

Featuring the latest from the
International Society of Glass Beadmakers

The 2016 Gathering of the ISGB



by Jeri Warhaftig

In July 2016, the International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB) will convene in New Orleans, Louisiana, for The Gathering, the organization's annual conference. Building upon the success of last year's conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the ISGB is planning an exhaustive glass offering that will include, among other things, the usual fun and informative glass presentations; a diverse assortment of pre-conference workshops, tours, and sightseeing opportunities; and a one-day glass, bead, and jewelry bazaar.

The ISGB is the leading organization for the promotion, education, and appreciation of the art of glass beadmaking for wearable, sculptural, and functional art. Its mission states the organization's goals "to preserve the rich and diverse traditions of the art of glass beadmaking and glassworking techniques; promote educational initiatives and professional development; and encourage the innovative use of complementary mediums among artists and craftspeople." New Orleans' old-world style offers the perfect place to pursue the ISGB's mission because of its strong foundation in and long-standing appreciation for the arts. The New Orleans art scene thrives via countless galleries, performance spaces, and museums. Gathering attendees will have the opportunity to engage with its vibrant artistic community and to experience the diverse and plentiful glass-related opportunities that the city offers.

*Kathryn Guler working at the torch. Photo by Tamara Benton.
Photo of finished pendant by the artist.*

Conference Events

There are a wide variety of events at the conference to satisfy many interests. It is an opportunity for attendees to network with each other, gallery owners, collectors, technical vendors, and suppliers. It also gives technical vendors an opportunity to showcase new equipment, tools, supplies, and glass. Through demonstrations, lectures, panel discussions, and more, attendees can learn new techniques and business skills to further their glass knowledge.

The 2016 Gathering will also be the inaugural venue for a juried exhibition entitled *Hands of the Maker II: Collaboration*, the second in what will be a series of *Hands of the Maker* exhibitions. *Hands of the Maker: Wearable Treasures* was the first installment in the Hands series of exhibitions. For that show, individual artists were invited to submit finished wearable pendants and brooches plus black-and-white images of the maker's hands in the process of creating submissions. The exhibition then featured the selected artists' pendants and brooches alongside the images of their hands at work. The show highlighted the breathtaking capability of an artist's hands and the vast array of physical gestures necessary to give birth to an accomplished piece of art.

Breaking Tradition

The theme of the upcoming 2016 New Orleans Gathering is *Breaking Tradition*. This newest installment of the Hands series invites submissions that are collaborative and that the artists believe evidence in some way the conference theme. Artists are encouraged to break from traditional methods, materials, and designs. Or perhaps it will be the very nature of the collaboration that breaks with tradition. Artists are invited to explore new and different ways of sharing their work with one another on the journey to a finished work of art. Both wearable and functional art will be included.

As in *Hands I*, *Hands of the Maker II: Collaboration* will shed light on the pivotal role of the artist's hands. In order to encourage more daring and difficult collaborations, the ISGB announced the call for entries for *Hands II* well in advance of the release of other details about the conference. This was intended to enable artists at a geographical distance to communicate and to facilitate their collaborations on finished wearable and functional items. Once again, submissions will need to include black-and-white photographs of the makers' hands at work on their submissions.

The Role of a Maker's Hands

Hands are an artist's canvas. They help bring a story to life, capture a moment in time, and evoke the spirit of the creative process. Hands perform mundane tasks such as tying shoes, completing gestures, and enabling us to speak through the physical expression of finished art.

Photos from the 2015 *Hands of the Maker* exhibition reveal that the pendants and necklaces selected came from all over the world and displayed great beauty and diversity. In this next iteration, the *Hands II* exhibition will evidence the more complex undertaking of a joint pair of hands and the harmony that can be achieved when hands successfully collaborate on a finished expression of art.

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Submissions for Hands of the Maker II: Collaboration must be received by March 15, 2016. All collaborators must be ISGB members. Additional details about entry and more information about the organization can be found at www.ISGB.org.

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