**Collectible Beads: A Universal Aesthetic**

What makes a bead collectible?

-made of rare materials

-made of costly materials; this is tied to the level of technology such as glass making.

-Emotional associations

-Age and provenance-some beads are up to 40,000 years old and made by Cro-Magnons.

Many anthropologists have had a bias against these small, low value
but most numerous human artifacts that are found are sort of the small change of history.

**Africa**

Slide # 1 (page 8): these beads
represent the highest art of Mauritanian beadmaking. Using
ground and washed glass, gum Arabic and spit they are refused in
small clay kilns. Made since 1200 AD, they resemble European trade
beads, and are worn by women in their hair. Africa never developed
hot glass technology until the late 20th century when it was introduced as a way for Africans to make a living.

Slide # 2 (page 12): Stone beads of Gneiss and glass simulants (third
strand.)

Slide # 3 (page 14): Agate & Jasper from Mali. Various African
cultures used lapidary techniques and used metal tools.

Slide # 4 (page 14): Amazonite and Scorzalite.

Slide # 5 (page 18) Beads from Ghana and Nigeria: from the top:

Powder glass beads, glass coraI simulant, ostridge egg shell and
land snail shell disk beads, Terra-Cota beads, shell pendant, gneiss,
Aluminum.

Slide # 6 (page 20): Bodum bead from Ghana powder glass bead.
Note use of preformed decorative units and darker glass used to form
the core. This is the most advanced African Glass technology.

Slide # 7 (page 36): Amber and Copal beads from Morocco. Amber
is a prized material and much traded in Africa. Note repairs to
beads using silver. Beware there is also much use of imitations such as
plastics.

Slide # 8 (page 37): Mauritanian plastic "amber", carnelian
(probably imported from Germany) polychrome glass (From Venice)
and locally fabricated silver beads.

**China & Taiwan**

This is second most prolific source of beads. The Chinese were first to
use glass for adornment - at least that have been found so far. Due to
the political situation very little has come to light in the West. Personal
adornment was banned by the Communists and confiscated for
recycling (glass & metals} particularly silver and gold.

Slide # 1 (page 54): these are ancient Jade and other hard stones – from the Han Dynasty.

Slide # 2 (page 55): Stone beads of agate, carnelian and serpentine used for Toggles and pendants. Toggles are used on the Chinese version of Netsukes as stops to hold pockets.

Slide # 3 (page 56): Reproductions of Warring States (473-256 BC) or
early Han Dynasty beads made by the Chinese state as there are so few originals. Most outside of museums are reproductions or fake, as the sale of originals are banned.

Slide #4 (page 56): Stratified horned compound glass eye bead from the Warring States Era, is among the most complex and wee made beads in the world.

Slide # 5 (page 57): Glass Eye Beads, late Warring States - early Han dynasty.

Slide #6 (page 58): Counterweight pendants of Court necklaces, Glass simulants instead of stone.

Slide # 7 (page 58): More counterweights from Court necklaces. Note the range of skill in carving of details by lapidary methods (quartz sand, water and bamboo.)

Slide # 8 (page 58): Wound glass is lamp worked. Note the range of soft and variable colors and translucence of old Chinese glass.

Slide # 9 (page 65): Cloisonné and enamel beads pre-WW II, are copper, glass, gold overlay. Note the range of craftsmanship.

Slide # 10 (page 66): Wood and clay beads covered with Kingfisher
feathers are unique to China.

Slide # 11 (page 66): intricately carved and pierced Ivory.

Slide # 12 (page 67): Cinnabar, mercuric sulfide lacquer built up in
layers over a wood base and carved. The black has soot added
to lacquer. The earliest are from the 13th century. Now they are
machine made and carved.

**Japan, India, Himalayan States,
Thailand, Philippines & Indonesia**

All of these countries traded Beads, styles and technologies, so there will be many similarities.

Slide # 1 (page 74): Japan, whales tooth dyed, and several glass
simulants. Some were also dyed green.

Slide # 2 (page 74): Formosa, glass simulated chevron Ojime beads.
Chevron beads came from Venice and were traded far and wide.

Slide # 3 (page 75): Korea, glass.
Slide # 4 (page 75): Japan, gold lost wax cast Ojime bead. Note
exquisite detail.

Slide # 5 (page78): Vermeil beads from India, antique and very rare.

Note fine repose work on the fabricated beads.

Slide # 6 (page 80): Himalayan
Countries acid etched agates and carnelians called dZi beads and
much prized by collectors. It can be hard to tell old from new reproductions.

Slide # 7 (page 81): Tibetan Pendant with dZi beads, jadeite, pearls, precious stones and glass.

Slide # 8 (page 83): India, opalized
wood that has had patterns bleached into it- the technique is no longer known.

Slide # 9 (page 84): Thailand, glass and stone. Thai glass has a greasy appearance.

Slide # 10 (page 86): Philippines, etched shell.

Slide # 11 (page 86): Onyx and glass heirloom beads.

Slide # 12 (page 88): Bali, these beads show a high level of craftsmanship but were produced with a very low level of technology.

Slide # 13 (page 88): Java, 12th - 13th century, fabricated from sheet gold with some granulation.

Slide # 14 (page 89): Indonesia, beads of bone and glass.

