



Polymer Clay Polyzine

July 2002

Volume 3, Issue 7

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Editor's Letter

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Dear Readers:

Here's the July issue. It's a bit truncated this month because I've been out of the country for the past month, and I've been working like a dog to catch up on all my work since I've been back.

I know you have all been waiting for the July issue of Polyzine, and I thank you for your patience and assure you that August's issue will be back to it's usual full self.

In the meantime, the letters and question and answer sections are chock full of information, as is the book reviews page.

Thanks for tuning into Polymer Clay Polyzine, and have a wonderful month!

Deirdre

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Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor:

I am so glad this magazine is being produced. I just read my first issue (May). You are right, it will get you inspired. I liked the article about the different clays. I found the same conclusions, about the clays. For me the Kato Clay is better because I have trouble conditioning firm clays. I like Sculpey but it does not hold its form as well.

I have Fibremyalgia, which greatly affected my hands. That is not really like Carpel Tunnel but it hurts much the same. I discovered a help for my condition and would you believe it is in the conditioning of the clay.

I started dragging my clay making surface to the television to spend time with my husband. Since I didn't want to drag the pasta machine too, I would do a lot of the first conditioning with my hands. My hands started hurting less. When I told the doctor she said that it was a really good form of therapy. It is a hand exercise that is not quite the same procedure as putting up mail (I worked for the Postal Service) and endorphins are released by the exercise, plus I enjoy it. A win win situation.

Thanks again for your great magazines.

Allison Bolm



Dear Editor:

I shiver when I read Julie's article. I just saw her at a craft fair, and what she went through took a lot of courage. However, I would like to offer a little bit of an alternative view (not necessarily relevant to Julie's experience, just some other thoughts).

Five years ago I too was diagnosed with carpal tunnel. Luckily, I was told that I didn't have any nerve damage, but the same "cattle Prod" test Julie describes said that I had quite a severe case of it. But I didn't need a test to tell me that, as I had spent several weeks unable to sleep because of the night time experience of my hands feeling like they were on fire--blazing agony.

Then my neck and shoulders became so stiff that I couldn't back up a car. The doctor felt that I had rheumatoid arthritis, which was also causing the carpal tunnel. While my rheumatoid blood factor was very elevated, I didn't have all the symptoms. At that point she said, you can consider surgery for the carpal tunnel, and I can put you on prednisone or plaquinol, or you can try alternative therapies. My mother has had disfiguring rheumatoid arthritis, and she and 2 cousins have had carpal tunnel syndrome and surgery.

I decided to look into alternative methods. Here is what worked for me.

Acupuncture: after about 5 sessions, the carpal tunnel syndrome was gone and has never recurred. When the needles were being inserted, I felt like my hands were being electrocuted. They began to get better immediately. I went from needing braces on both my hands to feed myself, to completely cleared up. However, the acupuncture did nothing for the neck and shoulders, and the acupuncturist said, whatever is wrong there, it's not something I can help--you need to try other things.

Iyengar yoga: Did this for about three months and feel it made me much more flexible, but didn't totally solve the problem.

Major diet changes: I switched to an almost exclusively vegetarian diet (meat about once a week). Got religious about only organic food, and no products that contain partially hydrogenated vegetable fat (which is in tons of prepared foods, crackers, bread and cookies--really hard to avoid).

I do eat out at restaurants and friends houses but I make a lot of meals from scratch. This was a very hard change to make given a normal urban lifestyle.

Cost? Since I track my bills on computer, I can say with confidence that it's not as expensive as you might think--it costs about 25% more to go all organic (including the little meat I buy). I believe this is the single greatest effect on all my aches and pains. I truly believe I was being slowly poisoned by all the additives and gunga in our normal

food supply.

Supplements: I read pretty extensively and decided to follow Dr. Andrew Weill's recommendations (guy with a bunch of bestsellers and a website) to take evening primrose oil, omega-3, and feverfew supplements. If I go off these for more than a week, I start to get pretty creaky. However, I didn't see benefits from them until I had been taking them for a month.

