



Polymer Clay

MOKUME GANE
JANE HEWITT

Welcome fellow crafters! I'm Jane a 'granny from Barnsley' who loves experimenting and have discovered the amazing freedom you can have by 'playing' with Polymer Clay. This ebook is by no means an expert's guide it is merely a record of my experiments; the ones that produced results which were happy accidents and the ones that were complete failures and ended up as a muddy pile of grey clay. I hope that you find some of it useful


J x

www.janehewitt.wordpress.com



Janeh271





Mokume-gane (木目金) is a Japanese metalworking procedure which produces a mixed-metal laminate with distinctive layered patterns, as well as that laminate itself. (wikipedia) It was first developed in the 17th C as a method for decorating Japanese swords, these decorations were seen as status symbols.

It has been used by various polymer clay artists to create amazing veneers – by using different colours, textures, tools and items to mark make you can create abstract or more controlled patterns in polymer clay.

My first attempts were a 'disaster' – muddy mixed colours, holes in my clay ... then I discovered the work of Melanie Muir who combines this technique with her inspiration from nature. Her work is amazing and I was over joyed to find she has a shop selling stamps and cutters created from her designs – several of these were purchased and my eureka moment had arrived! With the right tools and lots of patience, I could create something unique.



Shop Tools – Melanie Muir
Jewellery Design



As I understand it, there are basically two main 'types of this technique'. The first involves making a stack of coloured slices of clay and then making imprints with various tools to create patterns and then taking slices from this block and laying them out to create your veneers. I will be completely honest, I have tried this technique so many times and I just can't create anything i'm happy with!



In the spirit of this e book I'm happy to share my 'failures' as well as work I'm happy with. I know its all subjective and some people might think this is ok and really dislike things i'm pleased with. The whole point of this is to experiment and find what you enjoy.



Scraps

Scraps are ***your friend*** so never throw them away. I have a small white dish that I use for shavings and a larger bowl for 'off cuts' but failed projects are kept in an airtight chocolate tin to be recycled into other projects.

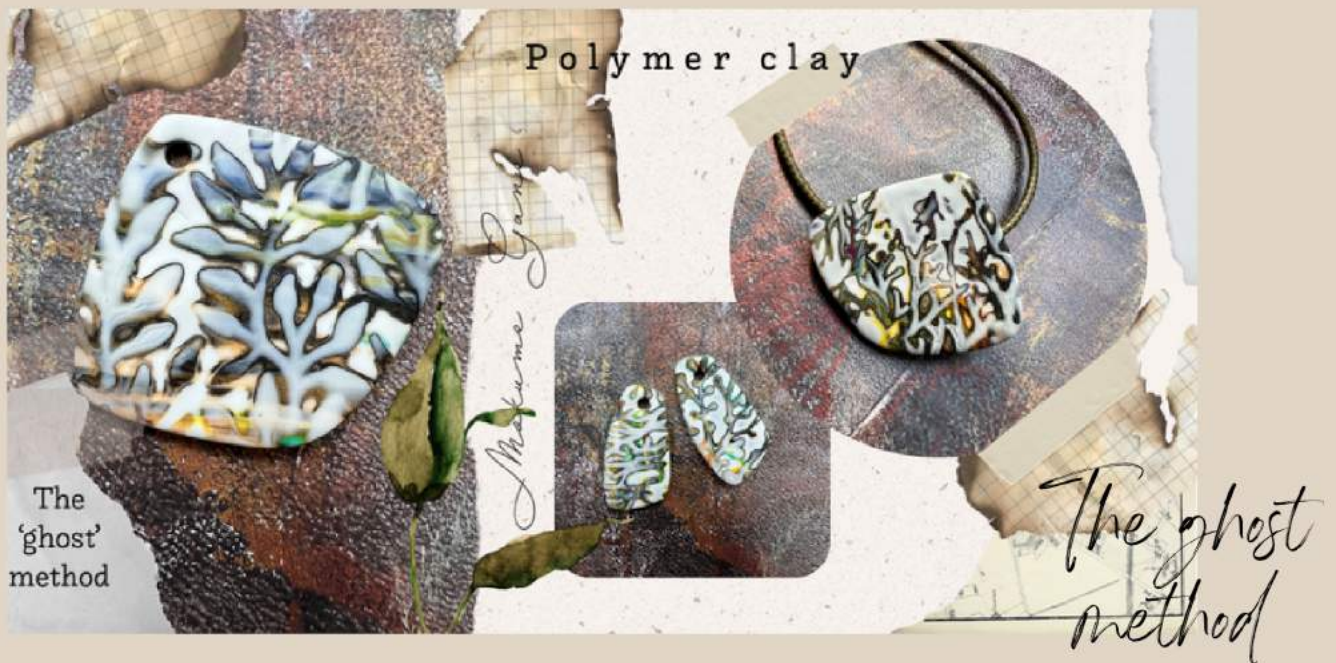
The other technique involves rolling your stacks of clay, cutting, stacking and re rolling then using a texture mat or stamp and shaving off the top layer to leave a pattern behind.

