



The  
**BEAD FORUM**  
Newsletter of the Society of Bead Researchers

Issue 86

Spring 2025

## Art and the Ancestors: Beads and Tradition in Contemporary Native American Art

Michele Hoferitz

The art of Native American beadwork is a vibrant thread that connects centuries of cultural expression to the present. Today's Native artists engage in meaningful ways with beadwork, both honoring traditional techniques and innovating new forms that address contemporary themes. By utilizing ancestral materials, motifs, and methods, artists assert their cultural identities and reframe and affirm Native presence in the modern world. Museums, including the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe, have increasingly highlighted this dynamic interplay of tradition and innovation, reflecting the continuing relevance of beadwork to Native American life and art. Local museums around the country are following this trend, and contemporary Native American art is often featured in exhibits and collections.

Beadwork has long served as a form of storytelling, status expression, and spiritual practice across Native North America. Glass beads, introduced through European trade beginning in the sixteenth century, were quickly incorporated into indigenous artistic traditions, merging with earlier uses of natural materials such as shell, bone, and porcupine quills (Dubin 1999). Over time, beadwork became a hallmark of Native regalia, spiritual objects, and personal adornment, coded with meaning and history.

Contemporary Native American artists have not abandoned traditions; instead, they have embraced and reinterpreted them in innovative and provocative ways. For example, Teri Greeves (Kiowa) stitches intricate beaded narratives onto sneakers, merging modern American footwear with ancestral storytelling forms. Her use of traditional bead techniques to decorate nontraditional surfaces exemplifies how artists negotiate the space between past and present. By including traditional designs and motifs in her modern work, the

history and values of past cultures are brought forward to the present, establishing balance in an ever-changing cultural landscape.

Similarly, Marcus Amerman (Choctaw) has pushed beadwork into the realm of pop art, producing portraits of celebrities like Janet Jackson and icons such as Superman rendered entirely in beads. Amerman's work challenges assumptions about Native art as a static tradition, demonstrating that beadwork can operate within globalized, mass-mediated visual cultures while remaining deeply rooted in Native experience. Amerman's exceptional and striking beadwork can be found in museum collections not only in North America, but in the UK as well, at the Rainmaker Gallery in Bristol. (Rainmaker Gallery 2025). Amerman describes his beadwork as "a combination of Western realism and Indian color and geometry," representing the blending of cultures that Native Americans experience, sometimes within their own families (Whitman 2019).

The selection of materials remains a crucial element in these contemporary practices. Many artists choose to work with glass seed beads, a material historically traded between Europeans and indigenous nations, and now imbued with Native meaning and interpretation. Others, like Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock), combine beads with leather, shells, and quills, drawing attention to the continuity of indigenous material culture even amid centuries of colonization and change (Heard Museum 2018).

Beyond materiality, traditional designs and motifs also resurface in contemporary beadwork. The "floral revival" movement, for instance, finds expression in the work of artists from Great Lakes and Plains traditions who reinterpret nineteenth-century floral patterns originally developed during the fur trade era. Artists such as Karen Ann Hoffman (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin) incorporate these motifs into sculptural

## The Bead Forum

beadwork forms that engage with contemporary issues, from environmental stewardship to Indigenous sovereignty (National Museum of the American Indian 2021).

For many Native American artists, beadwork is a way to connect to their ancestry through the designs as well as the practice. Jula Harjo is a bead artist who grew up in Oklahoma as part of six individual tribes that are all part of her ancestral and cultural heritage. She sees her beadwork as a metaphor for the blend of cultures in her life in the same way that her community reflects the multiple individuals and traditions that have come together to shape it. Jula interacts with other Native American artists, and feels that sharing their pieces is like sharing parts of who they are, ultimately reflecting a larger connected community (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma 2025)

Museum exhibitions increasingly acknowledge these layered meanings. The exhibition *Stretching the Canvas: Eight Decades of Native Painting* at the National Museum of the American Indian included several artists who integrate beadwork into their broader multimedia practices. Such exhibitions emphasize that Native art is not confined to ethnographic pasts, but is an evolving field engaging with the complexities of modern life.

Importantly, museums have begun to involve Native curators and artists directly in the interpretation and presentation of beadwork. This shift ensures that beadwork is not merely displayed as artifact, but as living art. Emil Her Many Horses (Oglala Lakota), curator at the National Museum of the American Indian, remembers his great-grandmother who used horse motifs in her art. His designs include horse heads as a tribute to the Native traditions of his ancestors (Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian 2021).

Many museums that have featured traditional Native American artifacts in their collections are reimagining their spaces as cultural materials are repatriated to tribes through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The Jones Archaeological Museum in Moundville, Alabama, for example, recently installed an exhibit called *Learning from the Ancestors: Historical Influences on Contemporary Native Art*, emphasizing ways that art can connect the past to the present. Included in the exhibit are works from artists from Tribal Nations of the Southeastern United States, including artists from

Alabama, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

One of the artists featured in the exhibit is Laretta Weaver (Cherokee), who lives in the MOWA Choctaw community near Mobile, Alabama. Weaver, who helps students learn about their cultural heritage, is organizing a Choctaw dance team, and is a well-respected bead artist. Her contribution to the Moundville exhibit includes dance regalia that she created for her daughter (Figure 1). The exhibit also includes a beaded gorget



Figure 1. Choctaw dance regalia by Laretta Weaver. Photo courtesy of Jones Archaeological Museum.

and bag entitled *The Embrace* by Brit Reed (Choctaw descendant) (Figure 2) whose work blends traditional techniques with color theory to create dramatic visual impact.

