



Jewelry
Making
DAILY

Polymer Clay Jewelry Making:

5 Free Projects to
Learn How to Make
Polymer Clay Jewelry

**TUXEDO
PIN/PENDANT**
BY ILENE GOLDMAN



**REVERSIBLE
CHECKERBOARD
PENDANT**
BY PATRICIA KIMLE



**MAD FOR
JELLYROLLS**
BY DONNA KATO



STUFFED NECKLACE
BY LOUISE FISCHER COZZI



**POLYMER CLAY
CONVERSION
NECKLACE**
BY SARAJANE HELM

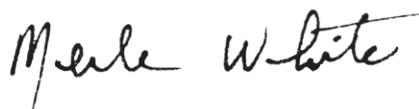


MAKING JEWELRY WITH versatile polymer clay opens up a world of creative possibilities using common tools and household equipment. With little more than a sharp knife, some sandpaper, a pasta machine, and a toaster oven, you can make polymer clay jewelry that is as bold or as delicate as you like.

Inside this terrific e-book, you'll find projects that will show you how to take advantage of the painterly qualities of polymer clay to make a checkerboard pattern, a jellyroll pattern, and a graduated color blend. You'll find out how to decorate the surfaces of your polymer clay beads with textures and acrylic paints.

You'll learn to combine polymer clay with silver from old jewelry you're ready to take apart and give new life to in a brand-new design. You'll work fabric, metal, and more into your polymer clay beads, necklaces, and pendants – even a combination pin/pendant! And you'll love how lightweight polymer clay is: even very large statement pieces are easy to wear all day long.

Add polymer clay to your jewelry making repertoire today!



Merle White
Editorial Director, Interweave Jewelry Group

Tuxedo Pin & Pendant

BY ILENE GOLDMAN

If you enjoy dressing up your outfit with a beautiful pin or a pendant hanging from a simple silver chain, this Tuxedo pin/pendant is just the thing. Wear the pin on the lapel of a jacket or coat to brighten it up.



Materials

Polymer clay:

- 2 oz yellow
- 1 oz turquoise
- 1 oz magenta
- 1 oz black
- 1 pin back with bail
- 1 tablespoon of fine or very fine glitter (optional)
- 4mm silver-ringed crystal AB Swarovski hotfix flatback (optional)
- Clear liquid clay
- Superglue

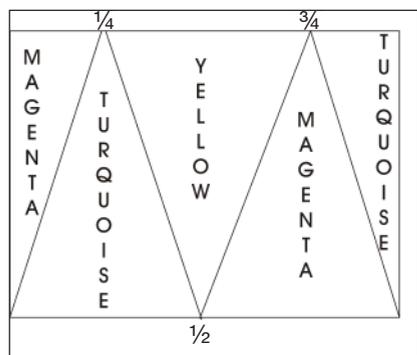
Tools

- Pasta machine*
- Tissue blade
- 50-grit sandpaper for texture
- 400-, 600-, 800-, 1000-grit wet/dry sandpaper for sanding
- 4" x 6" index card cut to the width of your pasta machine
- 2-1/2" square cutter

* The settings in the directions are for the Atlas pasta machine (the widest setting is #1), so please adjust accordingly.

PATTERN GUIDE FOR SKINNER BLEND

1. Cut an index card to the width of your pasta machine. On one long edge of the index card, make a mark at the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ points. On the other long edge, make a mark at the $\frac{1}{2}$ point. Draw a line from the $\frac{1}{4}$ point to the $\frac{1}{2}$ point and another line from the $\frac{3}{4}$ point to the $\frac{1}{2}$ point. Next, draw a line from the $\frac{1}{4}$ point to the lower corner of the index card and do the same at the $\frac{3}{4}$ point.



CREATE THE SKINNER BLEND

2. Condition the yellow, turquoise, and fuchsia clays on the widest setting on your pasta machine (#1 setting on an Atlas). Cut out 2 triangles of each color with each triangle rolled at the widest setting of your pasta machine.

3. Put the same color triangles together so that each color is now a double thickness. Using the index card as a guide, place the color triangles of clay on the card as shown.



4. Press the seams together with your fingers on both sides of the clay. This is done to ensure that the clay will not split at the seams when rolled through the pasta machine. The triangles do not have to be perfect. Even if they are not the

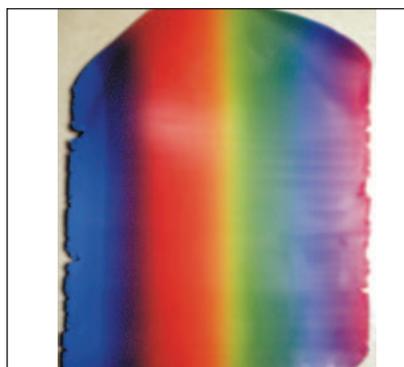
DID YOU KNOW?

You can condition your clay using a pasta machine, working with 1-2 ounces at a time. Soften the clay in your hands, then flatten it out with a rolling tool. Set the pasta machine on the widest setting and roll out the clay. **Note:** Never force a sheet of clay that is thicker than the roller opening because this could damage the pasta machine. Fold the clay in half and run it through the pasta machine again, fold side first. Repeat until the clay is soft and pliable, or about 15 times.

exact size or shape as drawn on the index card, your Skinner Blend will still come out very nice.

