Implosion-Earstuds Tutorial

Tutorial on how to make small implosions directly onto an earstud

by Regina Fischer

More about Reginas gorgeous beads you can find here:
www.kellerdrache.jimdo.com

You can find surgical steel earstuds in the standard and XL length in our shop at www.Vetromagic.at and in the shops of our Dealers!

More about frit, glasspowder and our tutorials you can find at:

www.Vetromagic.com

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What you need

small amount of frit in springcolors

1 clear rod with max. 7–8 mm diameter

2 earstuds in standard or XL length by Vetromagic

2 earstudsholder (= mandrell with luster terminal – you find a how-to on Vetromagic.at in the tutorials section)

graphitepaddle | vermiculite/kiln

Dear earstud-friends,

today I want to show you how to make earstuds with implosions. Lots of beaders shy away from this technique – but you will see, with a little exercise it can be easily done! And these small earstuds are absolutely charming!

It is springtime now while creating this tutorial, therefore we are using springcolors for our earstuds!

At first we are starting by heating up the tip of our clear rod and pressing it into the form of a small maria. A maria is a small dish at the bottom of our rod. The dish shoulnd‘t be to big, otherwise the earstud will be too big later.

Hint: Therefor the clear rod shouldn‘t be more than 7-8mm in diameter.

Now we carefully heat up our maria at the bottom and press it into the beforehand prepared fritblend.

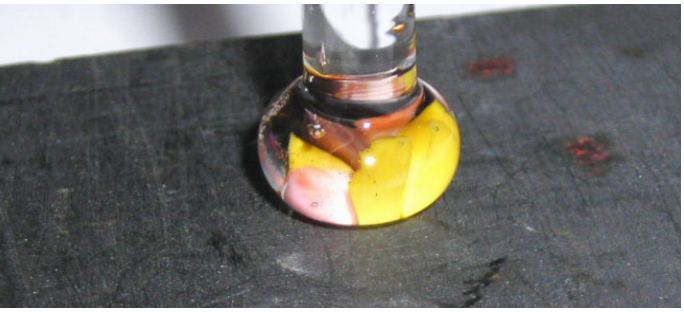
We heat up the bottom side of the maria again so that we can repeat the last step. The frit do not have to be melted in flatly, but should stick nicely to the maria.

Next we hold the glassrod vertically above the flame. By lowering the rod into the flame and up again we can control the temperature and with this the speed of slumping.

We spin the rod above the flame. It is important for the implosion to run slowly. So go near the flame and back away again to control the speed of how fast the molten glass runs.

The slower this is, the better you will retain control. Spin it slowly. The maria is very small. You will see how fast the glass starts running down at the edge.

By running down the clear glass takes the colorful frit along down.



When the maria is neary round like a ball (that happens really fast at this small size), we let the glass set.

That means, we put the rod onto our graphitepaddle and let the glass slumpf down by its own weight.

Important: Do not press, just touch the rod down and let the hot glass slump.

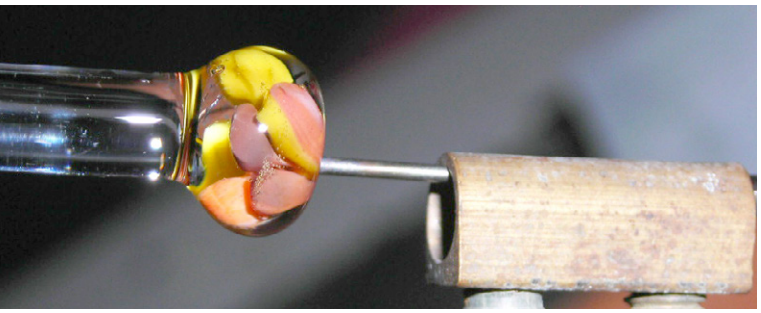
By letting it slump, the stained glass is pushed up a bit in the inside. How do the colorful frit move inside the clear glass? At first they are stretched because of the maria and then pushed up by the slumping process.

