

Glass Working

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Interestingly enough, glass is not a solid crystalline material. It is instead, amorphous, and flows when heated. Cold hard glass is really just a super-cooled liquid, which is super cool. In class we worked with glass, starting out with glass rods of a specific color and heating them over a torch. We then dripped the molten glass over a clay rod which we also heated in the flame. It was challenging to keep the bead round and not asymmetrical, because the glass wanted to drip with gravity. Working with glass kindled a new respect for glass art. It is fascinating how even before the Romans people were working with glass, figuring out how to control the temperature and working with a fickle material without the convenience that modern day society provides us. Ancient Egyptians would wrap glass around mixtures of mud and dung instead of the clay rods to create beautiful vases. Far into the future, 16th century Venetians created historically significantly intricate glass pieces. There was a shortage of wood, and they had to learn to work with coal as fuel without tarnishing the glass. They had that challenge and still created absurdly complex and sophisticated pieces, often ending up with crystal clear glass art.