Award-winning artist Rena Smith (Chickasaw) has studied traditional arts and designs and makes authentic Chickasaw pucker moccasins and other regalia items. Her beadwork reflects ancestral wisdom and connection to nature. Her *Green Corn Ceremony Moccasins* on display at Moundville are made of buckskin and embellished with traditional cosmic symbology (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Detail of The Embrace by Brit Reed. Photo courtesy of Jones Archaeological Museum.

Educational programs, such as the Indian Arts Research Center's artist fellowships at the School for Advanced Research, provide Native artists with access to historical beadwork collections, facilitating a dialogue across generations. Fellows often cite these opportunities as transformative, allowing them to study traditional techniques firsthand and incorporate historical knowledge into their contemporary practices (School for Advanced Research 2025).

Even the spaces of performance and fashion increasingly showcase contemporary beadwork. Events like the *Santa Fe Indian Market* and *Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto* feature artists who use beadwork to blur the lines between fine art, performance, and wearable design. Okuma, for example, creates fully beaded high-fashion garments that have appeared in *Vogue* and museum exhibitions alike, reinforcing that beadwork is both timeless and trendsetting (Allaire 2021).

Ultimately, contemporary Native American beadwork is a testament to cultural resilience. By grounding their art in traditional materials and designs while addressing contemporary realities, Native artists



Figure 3. Green Corn Ceremony Pucker Toe Moccasins by Rena Smith. Photo courtesy of Jones Archaeological Museum.

demonstrate that beadwork remains a potent, living language representing the vitality of Native nations.

The museums and institutions that recognize this dynamism play a crucial role in reshaping public perceptions of Native American art. Rather than framing beadwork as a static relic, contemporary exhibitions increasingly highlight its role as a vibrant, evolving tradition. In doing so, they honor the artists who, bead by bead, stitch together past, present, and future.

*NOTE: This article was drafted with the assistance of AI tools.*

## REFERENCES CITED

### Allaire, Christian

2021 A Bird With Character Inspired These Beautiful, Beaded Boots, *Vogue*, <https://www.vogue.com/article/jamie-okuma-beaded-boots-bird-design>

### Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

2025 Our Stories Make Us More: Jula Harjo. Electronic document, <https://togetherweremore.com/artists/jula-harjo>

### Dubin, Lois Sherr

1999 *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment: From Prehistory to the Present*. Harry N. Abrams, New York.

### School for Advanced Research

2025 Native Resident Artist Talks. Electronic document, <https://sarweb.org/artist-talks/>

### Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian

2021 Healing Through Native Creativity: Artist Conversation with Emil Her Many Horses, Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian. Electronic document [https://americanindian.si.edu/collections-search/object/yt\\_f7yktbuFb1E](https://americanindian.si.edu/collections-search/object/yt_f7yktbuFb1E)

### Whitman College

2019 Marcus Amerman '81 Pushes Boundaries of Native American Beadwork. Whitman College website. <https://www.whitman.edu/whitman-stories/marcus-amerman>

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## Society News

### SBR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

The SBR's annual business meeting was called to order at 11:09 A.M. PST on 3 April 2025 via Zoom by President Elliot Blair. Also in attendance were Editor Alison Carter and Secretary-Treasurer Alice Scherer.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### President's Report

This has been a busy and eventful year for the Society of Bead Researchers, with Alison Carter taking over as editor of *BEADS* and longtime Secretary/Treasurer Alice Scherer announcing that she won't be serving another term. Amidst all this change, I have continued to promote the Society and attempt to recruit new members. Notably, this has included a return to having an SBR presence in the bookrooms of various archaeological conferences. In 2024, this included staffing a table (with the assistance of Newsletter Editor Michele Hoferitz) at the Southeastern Archaeological Conference (and at the Society for Historical Archaeology conference in January 2025). At both conferences, I tried to sell journal back issues and recruit new members. I particularly tried to recruit new student members, emphasizing the SBR student conference travel fund and the new research fund (available to all members). The sale of back issues was slow at both conferences, but at both I had some success in recruiting new members for the Society.

#### Editor's Report

This year marked the transition to digital-only publication of *BEADS* with Volume 36 being published digitally in January 2025. The process of updating the *BEADS* archive website at the University of Oregon is progressing, with nearly all the archives having been posted online. To see the new look and explore many of our publications, go to <https://beadresearchjournal.org> and click on Archives. In the coming months, we will be completing the posting of archives, the uploading of color plates from the older issues, shifting to a new server to host our journal, and updating the articles with a DOI (digital object identifier). Having a DOI will give each article a permanent web address and make

them easier to search for and find online. I also hope we can have the journal indexed in Scopus, a database that helps with the visibility of the articles and would enhance our academic credibility. For those wishing to have a print copy of *BEADS*, we've also made a print-on-demand option available at lulu.com. We plan to make out-of-print issues available for purchase on lulu.com. Visit our [Current Issue](#) page on our website to purchase either a digital or a hard copy.

#### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Secretary-Treasurer Scherer reports that the SBR had 159 paid members in 2024; in 2023 we had 175, for a loss of 16. Our members are mostly from the United States (106) and Europe (29), but also from Canada (17), the Middle East (3), Asia (4), South America (1), and Australia (4). Institutions make up 13 of our members and bead societies/museums 3. There were also 9 comp'ed or traded memberships.

