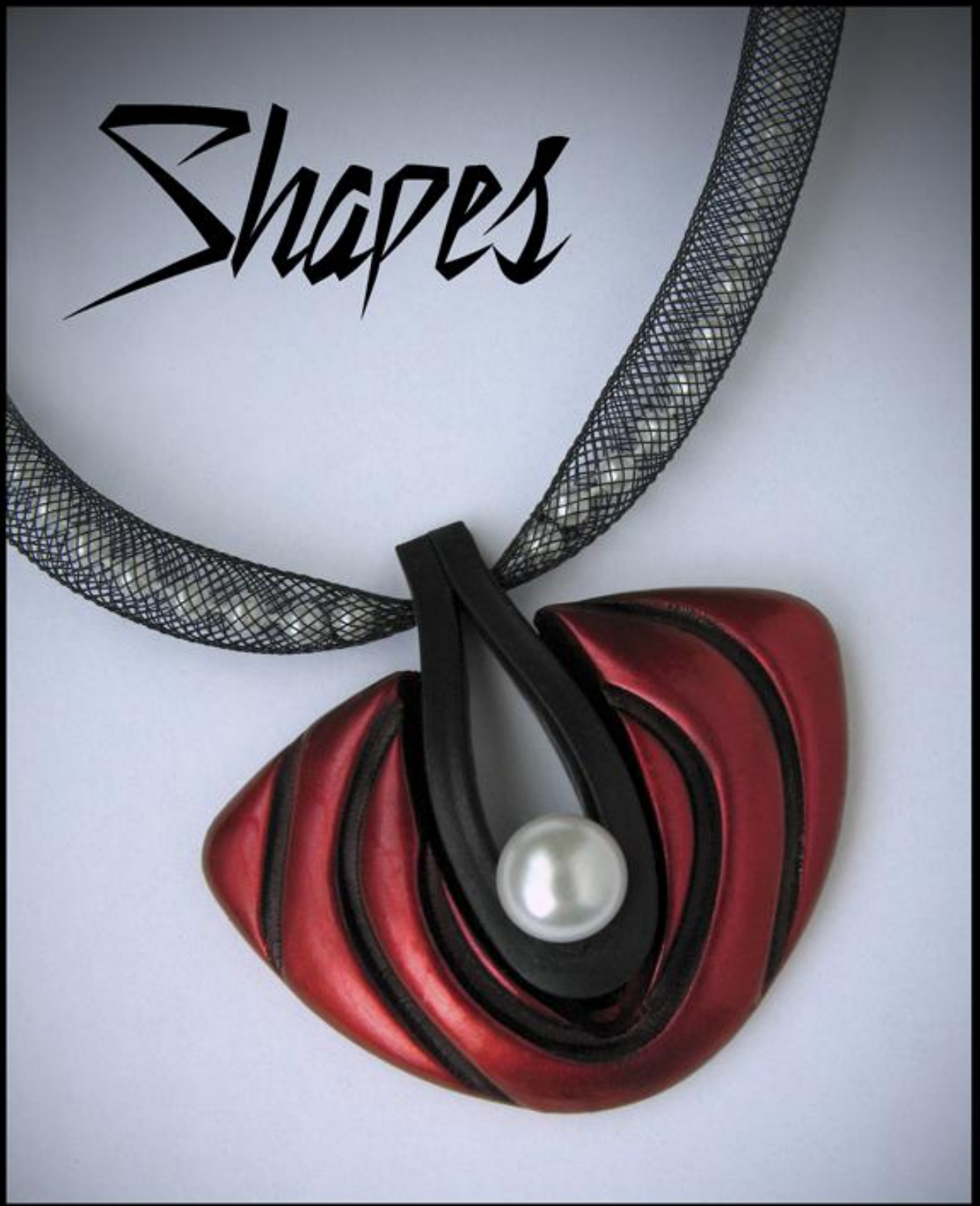


Shapes



25 Inspirational Jewellery Designs in Polymer Clay

Helen Breil



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DESIGN LINKS

For all Apps that support links, click on a shape to go to the corresponding design instructions.

OPEN WINDOW SERIES

DESIGN	1	2	3	4	5
PAGE	28	34	37	41	44

SPIRAL SERIES

DESIGN	1	2	3	4	5
PAGE	49	53	57	60	65

BIG TWIST SERIES

DESIGN	1	2	3	4	5	6
PAGE	70	74	78	83	87	92

COTTER PIN SERIES

DESIGN	1	2	3	4
PAGE	99	104	108	113

POLYMER BAILS SERIES

DESIGN	1	2	3	4	5
PAGE	118	121	124	127	131

THE "SHAPES" STORY



As is often the case, I stumbled on this new direction in my work in a unexpected way. In the summer of 2011, I was working with my cutters and I was intrigued by the shapes of the scrap pieces left behind. I started playing with them, twisting and turning them and it lead to my first "shapes" pendant. Several others soon followed. At the time I was preparing to go to a retreat and I was participating in a swap that required me to produce 22 pendants - a major undertaking for someone who produces work slowly! I started to experiment with different combinations of cutters and found new shape ideas developing fast and furious.

