



Heart of Illinois Bead Society

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Our Purpose is to encourage and promote interest and enjoyment in beads and beadwork

December Program

Holiday Ornament, Lois Hartwig and Mary Winters-Meyer. In this class, you will learn a simple technique for beading around a glass ball ornament. This is a quick project, using netting and fringe techniques.

Materials needed:

- ❖ 1 glass or plastic ball ornament
- ❖ seed beads
- ❖ Needle, thread, scissors

Please make sure to bring your ornaments, as the size of your ornament can affect the design.

January Program

(Editor's note: I decided to include information for the January program. With all the hullabaloo of the holidays, I'm not sure if I will get the January newsletter finished before the January meeting.)

Wire Beaded Beads, Mary Winters-Meyer. In this class, we're going to kick back and have some fun with a very simple technique for making beaded beads with seed beads and wire. Guess what? No needles or thread required! You will, however, need some wire cutters.

Materials needed:

- ❖ 28 or 32 gauge wire
- ❖ seed beads
- ❖ dowel – wire mandrels for glass beadmaking work well, as do the wire rods you find in magazine binders, or you can go with Mary's cheap alternative and use bamboo skewers. You'll also need a thicker dowel (can anyone say chopsticks?)
- ❖ Wirecutters

Mary will have a large assortment of colored wires available for purchase.

What's New

- ❖ **Possible Group Purchase?** I've been corresponding with Karen DeSousa, author of *Beaded Ornament Covers* and the *Celestial Series*. Both of these are patterns for making

beaded covers for glass ball ornaments. If there is enough interest, I can do a wholesale purchase and get 15% off of her ornament kits and 35% off her books. However, I will need a firm commitment to purchase, as there is a minimum to be met in order to get wholesale prices. Her books and pictures of the kits can be seen at: <http://www.accentbead.com/>. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in these books or kits.

- ❖ **Call for teachers!** We still need teachers for the monthly programs for next year. If you are interested in teaching a class, please let Mary or Cindy know.

Reminders

- ❖ Annual Member Dues of \$15 are due as soon as possible. Please bring your dues to the next meeting or mail a check to the Society. (P.O. Box 13, Congerville, IL 61729-0013.)
- ❖ If you haven't filled out the member survey, please do at your earliest convenience. We want to know what you want to learn!

Our Sponsor

The Bead Parlor at 1007 S. Fell, Normal IL 61761 (309-452-2421) is open on Mondays from 6:00 – 8:00 pm, Wednesdays from 3:00 - 8:00 p.m. and by appointment.

Bead Society members receive a 10% discount on purchases.

Links of Interest

We have several new and interesting website links to share with you this month.

- ❖ NanC Meinhardt has her 2003 schedule of classes available on her site: <http://www.nancmeinhardt.com>
- ❖ Some absolutely gorgeous "picture" amulet bag patterns: <http://www.amuseink.com/>
- ❖ Beautiful free cross stitch designs (these can be worked on a loom or in square stitch): <http://www.solaria.online.bg/gobelins/index.html>



Monthly Bead Tips & Tricks

This month I'm going to talk about talent and creativity. When other beaders have seen some of my more time-consuming projects, I often get comments like, "You have such talent – I could never make something like that!" or "You're so creative! I don't know how you find your ideas."

The funny thing is that comments like these are exactly the same comments I used to make about other artists. My sense of wonder was intricately co-mingled with a sense of inadequacy. I wasn't an artist. I couldn't create new designs, I could only copy what other designers have created. I didn't have talent or creativity.

It's all a matter of perspective. Once you change your perspective, you can discover the artist inside yourself. The event that changed my perspective was a bead class with a project that had no fixed pattern and a teacher that encouraged her students to experiment. My struggles to finish that project opened up a whole new world for me. In the following years, I also learned that following my own muse was not easy. All artists have their failures, and I went through my own share.

So how do you find your muse? How do you find your own talent? How do you learn how to express your creativity? One of my favorite books is *Art & Fear* by David Bayles and Ted Orland. (I highly recommend buying this book. NanC Meinhardt like to read passages from it in her classes, and it's a very well-written book.) In it, the authors explain that many people have the wrong impression of talent. The common belief is that talent is given only to a few, and only those few can become true artists. The truth is that it is the mastery of the techniques and tools of her art that characterize an artist. While some have a better aptitude for learning those techniques quickly (the common perception of "talent"), anyone willing to work at their art can gain the same mastery of technique. As the old adage says, "practice makes perfect."

As for creativity, again that is a skill that can be learned. There have been many books written that detail how to develop your creative sense. I won't try to repeat their wisdom here. However, in answer to the question about where I find my ideas, the answer is everywhere! My first large piece, based on a sea theme, was inspired by a trip to Key West and the large sea-themed murals on the sides of the buildings. My Phoenix was inspired by the

legend of the phoenix. My latest piece was inspired by ancient Asian beadwork.

