



Madison Bead Society Newsletter

Vol. 22 No. 5

www.madisonbeadsociety.org

March 2012

March Meeting: Q&A with The Camera Co.

Date: March 26, 2012

When: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Pinney Branch Library **Presenter:** Camera Co.

A representative of the Camera Co. will give us some tips on how to take great photos of our jewelry items. www.cameracompany.com

How to Buy Artist Made Glass Beads: Part I

If buying artist made beads is important to you, how do you distinguish between beads created by a studio glass artist and those that are mass produced by bead making companies or factories that imitate art glass? How do you buy beads of good quality?

The level of craftsmanship that sets apart glass bead work is a significant factor in determining the quality of a glass bead.

Bead Holes: bead holes in quality art glass beads should be completely cleaned out of “bead release”, a chalky white, grey or even blue chalky substance used in the creation process. The holes should have a puckered or rounded edge. They should be parallel to each other. Bead holes that are sharp or misshapen may cut thread over time.

Decorations should be properly attached: Check for “undercuts” on surface decorations such as flower petals, dots, and stingers, and any other raised decoration. The decoration should be flatly attached to the base or they will pop off.

Size and Shape: Were the beads made to be matching? If they were, all the beads in the group should have a consistent size and shape, with similar diameter holes. They should be of good consistent shape and look like there was attention to detail and design.

Air Bubbles: Air bubbles can be implanted as a design element, but if the bubbles look inconsistent with the design the quality may be compromised. Unintentional bubbles can weaken the structure and cause chipping or breaking.

Soda Lime and Borosilicate Glass: Glass artists use both soft (soda-lime) and hard (borosilicate) glass. Both glasses can appear brightly colored or muted in tone. The techniques used to make the beads are the same. The difference in glass or color does not affect the quality or durability of the bead.

Kiln-annealed Glass: One of the most important things to consider when buying glass beads is whether the glass was annealed properly, or annealed at all. After the bead is created, the glass must be held at a specific temperature for an amount of time. This allows the molecular structure of the glass to realign. The bead must then be cooled at a specific rate, which is called annealing. The type, size and thickness of the glass determine this process and can only be done in a kiln. You cannot tell whether glass has been annealed you must ask the seller. Properly annealed glass will endure a surprising amount of rough handling, while improperly annealed glass or glass that hasn't been annealed will eventually crack.

(continued on next page)

Head Bead Column

By Gail Piper, Head Bead

I hope everyone has gotten through winter OK – it's been a relatively mild one, but while we got little snow, it was still as dark as ever. But, now the days are getting longer, we have more light, and we are actually beginning to feel a little bit of spring in the air. Any day the crocuses will be in bloom!

This was MBS's first try at a program year that is split in the middle by not meeting December and January instead of July and August. I think most members will agree that it seems to have worked out well.

If you have not yet signed up to participate in this year's bead challenge, I hope you will consider doing so at our next meeting. You can register by mail if you prefer. The parameters of the challenge have been in several past newsletters, and are posted on our website along with the form to register. We are asking for a \$5 registration fee that will go towards prizes for the winners.

MBS will again have a vendor space at the Art Glass and Bead Show this month at the Alliant Energy Center. If you are there, please stop by and say hello. We always welcome members to sit and rest at our table if they want to. We will also have a package check service for MBS members where we will keep your purchases for safe keeping if you do not want to carry them around during the show. Many members have asked us to do that in the past so this time we have come up with a system to use.

I hope to see you at the March meeting where the Camera Company will talk with us about photographing our beadwork. And, perhaps we will see you at the Alliant Energy Center at the bead show.

How to Buy Artist Made Glass Beads (continued from page 1)

What should you look for when shopping? Ask the artist about the type of glass they use and their annealing process. They should be able to answer these questions. The answer you want to hear is that the beads were kiln annealed at a controlled rate. Flame annealing, cooling in a fiber blanket or in heated vermiculite are not adequate. If you find cracks or chips this may alert you that this work has not been annealed.

Hopefully this will help you shop with confidence whether online or in person at shows, stores and galleries. You may want to ask a glass artist friend to also help you buy artist-made glass beads!

Next month: Part II – Distinguishing Artist-made Beads from Factory Glass Beads

Carla Stemmer, MBS Vice Bead and Glass Lampworkers of Wisconsin (GLOW) President

(Information obtained from The International Society of Glass Beadmakers)

MBS is now on Facebook!! Be our friend ☺

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sfr=1#!/pages/Madison-Bead-Society/146773198696019>

2012 Schedule

March 24 & 25

Art Glass and Bead Show

www.madisonbeadshow.com

March 26 @ Pinney

Branch Library** – Q&A
with The Camera Co.