I've always had a strong interest in design and I was pleased with the open areas (negative space) of these designs which visually gives some "breathing room" to the piece. The open spaces also allowed for additional design elements like dangles, cotter pins and buttons

which I had fun adding as focal points. I also love the 3 dimensional form of these designs which gives them a sculptural quality. These pendants also had the bonus of usually requiring just one baking (most of my previous work required multiple bakings). For all these reasons this seemed a good direction to take for my swap pendants.

The pendants were well received at the retreat and I felt encouraged to continue exploring this new direction when I returned home. My first thought was to document my designs in a tutorial but before long my catalogue of new shapes was so extensive that I had enough material for a book. After a year of solid effort, I can at last share my ideas with you. I hope that you find the ideas presented here inspire you to explore new creative directions.

My advice to you dear reader, next time you have a spark of an idea, explore it to its fullest and see where it leads you.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is unique in the polymer clay book category in that its primary focus is on design rather than technique. As such, any skill level from beginner to more advanced can benefit from the ideas I am presenting here. The first project, Open Window Series Design 1, has instructions for a pendant, start-to-finish. However all of the remaining 24 projects only include instructions for creating the shapes. I purposely keep the project step-by-step images neutral of surface technique to keep the focus on the design and to leave them as a "blank canvas" on which you can apply your artistic vision.

There are endless creative possibilities for you to explore and apply to these shapes. But textures and surface techniques are one of my passions and I couldn't write a book without including some that I've developed and used on the finished pendant examples throughout this book. I have included a chapter with instructions for 5 simple, but dramatic, surface techniques that you can apply to your shapes.

For the book I developed five Design Series: Open Window, Spiral, Big Twist, Cotter Pin and Polymer Bails. Each Series contains 4 to 6 projects for a total of 25 unique shapes as well as instructions for an additional 37 variations. Once you get familiar with my shape-making process I fully expect that you will be developing your own variations before too long.

Within each design series the projects are ordered from the easiest to the more advanced. I suggest you read Open Window Design 1 first, which combines instructions for creating a surface technique with the shape-making process. Once you have an overview of the total process, I suggest you choose one of the easier designs from the beginning of any of the series and practice the shape-making process several times with plain clay before committing to a finished piece. The symmetrical designs require some care and precision, so if you have a more "organic" approach, the asymmetrical shapes might be a better choice for you.

In order to keep the step-by-step process as clear as possible, and to avoid repeating information, I have gathered together all of the common shape-making information in a section called "Project Essentials". Please read this section before beginning any projects.

"If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward, you're always in the same place." — Nora Roberts

Each of the 25 shape making projects includes an example of a finished pendant in my "style." But I also wanted to show you how these designs would look in a variety of styles and techniques. I wanted a gallery featuring the signature styles of talented polymer artists whose work I admire. But the doubting voice in my head said "Why would an established artist want to create pieces using my

designs?" Thankfully the stronger voice in my head took Nora Robert's quote above to heart. If you don't ask you don't get. I'm happy to report I was overwhelmed and thrilled with the very positive and generous response I received to my request for gallery submissions. Twenty-nine busy artists took the time to produce wonderfully creative pieces. The majority of the people did multiple submissions with Ron Lehocky (famous for his charity fundraising heart pins) taking the record by sending me images for 10 pieces he created for the book! These gallery submissions are beyond anything I could have hoped for. I can't thank all of the participants enough. I hope that you will all be as inspired with their work as I am.



NAVIGATING THE eBook

This book was written to be easily read on any large format, 8 inch or longer, tablet (e.g. iPad) or computer monitor. While it can be read on all devices that support the PDF format, the font and image sizes were set to optimize the balance between content on a page, and readability, without the need to scroll or enlarge the page, for these larger format hardware devices. This allows for easy reading with a simple page advance required when you are ready to turn the page. For smaller tablets, consider reading the book in landscape mode.