I won't say I'm pain free--I am a bit stiff in the morning, but I AM 48 years old. I have chatted with so many people who have carpal tunnel and rheumatoid arthritis, and few people have even been willing to consider doing what I did. Yet, the difference in pain has been incredible. And my rheumatoid blood factor has gone from over 100 down to 21, a normal level.

I don't know if this might be of help to anyone reading Polyzine, but please consider what else you might do before surgery or drugs with serious side effects. I'd be happy to hear from anyone with any questions. I'm not a doctor, but I can tell you what worked for me. (and I don't sell anything but polymer clay artwork!)

Danielle Schultz



Dear Editor:

Thanks for putting this magazine together. I am a newbie so am keen to learn. I am interested in clay characters right now. I am a big fan of Maureen Carlson. Thanks.

Wendy



Dear Editor:

Congrats on another great E Zine, do you think you could start putting them out more than once a month? (Just kidding!) I sure enjoy it, and thanks for putting it out for all of us

clay add...enthusiasts!

Thought I would share my version of the treasure boxes, they are really fun to make, I can see one as a gift for everyone on my list come Christmas! Also I wanted to pass along a tip I discovered about the fit of the lid.

When the box is complete, and has been painted, sealed and is ready to go on to the bottom, often it is a very tight fit, and paint and sealer are torn away when the lid is put on. To fix this problem, I apply a coating of wax to the inside of the lid and the outside edge of the box. Just run a candle along it a few times and voila, it will fit on there perfectly and no more repainting or resealed where the lid was snug.

Again, thanks for all the great info.

I hope you enjoy the pics of my treasure boxes.

Suzan Jarisz
Williams Lake, B.C.
Canada





Dear Editor:

Thank you for letting everyone know when the July issue will be out. I have been looking since July 1st. I love the site and can't wait to see what new things you have come up with.

I can say I am little disappointed but very glad to know that the July issue will be coming out and that I do not have to check the site every day!!!

I hope that the circumstances that delayed the issue are not too dramatic and are resolvable.

Happy Summer and to further issues of Polyzine,

A Devoted Reader and Learner!!!

Dear Devoted and all other readers:

Sorry about the delay this month. Read all about it in [Editor's Letter](#). In the meantime, enjoy the issue!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

greetings again.

while doing grocery shopping the other day i found a set of cookie cutters that has plenty of butterfly shapes in it. it was cheap and i had to buy it although i rarely use cutters in my pc work. but I got a great idea for how these could be used; you could cut a butterfly from mirror image slice ([Mirror Cut Cane Pendant tutorial](#)) and get pretty fancy butterfly without knowing anything from caning. have not tried it jet but have to share it before i forget.

pörrö

ps. sorry, no caps, i am feeding my 5 week old while writing this.



Dear Editor:

I was excited to see "Fun With Fabric" by Karen Rhodes. Thank you so much for sharing this surprising idea. I have collected scraps of fabric for decades, for a "someday" project. I am a beginner to polyclay, and loving it, but wondered if I'd ever get to using my fabrics. Now the ideas are flying right and left, and I'm eager to try this new technique. Thank you!

Mickie Hettema



Der Editor:

I am brand new to PC-actually just heard about it this week. Definitely include me on the list for receiving your next issue.

Thanks you SO MUCH. This is such a fascinating medium that leaves plenty of room for creativity and unique style! I haven't got involved and already I see the possibilities are only limited by one's imagination.

Marilyn



Dear Editor:

I loved the article on lentil beads. I've been making them for months...but being the lazy person I am...I've been baking them on small light bulbs.

The bulbs are the decorative round type that use clear glass...the smaller size. I cover the bottom with clay (about 1/2 pkg) and make sure one side of the clay is flat so the bulb does not roll. I use clay either on a number 1 or 3 setting. I warm the bulb up for a few minutes in the oven and then lay the clay circle on the bulb. I can usually fit two circles on each bulb.

Warming the bulb and then cupping the clay in the palm of my hand allows for a smooth & tight suction to the bulb.

I let them cool a bit before I pop them off the bulb.