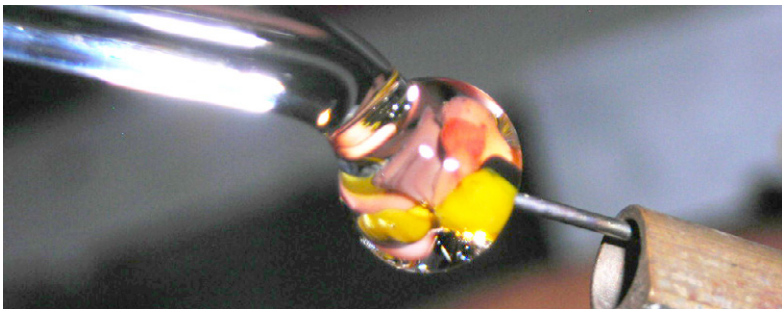
At first there will be straight lines, if you let it slump again, the lines will start to be bent to the outside. This means for us, depending on how often we repeat this step of heating and slumping, we can influence the shape of the implosion.

When you are happy with your implosion, we can pin it onto the prepared earstud.

To do this, heat up the bottom of the implosion, but not too much. If it is too hot, your beautiful implosion will lose its shape again and the hot glass will start running again.

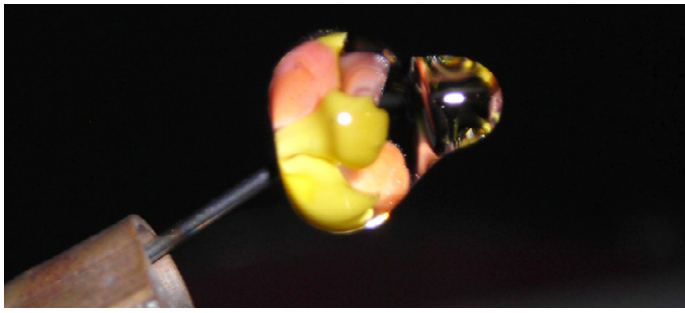
Hint: The rod is held in the left hand (for rightys).

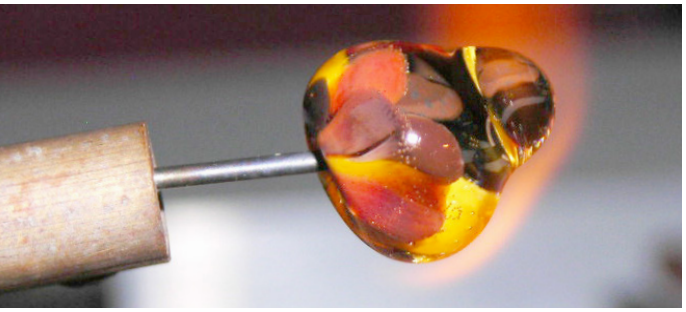




We spin the metal earstud 2 times briefly through the flame. That is more than enough to heat it up and make the glass able to stick to it.

Now we stick the earstud a little bit into the warm bottom of the implosion. Two millimeters are more than enough. Just twist the stud a little, to make the glass stick better onto it.