April 23 @ Oakwood

Village West* -- Chris Mode
(\$)

May 21 @Diakonos

Designs Studio, Stoughton

June 25 @ Oakwood

Village West* -- Sue Ripsch,
Chain Maille Ring (\$)

July 23 @ TBD – Ingrid

Stark, ear wire and S hooks

August 27 @ Oakwood

Village West* -- Annual
meeting, elections, bead
challenge judging, and
dessert to share

(\$) – There is a fee for this
workshop

**Pinney Branch Library

204 Cottage Grove Rd.

Madison, WI 53716

<http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/pinney>

*Oak Wood Village West

6201-6225 Mineral Point Rd.

Madison, WI 53705

Heritage Oaks Building

Bead of the Month: Crystals

I can't cover everything about crystals in this tiny space so I'll just mention a few resources, beginning with the April 2012 issue of *Bead & Button* article "B&B's Handy-Dandy Guide to Crystals." It did indeed answer some questions about crystals I was afraid to ask.

The difference between a glass bead and a crystal bead is the lead content in the crystal. Wikipedia has a good article on lead glass (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lead_glass) with a link to Swarovski, an Austrian company founded in 1895 and the biggest name in the business.

A book I have that inspires me is *Creating Crystal Jewelry with Swarovski: 65 Sparkling Designs with Crystal Beads and Stones* by Laura McCabe (c2008). It has a nice introduction to tools, materials, crystal types, basic stitches, a little history, and 20 projects. Enjoy! Pat Reichert, Editor

April meeting: Making an Impression

Date: April 23, 2012

When: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Oakwood Village West

Presenter: Chris Mode from Creative Mode **Cost of kit:** \$33.00

NOTE: We need a head count for this meeting. Please R.S.V.P. by emailing houseofpat@charter.net or calling 608-345-3166 before April 20th.

We'll create a sterling silver cuff bracelet that will include your own sentiment. Chris will show us a technique for quickly and successfully stamping your letters into the silver, antiquing the bracelet, and polishing it to your desired shine. More details in the next newsletter.

2011-2012 Officers

President	Gail Piper	Gail.Piper@madisonbeadsociety.org
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2011-12 Bead Challenge

It was decided at the September Officers meeting that we will have a beading challenge this program year in addition to the Soft Flex challenge Carla is working on. (More on the Soft Flex challenge in a future newsletter.)

There are four categories to choose from. You may choose to enter as many categories as you like. There will be a \$5 entry fee for each category you enter; this money will go towards purchasing prizes for the winners. Judges will be lined up closer to the judging, which will take place in August 2012 at the Annual Meeting. The site of that meeting is also to be determined, but we have decided, for a number of reasons, to have it somewhere other than a restaurant next year. We might have snacks but not a major potluck meal. [*NOTE: The deadlines noted in the Oct. newsletter have changed.*]

The Challenge Specifics:

- You are asked to make a piece of jewelry or wearable art, except for category #3 which can just be a bead or set of beads.
- Deadline to register: July 2012 MBS meeting.
- A \$5 payment is to accompany each category registration.
- You may mix/combine techniques in your challenge item but can only submit your item as an entry into one category. A challenge item cannot be submitted into more than one category.
- Your challenge item can be based on a pattern but should be your own creation in the end.

The categories are:

- 1) Metal: this would be items you create out of metal; this category includes chain maille. (Please see category #3 for Precious Metal Clay.)
- 2) Bead Weaving: any/all types of bead weaving techniques fall into this category.
- 3) Artist-created Beads/Pendants: if it is a bead or pendant and you made it, then it's in this category; lamp work, beaded beads, paper beads, clay, precious metal clay, etc. are all in this category. You can submit your item(s) as loose beads or use in a project. If submitted in a project, your bead or pendant will be the only thing judged.
- 4) Jewelry Design: this would be any jewelry or wearable art item(s) you create that does not fall into the other categories. Examples might be: strung beads, leather adornment items, etc.

We hope a lot of members will be inspired to participate in this challenge and by having this set up early in the program year everyone will have plenty of time to begin thinking about and working on their projects. But – remember that you must register in advance to participate.

By Gail Piper