

January 2002
Volume 3, Issue 1

Dear Editor:

Volume 2, Issue 12 is the first of your online magazines I have seen...Wonderful job. I was going through it tonight with my 9 year old granddaughter and what wonderful ideas to work on with her for Christmas things. Thanks again...now on to the"rest of the issues."

Katherine Fuqueron
Moderator of [MSATOneInchMinis](#)
A Yahoo Group



Hi Deirdre,

I know I'm probably dreadfully late in my response but here it is, just in case it's useful in the future. Sorry I don't have any pictures but I don't have a digital camera.

I have no idea if this is unusual or not but I have been using a miniature table saw for some of my polymer clay work for a couple of years now.

I purchased a Microlux Tiltting Arbor Table Saw from [Micromark](#) - the catalog business that specializes in model-making tools and accessories.

It's small - about 12" high and 10" square on the top.

I use the saw to cut baked slabs of polymer clay that I assemble into boxes, book covers or other projects. The saw makes beautifully clean cuts **and** angled cuts. This allows me to make mitered corners on my boxes and the results are clean and professional looking. I have been extremely pleased with the saw's ability to meet the various challenges I have given to it!

It has variable speeds so you don't have to worry about melting the clay at high speeds. The blade tilts from 0 - 45 degrees which has been adequate for all but the most unusual projects I have undertaken.

Here are some details about its use:

- Since I don't have a heated workshop space where I can work, I clamp the saw to kitchen island and connect the vacuum cleaner to the saw's handy output pipe to suck up the copious quantities of polymer dust that are produced. I always have lots of clean-up to do after using it!!
- I wear an apron, safety glasses and mask as quite a bit of dust still kicks back during the cutting process. Like every carpenter I know, I've had to remove the safety guard over the blade to be able to see what I'm doing.
- I have to store the saw on some shelving when not in use.
- I use a high speed slitting saw blade with the smallest kerf for cutting the baked clay. The kerf is the thickness of the blade that eats the clay as it cuts. I believe it has 230 teeth and a .020" kerf. These blades are available from Micromark as is the "easy mount bench bracket" that holds the saw to the table.

As I became more skilled with using the saw for cutting up small slabs of clay, I became more ambitious and wanted to cut larger slabs. Unfortunately, the surface area of top is small so I was limited in just how wide a slab of clay I could balance on the tabletop - I think the limit was 4" and I wanted to move onto bigger and bigger! So, with the help of a carpenter friend

who had lots of leftover plexiglas, we made a plexiglas table top that is 18" square and is now screwed right on top of the original saw's table. This has been terrific and given me lots more flexibility in terms of larger clay slabs.

I grew up around power tools but never have used a full size table saw as I am rather short and don't have enough leverage to safely handle lumber. I feel perfectly safe with this little saw because I'm above the saw and always handling materials that I feel like I can control - very important when working with power tools! This saw is dangerous - no doubt about it - it can still cut off a finger or kick back a piece of clay and send it flying.

If you're not accustomed to the basic rules of how to work around a table saw - no matter the size - definitely find someone who is and have them give you all the safety info regarding how to use accessories to keep yourself safe, where to position your body so you are safe, etc.

Bake up a bunch of slabs of various thicknesses of junk clay and practice on those first. Different clay brands cut differently - some edges are cleaner than others. If you're making angled cuts, sometimes your work needs to be face down or face up so you have to think through every cut (sometimes 3-4 times it seems!!!) before you commit yourself to the blade.

I've made quite a few wrong cuts but "Life is like photography - we develop from the negative." Your spatial perception skills will be challenged but will grow too.

If you want to know more about this tool, let me know!

Carol



Dear Editor:

I'd add an engraving tool that I found in an art store: It has a sharp end that is good for drawing lines with, and a spoon-like end that is pointed that I use for everything: shaping, burnishing, indenting, moving the clay around, you name it!

Kathy Marie Garness

(14 years' in the field making figures for a Christian Education program called the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd)



Hello all,

I wrote the Mayor on the art in the trash City! I hope everyone else does! I feel that most public Art is more of an eyesore though I have seen some lovely pieces here in Texas: some in Dallas -- bronze mustangs And longhorns running free -- and in Port Aransas -- great Bronze Sea life and Sea Birds to name a few !