5. Place the long end of your rectangle against the rollers (this will now be called the bottom edge) and roll it through the pasta machine at the widest setting (#1 setting on an Atlas). If you have chosen to add glitter to your blend, you can begin to add it now (please read note below about adding glitter).

6. Fold the sheet in half, bottom edge to top edge, matching color to color. Roll the folded sheet through the pasta machine again making sure that the folded edge goes through the pasta machine first. Continue folding and rolling the sheet through the pasta machine in the same manner for about 20–25 passes. Always pass the clay through the pasta machine in the same direction each time, otherwise you will smear the colors, and you will not get a graduated blend.

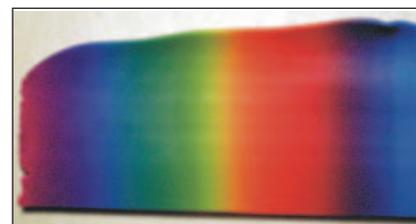


Note: Adding glitter to polymer clay can get messy. To reduce the mess of glitter everywhere,

add a small amount of it onto the Skinner Blend sheet—no more than 1 teaspoon at a time—each time you roll the sheet through the pasta machine. Rub the glitter over the surface of the clay with your finger and then fold the clay sheet in half, bottom edge to top edge with the glitter on the inside, sealing the side edges like a pocket. Put the sheet through the pasta machine, folded side first. Continue adding small amounts of the glitter in the same way until all the glitter has been mixed in.

CREATE THE PIN/PENDANT

7. Cut off a 2" section of the blend, across the colors.



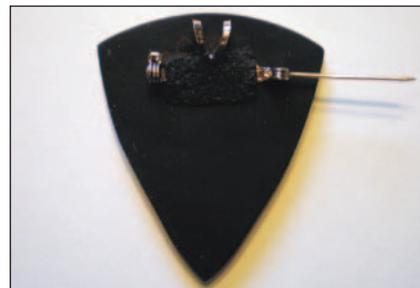
8. Run this strip through the pasta machine on a thin setting (#4 on an Atlas). Ensure that the color stripes are perpendicular to the rollers.



9. Use the square cutter to cut out a section from the blend. With the colors horizontal to you, cut a long narrow triangle across the colors with the tissue blade to form a V shape in the square. Set this aside.



Optional: Place the Swarovski hotfix flatback crystals on the black V shape and gently press it in to ensure that it lays flat against the clay. Bake according to the manufacturer's directions.



directions.

14. Sand the front of the piece using 400, 600-, 800-, and 1000-grit wet/dry sandpaper. Buff to a nice sheen.

RESOURCES: Similar polymer clay pieces can be purchased from Ilene: e-mail at pcclayer@aol.com for pictures and price list. Polymer clay and glitter: Check your local craft store.



ILENE GOLDMAN lives in the beautiful mid-Hudson Valley of New York where she is a software engineer by day and a polymer clay artist/jewelry designer by night. She has been designing jewelry since 2001. In 2004, she discovered polymer clay and is now a poly-holic. Ilene is the co-president of the New York Polymer Clay Guild (www.nypc.org) and a member of the National Polymer Clay Guild. Visit her website at www.ilenegoldmandesigns.com. You can contact her by e-mail at pcclayer@aol.com.

CREATE THE BLACK BASE

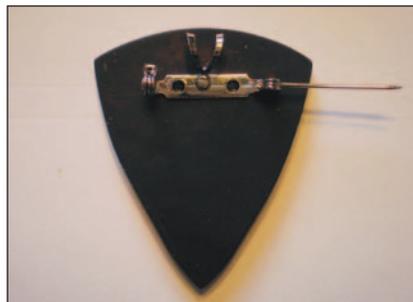
10. Roll out the black clay on a medium setting of your pasta machine (#3 on an Atlas). Texture the top of the black clay by pressing the 50-grit sandpaper into the surface. You can also run the clay and the sandpaper through the pasta machine on the widest setting (#1 on an Atlas). Spray some water on the clay first so that the sandpaper will release from the clay easily.

11. Place the black textured clay, textured side up, on your work surface. Place the Skinner Blend piece on top of the textured side of the black clay and cut out your shape with the tissue blade.

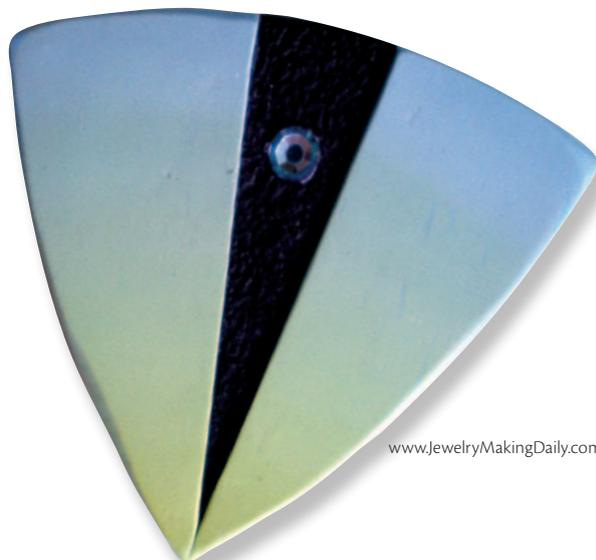


ATTACH THE PIN BACK

12. Place a drop of superglue onto the bar of the pin back. Place this on the back of the baked piece and let dry.



13. Roll out a small amount of black clay on a thin setting (#5 on an Atlas) and cut a small rectangle to fit over the pin bar. Put a small amount of liquid clay on and around the bar of the pin back. Place the small rectangle over the bar and press down gently using the 50-grit sandpaper. Bake according to the manufacturer's



Reversible Checkerboard Pendant

Carved polymer project

BY PATRICIA KIMLE

This pendant begins with a solid black bead. Carved geometric patterns create many angles which are highlighted by metallic and pearlescent acrylics.