Total revenues for 2024 were \$11,781.21 \* and total expenditures were \$6,152.42 \*

As of 31 December 2024, the balances in the various SBR accounts were:

U.S. Bank account (Portland) US	\$	13,992.04
PayPal account	US \$	1,269.05
Vanguard account**	US \$	25,792.27
TD-CT account (Canada)		(CD\$0)
<b>CLOSED 31 December 2024</b>	US \$	0.00
Petty Cash		(CD\$0.00+US acct \$207.03)
	US \$	207.03

<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>US \$ 41,260.39</b>
	<b>-US \$ 3,563.30</b>

Minus expenses outstanding  
as of 31 December 2024

<b>Balance</b>	<b>US \$ 37,697.09</b>
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#### TOTAL MONIES ON HAND

<b>END 31 December 2024</b>	<b>US \$ 37,697.09***</b>
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\*The revenue and expenditure totals above include credits (\$33.84) and refunds (-\$33.00).

\*\*The amount as noted above for our Vanguard account does not include \$3,021.83 in unrealized loss

which is reflected in the 31 December 2024 Vanguard statement balance of \$22,770.44. (A full accounting of Vanguard monies is available upon request.) \*\*\*This sum includes monies received from the Bead Society of Greater Washington when they closed their Society's books. Those funds, \$5,353.03 in total, have been earmarked for grants to be given by the SBR for Student Travel Awards and Research Grants for researchers. Please see our website for more details: [www.beadresearch.org/sbr-funding](http://www.beadresearch.org/sbr-funding).

## Summary Report

<b>Balance End of 2023</b>	US \$ 32,133.25
2024 Income	+US \$ 11,747.37
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>US \$ 43,880.62</b>
2024 Expenses	-US \$ 6,119.42
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>US\$ 37,761.20</b>
Credits	+US \$ 33.84
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>US \$ 37,795.04</b>
Refunds	-US \$ 33.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>US \$ 37,762.04</b>
Reconciliation*	-US \$ 64.95
<b>Balance End of 2024</b>	<b>US \$ 37,697.09</b>

## NEW BUSINESS

### Time to Update Our Bylaws

Blair has begun the process of reviewing the SBR bylaws and making recommendations for updates, which hasn't happened since 1998. Many of these reflect changes in technology in the last 30 years (e.g., switching the language for meeting notifications from telegrams to email!), but there also may be some more substantive recommendations. Keep an eye out for a vote on these suggested updates sometime in 2025.

### A New Series of Bead Webinars has Launched

On March 29, we held our first *BEADS* webinar with a talk by Lars Larsson, based on his recent article about tooth pendants in Volume 36 of *BEADS*. There were 62 people who registered to attend the webinar; of those, 15 participated. Dr. Larsson did not wish to have the webinar recorded, but Carter plans to have future webinars recorded and posted online for future viewing. Visit our Webinars page for more information and a link to a recording of our April webinar by Elliot Blair, SBR President. Carter is soliciting suggestions for future webinar topics and aims to hold them periodically

throughout the year. Contact her at [acarter4@uoregon.edu](mailto:acarter4@uoregon.edu) with ideas and suggestions.

### Updates Made to Author Guidelines

Carter has updated the "Information for Authors" guidelines to reflect our new digital-only publication model, the updated peer-review process, recognition of recent changes to NAGPRA laws in the United States, and the encouragement of responsible publication of research on looted materials. Those new guidelines can be found under the [Submissions tab](#) at beadresearchjournal.org and also beadresearch.org on the [Information for Authors](#) page. As the peer-review process has changed, the Editorial Advisory Committee is no longer necessary and will be dissolved. As always, Carter encourages authors to reach out to her about potential manuscripts for submission.

### Proposed Membership Fee Structure Change

A number of changes will be taking place as regards our membership structure and pricing. Due to increased printing and shipping costs, our primary membership level will continue to only include a digital copy of the annual journal. And, while many people are perfectly happy having only a digital copy, many others would prefer a hard copy, especially if they have all the earlier volumes in print.

Fortunately, due to the efforts of editor Alison Carter, print copies of all new issues (and eventually older, out-of-print issues) will continue to be available through print-on-demand publishing. While copies will be available to anyone via direct purchase, it also allows us to offer an extra benefit to those members who pay more for their memberships. Before now, we had nothing extra to offer them besides our undying appreciation

Toward that end, a new membership level has been created that allows for a Digital+ print copy membership. The Sustaining rate of \$50 has been eliminated and replaced with the Digital+ level at \$60. HOWEVER, given the cost of shipping out of the country, this is only available for folks in the countries where Lulu.com has printing and shipping facilities. Those include the United States, France, India, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada. As Lulu adds countries, we will expand this list. Members worldwide who choose to support the Society at the Patron or Benefactor level will also receive both digital and print copies of the journal, unless they request otherwise.

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Our new membership levels (all in US \$) are:

- Individual, Worldwide, Digital Only \$25
- Individual, U.S., France, India, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada, Digital+ \$60
- Patron, Worldwide, Digital+ \$100
- Benefactor, Worldwide, Digital+ \$150

On completion of publication of *BEADS*, a dataset of digital+ members will be extracted and uploaded to Lulu.com. An order will be placed and on payment from the SBR, the copies will be printed and mailed by Lulu.com.

