

# Warring States Bead

Text and Demonstration by Suzanne Tate

Photography by Jason Tate



## Glass Rods

Light Blue  
Dark Blue  
White  
Yellow

## Prepulled Stringers

White  
Light Blue  
Dark Blue

## Tools and Materials

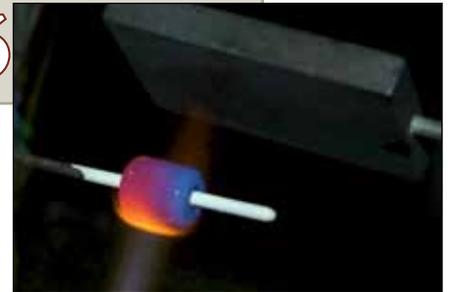
Torch (any size)  
Graphite or Brass Marver

As a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) I have developed an interest in the historical development of glass beadmaking. Even though it does not fall under the period on which the SCA focuses (AD 600 to AD 1600), one of my favorite historical bead styles is the Warring States dot bead (480 BC to 220 BC). As well as being beautifully intricate bead forms, they also challenge my patience, skills, and the steadiness of my hand, but also allow me to create infinite variations.

I love creating modern variations of the Warring States bead with contemporary colors and intricate masking. As a re-creator, however, I am often aiming to produce replicas of historic finds (for example, for my ongoing project of producing a bead timeline). This tutorial will focus on re-creating a specific historical bead, as seen illustrated in Louis Sherr Dubin's *History of Beads*. In the book, the picture is in black and white, so I have deduced likely colors by considering other bead examples from the same period, and the shades illustrated.

Using the marver, shape the bead into a barrel.

3



4

Place 4 large white dots around the centre of the barrel.

Be sure that the dots do not spread too close together. You must also allow room around them for the other dots. Place the first dot in the center using the white rod. Turn the bead around and place another white dot exactly opposite the first. (You may wish to turn the mandrel so you can see the bead from the side to help you find the exact opposite point.) Placing this second dot is the most difficult. Once the second dot is applied, place the third and fourth dots between the first two, spaced evenly.

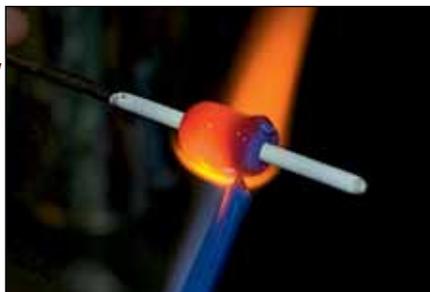
1

Using the light blue glass, create a gather and start making the base bead.



2

Make a large footprint to allow room for the design.



5

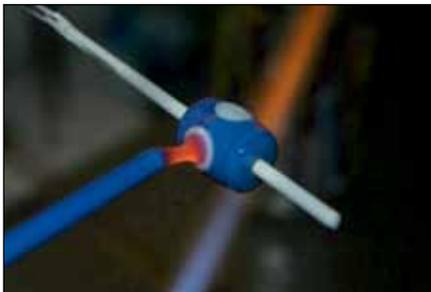
Melt the 4 dots in.



You can use the marver to flatten the dots to speed the process, and you can also use the marver to push the dots slightly to the side as they melt in, if minor placement adjustments are needed.

6

Apply a dot to the center of each white dot, using the light blue rod.



Be sure that you are wafting the bead through the flame between each dot, keeping the base bead warm.

7

Allow each dot to melt in, but not all the way.



Use the marver to flatten the top of each dot.

8

Apply a dot to the center of each blue dot, using the white rod.



Again, make sure that you are keeping the base bead warm between each dot, but not allowing enough heat to build up to affect the other dots. Continue to do this as each new layer is added.

9

Repeat step 7, using the marver to flatten the top of each dot.



10

Apply a white dot to the edge of the barrel between each central dot and marver the top flat.



11

Apply a light blue dot to the center of each of the new white dots and marver the top flat.



12

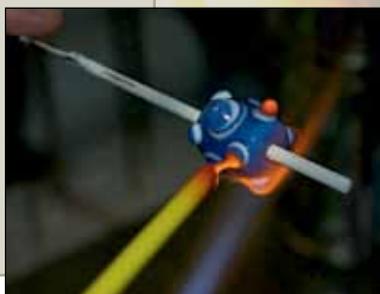
At this stage, start making the outside dot towers lean slightly outwards.



