

# Nile Monitor Lizard for Paperweight Inclusion

Written by Jennifer Wilson of Crystal Myths, Inc.

Photos by Lewis Wilson of Crystal Myths, Inc.



What you will need: soft glass rods, COE 104, in black and yellow (I choose to use effetre or moretti glass), pair of tweezers, a torch that will give you a small pinpoint flame (my torch of choice is a Lynx by GTT), and a sample (I find that small plastic models are great-better than a picture-you can generally find a ton at your local flea market)



**1**  
I begin by drawing my yellow & black rods down about 1/3 to 1/2 the diameter of the original rod. I then fire cut both of them into 2 rods.



**2**  
I start to build up the tail section by putting a yellow "dot" on the end of the black rod,



**3**  
Then alternate dots of black and yellow until I have what looks like a bumble bee.



**4**  
At this point I start to draw down and shape the tail.



**5**  
Holding onto the punty (the black rod attached to the tail), I start to build up the body of the lizard.



**6**  
Once the glass is built up I start to elongate it. I then apply lots of yellow dots along the back & side of the lizard's body (I do this now because once I leave an area-I can't go back & reheat it without shocking it).



**7**  
I now start pulling the first section of the back right leg.



**8**  
I then turn the piece upside down & immediately pull the first section of the back left leg.



**9**  
I now go back to the right side & pull out the first section of the right front leg.



**10**  
Then again I flip the piece upside to pull out the first section on the left front leg. When the piece is upside down there is a better view to see if the legs are matching.



**11**  
I then go in and pull out the second sections on all four of the legs, in the same order I had done the first sections.



**12**  
Now I reattach my black rod to the neck area and begin shaping and elongating what will be the neck and head.



**13**  
I now start applying yellow dots and lines to the underside of the neck, also to the back and sides of the neck and head.



**14**  
At this point I go in and do the final shaping in the face area.



**15**  
To make the eyes, I put a small black dot over an existing yellow dot. Eyes can be difficult, if you end up with one larger than the other-try to build up the smaller one.



**16**  
I now begin to pull out the toes on the back right leg.



**17**  
I now flip the piece over and begin pulling out the toes on the back left leg.



**18**  
Be sure to do all the "pulling" on the toes outside of the flame.



19 Now I go in and start pulling out the toes on the front feet.



20 I now put a little heat in my tweezers and grab onto one of the front feet. While I'm holding on with the tweezers I do the final shaping on the tail and then burn off the punty.



Here is the original sample (left side), the piece I just finished (right side), and then a piece I had done a while ago that is closer to the normal size I generally make (middle). I think you can tell why I made a piece substantially larger than normal for this article....so you would be able to see it!



This is a picture of the piece inside a marble encapsulated by my father Lewis C. Wilson.

Even though the finished piece is less than 2 1/4 inches long, it is still about 2 times larger than I would normally make the piece. However, it becomes very difficult for anyone other than myself to be able to see what I am doing when I work that small. After the piece is finished and annealed it is heated in a vacuum chamber and formed into either a marble, paperweight, or pendant by my father. I can do encapsulations but they take about 4 times as long and look about 10 times worse than my father's. The trade off is my eyes are better than his so I can shrink down almost anything for him to use in a scene.

If you want an idea about what happens from the lizard to the final piece you can check out a free streaming video clip of my father making a piece on our website [www.crystalmyths.com](http://www.crystalmyths.com)

Jennifer's first glass experience was sitting on her father's lap (Lewis C. Wilson) at age four and making a fox-n-sox from the Dr. Seuss story. Jennifer originally made borosilicate sculptures and then started to make soft glass beads in the early 90's. Later, as her father began making paperweights and paperweight-style marbles, Jennifer began making small soft glass sculptures for the inclusions. Jennifer is also involved in the organizing and running of the Best Bead Shows, which her family promotes.

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