## Secretary-Treasurer Position Update

Alice Scherer's sixth three-year term as Secretary-Treasurer has wrapped up. She continues to perform the duties of Secretary-Treasurer as the search for a new officer to replace her continues. We are currently in discussions with someone who expressed interest in taking on the role. Scherer has set a date of June 15 when she will definitely step down. Once someone has been chosen and voted on by the membership, she will continue as Sec-Treas Emeritus to aid with the transition.

## President Position up for Election

President Elliot Blair has agreed to run for one more three-year term, so as to assist with the transition to new leadership. Should someone wish to also run for President, they should contact Editor Alison Carter to express their interest in being considered.

There being no other new business, the meeting was adjourned by the President at 1:37 P.M. PST.

--Respectfully submitted by  
Alice Scherer, Secretary-Treasurer 3 April 2025

## SBR Student Conference Travel Award Recipient

Julian Hirsch, a Ph.D. candidate in Archaeology at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is our third travel award recipient. His paper, "The Ritual Lives of Carnelian Beads in Late Chalcolithic Context," was presented at the ASOR Annual Meeting held in Boston in November of 2024. It proposes that three cloth bundles containing hundreds of carnelian beads and thousands of glazed steatite beads, uncovered in The Cave of the Skulls in the Judean Desert of Israel,

attest to the curation of these beads both during the time of their use, and with regards to their specialized deposition. As few carnelian beads can be found elsewhere in the Late Chalcolithic, the paper argued that The Cave of the Skulls was, in fact, understood as the sole "proper" place in the southern Levant for "retiring" these ornaments.

## Volunteer Opportunities

With Karklins out of leadership and Scherer transitioning out and Blair, Carter and whoever will be the new Secretary-Treasurer increasing their level of involvement, it's time for other members of the Society to help with the work of running the Society. Some possible opportunities for volunteering include:

- Chairing the grants committee, for grants to students attending conferences and grants to researchers;
- Providing website management assistance to the webmaster (Scherer) and perhaps ultimately managing our web presence;
- Setting up the SBR's Lulu.com store for back issues of our journals that can be linked to from our archive site, [beadresearchjournal.org](http://beadresearchjournal.org);
- Membership chair, to help increase membership and communicate regularly with members to remind them to renew (notifications go out four times yearly);
- Publications sales fulfillment, for the two issues of *BEADS* we will continue to sell hard copies of; and
- People to write articles for the *Forum* (this is DESPERATELY needed, so don't be shy. We need you).

## Herewith We Express Our Gratitude

A special thank you to those members who've helped ensure the financial well-being of the SBR through their Sustaining, Patron, or Benefactor membership monies. We are grateful for your help. Our list below runs from 24 May 2024 through 22 April 2025.

- **Sustaining (\$50+):** (2024) Gail Bumala, Jamey Allen, Andrea Turchetto, Alan Curtis, and Laure Dussubieux.
- **Patron (\$100+):** (2024) Pavanni Ratnagopal, Rochelle Marrinan, (2025) Kathy Anderson.
- **Benefactor (\$150+):** (2024) Jeff Mitchem and Joan Eppen.

# SBR Treasurer's Summary Report for 2024

**OPENING BALANCE AS OF 1 JANUARY 2024 .....** ..... **\$32,133.25**

**INCOME .....** ..... **\$11,747.37**

**Annual Dues**

Individual-North America .....	2,875.00
Individual-Overseas .....	860.00
Digital-Only (for 2023) .....	25.00
Sustaining .....	750.00
Patron .....	200.00
Benefactor .....	1,300.00 ..... 6,010.00
Journal Sales (Back Issues) .....	966.00
Investment Income, Vanguard .....	846.17
Donations .....	3,646.55
Miscellaneous: Prepaid Postage \$278.65 .....	278.65

**EXPENSES .....** ..... **\$6,119.42**

**Journal Production (Volume #36)**

Layout .....	1,110.00
Printing (print-on-demand at Lulu.com).....	229.60..... 1,339.60

**Postage/Shipping**

Journal (Annual issue) .....	95.89
General (Back issues and other) .....	955.81 ..... 1,051.70
Website (Domain Names, Web Hosting, Site Maintenance) .....	1,411.95

**Office Expenses (Stationery, Supplies, PO Box Rent)**

Secretary-Treasurer.....	454.23
Editor .....	0.00 ..... 454.23

**Miscellaneous**

Cost of Selling (eBay) \$38.68, PayPal, \$224.23 .....	262.91
Academia.edu Premium Fee (Editor Emeritus) .....	267.03
Oregon Corporation Filing Fees.....	90.00
Conference Fees (SHA \$350, SEAC \$50) .....	400.00
Business Lunch (Editor, Secretary-Treasurer, Graphic Artist) 92.00	
Student Travel Award (Julian Hirsch) .....	750.00 ..... 1,861.94

**Preliminary Closing Balance as of 31 December 2024 .....** ..... **\$37,761.20**

Credits \$33.84 minus Refunds (\$33.00) ..... +.84

Minus Reconciliation ..... (64.95)

