



TRY IT

SEIZE THE CLAY

*Shape your success as a sculptor
with these six easy projects.*

PROJECTS **JODI MENSING HARRIS** PHOTOGRAPHS **STEVEN MCDONALD**
WORDS **HEIDI PALKOVIC**



PRESS TO IMPRESS Balls of white polymer clay dot the surface of a mod hanging planter, *below*. To make a form, cover an upside-down, oven-safe flowerpot with parchment paper. Knead the clay, then roll out a thin sheet with a clay roller or rolling pin, press it around the parchment paper on the pot's exterior, and trim as needed. Form balls and press them onto the clay sheet (A). Press a small round object, such as a marker cap, into each ball. Poke three evenly spaced holes around the rim of the clay planter using a bamboo skewer. Bake according to the manufacturer's instructions; let cool. Remove the clay from the flowerpot form. Roll out another thin sheet of clay, and press it inside the clay pot to strengthen the liner. Repoke the holes, and bake again. Once cool, thread jute through the holes and tie as a hanger.



STAY HYDRATED
POT THE PLANT IN
A LIGHTWEIGHT
PLANTER WITH
DRAINAGE HOLES,
AND REMOVE FROM
HANGING POT
TO WATER.

WHAT A DISH Swirls of colorful clay mimic the look of marble on this decorative dish, *below*. Knead four or five shades of polymer clay, then roll out $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diameter rods of each color. Lay the rods in desired order, then twist together and fold the twisted rods in half (A). Twist and fold the clay again (B). Form the clay into a ball, then roll it out until $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Lay a square dish on top, and cut out the clay around the dish edges (C). Place the clay square inside an oven-safe glass bowl, allowing the corners to curve up slightly along the sides. Bake the clay in the bowl according to the clay manufacturer's instructions. Allow to cool, then remove the dish from the bowl. To smooth the corners of the dish, dampen and sand the corners slightly. Let dry.





HANG TIME Cookie cutters make it easy to cut clay flowers for this driftwood mobile, *left*. Roll out shades of pink, lavender, and white polymer clay to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, then use flower-shape cookie cutters to cut out the flowers (A). Press pieces of lace or other items onto the surface of each flower to create patterns, and poke a hole for hanging in each flower (B). Place the shapes on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper, and bake according to the clay manufacturer's instructions. When cool, hang the shapes from a piece of driftwood using varying lengths of monofilament thread or fishing line. Tie a thick piece of jute or rope around the center of the driftwood and hang the mobile from a ceiling hook.



A



B



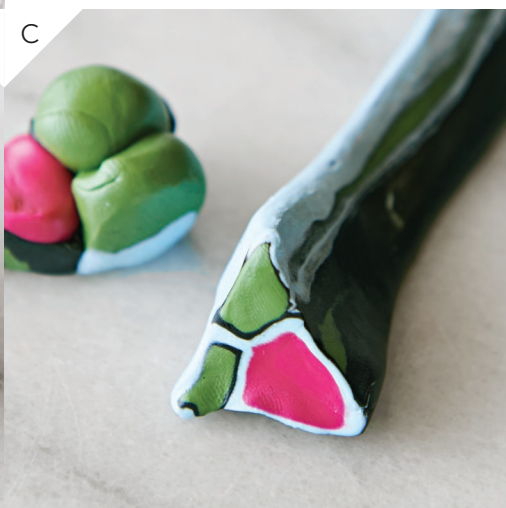
MAGNETIC ATTRACTION Floral designs take shape on clay-topped magnets, *left*. For this project, knead each color to make clay warm and supple before layering. Form one short pink and two short olive green rods (the pink rod should be slightly larger than the green rods) and thin strips of black and light turquoise clays (A). Layer the turquoise strip on the black strip. Place the pink rod crosswise in the center of the layered strips; wrap the strips around the pink rod (black on the outside). Continue wrapping strips around each green rod with turquoise side out, stacking rods as shown (B). Press stack into a pyramid-shape rod and gently stretch it as long as possible without impairing the design (C). Slice rod into seven equal pieces, and press them together like pieces of a pie (D). Gently stretch the pie into a rod, then slice it into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick disks (E). Bake according to clay instructions; let cool. Hot-glue a magnet to the back of each disk, and use after glue dries (F).



A



B



C



D



E



F



A

BUDDING IDEA Inside this geometric clay vase, *below*, is a glass test tube, which is just the right size for holding a few flower stems. Knead turquoise and white polymer clays together to get the desired shade of blue, then form the clay evenly around the test tube in a ball, making sure the tube is centered in the clay and the opening is uncovered. If needed, poke a pencil through the clay to clear the opening. Slice shallow pieces of clay off the ball using a sharp knife and straight strokes to create the geometric surface (A). Follow the manufacturer's instructions to bake the clay; let cool.



MODEL BEHAVIOR Arts and crafts stores offer a range of modeling clays, including polymer and air-dry varieties. Polymer clays, such as Sculpey and FIMO brands, stay workable until baked in the oven and come in dozens of colors and effects. Always check the package for its recommended usage, such as jewelry, caning, sculptures, and kids' crafts. Air-dry clay gives a natural look to your projects but requires moisture to stay workable and will shrink slightly while drying.



A



B



C



COLOR CHECK
 TO LIGHTEN A HUE,
 KNEAD COLORED
 POLYMER CLAY
 WITH WHITE CLAY
 FROM THE
 SAME LINE.

SAY CHEESE Make your mark with custom clay cheese identifiers, *below*. Roll out a thin, even layer of air-dry clay, then cut out shapes using small cookie cutters. Stamp letters and designs onto half the shapes (A). You will need two shapes for each marker, one stamped and one plain. Cut 4-inch-long segments from the pointed ends of bamboo skewers. Sandwich a skewer segment between the clay layers (B). Seal the edges with a dampened finger; let dry. Wiggle the skewer periodically as the clay dries so it is removable and replaceable. Use a small brush to push brown acrylic paint into the stamped designs (C). Gently wipe paint from each surface with a clean cloth so that the designs keep the paint; let dry.

