

I have always admired the artists who work with silver and gold metal and polymer clay to produce wonderful polymer beads that are surrounded with a gold or silver frame.

The idea to copy this technique came to me one day when I was walking through the craft store. There on the peg rack were packages of metal outlines in various shapes with holes in them so they could be used as beads.

Wow!

I realized I could use these metal beads to recreate the look of the beautiful beads I had seen. The following project is how I did it.



Supplies:

- Clay (any color) or a cane slice
- Tissue blade
- Small knitting needle or piece of wire to fit through metal frame beads
- Needle tool
- Exacto knife
- Acrylic paint (I used Pearlescent Liquid acrylic by Daler-Rowney, but I am sure any acrylic paint that is bright would do)
- Pasta machine
- Metal frame beads from Elite Better Beads (I found mine in Michaels)



Step One:

Start with your clay conditioned and ready to paint. I work on a thick slab -- a double #1 on the Atlas pasta machine. Use a brush or Q-tip to apply the paint to the clay. Make it pretty heavy as the paint stretches out and the color gets somewhat muted.



Step Two:

After the paint is completely dry, roll it through the pasta machine on the #1 setting. This will cause the paint to crack and distort.

If you want more distortion, turn the clay one-quarter turn and run it through on a #3 on the pasta machine. These beads are pretty small so you don't want to distort it too much or you will lose the color.

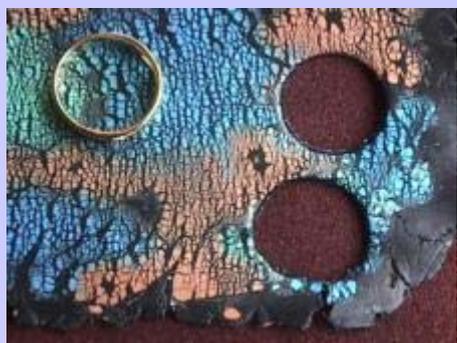
Step Three:

Fold your sheet of clay so it is doubled, with right sides facing out. This will make both sides of your bead at one time. The thickness of your clay should equal the depth of clay needed to fill your metal frame bead.

Step Four:

Lay the clay on the work surface and decide which metal frame bead you want to use. Move the metal frame bead over the sheet of clay until you find the design you like.

Lay the metal outline bead on the sheet of clay and push down. Lift the metal frame bead away and cut on the inside-most line with your tissue blade.



Step Five:

Place the clay back inside the metal frame bead and smooth down the edges of the clay so it adheres well to the metal frame bead.



Step Six:

Holding the entire bead between your fingers, use your needle tool to poke a hole through the metal frame bead hole, the polymer clay, and back out the other side of the metal frame bead hole.

Note: The large heart shapes were the only ones I couldn't make a hole in.

Step Seven:

Clean up the edges and make the holes larger with the knitting needle. Make sure the holes are smooth inside so your Buna cord or chain will slide through easily.

Step Eight:

Bake the beads according to the clay manufacturer's directions. After they are cool, I seal my beads (clay part only) with Future Floor polish or Fimo Glaze.

This will just get you started and I would love to see what wonderful creations you produce with this as a starting point!

In the meantime, here are a couple of other beads I made!



[Marty Woosley, Dallas, TX](#)