

# POLYMER CLAY AT MAFA BY DEIRDRE WOODWARD

I was so excited to find out that the [Mid-Atlantic Fiber Association](#) was not only having a conference at my university but that polymer clay classes were included in the class schedule! I went on-line and downloaded the class schedule as soon as it was available, and to my surprise and tremendous delight, there were four different polymer clay classes being offered!

The MAFA conference was split into two separate occasions: the pre-conference, which consists of a three-day workshop on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and the conference itself, which consisted of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday workshops. During the pre-conference, a polymer clay class called "Transferring and Coloring Images on Polymer Clay" was being offered by none other than Robin Beaty, a woman whose polymer clay art I was introduced to and fell in love with last year. I was delighted by the chance to get to work with her, so I filled out my registration and mailed it off immediately.

When the first day of pre-conference came, I was up before the alarm clock. With my bag filled with clay and other supplies, I trundled off to the university and found my classroom.

When Robin started class, it became quickly apparent that the eight of us enrolled in her workshop were in for a treat. Robin is an ex-English professor who quit her tenured position at a university to work full-time in polymer clay. She is also a delightfully kind and generous person and set us all at ease, so the entire class almost immediately bonded with her and with each other.



Here Robin (r) and a conference participant examine a piece of work.

Robin taught us several different techniques for transferring images to Polymer Clay. We worked with laser transfers, transfer paper, and Lazertran. Robin also showed us how to silk screen and let us use her wonderful silk screens to practice.

From the start, the conference participants blossomed, but in very different ways. Walking around to the different tables was amazing; everyone started with the same technique but interpreted it in different ways, resulting in very different work.

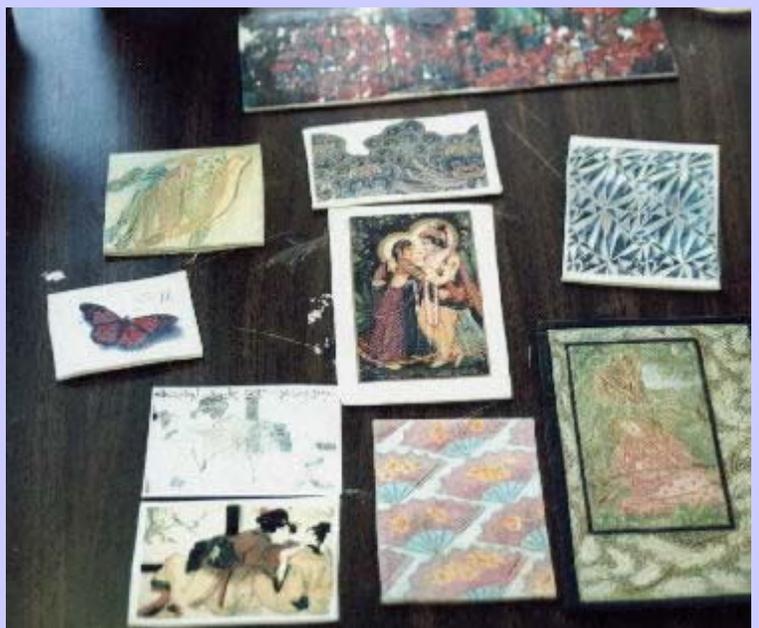
This is a hand-colored laser printer transfer.



This is an hand-colored image created by tearing the transfer away quickly, creating an etched surface on the clay.



Here we have a variety of techniques: Lazertran, transfer paper, photocopy transfers, and etchings. This woman's artistry was just amazing.



Another wonderful artist among the participants. This woman transferred images to a ball! She said she used a paper maché ball. Unfortunately, the clay on the ball cracked, most likely due to the pull of the paper maché.



Robin's work. She makes the most beautiful necklaces with hidden pictures and objects. Robin's work with surface techniques, hinging, and embellishing is breath-taking.



Robin makes necklaces that act like books: they can be opened, revealing pictures hidden inside.



Robin's work was so lovely and inspiring. The pre-conference workshop was tremendously helpful to me with my work on transferring images, and the people in the workshop were great fun.

If you ever get a chance to take a workshop with Robin, I highly recommend it.

Robin's workshop wasn't the only one I took, however. I spent the weekend working with Elise Winters! That workshop will appear in the August 2001 issue of Polyzine, so stay tuned!