Tools

- Work surface and rolling tool (or pasta machine)
- Wet-dry sandpapers, 320-, 400-, 600-, 800-, and 1500-grit
- Small hand drill with 1/8" bit
- Dockyard v-carver or v-shape blade in linoleum knife
- Permanent fine-point marker
- Small paint brush
- Buffing lathe with clean, unstitched muslin buff

Materials

- 1 pkg. Premo black (scrap clay can be substituted for bead core)
- 3-4 colors of metallic and/or pearlescent Lumiere paints by Jacquard
- 2 gold tone beads, approx. 3.2 mm holes
- 22"-30" length of 3 mm rubber cord (according to preference)
- Optional: cord end caps, jump ring and clasp (for shorter length cord)
- cyanoacrylate glue (medium or slow)

OPENING PHOTO: JEFF SCOVIL; STEP PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

1. Begin by conditioning your clay. Knead it by hand or roll it through the pasta machine several times.

2. Form a bead core with a walnut-sized piece of black clay or scrap clay. This core should be slightly smaller than the desired bead. The shape should be an uneven triangle and tapered at the edges. Bake according to the manufacturer's recommendations listed on the package. Cool.

3. Roll out a sheet of black clay approximately 1/8" thick (this is usually equivalent to the thickest settings on most pasta machines). Cover the bead form with the black clay and press firmly, being careful not to trap any air bubbles.



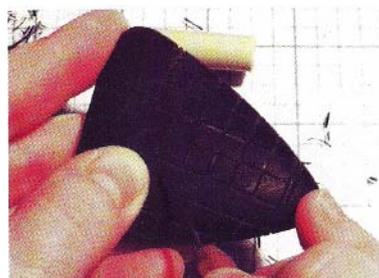
Smooth the seams and the surface of the bead. Bake according to the manufacturer's recommendations listed on the package. Cool.



4. Wet-sand the bead beginning with the 320-grit paper. This grit will remove fingerprints and bumps on the surface. Rinse the paper often. After the surface is even and smooth, progress to 400-, 600-, and 800-grit. Each successive grit removes fine scratches left by the coarser grits. (Note: Polymer clay should not be sanded with dry paper or electric sanding equipment as the surface will be scratched and the dust particles are hazardous to one's health.)

5. Measure out a grid pattern on the surface of the bead and draw it with a fine-point marker. If desired, add the leaf pattern or pattern of your choice overlapping the grid pattern. When marking out your pattern, you may wish to create two complementary designs so that the pendant becomes "reversible."

6. Using the carving tool, follow the lines created. If you are not experienced in carving, you may wish to bake a flat piece of clay to practice with in order to familiarize yourself with the feeling of the clay and the pressure required for carving. Try to cut in long, smooth lines, keeping even pressure on the tool. Keep the tool at a consistent angle to the work; the higher the angle of the tool, the deeper the cut will be.



7. Begin cutting parallel lines diagonally across alternating squares to create the checkerboard, varying the direction of each row. Make these cuts shallower than the grid lines.

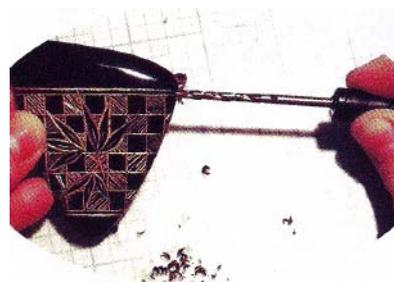
8. After carving, the bead is ready to be painted. Choose the main color of paint and rub the paint into all the carved lines of the bead. Wipe excess paint off with a dry cloth.



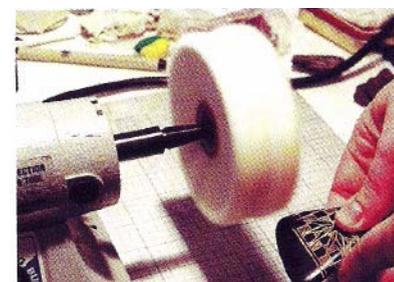
9. Dab a second and third color into random areas of the pattern, again wiping away excess. Let dry several hours.



10. Using the drill bit, drill holes about 1/2" deep into each side of the bead, about 1/3" of the way down the height of the bead.