If I use the circles for earrings I have to rough up the inside of the circle...it is as smooth as "glass".

Laurie



Dear Editor:

I read with great interest the article on how to create lentil beads but think there is a far easier way:

Design your 'fronts' on the flat and brayer flat or run through the pasta machine. Cut out the design, in a circle, with cookie cutter.

Gently, in the cupped palm, push the cut-out on to an ordinary light bulb. Press, again with the cupped palm so as not to distort the shape, until the circle adheres comfortably to the bulb.


Place the whole thing on polyfill so as not to create shiny spots.

Bake as usual, allow to cool naturally.

I've been doing this for over a year and it's foolproof!

When they're cool, sand the cut edges by placing the entire edge down on to sandpaper on a table and move in a circular motion.

Barbara Colautti



Hi to all at polyzine,

I am a very enthusiastic beginner, introduced to polymer clay by a dear friend I am now hooked and would love to receive your magazine. Please put me on your e-mailing list. Thank you and I look forward to your next edition.

Kind regards
Shelley Byrt



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Questions and Answers

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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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Book Reviews

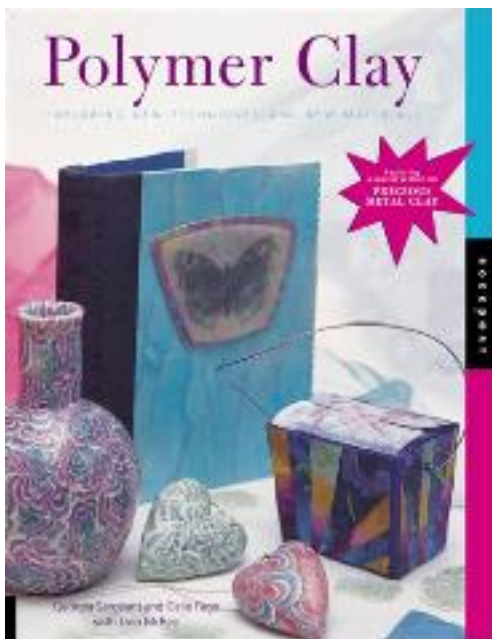
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What a lot of book do I have to share with you! The following are five books, two that deal specifically with polymer clay, and three that deal with making jewelry, that came my way in the past month.

Polymer Clay: Exploring New Techniques and New Materials

When I was talking with Georgia Sargeant this spring at the Baltimore ACC show, she mentioned that her polymer clay book was in production and would be out sometime in 2002. Imagine my surprise to find it in France, of all places, this June! I immediately made a note on my to-do list for when I got home: Buy this book!

Georgia, along with Celie Fago and Livia McRee, have put together a lively collection new techniques and new materials which they demonstrate and use in nearly twenty sophisticated but not difficult projects.

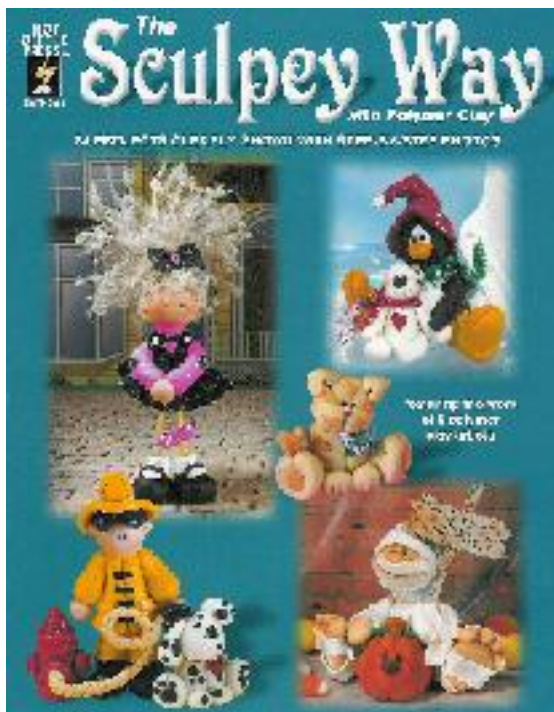


Starting with a short discussion about exploring polymer clay, the book continues with the requisite polymer clay basics, including a discussion of the various clays necessary tools, and basic techniques. The rest of the book is broken into thematic sections, the first dealing with creating visual effects with the clay, the second with creating structures from the clay, and the third with surface enhancements to the clay.

