



Pot Melt Tutorial

By

Laurie and Joel Spray

Bonny Doon Fused Glass Art

5657 Bonny Doon Road, Santa Cruz, CA. 95060

831-454-0103

Email to bkpottery@aol.com

<http://bonnydoonfusedglassart.blogspot.com/>

<http://lauriespraywarmglasstools.blogspot.com/>

Pot melts can be done in a few ways.....one way is to support the pot over a heavily kiln washed shelf with stilts. I use regular kiln stilts with a slice of kiln shelf across them. (An old broken kiln shelf will slice easily with a wet tile saw.) Fill the pot with scrap glass and fire up the kiln. (Firing schedules later!) As the glass gets hot it will drip onto the shelf making a mix of colors and a "basic" melt. The shape will be irregular and you have to be sure that the stilts are spread far enough apart that the melting, spreading glass will not touch them.

Another way to do a melt is to drop the glass into a prepared stainless steel ring. I prefer this way. Not only do you end up with a better form but it also will take away the chance of hitting those stilts. Your pieces can also be thicker if that is what you are looking for. The stainless steel form needs to be placed on your kiln washed shelf with 1/8" thick fiber paper around the inside of the stainless. (Not thin fire) Overlap the joint slightly. Always cut the fiber paper with a straight edge so that the fiber is sitting flat on the kiln shelf with no gaps. Do not use fiber paper under it as it can travel with the melting glass and push it into the glass itself when it is melting. Also do not kiln wash the stainless steel ring. It is not necessary. Here is a picture of a single pot sitting above a 10 x 10 stainless steel form.



From the design in this piece you can see that there were 7 holes in that pot. You can also see how dark colors can really dominate a melt. In a side fire kiln like the Skutt in this picture you can fire a pot melt on each level that you can fit.

Another way is to have the kiln shelf braces directly sitting across the stainless steel as in the next picture. The different heights of the falling glass will give you a slightly different look. The higher the pot the thinner the stream of glass.



This photo is taken in my top loading Genesis kiln. I have each pot melt set up on a small kiln shelf only because my larger shelf was not dry at this moment.....These small shelves are sitting right on the kiln brick. As you can see I pile the glass high. Personally I use a lot of opaques and whites mixed in. Be sure to take notes on every load. I use

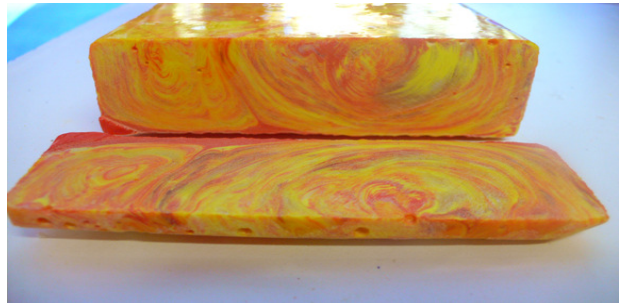


the pots over and over again choosing to use the same colors. There is always a little glass left in the pot after firing and those colors will drip into the next melt.

Another great use of the pot melt technique is to make pattern bars. Using a stainless steel pattern bar former prepare it the same way that you would prepare a stainless steel ring or square. Here is a photo of a pattern bar that is 10" long by 3 1/2" wide and 2" deep with 2 pots on it and a 8" long by 3 1/2" wide and 2" deep with one pot. Your 1/8" fiber should cover the entire inside edge overlapping any joints. (not in this picture) Pile the glass into your pot and fire away.



Here are a couple of pot melt pattern bars. You can get a feel for the possibilities here. The colors mix so nicely in the depth of the pattern bar. Cut them with a wet tile saw. Use a fine grinder bit on the surfaces that come into contact with the saw blade and clean very very well before firing them again. Do not let the slices get dry between slicing and cleaning. You can use these slices in many different applications.



As you are slicing them you can match them into mirror images as shown here. Here is another trick that can be a great look. Before putting the filled pot onto your stainless former put some scrap glass onto the kiln shelf within the fiber walls. So lets say you put red opaque unevenly across the pattern bar space. Then place your pot onto the stainless as in the picture above. You will find after firing, when you are slicing up your bar, that the color scrap that you put onto the shelf can now be a great center of a "mirror image" look. It will be a solid against the other swirling colors.



Firing Schedules for Pot Melts

250 degrees an hour to 1100 hold 15 minutes
 450 degrees an hour to 1685 hold 45 minutes
 9999 (as fast as kiln will go) to 950 hold 3 hours
 (1 hour per 1/4" thickness)
 100 to 850 hold 1 hour
 100 to 650 hold 15 min off
 Do not open until room temperature

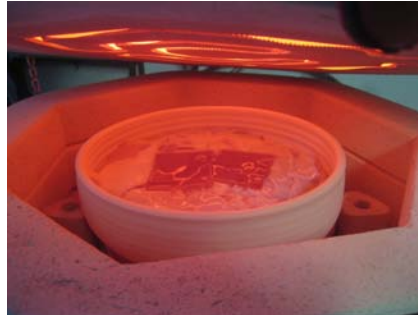
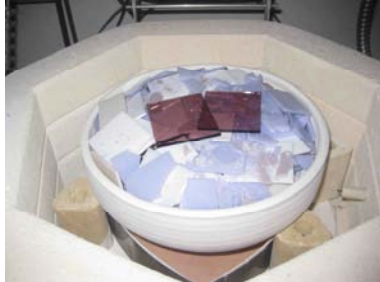


You can sit your pot melt pot right on the stainless steel for support. Just be sure to calculate the amount of glass you use. You can also put it up on supports to have the glass drop farther for a different look. Of course these forms still need 1/8" fiber before firing!





This is a really fun pot melt to do.....we now make adjustable heart stainless steel rings. They are pretty cool as you can adjust the size of the heart from 8" to 10 1/2". Line it with fiber as you would other stainless rings and support your pot over the heart. In this one we were looking for very soft colors so we went with pale purples and whites. (There is a little more purple hidden in the pot)



As you can see here (this was at 1135 degrees) the pot is very close to the lid. This is not a problem but never let the glass touch the elements. This is firing in my Hot Box Evenheat small kiln.

In the picture below you can see I can get a smaller heart and a 8" pattern bar in one load in the evenheat!!



Or two pattern bars at once!! It just goes to show that even in small kilns you can get a lot done in a load!!

Here is another great way to use potmelts using a round stainless steel ring. Take the fired pot melt and grind the edges very carefully finishing with a very fine bit and cleaning extremely well. Grind down any imperfections in the top such as strings of glass that did not totally melt. Next refire the round with a sheet of clear slightly larger than the potmelt without a ring or dam. It will spread a little so allow for that if it is very thick. Fire very slowly as this is a thick already fired piece of glass! 100 degrees an hour to 1100, 250 to 1460 should do fine. Anneal carefully. Take it out of the kiln and inspect all the edges one last time and grind only if it is called for. It is then placed on a large circle of colored glass with a large round of clear over it. Center it well and fire very slowly again. Anneal even longer. You will love it!!



Some pot melts are meant to be cut up into elements or jewelry....others are just too beautiful and are admired all by themselves. Have fun....there are no limits!!!! Take notes on every load. You will be glad you did!!

Visit our site for stainless steel ring, pattern bars formers, expandable hearts, and squares!

<http://bonnydoonfusedglassart.blogspot.com/>