Thanks for letting us know and I hope it helps to write an email I believe that it might be better to write a hard copy letter but maybe not?

Victoria

Dar Victoria and everyone else who wrote to the Mayor (and there were a lot of them):

The Mayor wrote back to me. He was incensed. Apparently we didn't have our facts straight, or so he claimed. I checked out all news stories regarding this issue and found that all the facts Tommie presented were, in fact and of course, accurate.

The Mayor and I had a short e-mail exchange, then he disconnected his e-mail address.

Deirdre



Dear Polyzine,

I found that sometimes you just can't find the shape of cookie cutter you need to make a project easier to complete. I pulled out an empty coke can from the recycle bin, and with my husband's tin snips and an idea in my head, I went to work.

You first need to cut open the can, being very careful not to cut yourself on the sides of the can. Cut off the top and bottom of the can. You are then left with a square sheet of aluminum. I then cut the strips about 1 1/2 " wide and as long as you can. You need to make one edge safe so you don't cut yourself when using as a cutter. Bend over about 1/4" along the length of the cut strip and make the seam flush by running down the edge with a pencil or other tool.

Then I repeat that step again so that the rough edge is enclosed inside itself. Now you have one safe edge and one that can be used to cut clay. Then you can bend the strip into the shape you want using your assortment of pliers to make corners or rounded edges as desired.

You can play around and come up with ideas that may work better for you. I have not checked around but I am sure you can probably find sheets of aluminum or tin that you can use instead of a can. I have also used a cookie cutter that was flexible enough to be reshaped into what I needed.

Have fun!

PS. Thanks Polyzine for all you do. I enjoy the info a lot.

Kelly Steindorf
San Diego Polymer Clay Guild



Dear Polyzine:

Ditto on your review of this tape [Judith Skinner]. The quality is extremely poor - everything is so dark! And, it was boring after the first demo of the cane. It just described the same thing over and over and over.....

This is my third tape from abba dabba, and I don't think I'll buy another from them unless they improve the quality of their tapes.

Vinnie Dachowski



Dear Polyzine:

Wow!

What a great issue. Dave Snyder's candy canes look good enuf to eat! and Jeannie Havel's Elements of Polymer Clay article!!! Well, Duh! Everyone one of my godkids has **some** type of Playdoh station gathering dust in the attic or garage.

Guess I will do some "visiting" this weekend. Hope this letter finds your staff well and that they have an awesome holiday.

Carpe Beadum
Carissa Nichols



Dear Editor:

Hi, I'm hoping you can help me. I am one of those weird people that actually had a pasta machine for making pasta (and did so for years). The machine is over 15 years old and has 5 settings. I started using it for polymer clay and of course had to buy a new one for making pasta that has 10 settings.

Although I thought it would be nice to have the 10 settings for clay rather than 5, the thought of taking apart the machine and getting it clean enough to use for food again was too overwhelming.

My question is: when instructions refer to setting #3 is that #3 on the 5 settings or #3 on the 10 settings? There is a big difference. Thanks so much for your help.

Johnna Heilbrun

Dear Johnna:

That's a great question, and of course, there is no answer. Each pasta machine has different thicknesses (thickni?). Most people use a 7-setting pasta machine (only because that is the inexpensive standard) but many people have a 5-setting machine or a 10-setting machine.

To make matters worse, some machines are set 1-7 where 1 is the thickest and 7 the thinnest, while other machines are set 7-1, where 7 is the thickest and 1 is the thinnest.

Elise Winters suggests that we all move away from instructions that use the pasta machine setting and towards instructions that use millimeters to describe the thickness or thinness of our slabs.

In the meantime, I'd use this advice: if the instructions call for a thick slab, use your thickest setting. Vice versa for thinness. In the final instance, go with your gut -- if the piece seems like it should be a thick backing piece, then make it thick. But if it seems to be a thin embellishment piece, make it thin.

I know this doesn't answer your question entirely, but perhaps it clears things up a bit?

Deirdre



Hi.

I'm a "newbie" to PC and would like a source (or sources) for cabochon forms. Can you help?

