



Dear Readers,

Welcome to Just Ask. I am here to answer your questions...if I don't know the answer, I will research it with our team of experts and give you THEIR answers. Email me at: Deb@pcPolyzine.com.

Hi Deb,

I have worked with clay for many years now, and I am really interested in making snow globes. Could you please help me find the magic liquid(s) (or recipe) for inside them? The ones I have made, the clay stays nice and bright but it forms a white floating film in the water Why? Your help would really be appreciated. Thanks, Jill

Jill—for more information on making a snow globe, here is a link I found while performing a Google search: <http://www.mybackyard.com/current/134p1.htm>

Without knowing what liquid(s) you have used, I really couldn't advise on what to change However, if you follow the Google trail, you will find over 25 thousand links, from the science teacher's page, to the baby food jar recipes.

There are directions at glassattic, too:

http://www.glassattic.com/polymer/MainPages/outdoor_snowglobes_fountains.htm

Please let us know how the new globes turn out!

Deb

Now, J Smith writes:

I am interested in Donna Kato's new metallic clay. I also saw in a magazine, (Jewelry Crafts on page 35) that a craftsman, Cassy Muronaka, used gray telephone wire as an eye pin. She inserted the telephone wire into soft clay and then baked it according to clay directions. The wire bonded to the clay. Have you heard of this? I can't seem to find the telephone wire. Do you have any ideas?

If you visit your local second-hand or thrift stores, you will probably find some wire that you could split (remove the outer, insulating layer to get to the colored wires) and use, or you could go for a product that is making life easier for a lot of crafters: It's called fun wire, and if you do a Google search for that name, you will come up with over two million page hits. Here are a couple of those links, to give you a jump-start:

<http://polymerclayexpress.com/wire.html>

http://www.millerwoodcrafts.com/suppllies/fun_wire.htm

You may also be able to find Fun Wire in your local craft shop. Remember, the smaller the gauge, the thicker the wire.

Have Fun!

Deb

Now Marj has a question that has never crossed MY mind:

I would like to know HOW I can tell if a pasta machine has been used for polymer clay. I recently bought a pasta machine at the Good Will store. I would like to use it for pasta, but I am not sure IF it has been used for polymer clay. Is there any way that I can tell? Is there any special way that I can clean the machine just in case it HAS been used for polymer clay? I read not to put the pasta machine in the dishwasher and not to soak it in water.

On the Carol Duvall show, they always say not to use the same pasta machine for pasta and for polymer clay. I am NEW to using polymer clay, so I don't know what to look for on the pasta machine.

I REALLY enjoy watching Donna Kato on the Carol Duvall show. What beautiful projects. And, thank you for being an inspiration to new polymer clay "artists" :-).

Thank you in advance :-).

Marj

ME, an INSPIRATION? Why, thank you!

How to tell if a pasta machine has been used for clay...Hmmm...That is a very interesting question, Marj. In my humble opinion, any pasta machine found in a thrift store HAD to have come from a pasta maker, not a clayer. Most of us who do both, have multiple pasta machines, (I have two for clay and just one for pasta) and we always know another clayer who could use another one To check, though, I would turn the machine over and closely examine the rollers and scrapers from the bottom. If you see flour and dough residue, I would venture to guess that it was used for food, and if you see ANYTHING in colors, you should probably assume it was used for clay If it has been used for pc, there is no foolproof way to make it safe for food

Just for the record, around here, we love hand made ravioli best!

Hungrily,

Deb

Now this letter really did come into pcPolyzine International Headquarters.

I just wanna see if I actually get a response from you. Ummmm how is Mona? Mwhahaaa.

**Your loving son,
Gregg**

Dear Gregg, here is your answer:

Call your mother!

For other readers, Mona is our nine-year-old, six-toed dog. Gregg is my eldest child, who lives in another town. Clearly, he is also one of our many readers!

Thanks for writing, Gregg. Good to know your email program DOES work.

Harrumph!

Deb

I LOVE to hear from readers who have more to add to what I have said in my column. Debbi from the National Polymer Clay Guild is one who wrote in response to my suggestion that you check your local library for polymer clay titles:

Hey, Deb you could always send them to the National Polymer Clay guild for video and book rentals

Debbi the librarian

Thanks

Thank YOU for the reminder, Debbi--

Of course, all of you should JOIN the guild first, but you ARE a member, right? IF not, here is a link you may find useful: <http://www.npcg.org/Membership/membership.html>

Linda has a sculpting question:

Hi,

A friend sent me your site address -- making the Troll looked like fun.

I collect Dollhouse Miniatures; I am looking for someone to make some figures designed like the "Suzy's Zoo" characters. They are shown on cards, and are dressed & do people things. There is a duck, a turtle, goose, bear, etc.; they can be dressed in the FIMO, not fabric.

