

**Subject:** [Test] Your ClayAround Newsletter

**From:** ClayAround <Newsletter@clayaround.com>

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## Your ClayAround Newsletter

ClayAround



When I was a child my father gave me some blue 'stuff' that was, he told me, a brand new by-product of oil. I was fascinated. We are told that in the 1930 a well-known German doll maker experimented with this new compound and she, like I, did not know that this was at the inception of polymer clay. Her daughter Sophie, however, added plasticizers (and colour) and developed a usable modelling substance that could be marketed. She called it 'fimoik' (her pet name was 'fifi') It was acquired by Eberhhereard-Faber in 1967 and the name changed. Staedtler now own Eberhard=Faber. You can find out more from them [here](#).

I came across an article by Elise Winters. Elise was an eminent member of the polymer clay community who sadly died recently. You can see an excellent article about her by [Rachel Carren](#). The image top left is an example of her distinctive work (a photography by Ralph Cabriner) and In [her article](#) she recounts how, in the early 1980's, Marie Segal (another of one of the original protagonists) ,and her husband, started 'Fimo Factory'. This because Fimo was the first of the polymer clays. You may be interested to read what [Wikipedia](#) has to say about it.

Polymer clay goes from strength to strength and researching its origins has been fascinating. Many different makes have emerged and continue to emerge. I sell the market leaders, but there are, world wide, many other makes. In my experience Premo is most popular with Kato a close second. Fimo's target market, until recently, has been children, and in the world of art it still suffers from this history. In Europe,

and more recently in the UK, Cernit and Pardo are now becoming popular. Premo, made by Polyform, was developed in the 1960s in the USA. It was originally developed for industrial purposes and, like the original substance cited above, it was rejected, until, a visitor found some and made a model out of it Hence Sculpey was born. More information can be found on [this website](#)

Kato clay has a very different texture from that of the other popular clays. Van Aken developed Kato clay, giving Donna Kato's name it and you will find a lot of information about this clay on their [marketing website](#)

More recently Viva Décor developed Pardo which was refined with the help of key members of the German polymer clay guild. It is a quality clay that was originally developed using bees wax and tested and backed by Lisa Pavelka. It was, in its early evolution, quite unpredictable and the beeswax proved to be too soft for use when making canes so their Art Clay was developed. This latter clay is now well respected. Being in at the start of this clay I built [a website](#) to showcase it.

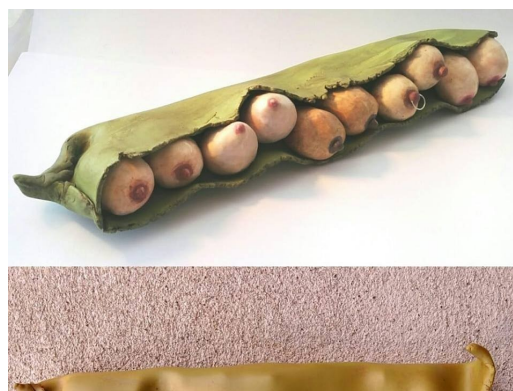
Cernit has taken a long time to gain recognition. Only 10 years ago it was marketed by its promoter, from Holland, who was seen frequently at exhibitions and shows. It was eventually adopted in Europe and now in the UK. It has qualities of colour and shine that are not so apparent in other clays.

What is more important are the people who have made polymer clay the enduring material it is today. The obvious one is Judith Skinner who created 'the skinner blend' in 1996 and she is interviewed [here](#). But before that in 1990 Nan Roche invented the mokume gane technique, shown in a magazine of the time called 'the New Clay'. She talks of another interesting idea of hers in this [YouTube](#) video.

Around 1994 [Steven ford and David Forlano](#) created the first canes. From 1992-1996 Tory Hughes was stacking and cutting clays and creating imitation gem stones whilst Lindly Haunani was creating impressions with tints and foils. You can find out more about Tory on the [Ornament website](#). Lindley has now made her reputation as an expert in colour (and cooking!)

My favourite still is the work of Kathleen Dustin who seems to have been around 'for ever' and whose work is so skilled, original and beautiful it is difficult to surpass – she is teaching making handbags in the UK very soon. Above right is a picture of one of the many bags she has made and you can see more on [her website](#)

Finally, it is old, but it is interesting, on YouTube you can find the slides created by [Cynthia Tinapple](#) at Synergy in 2018 – worth a look.





The big news is I have just received the new Fimo clay series, the [Leather look clay](#). It is, I am tempted to suggest, the Fimo equivalent of Sculpey Souffle although there are already differing opinions on this.

On an entirely different subject, I find it interesting that, after having sold very few over a long period of time, suddenly there is a run on [Mel Muir's templates](#). I am guessing that the new interest is because more than one supplier is creating them, including [Debbie Bulford](#), who will custom make any designs that you would like to produce.

A big learning curve, but I have been building a [new website](#) for a local craft group. The constraints on this site are the pictures the members have sent me, and they have given me pause for thought about the ClayAround website. I know I need to improve the images on the ClayAround site. More importantly, the Clayaround site



Lee O'Connor is well known to many of us for her original work (see above). Lee now lives in Greece and we may well not hear so much from her about polymer clay in the future. This is what she says:

"I started off my career as an Air Traffic Controller in South Africa, long before I started painting and making jewellery.

For my silver bangles I needed a strong material to sculpt and then electroform. Polymer clay was perfect and I soon fell in love with the myriad possibilities of this medium.

I am, however, greatly concerned about the damage that plastic is doing to our environment, and about harmful chemicals in cosmetics and other items we use daily. I started making hand crafted soap in small batches, using natural ingredients like local Greek olive oil, seawater and salt, local honey and goat's milk, dandelions and rock samphire that I pick on my morning walks, fresh aloe vera from the garden, other herbs, flowers and essential oils – no perfumes or artificial dyes.

Using & selling soap bars, wrapped in paper, with no plastic involved, and persuading others to do the same, offsets in a small way for me the use of plastic in my polymer clay creations". Below you can see a picture of some of her soaps, but you can find lots more about her polymer clay and other art work [here](#)



needs upgrading. In initial tentative research on Facebook I find that the side bar on which one can find categories is overwhelmingly popular. However, the cart platform is no longer supporting side bars – they are ‘out of fashion’! I am in the process of devising a method whereby I can emulate it.

Despite this, I really would appreciate comments, if you have time – to [website@clayaround.com](mailto:website@clayaround.com) – on what else could be better, and on what would make the site more user friendly

We are delighted to announce that Jayne Rozario has offered to do a special workshop for us at ClayAround (in Wales) On 15<sup>th</sup> June she will do a full day workshop, giving us the benefit of her vast knowledge and experience in the putting together of jewellery. She is offering not only to teach the skills required when putting together pieces, but also problem solving for your own pieces. A particularly valuable workshop: you can find full details [here](#)



A reminder that the British Polymer Clay Guild are putting on special workshops - in particular [Christi Friesen](#) will be in Kidderminster on 25th and 26th May. It is not too late to book on this very special weekend.

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**The creative adult is the child who survived**

Ursula Leguin

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