

Mile High Polymer Clay Guild Newsletter

January, February, March 2006 www.mhpcg.org Volume 11, Number 1

January 2006

Dear Members of Mile High Polymer Clay Guild,

It's such a cold, snow day! I think about our coming Holiday Recovery Party, scheduled for January 28th, and it warms my heart. For those of you with fond memories of our past parties, you know what I mean. For our new members, you have a great experience awaiting you!

There will be a number of activities:

Gift Exchange: Bring a wrapped gift of something related to polymer - something you made is always best. Jan Frame and Rosemary Probst will lead us through the selection and stealing process. Yes, you can take someone else's gift! Jan will explain.

Silent Auction: Now is the time to find items you don't want or no longer use. Bring them to the party for the auction. Proceeds benefit guild projects, workshops and equipment purchases. There will be great items at bargain prices!

Raffle: We have a few things already. Donna Kato donated a pendant, and Debbie Jackson donated some Ten Second Tools. Consider donating something.

Gallery: Bring your polymer creations to sell and/or display. You'll be responsible for your own transactions.

Lunch: This is a buffet with salads and desserts provided by members. The Guild will buy the ham. Bonnie Torres will coordinate the 'what to bring' list via e-mail.

The best part: Visiting with everyone!

Updates on the plans for this member year:

- Signups for the Kathleen Dustin workshops continue. There are openings for both dates, March 1- 2 and March 3-4, 2006.
- The next Swap will be February, 2006. Barb Harper will announce details.
- The Guild Retreat is scheduled for the third weekend in May.

Best wishes for a wonderful new year!

Diane Luftig





Exploring the Rainbow

by Tina Holdman

The inspiration for this color collection came from an "inspiration sheet" that I put together after taking Maggie Maggio's workshop. However, inspiration for color combinations can come from a rich variety of pieces, so it's worth taking a bit of time to discuss these sources.

- Books -- you can use books on art, quilting, knitting and other topics to find color inspirations.
- Cloth/materials -- great inspirations are just a sewing store away!
- Artwork -- a great source! Think of Van Gogh's deep rich colors or Monet's softer palette.
- Magazines -- you can find fashionable colors & interesting color combinations in fashion, decorating, or other specialty publications.
- Nature -- the mottled grays on a rock, the shades of the sky -- the choices are almost infinite.
- Paint chips -- You can use ready-made collections that the paint manufacturer's put together or handpick your 'collection' one color at a time.
- Alternative arts/crafts -- think of scrapbook paper, quilts, stained glass and other wonderful sources to choose from for inspiration.

The colors in this collection are cheerful and fun and would be great used in a children's project. This is also a good collection of colors to use in a coordinated bead project. These colors are mid-tone brights with ecru thrown in to soften the colors just a bit. ~~This collection would actually work well with a collection of pastels used as an accent or vice versa, with these darker colors setting off the delicate tints of a lighter color collection.~~ For those who prefer a softer or a more neutral palette, this collection is a good place to challenge yourself to do something different and stretch your creative limits.

Yellow Lights

2 parts Premo Cadmium Yellow
1 part Premo White
1/2 part Premo Ecru

Violet Sparkler

5 parts Premo Ecru
4 parts Premo Fuchsia
4 parts Premo Violet
1/2 part Premo Turquoise

Turquoise Twister

2 parts Premo Cobalt Blue
1 part Premo Turquoise
1 part Premo White
1/2 part Premo Ecru

Dark Orange Slushy

3 parts Premo Orange
2 parts Premo Cadmium Red
1 part Premo White
1 part Premo Ecru

Roller Coaster Blue

3 parts Premo Ultramarine Blue
1 part Premo Cobalt Blue
1 part Premo Turquoise
1/2 part Premo Ecru

Purple Scrambler

3 parts Premo Purple
1 part Premo Turquoise
1/2 part Premo Ecru

Tilt-A-Whirl Green

4 parts Premo Sea Green
1 part Premo Cadmium Yellow
1 part Premo Ecru

Dark Cotton Candy Pink

4 parts Premo White
2 parts Premo Fuchsia
1 part Premo Brilliant Red
1 part Premo Ecru



NEW MEMBERS

Toni Wulff

1022 S. Summit View Dr. Fort Collins, CO 80524

Diana Ho

2943 1/2 N. Beverly Glen Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90077

