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2003
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POLYMER CLAY
POLYZINE

Book Reviews

Creative Metal Clay Jewelry: Techniques, Projects, Inspiration

CeCe Wire
Lark Books, 2003

Having been a potter for 20 years who worked mainly in porcelain, I really looked forward to reading CeCe Wire's book [Creative Metal Clay Jewelry](#).

CeCe begins with a clear explanation of the three formulas of metal clay, their different qualities and how to make a choice between them. Her list of tools and equipment is clear and concise with explanations how each may be used, along with important safety instructions.

The photographs and drawings accompanying the step-by-step instructions are particularly helpful and each project lists all the supplies needed to complete the piece. CeCe takes the reader from the very easiest projects to the most difficult. The first project is called "Silver Snails": earrings that require 6 tools or equipment and can be completed in 5 easy steps. The last project is a "Perfume Amphora" necklace that requires 18 steps to complete. In-between there is a wide selection of bracelets, necklaces, rings, pins, earrings, sculptural pieces and buttons and beads -- something for everyone at every level.

I found the photographs very attractively done and before I was half way though the book, I was already planning the pieces I could make.

I think this book contains everything needed to begin your journey into the wonderful medium of metal clay.

-Jean Cohen

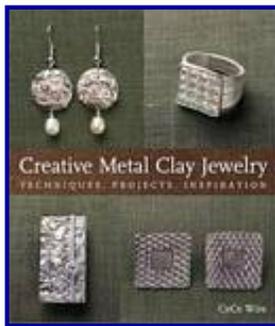
Get Rolling with Makin's Clay: The No-Bake Clay

Emily Disdale
Design Originals, Can Do Crafts, No. 5201, 2003

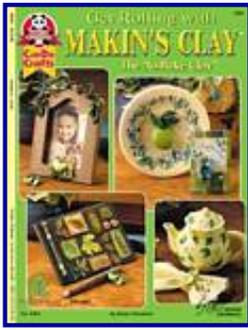
While this book doesn't use polymer clay for its projects, there's no reason not to!

Makin's Clay is a non-bake clay that mimics polymer clay in all but the curing process. The projects in the book -- from book covers to teapots -- are all well-suited to polymer clay. Especially useful are the last several pages, which detail various Makin's Clay tools that are perfect for polymer clay. Cutter sets include

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the alphabet and numbers, geometric shapes, bugs, animals, kids, and leaves. There are also clay texture sheets, a roller and cutter set, and push molds.

I haven't seen these products in the stores, but a quick check at your local art may turn them up!

--Deirdre F Woodward



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I remember it well - the first time I met Johnny and Robin Kuborssy . It was about four years ago, at one of my guild meetings - the South Bay Polymer Clay Guild, in San Jose, California.

I was surprised to discover that the clayer in the family wasn't Robin, but her husband, Johnny! Men in the polymer clay world are about as rare as hens' teeth, so we were especially delighted to welcome them into our group. At the time, Johnny was making whimsical, colorful little fantasy creatures with expressive faces, which he called "PolyPals." He brought a few to show us, and attracted an enthusiastic crowd!

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As with most creative people, Johnny has been into some kind of artistic endeavor for most of his life. The eldest of five children, he was born 33 years ago in Nazareth, the Holy Land. His parents and one of his sisters still live there. His brother and two other sisters and their families live in neighboring California communities, and all have a very close relationship.

Johnny began learning English at the age of eight, and though he has been in the United States for fifteen years now, a charming hint of an accent is still discernible.

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Of course, I had to ask Johnny the inevitable question: "How did you discover polymer clay?" He told me that he knew about it from seeing it in craft stores. About ten years ago he was playing with some Silly Putty, and made a flower that Robin loved. She convinced him to go out and buy some of that colorful Fimo and reproduce the flower with a material that would last. And of course, the rest is history.

PolyPals began when Johnny started making small figures to entertain his little daughter, Stephanie. When his friends and other family members saw them, they convinced him to try selling the figures in craft shows, and as predicted, they were a sell-out! Not only were the figures entertaining to children, they made charming little computer companions - one of the advantages to living in the Silicon Valley!

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At our first meeting, I saw Johnny as a self assured young man. I was surprised when he told me, "When I first started at the guild, I looked at everybody's work, and I felt very small and insignificant . I compared it to what I was doing, and felt really bad, because everybody else knew a lot of things that I didn't know. I never dreamed I could get to their level."

Johnny stayed with what he knew he could do well - his PolyPals -- but leapt at every opportunity to learn the skills and techniques of other artists. The South Bay Guild is rich with its own 'natural resources' -- artists who are prominent in the polymer clay world. We also invite a number of well-known artists to teach classes. Says Johnny, "I wanted to do the kinds of things they did, but to develop my own original style. So I stayed with it and learned all I could, and finally, I did!"