The beauty of an eBook is that you can easily jump back and forth from section to section, enlarge an image for a closer look, and in some cases, annotate, bookmark, or highlight sections you want to go back to. Numerous links (clickable text underlined in blue) are included in the book to further enhance your ability to navigate the book as needed - to quickly jump to referenced sections. These links work with most but not all devices or applications. There are now so many devices and operating systems that we cannot provide guidance or instruction for each one in the market today. To enhance your reading experience I encourage you to learn about the navigation options for your device and reading software (app) by checking the appropriate Help section.

I have provided some navigation instructions for the **iBooks** and **Kindle** apps, as well as **Adobe Reader** for Desktops and Laptops, on our website. You can view these instructions [here](#).



PROJECT ESSENTIALS

This section covers various elements required in one or more of the projects and some of the conventions I have used in creating the projects. While some of the points might be more suited to beginners, others like the section on support forms, are used in most of the projects. I suggest you familiarize yourself with this content before starting the projects, and then refer back to it when required. In most cases I have links on the project pages to make it easy to jump back to the information that you need to refer to.

The following summary includes quick links to the topics covered in this section:

- [Measurements](#)
- [New to Polymer Clay](#)
- [Using Metal Clay](#)
- [The Clay](#)
- [Work Surface](#)
- [Curing](#)
- [Softening Clay](#)
- [Firming Soft Clay](#)
- [Creating Your Clay Sheet](#)
- [The Cutters](#)
- [Sanding Your Cutters](#)
- [Bevelling Edges](#)
- [Making the Cut](#)
- [Smoothing Rough Edges](#)
- [Support Forms](#)
- [Reshaping After Curing](#)
- [Drilling Stringing Holes](#)
- [Edge Colouring Options](#)
- [Cotter Pins](#)
- [Adding a Button Focal Point](#)
- [Making a Texture Impression](#)
- [Making Rubber Cording Bails](#)
- [Sealants](#)

MEASUREMENTS: All measurements in this book are given in metric. Please purchase a metric ruler if you don't already have one.

NEW TO POLYMER CLAY: If you are new to polymer clay please see the "[Polymer Clay Basics](#)" page on my website for links and information to basic information such as:

- Conditioning clay
- Making overly soft clay firmer (a process called leaching clay)
- Curing clay
- Storing clay
- Work surfaces
- Safety tips
- Standardized pasta machine thicknesses
- Elements & principles of design



USING METAL CLAY: I invited four experienced metal clay artists to create pieces for my Gallery Section. I am very pleased to say that they were all successful in using metal clay while following my shape-making instructions intended for crafting pendants from polymer clay. Many thanks to Amanda Ellis who shared her notes and tips on the process. Additional thanks to Jacqueline Wells, Carol Faith and Natalia Colman for their additions to Amanda's notes. I've summarized their notes on the "[Metal Clay Tips](#)" page on my website. If you are experienced in working with metal clay and enjoy a challenge give it a try. I would love to hear back from you on your experience using metal clay with these designs!

Let's begin with some important background information before you get started on a project.

THE CLAY

The designs in this book require clay that has a good balance between soft and firm. Soft, so that you can create 360 degree twists without your clay breaking or cracking, and firm, so that your clay doesn't get sloppy, marred or distorted as you manipulate it into the desired shapes. Clay formulations have recently undergone many changes but at the time of this writing (Autumn 2012) my personal choice is Kato clay for the following reasons:

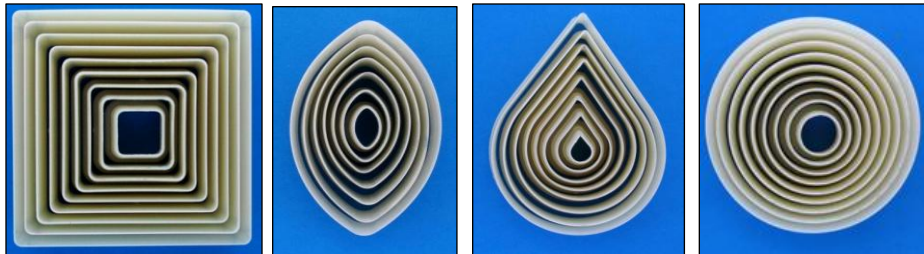
- Strength - considered one of, if not the strongest clay on the market
- Firmness - can take a lot of handling without getting unintentionally distorted or marred
- Not sticky - does not show fingerprints like other brands. Does not stick to rubber stamps or my fingers
- Colour stability - maintains its colour after curing
- Can be reshaped after curing - See [Reshaping After Curing](#) further on in this section for more information on this very useful property.

Rubber stamps		I've used my Mambo stamp to texture the back of this pendant and finished it off with mica powders.
Foam Sheets		Also known as "Fun Foam." The texture is very subtle here but I rolled a sheet of it through the pasta machine to texture this back. Gold and copper mica powders were then applied before curing. The glow on this is so pretty it could almost be the front of the pendant!