When applying each dot, do so from an angle rather than straight on. You can also use gravity to make the dots lean out.

13

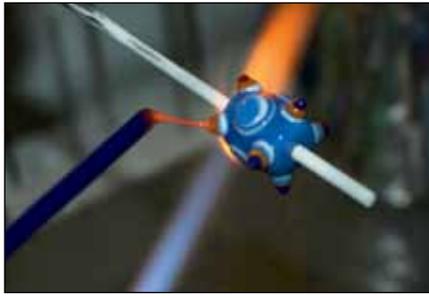
Add a layer of yellow dots to the outside dot towers.



Remember to encourage the dots to lean outwards. Marver the top flat. It is important to keep the base bead warm, but do not melt the outside towers in at all.

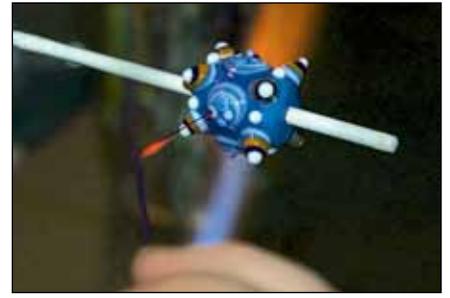
14

Apply dark blue dots to the outside dot towers.



19

Using a dark blue stringer, place a dot on the remaining white dots (left and right) in the central design.



15

Using stringer, apply a white dot between each of the outside dot towers.



20

Moving back to the outside part of the bead, add dark blue dots on the small white dots on the left and light blue on the right.



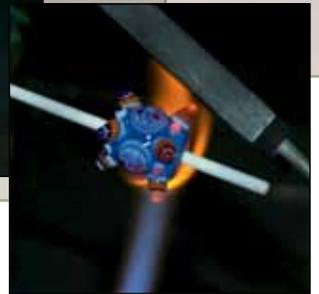
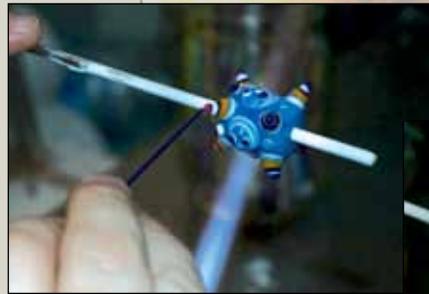
16

Using a fine stringer (and a steady hand!) add 4 white dots, evenly spaced, within each blue circle.



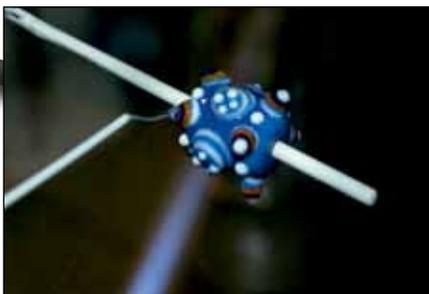
21

Moving back to the taller towers on the outside, add a final layer of small dark blue dots, using stringer.



17

Moving back to the outside towers and continuing to keep the bead warm between each addition, add a dot to each outside tower using white stringer.



Use a marver and gravity to help the towers lean outwards slightly. Making sure that every part of the bead has had enough heat, check that each final layer of dots has melted to a half dome, with no undercuts. This will ensure that the bead is less fragile.

Place the completed bead in the kiln for annealing.

18

Moving back to the center, use a light blue stringer to place a tiny dot on the top and bottom white dots of each central design.



FLOW

Suzanne Tate has been beadmaking since 2003 and has been involved in historical recreation for a bit longer. She is a secondary school art and photography teacher who has many creative outlets, but once she was introduced to working with glass, her interest in most other artistic mediums faded.

Suzanne was fascinated by how certain beadmaking skills and designs have been in a continual cycle of discovery and loss throughout history. While she enjoys researching and recreating historical beads, she also loves the creativity and freedom of working in more contemporary styles. Suzanne tends to work with new designs as often as possible, rather than developing a signature style. She is addicted to dot beads though, making her beads in her home studio in Melbourne, Australia, in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges. Visit [www.solarflarecreations.com.au](http://www.solarflarecreations.com.au) to view more of Suzanne's glass art.