Perler Bead Basics with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Perler Bead Basics

Perler Bead Basics

(upbeat inspirational music) - Hey everybody, welcome to Creativebug. We're coming at you live like we always do on Thursdays. Can't believe it's already the end of May. It's almost June. It seems too impossible, but here it is. And so of course I want it to be summer because it feels like we're embarking on summer. And something that I thought would be fun for a summer craft is using Perler beads because they're so bright and colorful, and graphic, and that makes me think of summer. Although I have to admit I haven't worked with them much. So, the last few weeks I've been diving in and playing with all the different kinds of Perler beads colors, and different little forms for setting them up, and also some troubleshooting tips for how to melt them and work with them in general. And if you guys have worked with Perler beads and had great success, let us know, because I'd love to hear what you've been making with them. I thought I would show you kind of what I wound up landing on as my favorite sort of process. I have to say that there's something very meditative about this process. I'm not somebody that really colors in coloring books very much, although I loved them when I was a kid. But I feel like this is kind of a similar thing where you're kind of working methodically with color, and then you get this really cool product at the end, which is whatever it is that you're making. Could be a coaster or a drink marker. I'm gonna use a coaster, or make a coaster rather. And so I've got my materials here. These are the boards that you can create your designs on. And, Perler makes a lot of different shapes, so this is a round one. I've got a square one that can actually connect with other squares, if you want to make a larger design. So these kind of click together. There's a star, we've got a hexagon, a heart shape. I think these different little boards would lend themselves really nicely to making like key chains or ornaments, and this would be great for a kids party. I'm just gonna stick with a square base. I'm gonna make sort of like a quilt pattern. If you are working with something round, the difference between the round and the square ones is the way the lines are done. So the circular ones are actually done in like a radial pattern. And one thing that I kind of did to enhance the little design boards is I marked my center peg. So if you get a look at this design board, there are lots of these little notches that the Perler bead itself sits right on top of. So, just like that. And, at first glance you may think you know what the center is, but I think it's easier to mark it. So I flipped my boards over, counted out the little pegs, and then with my Permapaque marker I just marked the center, so that anytime I'm designing I don't have to think about this every time. I just can look and know that there is a dot where my center is. So I want something symmetrical. That's how I would go about doing it. So now I've got my board, my design board. I have this great set of colors that came together like this in this tray. You can also get Perler beads in little packages. You can get them in these great shaker containers that they're kind of like sprinkles. So they shake out like this. And you can work with whatever feels most comfortable. I mostly pick by color. So of course, let's have a few more hot pink ones because it's like my favorite color and you know I'm gonna want more of those. And they're not in my tray here. And then you can also use these little Perler bead tweezers. I found these really handy to have just for random little pick ups. I didn't use them for placing every single bead because I find that I get too shaky and I wind up knocking other beads over with the little tweezers. So you might find them really useful to place all of your beads, but I just use them for kind of troubleshooting. So, I like to start in the middle because in this case I'm gonna do like a quilt. And why not use the hot pink because I've got