At first this technique is hard to get to grips with as there are lots of variables. The width of your layers of clay, the colours you put together, the actual shaving technique ... but when it does work it's just mesmerising. The beauty is you can't predict what you are going to get, nor can you replicate it exactly so no two pieces are identical.

I love Melanie Muir stamps, and these are my 'go to' designs – I think I've bought most of them now! Her work is inspirational and based around natural forms which as a photographer, appeals to me.

I'd had a few 'successes' following tutorials but I wanted a design that was more muted than the ones I'd been making. I decided to experiment and came up with what I call my 'ghost technique' as it gives me a muted feel and isn't overpowered by the black.





Roll out a sheet of white polymer clay to 2nd thickest setting (number 2 on my machine)

Use the shavings from previous mokume gane pieces -I now save mine in a small dish especially for this purpose. These will be very thin and contain lots of white as well as colours and a touch of black. Spread these out over your white clay – if you haven't enough then save it until you do!

Roll out another piece of white on the 3rd or 4th thickest setting and place on top of the layer of scraps

Roll gently with a rolling pin

Cut your clay edges straight

Roll through on thickest setting

Cut in half and then stack

Repeat twice

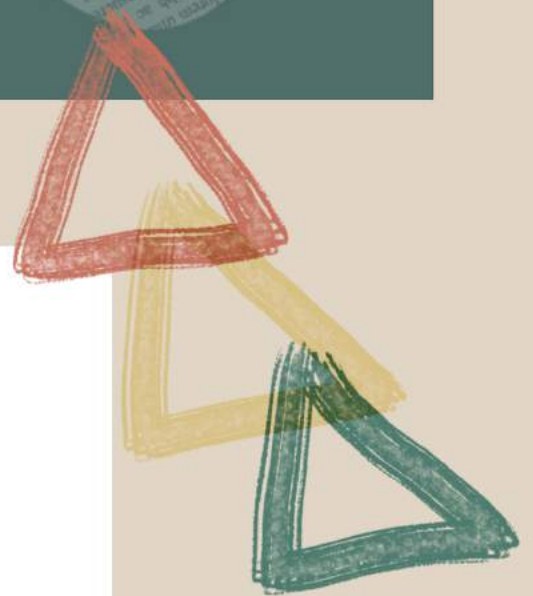
Spritz with a water spray

Press your chosen stamp into the clay and then gently slice away the top to reveal the pattern (I love the leaf design ones for this as they work best for me)





Save your shavings to mix in with a future project
Place a piece of paper over your veneer and rub gently to create a smooth surface
Your veneer is now ready to use to create whatever you decide.





GHOST TECHNIQUE



Making Art works

FROM SCRAPS



I tend to make 'veneers' with scraps of clay and last week I cut up a veneer to make a bracelet. These were totally random, so I placed them in lines to see what worked best together. I'm a member of a group on Facebook and the admin there, a lovely lady called Heidi McCullough, suggested I use them to make a piece of artwork. I loved the idea and began to experiment. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and many people asked for a tutorial so I've added some tips below.