**FINAL CLOSING BALANCE AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2024 .....** ..... **\$37,697.09**

## SBR Proposed Budget for 2025

<b>OPENING BALANCE AS OF 1 JANUARY 2025 .....</b>	<b>\$37,697.09</b>
<b>INCOME .....</b>	<b>\$ 9,500.00</b>
Annual Dues	
Individual memberships (Digital Only, \$25 each) .....	2,500
Individual (Digital+, \$60 each) .....	3,000
Patron .....	600
Benefactor .....	800 .....
Journal Sales (Back Issues) .....	1,200
Investment Income, Vanguard .....	850
Donations .....	200
Prepaid Postage .....	350
 <b>EXPENSES .....</b>	 <b>\$11,624.00</b>
Journal Production (Volume #37)	
Layout .....	1,200
P-o-D copies for Patrons, Benefactors, Officers .....	550
P-o-D copies for Digital+ members .....	1,250 .....
Postage/Shipping (general orders) .....	750
Website (Domain Names, Web Hosting, Maintenance) .....	600
Insurance .....	200
Office Expenses (Stationery, Supplies, PO Box Rent)	
Secretary/Treasurer .....	500
Editor .....	75 .....
Grants	
Student Conference Travel Awards (2) .....	1,500
Research Assistance Fund Grants (2) .....	4,000 .....
Miscellaneous	
Financial Charges (Bank, PayPal, Square, Venmo) .....	250
Cost of Selling (Ebay) .....	30
Academia.edu Premium Annual Fee .....	299
Oregon Corporation Filing Fees .....	70
Conference Bookroom Table Fees .....	350 .....
 <b>PROJECTED CLOSING BALANCE AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2025 .....</b>	 <b>\$35,573.09</b>

— Respectfully submitted, Alice Scherer, Secretary-Treasurer (25 March 2025)

## In Memoriam



**Margret Carey (1929-2025)**

Margret Carey passed peacefully on 23 April in London, just short of her 96th birthday. She was born in Dublin while her father was working at Trinity College, although she also had Irish blood on her mother's side. She grew up in England.

Despite her profound deafness, Margret gained a degree in Archaeology and Anthropology at University College London and had a successful career. From 1953-1961, she was a staff member of the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum and later worked there as a volunteer. Among many projects, Margret carried out ethnographic fieldwork among the Bemba in Zambia in the early 1970s and later curated an exhibition of their material culture at the Museum of Mankind.

Margret had a keen interest in beads and beadwork, especially of sub-Saharan Africa, and wrote two booklets and several articles related to those subjects and region. She also attended numerous bead conferences and symposia worldwide. The second author was her traveling companion on many of these trips, which she remembers fondly.

Margret was one of the founding members of the Bead Study Trust and served as its assistant treasurer and then as the editor of its newsletter. She was also a longtime member and supporter of the Society of Bead Researchers and served on its Publications Committee from 2007-2022.

Margret was a kind, intelligent, and knowledgeable person known and loved by many, all of whom will miss her greatly. Rest in peace.

Karlis Karklins and Stefany Tomalin

You can help keep *The Bead Forum* interesting and useful by submitting short articles on your bead research, as well as announcements of new publications and relevant conferences or symposia. Send to [beadforumnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:beadforumnewsletter@gmail.com).

Next deadline:  
1 September 2025

## Conferences & Exhibits

### Akwesasne Beadwork Conference

**Mohawk Akwesasne Reservation**

**19-25 September 2025**

The annual conference, first held in 2009, features talks and activities led by beadworkers and researchers on the history of beadwork. All lovers of beadwork are invited. For more information, contact Dolores Elliott at [Dolores@stny.rr.com](mailto:Dolores@stny.rr.com)

### *Beaded Birds in Haudenosaunee Art*

**Roberson Museum, Binghamton, New York**

**7 March to 31 October 2025**

An exhibit of Iroquois beadwork featuring images of birds. Over two hundred pincushions, purses, and wall hangings will be included. For more information, contact Dolores Elliott, [Dolores@stny.rr.com](mailto:Dolores@stny.rr.com)



*19th century Mohawk Shelf Valance.*

*Photo courtesy of Dolores Elliott.*

### *Radical Stitch*

**Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art**

**500 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN**

**12 April – 3 August 2025**

One of the largest exhibitions of contemporary Native bead art in North America, featuring approximately 100 works by Indigenous artists from the U.S. and Canada. The exhibit explores themes like pop culture, food sovereignty, and Indigenous Futurism, highlighting the transformative power of beadwork. <https://eiteljorg.org/radical-stitch-eiteljorg>

### *Indigenous Beadwork of the Great Lakes: Selections from the Illinois State Museum Permanent Collection*

**Illinois State Museum**

**502 S Spring St, Springfield, IL**

**Through 6 September 2025**

This exhibition features stunning examples of beadwork by Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) artists from the turn of the 20th century. It explores beadwork as a form of resiliency and a method for expressing and maintaining one's identity. <https://www.illinoistatemuseum.org/welcome-ism-lockport-gallery/lockport-exhibitions.html>

### *Learning from the Ancestors*

**Moundville Archaeological Park**

**634 Mound State Parkway, Moundville, AL**

**Through 31 May 2025**

This exhibit explores regalia, including clothing, adornments, and jewelry, with historic and modern examples from Southeastern Native American peoples such as the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek. <https://moundville.museums.ua.edu/2025/01/13/learning-from-the-ancestors-historical-influences-on-contemporary-native-art>



*Detail of gorget in The Embrace by Brit Reed.*

*Photo by Michele Hoferitz.*

# Recent Publications

## Arnott, Robert

2024 Crossing Continents: Between the Indus and the Aegean in Prehistory. In *There and Back Again: Afro-Eurasian Exchange in the Neolithic and Bronze Age Periods*, edited by Marie Nicole Pareja and Robert Arnott, pp. 7-18. Archaeopress, Oxford.

