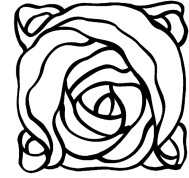


MILE HIGH POLYMER CLAY GUILD NEWSLETTER



April May June 2009 www.mhpcg.org

A Letter from the President

I'm kinda new here. Since we had a winter that felt like spring does that mean we'll have a spring that feels like winter? Anyway, Happy Spring, everyone!

I want to begin by thanking you for allowing me to be your president this past year. I think we've enjoyed a great year together thanks to so many people who give so unselfishly of themselves. And speaking of giving unselfishly, have you considered giving a presentation of your own at a meeting during this coming year? I remember the first time I was asked to do a demonstration. I think I'd been a member two months. I was a bit nervous but said 'yes' and discovered that, like so many other things we do, I learn more when I'm teaching. I've learned a lot of wonderful things volunteering. All this is my way of inviting you to do a demo. If there's something you're interested in learning, all you need to do is find a book or an online tutorial, talk with someone who knows the process or just get out your clay and start trying new things. Our membership has almost doubled this past year. Let's see if we can double the number of generous instructors in our guild. If you don't want to do this alone, grab a friend and do it together!

We have several things in the works for our near future. The Donna Kato workshop on May 9th is sold out but we have a waiting list. You can contact Sue Mueller in case there are cancellations. Karen Sexton has a steering committee planning our wonderful retreat June 5th & 6th. It will be a bit different this year and I think you'll like the changes. We're thinking of publishing a 2010 calendar featuring pictures of our own members' work. If you

have experience with this kind of thing please get in touch with me. We have a list of the artists who've approached us about presenting a one or two day workshop in the fall. I hope to have some information put together for our May Clay Day so that we can choose who and what we'd like to sponsor. At our April meeting we're going to clean house and go through out equipment room to accommodate more tables.

One other change also concerns the structure of our monthly meetings. We had some rather noteworthy guests at our February meeting: Donna Kato, Linda Peterson and Jen Lowe. All of them wanted to know why we didn't have our clay and tools set up and why we weren't playing. That's when it hit me: true, we've just come out of the holidays and haven't seen each other for a while and have lots to catch up on. True, we've been having a terrific selection of demonstrations each month. However, I do miss just sitting around claying with my friends! We're going to take one meeting each quarter & make it a true Play Day, beginning in May. No formal demonstrations will be scheduled. We'll all just set up our gear & play together with our clay. Some amazing things will happen when we do that, too!

Thank you all for making this a wonderful organization. I'm proud to belong! In my travels as a teacher up here in the Longmont area I've found a good core group of individuals who are committed to getting a new guild started in the northern part of the state. We hope to have that group launched early this summer. They'll be a sister guild just like our friends in Colorado Springs and Pueblo and I hope they'll keep growing and learning like our own wonderful Mile High Guild. You set a great example!

Peg Harper



EXPLORING THE RAINBOW WITH TINA HOLDMAN

Kato Clay Carnival Collection

This is a collection of Kato Clay recipes designed for the '08 Vegas Clay Carnival. It is a collection with mixed warms and cool shades in neutral colors. It includes many metallics with a full range of browns, coppers, silvers and creams with a deep metallic purple as an accent hue. The inspiration for this collection comes from a photo of cats by artist Laurel Burch. If you have seen her work, you may be surprised with the collection of metallic neutrals as she is known for bright and cheerful color palettes. However, she does have some of her work in these lovely shades as well. If you have not seen her work I do recommend it as it makes for great eye candy and lovely inspiration for pulling together a lively palette. *(Editor's note: these colors would be great for steam punk creations.)*

Metallic Light Honey

6 parts Kato Pearl
1 part Kato Gold
1 part Kato Brown
1/2 part Kato Yellow

Aged Copper

4 parts Kato Copper
2 parts Kato Brown
1 part Kato Gold
1/2 part Kato Black

Rich Walnut

8 parts Kato Brown
7 parts Kato Black
6 parts Kato Copper
2 parts Kato Red

Light Pink Taupe

6 parts Kato Pearl
3 parts Kato Brown
1/2 part Kato Gold
1/2 part Kato Magenta
1/2 part Kato Red
1/2 part Kato Black

Light Ecru

6 parts Kato White
4 parts Kato Pearl
2 parts Kato Brown
1 1/2 parts Kato Yellow

Metallic Terra Cotta

5 parts Kato White
5 parts Kato Pearl
3 parts Kato Copper
1 part Kato Yellow Concentrate