What makes this book significantly different from other polymer clay books is the fourth section, written by Celie Fago and dedicated entirely to exploring, explaining and creating with precious metal clay.

The book, published by Rockport, is well-photographed and printed on fine paper. The overall effect is a lovely book within and without, beautiful to look at and filled with beautiful projects to make.

Polymer Clay, by Georgia Sargeant and Celie Fago with Livia McRee
Rockport Publishers, Inc., 2002
ISBN: 1-56496-869-3
Retail Price: \$22.00



The Sculpey Way with Polymer Clay

Hot off the Press has a corner on the cute market, and their newest publication, The Sculpey Way, continues that trend. I don't particularly like cute, but with this book and the others in the Hot off the Press polymer clay series, I find myself drawn to these projects for three simple reasons: they are well done, with easy-to-read instructions and clear illustrations.

The 74 projects in The Sculpey Way cover a wide variety of themes, from animals such as Glory Bee and Antique Bear to people like Noah and Old McDonald to holiday-themed projects such as Halloween Friends and Parker Pilgrim, and range in complexity from simple to detailed. There is something here for everyone, and the clear writing and detailed photographs ensure understanding at every stage as you work your way to a nicely detailed polymer clay figure.

The designers for these 74 projects are Anita Behnen, Shelly Comishkey, Shohreh Dolkhani, Judy Ferrill, Sara Naumann, and Linda Welsh.

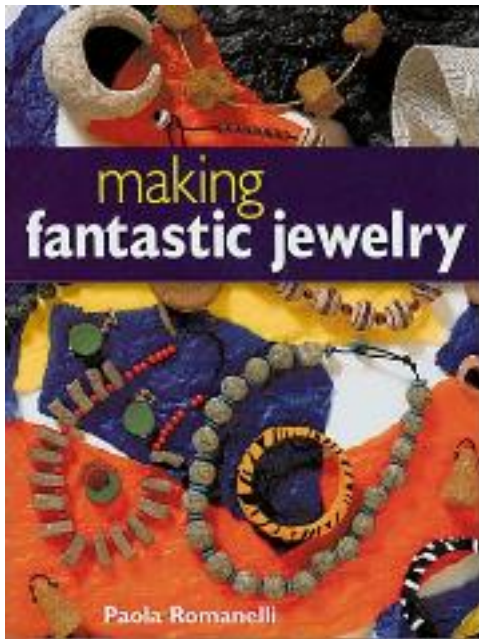
The Sculpey Way with Polymer Clay

Hot off the Press Inc., 2002

ISBN: 1-56231-823-3

Retail Price: \$13.95

The following books are jewelry, wire, and bead books that struck me as interesting and potentially useful for the polymer clay artist.



Making Fantastic Jewelry

Originally published in Italian, Paola Romanelli's Making Fantastic Jewelry leaves no material untouched in the search to create unique jewelry pieces, including polymer clay. From papier-mache to natural material (including orange peels!) to rubber to safety pins, the materials used in each project surprised and intrigued me and opened up new avenues of inspiration for my own polymer clay work.

