

Questions and Answers

[Adobe Acrobat version](#)

Dear Editor:

I read the query about a digital camera and have some general information:

Finding the right digital camera takes some research because there are so many with a variety of features. So, these are the considerations you have to look for: If you are only going to take digital images for use on the web or will need small (4 x 6) prints you do not need a top of the line camera.

You can find one for about \$200 to \$300. But check around there are a lot of bargains for the same model. Also, try Ebay. Many people get a good low-price camera and then decide to upgrade later.

The important features are to have at least 1.5 Megapixel resolution and 3x OPTICAL zoom. Your computer model will determine the interface you need. For small items, such as you indicate you need a macro capability. That is a feature that allows you to focus on small items closely without them becoming out of focus.

Some comparison sites:

[Deal Time](#)

[Steve's Digicams](#)

Jacqueline Gikow



Dear Editor:

I am new to the polymer clay world and I was wondering if someone could assist with one problem that I am experiencing. I purchased a pasta press to make flat sheets of clay for decorative work; however, I am getting bubbles in the clay. No matter how much or how little I condition the clay with my hands...no matter how much or how little I attempt to press the clay to work out the bubbles before running through the press...I get these small bubbles. It is MOST frustrating!

Additionally, I have only created and baked a couple of small pieces thus far, and a few of the pieces have bubbles after baking although they did not seem to be present before baking. What is it with these bubbles??? =) And how do I get rid of them??

Any information you can provide will be very much appreciated! Many thanks in advance.

Best regards,
Dena Turner
Houston, TX

Dear Dena:

I know how frustrating bubbles can be. Ugh.

I know you said you condition carefully, but my first response is that you are getting air trapped in the clay as you are conditioning and it's causing bubbles. I cut my clay in thin slices, then roll them through the pasta machine to condition it. To make sure bubbles aren't getting trapped, after you roll a sheet then fold it to roll again, make sure the fold is the first part of the clay that enters the pasta machine.

Also, bubbles may be caused if you are getting moisture caught in the clay. Are you using water or any other moisture with the clay? The moisture doesn't combine with the clay, then, when baked, the moisture turns into steam and causes a bubble.

That's all I can think of. Anyone else?

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

I would like to know if you can help me find a site, or store that sells TEXTURED PAPER for clay use. I cannot seem to locate any. Please help.

Thank you.
Maria

Dear Maria:

If you are speaking about plastic texture sheets, there are a variety of sites on the internet that sell them, including [Polymer Supplies On-Line](#), which offers the set of six sheets for under \$10. Make sure you scroll down the page to find the texture sheets.

Diane Black's [Textures](#) at Glass Attic is also a great source for finding places that sell texture sheets.

If you are speaking about textured paper, a quick search on [Google](#) took me to lots of sites that sell textured paper, including [Freckles Press](#).

I hope these sources are helpful, so you can enjoy the fun of working with textures and clay!

Deirdre



Hi Deirdre.

I'm part of your Polyzine EMagazine list and just read your "bit" about mass emailing. I, too, am the newsletter emailer in our company and am totally frustrated by it. We have a list a little larger than yours and I've always used Outlook Express to send them in batches of about 60 names.

I use the BBC feature as well which I'm sure our customers appreciate. The problem I have is no-longer-valid email addresses block the sending of the newsletter. I get an error message and have to delete the address, go to the Outbox and delete the message and start again. Sometimes I do this 10-12 times for one list! And we have 32 lists so far!

You talk about 100 mins. to send yours, I'm talking **several hours**.

I wondered if any of your readers made any useful suggestions that I might try...? Any help is much appreciated!

Thanks.... By the way, I LOVE Polyzine! You do just a super job there! Couldn't be better. :)

Barb Alexander
[The Batik Butik](#) (have a peek!)
Victoria, BC Canada

Dear Editor:

There is a great mass-email program out there that doesn't really do mass email with BCC's. It is called Gammadyne Mailers (<http://gammadyne.com/>) and it sends out your emails one at a time (quickly - I can do about 500 in less than 15 minutes).

I use this program all the time and because it sends out the emails individually, MOST providers don't have any problems with it.

Here is the "blurb" from their website: Gammadyne Mailer is an incredibly powerful Email automation utility that sends personalized messages to a list of recipients, and automatically processes incoming Email such as removals, sign-ups, and bounce-backs.

Here is a partial list of its amazing set of features: database merge, HTML messages with embedded images, multi-tasking, direct delivery, list-serving, auto-responding, auto-forwarding, command line support, exclusion lists, unlimited mailing list size, message preview, duplicate elimination, and much more.