Metallic Aubergine

6 parts Kato Magenta
3 parts Kato Pearl
1 part Kato Silver
2 parts Kato Black
1/2 part Kato Red

Hammered Pewter

6 parts Kato Pearl
4 parts Kato Black
4 parts Kato Silver
1 part Kato Red
1 part Kato Magenta

Rich Copper

4 parts Kato Gold
2 parts Kato Copper

Platinum

2 part Kato Silver
1 part Kato Pearl

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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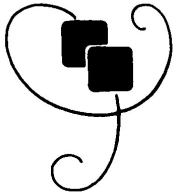


MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

American Style Magazine's lead article on polymer clay features **Ann Kruglak's** anemone teapot along with works by seven other artists. There are 48 display ads by polymer artists as well, showing the breadth and depth of artistry that is possible with polymer clay. Ann has also had one of her polymer clay creations accepted to the 2009 Women's Work exhibit in Woodstock, Illinois. See Ann's other work on her website: www.MysticDreamerArt.com

Belle Armoire Jewelry, Spring 2009 issue, features **Karen Sexton's** beaded bracelets article.

Carol Devlin has just published a memoir, "What Do You Do With the Yolks?" in which she relates with candor, humor and warmth stories of growing up in Kansas. Family pictures are sprinkled throughout the book, adding interest and a sense of looking back through a treasured photo album. Congratulations, Carol. Well done!



One of the guild's triumphs this past year was sponsoring a Tory Hughes Workshop. For all of us in attendance, Tory generously provided information and inspiration. Joanne McGee, who coordinated the workshop, provides the following highlights. Thank you, Joanne!

Tory Hughes is a master polymer clay artist and is a personable and effective teacher. Those of us lucky enough to attend her Hinged Pendants Workshop have enough ideas to explore for months if not years! Some of the particularly great things I picked up were:

Polymer Clay is *extremely* sensitive to temperature. Tory bakes Premo at 275 to 280 degrees for a minimum of 45 minutes. Many of her pieces are re-baked and may end up having a total bake time of up to four hours! Once the oven door is closed & do not open and close it since that can cause the temperature to spike. Also, many pieces do better if left in the oven to cool slowly. (Clay on glass is an example.) If you are getting cracks in your work, do not open the oven door, turn it off and let the whole thing cool overnight. (By the way, our new oven is GREAT! Plus, our oven monitors kept the oven doors closed so that nothing got scorched. Yeah, team!)

Polymer clay gets stronger the longer it is baked. You know when a piece is well baked when it is not brittle. A well baked piece is flexible.

We had a lot of fun watching Tory demonstrate the Worktek belt sander. Wow! Are our hand sanding days over? Using the belt sander an artist can very quickly smooth off and shape a piece as desired. This tool may now be on our guild wish list!

Tory's hinge techniques* can be used on jewelry as well as boxes, books and other items. They can be hidden or they can be a feature of a piece. I am sure we will see some demos of these beautiful hinges at one of our upcoming meetings.

We revisited doing black and white transfers

with great success. The copies must be fresh and must be made on toner copiers. Laserjet copies do not work for this technique. Toner copiers use 'polymer' powders to make the toner. If you want to use color, simply color in your black and white copy with Prisma colored pencils. Brands can vary in their quality and compounds and we know that Prisma pencils have the correct polymer base for this technique. You are welcome to experiment with other brands.

We experimented with the Gwen Gibson **tear-away technique** which produces beautiful, subtle textures on raw clay. Just remember to leave a tab on the paper so that it is easy to quickly rip the paper off the clay prior to baking. My tear-away pieces were more effective when I left the raw clay on for at least 30 minutes. In both the tear-away technique and regular transfers, you must carefully cut around your design and then lightly roll over the paper so that it is flush with the clay. Once the piece is baked, it is great fun to carve back into the piece with lines, spirals, etc. You can also bake the torn away paper and reuse it as a stamp on other projects.

For **attaching paper to unbaked clay**, use Sobo glue, front and back. Let it dry. Lightly roll over it on the unbaked clay to make the paper flush with the surface. Bake. The glue protects the inked side of the paper from running.

