

Color

An ideal way to begin working with polymer clay is to do some color mixing. It will help you become familiar with the texture and consistency of the clay as well as begin to learn about how the polymer clay colors behave.



Start to look around your environment at colors. Have you ever had the experience of seeing a distant figure in a pink dress, only to realize, at close range, that she was wearing a white dress with tiny red flowers? Start to notice the way billboards use color. What colors are the letters and the background? They draw your attention and sometimes even appear to vibrate and move. They can be seen easily from a distance, which is often due to the contrast in coloring. This use of contrast is particularly important in small work like jewelry. When you notice small objects, like jewelry on a passersby, the shape is what you notice first, then the overall color, and the pattern is last. If the colors are very similar to one another the pattern becomes lost at a distance.

A pleasing and artistic use of color, and an understanding of contrast, are so important to the success of your work that a review of the basics of color theory is constructive. While everyone has his own preferences for color combinations, there is a science called color theory which attempts to describe and explain how people perceive and react to colors. A mountain of information has been written about the way colors interact with one another, and with the human eye and brain. Color can be studied from the perspective of physics, chemistry, physiology or psychology. The artist is the conscious or unconscious interpreter of knowledge from these disciplines. A brief review of some of these basic concepts, part of the language of art, may inspire you to experiment a bit with color and make some discoveries of your own. The polymer clay colors can be used as they come out of the package, but ultimately you are going to want to make at least some colors of your own. If you keep track of the ratios of clay used to make a specific color, you will be able to reproduce it later. You can pinch off a small amount of the mixed color, flatten it and bake it, then glue it onto a cardboard sheet with the formula noted and you will have a permanent color index.

The Color Wheel

The colors of the rainbow - red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet - can be arranged in a color wheel. The color wheel is simply a convenient way to represent these spectral colors and relate them to one another. White light is composed of a spectrum of wavelengths that can be seen when the