

Bug

Design, Fabrication, and Text by Lewis Wilson

Photography by Robin Aragon

My career as a flameworker has been an interesting one for me. Up to this point I have worked with boro for over thirty-six years, soft glass for over sixteen years, and with Uroboros 96 COE glass rods for about two years.

Over the years I have taken three long workshops with Lucio Bubacco, one of which was at his studio in Murano, Italy. His style of working soft glass has influenced me greatly. I got used to working with a *porticana* (rod warmer) and also working on a Lucio torch made by Carlisle. The rod warmer and Italian-style torch help greatly with soft glass sculptures. It was Lucio who mentioned something as simple as using a transparent puntty rod for the puntty, because transparent soft glass rods are stronger.

I made this bug with Uroboros glass using the Lynx part of my Mirage torch and also *not* using a rod warmer. I wanted to take away the two things that make soft glass sculpture easier—the Italian torch and a rod warmer. I wanted to present this tutorial in a way that most anyone with any torch might want to work with this glass. From the first time I worked with it myself, I was amazed at how it was not “shocky” like some other non-104 soft glass. This 96 COE glass was easy to work with. I could even say it acted a little bit as if it were boro. Just a little. But the ease of working with it made for a faster and more laid-back experience.

You still need to back-fire the 10 mm rods a bit and every now and then throw some heat into the body of the piece. But overall, the glass is fun to work with and lets you pull and stretch it out as well as letting you work with it a little bit longer, not cooling too fast the way boro does. You could work this with a Nortel Minor, a Carlisle Mini CC, any GTT, or even an old-school National—just work it back in the flame.



Uroboros Glass Studio

96 COE Glass Rod

10 mm Black

6 mm Transparent Color

Tools and Materials

Marver Small Knife

Tweezers



The rods are available in 6 mm to 7 mm rods. Glass artists are also pulling 10 mm rods, maybe in five or six colors. Make sure that you get some of this glass. It is easier and faster to work with. You can build up a nice size sculpture starting with a 10 mm rod.

The black rod that I worked with reduced a little, and I liked the look of it on the body. You will see that the thinner legs do not reduce. Work farther out in the flame with more oxy in order to not reduce.

1

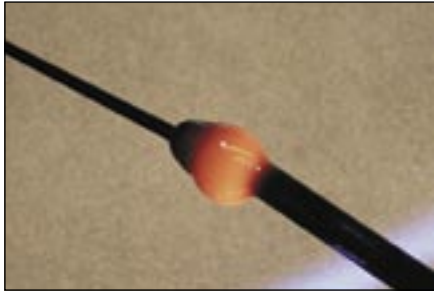
Start the bug by using a 6 mm rod as a punty to a 10 mm rod of black.



This black tends to reduce if you are not careful. I worked it close in and *wanted* the reduction, because it added to the bug's look. Be sure to punty with a transparent color rod, as it will have more strength to punty than an opaque rod.

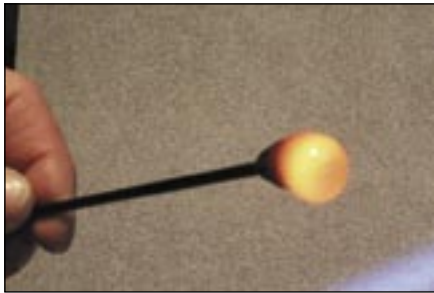
2

Condense the rod to make the abdomen.



3

Burn off the glass.



4

Marver the glass to flatten it on two sides.



5

Apply surer heat on the side.



6

Lay on your marver paddle and let the abdomen sink down.



This will give a natural curve on the top.

7

Heat the midline of the back of the bug and use a small knife to make a line.



Make two more lines on either side.

8

Heat and flatten the end away from the punty.



9



Heat the face of the flattened area, and, from the middle, wipe and pull glass to the left side.



Repeat for the right side. Both these wipes should leave you with a rounded front to the bug.

10

Turn the bug over and lay in a line lengthwise.



11

Lay in a side line toward the front, then lay in two more lines.