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it? And you can work in any way that feels comfortable to you. So I'm just placing these directly onto the pegs. So, start with that cross pattern. I may want that elsewhere too. I can choose to place those cross patterns or trefoil patterns now, or I can wait until I build out. So I'm gonna build from the center out. So I'm just playing with color, and this is the part that I like the best because I'm not overthinking anything. I'm just responding right away to what I think goes with this. So now I have this square. Do I want to continue this pale blue line all the way around, or do I want to start with a new color? Maybe I'll go with a new color. And you do want to be careful. I definitely had many things on my workbench downstairs knocked into these, and then you wind up spilling your little beads all over the place. I think it would be handy to actually work like on a cookie sheet, or an enamel painting tray. Because then if you did spill your beads at least they'd be contained and they wouldn't fall on the floor. And, if you're curious about how you choose a design, this is sort of like pixel art, or I used to make like a lot of just colorful patterns using graph paper when I was a kid. Mostly when I was in like the fourth and fifth grade. I would just color lots of patterns on graph paper while I was in class. So you could do prep work like that, and lay this over your graph to see what your colors are. You can also print and download templates from the internet. Perler sells lots of great design idea books. So now let's see, I've got a center in all those spots. So I'm not thinking, I'm just like responding to what I see. Let's see. I really like this color. I think I'll add that. If you have questions feel free to write them in the comments. Faith will let me know that you have questions. Also if you've made anything cool with Perler beads, let me know, because now that I've been playing with it I'm curious as to what else I want to make with them. So I'm kind of just working, like I said from the center out. I'm keeping things pretty symmetrical. I'm thinking of this like a little mini-quilt. And the way these work is once you put your entire design on your board, you melt everything using just a household iron and some paper. It's more like a parchment paper than a wax paper. They actually make their own ironing paper and sell it, but you can totally substitute with parchment paper. All right. Just playing with my colors here. I think I want a dark color next. And I think I'll use this as a coaster eventually. So that's why I'm sticking with the square. Round would make a nice coaster as well. Put a hot pink right there. And I like thinking of this like a quilt pattern because I think anything in miniature is really, really cute. You can also rotate this if it's easier for you to work on as you're going. Like if you tend to knock your beads off. So this is like a little mini quilt. You could definitely make this as like a rug or something in a dollhouse too. - [Faith] We've got a couple comments. - [Courtney] Yeah. - [Faith] A lot of people like making them with their grandchildren. - Sounds like a lot of you guys have done this with your grandkids. I think this is an excellent occupying craft. I think kids really love to sort things especially by color. And it's always good to build like fine motor skills, and they have smaller fingers than we do so this is probably easier for them. Yeah, this is a great activity to do with children. The ironing needs to be of course supervised by an adult. - [Faith] Holly has made coasters with them. - [Instructor] Polly's made coasters? - [Faith] Holly. - Holly, hi Holly. Sounds like you've made some fun party coasters maybe. - [Faith] Stacey is wondering, is a heat press better or an iron for melting? - Oh, we have a question about, is it heat press as in like a Cricut EasyPress Or an iron better for melting? Perler recommends just using a household iron and that's why I used. It's pretty easy to work with and I'll show you, when I'm finished with the design we'll iron this and melt it together. I haven't used the EasyPress to do this, like a Cricut EasyPress. That's a much more expensive tool than a household iron, but if you have it I think it would give you really nice even pressure. And so if you have it, definitely use it. I think that's a great idea. All right, let's go back to my red. I haven't used my red in awhile. - [Faith] Ida would like to know where you buy them. - And the question is, where can you get Perler beads?