Clare Pramuk

11508 Shakespearean Way Austin, TX 78759

Monica Lemaster

1423 N. Cedar St. Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Eddie Nelson

7580 Sunny View Lane Colorado Springs, CO 80911

Karen Green

13988 Fairfax Thornton, CO 80602

Lynne Bartle

9405 Winged Foot Road
Peyton, CO 80831

Marcene Etchieson

1210 King Crown Rd. Woodland Park, CO 80863

*Please change Peggy Wagner's e-mail address
to:*

peggyawagner@msn.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

KATHLEEN DUSTIN CLASS

It's not too late to register for Kathleen Dustin's class:

"Translucent Techniques & Design Decision Basics"
March 1 & 2 or 3 & 4, 2006 Contact Susan Mueller,
970-453-0262 suemuellersmail@aol.com

More details on our website: www.mhpcg.org

MHPCG SPRING RETREAT

May 19, 20, 21, 2006

Hampton Inn, Union at 1st
Lakewood, CO

Information & registration will be announced soon!



NEW PRODUCTS

Ez-Squeezer is a crank screw device that pushes the plunger of your clay extruder. The tool measures 10" & has three parts: the main body, a small t-shaped screw that attaches to the work table with a clamp, and a long handle screw that pushes the plunger of the clay gun. www.ez-squeezer.freehosting.net

Attention Sculptors! The new **Super Sculpey Firm** offers a perfect medium for your creative projects. The Spring issue of Polymer Cafe will review this product as well as **Sculpey Ultralight**.

ODDS AND ENDS

HOLLOW BEADS

Using cornstarch packing 'peanuts' for hollow beads has been around for a while. A recent innovation is making free form shapes by strategically 'melting' the peanuts together. Use a tiny bit of water on your fingers to fuse the peanuts together & to gently 'file' down unwanted bulges. This takes practice and a very light touch with the water. Of course the trick is to make the holes in the raw clay so you can dissolve the peanut from the bead interior after baking. You can create medieval style beads by wrapping narrow strips of textured clay around the forms, allowing ample space between the strips and adding Pearl-X for a metallic look.

California artist Desiree McCrorey features another technique for using wax to create hollow beads on her website: www.desiredcreations.com/

REASONS FOR CLAY CRACKING ...

There's been an ongoing discussion about reasons for baked clay cracking. Long-time polymer clay artist Elizabeth Campbell posted the following list of possible causes and noted that trying to identify 'the' reason is probably impossible. Some factors include:

- ♦ Clay too thick or too thin
- ♦ A thin layer overlying a thick one that's already cured
- ♦ A dry-ish clay layer over a juicier one, or vice-versa
- ♦ Under conditioning, inadequate mixing of clay brands or clay densities within the same brand
- ♦ Failure to support raw clay while it cures
- ♦ Rapid temperature changes
- ♦ Swelling of underlying structure (wood, for example)
- ♦ Inclusion of atmospheric humidity or dampness from your hands into the clay
- ♦ Introduction of air pockets into clay when conditioning with a pasta machine
- ♦ Dampness in an armature or support of wood, mache' or other porous materials

- ♦ Forcing holes into beads & curing them on skewers too large for the hole.

POLYMER CLAY IN THE MOVIES

If you see the movie *Bee Season*, starring Richard Gere, watch for the scene with the kaleidoscopes. They were made with kits from Boston Clay Works! See the basic kaleidoscopes and all sorts of other things to cover at:

www.BostonClayWorks.com

A NEW USE FOR AN OLD CRIBBAGE BOARD

A Polymer Clay Interest newsgroup reader recently posted this tip: "I use an old cribbage board to put my needles & other clay piercing tools in. The tools are upright & it's easy to spot the one I need. One of these days I'm going to find a thicker board and drill larger holes so that I'll be able to fit other tools in."

GLITZ, GLITTER, AND GLEAM

As Tina H. would say, "Love that glitz!" She's not alone in her love of things shiny because clayers are discovering new products all the time. Most recent are the eye powders in the Mary-Kate & Ashley cosmetic line. They are very fine & stick well to the clay --similar to Perfect Pearls. Imagine the Sparkling Pink Sequin Dust on black or white pearl clay! Other recommended cosmetics: the pearl green L'Oreal eye shadow and the pressed eye shadow used as a Pearl-X substitute for kid-clayers because it doesn't spill.

Perfect Pearls contain a resin that makes it unnecessary to apply a protective glaze. Pearl-X needs to be sealed with Future or varathane.