THE CUTTERS

All the designs in this book are achieved through the use of cutters. I've used 4 cutter shapes - circle, square, teardrop and pod shaped - in graduated sized sets.

I use and recommend the Fat Daddio's brand of cookie cutters.



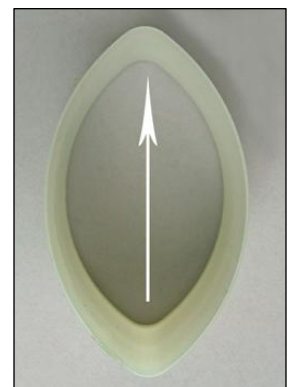
Their features include:

- Seamless
- Made from nylon and fibreglass
- Temperature resistant to 320°F
- Virtually unbreakable
- Hold their shape

They can be purchased at fine kitchenware stores, Amazon.com or in Canada at [Shades of Clay.com](#)

Metal cutters can be used for the designs in this book, however, the basic brands have the disadvantages of having seams and can easily lose their shape. If you choose to use metal cutters the sizes will not necessarily correspond to the Fat Daddio's sizes. Use the size closest to the one I've given in the project instructions.

Note that measurements for cutter sizes used in the instructions throughout this book are taken lengthwise from the cutting edge of the cutter.





*Open Window
Series*





Open Window Design 1

We get started with the first design in the Open Window Series. Of the 25 projects, this one is unique in that it has instructions for the making of this pendant from start to finish. The remaining 24 projects only have shape-making instructions.

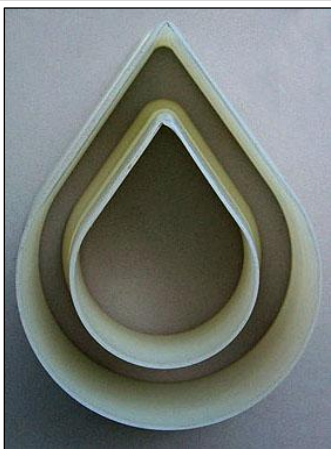
This is one of the easiest shapes to create for those of you that are beginners. The instructions will take you through the basic use of a rubber stamp, introduce you to my shape-making process and show you my colouring technique.

Pendant size: 6.7 cm long x 5 cm wide x 4 mm thick.

PREREQUISITES

- Read all the [Project Essentials](#) sections

MATERIALS & TOOLS



- 50 grams of black clay
- "Four Play" texture stamp by Pixie Art Stamps
- Texture for back - 80 grit sandpaper or fabric
- 7.2 cm teardrop cutter
- 4.2 cm teardrop cutter
- Plastic sheet for creating a bevelled edge (optional)
- Needlepoint tool or large sewing needle
- [Support Form 1](#) (See Project Essentials/Support Forms)
- Rubbing Alcohol
- 1 /16" drill bit
- Viva Decor Inka-Gold: Copper (903), Silver (902), Gold (918), Turquoise (914), Lime Green (906)
- Gilders Paste: Silver and Gold
- Preserve Your Memories II Acrylic Sealant Spray (PYMII)
- Cutting mat with grid

Open Window Design 2

Here's another example of the use of a rubber stamp ("[After the Rain](#)") to provide the element of texture for this uniquely shaped pendant.

Gold and copper mica powders were applied before curing. A soft blue/green patina-like wash was applied after curing. The bail was removed from this copper flower charm and applied to a cotter pin to compliment the design.

Only 4 simple steps are required to make this shape.



Pendant size: 6.5 cm long x 6.5 cm wide x 4 mm thick.

PREREQUISITES

- Read "Project Essentials" sections: [The Clay](#), [The Cutters](#), [Bevelling Edges](#), [Making the Cut](#), [Smoothing Rough Edges](#), [Support Forms](#), [Reshaping After Curing](#)
- Prepare a clay sheet at the suggested thickness of 4 mm using your chosen surface technique

MATERIALS & TOOLS



- 6.6 cm square cutter
- 5.6 cm teardrop cutter
- Cutting mat with grid
- Plastic sheet for creating a bevelled edge - optional
- Needlepoint tool or large needle
- [Support Form 1](#) (See Project Essentials/Support Forms)



5. CREATE GROOVE FOR CORDING

There are many options for creating a bail for your pendants. In this example I am using a hollow tube product called SoftGlass. The tube opening is suitable for stringing beading wire through. We will make a groove in the clay that we will later glue the SoftGlass into.

Lay your pendant face down on your clean work surface and lay your SoftGlass in the "valley" of the curve you just formed. Gently press on the cording just enough to make small marks in your clay (a). Remove the SoftGlass.