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A lot of craft stores have this. JOANN definitely has it. Perler has their own website. You can get them online, like at Amazon and so forth. And there are lots of kind of kits where you can make certain projects, or there's a lot of licensed designs. So, the style of the Perler bead like I said is like a pixel art style, and so it lends itself really well to characters, like Mario characters or other cartoon characters. And so you definitely see a lot of designs out there for that. I've also seen people on Etsy making things with Perler beads and selling them. Like I said they'd be really good for ornaments, package toppers. Of course coasters is the obvious and easy one. Drink markers. - [Faith] Taren has used them to make Christmas ornaments. - And Taren has used them to make Christmas ornaments. Which is awesome. I think that's like the perfect use for them. Okay, let's go back. So now I'm just like balancing out my color. I'm going back to my pale kind of peachy tone because I haven't used that in a while. Yeah, I think you could do so many different cool things. Let me just say too that, like while I'm at this design here you can see I haven't filled my entire design board. I can heat this up and iron it, and make it a complete design now. It does not have to be a full square even though I'm using the square design board. So you have flexibility of doing that. I'll show you something that I made earlier where I just kind of free-formed a strawberry and made it. But, I want to do a little quilt, so I'm gonna go all the way to the edge. And I was playing with using like neutrals, and whites. But, oh I have red there, and I want pink here. So I'm gonna take these out. But I like just using, I want to try something that's just like full of color, no neutrals. I also was looking in the Apple Store to see if you could download like an app that would pixelate photos from your phone. And I was doing that just like a few minutes ago and I did find an app. I'll show it to you guys in a minute. Because of course I want to make a Perler bead version of my dog Charlie. And that would help with creating my design too. All right let's put some hot pink back in here. Actually maybe we should just make this shape. Now you can't, once you melt this, you can't then add more things to it because the beads won't fuse evenly. And also they change in shape in size. They are gonna depress a little bit. And they won't have a hole necessarily or a full hole in the center, depending on heating them. But, let's see, what do people think? Should we go all the way to the edge or should we stop and do this kind of cool shape? I don't know, I'm gonna keep working until someone tells me otherwise. Like I said I can just get really into this. It's sort of like coloring book pages. And I'm gonna use the hot pink. Now the colors don't bleed in any way. They will just kind of sit next to each other, but you will get a denser richer color because as they melt, the hole in the center will close up a little. - [Faith] Caprecia would like to know, how can you turn them into a key chain? - Caprecia is asking, how can you turn this into a key chain? That's a good question. So, what you can do is, you'll see and we'll do it together, as soon as I start to heat it up, the holes will start to shrink. You'll want to just make sure that you don't iron fully just one of your sections, so that you could put a keyring through there, or maybe a piece of wire or twine, and then you could put a keyring onto that. So you could definitely make them into a keyring. Or like, I know kids are really into adding things to their backpacks, so onto the zipper like a zipper pull. This would be really cute for a zipper pull. All right. Let's just make a diamond shape, so I just need two more in here. Let's use hot pink. So I change up my pattern a little bit at the very end. So here's my pattern. Now you do want to be careful not to bump it because after you've done this work it can fall off of this pegboard, but these pegboards are really easy and handy. Something that I did before I was ready to iron but still wanted to work on this, like let's say you need to step away to do something else. I'll just take another design board and sort of shimmy it on here. And then this makes it much more stable for staying on my desk as opposed to just having it open. If I were to bump it or move the table all those beads would fall off. And so having this on top really helps. But we're gonna go

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ahead and iron it. So, I've got my ironing paper. Like I said this resembles more of a parchment paper than a wax paper. And it's reusable, so you can use it over and over, and over, and over, and over. So you really don't need a lot of it. And we're gonna iron this on the front side and then we'll iron it on the backside as well when we take it off the design board. So I lay my ironing paper down. I've got just a household iron set on a medium heat with no steam. And it may have been asleep, so let's wake it up. Yeah it's warm. And you want to apply even circular pressure. You don't want to press down because you can depress the beads. I'm just gonna let it sit there for a minute and sort of heat up, because the iron just went on. Again I have no steam, and I'm on a medium setting here. So you want to be careful at this stage not to knock it either. And you can kind of see, it's warming a little through the paper here. Now different colored beads will melt at different rates. And so I found that I had some that would melt faster than others. You can tell that they're melting quicker because the hole in the center starts to close up more rapidly. And so you do want to just kind of move things around once they're starting to be warmed up and melted a little. Again, you don't want to risk knocking any beads out of place. But as it starts to melt it's pretty sturdy. I'm not pressing, I'm just letting the weight of the iron do its thing. And I'm checking, so you can see through the paper on this top part, the openings in the beads are smaller than this part at the bottom. And I can tell that it's sloping down a little bit so now I'm gonna go to this side. I'll just try to get this side with a little more heat than the other side. So let's take a look. We're looking through the paper. You can see that these edges are pretty closed. The holes are pretty closed, and I still have some opening center holes in this little bit right here. Now according to Perler, ideally you would still have a little bit of opening within the beads, but I've also seen people do the designs where they're fully melted and there is no opening in the center. The opening in the center just gives you some flexibility for adding it onto something. Putting a piece of ribbon or twine through there to make an ornament, or something you'd hang in the window, or a key chain. Okay, so that's well fused. I'm gonna pull it off. It comes right off, I can use my design board again. And now I'm going to iron this side. And because I have a second piece of paper here I can just put this on top. If you wanted to peel this off of the paper you could do that too. So now we're gonna repeat the process. You definitely want to iron both sides. Let me say though, if you were doing something much larger and you wanted to make it curved like a bowl or a cup or something, you wouldn't fuse the back side. You would curve your piece at this stage. And then you would glue the edges with hot glue. My Perler game isn't that strong yet, so, I'm not gonna make any curved objects today. I gotta get some more coasters under my belt. I'm not worrying about anything shifting because the other side is fused. But I'm just trying to apply even pressure. Checking every so often. I don't want to overheat things and have them totally puddle. Okay I think that looks pretty good. Now it will be warm to the touch. Let's say if I peeled off my paper and I want to heat this up again, I totally can. There's not a reason to not heat it again if you think you need to. But I think this looks good. So there's my little design. And I can decide what side is the front and what side is the back. So like for this side, I would say that these holes are far smaller, and these ones are much more open. And so I might want to reheat this side so it's more consistent if this is gonna be the top of my design. And this was the side I did first so it's gonna need a minute to heat up again. And this is where just the experimentation comes into play because like I mentioned earlier, the different colors of beads will melt at different rates. And of course this is the part that the adult needs to do if you are making these with kids. Let's see how that looks. It's a little more even, so I think that looks pretty good. Now one thing I would do is as this is cooling I would weight it under something because things when they're warm tend to curl a little bit. And I did notice when I was making other things that if I did not weight them they tended