Thanks,
Barb Alexander
Victoria, BC Canada

Dear Barb:

While there are tons of places to find cabochon forms off-line ([Riogrande](#) springs to mind), here's a site you can visit that lists on-line sites that sell jewelry supplies: <http://dmoz.org/Shopping/Jewelry/Supplies/Findings/>.

You can also visit Yahoo! and run a search using the phrase "jewelry making supplies."

Also, [Fire Mountain Gems](#) has cabochon forms. Run a search on their page for "cabochon setting."

Enjoy!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

Thank you for [Tommie's] wonderful article [[Keeping Safe](#)]. I just happened to be trying to purchase an inexpensive oven to cure my clay, because of all the warnings I've seen on various shows. After burning two pieces in a substandard oven, I returned the oven and thought I was going to have to A) Clean my oven every time I bake clay or B) Buy a \$100 oven to exclusively bake clay. I just happened to go back to the prior issues of Polyzine when I found your article. I'm so happy I could cry.

My 4 year old dearly loves to roll clay through the pasta machine (over and over and over.....). He's the closest thing I have to a powered pasta machine! My problem was washing his hands with anal retentive attention, due to all the warnings. It's nice to know he can wash his hands on his own, without me scrubbing them with a brush till they're raw.

Thanks to you Tommie, we can clay with happy abandon (almost).

Blissfully creating,
Kathy Beringer and son
Crystal Lake, Illinois



Dear Editor: [Re: [Covering Altoid Boxes](#):] This has to be the coolest thing I have ever seen. I always felt guilty throwing my empty Altoid containers away - now I know why! I am running out to purchase Fimo and a pasta machine for myself and daughter this week. Can't wait! Thanks for the inspiration,

Jill



Dear Editor:

I have just started experimenting with PC and snowglobes. I am totally flying blind on this new adventure, but I imagine I am not the first to attempt it. Any chance this topic might appear in future issues? :)

LJ

Dear LJ:

Good question. As always, the best place to go for snowglobe advice -- which has been the subject of much debate in various polymer clay circles -- is [Glass Attic](#). Enjoy!

In regards your second question, I'd love someone to submit an article on making snowglobes. Writers? Artists? Anyone?

Deirdre



Hello:

I am an artist just starting out in the sculpting world and was just wonder if after you put the fiberfill around the wire if you can bake that with the clay on it?

Thank you for your time.

Tim

Tim:

Great question! I know that a lot of people make things out of clay then rest them **on** fiberfill during the curing process. Therefore, fiberfill is fine in the oven at the proper curing temperature. It seems logical enough that the fiberfill could be **inside** the clay as well.

Give it a try and let us know.

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

What tips do you have on keeping a clean worksurface? I wash my hands and keep a damp washcloth available during sculpting but I still seem to get "dirt" in the clay.

Also, I was reading the article from Desiree about covering Altoid boxes...where can I purchase the hole punch and blades she refers to? Thanks!

Tejae

Tejae:

Another great question. I use baby wipes for everything. I wipe down my work surface with them, I clean my hands with them (constantly), and I even run them through my pasta machine between colors.

A friend of mine covers her conditioned-but-not-yet-used clay with very fine, white curtains. It keeps the dust off.

Regarding Desiree's hole punch and blades, Desiree says she purchased the hole punch as part of the Leather Factory Maxi Punch Set which she found at a "Michael's craft store equivalent," and the blades are tissue blades, but NuBlades could work too.

Deirdre

p.s. Cat hair doesn't constitute "dirt."



Dear Editor:

I just found your magazine a few days ago and feel like I've stumbled on Polymer Heaven. I already have loads of things I want to try from the articles.

Meanwhile, I have a tip to pass on to readers: About two years ago, I made some faux-jade amulets for the members of a class I was taking, and to make the dark specks that often characterize jade, I mixed in a little bit of crumbled tea leaves. After baking and buffing, they looked great--until about 6 months ago, when the dark spots from the tea leaves starting spreading and staining. Now the amulets look like they have some sort of awful disease, with big brown blotches all over them.

So much for my brilliant idea. Next time, I'll use black play sand or even potting soil!

Sarah



Hello!

I am looking for the silver and gold spacers the larger size. Michaels can't get them until mid January, do you have a place I could order from?