Can you suggest someone I could contact? Or could you forward my email to someone who might want to do them for me?

Thanks for any help you can give me. I will come back to see the Troll's body - it is neat & something I could never do!

***Take care,
Linda ^..^<***

I will throw this one to our readers. If you can help Linda, why not email me at Deb@pcpolyzine.com and I can forward your email to her. One warning, though, when copying copyrighted or patented items, selling them without permission, or claiming the design as your own is off limits. If you want to make them for your own use, that is another matter. Always remember to give credit where credit is due.

Deb

Here is one from Christine:

Hello,

Somerset Studio [magazine] recently held a competition in which one had to write a cinquain (5-line structured poem) and present it in calligraphy, paper crafts, and/or rubber-stamping. I unfortunately missed the competition deadline, but wrote a poem about light that I would like to present with a polymer clay/stamping format.

I would like to "print" the poem on a translucent clay sheet, in keeping with the light theme. However, I don't want to use letter stamps on the clay itself to write the poem. I would like the printing instead to be smooth and black, maybe dressed up a little with some sparkle embossing powder.

I have been thinking and researching how I could transfer the "poem image" to the clay, but can't think of how I could do this without the writing coming out backwards on the clay sheet.

Do you have any ideas on how I could create a transfer image with the printing in reverse, so that when I transfer it to the translucent clay sheet, it will be right side out?

Thank you.

Christine Krause

Christine...this one is easy, because I learned the hard way!

When we wanted to make static cling stickers for the windows of our espresso hut, I got some sheets from the office supply store, and went to it. I designed them, edited them, and printed them. Excitedly, I went to the printer tray and...

Backwards they were....

SO, simply put, tell your printing program to reverse the print (it might also be referred to as "mirror image"), so when you lay it on the clay, it faces right side up.

And please, do send in photos of your poem on clay.

Deb (who always found Haiku hard enough to write)

And now, this from Cheryl, who has been doing some creative planning:

Hi,

I am not even a novice yet - I have never touched polymer clay. But I have an idea that I would like to play with - if polymer clay can be made weatherproof. Is it? Can it be made so? Thanks very much for your help!

Cheryl, the answer is yes, according to some of my sources. For more information, I will refer you to Dianne Black's Glassattic:

http://www.glassattic.com/polymer/MainPages/outdoor_snowglobes_fountains.htm

One suggestion – make something small and replaceable and try it in the weather for a summer or winter. See if you like any changes. You may find the aging makes it better!

Deb

Now, remember the woman who asked about boiling clay? A reader, Janey, has another take on that curing method:

Deb, just for the lady who wanted to know about the above topic...

I have always cured poly clay in an electric skillet, just sitting on a tile, maybe with a little parchment paper to keep it from getting too glossy where it is in contact with the tile. I bought two square skillets with the high covers meant for frying chicken (I think). Got a good oven thermometer, set the dial to 275 degrees, and watched them like a hawk, to make sure they weren't spiking above that temperature. When I was satisfied that they would behave well, I stuck practice pieces in both, some big, some little. I have NEVER burned a batch of items, but did have one mishap. I used some of the very first green Kato clay that I'd had on hand for 8 months. It melted - into a big puddle, right off the other colors it was applied to YIKES!

So, I would suggest this person try an electric skillet, MINUS the water, and see what she thinks. Again, cure something unimportant first, and good luck!

Janey Wichterski

Thanks, Janey. That sounds like you have done nothing less than making an oven out of an electric skillet. I have one of those that was a wedding gift in the last century, so I think I will try it for those days that are just too beastly hot to be baking, or to bake in my studio. Thanks again!

Deb

Hi -

First, I want to thank you for your long hours & dedication to polyzine so that we the readers have an excellent source of information and inspiration.

I favor FIMO Classic, however, my hands are begging for softer clay and I could also save time with conditioning clay. I am not willing to give up the strength and support that FIMO Classic is known for. Is FIMO Soft as strong as FIMO Classic? If not, how does FIMO Soft compare to Premo?

**Thank you,
Caroline**

Caroline, on behalf of our esteemed Publisher, let me thank you for your appreciation!

On my own behalf, I think Premo is easier to condition and tougher after curing than FIMO Soft. FIMO is really too hard for me to deal with, since I am very impatient, and an old softball injury to my hand makes conditioning it difficult. That said, I think Cernit is the easiest to work with. My hands tend to be warm, and it becomes workable very quickly. It has a lovely sheen when cured, and is very tough. Doll makers often prefer it, and I love to condition it. I personally prefer Premo to the FIMO clays.

Let us know what you think.

Deb

Publisher's Note: My personal thanks to Deb Hayes for the many hours she devotes to researching your questions. She is a gem of a co-worker and I love her like crazy. Now, if I could just find a way for her to feed me (she's a really good cook, but we live thousands of miles apart).