Golden makes great varnishes to cover foils. These are water based and contain UV protection. Look for them in art stores: Golden Polymer Glass, Satin or Matte Varnish with UVS. Sculpey makes good **glazes** and the shine they produce is glass-like. J.M.

*Note: Tory's video on making hinges is in our library.



MISCELLANEOUS

The Donna Kato Show Prariecraft.com will soon be offering 30 minute instructional streaming videos with Donna Kato. On the first video, Donna will demonstrate making an Encased Toner Transfer Pin, start to finish. Each on-line video will be 30 minutes. The introductory cost is \$4.99. For further technical information, see the www.prariecraft.com website.

RECONDITIONING CLAY

Peg Harper shares the following tips on re-constituting Kato Polyclay if it is dry and crumbly. Cut the block into slices & brush on Kato Liquid Medium. Place clay in a baggie for several days. After absorbing the added polymer, the clay should condition easily. We've been assured that the bugs have been worked out of the new Kato Polyclay formula and that future batches should condition without difficulty.

BUG SWAP

Our inspiring and efficient Swapmeister Barb Harper introduced members to the Spring Swap at our March Clay Day. She demonstrated bug-making and displayed a bevy of wonderful examples.

The Swap sign-up deadline is April 25th Clay Day & the actual swap will take place at the May 23rd Clay Day. Participants will make 10 bugs & receive 10 in return. Barb asks that participants make several extra—one for the guild collection & some to trade. Bugs should be marked with your initials & individually bagged in plastic sacks along with a card identifying the creator. Bugs may have bales or pinbacks or can be free-standing and should be 2-3" long. Feel free to use other materials (beads, wire, foil, flitter, etc.) as long as the bugs are at least 50% polymer clay.

Note: Barb's demo handout (instructions for constructing bugs) is posted on our website along with full swap instructions.

Remember, if you sign up you are expected to follow through & have your ten bugs ready for exchanging on May 23rd. Dropping out is not acceptable. In case of emergency you can negotiate turning your bugs in at the June meeting or before. Please contact Barb if you have questions or want to sign up: FlyinBarb@aol.com

GUILD INFORMATION

Our membership year ends May 31st & dues are due. Active membership is required for all guest artist workshops, special events & for equipment use & rental. Dues cover a variety of expenses: church rent (\$75/meeting), newsletter printing/postage, and special treats for the Holiday Recovery Party. The \$3 library rental fees keep the library solvent for new purchases & replacements. Silent Auction proceeds help offset workshop costs & special purchases such as our PMC kiln & tumbler, convection ovens, storage cats, tables & Foredom buffer.

BUG CONSTRUCTION BY BARB HARPER

1. Decide what you find attractive about bugs. Is it their symmetry, color, shape, texture? Plan to work toward that aspect.
2. Find or make a mold for the shape of the bug body. Measuring spoons work well. Spray the mold with water and press a ball of clay into it for the belly. Remove from the mold. Spray again and press a little larger ball of clay into the mold for the back of the body. If you don't plan to cover this later, choose a clay color for the finished bug or a color that you might apply mica powders to.
3. If you want legs, cut 3 length of wire for six legs.
4. If you want a bale or to add more appendages, cut wire and press it into the mold with the legs.
5. Now press the belly piece over the wire parts.
6. Remove from the mold and bake. If your bug is hard to get out of the mold, pry it out at a place where you will add the head so the pry marks will be covered.
7. When the bug base is cool you can roll or mold a ball of clay for the head and other body parts you may wish to add. This is also a good time to mark the bug with your initials or add a pin back.
8. Apply veneers and cane slices for the eyes, wings, feet, etc. and rebake.
9. When it is cool, glue on any other embellishments and shape the wire legs the way you want.
10. Have fun and be inventive!

INFO AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The www.mhpcg.org website continues to expand and contains useful & interesting information. You'll find pictures of special events and clay days, a gallery of members' work and sign-up forms for dues & special events. The Members' Section contains our current membership list, By-Laws, Equipment Rental policy, and copies of past newsletters. Check with Webmaster Janice Calm about adding your picture and work to the gallery. (JanKristin@yahoo.com)

OPPORTUNITY AWAITS ...

We have openings on the Board of Directors and encourage you to consider throwing your name in the hat in time for elections in April. Contact Peg Harper (Peg@harpersound.com) if you're interested. Regular attendance at the monthly 8:30 board meeting (prior to Clay Day) is essential & computer skills are helpful.