Not yet developed are ideas inspired by pictures of other artwork (usually not bead-related), a summer vision of butterflies dancing on the breeze, and most recently the decorations on Christmas packages! Learn to look at the world around you with your eyes and mind focused on how you can interpret what you see with beads. And most important, don't be afraid to experiment. Not all ideas will work out. X-rays of paintings by famous artists show that they often painted over their canvases. I have a basket full of failures that I haven't yet pulled apart so I could reuse the beads.

In short, my "tip" for you this month is to develop your talent. My "trick" is to practice and enhance your creativity. My advice is to let go of your control and play, and to proudly proclaim that you **are** a bead *artist!*

Book Review

The Beaded Basket, Jeanette Shanigan, softcover, 25 pages, SRP: \$20.00

As soon as I decided to buy this book, I knew it would be my next review. After receiving the book, I almost changed my mind, because I wasn't happy with my purchase. Then I decided that it's the duty of a reviewer to state the bad as well as the good, so I decided to go ahead with the review. I'm going to do this review in two sections, which makes it a bit longer than my usual review. The first will be a review of the technique, the second a review of the book.

The technique: Basket Weave

This is a new technique, and of course there's always a lot of excitement generated when someone introduces something unique. There have been rave reviews about this technique on some of the bead-related mailing lists that I read, and it is definitely a unique technique.

The basket weave is a variation of netting in a double layer configuration. It really does look like a woven basket when completed, and you can get some interesting effects by changing bead sizes or using multiple colors.

I found this technique to be truly challenging. It requires strong tension to work right. In the past,



when an author would say a project needed tight tension, I've had no problems with it, because I'm a "tension queen". I have to consciously think about it in order to relax my stitches. With this technique, however, I found that you really do have to maintain tension *all the time*, or the stitches loosen up and you'll end up with a mess. (It may be possible to do each row and then go back through the row a second time to tighten it up. I've done that with other netting projects, but haven't tried that yet with this technique.) I recommend using short lengths of thread, because the constant tension will weaken the thread to breaking point if you use longer lengths.

When completed, the finished piece is incredibly stiff, even more so than the peyote baskets that I've made. Once I got the hang of the technique, it wasn't hard to do, other than maintaining tension, although it is time consuming and uses a lot of beads. (A 4 x 6 inch basket in size 11/0s uses about 80 grams of beads.) Like most netting-based techniques, the basket weave is fairly forgiving of irregular beads. In fact, I'd say that Czech beads make this technique look even more interesting, because the technique has a lot of texture to it, and irregular beads would give even more texture.

The final word is if you feel up to a challenge, and like making beaded baskets, you'll probably enjoy this technique.

The book:

While the technique was truly interesting, I was quite disappointed with the book itself. The front and back covers look quite nice laminated with color pictures of the baskets, but I found the interior of the book unprofessional. The pages look like poor quality photocopies with uneven black lines running across the top of the pages, and the paper is standard weight, not the thicker weight that I prefer to see in a book. (Thicker paper ensures that the other side doesn't show through the page.) In addition, a fairly significant portion of each page is taken up with a copyright statement. I know that bead authors are concerned about their work being stolen, but having a 5-line statement on every other page is taking up space that could be used more effectively, in my opinion.

On her website, Jeanette says that this book is 25 pages, but the book that I received has only 14 pages. Her website also says that the book has 19 unique patterns, but the book I got only has 6.

When I emailed her to ask about this, she said that her distributor suggested she add in more patterns, so she added in another 11 pages on the second printing. She offered to mail me the additional pages, which does show a good sense of customer service.

As far as the instructions are concerned, I would consider these adequate instructions for class handouts where the teacher is demonstrating the technique. For a book, there are far too few illustrations, and the written text is somewhat sparse. It took me three tries to figure out how to do the basic technique from these instructions. The main technique is described with only 7 illustrations for the 19 steps shown in the written text, and the next two patterns in the book have no illustrations at all, with the final patterns having only illustrations for the embellishments. To be fair, I was able to eventually figure out the technique from the written text, but I think many less experienced beaders would have difficulty.

Something I would have found very useful in this book would be instructions on increasing and decreasing within a piece to vary the shape of the basket. This is not covered in the book, except for the patterns that change bead sizes. For a new technique, I consider increasing and decreasing to be a necessary "basic" that should be covered. While there are patterns in the book that show baskets with variations in diameter, the increases and decreases are done by changing the size of the beads. I would have been happier to also see methods for increasing and decreasing while staying with one size of bead.

I also think that part of my disappointment with this book was due to the price. The standard retail on this book is \$20. Even with the added pages, this seemed too much to pay for the quality of the book that I received. If I was browsing through this book in a bead store and saw a \$20 price tag, I would never have bought it.

In conclusion, I would recommend that if you see this book at half-price, you enjoy making beaded baskets, and you enjoy a challenge, then it would be a worthwhile purchase.