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And learn he did! Johnny started making jewelry that immediately attracted notice -- etched and inlaid faux ivory, faux bone, and delightful ornate pieces with a flair that reflect his Greek and Middle Eastern heritage. The Bay Area Belly Dance Society of San Francisco caught wind of his jewelry, and Johnny was asked to sell at one of their shows.

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The past two years have been significant ones for Johnny. In 2001 he attended the National Polymer Clay Guild's conference, aptly named "The Muse," in Philadelphia, and met more influential artists. He was elected president of the South Bay Guild. He attended HIA in Anaheim this past January, and charmed Lisa Pavelka and Donna Kato. Lisa took home several of Johnny's PolyPals, and has included him on the [HIA photo page at her site](#), calling him, "the Incredible Johnny." Johnny has been asked to write an article for both Polymer Cafe and Expression Magazines, and his PolyPals creations are featured in and on the cover of Irene Dean's new book, Kids' Crafts: Polymer Clay.

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In a recent message board discussion of men in polymer clay, Donna Kato had this to say: "Don't forget Johnny Kuborssy...I almost whopped him when I saw his first piece - it was so beautiful. But then I found out he made it for his wife and my heart melted. I call him one of our Hunks of Clay!"

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Though his PolyPals still hold a special place in his heart, Johnny now makes them by special request only, as he is now fully immersed in creating his amazing jewelry. He has a sketchbook full of drawings of future creations. Falling victim to the Silicon Valley employment slump, Johnny was recently laid off from his position as manager of a travel store. But, with his usual faith and optimism, Johnny is confident that another door will open soon. Meanwhile Johnny plans to use this time well and bring as many of those sketches in his bulging sketchbook to full fruition.

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And what does Johnny have to say about his rise to prominence in the polymer clay world? "I'm now creating original pieces. What I'm trying to say here is that never give up, and always believe in yourself, no matter what. I finally found my niche!"

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To see more of Johnny's beautiful work, visit his site at [PolyPals](#).

Johnny plans to soon begin selling his creations on the online auction site, [Just Beads](#). Be watching for him!



[Renaissance Pendant](#)
[Alicia DiGiorgio](#)

Supplies

- Black polymer clay
- 1 red glass cabochon (or a flat marble)
- 6 little pearl cabochons
- Gold acrylic paint

Click on images for larger picture



Tools

- Cutter
- Paint brush
- Stylus for embossing
- A tile or something that you can work on and put on the oven

Click on images for larger picture



Step One:

Condition your polymer clay block until it is soft. Roll it into a ball.

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Step Two:

Put the ball on your surface and smooth it with a glass or brayer. The pasta machine is not recommend since the width must be at least 5 mm in order to hold the cabochon.

Turn the smoothed clay form into a shape (i.e. square, oval, circle, etc).

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Step Three:

Texture the shape with some tool (i.e the embossing stylus) in order to achieve a background that looks "antique". Remember also to put a little clay strip on the top. This strip will help you later when you string the pendant.

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Step Four:

Either paint with a clear color or glue a piece of foil onto the back of your glass cabochon (not a plastic one! it would melt in the oven!) . The paint or foil keeps the color bright. Otherwise, the black clay will turn the color of the cabochon from bright to dark. If you'd like the darker color, go ahead and skip this step.

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Step Five:

When the paint/glue is dry, put your cabochon in the middle of your clay form and use a light pressure to set it.

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Step Six:

Make a very thin log with the black clay and use it for the bezel. The cabochon is then fixed to clay form and you won't need to glue it.

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Step Seven:

Use your embossing stylus to decorate the bezel

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Step Eight:

Place the other little pearl cabochons around the big cabochon and add other decorating elements using your fantasy !!

Bake according to the instructions of your polymer clay brand.

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Step Nine:

After the pendant is cooled, you can paint it with the gold acrylic paint and use a dampened tissue to remove some paint. The gold will stay in the crevices; others will be dark. This gives an "ancient" aspect to your pendant !

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Step Ten:

Use a varnish and ... et voilà ... you now own a renaissance pendant!!

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POLYMER CLAY **POLYZINE**

Painting in Clay: Carol Zilliacus

by Deirdre F Woodward

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Like a determined tornado, Carol Zilliacus prepares us lunch. "This is good," she says. "Sit down. Don't wait for me, eat." We sit, and finally, tempted by the smell of baked fruit, we dig into our pears, plums, and cottage cheese salad while Carol continues her dervish activities in the kitchen.

Lunch is delicious, which should be no surprise considering whose hand made it. Carol Zilliacus, a Silver Spring, Maryland resident, has been dishing out delectable works of art for more than 20 years. First a school teacher, Carol took a watercolor class in the 1980s that revealed to her her artistic side. She hasn't looked back since.