You now have the areas on the bottom where the leg will come from.

12



Put a small gather of glass in the front left area, then add three more small gathers of glass to the bottom of the bug.



There should be four "dots" where legs will be added.

13

Add the first segment to the bug's leg while looking down on the back.



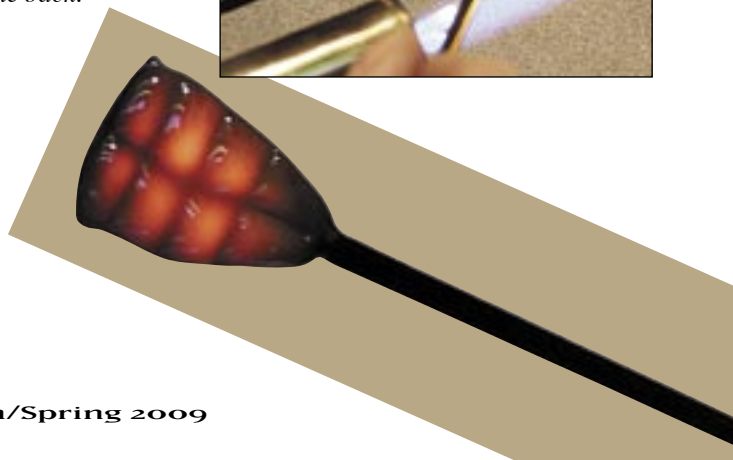
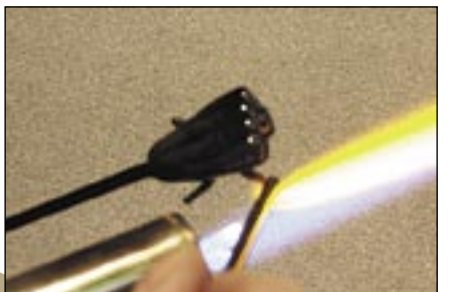
14

Hold the bug upside down to add the second leg segment.



15

Add the third segment while looking down on the back.





16

Add the next leg with bottom looking up.

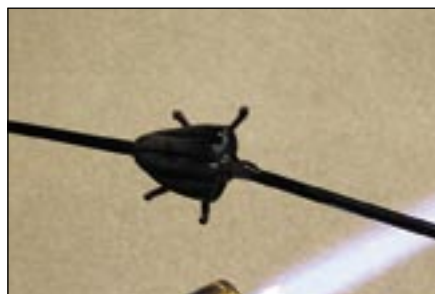


20



17

Add a small ball of glass to the front of the bug, flatten, and punty.

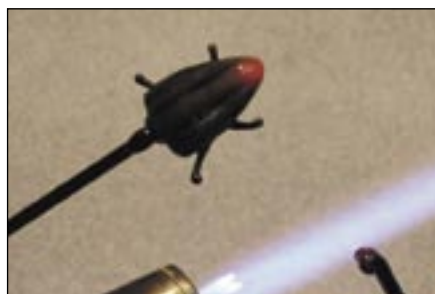


Using a transparent rod, punty onto a leg and pull a curved section of glass to make the new punty be inline with the bug body.



18

Burn off the original punty.



Change the punty to the left hand (if you are right-handed).

21

Heat up a small rod of black, add a gather to the front of bug, and flatten.



19

Pull out the bug tail point.



