

Spaghetti Mokume Gane Three Variations by Christine Platt

What do you do when your 10-year-old discovers your clay gun?

You make lots and lots of spaghetti! Then you turn it into *Mokume Gane*, as I show here in three variations.

Supplies for all three variations:

- clay gun and the disc with the smallest holes
- five or six colors of clay $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ block of each (I used red pearl, red glitter, red + translucent, pink + pearl, pink + translucent)
- white clay: one block
- small circle cutter approximately same diameter of your clay gun
- clay blade
- rolling pin
- pasta machine
- wet/dry sandpaper in 400, 600, and 1500 grit
- Krylon® metallic leaf markers



Step 1:

Mix and condition your colors. Roll out sheets of each color on thickest setting of pasta machine. Using circle cutter, cut out circles of clay. Stack the circles randomly. Compress stack lightly. Insert stack into clay gun, using smallest holed disc, extrude lots and lots of spaghetti strands.



Step 2:

With your clay blade, cut across the stands of clay to make little strands about 1 inch long.

Toss and separate the strands so the colors are all mixed up.



On a sheet of paper make a layer of strands about 4x6 inches. Move the strands and separate any clumps you may have. You do not want to see much of the white paper below.

Take your rolling pin and compress the layers of strands so you have a noodle-like pancake.



Step 3:

Run the pancake through the pasta machine on thickest setting. Back this piece with a piece of white clay also run through the pasta machine at the thickest setting.

Step 4:

Trim and put through the pasta machine at the thickest setting.

You now have your *Mokume Gane* pad. You can use it just as you would use any pad of *Mokume Gane*. You can impress it, mold it, slice it, put balls of clay under it -- the variations are endless.



Variation 1: Romantic watercolor heart pendant

Additional Supplies:

- white clay, size of a walnut
- organdy ribbon ¼ inches wide burgundy and pink 1 yard of each
- 16 clear frosted e-beads
- small silver colored eye screw
- silver toggle clasp
- silver crimp beads



Cut a small section from your pad. 1½-x 2 inches will do.

Slice very thin slices off the pad in many different directions. Save all your slices for variation 3. When you have reached the white layer in several places stop.

Take a ball of white clay about the size of a small walnut and roll it into a log. Put the log aside.



Take your pad of clay and put it through smaller and smaller settings on your pasta machine. (I have 9 settings on my pasta machine, and I rolled the pad through 7 settings). The pad should be quite distorted now and resemble watercolors.



Take this very thin sheet of clay and wrap it around the log you made earlier. Cover both ends and get rid of any trapped air bubbles.

Round your log into an oval and then into a heart. When you are happy with the shape place it on your work surface and flatten slightly with the palm of your hand.

Insert eye-screw.

Bake your heart according to the manufacturer's directions. After baking, let the heart cool, then sand lightly (remember this is a thin sheet) with 400 then 600 grit wet/dry sandpaper. Sand for only a few seconds with 1500 grit and then buff or apply a coating, as you like.



Thread the two organdy ribbons through the eye-screw and knot them over the screw a couple of times. Thread the beads onto the ribbon, spacing them randomly. (The best way I know to thread beads onto ribbon is to use floss **THREADERS**, which I find next to the toothbrushes and the dental floss).

After you have threaded the beads and measured the necklace around your neck-so you know where you want the pendant to hang-mark the ends with a small piece of tape so you know where the clasp will go.



Thread on your crimp beads and then, one side of the clasp. (You will have one crimp bead for every strand of ribbon). Thread the ribbon back through the crimp bead and then crimp the bead. You need to do this on both sides of the clasp.



Variation 2: Heart revealed pin

- black heat set ink
- heart-related rubber stamps, buttons and other items
- scrap clay to make a mold
- black clay for backing and trim
- pin back



For this variation, you will make a mold out of scrap clay. Impress the mold with rubber stamps, heart shaped buttons and/or metal charms.



Bake your mold for one hour so it is very strong. When the mold is cool, dust it with cornstarch and press the *Mokume Gane* pad into the mold, *Mokume Gane* side down against the mold.

Using the tips of your fingers make sure to press the clay into all the details.



Starting on one side of the mold, carefully peel back the clay. Place the clay on your work surface and cut the shape of your final pin.

Bake the pin according to the clay manufacturer's directions.



When the clay has cooled enough to handle, ink over the entire surface of the pin with the black heat-set ink. Make sure you get into all the cracks and crevices. (The reason I use heat-set ink in this project is after you heat set it, you can wet sand it and it will not peel or flake).

To set the ink, either put the piece back in the oven for 5-10 minutes or apply a heat tool/gun to the piece for 2-4 minutes, moving the heat tool around to prevent burning.

When the piece is cool, wet sand with 600-grit sandpaper. Be gentle with this -- you just want to reveal or hint at the heart. If you happen to sand off too much black, don't worry; you can touch it up later.

Dry off the pin. With a very tiny brush, touch the spots of color you revealed with gloss glaze to bring out the color. If you sanded off too much black anywhere, touch up with the same brush and the ink. Don't forget to set the ink.

Finish off the pin with a simple black border made out of a snake of clay. Flatten and wrap the snake around the outside of the pin. Attach a pin back with another small piece of clay and re-bake.



Variation 3, Graphic heart pin

- small amount red glitter clay
- white clay for backing
- pin back
- Krylon® metallic leaf markers



The last variation is the simplest.

Roll out a sheet of white clay to thickest setting. Place all those thin slices from the original pad on the sheet of white randomly, leaving some white space between slices.

Depending on how big your sheet of white is, you may need to cut some more slices off another piece of pad.



When the piece of white is pretty well covered, roll it through the pasta machine at the thickest setting. Then reduce the setting with each pass until the sheet looks like either someone took pastels and scribbled all over your clay or someone has torn beautiful papers and pasted them all over your clay.

Either look is wonderful and depends on how thinly you shaved your block. To keep the images from distorting, turn the clay sheet 90 degrees each time you pass it through the pasta machine.

Finishing this pin is a breeze -- cut a heart shape out of white clay. Tear a piece of your artistically colored clay and add it to your cut out heart. Trim where necessary.

Make sure, as you smooth the two pieces together, there are no air bubbles trapped between the white clay and the colored clay.

Add some tiny red glitter clay polka dots and a pin back and bake according to clay manufacturer's directions.



When the pin has cooled, edge it with a metallic marker.