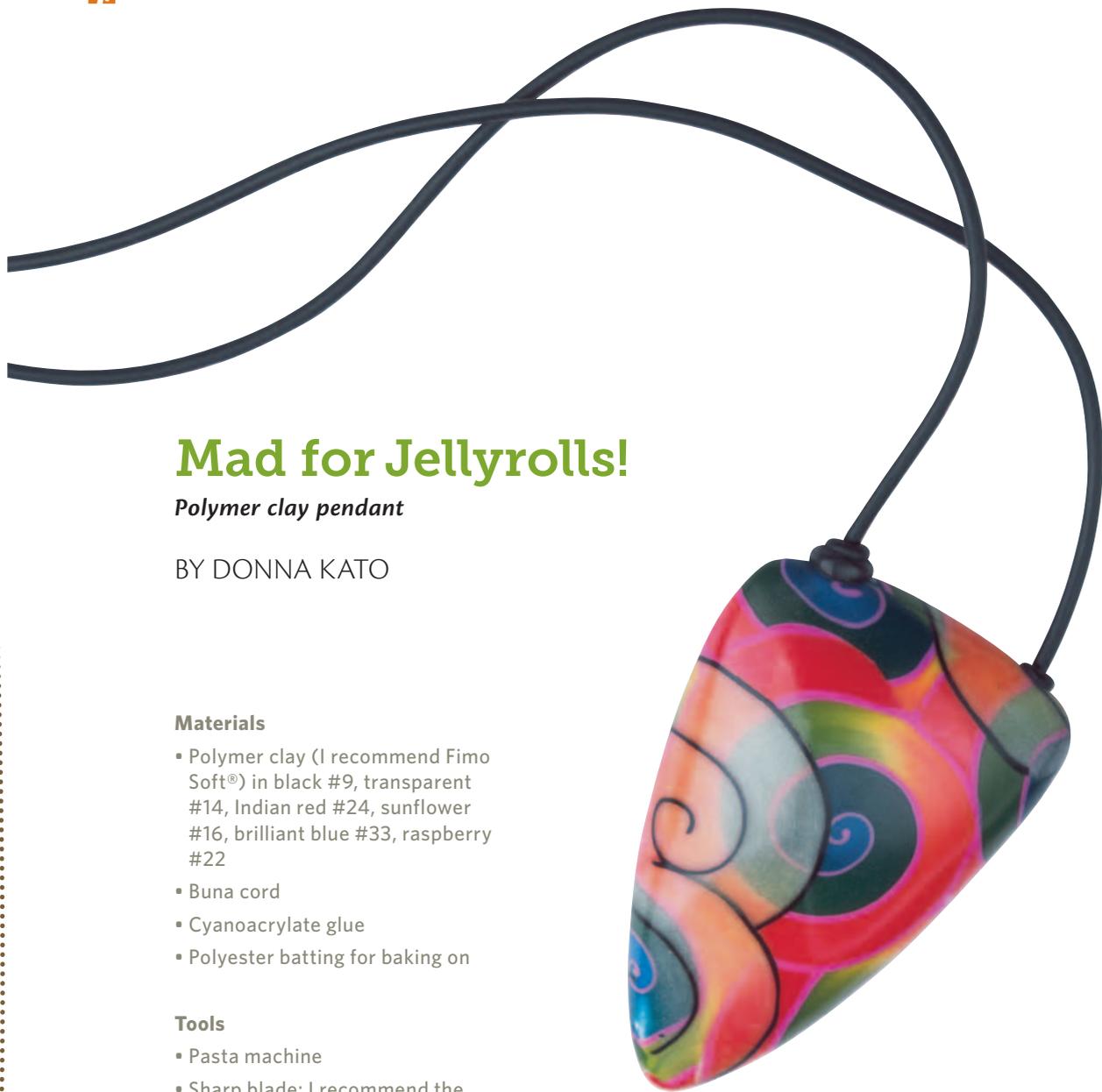


11. Sand off any paints left on the surface using 1500-grit wet-dry sandpaper. Buff with soft cloth or buffing lathe with unstitched muslin wheel. The black clay should acquire a high shine and look like onyx.



12. Place the gold tone beads on the rubber cord and glue the cord ends into the bead using the cyanoacrylate glue. If you prefer a shorter length, cut the cord into two pieces and glue on the cord end caps, and attach clasp with jump rings.

PATRICIA KIMLE has been creating jewelry and fine craft items with polymer clay for over 10 years. She has shown work in juried exhibitions of polymer including the annual Embellishment and Bead & Button shows. More examples of Patti's work can be found at www.kimledesigns.com.



Mad for Jellyrolls!

Polymer clay pendant

BY DONNA KATO

Materials

- Polymer clay (I recommend Fimo Soft®) in black #9, transparent #14, Indian red #24, sunflower #16, brilliant blue #33, raspberry #22
- Buna cord
- Cyanoacrylate glue
- Polyester batting for baking on

Tools

- Pasta machine
- Sharp blade; I recommend the Nublade Kato
- Bamboo skewer
- Acrylic rod
- Optional: for high sheen finish, 400- and 600-grit wet/dry sandpaper and electric buffer fitted with a loose muslin wheel. If you do not have a buffer, you may apply Fimo gloss glaze after sanding.

This project features a balanced “jellyroll” and a coiled roll that resembles a snail. It includes instructions to create a three- and four-part Skinner blend and a way to apply your cane slices that will minimize image distortion.

