



Mokume Gane

There are as many ways of creating this faux metalsmithing technique as there are polymer artists. Here are three...

Welcome...

Thank you for attending my class in Mokume Gane techniques!

It is my hope that you are able to take what you learn in this class and do lots more experimentation on your own. If you're already experienced at handling polymer clay, or if you've taken my "Great Starts" class, you probably won't have any trouble following the instructions. If you do run into something that has you stuck, feel free to email me at elizabeth@thepolyparrot.com and I'll be glad to help you.

You can take parts of one of these techniques and use them with parts of other techniques—recombine them and change them to suit the look that you're going for. Don't be afraid to try new ideas, such as coloring the layers of clay with layers of Genesis Heat set paints, or substituting a fine film of Pearl Ex or other mica powders for the foil in between translucent layers.

I'm happy to have you with us, now.....

....let's get to claying around !

An Easy "Jellyroll" Mokume Gane - My take on Donna Kato's most excellent idea



Tint a package of translucent clay with several different colors. This is an easy way of laying out a translucent blend. Lay tiny ropes of color on a slab of clay. Fold lengthwise and put it through the pasta machine, fold first. After eight repetitions,



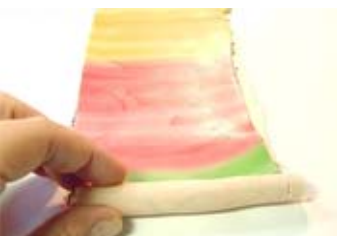
you'll have a stripe-y mix like this one. You can leave it like this or blend a few more times through the pasta machine. When you get a blend that you like, make your final fold in the slab, and feed it through the pasta



machine lengthwise. Reset the pasta machine to a thinner setting, such as #3 or 4, and roll this belt of color through again. Lay the belt onto the work surface and cover one side with metal leafing foils of one or more



colors. Make a very thin sheet of another package of translucent (#7 or 8) and cover the foil with it. Make sure that it's well adhered to the foil and slice open any air bubbles from the side. Trim the extra away.



Beginning at one end of the belt, roll the clay tightly into a cylinder. Again, be careful of air bubbles.



Let the jellyroll sit for at least an hour to cool. Slice the jellyroll on an angle to get the most reflectivity from the flakes of foil.



You can apply the slices directly to a light-colored bead base as shown on page 2, or you can apply them to a sheet of scrap or



colored clay. The dark green and the copper foil really show through the jellyroll slices, as this picture demonstrates.



Materials:

Two packages of translucent clay
Tiny amounts of clay to tint the translucent
Metal leafing foil

Tools:

Round-ended sculpture tools or needle tools
Very sharp tissue blade
Lucite square



Make a Skinner blend of different colors, or tint a package of translucent clay with two or more colors of regular clay... it takes only a tiny bit to tint a quarter-package of



translucent. Roll your colors on # 3 or 4 and apply them to silver leafing foil. It's easier to put the clay on the foil than vice-versa. Make sure that the backs are completely covered



with foil. Roll out the remaining translucent very thin—#7 or 8 and layer that over the leafing foil. Stack up the little sheets of color. Compress and stretch a little bit to



crackle the foil. Cut the pad in half and stack one half on the other. Compress, again, slightly. It doesn't matter if the outside edges are even or neat, you'll have roughly a



rectangular slab. Turn it over, and holding it in your hand, push deep dents into the back with one or more round-ended tools. This one used four different sizes, but that's just a



personal preference. Fill the holes with little balls of translucent, either right from the package or tinted. I used a little of both for this particular one, but I think I like using plain



translucent the best. Turn the block over and square it up, pressing in from the sides and making it taller than it was to start with. It has lots of hills and valleys, but more than this



would have been even better. Smush down from the top to compress the layers a bit and adhere the block to your work surface.



Begin taking very thin slices from the top... this part takes some practice. Pull them off and turn them upside down on a piece of deli wrap, taking care to keep them separate and not



let them get stuck together. When you have a good variety of all the colors you used available in your slices, you can start applying them to your surfaces. For the truest



colors, use white bead bases. **Ease** the slices onto the ball of white clay, trying not to let the slice get folded or distorted. Overlap bland areas with more interesting shapes, etc.



When the bead is completely covered, roll it in your palms to meld the seams together and stick the slices down really well. Brayer over any stubborn seams.



Roll the bead under a piece of lucite to remove fingerprints and even up the shape. Let it sit for a while to cool before putting the holes in, or drill after it's cured.



To cover some items, it's best to apply the slices to a sheet of clay, first. When it's covered, put a piece of heavy plastic over it and roll it smooth with an acrylic roller. The



plastic holds tension on the surface, keeping your designs more intact, while the interior clay shifts around to fill dents and gaps. Peel off the plastic, and check for perfect



smoothness. Your sheet will be ready to apply to tins, pens, etc. This translucent ambered a bit more than Premo translucent with bleach does.

Materials:

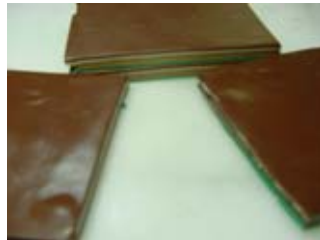
Two or more packages of Premo Pearl Clays
One package of Premo in a much darker color
Scrap clay for bead bases

Tools:

Pasta machine
Tissue blade
Tools for "distressing" the slab
Lucite square



Mix two or more colors of pearl clay and run them through the pasta machine at least ten times each to align the mica particles. Stack up the color sheets and cover the top



with a thin (#5 or 6) layer of a dark color - here I used burnt sienna. You want this dark color to be of very soft, almost sticky, stretchy clay... I recommend Premo - you can add a

touch of diluent, if necessary. Roll the stack through the thickest setting on the pasta machine. (Something which I forgot to do with this particular stack!) The resulting designs would have been much more intricate had I thinned this first stack. Cut the thinned stack into quarters and stack again. Try to get the layers well-adhered, but don't worry if they don't line up perfectly on the sides. Using any sort of tool that you have



handy, "distress" the top of the pad, pushing the tool down as far as possible into the stack - repeat until the surface is covered with designs. Pushing in on the sides with your



palms, begin squaring up the stack, gradually, making it taller. The layers will compress unevenly, which is what you want. Then press down with a lucite square to compress the



layers and stick the block to your work surface. Let it sit and cool before taking slices from the top with a very sharp blade. Lay the slices aside on a piece of



deli wrap, taking care to keep them separate. Your slices won't usually come off evenly... they'll look a little ragged, like these. These slices were applied to beads.



One has been sanded, buffed and glazed. You could also apply the mokume gane slices to a sheet of scrap clay for covering other objects, as with the other styles of MG.



Rattle pendant.

This is a different set of metallic colors; blue, purple, teal and gold with a black "detail" layer instead of burnt sienna.

This is my favorite pendant of all the ones I've made.

You can try this technique with many shades of the same color for a beautiful effect, too.



I call this set "Spilled Paint," - it is made from many layers of bright colors interspersed with a few sheets of black and white clay, then distressed from above like the technique shown with metallic clays. After the shaved-off slices are applied to the bead bases, the beads are textured with chiffon, so they have a "fabric-y" feel to them. They're capped with black clay details.