

March 3rd 2006 Newsletter

Olympia Rain / Kronos striking information:

These colors contain dissolved silver and other metallic oxides, as well as billions of crystal forming nuclei. When worked hot, the silver stays in solution, but when cooled slightly and reheated, silver crystals begin to grow. As the silver crystals become larger, the glass color begins to change. The most visible effect is the formation of a surface haze. The color of this surface layer will vary depending on degree of heating/striking, and the flame atmosphere in which the crystals develop. After extensive testing I have developed reliable methods for producing multicolored effects. It is important to note that when using 104 coe glass, the temperature at which the glass begins to soften is very close to the temperature at which the silver crystals will grow. Generally, silver rich colors should be worked fairly hot to keep the glass from over striking during the assembly of the bead/marble/etc. Once the piece was complete, one would strike the colors in the flame to achieve the desired effect. Ideally when growing the crystals, the glass would be struck for extended time in the far reaches of a neutral flame. In practice, this means that enough heat is absorbed by the bead that it may begin to slump or move. To eliminate this problem, one can strike these colors by using a soft neutral to slightly reducing flame, and flashing or rotating the not-very-hot bead briefly an inch or so from the burner face until the silver begins to deposit on the bead surface, initiating crystal growth. After this initial treatment, the bead can be rotated in the far reaches of the flame to further develop the different hues. The first step does not take long, only 3-6 slow passes through the flame. If the bead is overheated, you will see the silver haze burn off again, and another striking cycle will be required. The soft flame environment has a slight reducing effect on the glass, pulling silver to the surface. Be careful to avoid over reducing the glass, as this will leave a grey tint to the color. Ambers, Greens, Blues, Purples, and Cream tones can all be produced with either Olympia Rain or Kronos. Alternatively, the reactive glass can be applied and melted in using a soft neutral to slightly reducing flame, striking the glass as it is heated. This tends to create cream and green tones. If caramel colored earthtones are desired, one can melt and twist Olympia Rain or Kronos in a slightly reducing flame, gather and pull out into stringer again.

After striking with either method, one can encase the reactive color with clear, colored transparent, or more Olympia Rain. This will magnify the struck glass and prevent overstriking or burning off of the colors. Silver rich glass also reacts in interesting ways with some of the Italian color rod. Try over Dark Ivory or Transparent Yellow. Using a nonreactive base color such as cobalt or black will accentuate the struck color of Olympia Rain. Often the base color will be altered by silver fume deposits during striking.

These colors contain various metal oxides that may vaporize to some degree during use. Please use appropriate precautions and adequate forced air ventilation when using.

A slower striking version of Olympia Rain dubbed OR2 is now available to give more control over the finished color. It contains crystal growth moderators to prevent accidental over-striking during extended working times. Kronos is in production this week, and will be available for sale soon. Thanks for your support and happy flameworking!

Jed at Double Helix Glassworks