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to curl just a little bit more. But you could reheat it and re-weight it. That's not a problem. So that's my little cute like mini-quilt. Maybe I'll put it in a dollhouse. I'd have to make a dollhouse first though. Here's a bigger version. So this is more coaster size. And this is also sort of a quilt pattern, and I really liked playing with, just working with colors in a geometric pattern, like I said for me it felt like coloring in a coloring book page. So it was like really meditative to play with my color combinations, and just work from the center out. I also did a little C for Creativebug, so this could maybe be a bookmark. You could hot glue this onto a package. You could use it for almost anything. It's pretty resilient once it's been melted and fused together. Of course, Perler bends lend themselves really well to play food, or anything sort of iconic and graphic. So I wanted to try a donut. This is my donut. And one of the kind of tips and tricks for making donuts is using a darker color on the edges so your frosting looks a little bit more 3D. So I used black here, and then the chocolate frosting of course is brown with pink sprinkles. Here's another one I did as a drink topper. So this is like a little mason jar. Now it's not gonna hold your drink in, but let's say you're having a party with premade drinks, you could do these so that people could identify their drinks. You could even try putting an initial in there if you wanted. Of course it's gonna be pixelated, but it'd be really cute. So this is like a little strawberry donut topper. And here's my free-form one. I worked on just the square board and made a little strawberry. That's kind of like my summer roundup of Perler bead projects. And these things are just super cute and fun to work with. It's a nice way to kind of slow down and be calm, play with color. There are, I think over 100 colors that they make, and I just saw on their website they came out with 12 new colors. Perfect for the summer, there are lots of tropical ones. I think citrus slices would lend themselves really well, or any kind of character design. You could sketch out are design first on graph paper and then use it. The great thing about these design boards it that they're transparent, so you could actually put it over something as your guide. Like if I wanted to make another one of these little quilts, but maybe in a different color, I could put this over and use it as my guide. Do you have any other questions, Faith? - [Faith] Must they iron both sides? - Yes, well actually no, not exactly. The question is, do you have to iron both sides? If you're doing something flat you definitely want to iron both sides because it'll be more stable that way. But if you do want to attempt making a curved project like a drink kind of cover, or anything that's round like a votive cover, you would only fuse one side, allow that unfused side to bend, and then you would hot glue your seam. It's a great question. These Perler beads are really fun to work with. I'm not sure what I'm gonna make next. I was thinking maybe like a cuff bracelet could be cute. You could play with your design. In that case I would only fuse one side, and then leave it open to harden, or maybe let it harden around something that's similar to my wrist size, like a little jar. And then I could use it as a cuff. Thank you guys so much for joining us on the live shoot. We love all your comments and questions, and we'll see you next week. (upbeat inspirational music)

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