

MAKING RONDELLE BEADS *using* PLOYMER CLAY *with* PEARL EX

by Carolyn Hasenfratz, courtesy of Jacquard Products



Normally when I'm planning a new craft project, I try not to be too influenced by trends. The new Pearl Ex Chromatic colors however seem to be in harmony with some things going on in the world of fashion, so I decided that bead-making would be a great application for these bold new colors. Bright jewel and metallic tones are perfect for jewelry!

Pearl Ex Powdered Pigments are a versatile pearlized powder that can be added to nearly any artist medium. They need to be mixed with or coated with some kind of binder for permanence. In this project we'll be rolling the beads in the powder to apply it to the surface of the beads, and then sealing the surface with Pearl Ex Varnish.



Materials

- Pearl Ex Powdered Pigments
- Dust Mask
- Disposable latex gloves
- Scrap polymer clay or color of your choice
- Polymer clay work surface
- Skewer for making holes
- Polymer clay blade
- Embossing powder (optional)
- Polymer clay dedicated oven
- Wire
- Scrap cardstock
- Hole punch
- Tape
- Small paintbrush
- Pearl Ex Varnish
- Chunk of scrap Styrofoam (such as overturned food tray)



Directions

1. Put on your disposable gloves and roll out the clay in tubes about as big around as a pinky finger. (If you are beginner to working with polymer clay, see my tutorial Polymer Clay Lesson One: Introduction and Making Textured Beads at: <http://www.limegreennews.com/polymer.html> for general tips on working and safety information. Jacquard's brand of polymer clay, Cernit, is phalate-free.)

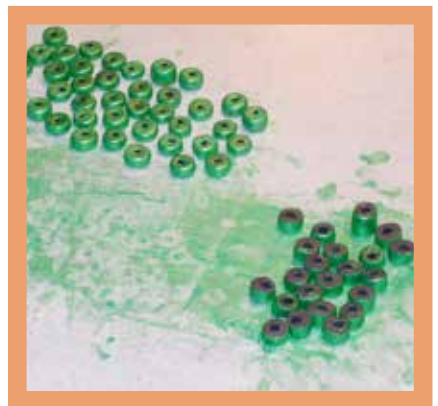
2. Put on your dust mask and sprinkle some Pearl Ex onto your work surface. You can use just one color or blend the colors. Then roll your clay tubes in the powder, simultaneously narrowing them to about the diameter of a pencil.

Variation: During this step, if you want you can add some embossing powder to the mix. In my samples I used clear embossing powder to add texture to some of the beads without adding color. You can experiment with colored embossing powder if you like. The temperatures at which the clay is baked should melt the embossing powder. If you have any problems getting it to melt, you can use a heat gun on the beads after baking to finish melting.

3. When completely coated with powder, cut clay tubes into 1-2 inch segments. Pierce lengthwise with a skewer to make holes. Roll skewered tube while cutting clay into segments with polymer clay blade.

4. Dip sides of beads in powder and smooth edges with fingers.

Note: If you need to clean your work surface between colors, I get very good results by wiping it down with hand lotion then scrubbing with a rag and wiping it thoroughly clean. If you decided not to use gloves, hand lotion followed by soap will get the clay/powder residue off of your hands.



Directions cont.

6. The next step is to bake the beads. If you don't have a rack for baking beads, you can easily make one by making three long wedges out of scrap cardstock and holding them together with tape. Punch holes along the tops of the wedges to make depressions for the wires to rest in. String beads along the wires and bake according to clay manufacturer's instructions.



7. After the beads are baked, paint them with Pearl Ex Varnish to seal the powder coating. Use bent wires pushed into a piece of styrafoam as a support for the drying beads. If you like you can add a bit of powder of another color to the clear varnish to layer and blend the colors.



After the varnish is dry, you can now come up with jewelry designs for the rondelle beads you've made. Here are some ideas I came up with.

Finished Pieces