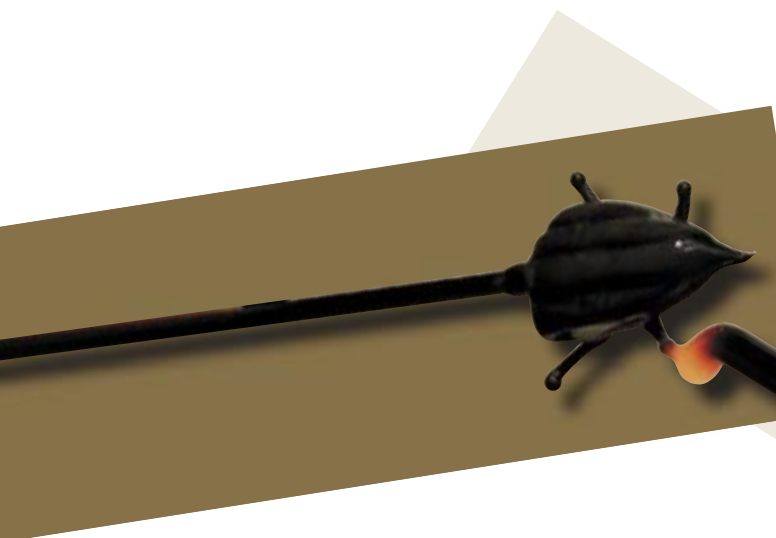
22

Heat a 10 mm rod of black in the back-fire while hitting the top of the bug body to keep it warm.



23

Attach glass to the front of the bug.



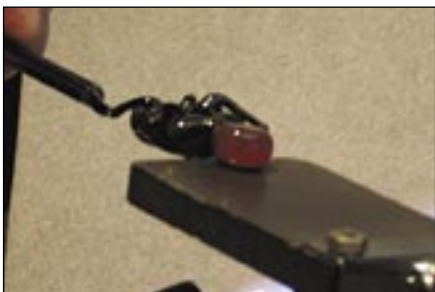
Burn off a section one-fourth the length of the abdomen and flatten on the top and bottom on the marver.

24



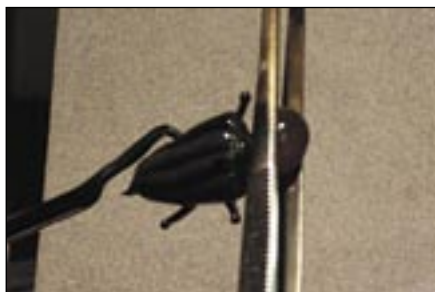
Flatten the back side.

25



Use tweezers to flatten the back side more.

26



Flatten the front with the marver.

27



On the small torso section, add a "pointy" pull low and to the right.

28



29



Do the one on the opposite side high and to the right.



It may be easier to do this one upside down.

30



Add the last point to the left so that now there are four pointy parts.

31



Add a "dot" to the left underside and the right underside.

32

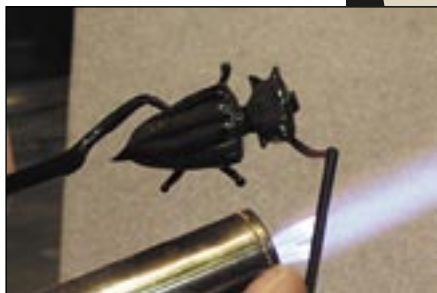


Add a gather to front of the bug, then flatten.



33

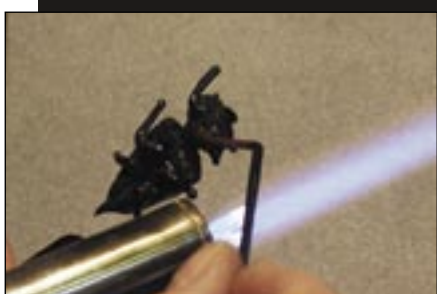
Pull the leg segment while looking down on the bug.



34



Add the next leg segment with the bug upside-down.



The second photo shows the bug as seen from above with all six beginning leg segments.

35

Heat up the 10 mm rod while letting the side fire keep the front of the bug warm.



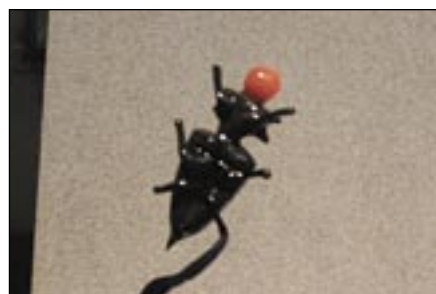
36

Add a gather to the front of the bug and let the gather hang down to elongate it.



