



I Heart Mokume Gane! By syndee holt

Mokume Gane is an ancient Japanese metalsmith technique that has been adapted (with great success!) to polymer clay. Polymer clay features several different methods of Mokume Gane, including my favorite method that creates lots and lots of textures as well as colors, thanks to the Sculpey Souffle clays used!

Supplies:

3 packages of Sculpey Souffle clay – I've used Bluestone, Mai Tai and Igloo
Sculpey Clay Conditioning Machine
Sculpey Acrylic Roller
Sculpey Style n' Detail Tools
Sculpey Design It Templates- General Shapes
Sculpey Hollow Bead Maker
Sculpey Needle tool

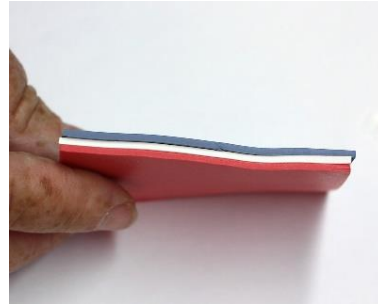
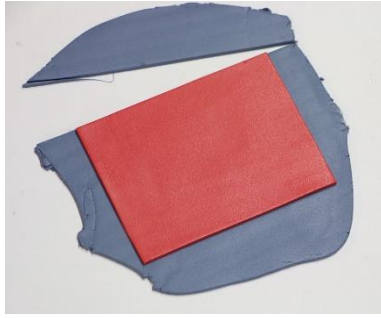
Have on Hand:

Smooth ceramic tile or sheet of glass
Tissue blade or other sharp, thin clay blade
Craft Knife
Findings for necklace, earrings and jewelry tools
Instant glue

Getting Started

Polymer clay may stain. CLAY MAY DAMAGE UNPROTECTED FURNITURE OR FINISHED SURFACES. DO NOT USE polymer clay on unprotected surfaces. We recommend working on the Sculpey clay mat, wax paper, metal baking sheet, or disposable foil. Start with clean hands and work surface area. Knead clay until soft and smooth. For best results, clean your hands in between colors. Shape clay, pressing pieces together firmly. Bake on oven-proof glass or metal surface at 275°F (130 °C) for 30 minutes per ¼" (6 mm) thickness. For best baking results, use an oven thermometer. DO NOT USE MICROWAVE OVEN. DO NOT EXCEED THE ABOVE TEMPERATURE OR RECOMMENDED BAKING TIME. Wash hands after use. Baking should be completed by an adult.

Begin by preheating oven to 275 °F (130 °C). Test temperature with oven thermometer for perfectly cured clay. For best results, condition all clay by running it through the Clay Conditioning Machine for several passes on the widest setting. Fold the clay in half after each pass and insert the fold side into the rollers first.



Step 1:

Select 3 colors of Souffle clay, with one of the colors being a lighter color for contrast. I've selected Bluestone (my favorite!), Mai Tai and Igloo (as the contrast color). Once your clay is conditioned, roll it out on a #2 layer on your Sculpey Clay Conditioning Machine (about a #3 on a pasta machine with 9 settings) and cut a rectangle out of one of the colors that is about 2-1/2 by 3-1/2 inches. Lay this rectangle on each of the other colors and trim around it to create a stack of the 3 colors, with the Igloo in the middle. Press the layers lightly together.

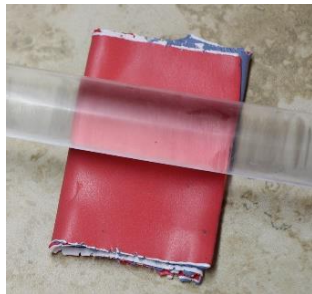
Step 2:

Roll this stack back through the Clay Conditioning Machine on the SAME setting to reduce the thickness of the layers. Accordion fold the strip of clay as shown.



Step 3:

Roll the folded clay back through the Clay Conditioning Machine on the same setting again. Once again, accordion fold the layers as in Step 2.

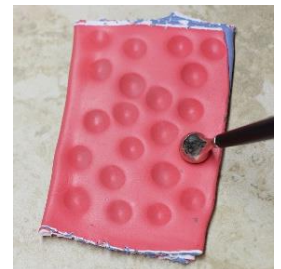


Step 4:

Place the folded clay onto the smooth ceramic (or glass) tile and use the acrylic roller to lightly roll over it and remove any air bubbles. NOTE: The top and bottom layers should be different colors – whatever color you decide for the top will be the color showing in the holes of the final Mokume Gane.

Step 5:

The key to a great Mokume Gane is texturing the layers to create the patterns in the slices. I use the Style n' Detail tools for this, starting with the largest ball stylus, I deeply emboss the surface of the clay.