FINISHING TOUCHES

It wasn't until I'd floundered around with polymer clay several months before I discovered Margaret Regan's beautiful work on display at the Helena Montana Museum. (www.mregan.com) Compared with my crude attempts, her work was amazing! As I analyzed just what made her pins so special, I realized the precise canework, flawless finishing, and neatly applied findings were the critical elements. Sanding? "Hmmm, I thought. Maybe I've been missing something!" K.S.

Polymer Clay newsgroup members posted the following thoughts about ways to bring the quality of polymer clay pieces to a truly awesome level.

- ◆ While the clay is uncured, smooth seams as invisibly as possible. Try not to smudge details & patterns, but try to eliminate visible cracks between joins. This takes practice, especially in keeping the surfaces dent and mark-free. Sometimes it helps to save part of the work for when the soft clay has cooled a little.
- ◆ It's very important that the pin clasp be open on the bottom side of the pin so if it uclasps when worn gravity will hold the pin shut. Another pin trick is to place the pin back just above the center—maybe 1/3 of the way to the top, so it doesn't flop over when worn.
- ◆ To assure a good bond, sand the pin back on very rough sandpaper before applying Loc-tite or other cyanoacrylate glue.
- ◆ Remember edges! Make them thick enough to look sturdy but not clunky. Gwen Gibson recommends a #1 plus a #4 (Atlas pasta machine) as a good thickness for a pin. Pay special attention to the pin edges—texture or smooth—not messy. If you choose to use a gold marker, make sure the line doesn't wobble unless you can cleverly and deliberately incorporate it into a design feature!
- ◆ Great craftsmanship is a combination of design and technical skills (which you learn) and being very thoughtful and deliberate about every detail. If you plan to do it and then execute it well, it should look professional. Even if it isn't to everyone's taste, the craftsmanship should be right on.
- ◆ Buy the best findings you can afford. The slender pin backs from www.rings-n-things.com are used by Elise Winters and really add 'class' to a piece.
- ◆ Don't be fooled! A shiny gloss finish often brings out flaws and signals short-cut methods, not careful finishing.
- ◆ Not all endeavors are worth finishing or saving! I have boxes of these 'try-outs', optimistically referred to as 'prototypes'. I've learned from each piece but show them only to close friends who recognize and accept my artistic shortcomings.



Spring Retreat

Friday June 5th & Saturday June 6th

Lockwood Christian Fellowship 1354 S. Union Blvd.

Lakewood, Colorado 80228

Sign up for our annual Spring Retreat! This year we plan an open-studio event focusing on embellishing journal covers using a variety of polymer clay techniques. Friday evening demos will present these techniques. You will receive a blank journal as part of your registration fee so all you need bring is your tools, clay and a variety of things useful in your cover design. We will send a complete list of suggestions with your e-mail confirmation packet. Saturday afternoon Tejae Floyde, noted mixed media artist and winner of several national awards, will be our guest artist.

Schedule of Events

4 p.m. Friday—gather for a social time, set up your work space

5:30 p.m. Potluck Supper

7:00—9:00 Roundtable Demos - Ideas & techniques for journal cover designs

Friday night—bring your sleeping bag & pillow for a slumber party at the church or drive home and sleep in your own bed.

7:30 a.m. Saturday—continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m.—noon Open Studio—create journal covers

12:30 p.m.—Lunch

1:30 -Guest Artist Presentation—Tejae Floyd

3:30—Door Prizes & Group Clean-up

Since this is a cooperative event, participants will be assigned to help with either set-up, clean-up and also food serving/clean-up. You may indicate your preference on the registration form below.*

Name _____ E-Mail _____

2009-10 dues (if not yet paid) \$30

Retreat Registration Fee: \$30 (includes food, demos, special materials, and FUN!)

Make check payable to: MHPCG & send to Sue Mueller P.O. Box 4629 Breckenridge, CO 80424

*Indicate your preference: _____Set-up (1:00 p.m. Friday)

_____Clean-up (3:00 p.m. Saturday)

_____Kitchen: food prep, clean-up

MHPCG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Don't forget to mail your \$30 dues check to Sue Mueller, P.O. Box 4629 Breckenridge, CO 80424.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CLAY DAYS

April 25th

May 23rd—Swap bugs due!

June 27th

May 9th—Donna Kato Workshop

June 5-6th Annual MHPCG Retreat



Karen Sexton, Editor
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