

Smashed Beads Jewelry

Part of the beauty of these sophisticated focal beads is that they don't require precision, making them an ideal beginner project. Choose your favorite colors and have fun creating – you'll smash any imperfections!

Materials:

- Flameworking torch and Torch holder clamp #425704
- Mandrels
- Bead release
- Safety glasses
- Annealing bubbles #94701 or Fiber blanket #92803
- Italian Rod Assortment #91PAK
- Bead hole cleaner #425724 or Diamond Bead Reamer #69789
- Adjustable Parallel Bead Press #325204
- Graphite Paddle #425725

Note: Always wear appropriate clothing and safety glasses when flameworking. Follow all manufacturer instructions for your torch.



Projects shown by artist Val Oswalt-DeWaard



Instructions:

1. Dip your mandrels in bead release and allow to dry. Note: Release can be flame dried in the back of a torch flame to speed the drying process.





2. Slowly introduce your mandrel and glass rod into the flame, holding them away from the torch head in the area of the flame outside the cone. (The cone is the blue triangle of color you see in the flame at the torch head.)

3. Turn the glass rod and mandrel between your fingers continuously. Allow a ball of hot, soft glass to form at the tip of the glass rod.

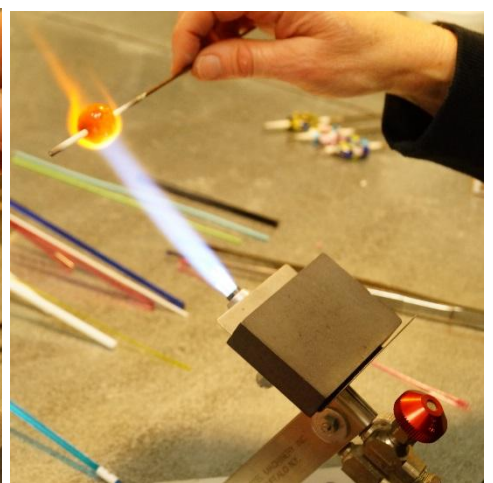
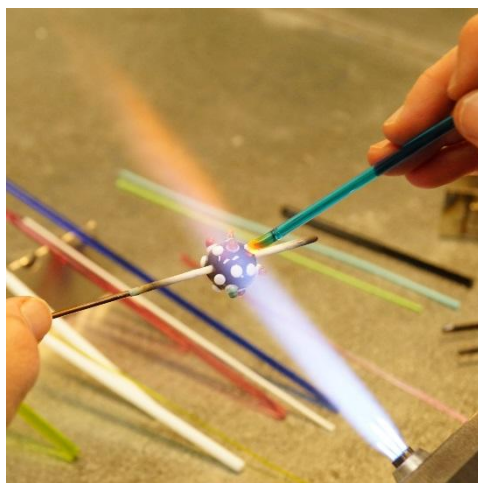
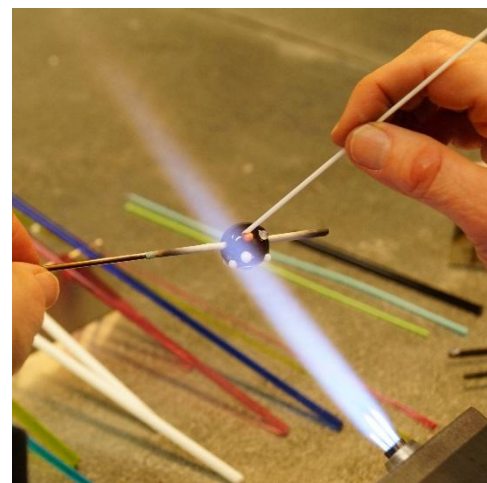
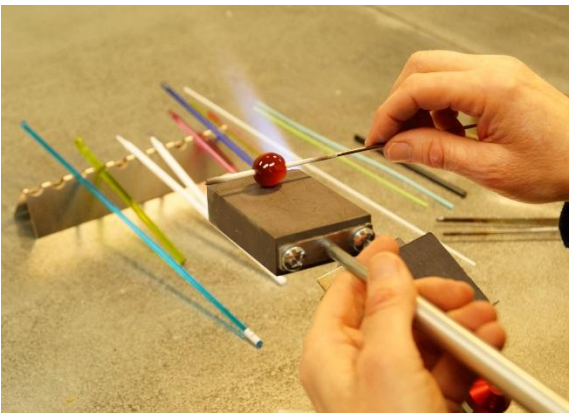
4. Lay the molten glass ball [gather] onto the hot mandrel, allow the soft glass to trail around the mandrel as you turn it, forming the base of your bead.

5. Continue heating the rod to soften. Use softened glass gather to wind onto the mandrel. Tip: Before reaching unheated (stiff) glass, taper or draw the rod away from the mandrel. Heat the thin string of glass until it separates. Repeat this process until your desired bead size is reached. Use a graphic paddle to shape your bead.

6. After the base of your bead is the size you desire, heat a rod or stringer in the base color for your dots, touch to the bead, then burn off the connection to form a dot. Repeat to add as many dots as desired.

Note: For our beads we used white as our base color for all the dots.

7. Heat your accent color and add dots on top of or overlapping base dots. Repeat with as many colors as you want.



8. After you are happy with your dots, heat the bead evenly until the dots melt into the base of your bead. Smooth shape as desired on graphite paddle.

9. Return bead to flame and heat until glass is soft. Remove from flame and use your bead press to evenly smash the bead. Be careful not to over-flatten the bead – leave enough depth for the mandrel.

10. Cool just outside the flame to set the shape of your bead. Place your bead in a container of Annealing Bubbles, between layers of Fiber Blanket or into an annealing kiln to cool.

11. Allow beads to cool fully (to room temperature) and remove from mandrels. Use a bead reamer or bead hole cleaner to remove bead release residue from inside the beads.

12. Place finished beads on your choice of findings and enjoy!