OPENING PHOTO: ROBERT BRODIE; STEP PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

PREPARING THE CLAY

All polymer clay must be conditioned prior to use. A pasta machine expedites the process but, if you do not have one, the clays can be conditioned by hand. Heat also helps, and sitting on the package first will warm it up about right. Divide the package into 8 pieces. Knead each piece separately, then knead them together.

To condition Fimo Soft with a pasta machine, slice the block in half, compressing the halves by rolling and pressing with an acrylic rod to a thickness of $\frac{1}{8}$ ", then rolling each half through the pasta machine. Roll them together, then fold and roll, fold and roll until the sheet is soft and pliable and the surface is unblemished. To speed up conditioning, reset the machine to a thinner setting before repeating.

THE 3-PART SKINNER BLEND

1. Condition $\frac{1}{2}$ package each of brilliant blue and Indian red. Condition the entire package of sunflower. Because the colors will be arranged blue, sunflower, red, and sunflower is the center color, you will need twice the volume of sunflower. Conversely, each end color requires only half the volume of the center color. These are always the proportions for a three-part Skinner blend.

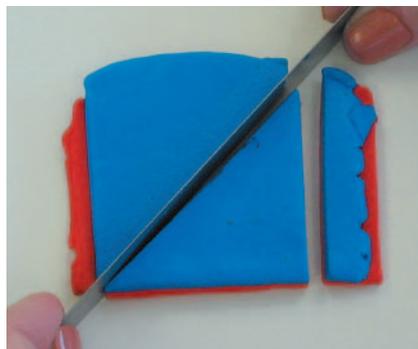
Roll each color through the thickest setting of the pasta machine.

Fold the blue and red sheets in half, then, matching the folded edges up, place one atop the other.

2. Using the blade, make the first cut close to the raw edges, perpendicular to the fold.

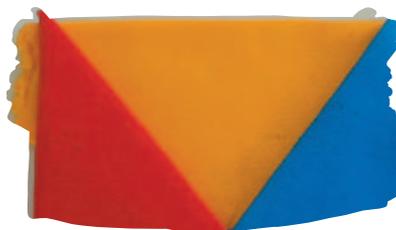
3. You have now cut a 90° angle.

4. Make a diagonal cut opposite the 90° angle. The specific shape of your folded pieces will dictate the shape of the triangles you cut. Just remember, you want to cut two right-angle (90°) triangles that are the same size.



5. Separate the cut triangles. Fold the sunflower sheet in half. Lightly place the first cut triangle on the sheet so that the fold in the cut triangle is perpendicular to the fold in the sunflower sheet.

6. Using the blade, cut the exposed sunflower triangle shape.



7. Remove the excess clay from beneath the right angle triangles, then reassemble the three triangles to form a rectangle.

8. *The first time you roll this tricolored piece through the pasta machine, remember that all colors must come in contact with the rollers!*

Position the piece and roll through, still on the thickest setting of the pasta machine.



9. Fold the sheet so that the same color edge folds over the same color edge; be sure to do this every time you fold! Roll fold-first through the pasta machine.



10. Continue folding and rolling until your sheet is nicely blended and you have no streaks in your sheet.



11. Note: To make a two-part Skinner blend, you only need two right-angle triangles instead of three.

3-PART SKINNER BLEND JELLYROLL

12. Fold the Skinner blend sheet, same color edge on same color edge. Roll lightly with your acrylic rod to press air pockets out. Trim the raw edges.

13. Mix 1/16 package of white to 1/16 package of raspberry. Roll through the thickest setting of the pasta machine, then through the thinner settings until you have rolled through to the thinnest setting of your pasta machine.

14. Place the raspberry/white sheet on the folded Skinner blend sheet. Trim the edges.

15. Using the acrylic rod, thin the blue and red edge. From the thinned blue edge, roll tightly.



TRANSLUCENT SNAIL-TYPE JELLYROLL

16. Roll conditioned translucent clay through the thickest setting of the pasta machine.

Cut in thirds and stack the pieces to make a thick slab. Trim the edges.

17. Using the acrylic rod, thin one edge.



18. Roll a piece of black through the setting of the pasta machine down to the thinnest setting.

19. Place the translucent slab on the black sheet and trim.

20. From the thinned edge, roll up tightly to make the snail-type jellyroll.



PENDANT ASSEMBLY

21. From your scrap clay, form the basic shape of your pendant.

22. I'd recommend using a clay that retains its body even when exposed to the warmth of your hands — Fimo Soft is perfect.

23. Cut thin slices from the colorful snail-type cane. Place one slice on the bead, then roll with the acrylic rod. Continue, placing one slice on at a time until the entire bead is covered. By working one slice at a time, and making your slices as thin as possible, your jellyrolls will be less distorted.

24. Cut thin slices from the translucent snail-type jellyroll and apply in the same way, one piece at a time. Make the surface of the pendant as smooth as possible before baking!



PENDANT FINISH

25. "Drill" holes into pendant using a bamboo skewer. The holes in my pendant are approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ " deep.

26. Roll two small balls of black clay. Cut one ball in half and roll to make two smaller balls. Place the large ball in one of the holes. Flatten slightly with your fingers, then drill through the center with the skewer. Place a smaller ball on the larger, then drill through again. Place the other small ball in the other drilled hole. Press flat and drill through with your skewer.