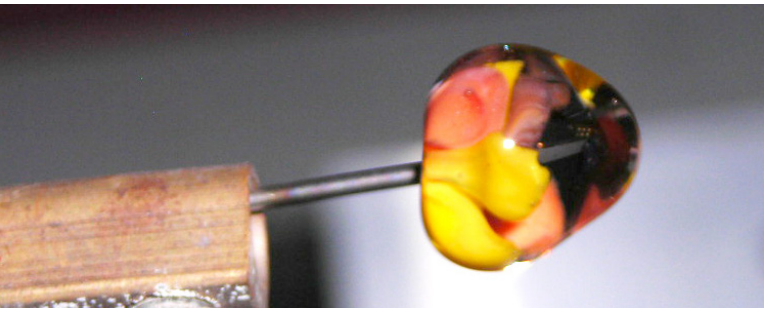


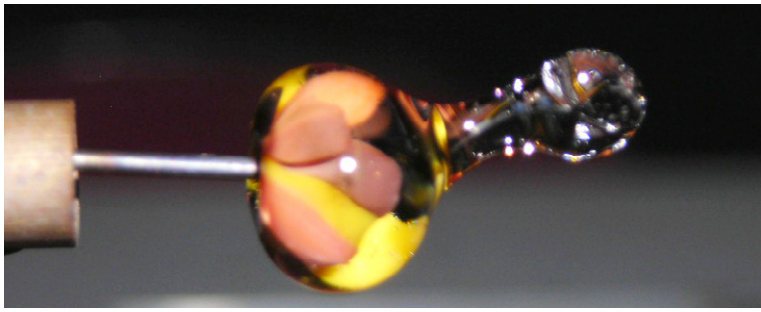


Now we are ready to melt off the rod. To do so heat up the rod a little above the implosion and pull it away.

The glass will now be a bit askew on the earstud and will have a little witch-hat on top.

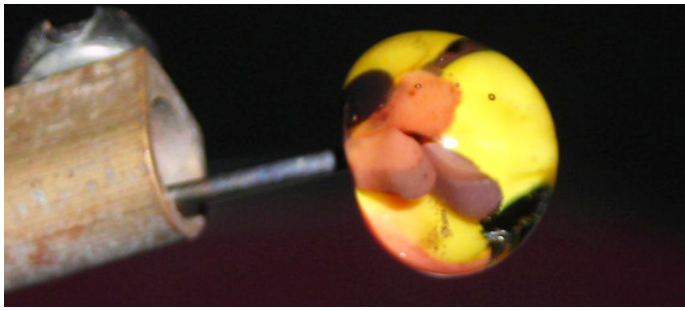
To correct this heat up the glass but not the metal earstud!

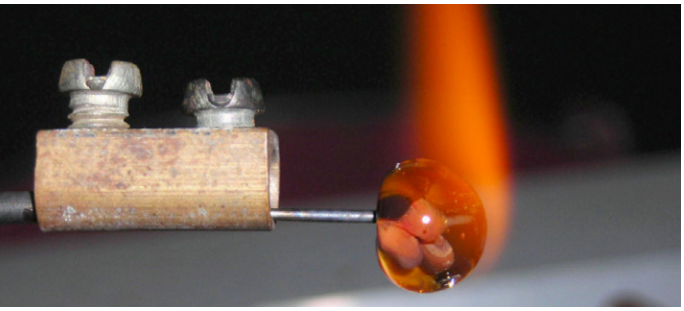




Take a tool of your choice and correct the position of the glass on the earstud. Just push on the bottom of the glass until its evenly distibuted and a litte flattend on the bottom

Now there is still too much clear glass on the top. Heat it up and take it off with your tweezers. Take off just a bit at a time. You can repeat the step multiple times. It‘s ready when the size seems to be okay.

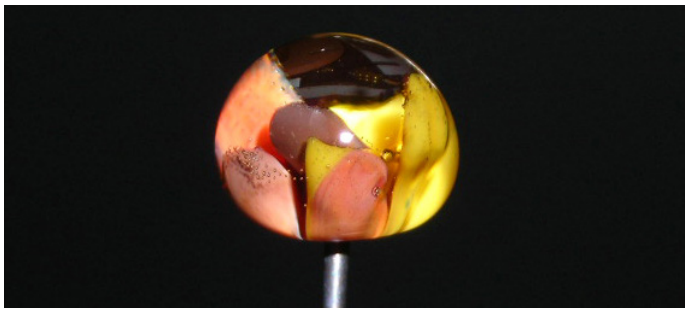




Heat it up again and melt it nicely and smoothly to see if the size really is like you want it to be.

Now comes a little trick to get a nice form at the back and to make it nice to wear.

We heat up the whole glass again (not the earstud) and hold it vertically.
The heated glass flows a little downwards. If it tilts a little to a side, help with a tool of your choice to straighten it again. Make everything nice and warm again.



And now it‘s done!
Put it into your annealing kiln or your vermiculite.

I hope you had fun and that the tutorial is clear to understand. So don‘t be afraid of implosions! ☺

Lots of love, Regina