If you are unfamiliar with a wire loop tool, practice on a piece of scrap clay first. Holding the wire loop tool like you would a pen, lightly run it along the full length of the groove mark removing clay as you go. Do several passes making a deeper groove with each pass. The best way to determine the final depth is to put a piece of the SoftGlass into the groove, pressing it gently in position. Approximately 1/3 of the tube height should fall into the groove.

If you are applying mica powders or any other pre-curing surface applications to the pendant, front or back, now is a good time to do this.

6. CURE

Follow instructions for creating [Support Form 4](#) found in Project Essentials/Support Forms.

Put your pendant on a clean oven-safe surface. Wrap your snake form under the outer edges of your pendant letting the edges drape over the form. Position the inner spiral as you'd like it to cure.

Put into the oven and cure for approximately 45 minutes. If the pendant's curves did not cure in quite the right position, see Project Essentials/[Reshaping After Curing](#).

Complete with any post-curing finishing (sanding, antiquing, adding gloss, etc.).



4 CURE

Follow instructions for creating [Support Form 1](#) in Project Essentials/Support Forms.

Put your support form on a clean oven-safe surface and put your pendant on top of the form. The bottom edges should be on the work surface.

Remove your focal point if it cannot withstand the heat of the oven. Note the pearl button shank stub marks in the clay. The button will be glued back in place after curing.

Put your pendant into the oven and cure for approximately 45 minutes. Allow to cool in the oven. Complete any post-curing finishing ([drilling](#) [cording holes](#), sanding, antiquing, adding gloss, gluing in focal point, etc.).

5. VARIATIONS

There are many variations possible for interesting bails of this type. In the example on the left I have used simple strips of clay to create a unique design element extension to the pendant.

If you want more drama, consider this extruded string version on the right. I've used the multiple string extruder template and just pinched and rolled the ends into a point. Have fun playing with other options!





Rebecca Watkins | USA | artybecca.blogspot.com
Floral Kimono Brooch | Spiral Design 3



Fabiola Perez Ajates | Spain
fabicontusmanos.blogspot.ca
Horn of Plenty | Big Twist Design 5
Photo by artist



Debbie Crothers | Australia
flickr.com/photos/debbiecrothers
Untitled
Open Window Design 3
Photo by artist



Jana Lehmann | Germany
Flickr.com/photos/feeliz/
Spiral Tropicana | Spiral Design 3
Photo by artist

GALLERY ARTISTS

Alice Stroppel	USA
Amanda Ellis	UK
Ana Belchi	Spain
Angela Garrod	UK
Anja Overdijk	The Netherlands
Bettina Welker	Germany
Carol Faith	USA
Carolyn Joy Good	Canada
Cecilia Mabcrea	China
Debbie Crothers	Australia
Enkhtsetseg Tserenbadam	Switzerland
Eva Ehmeier	Austria
Fabiola Perez Ajates	Spain
Ingrid Ulrich	Germany
Jacqueline Wells	USA
Jan Geisen	USA
Jana Lehmann	Germany
Kathrin Neumaier	Germany
Katy Schmitt	Germany
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Natalia Colman	UK
Noelia Contreras Martin	Spain
Rebecca Watkins	USA
Ron Lehocky	USA
Sabine Spiesser	Australia
Sandra Trachsel	Switzerland
Sue Corrie	UK
Tanja Stumpp	Germany
Tejae Floyde	USA

About the Artist



The 1997 summer issue of American Style magazine introduced me to a new and wonderful medium called polymer clay. The magazine featured Kathleen Dustin, Elise Winters, Rebecca Zimmerman and many others. Their work and the possibilities of the medium fascinated me and despite having no creative arts background I was hooked.

Exploration of design and developing new surface techniques fuel my continued passion with the versatile medium of polymer clay. Sharing the results of my exploration are another passion of mine. I have been able to share my ideas through articles in Art Jewelry Magazine, Step-by-Step Beads, PolymerCAFE and have also published a popular line of tutorials. I particularly focus on techniques that are easy to learn and suited for beginners. I also teach workshops where I

love introducing polymer clay to new users. My love of texture led to my creation of a line of texture stamps that have been used by clay artists around the world.

I combine the surface techniques I have developed with my love of design in my signature style of contemporary jewelry. My necklace "Coleus" won first place in the 2010 International Polymer Clay Association Progress & Possibilities Competition in the Intermediate Jewelry category. My necklace "Waves" was chosen from 130 entries for the cover of the 2011 Toronto Bead Society calendar.



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The beginning is the most important part of the work.

Plato