

Mokume Gane Tutorial

by Valerie Moore



Materials:

3 different skinner blend logs
1 block of black clay
texture sheets, stamps or molds
A sharp blade
Pasta machine

Mokume Gane is one of my favorite techniques. Here is another variation, which is not an original idea by me but one that I've adapted to suit my needs.

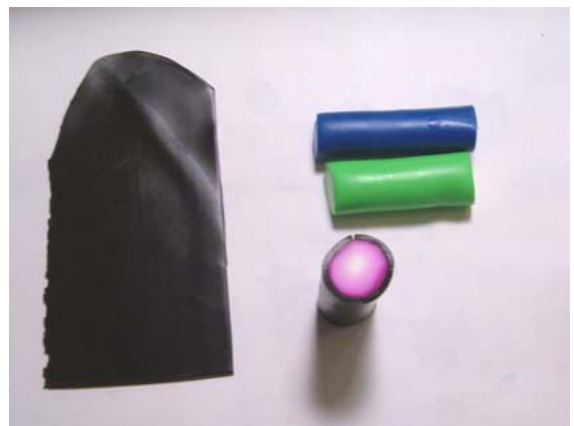
I often use natural objects as molds and texture sheets and for this one there is no exception. In my beach wanderings I picked up a very neat piece of coral that I took an impression of in polymer clay.

Step 1:

Roll the black clay through the pasta machine at a 4 setting and wrap each skinner blend log to make a bullseye cane.

Step 2:

Roll each color out until it gets to be about 10mm (thick). Brayer each log slightly flat until it is about 6mm thick. Cut each color in half. Set one half of each color aside. You should now have 6 flattened logs, 2 of each color.



Step 3:

Stack 3 logs of color on top of one another in whatever combination you prefer. Do this with with the other 3 logs of color in the *same* combination.



Step 4:

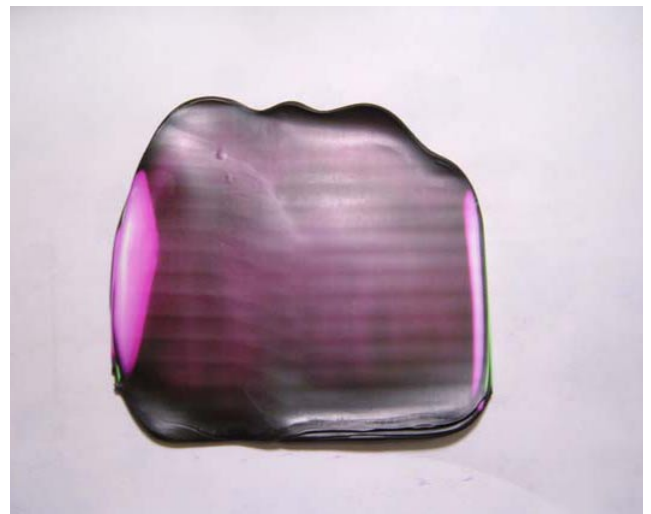
Stand the new log so the colors run vertically (up and down). Pinch the top so you form a triangle. Do this on both stacks of colors.



Step 5:

Place the stack, pointed side down, into the rollers on the pasta machine and run through at a 1 setting. Do this to the other stack as well.

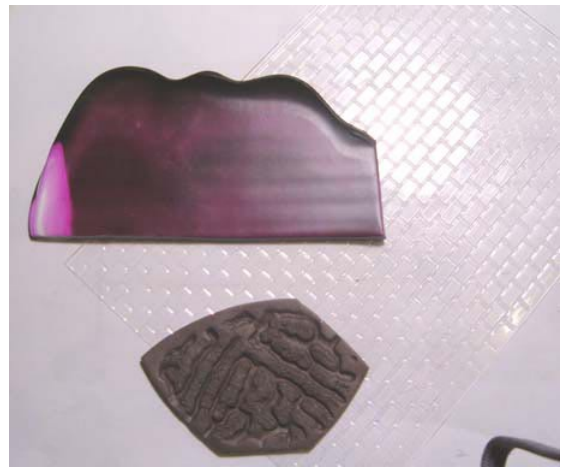
Place one sheet on top of the other. Make sure you do not turn one sheet onto the opposite side. You want all the colors to go in order. Roll through the pasta machine at a 1 setting.



Step 6:

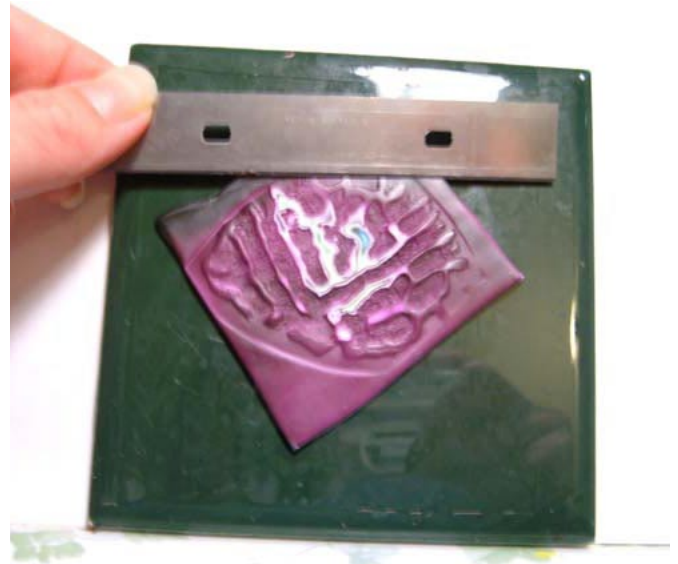
You are now ready to impress your sheet. You can use a texture sheet, a stamp or a mold. Really anything that will make an impression will do. It is wise to use a release agent so your clay doesn't stick to your texture sheet. To make things easier I've cut my clay sheet to fit my texture sheet.

Press firmly with your fingers or run your sheet with the texture sheet through the pasta machine (if it will fit). If I use a texture sheet I usually run my clay sheet through the pasta machine on a 2 setting and then run both texture sheet and clay sheet through on a 1 setting.



Step 7:

Let your clay rest for a bit to firm it up or place it in the fridge for a few minutes. Start slicing the raised areas away to reveal the pattern. Be careful though; you don't want to cut too deeply or you may lose the pattern.



Step 8:

Run your sheet with the pattern through the pasta machine again. I usually start at the 3 setting, go to 4, turn the sheet 90 degrees, and go to the 5 setting. This prevents the pattern from warping too much.

You now have a patterned sheet of mokume gane! Congrats! You can use it on tins, pendants or anything else you can think of.

