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## Montreal Polymer Clay Guild by Deirdre F Woodward [print version](#)

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Since I am a teacher, and get my summers off, I usually spend time in upstate New York with my family. This summer, I decided to treat myself to some polymer clay fun -- I made arrangements to meet with the Montreal Polymer Clay Guild. Let me tell you right now -- I wish I was part of this guild. We spent half the night laughing, telling naughty jokes, and sharing polymer clay tips and techniques.

The Montreal Polymer Clay Guild was started in 1997, after two events. First, during a workshop with Tory Hughes, Tory suggested to the group that they ought to form a guild. Second, Montreal hosted a polymer clay show featuring well-known US artists, including Tory, City Zen Cane, Dan Cormier, and Jamie Allen. After these two events, three women -- Lynda Gould, Ruth Shine, and Norma Colter -- decided to work together on a guild.

Here, Nicole Landy and Lynda Gould (right) share a joke while examining some polymer clay items.



The guild now meets monthly at the Visual Arts Center in Montreal. Usually the guild meetings feature a demonstration, most recently an amber bead demonstration.

What I found so remarkable about this guild is that they slip easily between English and French as they talk among themselves. Consisting of both English and French speakers, the group does not favor one language over the other. In one corner of the room, two women can be speaking in rapid French, and a third can join them, seamlessly, in English.

Here, Elsa Brunelle, Gaby Orbach (standing) and Dyna Toutoungi (right) examine a polymer clay item.



Not all the members of the guild could make it to this impromptu meeting, but the ones that did brought with them a treasure trove of polymer clay items. From dolls to boxes to earrings, this group creates as many things in polymer clay as one could possibly think of.



Here, Trita Cohen and Barbara Lang (right) examine Trita's wearable sculpture.



Elsa Brunelle created this incredible faux amber bead necklace. I was truly impressed with the magnificent beauty of this piece.

When the beads proved to be too heavy for the string Elsa chose, the entire group joined together to brainstorm ways to make the necklace lighter.

Using tinfoil -- instead of clay -- as the base of the bead seemed to be the most popular suggestion.



Trita Cohen demonstrates her wearable sculpture. The hands of the faux clock she is hold are actually earrings!



Trita also created this incredibly clever doll. The face -- in polymer clay -- is actually a transfer of a photograph of Trita.

But there's more . . .



Inside the doll, there are photos of Trita's mother, grandmothers, and other relatives on the outside circle, and photos of Trita's daughters (actually, their heads on geisha bodies!) on the inside circle.



Dyna Toutoungi created these exciting items. Dina enjoys hand coloring her pieces, as you can see on from one of her more recent pieces --- her journey from sorrow to happiness (lower left).

There are three main sections on this piece -- to the right are autumn leaves, which represents sorrow, and to the left is a woman in springtime, which represents happiness. In the center, the woman presides over a whirlpool of writing that contains works of encouragement and joy.



Nicole Landy created the molded pieces to the right. She uses her work for assemblage, which is, she explained to me, a shadow box technique. By creating molded pieces, adding them to other pieces, and arranging them in shadow boxes, Nicole creates interesting three dimensional sculptures.

I asked Nicole about the striking patinaed effects many of her molded items have, and she told me that she, like others in the group, use patina paint to created the wonderful weathered effects on her pieces.



The next two pieces were created by Lynda Gould. I was really impressed by her technique and form!

This piece is a round box, impressed with images and wiped down with paint for an aged look.



Here Lynda has used texture and form to create this stunning Asian-inspired box with lid. I think it would be perfect for burning cones of incense.

Lynda also makes pins and earrings, which she sells at a small boutique near her home. Her items are very lovely, and I am proud to say I own a Lynda Gould pin!



These necklaces and other items were created by Gaby Orbach. Her work has a lot of texture and surface detail, and is quite lovely. Notice in the upper left hand corner the use of polymer clay with notebooks!



Barbara Lang created these pieces. Her technique is unique and results in very impressive pieces.

To the right, Barbara uses polymer clay in combination with paper and other materials to create Byzantine-eque boxes. The Frieda Kahlo piece is especially intriguing.

On the left are Barbara's etched transfer pieces. She uses transfers to create an etched image into the clay, then hand colors the image and add some metalwork for detail.



Here's an upclose picture of one of Gaby Orbach's necklaces. I especially like the combination of metal beading and clay.



Nicole Landy's etched transfer technique resulted in this wonderful fragment of medieval writing.



Dyna Toutoungi used faux bone, faux stone, and a real feather to create this wonderful native-inspired bear paw necklace.



I spent some wonderful hours with some of the people who form the Montreal Polymer Clay Guild. It was a great experience, and I'd love to attend one of their meetings. The people I met are warm, hospitable, and willing to share their knowledge and skills.

Nowhere was this more evident than when Lynda brought out this basket and asked the group if anyone had bottles to donate. The guild, and Lynda especially, has picked up on the Bottles of Hope drive started in the United States, and gives thousands of decorated bottles, filled with messages of inspiration and hope, to area cancer wards.

Thanks for the visit, you guys!