Advanced list management features make it easy to add, change, verify, and remove recipients from the mailing list. The text and HTML bodies, as well as attachments, can be automatically personalized with "G-Merge", a powerful language that permits "IF" statements, variables, loops, mathematical expressions, and full database access. G-Merge has an extensive function library and is capable of automating even the most difficult of tasks.

Only \$139 U.S.

I hope this helps!

Judy

Dear Deirdre,

I saw you "letter to the Editor" and I think I can help.

I bought an email program called Mail King. It's wonderful. I've sent over 800 emails at once when I was publishing a newsletter. I also sent out emails when I launched my website (www.lepoppet.com). I would highly recommend this software. I think it only costs about \$50.00. You can probably find it at www.beyond.com or any softare place.

Hope this helps.

Maria Carrillo

Deirdre:

My best idea would be to set up an "announcement only" mailing list at Yahoo. You can manually add your entire list to the Yahoo list. Simple to do, and no one can email anything to the list but you... and I don't think there's a limit as to how many people you can have on the list.

Tess

Teresa Kintner Gunnell

Usui Reiki Master/Teacher

Please visit my website: [Garnet Pomegranate](#)

Dear Editor:

I think you can set up a yahoo group to be announce only. I know you can create a group and add a list of addresses to it, 'cuz I've done that. Perhaps that combo would work for your mailing list. Oh, and I'd love to be ON your list. :->

Itg



Dear Editor:

I recently tried my hand at tiling an old table top. A problem arose and I could not remove the excess grout until days later. I am having trouble removing the grout and smoothing it between the broken tiles. Do you know of a homemade remedy for this.

Thanks
Desilu

Dear Desilu:

What an interesting problem. I don't have an answer, but perhaps someone else does?

Deirdre



Dear Deirdre:

Here's something Sue can try [to remove the white film that sanding and buffing sometimes leaves].. After sanding down to the chosen grit (whether that's 600 or 1500), put the beads back in your oven at no higher than your usual curing temperature for about 5 to 10 minutes. This will eliminate that "bloom" from the sanding.

I have tried this myself with success, and the method was confirmed in a workshop I took with Pier Voukos at this year's Bead & Button Show.

Happy Claying,
Susan Miller
[Litte Shop of Art](#)



Hi,

I have newly discovered this medium and your wonderfully informative site. I would like to incorporate some large sculpted shapes into a piece I am working on and need your advice. Should the shapes be made of solid polymer clay or would you advise creating

the shape in some other material (eg. polystyrene) and then covering it in sheets of clay which can then be decorated.

Thanks for your time in responding to this.

Cheers
Karen

Dear Karen:

Most people use armatures made of wire and tin foil as the base shape for larger sculptures. I'd stay away from polystyrene only because I'm not sure what it does when heated to the temperature needed to cure polymer clay -- does polystyrene melt at those temperatures?

Readers, any other advice for Karen?

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

Do you have any source of buying the tins, at a very, very reasonable Cost without having to purchase the mints?

I would love to try our some decorating techniques but do not want to Spend a fortune on the boxes. If I hit on a technique I like, I would like to share it the others at the stamp store I go to.

Your thoughts would be appreciated.

Joanne

Dear Joanne:

I get my tins from friends who eat those mints. I also have been getting neat-o thin tins from AOL -- they've been sending their cds out in tins.

I'd ask neighbors and co-workers for the tins, but perhaps some of our readers have a better source?

Deirdre



Hi

I was looking at a book about clay and saw an item made with a ginko leaf background stamp and it said stamp by Nan Roche.

I am unable to find any Nan Roche stamps - are they available for purchase anywhere?

Thanks
Lynn Ragali

Hi Lynn:

Here's Nan's response:

The stamps are made by Barbara McGuire (currently in her living room). I believe they can be purchased at Polymer Clay Express here on the east coast. I sometimes have a few for sale but not right at the moment.

Barbara contracted with both Cynthia Toops and myself to make some design images that have both the positive and negative for use by polymer artists. Her website is : [Creative Clay Stamps](#).

Hope this helps,

Nan



Hi There:

I am in need of fimo clay patterned canes. I recently found a site that had some very cool canes, but i can't find it any longer. I would appreciate any help that u could offer in finding cool canes for my candles.

Sincerely

[Jerry Blisse](#)

KOOL Candles

Dear Readers:

Anyone want to help Jerry out? May it could be a part-time (probably more like full time!) job?