There is growing evidence that beads of various materials and other commodities were reaching the Aegean region from South Asia as early as the 3rd-2nd millennia BC.

## Babalola, Abidemi Babatunde

2024 The Ile-Ife Glass Bead Series: Classification, *Chaîne Opératoire* and the 'Glass Bead Roads' in West African Archaeology. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 59(4):527-552; <https://doi.org/10.1080/0067270X.2024.2412945>.

The study of the glass beads and production waste excavated at Igbo-Olokun in southwestern Nigeria has revealed how the beads were made and how they relate to the early commercial networks in West Africa.

## Benz, Marion, Julia Gresky, Christoph Purschwitz, and Hans Georg K. Gebel (eds.)

2024 *Death in Ba'ja: Sepulchral Identity and Symbolism in an Early Neolithic Community of the Transjordanian Highlands*. Heidelberg University, Heidelberg; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381995609>.

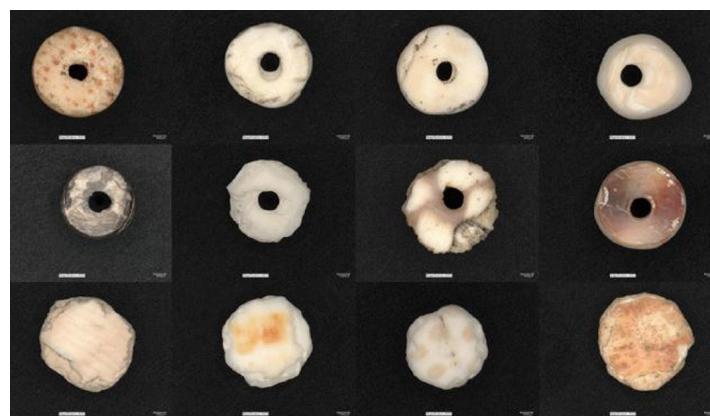
Contains several sections that deal with the beads, pendants, and other ornaments found in association with burials at Ba'ja in southern Jordan.



## Buffa, Dani

2024 Shellfishers' Insights into Ecosocial System Resilience in Southwestern Madagascar 1000 BP to Present. Ph.D. dissertation. Anthropology and Climate Science, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park; [https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/files/final\\_submissions/31712](https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/files/final_submissions/31712).

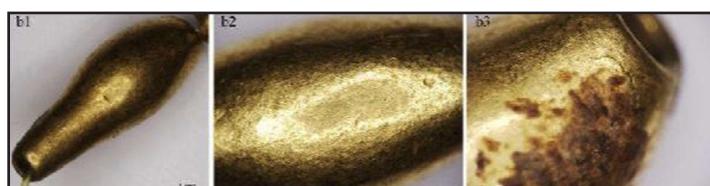
Chapter 3 explores temporal and spatial trends in shell bead production in Madagascar and how these trends fit into the larger Indo-Pacific world.



## Chen, Dian, Qingshuo Zeng, Chao Li, Baotong Qiao, and Wugan Luo

2024 Exotic Treasures or Local Innovation: Gold and Silver Beads of Han Dynasty Excavated from Nanyang City, Henan Province, Central China. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 161, 105903; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376079734>.

Analysis of glass beads decorated internally with gold and silver foil applied through foil-fusion revealed that the gold beads originated from different sources, whereas the silver ones likely originated from the Central Plains region.



## The Bead Forum

### Chua, Lynn, Swee Mun Lee, Ivan Djordjevic, and Dominic Low

2025 Investigating Deteriorated Glass Beads Containing Lead Arsenate in Peranakan Beadwork. *Heritage Science* 13, 34; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389283857>.

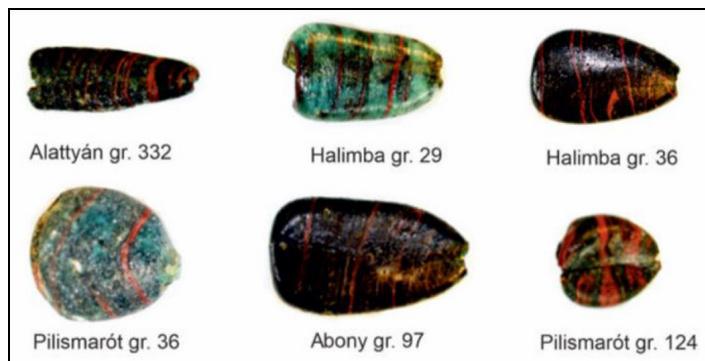
A whitish efflorescence on certain beads of 20th-century Peranakan beadwork is identified as lead arsenate, a toxic substance that may be harmful to those handling affected pieces.



### Fülöp, Réka

2024 Typological Analysis of Beads from Selected Late Avar Cemeteries. *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae* 2024:109-134; <https://www.academia.edu/126465942>.

Presents a classification system for glass beads of the Late Avar period which prioritizes the production technique as the primary factor, with formal characteristics considered secondary.



### García Sanjuán, Leonardo, Samuel Ramírez-Cruzado, Marta Díaz-Guardamino, José Antonio Lozano Rodríguez, Teodosio Donaire Romero, José Ángel Afonso Vargas et al.

2025 A Multi-analytical Study of the Montelirio Beaded Attires: Marine Resources, Sumptuary Crafts, and Female Power in Copper Age Iberia. *Science Advances* 11(5); <https://www.academia.edu/127352555>.

