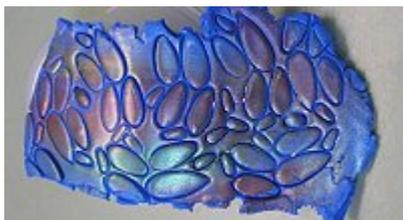


Most of us can't walk by any kind of gadget without thinking "how can I use that with polymer clay?" I'm no exception. From apple corers to zesters, cookie cutters to pizza wheels, cosmetic applicators to old electric toothbrushes we came, we bought, and we improvised.



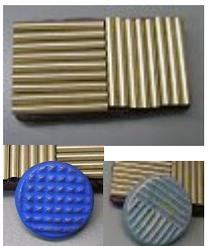
My latest conquest is what I like to call Brass Trash. You can buy it by the bag from any model shop and the [MicroMark](#) catalog. Mainly scraps of brass rods it also contains square shapes and oval shapes lengths from 1/4 to 7 inches. I saw it advertised in the MicroMark catalog while I was recovering from my broken shoulder. Shopping on-line was my only recreation. My imagination was way ahead of my tool building skill but I have come up with a few things that are workable and I'm sure the rest of you can add to that.



The first thing that attracted me was the oval, or tear drop, shape and I envisioned putting the various sized ovals together with a rubber band into a design that could be changed to suit my mood. Wrong. The rubber band will hold a basically round configuration but anything elliptical needed something else. Scotch tape? Seems to work pretty well. Embedding in clay? I need to learn to cut the pieces smaller. This one is a work in progress. Although the rubber stamp designer at Embossing Arts was impressed with it enough to keep my original sample. I used this one as both a texture tool and a cutter, although the clay gets stuck in the smaller holes. A water release helps.



The second "tool" was rather serendipitous. I picked up a length of rod and it was stuck with another piece of rod inside a bigger rod. A few drops of glue and another design was born. Dipping it in Pearl Ex gives you another look.



The most versatile tool is simply a series of same diameter rods embedded in a piece of clay. After baking flip the pieces out and then glue them in with your favorite glue. As you can see from the pictures you can get three different patterns and as someone in the button swap will see, it makes great buttons!



I also found a very small square rod, about an eighth of an inch and a similar sized hexagon that are too small to photograph but will make excellent impressions.

So here is a challenge to you all. Invent a new tool from scrap. It's fun and will keep you out of trouble.