

## A Simply “Bead-iful” Event —“An Evening of Beads, High Seas, and Culture”

On Saturday, June 25, over two hundred bead aficionados, members of local bead societies, friends of The Bead Museum, and special guests adorned in creative black tie attire, decorated with elaborate, beaded jewelry, gathered at the U.S Navy Memorial Heritage Center for the Gala “An Evening of Beads, High Seas and Culture” to benefit The Bead Museum. The Gala marked a decade of promoting cultural understanding through the interpretation of beads– the ten year anniversary of the founding of The Bead Museum, an emerging cultural institution located in the heart of Washington D.C’s bustling Penn Quarter neighborhood.

The evening was the result of months of creative collaboration by the Baltimore Bead Society, the Northern Virginia Bead Society, and the parent organization of The Bead Museum, the Bead society of Greater Washington (BSGW).

Prior to the gala, guests met at The Bead Museum for a special reception to view, “The Eternal Bead,” presenting the eight fundamental ways people around the world use beads. Gala attendees received a copy of the evening’s commemorative program when they arrived, and enjoyed refreshments while viewing the exhibition and the Museum’s centerpiece, “Bead Timeline of History,” all while catching their first glimpse of each other’s alluring beaded adornments.

Shortly thereafter, excited gala attendees moved to the adjacent U.S Navy Memorial Heritage Center for the highly anticipated silent auction and east coast premiere of cinematographer Diana Friedberg’s Silver Screen Award – winning film, “World on a String, Part I: The Eternal Bead.” Upon arrival at the U.S Navy Memorial Heritage Center each guest was greeted and given a handmade commemorative art glass bead to remember the special occasion. These one of a kind beads were created especially for Gala attendees by 21 generous and talented members of the Society of Glass Bead Makers-Mid Atlantic Chapter.

A plethora of high energy filled the U.S Naval Heritage Center as guests playfully competed to bid on a wide range of donated pieces; including a fish shaped lampwork bead, a Turkoman necklace, a strand of Mizo amber, and a collector’s necklace of coral, charms, jade and copal. The bidding continued into the evening with champagne punch and delicious hor d’ouvres.

Mistress of Ceremonies, Gala Committee Chairperson and incoming BSGW Board President, Elaine Robnett Moore, introduced the Gala’s East coast premiere of “The Eternal Bead,” the first of Diana Friedberg’s five-part documentary series. Guests were delighted by a sneak preview of Part II of Friedberg’s series, “The Tiny Mighty Bead,” which explores the breadth of seed bead uses across cultures. After the screening, many guests eagerly purchased their own autographed copies of the award-winning films.

Gala guests were also treated to a live fashion runway show of Gail Be’s *Swarovski* crystal gowns. Dripping of beads, sequins, and feathers, the audience was astonished to learn that Ms. Be’s designs use no fabric or stitching, nor does she sketch or calculate the beads in any of her stunning creations.

After much anticipation, the Gala Judges; Lisa St. Martin and Harriet Lesser announced the winners of the most whimsical, most elegant and most ingenious pieces worn that evening. Designer, Amy Meyer Phifer, was honored in the “most whimsical” category with her *Treasure Chest* necklace, a three generation creative project of seed beads, glass charms, and gems attached to a small wooden chest. Hilary Whittaker, was awarded “most elegant” with her collector’s necklace of a gold capped Japanese *netsuke* bead, and Nepal Hill tribe silver beads. Elaine Robnett Moore’s *Fireflies* necklace was granted “most ingenious,” as it was made of *Swarovski* crystals, faux sinew, and eight feet of plastic tubing.

As the “Beads, High Seas, and Culture” gala, also referred to by some as “a walking art show,” finally concluded, many guests departed proudly displaying their commemorative art glass bead along with silent auction items won in hand. Everyone agreed it was an evening that The Bead Museum, bead societies, and all who attended would never forget. Many guests even inquired about the next gala to support The Bead Museum. The Gala Committee expects to announce this soon.