A profusion of disk beads made of shell, stone, and bone recovered from a *tholos* burial in southwestern Spain adorned garments worn primarily by women of high social significance.



### Gromman-Yaroslavski, Iris, Naomi Porat, and Daniella E. Bar-Yosef Mayer

2024 A Neolithic Technological Approach to the Production of Stone Beads: Insights from the Analysis of the Nahal Hemar Cave Assemblage. *Journal of Arid Environments* 225, 105255; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaridenv.2024.105255>.

An assemblage of stone beads from a site in southern Israel was analyzed to reconstruct the technology applied by artisans during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (9900-9400 BP). Eleven minerals were identified using SEM-EDS analyses, as well as portable XRF.

### Higham, C.F.W.

2024 Mortuary Rituals and Social Change from the Neolithic to the Iron Age in Thailand. *Asian Archaeology*; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41826-024-00094-8>.

Extensive excavations in Thailand have generated a record of how the dead were interred over a period of about three millennia. Shell beads predominated from the time of the late hunter-gatherers until the Iron Age, when beads made of carnelian, agate, gold, and glass seemingly replaced them.

### Laylander, Don, Eric W. Ritter, Harumi Fujita, and Andrea Guía Ramírez

2024 Shell Beads and Ornaments in Prehistoric Baja California. *California Archaeology*; <https://doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2024.2416349>.

The prehistoric archaeological record for marine shell beads and ornaments in Baja California sites is not

as extensive as for some other regions. Nonetheless, it does offer insights into the interpretation of several issues relevant to the peninsula's prehistory, including procurement practices, social organization, intercommunity exchange, and extra-peninsular links.

### Lifantii, Oksana

2024 Scythian Jewelry Meshes and the Problem of Their Interpretation. In *Situating Eurasia in Antiquity: Nomadic Material Culture in the First Millennium BCE*, Caspar Meyer, editor, pp. 256-271. MDPI, Basel; <https://www.academia.edu/123184801>.

Members of the Scythian elite in the North Black Sea region during the second half of the 5th century and throughout the 4th century BCE wore mesh-like and cross-chest decorations composed of gold or gilded silver tubes, beads, pendants, and buttons.



### Lü, Qin-Qin

2024 Natron Glass and the Silk Roads in the First Millennium BCE. In *Reimagining the Silk Roads: Interactions and Perceptions across Eurasia*, Julian Henderson, Stephen L. Morgan, and Matteo Salonia, editors, pp. 95-109. Routledge, Abingdon, UK; <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/95783>.

Mediterranean natron-glass objects, including glass beads likely made from Levantine raw glass, spread eastward, and a large number of these probably arrived in China through the Black Sea region and the Steppe around the mid-1st millennium BCE.



### Mărgărit, Monica

2024 Shell Adornments of the 6th-5th Millennia BC in the Romanian Lower Danube Area. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 54, 104436; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2024.104436>.

Reviews the ornaments from 22 settlements and 19 necropolises from various aspects: the raw materials and their sources of procurement, the *chaîne opératoire*, and the ways they were worn.

For more information about submitting an article for consideration in *BEADS: The Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers*, please visit our new journal website at [beadresearchjournal.org](http://beadresearchjournal.org).

## The Bead Forum

### Mattson, Hannah

2025 Reevaluating the Organization of Lapidary Production at Chaco Canyon. *American Antiquity*; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388789882>.

Presents an analysis of the various lapidary tools recovered from Pueblo Bonito, the preeminent great house in Chaco Canyon, northwestern New Mexico.



### Meighan, Clement and Elliot H. Blair (ed.)

2024 *Glass Trade Beads in California*. BAR International Series 3185; <https://www.barpublishing.com/glass-trade-beads-in-california.html>.

Documenting more than 400 varieties, this is the only treatment of archaeologically-recovered glass trade beads in California with substantial regional and temporal breadth. The study covers the period from early contact through the early 20th century.



### Mitchell, Peter J., Brian A. Stewart, Courtney Hopper, Genevieve Dewar, and Michael A. Schillaci

2024 Making Connections: Ostrich Eggshell Beads as Indicators of Precolonial Societal Interaction in Southeastern Southern Africa. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*; <https://doi.org/10.1080/0067270X.2024.2411138>.

In that the size of eggshell beads can be controlled and patently varies through time and space, the authors

employ it as another potential indicator of the existence and spatial extent of past social networks.

### Munisi, Neema C., Thomas J. Biginagwa, Edward Pollard, and Elgidius B. Ichumbaki

2024 Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on the Meaning and Consumption of Glass Beads in Ancient Kilwa Kisiwani, Southern Tanzania. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*; <https://doi.org/10.1080/0067270X.2024.2419781>.

Examines the cultural meanings and routine practices that shaped consumption patterns of glass beads in Swahili cities. Against the prestige goods theory that regards glass beads as elite goods and a symbol of power, the authors argue that function and cultural logic determined bead access and consumption patterns.

### Naso, Alessandro (ed.)

2024 *Amber for Artemis. Amber Finds from the Artemision at Ephesos*. Forschungen in Ephesos XII(7); [https://verlag.oeaw.ac.at/en/product/amber-for-artemis/99200888?product\\_form=5450](https://verlag.oeaw.ac.at/en/product/amber-for-artemis/99200888?product_form=5450).

