

Craft Corner—A Closer Look at System 96®

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Tucked about halfway down the System96.com home page rests a section titled “Craft Corner.” These three links on the site for Project Guides, “Getting Started with Kiln-Fired Glass,” and an Idea Book serve as the gateway for a unique approach to glass fusing. It was created especially for newcomers, but we think it has something to offer hobby fusers at every level.

Spectrum’s “Craft” approach was originally developed as a foolproof way that anybody who had never touched glass before—kid to senior citizen—could sit down and make a fusing project. Ever been to a paint-your-own-pottery shop? That’s the idea. Walk in anytime, sit down, make a project, and leave it with the shop owner to fire. It’s a modern approach to crafting that is considerate of people’s time and schedules, very affordable, social (bring a friend!), and highly rewarding. To help glass adapt, we put together a combination of components and resources, plus some simple guidelines. The new approach is helping innovative glass stores succeed with drop-in craft and also allows paint-your-own-pottery shops to offer glass fusing along with ceramics. It is this set of components and resources that you will find in the System 96 Craft Corner.

Components. There is a group of glass components that are fundamental to the system. Most of them you know already—noodles, stringer, rods, frit, and pebbles. Spectrum has added Blanks (pre-cut squares, circles, and other shapes that form the bottom layer of most projects), Chips (1/2" squares), and Strips (1/2" x 12" lengths). These elements allow beginners, if they choose, to assemble attractive projects even without cutting glass.

Method. Most crafters choose a project they want to make and then follow a step-by-step project guide to replicate it. A project guide is to fusing what a pattern is to stained glass. It includes a list of components and a set of instructions, with photos and illustrations to clarify plus any special tips that might apply to that specific project. Firing instructions are as simple as “Tack-Fuse” or “Contour-Fuse” or “Full-Fuse.” If the shop owner is doing the firing, no worries. If the crafter is doing it, these are defined by simple, four-segment cycles that are consistent across all projects. By suggesting a simple set of rules for project design and firing, the craft approach assures consistent, predictable results and satisfying fusing projects—first time, every time.

Resources. In the Project Guides section of Craft Corner, you’ll find about thirty free project guides that are downloadable at the click of a mouse. There’s also an Idea book with twenty-seven pages of project photos to spur the imagination. At the “Getting Started with Kiln-Fired Glass” under Craft Corner, you’ll find an easy sixteen-page booklet that teaches the craft approach from start to finish.

The Bottom Line. Glass fusers—beginners and otherwise—are quickly making the System 96 Craft Corner an inspiration destination. The project guides are first-rate and easy-to-follow. The components are simple, either available from your supplier or easy to make yourself. And with a few simple rules-of-thumb, our unique approach has neutralized the technical difficulties, so you can focus on the fun, the creative, and the rewarding. That’s what it’s all about!

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