

BEGINNERS' CORNER

BY DEBORAH HAYES



Dear Readers:

Welcome to the Beginner's Corner at the Polymer Clay Polyzine! This is, as the name implies, for beginners of all stripes in the polymer clay world.

Since I am pretty new, as well, I don't know lots about polymer clay, but I am very good at Internet research! I welcome your questions, and if I don't know the answer, I will do my best to find it for you.

One of the best resources we have on the Internet is Diane Black's Glass Attic site (www.glassattic.com), fondly called the Polymer Clay Encyclopedia. I highly recommend anyone using polymer clay, whether experienced or not, to go there and devour all the information she has compiled! Make a cup of tea and enjoy!

In addition to referring folks to the Glass Attic and answering questions, from time to time I will relate some of my adventures with this wonderful medium (such as the time I decided the translucent beads were not over-baked, but amber -- I MEANT to do that!).

It is a pleasure to join the talented and experienced staff at Polyzine.



Now, for some mail:

Dear Beginners' Corner:

Hello there, I am new to the clay world but going like gangbusters! There are a couple of things I would like to try and don't know where to find the technique.

Is that crochet that Nan Roche does on some of her jewelry? Does she use a crochet needle and is the clay slightly cured? Does she have a site where I can go and look at the clay projects? I have her book and will purchase the next one as soon as it becomes available.

Thanks, I love the on line magazine. Great.

Barbara/TX

Dear Barbara,

Welcome to the clay world! Nan's work is amazing, isn't it? As luck would have it, I just watched her video and she demonstrated the link necklaces.

She used raw clay, and she makes the links by hand, after extruding the clay with her adapted clay gun. The ones that look more like crochet are probably the double links, again made by hand with raw clay.

I highly recommend her video if you want to learn to make those kinds of chains; it is very clear and easy to understand. You can purchase the video from any one of the online merchants, or perhaps your library will have it, to get you by until yours arrives!

Again, welcome!

Deborah



Dear Beginners' Corner:

I'd like to know what kinds of materials could safely be used as inclusions with polymer clay. I have successfully used Swarovski crystal and lampworked glass in combination with clay, as well as embossing powder for rubber stamps. What are some of the other possibilities?

Sarah S.
Greeneye Beadworks
GreeneyeGraphics@aol.com

Dear Sarah,

Would you believe, for starters, glitter, dried flower petals or herb leaves, tiny beads, chopped crayon, metal leaf, art sand, shreds of cured or "too hard to work" polymer clay?

Also, there are the dry pigments and paints that can be used, as well as household items, including, but not limited to dryer lint and pet hair!

Remember, I am new to polymer clay, but I have heard from those more experienced that the basic rule is if it can be safely baked at clay curing temperatures, it can be included.

I recently cured some beads that were already on Buna cord, and it turned out fine. Next step? How about chopped Buna in

clay? Hmm---I feel an idea coming on!

Inspired,

Deborah



Dear Beginners' Corner:

What a treat to have found your Polyzine! I am a quilter, but have always loved working with clay. I have been dabbling with p.c., but didn't know the first thing about canes and pasta machines except what I had seen on Carol Duvall's show. Any suggestions for a good, basic how-to-get-started book? Donna Kato's? Kris's book? Which one? Thanks and keep up the great work.

(Your site is so easy to read and understand)

Donna Mollere

Dear Donna:

Thanks for the kind words! Both Donna's and Kris' book would be good, and I especially liked syndee holt's book, *Polymer Clay for the First Time*. Depending on which learning style you have, one of the three should do the trick! Be sure to check the library near you before you commit to buying one. You may find, as I did, that you want to buy them all!

Happy reading,

Deborah



Dear Beginners' Corner:

I am completely new to working with polymer clays. I would like to know if there is any medium that I can use to color white clay before it is baked. I want to put a print on the unbaked clay to color with colored pencils after the project is baked. I'm assuming that you can't mix acrylic paints into the unbaked clay. I would really appreciate your help. Thank you.

Judy

Dear Judy:

Actually, acrylic paint is the best one to use with polymer clay. I would suggest visiting Diane Black's website: <http://www.glassattic.com/polymer/paints.htm> for more info on using paints with polymer clay.

Regarding adding color to white clay, I feel packaged colored clay is your best bet. You can get very soft pastels that would still show off your post-curing coloring. Have you tried the colored clays now on the market? They come in a wide range of colors, including lovely pastels. It makes actually getting to the creating a whole lot quicker!

Good Luck,

Deborah



Send your beginner's questions to polyzine@pcpolyzine.com, subject: beginners' corner.