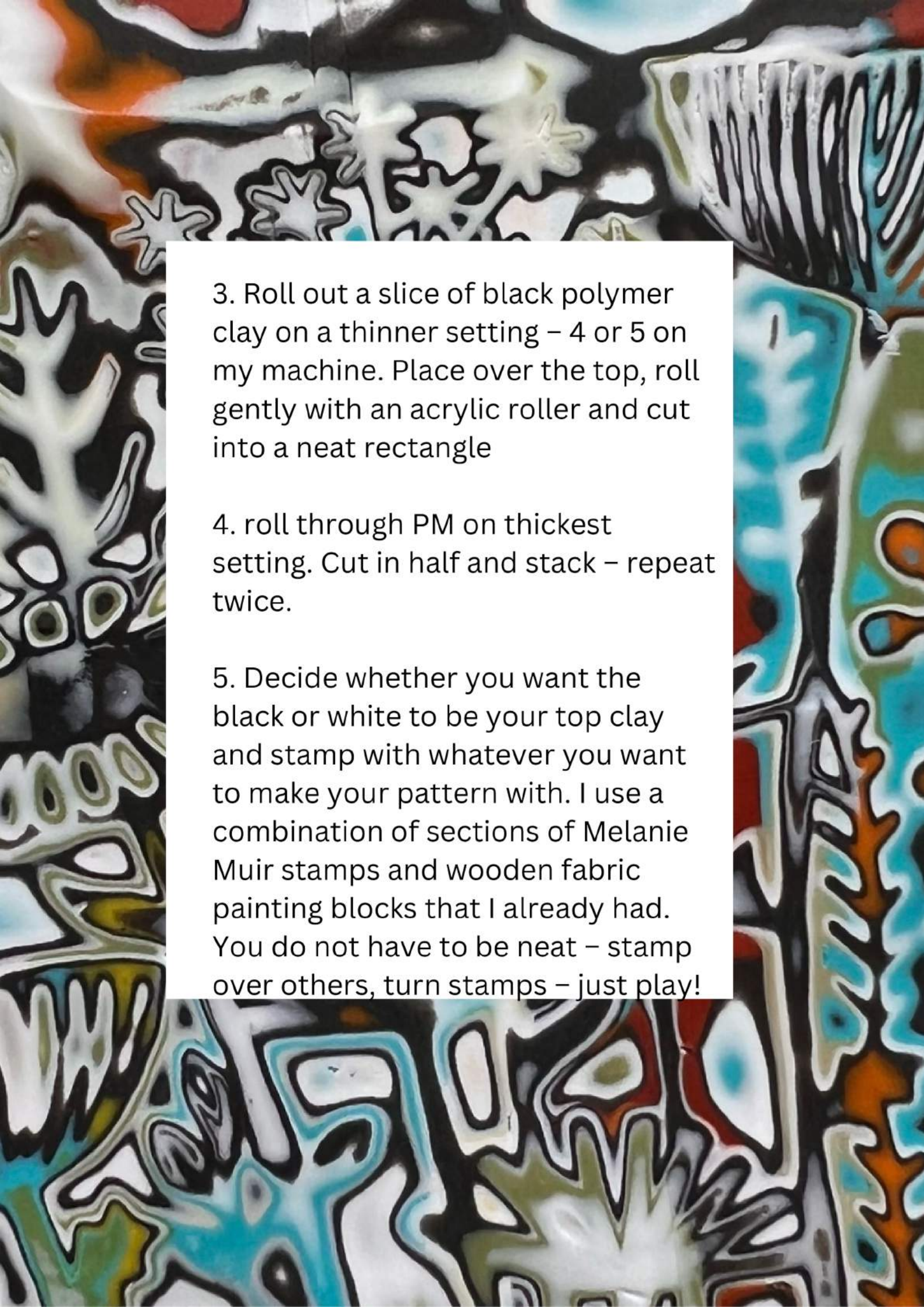




To create my veneers I use a slice of white clay rolled through a pasta machine on the 2nd thickest setting (no 2 on my machine)