GLITTER CLAY RECIPE

For some, the new Fimo Soft Glitter Clays are too 'fake'. Here's a recipe for creating dark teal with green and blue sparkles that is pleasing when used to cover glass vases or other items. Simply mix some of the Fimo Soft Glitter Blue with Fimo Soft Glitter Green, and then add a bit of black clay. The approximate proportions are 2:2:1. Soften the new color by brushing Pearl-X on selected areas.

FAUX ENAMELS FINISHES

Iowa artist/author Patti Kimle features a faux enamel project in her book Polymer Clay Inspirations. She suggests using 2-part epoxy resin for coating the pieces. The resulting high gloss emphasizes the underlying layers and effectively mimics enamel work. Patti's work can be seen on her website: www.kimledesigns.com

The newly formulated **Kato Liquid Medium** is very clear & can also be used effectively to create an enamel finish. Of course, it can also be used for photo transfers, softening clay, mosaic grout & and as a baked-on protective coating.

Two other products that produce a high gloss finish suitable for enamel pieces are **Diamond Glaze** and ultra thick embossing powder (**UTEE**).

TOASTER OVEN TIP

To hold the heat & reduce a toaster oven's tendency to 'spike', try this: place the oven on an insulated cookie sheet and/or several large ceramic tiles. Place ceramic tiles on the top of the oven. Bake the polymer piece on a small tile. The tiles seem to help the oven hold a constant temperature and bake more efficiently.

RAKU LOOK-ALIKES

A high point during my brief exploration of ceramics was day the class fired our raku pottery outside the high school gym using a large metal garbage can to hold the leaves, paper, and other combustible materials. I imagined a drum roll as we fished the pieces from the fire and discovered the shimmering, iridescent finish.

A very convincing look-alike raku is easily achieved using polymer clay and various mica powders and acrylic mediums. Here are two methods:

Raku #1

Micaceous Iron Oxide* aka "Raku Sauce"
Future floor wax, alcohol, Pearl-Ex powders

Paint the cured clay with micaceous iron oxide and let it dry completely. Mix Future floor wax with a little rubbing alcohol to reduce its shine. In a watercolor palette, blend small amounts of the Future mixture with interference or duo-color Pearl-X powders. Randomly brush these colors on in streaks and swirls. The Raku Sauce produces a gritty surface very similar to 'real' raku.

Raku #2 - 2 a.m. version

Texture black clay with very coarse sandpaper (36 grit) & rub on mica powders until you have the effect you want. Shape, bake, then seal with Future.

*Micaceous Iron Oxide is an acrylic medium. Art stores usually have the Golden brand.

Directions for a crackle raku finish can be found in Irene S. Dean's book, Faux Surfaces in Polymer Clay.

All of these raku methods are most convincing if used for items such as vessels, boxes or beads.



LORALEE'S VIDEO REVIEW

Intricate Kaleidoscope Caning by Sarah Shriver Abadaba Productions

Sarah's canes are beautiful, easy for some, difficult for others like me. This tape filled in all the blank spaces I had from my class with Sarah at our MHPCG second Devil's Thumb Retreat. About the lady, we can quote, "To know her is to love her!" Besides that, she is a wonderful teacher, and this tapes puts you up front at her class.

The 67 minute tape is packed with instructions. Sarah teaches you to construct her interlocking cane using a Skinner Blend. You'll see her fish cane chart as well. She teaches an intricate kaleidoscope cane with two variations. She then teaches you to multiply the image by breaking the cane apart and reassembling it.

This video should be a MUST on your list. It's available in our MHPCG library.

Loralee

PRICING FORMULA

Irene S. Dean, noted Tennessee polymer clay artist and author, offers this formula for pricing your work. She markets her work at high-end craft fairs, juried shows, and on her website.

Materials Use a postage scale to determine how much polymer clay is in a piece.

Labor Figure how long it takes to make the piece, times an hourly wage.

Overhead Add the total you spend in one year on booth fees, business cards, packing, etc. and divide it by the approximate total number of hours you spend producing your work in a year. This will give you an hourly rate to cover overhead.

Profit: Add materials + labor + overhead, multiply by whatever percentage you want your business's profit to be (10 or 15% is reasonable). This equals your wholesale price (what you charge stores who buy your work). Multiply the profit times 2 to get your retail price - that's the minimum the store selling your work is going to charge. You should not undercut your stores when you sell at a show. Selling at the retail price also compensates you for all the time it takes to sell at a retail show.

See Irene's beautiful work on her website:

www.good-night-irene.com.