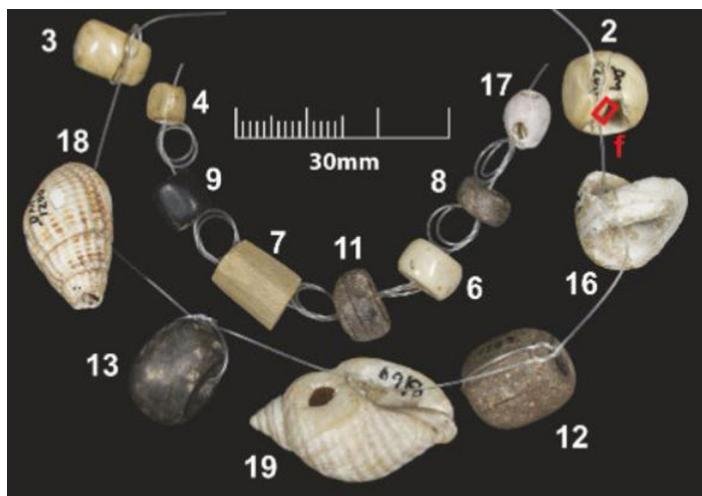
Presents a detailed study of the amber objects – including a variety of beads and pendants – recovered from the temple of Artemis at Ephesus in western Turkey. Sections deal with archaeological contexts and stratigraphy, typology, spectroscopic analysis, and amber in ancient literary sources. There is also a comprehensive catalog of the finds.



**Rowland, Jake Thomas**

2024 Beyond Symbols of Power: An Integrated Multi-scalar Study of the Life Histories of Middle Neolithic Elaborate Objects. Ph.D. dissertation. Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton, Southampton; <https://www.academia.edu/121713214>.

Chapter 4 explores the role beads and ornaments of various materials played in Middle Neolithic society and what they reveal about the identities of the deceased and those who buried them.

**Sattarov, R.R., A.A. Krasnoperov, and M.S. Voronkova**

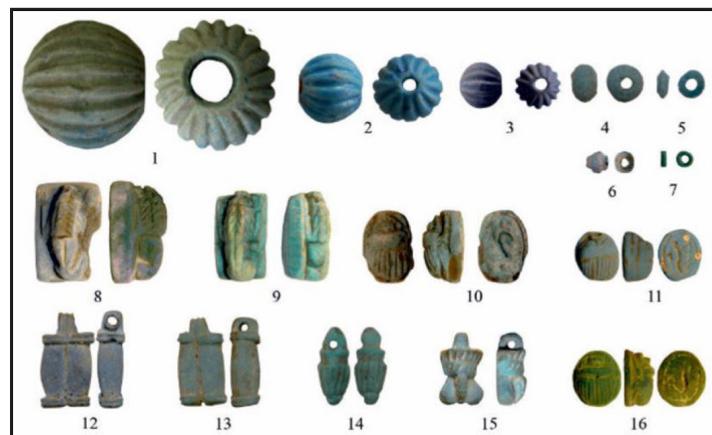
2025 Бусы из египетского фаянса в памятниках пьяноборской культуры [Beads Made of Egyptian Faience from Pyany Bor Culture Sites]. *Archeology of the Eurasian Steppes* 1:280-293; <https://www.academia.edu/128012277>.

Provides a catalog of 572 Egyptian faience beads and pendants recovered from burials found in 11 necropolises in eastern European Russia. They are attributed to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.

**Scaramelli, Franz and Kay Tarble de Scaramelli**

2024 Spatial Dimensions of Contact in the Middle Orinoco: Colonialism and its Aftermath. In *Venezuelan Historical Archaeology: Current Perspectives on Contact, Colonialism, and Independence*, edited by Konrad A. Antczak, pp. 223-257. Sidestone Press, Leiden; <https://www.sidestone.com/books/venezuelan-historical-archaeology>.

Provides succinct descriptions of the glass beads recovered from indigenous sites of the Early Colonial, Late Colonial, and Republican periods.

**Truffa Giachet, Miriam, Bernard Gratuze, Denis Genequand, Yao Serge, Bonaventure Loukou, Éric Huysecom, and Anne Mayor**

2025 The Systematic Techno-stylistic and Chemical Study of Glass Beads from Post-15th Century West African Sites. *PLoS ONE* 20(2), e0318588; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388855926>.

Presents the chemical analysis of a large and varied sample of glass beads recovered from five sites in Ghana, Mali, and Senegal, in contexts dated between the 15th and the mid-20th century.



## Who We Are

The Society of Bead Researchers is a non-profit corporation founded in 1981 to foster research on beads and beadwork of all materials and periods and to expedite the dissemination of the resultant knowledge. Membership is open to all persons and organizations involved in the study of beads, as well as those interested in keeping abreast of current trends in bead research. The Society publishes a biannual newsletter, *The Bead Forum*, and an annual peer-reviewed journal, *BEADS: Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers*. The Society's main website address is [www.beadresearch.org](http://www.beadresearch.org).

Contents of the newsletter include current research news, listings of recent publications, conference and symposia announcements, and brief articles on various aspects of bead research. Both historic and prehistoric subject materials are welcome.

The deadline for submissions for the next *Bead Forum* is 1 September 2025. Submissions should be in Word for Windows 6.0 or later with no embedded sub-programs such as "End Notes." References cited should be in *Historical Archaeology* format (<https://sha.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/HARC-Springer-Style-Guide-Nov-24.pdf>).

Send submissions to:

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