

THE Mentor & THE Protégé

Written By Pamela Radwan & Kim Miles

When thinking about what things to write for this article, I kept telling myself that people will want to know how I began making beads. After all, I am a Registered Nurse by profession. My fascination with glass beads started shortly after my daughter's bead bracelet and a lamp work bracelet that my husband gave me both broke. In my frustration with two repairs, I decided to try to fix them myself and started to do some research on the internet. The more I looked, the more interested I became, realizing that learning how to create glass beads was something I just "had to do".

Upon this realization, I signed up for my first (and only) introductory class to lampworking, where for 5 hours, I was taught the basics of glass bead-making. Seeing my first beads, I wasn't exactly jumping up and down with excitement, but I kept telling myself that they can only improve with time, practice and patience (of which I have none!). I discovered Corina Tettinger's book "Passing the Flame" in which she was kind enough to enclose a dedication that encouraged me to "go for it". After 2 months (approximately 30 hours of torch time), I was making my Renaissance and Florentine beads. Later followed sets such as my Nefertiti Blossoms, Rubies on Ice, and Eden beads. At the moment, floral beads are my passion—I love them. Learning to make them was one of my goals next to "encased" flowers which I have recently been creating much to my satisfaction.

In addition to having been granted this "gift", I have been fortunate enough to have the support and encouragement of world-renowned bead maker and glass artist, Kim Miles. Kim has kept me grounded and she has taught me that pushing the creative envelope is essential. Whenever I show Kim any of my new beads she will say, "Great work—beautiful! Now go out and create some new and ugly beads!" Being creative/innovative is not as simple as it sounds. Kim has created some unique pieces such as her bangle beads, inside/outside beads, miniature vessels, teapots, sculptural goddesses, and her world-famous lotus blossom beads. To Kim the art and craft of glass beadmaking is about freezing a small piece of time, light, and motion into a tangible form that can be worn and passed from hand to hand for generations to come. In addition, she is a "master" at using cubic zirconias in glass. Depth of design comes from placing as many as thirty layers of molten glass one over the other. Colors are hand mixed to create realistic dimension within the components of each bead. Although we "push" each other artistically speaking, it is important to note that creativity cannot be forced. I'm still waiting for lightning to strike in many ways. In the meantime, the passion for making glass beads is only topped by others who wear them and allow themselves to escape reality for a little while to dream about the beautiful things in life...

Pamella Radwan's glass beads are available through her website www.jellycatartglass.com and she may be contacted directly via e-mail at jellycat@rogers.com. Kim Miles' glass beads are available exclusively through her website www.kimmiles.com. You may also contact Kim directly to join her "Secret Bead Club" at kim@kimmiles.com.

