

Some Notes for Polymer Clay Button Talk by Laura Burlis

Polymer Clay is uncured plastic mixed with fillers and pigments. When baked or “cured” it is similar to PVC pipes in consistency. It was developed simultaneously in Germany by a German dollmaker (FIMO Clay) and the Sculpey Company in the USA.

Millefiori Cane Making: Like hard candy-making & glass rod millefiori glassworking (Venice), the clay has the ability to keep a crisp, clear design when “canes” of the clay are “reduced” or stretched, which also makes their designs smaller & more detailed.

Baking polymer clay: research shows longer you bake, the stronger, so bake buttons twice the recommended time. Important to pre-heat oven.

Types of clay recommended: Premo, Fimo, Cernit, or Kato. Kato is the strongest. Sculpey NOT recommended: it is relatively weak & brittle.

Button Holes: Important to be smooth inside: so thread does not fray: run piercing implement in from both sides; can also drill after baking for complicated designs.

Finishing: you can buff & sand the baked clay to achieve a glass-like finish.

Added Finishes for non-washable buttons: Resin, Varathane or p.c. varnishes.

Other Button Techniques: Molds: you can use existing buttons & reproduce them.

-if designs are undercut, use silicone mold.

-if not undercut, use Sculpey Mold maker clay (not flexible after baking)

Other Clay Techniques: Mokume Gane, Metallic Clay Mica Shift Techniques; Stamping with Rubber Stamps or Texture Sheets- the Possibilities are endless!

Resources for working with polymer clay

Want to try in person?- Classes at Textile Center the Sat after Thanksgiving:

Intro to Polymer Clay: Beads and Buttons FOR FAMILIES Sat, Nov 25, 10 am – 12 pm
For kids ages 5-12 yrs w/adult.

<https://textilecentermn.org/product/intro-polymer-clay-families-november2023/>

Intro to Polymer Clay: Beads and Buttons Sat Nov 25 1-4 pm

Millefiori cane techniques & Make an assortment of bead and button shapes. Adult level class

<https://textilecentermn.org/product/intro-polymer-clay-november2023/>

Textile Center of MN- has p.c. buttons for sale in the shop, made by members of the Polymer Clay Guild of MN. Also many books & DVDS in Their Library.

The Blue Bottle Tree, website by Ginger Davis Allman, is a wonderful resource for polymer clay info: Here's a link for how you can wash polymer buttons:

<https://thebluebottletree.com/wash-polymer-clay-buttons/>

Here's a link for buttons: <https://thebluebottletree.com/make-polymer-clay-buttons/>

Clay Squared to Infinity: Layl McDill is a master millefiori cane maker; sells buttons & has classes. <https://claysquared.com/studio/polymer-clay/layl-mcdill/silly-millies/>

Wee Folk Creations: <https://www.weefolk.com/index-secure.htm> Maureen Carlson in Jordan, MN, is a world-famous creator of silicone push molds for pc clay.