

The Tsunami Cane®

by Elissa Powell

Photography by Kyle Robertson

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Tsunami (Japanese): n. A very large ocean wave caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption.

Some natural events can be terrifying and destructive, yet at the same time beautiful. The tsunami can be tamed, when captured in polymer clay! My step-by-step instructions will lead you through the process.

Materials:

1. Pasta machine (a necessity!)
2. Large flat work surface
3. Tissue blade
4. Brayer, small glass, or Plexiglas rod for rolling
5. 1/2 brick each of two contrasting colors of polymer clay (one light, one dark). Use a firm clay, such as Fimo or Premo.
6. 1/8 brick each (approx.) of Fimo Soft metallic silver glitter and white clay.

Just a few pointers:

1. Non-clay surfaces to be covered will need a base of clay applied first.
 2. Don't worry about incomplete slices. As with the [Translucent Chrysanthemum Cane](#), perfect slices are of only limited use.
 3. After applying the cane slices to your project, smooth them with a hand dusted with cornstarch or baby powder. Any smoothing you do before curing will lessen the need for heavy sanding, which can sometimes erode away the thin cane veneer. Sand gently!
- May all your tsunamis be the polymer clay kind!

1. Start with a Skinner blend: 1/2 package each of two contrasting colors.



2. Roll sideways, so that the solid colors stay at either end.



3. Holding the log straight up, apply downward pressure to one end to shorten.



4. The compressed Skinner log is now a "plug."



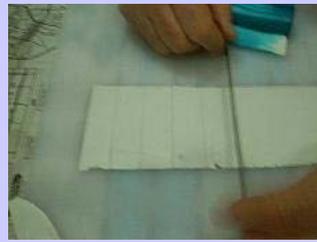
5. Use a roller to flatten the plug. Give a 1/4 turn, roll to flatten again, creating a rectangular shape.



6. For my tsunami, I am sandwiching a sheet of Fimo Soft metallic silver (1/4 brick) inside a thin sheet of white.



7. Here I have run the sheet through the second-to-largest setting on the pasta machine. I have trimmed off the excess white. Now I am cutting the silver/white into strips that match the width of my rectangular plug.



8. Now slice the plug lengthwise into five or six strips.



9. Insert a strip of the silver/white separator between each slice.



10. Here's my reassembled plug now with a strip of silver/white separating each slice.



11. With the roller, flatten the plug into a square.



12. Cut the flattened square in half, with different colors at either end.



13. With the roller, taper the dark-colored ends to almost a point, without flattening the lighter ends. Form each piece into a curl.



14. Fit the larger light ends of the curls into each other, and wrap the tapering dark ends around them.



15. Now you have a thick roll that needs to be reduced.



16. Squeeze and roll between palms or on flat surface, until your cane is reduced to desired diameter.



17. And there you have your tidal wave - er, tsunami!



18. Slice thinly. As with the [Translucent Chrysanthemum Cane](#), perfect slices are of only limited use. Partial slices will accentuate the effect of a rollicking, rolling tsunami!



19. Distorting a slice or two by a pass through a thin setting on the pasta machine will give you a larger swirl and different effects. The slice will also cover a larger area. Overlapping pieces will create more of a tumultuous look.



20. Here I have covered a ball of scrap clay with tsunami cane, and I am rolling it to smooth it.



21. I have made a heart (naturally!) but this cane is quite versatile and can be used for covering larger surfaces. Boxes? Picture frames? Notebooks? Vessels? Use your imagination!



Tsunami Cane Hearts ~ now Tsunamis come in different colors!



The photographer, Kyle Robertson: nephew and friend



Me: Elissa Powell

