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Dear Editor:

Carpal tunnel surgery is done so often now. I suffered for a long time, thinking it was neuropathy from medications I take. Well, as it turned out, I do have neuropathy but the real pain and numbness I had in my hands was from carpal tunnel.

After being tested, a week later I was under the knife for the right hand and three weeks later, I had the left hand done. It has been a year and a half and the scars are gone and the surgery was really easy. I started squeezing clay as soon as I could and I feel that it helped me to a quicker recovery.

I encourage anyone who has carpal tunnel to run don't walk to the best hand surgeon and have the simple surgery done so you can get back to claying.

Cindy Blank



Dear Editor:

Great e zine! I have been subscribed for some time now, and want to say I really enjoy the articles, comments questions projects.... well, you get the idea!

I just wanted to share my new creation with you. This is a commissioned piece that I finished a few weeks ago. He sold for over \$100.00!

I think Polymer Clay is such an awesome medium. I am totally hooked. If I can sell stuff that I have made, ANYONE can!

Thanks again!
Jennifer Cooke in Canada



Thanks for sharing, Jennifer. Jennifer also submitted some pictures for the [Reader's Gallery](#). Enjoy them!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

I watched the documentary "Blue Vinyl" on HBO last night by accident and was horrified this morning when I started to work on my fourth ever polymer clay project that that stuff is PVC. So then I started looking it up online and found your article (Keeping Safe and Exclusive) to be very informative.

I also found this paper from the Division of Occupation and Environmental Medicine at Duke University that appears to have been written today (!!) called "Hazard Risk Assessment from the Use of Polymer Clays". It's here: <http://duketox.mc.duke.edu/polymerclaysummary.doc>. It backs up your article.

I'm a creative person in the middle of a midlife career change and I was going to attempt to make a living for a while selling some polymer clay boxes with a baby theme, but there's no way I can do it now and keep my integrity. No matter what, I think if a person worked with it all day, every day and cooked it in their house, they'd be looking for trouble but way beyond that I don't want to encourage the manufacture of the stuff. I typed cancer patient's medical reports for 13 years and I have a much more intimate knowledge of cancer than I ever wanted to have.

After seeing the documentary and reading some info on Greenpeace (which, I admit, is biased in the ecological direction), it seems to be a sure thing that even if polymer clay doesn't effect the individual polymer clay artist, to work with it somebody somewhere will die from cancer from the production of it. It's about the cumulative effect.

It breaks my heart. I just discovered the stuff a couple of months ago and it's great fun to work with, not to mention I thought I had finally found a niche for my creative spirit. I had previously been a strictly 2-D kind of artist. Maybe Paperclay....

Anyway – as the author of the article [Tommie Howell] said, you all are probably sick to death of hearing from people wanting to take away your fun. I hate that too. J However, I think it would be nice if the polymer clay fans could get together and use their clout to find/manufacture a more ecologically friendly clay.

Now I'm starting to wonder about embossing powder too. I'm really not an alarmist/uber ecologist sort of person. The part of my personality that wants to keep her head in the sand usually wins, but geez.....none of us **has** to make art with this stuff. If I was a really motivated (and rich) person I'd start a company selling completely biodegradable art supplies.

It's ironic to me how artists, the people who really see the beauty in the world all around them, end up using the most toxic materials to express it. I love dying material, but the dyes will kill your liver too. :::shrug::: Even "natural" dyes use the most disgusting toxic things for mordants. :::shaking head:::

Sincerely,
Gretchen Little

Dear Gretchen:

Thank you for your letter. I too watched Blue Vinyl and found it very disturbing. The production of polyvinyl chlorides, according to Blue Vinyl, is highly toxic, and the workers who process polyvinyl chlorides are dying of cancer at alarming rates. There are several excellent articles about the HBO special and the PVC industry in general available on the internet, including:

- [Blue Vinyl: A Toxic Comedy](#)
- [The Chemical Papers: Secrets of the Chemical Industry Exposed](#)
- [Polyvinyl Chloride](#)
- [Why the Precautionary Principle?](#)
- [Industry Statements Refuting the Danger of PVC Products](#)



Dear Editor:

Thanks so much for your site. I look forward to the beginning of each month when I can see what good ideas you will share.

I have gotten so many great ideas from your website over the past year. I found a very rewarding way to share my love of this craft with a couple of 13-year-olds from my church. They were very interested in some clay ink pens I had created so I showed them how to make them. They have earned all their own money for summer camps by selling clay pens to their friends in just a few short weeks.

Thanks again for your inspiration that I can share with others.

Betty Farrar

Dear Betty:

I love that the kids you work with are selling the polymer clay pens to earn money for summer camp! It's amazing and heartwarming that they've been able to raise enough money for expenses. That's wonderful. Thank you so much for writing and telling us.

Deirdre