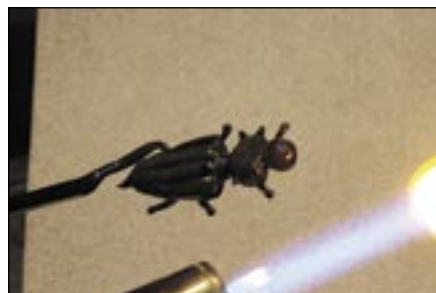
37

Turn the bug upside down and let the gather fall into the thorax.



38

Add another gather.



39

Flatten on the gather's side to shape.

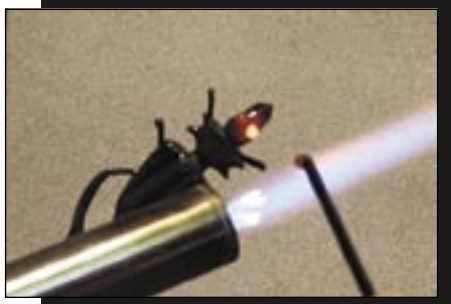




40



Add a small dot gather on the top of the bug head on the right side and on the left side.



Now you have two spots where the antennae will be attached.



41



Pull the antennae "strut" on the left side and then on the right side.



42

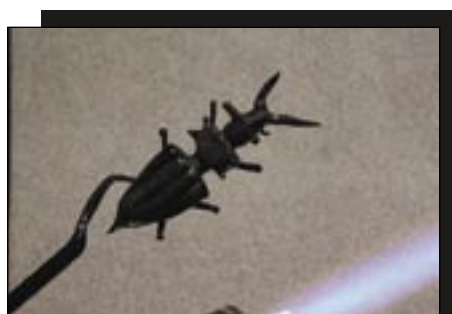
Add the feelers.



The bug has two downward-facing, big, wide feelers. Do the first one on the right side looking down on the bug. Then do the second one, which is pictured here with the bug upside down.



43



Here are top and bottom views of how the bug should look.



44

At this point a small crack will appear on the punty.



Just be aware and do not worry.

45

The bug should look like this from the side.



46

Heat a small gather of glass while also heating the end of the front right leg segment.



47

Pull down the next leg segment.



48

Place the bug on graphite to check the alignment.



49

Turn the bug upside down, pull down the left front leg segment, and check again on the graphite for alignment.



50

Burn off the punty.



51

Add the two back leg segments and place on the graphite for alignment.



52



Make a practice bug foot.

These four photos show how I do a practice bug foot. First pull a length of glass at an angle to approximate the end of the last bug foreleg or segment. This is a practice foot. After burning off the end of the rod, let it cool a bit, then add a very thin stringer.

The amount of glass in this stringer will be melted into a ball. By pulling the glass into a stringer and then melting it in, the ball will have definition when a few balls are lined up. They will not all run together. The fourth photo here shows the stringer melted into a ball. It has retracted back to the ankle. Practice this technique three or four times, and on the last ball add a couple of small "claws."

53



Add the right foot and then the left foot and finish all of the feet.

GPQ



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Lewis C. Wilson founded Crystal Myths in 1975 in Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida. The company was devoted to the production and sale of small sculptures made of Pyrex Brand sodium borosilicate crystal. Lewis chose the company's name from the subject matter of those sculptures, mostly mythological creatures.

The company went on the road participating in art shows up and down the eastern seaboard, and in 1981 Mr. Wilson brought Crystal Myths to New Mexico. There Indian dancers, Southwestern items, wildlife, and sea creatures in larger sizes were added to the product line. In the 1990s, Crystal Myths was incorporated and Lewis' wife Kathleen added her product line of fused glass jewelry. Their well-known how-to videos followed, and the Wilsons' daughter Jennifer joined the company with her own line of small sculptures and humorous beads.

Crystal Myths also operates a school, the New Mexico Glass Adventure, which is devoted to the instruction of bead, button, and marble making in Moretti glass as well as the creation of Pyrex glass sculptures. In 1996 the company also began promoting bead shows, and the Best Bead Show in Tucson was their first entrée into this venture.