

When Innovation Meets History



The 2025 Your Bead for Venice Competition

by Floor Kaspers

Every glass artist draws inspiration from a variety of sources. These can include a walk in the woods, pop culture, personal experiences, new glass supplies, a story told by a friend, and more. However, whether we are aware of it or not, we all draw inspiration from the glass artists who came before us. Our techniques and styles have a rich history. Innovation can't occur without starting with the stepping stones of glass history.

Glass beadmaking in Venice dates back to the 14th century. Venetian beadmakers continue to produce both traditional and modern beads. Many of the glass colors and techniques we use have their origins in Venice. You could say there is a bit of Venice in every lampworked bead made today.

Venetian Legacy Meets Modern Artistry

In the competition and exhibition, *Your Bead for Venice*, the International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB) explores the duality of history and innovation. It challenges beadmakers to create a bead inspired by Venetian beads and glass techniques. The ISGB created *Your Bead for Venice* together with the Committee for the Safeguard of the Art of Venetian Glass Beads and the Association of Art Beadmakers of France. This competition and exhibition explore the entanglement of history, tradition, and innovation.

*Karina Guévin and Cédric Ginart,
Piazza San Marco, 2.5" x 2.5" x 1", borosilicate
flameworked glass using zanfirico, encalmo and
sculpting techniques, 2024.*

2024's Beadmaking Triumphs

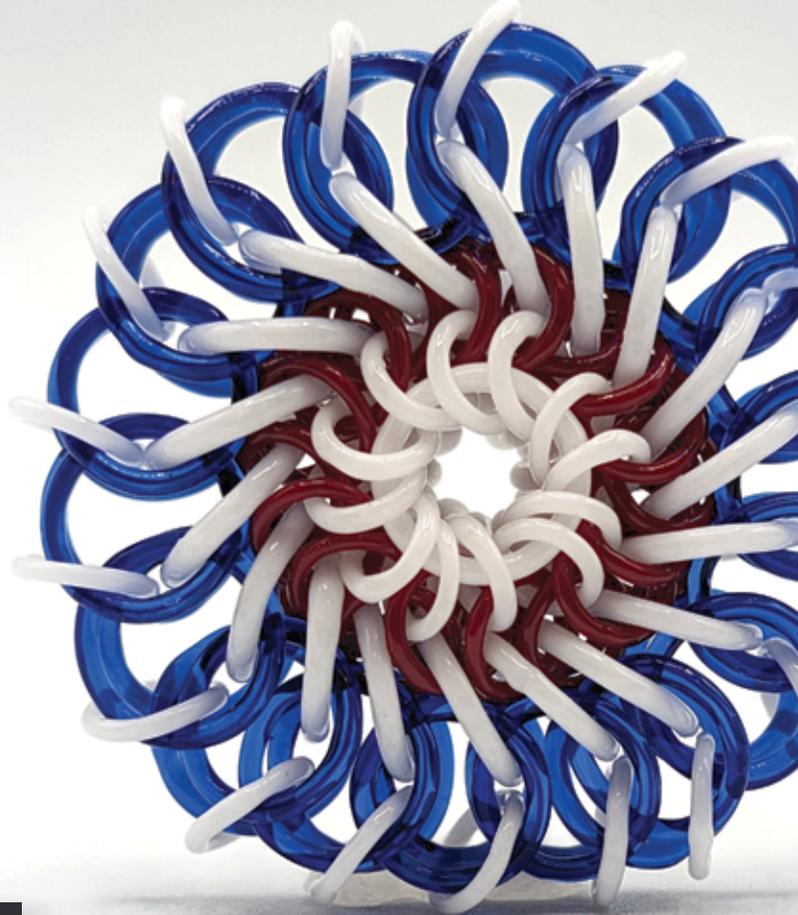
In last year's competition, the three beads awarded by the jury exemplified Venetian inspiration and modern interpretation. The first prize was awarded to Canadian Mathieu Grodet for his bead, *Infinite Variety*. It included a portrait of Marchesa Luisa Casati in the traditional Giacomo Franchini murrine technique. Marchesa Luisa Casati lived in Venice for a time and was a patron of the arts. To her, Venice was a living work of art. Its cultural influence flowed through her. Since the twelfth century, the lion has symbolized Venice. Speaking of the soulful influence of Venice upon her, she once said, "I see *myself*. I feel as if I am a lion."

The second prize was awarded to Canadian duo Karina Guévin and Cédric Ginart for their bead, *Piazza San Marco*. Inside the bead is a miniature Venetian goblet flanked by two lions. The third prize was awarded to American Kim Edwards for her bead, *Chain Rosetta*. Inspired by the traditional rosetta or chevron bead, she created a bead with the same colors and pattern in glass chainmaille.

What these artists were able to do was take inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of Venice and combine that with their own signature styles and techniques. They combined Venetian history with their own to create innovative miniature works of bead art. This is exactly what *Your Bead for Venice 2025* is all about.



Mathieu Grodet, *Infinite Variety*,
1.3" x 1.2" x 1.18", *flameworked murrine*, 2024.



Kim Edwards, *Chain Rosetta*,
2.36" x 1", *borosilicate chainmaille*, 2024.

Bead Your Competition

This year marks the fourth edition of *Your Bead for Venice*, featuring an open call to glass beadmakers worldwide. The final dates are yet to be released, but the deadline to create your beads or set of beads will be in May. A maximum of twenty finalists will be selected from the entries by a jury. The finalists' beads will be displayed at the prestigious Museo del Vetro in Murano during Venice Glass Week 2025. A professional jury will judge the beads based on their connection to Venice, attention to detail, and overall quality. Museum visitors can also vote for their favorite bead.

The beads will be displayed in the museum's Bead Room. This room is dedicated to the legacy and techniques of Venetian glass bead production. Some of the cases containing antique Venetian beads will make room for the new beads. This arrangement creates a tangible connection between the sources of inspiration and the beads that came from them.

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More information on *Your Bead for Venice 2025* can be found at www.isgb.org.

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