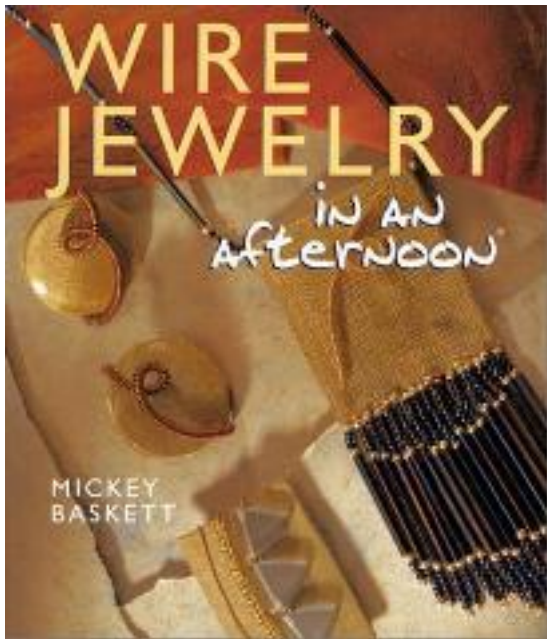
Romanelli's chapter on polymer clay itself shows only the most basic marbling technique, but the inventive reader can reinvent some of her other projects (necklace of candy, for instance) in polymer clay to create fun and visually interesting jewelry that will certainly be one of a kind.

Making Fantastic Jewelry, by Paola Romanelli

Sterling Publishing, 2002

ISBN: 1-4027-0124-1

Retail Price: \$16.95



Wire Jewelry in an Afternoon

I've always wanted to know how to wrap wire around beads and how to use wire in other projects, so I read this book with special interest. It opens promisingly enough, with information about types of wires and which wire to use in which project, along with instructions for twisting and coiling wire, but ultimately I walked away from this book feeling a bit flat -- less inspired than I thought I would be.

The projects are certainly interesting, incorporating wire and beads into necklaces, earrings, glasses holders, headbands, and all kinds of pins, but none of the projects really induced me to gather my materials and give it a try. Perhaps I'm just not a wire person, or perhaps the projects themselves were kind of pedestrian -- not really visually stimulating. Additionally, the illustrations for the step-by-step instructions were black-and-white drawings, which I find harder to understand than detailed photographs.

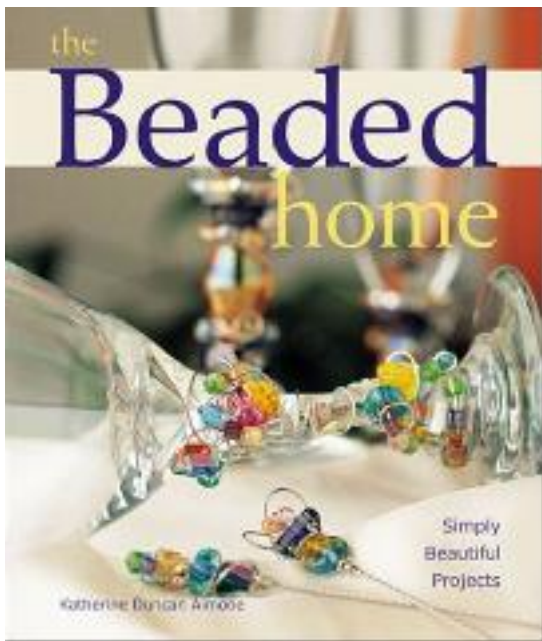
I found the final section -- Whimsical Wire Shapes -- to be the most interesting section. Offering tips on how to use wire jigs, this section shows designs for a variety of shapes that could be used to add decorative accents to the jewelry projects shown in the book or to any project that incorporates wire, from sculpture to boxes and books.

Wire Jewelry in an Afternoon, Mickey Baskett

Sterling Publications, 2002

ISBN: 1-4027-0132-2

Retail Price: \$14.95



The Beaded Home: Simply Beautiful Projects

Ohh. I love this book. Ostensibly, it's a book about beads, with basic bead, tools, supplies, and knotting information filling out the first several pages, but really, it's a book about fantastic projects that will really inspire you.

From beaded drawer pulls to beaded pillows, the nearly 50 lovely projects in this book, along with the spectacular photography, will draw out even the most reluctant designer in all of us. I found every project sparked a polymer clay design idea as well as a desire to make the project itself (as if I had enough time for that!).

Written by Katherine Duncan Aimone, The Beaded Home has quickly become one of my favorite books.

The Beaded Home, Katherine Duncan Aimone
Lark Books, 2002
ISBN 1-57990-381-9
Retail Price: \$14.95

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