**Middle East**

Home to the earliest civilizations, the Middle East cultures developed
the most important bead
technologies in stone, faïence, and glass. Due to millennia of trade, conflicts, boundary changes, and migrations of peoples it can be hard to pin down the makers. There is much faking of these beads today, collectors beware!

Slide #1 (page 96): Afghanistan agates cut in forms to show off their lovely patterns.

Slide # 2 (page 102): Ancient beads from the Middle East of shell, amber, alabaster, MOP, steatite, jet, white hardstone, hematite, bronze, lead, glass and faïence.

Slide # 3 (page 106): Ancient Egyptian faience.

Slide # 4 - 5 (page 112): Ancient glasses from Afghanistan.

Slide # 6 (page 112): Glass from Turkey made up until 1300 AD.

Slide # 7 (page 114): Ancient Syrian Eye bead from 300-800 BC.

 Slide # 8 (page 129): Moroccan hair ornaments of coral, amber, copal, glass simulations, and shells.

Slide # 9 (page131): Yemeni coral & silver. Note intricate work done with minimal technology.

**Americas**

The ancient craftsmen of the Americas were superior in tools
and methods. Due to the relative ease of providing food and shelter
these people were free to develop technical solutions that we barely
duplicate today.

Slide # 1 (page 140): Peru, orange Spondylus shell and MOP beads.

Slide # 2 (page 141): Tiahuanaco-Warri Inlaid beads of feline heads
(jaguars) using Spondylus “she", MOP, and greenstone.

Slide # 3 (page 142): Colombia, amber, stylized birds.

Slide # 4 (page 144): Mayan jadeite. Note high polish.

Slide # 5 (page 145): Mexico, jadeite/met diorite.

Slide # 6 (page 147): Colombian quartz and carnelian. They had no
metal tools and used drilling, pecking, sawing, incising, and
gouging with wood, bamboo and sand. Period 600-1600 AD.

Slide #7 (page 156): Colombian gold, lost-wax casting using
beeswax and invested in a mix of clay and charcoal.

**Europe**

Beads were made in Europe as early as Cro-Magnon man 40,000 years ago. Given the long history and dense populations, trading, changing borders, migrations of entire cultures, and exchanges of technology, the Continent is
a swarm with archeological sites yielding large numbers of beads.

 Slide # 1 (page 158):

Southeastern Europe, glass eye beads, 600-400 BC.

Slide # 2 (page 158): Ringperlen: Celtic beads, La Tene period -200
BC. Backlit these beads are nearly transparent.

Slide # 3 (page 160): this is a Murano, Venice, Italy, 1850-1870 Sample book. Beads have been made here since the Roman Era, and heavily traded to Africa, all over Europe and the Middle East and Asia, and later to the Americas. Murano is an island in Venice, where the rest of the town is safe from fires used in
glassmaking. Glass workers inherited the right to work glass,
but were not permitted to leave-under penalty of death- to protect
knowledge of the processes for making the wide variety of highly
colored and intricately designed beads and the monopoly. They set the pattern for many other artists to try to copy, and they still produce beautiful beads today.

Slide # 4 (page 164): Germany, Idar-Oberstein has been cutting
stone since before the rise of Rome. This slide shows Agate beads with a pendant of Dry Head agate. Now Idar-Oberstein cuts only premium materials as most stone beads are
now cut in Hong Kong, Taiwan, India or China. Idar-Oberstein now is best known for faceting and carving stone.

Slide # 5 (page 169): Venetian made beads used in the fur trade
by the Hudson Bay Co. The same color and style of beads can be
found in the Northwest USA traded to the Indians by Russian traders.

**Contemporary Collectables**

Many old sources such as Murano and Czechoslovakian glass
makers are still producing in an amazing diversity of styles:

-There is a newer trend to real artistry in glass bead making by individual artists-these can be expensive but will probably always be valuable.

-Bali and Thailand are again making very beautiful silver beads.
And there are new materials being used to make beads:

Slide # 1 (page 196): Polymer Clay which comes in fantastic colors is
relatively easy to work and can be baked in a toaster oven, and be
wildly non-traditional.

Slide # 2 (page 219): It can also be used to simulate materials that are
very expensive or endangered. Another new material is colloidal metals such as silver, gold, copper and bronze that is suspended in clay. It can be used to make very nice metal beads, and can now be fired with a small hand torch, so
one does not need a kiln. If you want to collect beads there are a couple of admonitions that it would be wise to keep in mind:

- Know your beads- learn what is typical of the beads you like; there are many fakes in circulation. The library or the internet can yield much information on spotting the real thing versus fakes. Know the value of the real things so you
aren't tempted and overpay for them.

-Collect what you like and enjoy them by displaying and or wearing them. Beads are adornment and it is a shame to keep them from seeing the light of day.

There is a Bead Society that also has numerous resources for learning about beads. There is also the Bead Museum in Prescott, Arizona where they have
an impressive collection on display. Ornament Magazine is a quarterly journal and every issue is filled with articles on both new and old beads.

Slide #3 (Book cover) and the go to book: A universal Aesthetic:

Collectible Beads by Robert K. Liu.

All the pictures you've seen tonight
are from this book.

Questions?

Thank you!