
Picture canes, coasters and more!

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Recap: Pictures Canes

By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



Our March program was a demo on building picture canes with Kim Day. Here are some of the tips and tricks shared during the program, and the picture of the final cane.

Step 1

Choose inspiration. Do google image searches for many images so you can pick the best parts of each. Possible searches include your topic (mine was robin) plus some of these terms

- Polymer clay cane (+ robin or bird)
- Clip Art
- Simple Drawing
- Shaded Picture
- Cartoon



Step 2

Make a drawing (any size) of what you want your picture to look like. This is typically bigger than my final drawing. Include some details on colors and shading.



Step 3

Make a drawing the exact size of the cane you want to build. Every single time you make a component, you will measure it against this drawing. Sometimes you can reduce the single component further to make it fit. This will keep your cane an appropriate size and proportional.

Step 4

Take notes of anything you can repeat. If there are two eyes, can you make one, reduce it, and use it twice? Butterfly wings are some of my favorites for reusing the same component multiple times.

Not a step but basic caning 101: Different consistencies or brands of clay will move at different rates. To avoid distorted designs, stay with one brand of clay (or a consistent mix of another like 50% premo 50% fimo), and leech clay that is too soft to keep everything consistent. Consistent, consistent, in case this redundancy was unclear.



Step 5

Make a recipe for whatever background color you will be filling the cane with. It is very easy to underestimate how much you'll need, and if it's a custom color it can be hard to color match. I used 1 part blue to $\frac{1}{4}$ part white to $\frac{1}{8}$ part black. If you are filling a cane with a custom color, in an emergency you can extend it with up to 60% translucent without affecting the color.

Step 6

Decide how high you're going to build your cane. The shorter the cane is, the easier

it is to build, but the harder it is to reduce without excess waste. I typically go for 1.5-2 inches minimum.

Step 7

Build your pieces. Take notes of any particular shapes. For the eye, rather than make the eye, then pack it with the head color, I did a thin line around it with the head color, cut the head in half, used a tool the same diameter as the eye to make a spot for it, then inserted the eye. Wrapping shapes or lines with the surrounding color helps minimize weird distortions showing up where air gaps in the packing occur. For each step, refer to your actual size drawing. Use tools to help shape parts- example shown was a triangle acrylic rod to make indents. You can also cut shapes out of larger blocks of clay. You can build subpieces and assemble them (example eye, then head, then separate wing that was combined with the head). When you need a straight line, it's usually easier to cut into a piece of clay and insert a stripe (example- cat whiskers).



Step 8

Fill in the background. As with the eye, wrap everything in a solid layer of the background color to prevent line distortion from air gaps. Fill in everything. Use big pieces when possible, because the fewer pieces the less chance for air. The edges

are where most of the clay is lost when reducing, so extra clay on the border will result in less loss of edge images.

Step 9

Some of the great clayers (including Sarah Shriver) do not rest their canes before reducing. Focus on getting the center moving by warming up the entire cane (can use a hammer, smack it against the floor, even heat it in an oven at a low temperature if you have tested this works with your oven). Reduce your cane- you can consider using cane ends, putting scrap clay on the ends, whatever method you prefer. Reduce starting from the middle to push out air, work from the center to each end.



Step 10

If you're not sure how large of slices you'll want, you can always reduce a cane further. Even if I'm going small, I usually leave half larger that I can reduce at a later date.

Here are the pictures from my demo. The large initial picture, the smaller actual size picture, the cane at the end of Wednesday night's program, the cane after packing it (adding background), the final cane after reduction.

Show & Tell

Send your Show & Tell items (pieces you finished, work in progress, new books, tools or resources you enjoy) to [Kim](#) or [Ria](#). Please send a caption identifying the piece or technique featured in the photo with your full name. As much as possible, do not crop the image. Each submission earns you a ticket to the year-ender party's raffle non-raffle.



Ornaments by Sharon Mhyre



Left: Kim Day experimenting with transfers; Right: Totems in progress by Kim Day



Earring pieces by Kim Day



Totems by Charles Nagel

Left: A Pebble's Secret; Right: Bat Man



Clay Camp Totem Swap by Charles Nagel

Left: Shy Moon; Right: Tide Pools



Jerusalem cane by Esther Schmidt



Shaman cane by Cheryl Dixon

April Program: Coaster Demos by Sandy Nigro

By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



1. Condition and cut two 4x4" pieces of black clay (or any color you want). Use the thickest setting on your pasta machine. These will be layered on top of each other to make the base of the coaster. You could even add a third layer if you wanted it heavier or thicker.
2. You will need a texture sheet to use on both sides of the coaster. (Sponge, refrigerator veggie liner, fish tank filter etc.) This will prevent fingerprints or inconsistencies on the surface.
3. Ceramic tile and patty paper to work and bake on. (Optional)
4. 1" cutter (Mine is actually 1 1/8")
5. Veneer of your choice, large enough to cut nine 1" inchies. Or, one solid 3.5" x 3.5" square if you prefer a solid-looking coaster.



6. The veneer could be the third or fourth thickness on your machine.
7. Your choice of stencil, silk screen, or rubber stamp to decorate the inchies or square veneer.
8. Your choice of Pan Pastels, Mica Powder, Inka Gold, paint, etc. to color the inchies.
9. A brush, sponge, dauber, or finger to apply the color.
10. You will place the raw inchies on the raw background. Arrange them equidistant from each other and from the edges of the background. This is the hardest part of the whole process. Believe me.