27. Place the pendant on the piece of polyester batting on your baking tray (this will prevent flat, shiny spots).

28. Bake at 265° for 45 minutes.

HIGH SHINE FINISH



29. Place a sponge in a bowl of water. Lay the 400-grit sandpaper on the sponge and sand the piece against the stationary sandpaper and sponge. Sand all sides of the pendant.

30. Replace the 400-grit sandpaper with the 600 and repeat.

31. Rinse and dry the piece completely.

32. Using the buffer, rub the pendant in circular motions against the muslin wheel to bring out the sheen.

33. In the absence of an electric polisher, you may apply a surface glaze. Simply brush on after following steps 29-31.

ADDING THE CORD

34. Using cyanoacrylate glue, secure the ends of the Buna cord in the holes of the pendant. Let dry, then wear!

DONNA KATO is a polymer clay artisan and jewelry designer who has used this medium for many years, making decorative items for both the home and personal adornment. She demonstrates at large craft shows, writes books, and designs projects and tools for Prairie Craft Company. You can contact her through her Web site, www.prairiecraft.com.

Stuffed Necklace

Lightweight polymer bead and fabric choker

BY LOUISE FISCHER COZZI



Do you find yourself drawn to large, statement-making necklaces that have lots of presence but are just too heavy to wear? Many necklaces with large beads are enticing but end up uncomfortably pulling on your neck and can only be worn for short periods of time.

Inspired by my creative friend Ruth Ross, this necklace consists of large, hollow-core polymer beads that are strung on lightweight fabric, keeping the beads in place and retaining the shape of the necklace. Practically weightless, this necklace can be worn all day and night with no discomfort.

To make the polymer beads, a surface design is applied to a polymer slab, which is then wrapped around a powdered dowel, removed and baked on end. I've used many design approaches to decorate my beads, including various forms of mokume gane, etching, texturing, etc .

A huge variety of fabrics can be used as the fiber core on which the beads are strung. Gauzy, crinkly, iridescent fabrics work extremely well. Gauzy means it's a lightweight, crinkled fabric that will easily expand to fill a hollow bead and iridescent fabric supplies that hidden glint of light. I use leather lacing or

tapestry cord as my inner core and then wrap it with the fabric. The inner core is also used to make the clasp.

There are endless possibilities to stuffed necklaces. If the fabric you choose is not too flimsy, you can go without the inner core and then use the fabric to fashion the clasp. The clasp can be as simple as tying knots in the ends of the fabric and sewing on a covered hook and eye. Necklaces become more elaborate when leather lacing and a button clasp are used. They are even more elaborate when polymer buttons are made and a tapestry cord is used to form the closing loop. The appearance of the finished necklace depends as much on the fabric and beads you have chosen as on the beads you have made. Each work is unique and personal. But in the end, the necks have it - the very best thing about a stuffed necklace is its comfort, wearability and incredible lightness.

Materials

- Polymer clay in contrasting colors (I used Premo! for these beads) - 2 oz. will make about 3 beads
- Leather lacing - desired length of necklace plus 5"
- Sobo® Glue (recommended as it is best for fabric and flexibility)
- Gauzy, crinkly, iridescent fabric
- Flat metallic ribbon for wrapping
- Bead for clasp (I used a fire coral bead)
- Beads and thread for decorating (optional)

- Accent Crown Jewels acrylic metallic paint (optional)
- Burnt umber acrylic paint (optional)

Tools

- Pasta machine
- Deeply textured mold
- X-acto™ knife (to cut leather)
- Scissors to cut fabric
- Needle and thread
- Wet/dry sandpaper, 400-grit, optional

OPENING PHOTO: ROBERT BRODIE; STEP PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

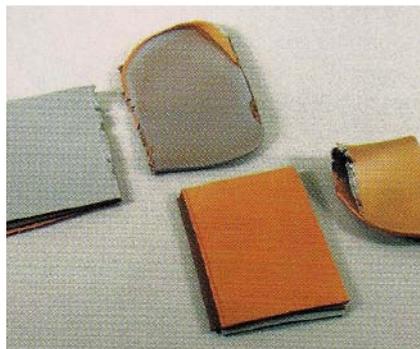
All necklaces are different. The number of beads used depends on the size of the polymer beads and spacers. When I make a choker using 1/2" beads, I use 28 beads and no spacers, or 22 1/2" beads with spacers. When I am making a choker with mixed size beads and wide fabric spacers, I used 13 1/2" and 3/4" beads. The number you use will depend on the neck size and the desired length of the finished necklace.

MAKING THE POLYMER BEADS

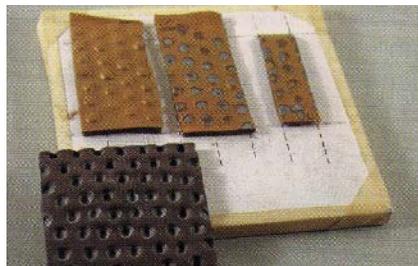
1. Choose 3 contrasting polymer colors. I made my own colors: gold - 1 part gold/1 part pearl; bronze - 1 part gold/1 part black; silver - 1 part silver. Roll each color through #4 in your pasta machine. After rolling, layer the three pieces and trim them to approximately 3"x 4".

2. Roll this piece through the pasta maker on #1.

3. Fold this sheet in half and roll through the pasta maker on #1. Repeat once or twice more or until the second color begins to show through.