Deirdre



Hello Tiffany,

Llet me be the thousandth person to suggest CHOP STICKS the kind you get when you order chinese food.....they will make excellent hair sticks...you may have to sand or paint the part that goes into you hair.

I use these CHOP STICKS for plant animals

Patzee

Dear Editor:

In the Questions and Answers column, Tiffany wrote about her problems finding a good glue.

I have a pair of hairsticks I received as a gift, and the glue on these hair sticks seems to be a very hard glue, it seems to have some body - as opposed to superglue - being very thin, do you have any suggestions at all???

I am very frustrated with my project - and I would greatly appreciate any and all suggestions that you may have...

I have a suggestion that might be helpful.

I think E-6000 Craft Adhesive might work well for the hairsticks. It's supposed to be super strong, clear, and excellent for making jewelry. The package says it has excellent adhesion to wood, metal, glass, fiberglass, ceramics, leather, rubber, vinyl and many plastics. Available at Wal-Mart stores, in the craft section. (It cannot be baked, though.)

Instead of jewelry head pins for the foundation --you might consider chopsticks, some sort of extra long darning needle, a small double pointed knitting needle, or browse around the hardware store....

Joanna Benz

Deirdre,

After reading the Q&A section of the June zine, here's an answer for Tiffany about the hairsticks.

I am new to polymer clay, but I have a long time background in making jewelry -- including hairsticks. As for the wire, I just use regular headpins in my hairsticks. The trick is not to hold onto the beads when you insert them in your hair! If you make sure to only handle the wooden stick, the wire won't bend.

You may also add a small drop of glue between each bead as you slide it onto the wire to cement the beads to the wire and to each other. (Make sure that you don't add too much or it will squish out between the beads and show.) Cementing the beads together a bit makes the beads act as a reinforcement for the wire. I also add a little extra glue to the wire when I am gluing it into the hairstick. The extra glue will cement the bottom bead to the stick, adding more stability. The only problem with this technique is that it is difficult to take the hairstick apart and reuse the beads if you become tired of it.

In response to the question about glue, I recommend E6000. It is an industrial glue that is widely used in jewelry and crafts. It sets up very firm and will glue non-porous materials (like metal) very well. You can find it in craft stores, some fabric stores and most places that sell jewelry-making supplies. One tube will last a long, long time! I can recommend a web site that sells it mail order if you can't find it locally.

Hope this helps!

Sheryl Nance-Durst

Dear Editor:

For Tiffany.

I am not sure what type of beading you want to do on the hair sticks. I use bamboo skewers as the base for mine (I also use this as a base to build flowers for vases). If you first cover the skewer with a thin layer of clay, then you can embellish the stick any way you want....no glue needed (at least the way I have been doing them). Good luck.

Linda H

Dear Editor:

Hi Polyzine! I have an answer to Tiffany Strickland's problem making hair sticks in the June 02 Questions and Answers. I have made many hairsticks with thin dowel rods purchased at the craft store. I cut them to the size I want (anywhere from 5" to 9" depending on how much you want them to stick out), then I sharpen one end with a pencil sharpener to get the right kind of point. The dowel is then painted, or covered with a thin layer of clay and baked, then covered with a good coat or two of a shiny finish.

When I make the bead that will go on top of the dowel I insert the dowel to make the right size hole in the bottom of the bead, then bake the bead. After cooling and finishing I glue the bead on the finished dowel rod with E6000. I have hair sticks I have used for years and they have never come apart.

I hope this helps!

Kristen Helmick-Nelson



Dear Editor:

Call me slow if you wish....but I need to know how do you transfer words onto these polymer clay dillies without them coming out spelled backwards????

Dah Me,

Karen

Karen:

It's not a dah question at all! A lot of people are probably wondering the same thing. It's the mirror image or reverse image function found in your print menu.

Here's how I do it: I use Microsoft Word, and I choose the Print function from the File menu, then choose the Properties button, which is in the upper right hand of the Print dialogue box. Once I am in Properties, I choose Features, which is the second tab along the top of the Properties dialogue box. In Features, I click on Mirror Image, which is the third choice down from the top.

Again, sometimes it's called reverse image rather than mirror image, but the results are the same: the page prints out backwards, and you can make photocopies of it.

Enjoy!

Deirdre



Dear Editor-

I just found your publication! I am so excited about the possibilities for a newcomer to pc and your e-zine is an amazing resource of information.

