

Glass 'Agate Gemstones' by Kristan Horne

I've been experimenting with tabular focal beads and the variegated quality of agates.



(Bases of - CIM Banana crème, CIM Ginger, Vetrofond Twilight, CIM Thai Orchid)

First I make a base bead of clear, not only is it cheaper and saves my special colours, but I get it in larger rods so it's much quicker to wind a base.

The oval cg beadroller makes getting a good initial shape easier but if I want a larger bead than my roller makes I simply make a bicone then marver the middle and round it in the flame.

Next I completely encase the clear in my chosen colour, I've been experimenting with some of the CIM and Vetrofond colours I have lying around, but any opaque/streaky colour is worth a try.

Now to variegation, I love using Intense Black and it only takes a teeny-tiny amount, I pull a hair thin stringer as long as my arms can stretch! Don't put the stringer in the flame it will just ball up, heat a circumference of your bead until it's red hot and press the stringer into the hot glass, if it doesn't stick it's not hot enough. Now heat the IB on the bead, a lot, until it does it's thing and starts to spread out, my favourite bit - it looks really cool!

On some colours you get a great kind of ghosting, but another option is to lay down a strip of dark ivory first and put the IB over that, it seems to spread better and looks more... intense!



(Trial bead on CIM ginger, L to R = straight Intense Black, IB over Dark Ivory, IB over Silvered Ivory)

I also experimented with pulling ivory stringer with a touch of IB on the gather which gave a much more subtle mix. For some sparkle use Silvered Ivory Stringer either by itself or with a hair of IB over the top and adding dots between stripes will spread out nicely too.

When you're happy with your decoration heat and squish it. Use a press or simply squash between a graphite pad and marver, just make sure it doesn't get too thin along the mandrel line as it may crack.

Back into the flame to remove any chill marks and into the kiln 😊