

MEMORIES IN BEADS

FOREVER, BORNE BY THE FRAILTY OF THREADS

AN EXHIBIT ON THE OCCASION OF
BEAD EXPO 2007, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



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EXHIBIT CATALOG

LACIS MUSEUM of LACE and TEXTILES
2982 ADELIN STREET, BERKELEY, CA 94703

THE LACIS MUSEUM OF LACE AND TEXTILES

LMLT was established in October of 2004, as the legacy of Kaethe Kliot who was the spirit of the Lacis Textile Center and Retail Store, a haven for the textile community and all involved in virtually every aspect of the textile arts... a place where she provided support, encouragement and knowledge to all. This spirit remains, after her untimely passing in 2002, in the Museum which encompasses all that she loved.

This spirit is best exemplified by comments received from those she touched:

...whenever I needed to recharge my spirit, I knew that a visit to Lacis would do the trick...

...her sense of the appropriate, that just-rightness which made Laces the alluring treasure trove that draws us in...

...her enthusiasm was contagious and she always wanted to share it. She was the consummate teacher...

...she had a mission to share everything she knew...

...she did what she loved and her passion and enthusiasm was always evident...

...Kaethe was the sort of person one takes with them – part of who I am is because of her...

...She will be remembered for many things; for me it will be a sense that all is possible...

The core of LMLT is the lace and textile collection of Jules & Kaethe Kliot, representing 40 years of dedication to the preservation of the finest of human handiwork. The collection includes thousands of specimens from pre-Columbian Peru, the finest laces from the 17th c. European courts and examples of the machine laces exemplifying the 19th c. industrial revolution. An extensive library, focusing on lace, textiles and costume with over 10,000 items of books, patterns, articles and other ephemera, and a respectable collection of the related tools of the textile crafts is included in the resources of the Museum.

LMLT is dedicated

- to preserving the spirit of Lacis as created by Kaethe Kliot as a place of support, knowledge and encouragement for all involved in any aspect of the textile arts.
- to preserve lace and textiles of all cultures from all periods including the patterns and tools of creation, the objects of their purpose and the literature associated with these objects.
- to provide a resource center for research and documentation of these objects.

This current exhibit explores beadwork in its many forms as it serves to satisfy our need for decoration in all forms of our tangible objects whether for our person or surroundings. The permanence of the bead is challenged by the frailty of its supporting structure creating the dynamic interaction between permanence and transience.

The bead in all its glory as a symbol of permanence is destined to frailty by its dependence on a supporting structure.

Ironically, some of the most beautiful beaded garments were fashioned from silk chiffon. What better reflection of the desperate exuberance of the twenties than a fragile network of glass and steel beads, held together by shreds of shattered silk? Pounds of beads stitched into deco swirls and fringes doomed these dresses to an early demise, but what fun to wear them and dance the night away!



It is hard to imagine any time in the evolution of man when adornment was not part of his exposure to the world. It is perhaps this need that truly separated man from his evolutionary predecessors. The bead surely must have been the initial ornament, as beauty was an integral part of his vision. A pierced shell or a special stone was noticed and separated from its world, destined to be shared, becoming part of his conscious attire.

There is no culture where the bead is absent. Sometimes used for currency, sometimes for prayer, and at all times for ornament, the bead in its many forms and materials continues to mesmerize us with its infinite possibilities.





Ornament could be a single bead, a string of beads, an applied bead or a sea of beads of infinite variety to express the need to create. These hard, small, pierced elements typically outlived their supporting structure, and only through our imagination can we surmise the glory that once was.



Simple strung bead ornaments would evolve to embroidery with beads and then would encompass every other needle technique as quickly as they developed. Knitting, crocheting, weaving, netting, braiding, tatting, and all forms of lace making would soon incorporate the bead in recognition of its unique attributes of beauty, timelessness and glory.



6,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley, beads of lapis lazuli, agate, turquoise, carnelian, pearl, amber, coral, and precious metal, as well as wood, shell, faience (glazed ceramic) and glass, were used as ornaments, in rituals, and were even buried with their owners to

accompany them in afterlife.

In Europe, beads of shell and stone have been found in excavations of prehistoric sites, and precious stone and metal beads are depicted in paintings, mosaics and



frescoes from the classical period.

Extravagant personal ornamentation fell out of favor after the Roman period, but beads were still used for ornamentation of ecclesiastical vestments and accoutrements and for counting prayers (the English word “bead” derives from the Anglo-Saxon word “bede,” or prayer). Gemstone beads were also worn as amulets for their reputed healing or protective properties.



In the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, beads reclaimed their place as personal ornaments, including glass beads from glass-makers on continent and other lands, as well as pearls, amber, coral, and precious stones and gold from the New World. Glass beads were also used as trade in newly opened global markets.

Before the 19th century, lavish jewelry and ornament proclaimed the wearer’s social status. Following the revolutions of the late 18th century, however, a note of austerity was introduced into the world of fashion, and precious stones



and metals gave way to less ostentatious glass, semi-precious stones,



and steel.

Venice was long the primary European center for the manufacture of glass beads, but by the 18th century glass making also flourished in Bohemia and Moravia, as well as in Germany and France. By the 19th century glass beads had become affordable to all social classes, and this availability was reflected in their increasing popularity, not



only for jewelry but for other forms of needlework as well. Early

glass seed beads were formed by hand, in minute sizes. Bead size increased as production methods changed, colors (and consequently designs) became coarser, and new bead finishes were introduced, many of which were prone to fading.

