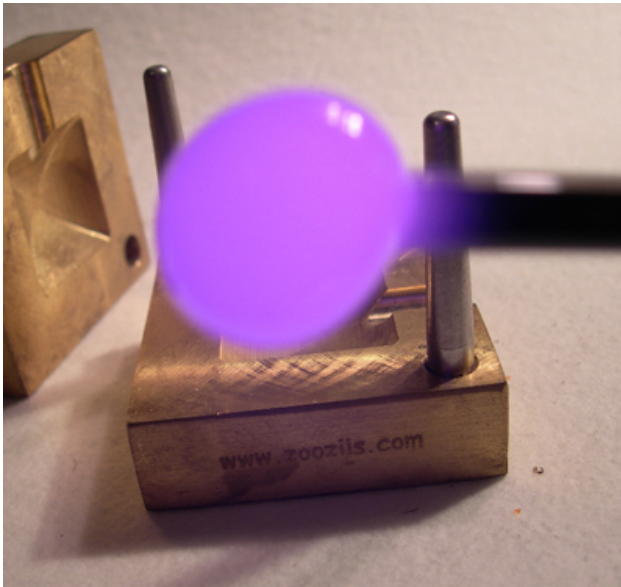
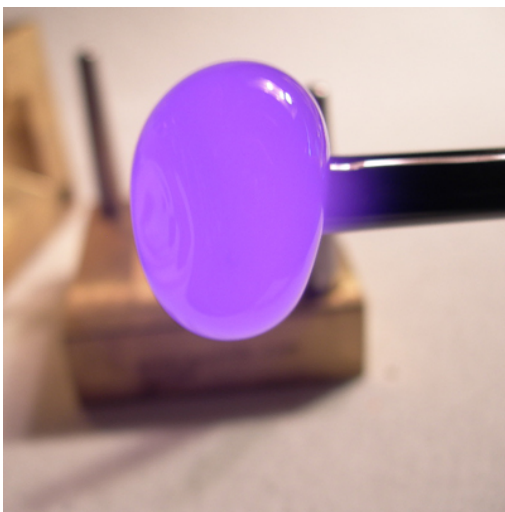


Off Mandrel Pillow Tutorial

First, I make a "baby bead", small bead, donut bead... I do this so that I can use it for the loop, instead of making the loop after I make the pendant. I use this also to make a button shank for the same purpose. You can skip this part if you prefer to make your own loop using any other loop technique. Once you make the bead, put it in the kiln with the mandrel hanging out as much as possible so that you can avoid burning yourself on the mandrel later when you take it out to attach your bead. Now, for the Pillow... Form a gather on the end of your rod of glass. You want the gather to stay "centered", so that you have optimal control. The Gather needs to be about 3/4" around (just an estimate).



To help make the glass go into the corners easier I marver the curve off the end. You can also use your "mashers" to form a "cube" out of the glass. I find that simply taking the curve off works fine, but do whatever is easier.



Add heat after marvering and press. You are concerned with this initial press that side A (side away from the rod) is shaped well. I don't worry much about Side B (side near the rod), at this point. You'll have time for that later. NOTE: Do not worry about pressing more than once. I often press up to three times to get just the perfect shape. You just need to heat between pressings, and keep the join of the rod warm too, so it doesn't crack and drop your Pillow.

First Press



Second Press



Third Press



Note: I pressed three times to show you the progression. I did not add any glass. I just heated the gather in between pressings and allowed the press to redistribute the glass.

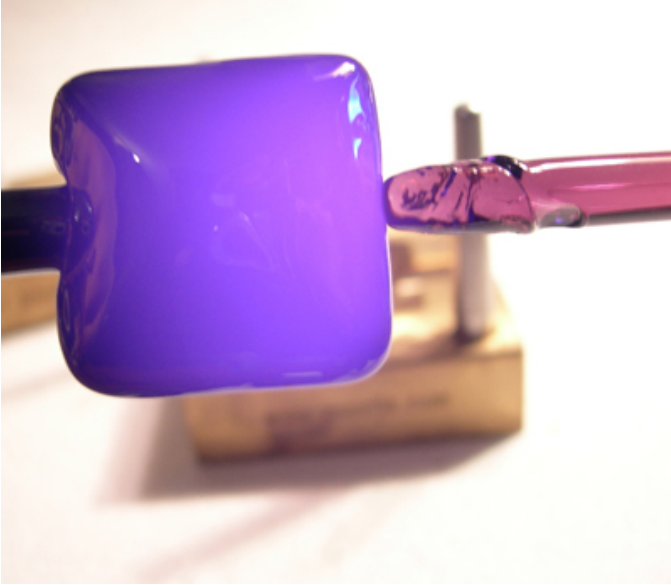
"Punty Up!" Okay, now we need to punty...

Wait! "What's a Punty?" A punty is a temporary handle. It can be made of several possible things. 1) A rod of the same color glass you are making the pillow out of. If you go this route make sure that you only do it if you are using a transparent color. If you use opaque for this purpose, it can get floppy easily...if you are using Moretti. Uroboros and Bullseye are stiffer so they work okay, even if they are opaque. 2) A rod of transparent glass of the same COE...this is the solution if you are using Opaque for your pillow, and are using Moretti glass...since transparent glass is stiffer it would work fine. 3) A rod of Boro 4) A thick mandrel (1/8") or Stainless Steel Chopsticks.