Thanks

Sharon Weatherford
Regional Manager Gables Corporate Accommodations

Sharon:

This is too late I am sure, but check out [Fire Mountain Gems](#) or run a search on any search engine for "beads" "spacers" "jewelry" "supplies."

Deirdre



Hi!

Your magazine is great! Thanks for 'writing' about Polymer Clay!!! (I wish it were in print on the news-stand.)

Tricia



Dear Editor:

I really enjoyed reading all the "tool" submissions in last month's issue. I agree that you can't have too many tools, and I've sure never experienced having too much money! (See Susan's note in last month's issue.)



I designed this clay/caulk gun adapter disk in the summer or fall of 2000. Tracy, a friend and sister member of the Blue Highway Polymer Guild in central Illinois, was struggling with some hardware at a guild meeting, wanting to mount her clay extruding gun into a standard caulk gun, to afford her greater leverage, but for whatever reason, it just wasn't working for her.

I had been aware that it was very difficult to extrude clay from clay extruding guns, but I hadn't been motivated to try to develop a simpler solution than those already available until I saw Tracy's keen desire to use her clay extruding gun in a caulk gun and her frustration with the hardware she'd purchased.



For anyone wanting to make a clay/caulk gun adapter disk, cut a 2 inch circle out of at least 3/4" thick wood. Drill 2/3 of the way through the center with a 7/8" drill bit. Then drill the rest of the way through the center with a 5/8" drill bit. If you have a tube of caulk, trace around it for the perfect size for your cut line, unless you have a 2" circle cutter for a drill press, which is easier yet.

Sue Lee

[Poly-Tools and Treasures](#)



Dear Claying Community:

I regret to inform all of you that next year's Clay Camp cannot be held.

Usually they send out a letter of announcement that the lottery for the dates are available to those who have had the facility before. I waited for the November date and letter to arrive but it did not come.

I called the Parks and Rec last week only to find that the letters in fact had gone out and the date as she put it "Tehachapi is all scheduled" through August!

Believe me I was **very** upset, but talking to her was like talking to air and this woman was the only person in the department!

I stewed over it and even tried to rent the YMCA camp down the road (but they have not rented that place in over two years). I did call the Parks and Rec supervisor and voiced my grievances with him, he said he'd look into it. Yeah well that was two days ago and I have not heard a peep.

Carl and I have decided to take a hiatus in 2002 for the Clay Camp, but I promise I will not let them get away with this next year!

So those of you who still want to come up over Memorial Day weekend and just stay in a motel and come hang with me I would be happy to host a clay day at the studio!

Maybe there is a reason for this...who knows.

Have a Happy Holiday season all of you!

Feel free to contact me for a clay day anytime!

Be well

Klew, Carl, Sydney, and Pepper!

P.S. For those of you who are not on my video mailing; I have three more videos out now too, you can read about them on my [site](#).



Hi,

We are the manufactures of glitters and are in process of manufacturing hexagon glitters. We are already manufacturing square glitters.

But due to non availability of requist machine, we are unable in the process. Although we know that you are not manufacturing this machine, but we still are enquiring for the same.

If you know any of manufacturers of hexagon glitter cutting machines, kindly inform us at nemchand@nda.vsnl.net.in.

We will be gracefully thankful for your great services.

Please see our websites: <http://www.trade-india.com/hexadiamond>.

Thanking you

Truly yours

Sandeep Jain

Hexadiomond Traders Pvt.Ltd.

New Delhi

India 110035)



Dear Editor:

wow is the only thing I can say about the j. gikow book PC creating functional and decorative objects....I am not a bead person although I have been know to make beads I want to make things like, pots, vases, dishes, things like that and this book is quite good.....cuz it makes my

mind go crazy with ideas I probably will not get too.

but for a non bead person this is an excellent book and I got it on amazon for a LOT less than at the book stores....of course I could have waited till it got to the library...I dont know if you give credit to new books but if you do please accept my recommendation....

patzee



Dear friends:

I am looking for any books or magazines on pewter making, info on equipment for this craft, and information on doing pewter casting and making small parts and jewelery ect. Any help that you can give me will be appreciated.

Thank you.

[R.J.MacRury](#)