I did have some questions about the butterfly wing article in the current (June 2002) issue and that is, how were the wings attached to the bodies of the butterflies and can the wings be baked again without damaging them? I am so pumped by the information in the article, because I have an idea for making fairies, but didn't have a clue about making wings for them! I'd hoped to come across a manageable technique and lo and behold, there it was!

Thanks for being there! I am an instantly devoted reader and now I'm off to catch up on the archived issues!

Jo LaMore

Bosque Farms, NM

Dear Jo:

I contacted Alan Vernall, the author of the wing's article, and here is his response:

The wings are attached to the bodies of the butterflies using the wires which protrude from them. I drilled very small holes, not much more than the diameter of the wires, through the bodies. The holes run straight through - from one side to the other (avoiding armatures, of course).

If the 'U' shapes of wire are identical in profile in the two wings, then only two holes are needed (both sides use the same holes, from opposite sides). If however, the wires have slightly different exit widths, then three or even four holes will be required. The wires may then be glued in place using superglue and any excess snipped off. Alternatively, the wires can simply be bent under as they emerge from the body on the opposite side from the wing and locked in place like that. This method is useful if the sculptures won't be subjected to much potential damage - in a display for example, rather than jewellery.

The wings can be re-heated after they're cut out, but to avoid distortion, they should ideally be supported and held flat (with thick card folded around them for example) to prevent curling in the heat.

I hope that helps.

Best wishes,
Alan



Dear Editor:

O.K. Now I have my Scum Buster..but how do I connect the sand paper? And on which attachment ? I love your magazine and have learned so much.

Thank you for all your time.

Kay Thacker

Dear Kay:

I have my Scum Buster too, but I haven't played with it yet, so I don't know how to attach the sandpaper! Fortunately, there is a tutorial at Polyzine: [Low Tech Help for Weary Sanders](#).

You should get all your questions answered there. Enjoy your new sanding device!

Deirdre



Hello

Thank you very much for such an informative newsletter. I am so new I haven't even started my first project but have my heart set on trying to make some lapis earrings. I just read your color section and did not see a 'recipe' for lapis. Do you have any suggestions or thoughts on how I could mix and get the lapis look I crave?

Appreciate any thoughts or suggestions.

Thank you,

Ruth Camack

Dear Ruth:

Why yes I do have some advice for you: [Glass Attic](#), Diane Black's encyclopedia of polymer clay knowledge. The specific page you want is [Many Faux Techniques](#).

Be sure to send us a photo of your finished project!

Deirdre



Dear Polyzine,

I am a novice to the wonderful world of polymer clay and I am doing a lot of reading about the product. I am amazed at how versatile it is.

Anyway, my ultimate goal is to make a fountain pen/pencil/desk set. I have looked for instructions and have found some on covering ball points but I am interested in using the fountain pen kits that I saw in Penn State supply.

Do you know of any instructions using these kits? Which brand of clay would be the best for the pens since they would have the possibility of being used daily?

I know that to learn techniques using the clay is probably better learned through trial and error but I was hoping to skip the error part on the pens. Any help would be appreciated.

Thanks!
Marj Walmsley

Dear Mari:

Covering pens is a very popular polymer clay project, and there are several places you can get instructions, including:

- [Elizabeth's PolyParrot site](#)
- [Glass Attic's Covering Pens](#)
- [Clay and Pens](#), using Penn State pens

With these three links, you should be able to cover batches of pens in no time.

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

I am learning about caning and a question comes to mind how to reduce square canes? I think I can figure out the round one but the square ones stump me! I just can't figure it out . Help!

Louise

Dear Louise:

Good question. Here are some sites that can help you reduce your square, round, and odd shaped canes:

- [Glass Attic's Reducing Canes](#)
- [Polymer Clay Central's Basic Polymer Clay Techniques: Reducing Canes](#)
- [Brenda Mousseau's tips for reducing a large cane](#)

I hope this helps!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

I am trying to make replicas of fish can your product make a mold of a fish that can be used to make a model of fiberglass or some other material?

Thanks,
Carol Bromel

Dear Carol:

Polymer clay can certainly be used to create a mold from which to make fish, but I don't know about the fiberglass or other material part. Readers, what materials have you used to make models out of polymer clay molds? Are there limitations?

Deirdre



Dear Polyzine:

In response to the button shank question. Many fabric stores sell the plastic ones. I think they are by Dritz. The jewelry findings companies like [Rings and Things](#) and [Rio Grande](#) have both the plastic and metal shanks.

Trina



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