

Madison Bead Society Newsletter

Vol. 22 No. 4

www.madisonbeadsociety.org

January/February 2012

Bead of the Month (January): Vegetable Ivory or Tagua

Vegetable ivory, also called tagua (tah-gwa) or corozo, is the common name of the seedpod of the ivory palm. When dried, it can be carved just like elephant ivory and has been used in everything from buttons, beads, figurines, and bagpipe components. It has been a boost to local economies in South America from Ecuador to Brazil where the most internationally-traded species is located. Harvesting is easy, just pick the kernels up off the ground after the fruit ripens and the forest animals have taken care of the pericarp. It takes weeks to dry the nut which can then be left the natural brown color, polished to a natural ivory color (the skin is removed), or opt for a marbled look. They can also be dyed a variety of colors using fabric dyes.

When buying tagua, keep these tips in mind: 1) The nut is hollow in the middle with a small canal running to its base, but that does not mean that all tagua slices come with a hole. Holes in tagua slices are signs of improper and accelerated drying process. Properly dried slices do not have cracks or holes. 2) Avoid using alcohol or perfumes, various chemicals may cause the color to run. 3) Check companies that claim to be certified as fair trade or eco friendly by using a recognized independent organization such as the Fair Trade Federation or Green America.



February Meeting: Polymer Clay: Basics of Sculpting, Stamping, and Coloring

Date: February 27, 2012

When: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Oakwood Village West

Presenter: Liz Jones of LIZart Designs

An introduction of the basics of polymer clay, including: conditioning clay, shaping, stamping with rubber stamps, coloring and baking.

We'll take a block of one-color clay and learn how to condition it so it is easy to work with. Learn the benefits of using a pasta machine to roll out uniform thickness of clay, and then use rubber stamps to add images & textures to the clay.

Then we'll use mica powders and inks to change the look of your piece. Learn the basic about baking clays and tips and tricks on how to finish and mount your final piece.

Cost/Supplies:

- One block of polymer clay (available at local stores, for under \$2)
- Rubber stamps, favorite textures
- Small cookie cutters, shape cutters
- Glue-on bails, or wire to create attachments (and pliers, if desired)
- Empty pendant bezels
- Extra clay will be available for purchase (Approx. \$2 each)



Head Bead Column

By Gail Piper, Head Bead

In that I had to write my last article before our November Show and Sale had taken place, here are some thoughts and observations on how it went at the new location.

General feelings from the artists were that it was “slow but OK considering the current economy”. There were limited concerns about it moving to the new Alliant Energy Center (AEC) location. Those concerns were primarily that loyal customers were used to the previous site and would not want to drive to AEC and pay the parking fee.

The positives included: a high volume of traffic generated by other events being held at AEC that same weekend; ease of unloading/loading; room was secured overnight so displays could remain up over night with all merchandise sitting out. Numerous participating artists voiced their opinion that we should hold the show/sale at the AEC again in 2012.

MBS officers and committee chairs involved in the event all met in mid-December for a follow-up meeting and decided to submit the paperwork to sign up for the same location for the 2012 Show and Sale. More information about the event will be coming out in future newsletters and announced at meetings. For now, please note the dates will be: November 17 & 18, 2012, at the Alliant Energy Center and in the same space. A few things we had issues with (e.g. the concession stand access) will be addressed with AEC and a few changes requested. Also worth noting is that Ingrid will be coordinator again and Liz will oversee the promotions. (I say ‘oversee’ the promotions because everyone involved needs to be assist with getting the word out about our show/sales.)

Don't forget about our 2012 challenge. Have you started your project or projects (you can have multiples, you know)? Be ready to submit your entry form(s) at our February meeting! See you there!!

Bead of the Month (February): Evil Eye and Adornment

By Gail Piper

Beads have been used by humans and their predecessors for about 75,000 years. They are a serious matter in traditional societies, providing identification by gender, age, social class and ethnic group. They have been – and still are – symbolic in many ways to all people around the world.

Probably the most common symbolisms relating to beads has to do with the “Evil Eye”, a widespread superstition that says a mystic (or magician or evil-doer of some sort) can cast a bad spell upon a person using their eye. By doing that they are giving you the Evil Eye, which can bring all kinds of bad luck, ill health, misfortunes, etc. upon you.

How do you protect yourself against the Evil Eye? Well, you can choose one of two strategies: you can either be defensive and attract the Evil Eye away or you can be offensive and attack it.

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MBS is now on Facebook!! Be our friend ☺

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

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

2012 Schedule

February 27 @ Oakwood Village West*

March 26 @ Pinney Branch Library – Q&A with the Camera Co.

March 24 & 25 Art Glass and Bead Show

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 and Dessert to share



Evil Eye

***Oak Wood Village West**
6201-6225 Mineral Point Rd.
Madison, WI 53705
Heritage Oaks Building

Bead of the Month (February): (Continued from page 2)

The first strategy – defense – consists of distracting the Evil Eye by making it look at something other than your eye first. What would divert its stare? Since the Evil Eye is looking for eyes, you give it some harmless eyes to look at instead of your eye. Or, you can use something to glare back, essentially fighting fire with fire. Graphic symbols representing eyes, whether dots, circles, circle/dots, or more complex motifs, are commonly used for this. When put on round beads these graphic symbols make wonderful substitutes for real eyes. Hence, a whole class of “eye beads” was born. There are countless numbers of eye beads, but Ancient Tibetan Dsi bead talismans are some of the oldest traditional eye beads and are amongst the most expensive beads known to man.

Other items will attract the Evil Eye, as well. The color blue is widely used in the Middle East, silver is said to work, but not gold. Certain stones, especially agate, onyx and carnelian are believed to attract the Evil Eye.

The other way to save you from the baleful influence of the Evil Eye is to boldly attack it. What better way to attack two eyes at once than with two outstretched fingers? The hand is the most convenient and effective offensive weapon against the Evil Eye. Hand pendants of all sorts came into use to perform this function, and most are open palmed. In Europe the ficus or higa (thumb protruding from the first two fingers) is more common. Other items with sharp points such as stars, doubled squares, and even chili peppers are believed to work.

Do you think this is all just a past superstition from previous centuries or only exists overseas in less progressive cultures? Think again. QVC sells an eye-bead bracelets and pendants for you to wear to protect yourself from the Evil Eye, a twenty-first century bearer of bad fortune.

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