WIRE-WRAPPING LESSONS: Marian Gurnee reported her success and pleasure with an individual wire-wrapping class at Elements Beads, 461 Sable Blvd., Aurora, CO. Marian worked with Darlene Eye, who patiently led her through the steps, resulting in a beautifully wrapped stone. Store hours are Monday 1-6 p.m. and Tuesday-Saturday 10-6. Phone: 720-859-2091.

NEW BOOKS

Polymer Clay for the Fun Of It

Kim Cavender

California artist Kim Cavender was a featured crafter on "Crafters Coast to Coast"; you may remember her colorful dragonfly. In her newest book she shares twenty-five projects, ranging from pendants and earrings to book ends and paperweights. An inspiring gallery of work by the author and other polymer clay artists make this a fresh, engaging guide to the many possibilities of polymer clay.

The CF Sculpture Series: Dragons

Christi Friesen

"Dragons" uses a step-by-step format to walk the reader through creating polymer clay dragons for focal beads, pins, sculptures and more. The author shares her signature style of beaded embellishments, adding another dimension to the polymer clay.

This book will charm you with humorous dialog, creative suggestions, interesting asides, lavish pictures and even several dragon "personality profiles".

Metal Craft Discovery Workshop

Linda & Opie O'Brien

This colorful book is chock full of information about using basic metal techniques to make whimsical, original art pieces. The 'basics' section covers useful skills such as cutting shapes from a metal sheet or deconstructing a tin can for project use, creating windows in metal, drilling/punching metal, etching, aging, adding metal enhancers, tearing & embossing, and making cold connections. Armed with these skills, the crafter is well prepared to create the projects: a tin can art coll, an altered metal purse, jewelry, 'kitschy keepsakes' and artist trading cards. Even more important, you can combine these metal techniques with polymer clay for making truly unique multi-media creations.

The number of new books featuring polymer clay & related techniques is amazing & more will be available soon! You may want to save your pennies for some of these or hope that local craft businesses stock them so you can use your 40% off coupons!

Polymer Clay Creative Traditions

Judith Belcher

Judy Belcher, a talented polymer clay artist, shares unusual projects inspired by the decorative arts of the past. Crafters can draw inspiration from painting and drawing, ethnic carving, quilting, ceramics, sculpture, glass, metalwork, and more. Through 300 stunning photographs and interesting text, author Judy Belcher reveals how these influences can be expressed in polymer clay. An introduction on PC history and basic techniques, plus tips and techniques scattered throughout the book, make Polymer Clay Creative Traditions an invaluable guide to creating works of art that blend a great material of today with great design ideas of the past.

The gallery features many Colorado artists: Eileen Loring, Nancy Osbahr, Diane Luftig, Maj-Britt Cawthon, Carol Simmons, Donna Kato, Sarajane Helm, Janis Holler, and Cynthia Becker.

Artful Ways with Polymer Clay

Dotty McMillan

In a follow-up to her popular Creative Ways with Polymer Clay, Dotty McMillan offers more techniques, tips and projects to delight crafters. All the basics are covered, along with colorful photos illustrating the details. Featured techniques include image transfers, molds, simple silk screening, ingenious inclusions, glazing, crackling, antiquing and more. Projects include a "knotty" bracelet, mini-kaleidoscope pendants, frames, a treasure box, sun catcher, stained glass eggs, and other items created by the author and other polymer artists.

WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

www.polymerclaydaily.com

This exciting new site is created by a Cynthia Tinapple, well-respected and talented polymer clay artist who authored the NPCG newsletter during the early '90s. The attractive, artful website includes interesting comments, information and examples of excellent polymer clay work. There are many links to international artists.

www.clay-essentials.com/

NPCG President Patty Barnes hosts this site, which sells HotStamps as well as Makins' tools, including their new Ultimate Clay Extruder and cutters.

www.beadbugle.com

Many ideas/materials for beaders & an easy tutorial on making a snowflake cane with a basic leaf cane!

www.judithskinner.com

www.barbaramcquire.com

Two of our favorite artists' renovated websites.

www.ninaowens.com

Fiber arts, beading, polymer clay & an interesting tutorial on designing a beaded necklace

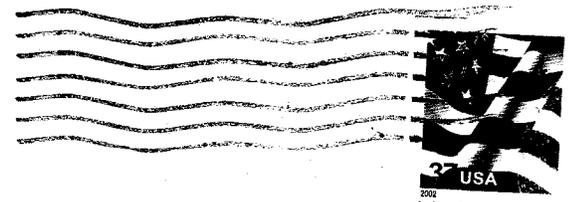
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Post a message to be e-mailed back to you in the future: birthdays, estimated tax payments, etc.

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