



A gallery of PAINTED PINS

New ways to play with painted polymer surfaces

by Elise Winters

For many years, I worked as a potter. I loved the malleability of clay and the pleasure of twisting, stretching, and squeezing it into many forms. Then, for more than a decade, I taught photography and let the subtle interaction of color, light, translucence, and reflection seduce me. In my most recent work with polymer clay, however, I've discovered that it is possible to have the best of both worlds.

To begin, I paint the unbaked clay with metallic paints to create shimmering surfaces with subtle color variations. When the paint dries, becoming brittle, I stretch the soft clay underneath. This causes a beautiful network of cracks to develop in the painted surface, an effect that potters and painters call "crazing."

Discover the beautiful surface designs you can create when you play with this technique and build your own collection of crazed painted polymer pins.

stepbystep

Roll several colors of clay into thin sheets and cut them into small squares. Paint each square with different colors and designs, cut them into pieces, and assem-

ble the elements into a collage.

❶ Working with four or more colors, condition and mix small quantities of Fimo Classic. Set the pasta machine at #5 and roll thin sheets of each color. Cut each sheet into 1½ in. (3.8cm) squares (**photo a**).

❷ Apply a thin layer of acrylic paint to the squares. Feel free to play with the paint, blending colors and adding texture. Then allow the painted sheets to dry (**photo b**).

❸ Select one of the painted squares to become your canvas or background. With the pasta machine set at #5, roll a thin piece of scrap clay and place it behind your canvas as a backing. Now roll this duo through the pasta machine. Notice how texture and patterns are created as the painted surface begins to stretch (**photo c**).

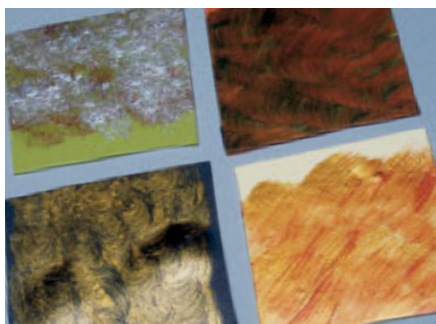
❹ Cut and tear bits and pieces from the remaining painted squares and arrange them on your canvas (**photo d**). The design will spread dramatically as you continue to roll and stretch the clay, so keep your composition very small. Save the remaining pieces of clay for another project.

❺ Open the pasta machine to its





a



b



c



d



e

widest setting (#1) and roll the collage. Turn the collage 90 degrees and roll it again, on setting #2. Continue to narrow the settings and turn the clay until your sheet is an even #5 thickness (photo e).

6 Run another sheet of scrap clay through the pasta machine set at #3. Use this sheet to back the collage. Run the collage through the pasta machine set at #1 to smooth it. (photo f).

7 Put your collage on a piece of clean scrap paper. Place a brass frame lightly over a beautiful section of the painted sheet. With your rolling pin, roll over the top of the frame, forcing it completely down into the clay (photo g). Gently lift the excess clay away from the outside of your frame.

8 Turn your piece face down onto another piece of paper. Set the pasta machine at #3 and roll out another sheet of clay using any color you choose. Apply this to the back of the framed clay, being careful not to trap air between the two layers. Allow the excess to extend beyond the edges of the frame.

9 Flip the piece over so the painted side is facing up. Gently trim the excess clay even with the edges of the frame using the tissue blade (photo h).

10 Bake the clay in the frame at 265°F (130°C) for 35 minutes.

11 After baking, the frame will lift off the clay easily (photo i). Clean the brass, if necessary, before gluing the frame in place. To finish the piece, glue a pin back onto the back of the clay. ●

Elise's polymer clay jewelry and sculpture are exhibited in museums and galleries around the world. Contact her at 56 Adams Ave., Haworth, NJ 07641.

materials

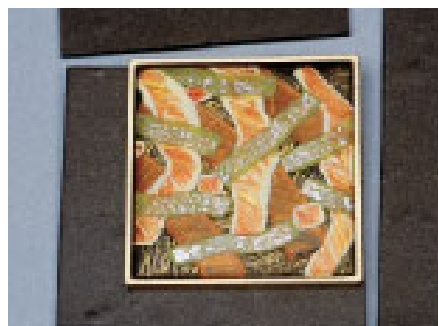
- 2 oz. (57g) pkgs. Fimo Classic, 4 or more colors
- 1 oz. (28g) scrap clay
- Rembrandt or Van Gogh acrylic paints by Talons
- ½ in. (1.3cm) Paint brushes
- Cyanoacrylate glue
- 1½ in. (3.2cm) Pin back
- 1½ in. (3.8cm) Open square brass frame #BR7101 from Metalliferous, Inc., 34 W. 46th St., NY, NY 10036; (888) 944-0909
- Tools: Pasta machine, tissue blade or Kato NuBlade, and solid acrylic roller



f



g



h



i



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