4. Powder the mold you chose to use and press the polymer piece into it. Use this textured slab as is or slice just the layer off to expose under colors.



5. Cut the slab into slices: the length I recommended is 1 7/8" x 3/8" to 1" wide.

6. Slant-cut the short edges so that, viewed sideways, it looks like a parallelogram.

7. Powder a 1/2" dowel to help prevent the clay from sticking to it - wrap a polymer slice around the dowel and fuse it to itself on the slanted edges (lap joint). Remove carefully - twisting rather than tugging. Bake standing on end. Sand the ends to smooth the edges if you want and paint the edges to create a metallic glow (optional). Add the burnt umber paint after the metallic paint has dried for an antiqued look (optional).



MAKING THE NECKLACE

8. Cut a length of leather lacing 5" longer than you want your finished necklace to be.

9. To create the loops of the clasp, fold over 2 1/2" of the cord. Slant-cut the inside of the leather end to be joined and glue. Wrap flat metallic ribbon around the cord to help hide the join.

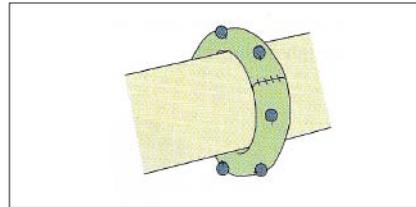
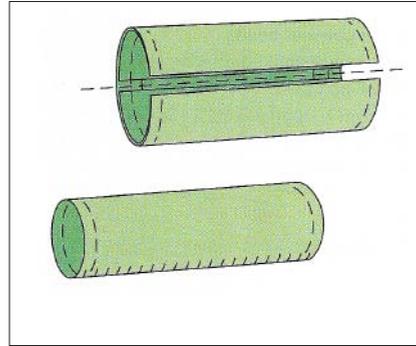
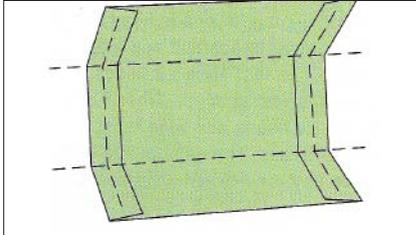
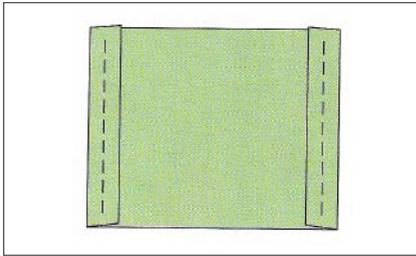
10. To add the bead for the clasp, pull 2 1/2' of leather lacing through the bead hole, knot at end and glue.



11. To create the inner core, cut the gauzy fabric lengthwise or the way it will stretch the least lengthwise, parallel to the selvedge (finished edge) if possible, 1/2" longer than the length between the loop and the button. Hem one short end. Lightly glue the fabric's long side to the leather lacing. Let that dry. Roll the fabric up, pin it in place, then slip-stitch it in place so you can test if the beads fit properly. String the beads on and if they are too tight, adjust by narrowing the width of the fabric and rerolling. If the beads are too loose on the fabric, try rerolling the fabric a bit looser. Stitch the fabric permanently (using an over-cast stitch) once you are happy with the look.



12. Though I have been known to string just the polymer beads onto the fabric core with nothing in between, more often, I add fabric "spacers." To create the fabric spacers, cut a piece of gauzy fabric to approximately 2" x 1 1/2". Turn short edges under and baste. Fold both sides lengthwise towards the center. Fold once more lengthwise. Stitch, baste or overcast stitch. Wrap around the necklace or a 5/8" dowel. Stitch the edges together but don't attach them to the necklace core (they should be able to slide). Decorate the outside edge with beads (optional).



13. String the polymer beads and fabric spacers (if you choose to put them in your finished piece) onto the core. Your necklace is now complete.



Additional options: This necklace offers a lot of opportunities for embellishing. Faux tassels can be created by folding pieces of fabric whose short ends have been frayed, and wrapping just once around the fabric core, then securing with beads and/or metallic threads. In my last class, a student used the core between the beads as a base on which to do wonderful elaborate beadwork. The sky's the limit.

Before beginning with polymer clay, **Louise Fischer Cozzi** was a graphic designer, sign maker, and fiber artist. Her interest in typography and fabrics heavily influenced her polymer work, which has evolved since 1991. She is a teacher, has been published extensively, and her work has been shown nationally and internationally. She can be contacted at tempestal@aol.com or you can write to her at 419 Sixth Street, Brooklyn, NY, 11215.

Polymer Clay Conversion Necklace

BY SARAJANE HELM



In looking through my jewelry box, filled with the rings and pendants and other items I like too much to part with but never wear, I came across a gemstone and sterling silver pendant that I had gotten decades ago and rarely wore anymore. I was thinking that it was too bad I couldn't just string this up with some of my own beads when it occurred to me that with just a little effort, I could change the entire look of the pendant. Since both the stone and the metal could withstand the 265°F temperature needed to bake polymer clays, I was on my way.

Note: Even though 265°F is a low oven temperature, make sure that any gemstones you're working with are not heat-sensitive.

