Over the years I have made hundreds of hearts like this using many different frit blends, but purple is my favorite! To produce truly purple hearts, you can incorporate intensely pigmented frits into your designs. My all-time favorite purple frit is African Violet by Val Cox. It is a magical blend of several different shades of purple and is so much more interesting than just one shade alone. Beadgoodies sells a similar blend called Timeless Purple.
I like to make this heart as an encased bead, however if you are a beginner and are unsure of your encasing skills, this design is also beautiful as an unencased bead. I also like to use Uroboros for these hearts for two reasons. First, Uroboros is 96 COE (and so is the frit), therefore, it is more compatible with the frit than 104 COE glass. Because the bead is encased, using 96 COE glass for the encasing layer reduces the possibility of incompatibility cracks. Second, Uroboros clear is inexpensive and is some of the best quality clear on the market. It melts like butter, making it much easier to apply the encasing layer. I can often make a bead like this without a single bubble because the clear is that good! Can you tell I am a fan of Uroboros clear?

You can also make this heart using other frit blends; however, you will achieve the best results if you use a blend with colors in the same family, as they will overlap and meld together on the bead, and contrasting blends can create some unpleasant and unexpected results. Now, let’s make a purple heart.

**TOOLS AND SUPPLIES:**
- Shaping tool (I use a Corina Magic Wand)
- Marver
- Optional – Graphite marble/bead mold
- Optional – Zoozii’s Large+ straight-sided lentil press
- Purple frit
- Rod of Uroboros Cotton Candy Grape opal
- Rod of Uroboros clear
- Thick stringer of Uroboros clear
- Stringer of purple

**Step 1:** This is a focal-sized bead approximately one inch wide and 1 ½ inches long. Begin by winding on a thin barrel in Uroboros Cotton Candy Grape. Although it looks pink in the photo, this color is actually soft lavender.

**Step 2:** Keep adding glass until the base bead is a rounded oval.

**Step 3:** Roll the gather in African Violet frit. It is not necessary to coat it thickly as this frit blend is very concentrated.

**Step 4:** Melt in the frit.
Steps 5a – 5c: You could skip this step and move to the encasing step, but if you want the striations in the design, you need to add a little heat and let gravity do its thing. Add heat to the gather and allow it to get “droopy”. Allow the gather to droop, pulling the spots of frit into lines. After it has elongated, quickly rotate the mandrel, and reshape the bead into an oval in the flame.

Step 6: This photo shows the design after the “droop and roll”. Throughout this tutorial, you will notice that in some photos, the purples appear more blue and in others, they are more red. This is caused by the amount of heat in the bead at the time the photo was taken. As the bead cools, the purple appears more blue.

Steps 7a - 7c: The encasing layer is optional, but it is what brings this design to life. Because Uroboros melts so easily, and because the design is forgiving (if you smear it a little it won’t matter), you can encase using the “round the world” method for your encasing layer. Simply start applying clear at one end, near the mandrel, but not touching the mandrel. Pushing against the preceding row, wind on the clear as quickly as possible, taking care to keep the base bead cool (but not so cool that it cracks). You can see in the photo that only the glowing part of the rod is in the flame. The bead is underneath and behind the flame.

Step 8: Melt in the encasing layer.
Step 9: With a shaping tool like a Magic Wand or brass knife, move the clear encasing layer toward the mandrel so that the base bead is covered, but don’t let the clear touch the mandrel.

Step 10: This is optional, but if you have a marble/bead mold like this one with open cavities on one side and round cavities on the other, it makes an excellent shaping tool to help round out the ends of the bead. When I shape the ends, I do not roll the bead, but instead I gently push it repeatedly in and out of the marble mold, rotating the bead just a little each time. This shapes the end without stretching the bead unnecessarily.

Step 11: To shape the other end, flip the mold and hold it in an underhand position, as I am in the photo.

Step 12: After shaping the ends, you can shape it further in the round cavity on the other side if your bead isn’t too wide.

**TIP:** When making this style of heart bead, the closer the bead is to a sphere before you press, the better the result will be. Using a marble mold like this one will make shaping the sphere quicker and easier.

Step 13: After shaping the base bead into a (more or less) sphere, use a press to flatten the sphere. I like to use a Zoozii’s straight-sided lentil press, (size is Large+), because it creates a nice curved face. You can see in the photo that the bead does not fill the press. You don’t want to create a lentil. You just want to flatten the bead, so you can achieve this by pressing it on your marver if you don’t have a press.

Step 14: After pressing, marver the ends so that they are even on the front and back. Pressing the bead will help to create nice puckers.
Steps 15a and 15b: With a razor tool, push a crease into the top of the bead to create the cheeks of the heart. In photo 15b, you can see what the bead looks like after creating the crease.

Step 16: With a razor tool, open the crease by rocking the tool from side to side, creating a “V”. Don’t do anything more to the top of the heart. We’ll come back to it later.

Step 17: Now it’s time to create the tail by aiming heat only at the bottom of the bead and allowing it to droop. I like to swing the bead forward and backward to help elongate the bottom. Be careful swinging the bead!

Step 18: If desired, you can angle in the sides using a shaping tool. I like to use a Corina Magic Wand for shaping my heart focals.

Step 19: Continue to add heat to the bottom and either let gravity pull the tail down, or rotate the bead back and forth in order to pull it down.

Steps 20a and 20b: You can leave the tail just like it is or add a swirl. To do this, while the tail of the heart is still hot, use a cold, clear stringer to pull the tail downward and then into a swirl. This is fun! It’s also a lot easier than it sounds. Allow the swirl to cool, or blow on it until it is cool enough to break off the stringer.
Step 21: Give the cheeks some gentle heat to round them out and then enhance the crease between the cheeks by pressing with a razor tool or the Magic Wand.

Step 22: After enhancing the crease in the cheeks of the heart, apply heat to one cheek and, using a cold stringer, push it into the glass and make a swirl. You have to push the stringer in far enough to really grab the glass in order to make a nice swirl. Break off the stringer.

Step 23: Using a purple stringer, place raised dots in the center of each swirl. I made the purple stringer by mixing African Violet frit with clear and then pulling it into a stringer.

Step 24: The last step adds a lot of bling to this design. Using a clear stringer, apply a row of raised dots along the edge of the heart and melt them in slightly. I hope you have fun with this design!

**TIP:** When breaking off stringer after making a swirl on a bead, ALWAYS wiggle the stringer from side to side and NEVER up and down. Wiggling it up and down puts too much strain on the bead release and can cause it to break.

**Sourcing Information:**

- **Uroboros:** Available by the rod or pound from Howaco Glass (http://www.howacoglass.com)

- **African Violet frit from Val Cox:** https://valcoxfrit.com/products/african-violet

- **Zoozii's straight-sided lentil press:** http://www.zooziis.com/collections/straight-sided-lentil/products/straight-sided-lentil-large-1

- **Corina Magic Wand:** http://www.corinabeads.com/pages/corina-magicwand.php

- **Marble mold:** http://www.mountainglass.com/Bead-Marble-Mold-7-8-1-inch.html#WCDUlUrhHE