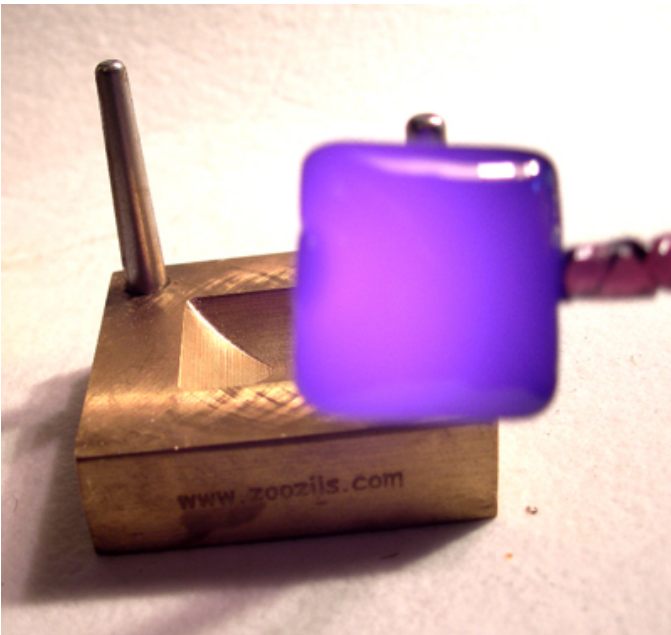
So, now that you've selected your punty...let's "punty up!"...

Heat the tip of your punty and the spot that you are going to punty...I heat the spot on the pillow, then I heat the punty, so that the spot heat on the pillow cools a little before I join the punty. The reason for this is because this join is a delicate "dance". If the pillow and the punty are too hot then when they join they will fuse...If that happens it will be hard to remove your temporary handle later. However, if you do not heat them enough, then it can fall off while you are working.

NOTE: While you are working you need to keep the whole process over your work bench. You do not want that pillow to fall off and land in your lap. A great additional protection is to wear a leather apron. Just be careful and work smart. Glass is Pennies a Pillow, and your burn is not worth the savings.



Now that you have your punty in place you can remove the original rod of glass. That is done by cutting it in the flame. It will probably leave a bump on the edge of the pillow. That is fine. You can marver that flat before you press again, which is what I did here.



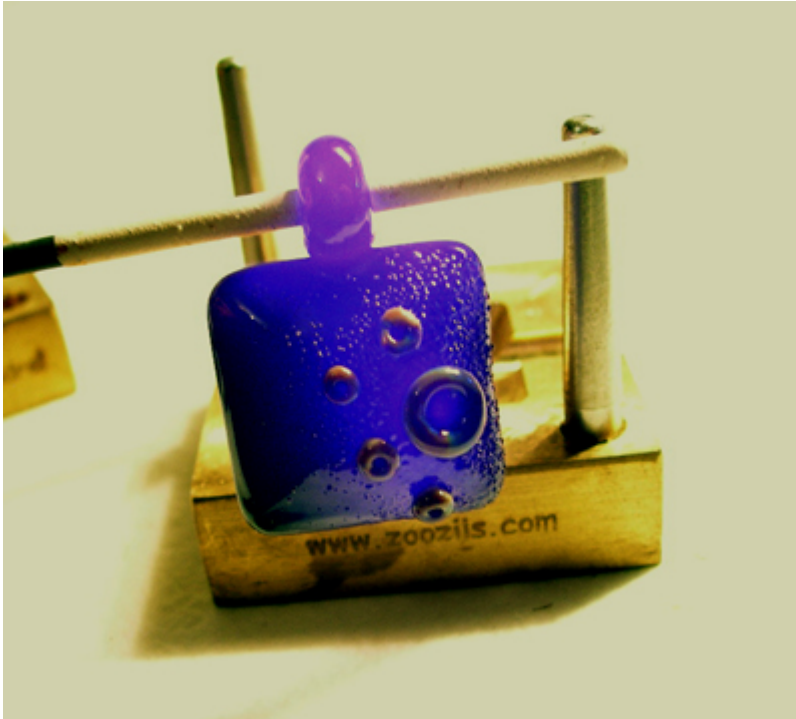
Be sure that you keep your punty warm so that it doesn't crack in the pressings and so that it doesn't release the bead before you want it to. Heat the pillow, concentrating the heat on Side B, not your well shaped Side A, as you do not want to lose that really great shape you already formed. Now you can press again. Once you are pleased with your overall shape. You can add your loop.



Adding your loop...Now, you can make a loop several ways, I find that I like the baby bead method. Take your mandrel from the kiln and heat the baby bead again (Make sure you do not hold the mandrel where it's hot!), so that it's warmed throughout. Now, spot heat one point on the baby bead and one point on the pillow. Then press the bead and the pillow together and heat the join so it's a stable join.



You don't need the punty anymore so we'll take that off. I remove it tapping it on my torch... I just tap the marver and that vibration should cause it to pop off the pillow. If it doesn't, which a common reason for this is if you let the join get too hot so it fuse, you can melt off, and just marver to get the shape back. Not preferred, but much better than losing the pendant if it looks good at this point.



I decorate at this point, then pop it in the kiln.

Remember: BE CAREFUL! Do not take risks, that will allow for that pillow to drop in your lap.