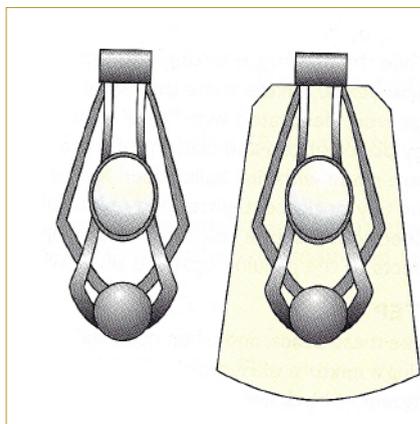
Materials

- An old silver and opal pendant
- Polymer clay (I use Fimo®)-small amounts white #0, translucent #01, and ivory (this is not a stock color, but rather my own mix of white, translucent, and tiny amounts of golden yellow #15 and caramel #17)
- Flecto Varathane Diamond Elite (a finish available from hardware stores)
- Gold and silver metallic foils (available from art supply or framing stores)
- Micro-crystalline glitter (available from most craft or party supply stores)
- Fiberfill (polyester quilt batting or stuffing)
- Black and metallic gold acrylic paints
- Assorted beads
- Cord for stringing (I use 3-ply nylon twist cord)

Tools

- Pasta machine, brayer, or empty glass jar
- Rotary tool (optional)

1. Place the pendant onto a flattened piece of ivory polymer clay. I created the ivory look by stacking layers of white, translucent, and cream-colored clays, then slicing to reveal the striped pattern. To flatten the clay, use the pasta roller, brayer, or glass jar. Using a sharp craft knife, cut around the pendant to form a shape that works (mine was a paddle shape). Lightly press the pendant into the clay, leaving the sterling silver loop at the top free for later stringing.

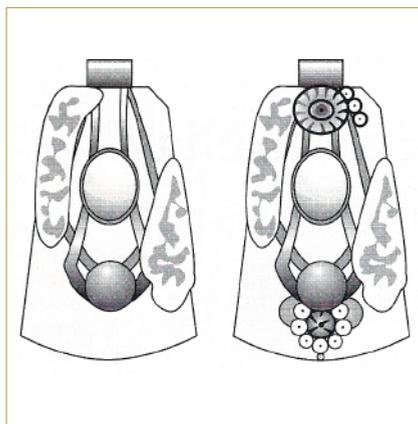


2. Flatten the rest of the clay again, and on top of the piece, randomly place a few small pieces of gold and silver metallic leaf. The nice thing about using leaf with polymer clays is that it easily adheres to the raw clay surface without any sizing (the tacky substance you normally use to attach gold leaf). Sprinkle just a tiny bit of micro-crystalline opalescent glitter onto the surface, using your finger to brush off any excess, and stick the glitter to the exposed clay between the bits of metal leaf.

3. Run a layer of translucent clay through the pasta machine on the #6 setting (the second-thinnest setting of the rollers). Carefully place the translucent clay sheet over the leaf and clay base, smoothing out any air and making sure the resulting sandwich is firmly stuck together. The

translucent layer entraps the glitter and the metal foil, and the resulting sheet can be rolled and further stretched to break apart the foils.

4. Cut small pieces of this sheet. Press them onto the ivory backing and the pendant edges along the top left and bottom right to hold the pendant in place, much as a metal bezel would do. Add tiny decorative bits of the ivory clay (top and bottom) and the clay with metal leaf (bottom). Use a needle to score a few decorative lines and to poke the occasional hole, again just for the look of it.



5. Place the pendant in a baking pan on a little nest of fiberfill (to protect the clay from the direct heat of the pan) with another tiny puff over the opal. Bake for 30 minutes in a 265°F convection oven. I *always* use a separate oven thermometer next to my pieces to ensure the correct temperature — underheating results in brittle clay, while overheating can scorch the clays and produce toxic fumes. Note: *Always* follow package directions when using polymer clay! When used according to directions, polymer clay is non-toxic, but directions vary slightly from brand to brand.

6. While the pendant is baking, use the remaining clay to form a few beads. I made some that were fairly simple, others that were decorated with “caps” made from ivory colored clay placed at top and bottom of the bead, and others that were made with tiny balls added for a reticulated effect. The tiny opalescent glitter and metal flakes from the foils added to the subtle coloration, and helped to tie the faux effects to the genuine opal and silver of the original piece.

7. Bake these beads, and when cool, stain the pendant and beads using a mixture of Flecto Varathane Diamond Elite and a tiny amount of black and gold metallic acrylic paint. Scrub this mixture onto the piece, and immediately wipe it off of the top surfaces using an old T-shirt. The recessed areas hold the mixture, and the resulting look is more like true ivory. If desired, buff some of the beads with a muslin wheel on a rotary tool for a soft sheen. This is particularly effective on the translucent clay areas, which can be buffed to a glassy sheen.

8. When dry, string your polymer clay pendant and beads with your choice of other beads. I used other faux ivory beads, plus beads made of glass crystal, lampworked glass, metal — and even a few fish vertebrae! Use a 3-ply nylon twist cord for stringing, as it is sturdy enough for long necklaces, yet small enough to fit through the metal seed beads.

SARAJANE HELM is a Longmont, CO-based artist. Her specialties include graphic and wearable art, beads, and dolls.