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In the mid-nineties, Zilliacus made the cross-over from watercolors to polymer clay. Her work is clearly influenced by watercolor, and many of the hundreds of pieces of art in her home demonstrate her ability to create a watercolor effect in polymer clay. Her use of pastels and shading lend a subtle and delicate air to dolls, kimonos, and wall pieces.

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However, Zilliacus is inspired by more than watercolors. Memories of her vibrant youth lived in the teeming and colorful neighborhood of Brighton Beach, a love of fabrics learned at the knee of her seamstress mother and reinforced through decades of sewing, a kinship with music and rhythm informed by her days as a dancer and made melocholic by acute back problems that forced her to both retire from teaching and stop dancing all combine into a force that explodes out of many of her projects.

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As forceful as her works is Carol's presence in the polymer clay world. She's been a featured artist in more than 40 shows, including the American Craft Council shows, Embellishments, the Bead and Button Show and Conference, and the Creative Crafts Council. She's been on faculty at The Corcoran School, Ravensdale, Arrowmont, Embellishments and the Bead and Button Conference. Her work has been featured in [The Artist's Illustrated Encyclopedia](#), Jacequeline Gikow's [Polymer Clay](#), Dorothy McMillan's [Creative Ways with Polymer Clay](#), Barbara McGuire's [Foundations in Polymer Clay Design](#), and two [Polymer Clay](#) calendars.

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With energy and exuberance to spare, Carol shows us around her home, then takes us to her studio to play with clay. After admiring the many masks that give personality to her studio walls, we get down to the task at hand: making faces. Carol is an excellent teacher; with the right combination of encouragement and advice, she gets me to produce a not-half-bad head complete with human-ish features.

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After several hours of conversation, deep concentration on the task at hand, and a wide-ranging discussion of artistic influences and favorite techniques, we head out to dinner. We settle into a delicious meal at a local Italian restaurant where the conversation turns to allergies and other quotidian matters.

After sharing a delicious tiramisu, we call it a day. I leave tired yet excited -- Carol's colorfulness, dedication to her craft, and energy has led me through an energenic day that was thought provoking and inspiring.

I recommend you check out that energy in Carol's work, and enjoy her ebullient use of color and form.



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Breaking into Print: Design Originals by Trina Williams

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What do Lynne Kruke and Desiree McCrory have in common with the more famous polymer clay names of Barbara McGuire, Gwen Gibson and Nan Roche? They have all had polymer clay projects published in Design Originals.

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Design Originals may be a good place to start if you too would like to see your work in print. More than an article and less than a book, the Design Originals booklet offers artists and designers a great showcase for their work.

Suzanne Mc Neill, founder and publisher, started Design Originals in 1984 before the big boom in the Arts and Crafts field, before crafting magazines and television shows about crafts became commonplace. She began as a designer for American Handicrafts, a division of Tandy Corporation, and wrote a column for Craftworks, one of the earliest craft magazines.

The best place for starting authors, says Suzanne, are craft magazines. They can help the new author get his or her feet wet and they build the artist's portfolio.

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According to Barbara Burnett, Media Director for Design Originals, whom I interviewed at the Hobby Industries trade show early this year, Design Originals tries to follow the trends in the crafting business.

If you have ever been to a show where Design Originals had a booth you know it is one of the most colorful around. With their boldly striped jackets the DO people are hard to miss. They even have polymer clay buttons!

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Barbara told me that Design Originals looks for what is selling in the marketplace. "Designers come to us", she said. "We ask them to send samples and photos. Digital photography is accepted."

When projects have been accepted the step-by-steps need to be sent in individual poly bags for final photography. After publication, designers get 12 copies of the book plus the ability to purchase more copies at 75% off retail.

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Last year I was able to show Suzanne McNeill some of my work. She was very gracious, looked at everything and gave me lots of good suggestions even though she decided my project wasn't for them.

Barbara states that Design Originals has a reputation of being ethical and easy to work with. Crafters like the basic directions of each and every title.

For a look through Design Originals' catalog go to [their website](#), and, if you have a project in mind, send your idea to Barbara Burnett, Design Originals, 2425 Cullen Street, Fort Worth, TX 76107. Be sure to include your name, address, phone and photographs or samples of your work.

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We are specifically looking for classes that range from beginner to advanced, and are new classes. We are also looking for class proposals that encompass the entire polymer clay community which includes but is not limited to; sculptors, caners, miniaturists, doll makers, metal clays, garage kit makers, precious, and gallery style work.

This conference is sponsored by the National Polymer Clay Guild for the entire Polymer Clay Community.

If you know of an instructor or artist who may be interested but not online, please pass this message on.

For complete proposal forms please contact:

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