

Back in 1844 when Hans Christian Anderson wrote his delightful tale of that odd looking little duckling, I doubt he had ever heard of polymer clay, nor defined "cane" the way we do now. Even so, Hans had the right idea when he coined the phrase that so aptly describes many of my cane disasters.

Trust me, I start out with the best of intentions, but you know how it goes; a bit too much white clay here, too little red clay there, and before you know it, oops, you have an Ugly Duckling Cane.

Now, if you remember the advice given to the mother duck in Anderson's story, it was suggested she abandon that odd looking egg, but no, she decided to sit on it a little while longer. She and I are a lot alike – I can't abandon my cane, no matter how ugly it is.

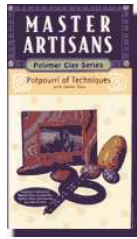


## Supplies

- "Scrap" canes or cane ends

## Tools

- Pasta Machine or Brayer
- Stylus or blunt point object



What to do? There's far too much clay invested in a cane to simply add it to the "scrap" pile, and lately, the number of ugly canes on my worktable seem to be multiplying faster than duck eggs. Fortunately, I watched Donna Kato's video, *Potpourri of Techniques* (Mindstorm) for the ten-millionth time over the holidays, and as she demonstrated the Marbled Paper technique, suddenly, there was my answer – I discovered how to turn all my "ugly ducklings" into "beautiful swans." Here is my rendering of Donna's wonderful technique.



**Step One:** Select a pile of scrap canes or cane ends and condition slightly by rolling on flat surface.



**Step Two:** Roll clay into log. Hold one end and twist opposite end as if making a candy cane. Alternate ends and continue twisting until desired stipe effect is achieved. You may need to fold clay in half and then fold over on itself several times.



**Step Three:** Using both hands, roll log INWARD to shorten length. Log will become "plug-like." Flatten plug with fingers and roll with brayer to smooth in both directions.



**Step Four:** Continue to flatten clay with brayer until approximately 1/8" thick OR roll through pasta machine at #1 setting. Be careful to roll in one direction only.



**Step Five:** Using stylus or blunt pointed object, drag lines perpendicular across stripes. This creates marbled paper look. At this stage, you can drag lines in the opposite direction (up or down) between the first lines you made. This creates a feathered look.



**Step Six:** Roll clay through pasta machine on successively thinner settings to smooth clay and enhance marbled paper look OR roll clay with brayer, taking care not to distort marbled image.

Your once "ugly duckling" cane should now be a "beautiful swan" ready to embellish picture frames; cover eggs, containers, and boxes; or, more traditionally, line the inside covers of polymer clay books