11. Press gently to join the clay.
12. Cure on paper on tile, covered, for an hour.
13. If desired, attach felt or cork feet to the back of the coaster. Sign your name.

14. Do not use a finish on the coaster, otherwise a hot cup or cold glass will stick to it.

April Program: Clay Day

By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



In addition to our normally scheduled Zoom hangouts every Wednesday evening and Saturday morning, 6 times a year we have our All Day Clay Day. Our next one is April 9th-10am until 5pm. Feel free to come online and visit for a few hours, or the whole day. This is a great time to work on a big project, or come with questions. I get some of my best inspiration by whining to my friends when something isn't working!

Special: Zoom Board Meeting

By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



We're going to do our annual board meeting on Zoom. While spectators are allowed, they will be muted during the meeting (feel free to type questions if you have any, or better yet send things you want discussed to me before the board meeting and I can add it to our discussion list). At this meeting we will discuss our previous year's finances, vote on a budget for this year, and as always talk about ideas we have for spreading the word about our Guild. This will happen Saturday April 2 at 2:00 p.m. on our normal Zoom link and should last between one and two hours.

Clay Camp 2022: More Info

By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



Clay Camp Registration is Open!

You should have all received the email about this, but just in case... Clay Camp Registration is officially open! Remember we are requiring up-to-date Covid vaccination. Currently only double rooms are available. If there is any extra capacity, we will consider opening up single room spots for an additional fee. Feel free to [email me](#) if you would like to be contacted if and when this happens.

Clay Camp Scholarship Information

We understand Camp can be quite expensive, and we don't want this to be an excessive financial burden if that would prevent someone from being able to attend. Because of this we offer members a 50% scholarship (classes not included) if they fill out the form on our website, and email it to [Kim Day](#). Do this before registering online. If you are eligible (member for a year), you will be given a code and told where to fill it in on the registration form. Ask if you have questions!

Clay Camp Swap Information

This info is all online, so I just wanted to remind you that if you cannot come to Camp, you can still participate in the swap (theme is totems, or large beads with a 5mm hole that can fit on a skewer) if you send the items to Kim Day before the start of Clay Camp.

One change in the rules: since we have enough confirmed swappers, I will now allow one group of 10 identical totems. Previously, we were limiting groups to five. Multiple groups are still allowed, but if you decide to do four groups, you can only have up to 10 the same, and the other two groups of five must be different.

The reason we are having limits on the number of identical items is because in the past we've had someone bring 30 of the same item to a clay camp swap. Only 12 people participated, so they got 12 from other people and 18 of their own back. With non-identical items, you can swap with the same person multiple times and get zero of your own back. Hope my clear as mud explanations helps.

Save The Date!

Help us promote our Clay Camp, download this banner or the poster about registration and post in your social media. Thanks!



Meetings: Zoom

By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



We have our monthly meeting over Zoom the first Wednesday of the month from 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

We also have small informal clay days every Wednesday 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. and every Saturday 10:00 a.m. - noon. All of these use the same Zoom link.

You are welcome to invite other people you know to these, there is no membership requirement for our informal get togethers. They can also craft with other mediums than clay.

If you'd like to be on an email list for people who want to schedule Zoom things outside these Wednesday and Saturday times, please let me know with very specific words "Add me to the Zoom email list" at polymerclay@gmail.com

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 988 553 9980

Password: clayisfun

From the President: 20 vs 1

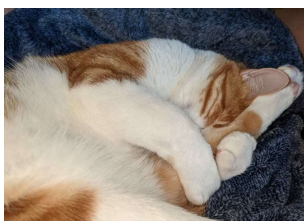
By Kim Day | polymerclay@gmail.com



Hello Clayers!

I've had a lot of not-great health days over the past few months, which resulted in minor actual crafting time, but lots of Pinterest time. With things starting to look up, I have a whole kit and kaboodle of project ideas swarming in my head. It's so great to be excited about clay again! Now I'm reminded of why I bring half my clay supplies to Camp every year, because I might be inspired to work on one of any of 20 different projects. Other people are more sensible and plan one specific project for Clay Camp. So whatever method works for you, hope you are starting to plan ahead.

The totem swap has been especially inspiring, because with so much time to work on it, I've been able to explore new ideas instead of hastily making something I already know how to do a week before Camp. I'm in awe of Dawn's spaceship totems though. Good thing the swap isn't a competition!



One of my great joys is hiking with my husband, and we've been enjoying the sunny days that have started poking through. On my last hike, I even had to take my sweater off part way through! Amazing how warm 60 F can feel after a long winter. Of course, I'm a hiking amateur when compared with Cathy Gilbert. If you're not already, you should become her Facebook friend so you can see all the gorgeous pictures she takes.

I'll wish good health on everyone, along with the chance to get some natural vitamin D. Happy claying, and enjoy this cat tax picture!

Kim



Update your Info

New members need to sign-up to our newsletter, the sign-up form is included in your NWPCG Welcome email from Membership.

Changing your email? You can [update your personal](#) information to ensure that you receive our newsletter. You can also add your website or social media links to your profile. This link is also available in every newsletter at the footer area.

If you haven't yet, please add "newsletter@nwpcg.org" to your address book so our newsletters do not go to spam.

Update

 Forward

NWPCG website



Newsletter Editor & Designer: Ria Mendoza Hoyt | orangejar@gmail.com

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