

Vessels With An Attitude by Dotty McMillan

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These little vessels are easy to make and such fun to sit on a desk or shelf. With added cord holders they can also be worn as an amulet. They are a good use for all those empty little bottles that seem to multiply for those of us who need to take prescription medicines, as well an excellent way to use those small bits of leftover canes.

The vessels in this project are made using the amber or yellow colored prescription bottles. This type of plastic holds up well in the oven. Make one as a vessel to set on a counter or shelf to hold little treasures, then make one as a pendant to carry your mad money, love notes, or other small items. The bottle is non-toxic and can be used to carry or store medications if desired.

Supplies

- Prescription bottle—size depends on what you will be using it for. Remember, however, that when you add the clay, the size or the finished vessel will grow considerably. This is important if you decide to make it to wear.
- 3 oz of gold metallic polymer clay
- ½ oz black clay
- ½ oz of skin tone or white clay
- Odds and ends of already made canes or make very simple new ones for this project. Any combination will do. Don't get too picky, just slice and place.
- Small face mold
- Circle cutters
- Glaze

Step One:

Remove any labels from your prescription bottle. If you wish, you may also remove the bumpy edge around the opening of the bottle using a small fine-toothed saw. However, you can also work around this edge.

Don't be tempted to put Sobo or other white glue on the surface of your bottle. It seems to cause an odd reaction with the plastic. The clay adheres quite well to the plastic without it.



Sheet with cane slices

Step Two :

Roll out a sheet of gold metallic clay on the #4 (medium thickness) setting of the pasta machine. Roll the clay until the surface is nice and shiny. Cut out a rectangle that is twice as tall as the prescription bottle you've chosen to use, and that is 2 ½ times as wide

Lay the sheet down on your work surface and begin to cover it with med/thin slices of any canes you have on hand. If they are overly large, reduce them before using. (or make a few quick and simple new ones).

Don't cover the entire gold sheet. Let some of it shine through in-between the cane slices.

Sandwich the sheet between two pieces of waxed paper and use a roller to smooth and press the cane slices into the gold clay. Use a little muscle when doing this. When you are satisfied that the surface is fairly smooth, remove the waxed paper.

Give the sheet one or two more rolls for good measure and to remove any lines the waxed paper may have made.

Step Three :

Find the center of the sheet of clay and cut a hole that is somewhat smaller than the opening in the prescription bottle. Center the sheet over the top and down the sides of the prescription bottle.

Line up the hole in the clay with the hole in the bottle. Press the clay up and over the edges of the hole and into the bottle a little to secure it.

Trim the bottom edge of the clay so that it is just the length of the bottle. Trim the side edges so they are straight.



Tuck the clay into the mouth of the bottle

Step Four:

Cut out the pieces shown in the photo to create the kimono sleeves.

Trim the sides to about 1/4" from the sides of the bottle, pinch them together and then press them against the bottle toward the back.



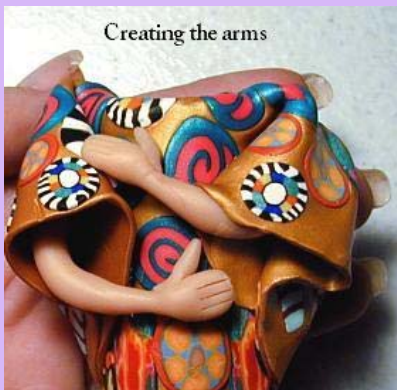
Open up the arm holes and then bend the sleeves forward and press the inside of each sleeve against the body/bottle to adhere it.



Step Five:

Form two arms/hands using skin tone or white clay as shown.

Make an elbow bend.



Step Six:

Attach the arms well up into the sleeves.

Bend and shape them in a manner that looks pleasing.

Step Seven:

Cut out a circle the size of the bottom of the bottle from a piece of clay that has been rolled out on the #1 setting of the pasta machine. Press against the bottom of the bottle to make sure it is firmly attached.



Step Eight:

Mold a face using the same clay you used for the arms. The one I've use here is made from a mold I took from a very old porcelain figure. But I have also used some of Maureen Carlson's small commercial molds. The latter gives the lady a fun, perky look. You can also opt to use only a round smooth ball for the face, with no features.



Add the back of the head and the neck

Add a rounded piece to the back of the face to form the back of the skull and a small piece for the neck.



Form hair with snakes

Roll out some snakes using the black clay and begin applying the hair.

Use coils, zigzags, or other shapes.

A look at any of the books which show Japanese Geisha will give you some ideas.



Add items to hair

Add flowers, combs, and other decorative objects to the hair.

Lay the head onto a small nest of fiberfill or a pad of soft folded bathroom tissue.

Bake and let cool.



Wrap stopper onto neck

Step Nine:

Add a ruff or collar to the neck to keep the head and a portion of the neck above the top of the bottle.

Bake the head again.

Add a ruff or collar



Step Ten:

In order for the head to fit onto the bottle as a stopper you must add a plug to the bottom of the head. This plug must be sized to fit snugly into the bottle.

Roll out some akin tone or white clay on the #1 setting. Cut out a strip that is approximately 1 1/2" wide and several inches long.

Starting at the back, wrap this strip around the neck about 1/2 inch from down from the head and face. This assures that some of the neck will show after the head is placed on the body.

Smooth the top edge against the baked clay of the neck. Wrap and secure another strip of the same size.

Smooth the clay and shape it so it will form a snug fit in the bottle. If necessary, add another strip around it.

Keep fitting the wrap to the bottle opening until only the neck portion of the head shows.

Bake the head again.

Step Eleven:

Make sure that the stopper portion of the head fits right. Sand any areas that may be restricting it. The stopper looks and works better if it is nice and smooth.

Place the head on the body and then coat the hair and the kimono with a clay compatible glaze. Several coats, dried well in between coats, will give the little lady the look of ceramic. Avoid the face, neck and hands.

Your little Geisha lady is finished and ready to use!



Variations