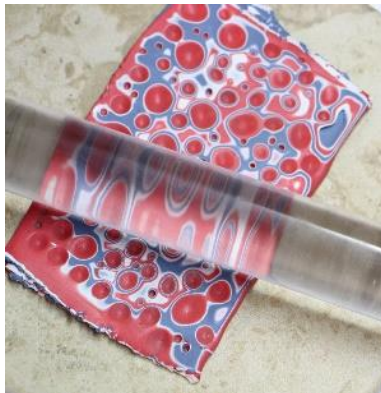
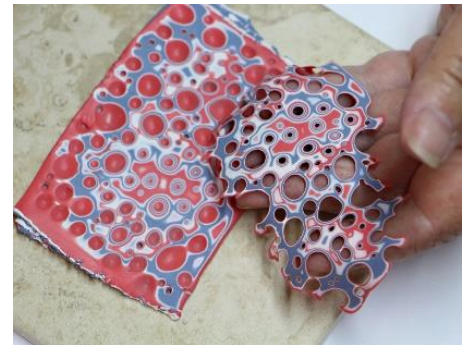


Step 6:

Repeat this process with the medium size ball tool. NOTE: I like to create a petal-like pattern around the larger patterns. Use the smallest ball tool to press LIGHTLY (it goes into the clay easily) to complete the textured surface.

Step 7:

Use the blade to slice off the very top portion of the stacked and textured clay. I find that curving the blade slightly helps. Set the clay you slice off aside carefully for future use and admire your lovely Mokume Gane pattern!



Step 8:

Lightly roll the surface of the clay with the acrylic roller to help even out the thickness of the clay and remove any cut marks. Don't roll so much that you remove the texture though!

Step 9:

Select the larger heart template and pop out the plastic in the template. Use a piece of fine sandpaper or a nail file to smooth inside of the template. Place the template on the sheet of clay, positioning for the best pattern and use the craft knife to carefully cut out the pattern.



the
cut

Step 10:

Cut out two of the smaller hearts for earring if you wish!

Step 11:

Slide the clay blade under the clay hearts to remove them from the tile. I like to accentuate the “attitude” of the heart curving the tip of the heart slightly. Use a knitting needle or other smooth tool to smooth the edges of the hearts.

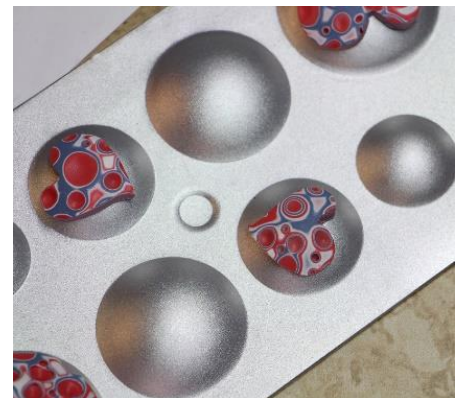


Step 12:

Use the needle tool to pierce each heart at the top center with a hole about 1/4 inch deep.

Step 13:

Place the completed hearts on the Sculpey Hollow Bead Maker, using the largest or second to largest mound for the large heart and the smaller mounds for the smaller hearts. Gently press into place with the palm of your hand and bake according to the directions above. NOTE: I warm my Hollow Bead Makers on the top of my oven before using so that the clay will mold to it easier.



Step 14:

Once the clay has baked and cooled, attach your findings and wear!

MORE DESIGNS USING MOKUME GANE SLICE YOU REMOVED!

USING MOLDS:

Step 1:

Lightly spray a donut mold in the Sculpey Cabochon mold with water. Wipe any water off the top surface of the mold. Place a portion of the Mokume Gane slice FACE DOWN in the mold.



Step 2:

Roll a medium size ball of clay (select a color from the pattern or a different color entirely!) and firmly press it over the clay in the mold.

Step 3:

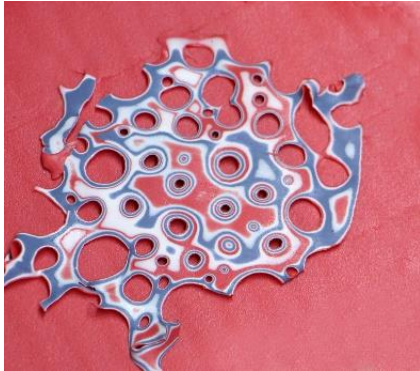
Trim off any excess clay from your patterned sheet and set aside. Remove the excess clay from the mold by slicing from the middle of the mold out to each side.



Step 4:

Wiggle the mold and pop the clay out! Use the needle tool to add any holes you will need and bake according to the directions above.

USING THE REST OF THE SHEET OF CLAY:

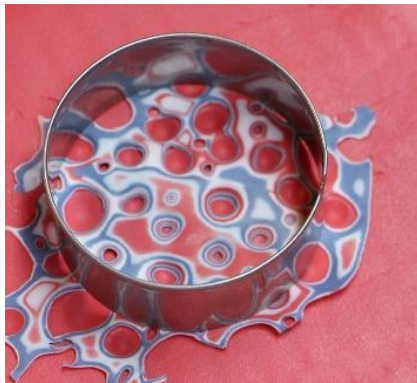


Step 1:

Lay the sheet of clay that you trimmed off the top surface on another sheet of clay (select a color from the pattern or a new color!), rolled out on the same thickness you used above or thicker. Use the acrylic roller to lightly roll it into place.

Step 2:

Use the Style n' Detail tools to recreate the original textures.



Step 3:

Repeat the steps listed above with the templates or use a Sculpey cutter to cut out a dramatic pendant.

Step 4:

Place this design on the Hollow Bead Maker with the hearts to bake! Don't forget to place a hole near one edge to attach to your necklace.