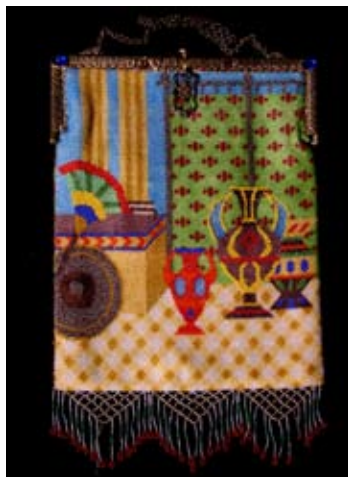




During the Franco-Prussian war, women were encouraged to donate their gold jewelry to the war effort, and cut-steel and iron jewelry came into vogue, sometimes engraved with the motto “Gold gab ich fur Eisen” – “I gave gold for iron”. Steel beads were used extensively in embroidery and in handbags, and remained fashionable into the 20th century. Round, square, oblong or faceted, often chemically dyed in gold, silver, bronze, or, rarely, other



colors, steel beads were used to decorate clothing and were worked into bags that were often stitched to complimentary metal frames.





a rise in the popularity of jet (a black variant of lignite) for mourning jewelry, especially after the death of Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, in 1861. Jet beads were used extensively as decoration on the black garments dictated by the stringent codes

of mourning etiquette.

In the 20th century, small glass seed beads were sewn onto silk and chiffon dresses, or strung into the fringes that made dancing the Charleston so much fun. Few of the fragile fabrics could bear the weight of hundreds of steel and glass beads, and most often we are left with only strands of beads and crumbs of col-



orful silk to evoke the memory of the glittering fashions of the Jazz Age.



Beads have decorated handbags for hundreds of years. Since the gown of a medieval lady had no pockets, she carried her necessities in a purse hung from her girdle, often stitched with rich designs. Elizabethan men and women carried sweets or perfume in whimsical bags shaped like animals, fruits, or nuts, many embellished with embroidery and beads. In the 18th century, fashionable ladies carried their handwork with them to parties and concerts in reticules that often displayed their abilities with a needle, including elaborate beadwork.



Beaded bags of the early 19th century were almost always knitted, with tiny (1,000 beads per square inch) glass or metal beads. In the early 19th century the beaded bag was often made in the shape of a reticule, a drawstring bag, decorated with



3 horizontal bands of closely knitted beadwork, usually incorporating floral or scenic motifs.

Also popular were small flat round purses of leather or beadwork, called “sovereign” purses, designed to hold English gold coins. Flat round chatelaine purses were also made in this shape, to be suspended by a hook from the belt, as well as Tam O’Shanter purses: soft round beaded bags shaped like a tam, gathered at the edge and attached to a metal purse top.



In the mid-19th century, crocheted and knit-



ted miser’s bags were hung from the belts of both men and women. These were fashioned from a long tube, with a small hidden slit in the center to squirrel away coins or dispense them one at a time. Sliding rings added to the security of the contents, and the ends were often of different shapes,

colors, or ornamentation, so the owner could distinguish them more easily



BEAD TECHNIQUES

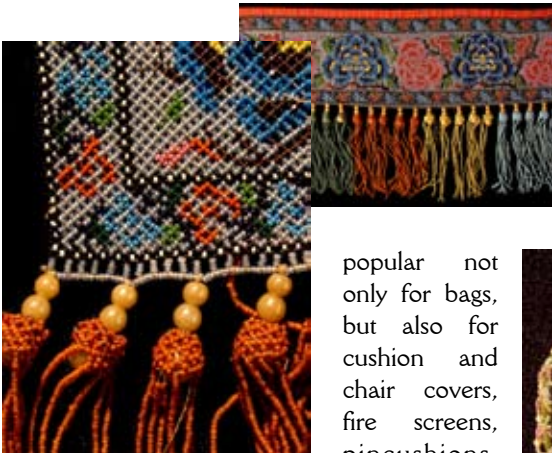
Beads can be incorporated into fabric in a number of ways.

THREADING AND STITCHING

The earliest beaded fabrics were made by stitching single beads onto fabric. Strands of beads can also be couched to fabric. This method has been used since at least the 12th



century, and is commonly found in native American beadwork. Beads can also be attached to fabric using tambour embroidery, and this is now the usual method for creating bead and sequin embroidery.



Beads can also be used in needlepoint. In the 1850's Berlinwork patterns were often worked using beads and woolen threads, or solid beads. Such work was

popular not only for bags, but also for cushion and chair covers, fire screens, pincushions,

wall pockets, and other decorative pieces.

Beads can also be strung into a network (a fes-





strands, sometimes twisted loops, and sometimes intricate netting work.

ton), rather than being sewn onto a ground fabric. Particularly interesting are bags made by stringing seeds (for example, apple seeds or melon seeds) along with seed beads into a network. Stringing is also used to create decorative tassels and fringes, sometimes simple



KNITTING

Beads are incorporated into knitted fabrics in two ways. In bead knitting, beads are pre-strung onto the working thread according to a graphed chart, and a bead is knitted into each stitch to create a solid beaded fabric.



In beaded knitting, beads are worked into some stitches to form a pattern of beads against a knitted ground.





In this case, beads may be pre-strung and pulled up as needed, or they may be slipped over individual stitches with a hook.

CROCHET

As with knitting, beads pre-

strung on the working thread can be worked into every stitch to create a solid beaded fabric (bead crochet), or on only some stitches to create a beaded pattern against a solid crochet ground (beaded crochet).



LOOM BEADING

Beaded panels woven on a loom are often fashioned



into framed handbags, but loom-woven panels also appear as hangings or decorative



pieces. The loom is warped with threads, and beads are picked up on a threaded needle according to a charted pattern and pushed up between the warp threads. The needle is then passed through the beads again on top of the warp threads, holding the beads securely between warp and weft threads.