Using as many different colours as you want - you could use just 3 or as many as you want - it basically is just a case of experimenting and seeing what works - Roll out to 2nd thickest setting again and place small sections torn off in a random pattern





3. Roll out a slice of black polymer clay on a thinner setting – 4 or 5 on my machine. Place over the top, roll gently with an acrylic roller and cut into a neat rectangle

4. roll through PM on thickest setting. Cut in half and stack – repeat twice.

5. Decide whether you want the black or white to be your top clay and stamp with whatever you want to make your pattern with. I use a combination of sections of Melanie Muir stamps and wooden fabric painting blocks that I already had. You do not have to be neat – stamp over others, turn stamps – just play!

By using different colours, stamps, thicknesses – you will get a unique pattern each time.



6. Using a sharp tissue blade, carefully shave off the top layer to reveal the pattern below.

7. Using your square cutter look carefully at your veneer and cut out the section of the pattern which appeals to you.



Make from
scraps



Tiles 2cms
x 3cms



Miniature
frames





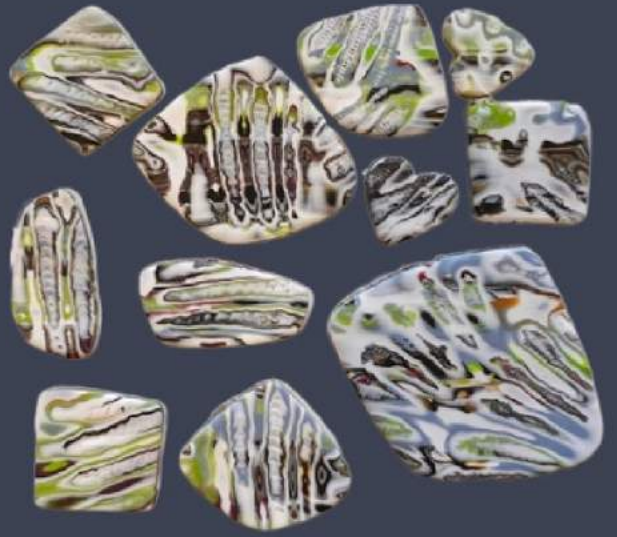
MARK MAKING



Take a small empty box and wander around your house. Pick up anything which could make a pattern. I found screws, a plastic wheel from a storage box, chains, wire... don't think oh that won't work, just try it!



Mokume gane with shells



Nature

AS INSPIRATION







*Wooden
block*

*Poppy
seed head*

You can create any number of patterns by combining different stamps or marks making items

Thin black line



For the bottom layer roll out white clay on 4 on your Pasta Machine
Choose a selection of colours - again -4 on PM - can use up scraps for this

Cover the white with torn off bits of coloured clay. It's ok to overlap but don't leave any gaps. Roll out a sheet of black on the thinnest setting - 9 on my PM and cover

Role through pasta machine on thickest setting. Cut in half and Stack. Repeat twice. Dust lightly with corn starch

Choice of stamps is totally up to personal preference. I've been experimenting with wooden carved blocks originally designed for block printing

Using a sharp tissue blade carefully take off the top layer of clay to reveal the pattern underneath. The thick black clay layer gives definition to your veneer without overwhelming it.

Once you have shaved off the top layer burnish your veneer -I use plain A4 paper and a spoon but again that's personal preference

I chose to make a trinket bowl from this veneer. Thin layer of black underneath - textured with sandpaper. Cut out with a plain round cookie cutter then place over a small ceramic bowl wiped with Vaseline to make removing the clay easier.

Veneers with some control



#ghosttechnique



These blocks are hand carved, and are used in block printing fabric. The design is often quite deep and so works with polymer clay (use corn starch before impressing it !)

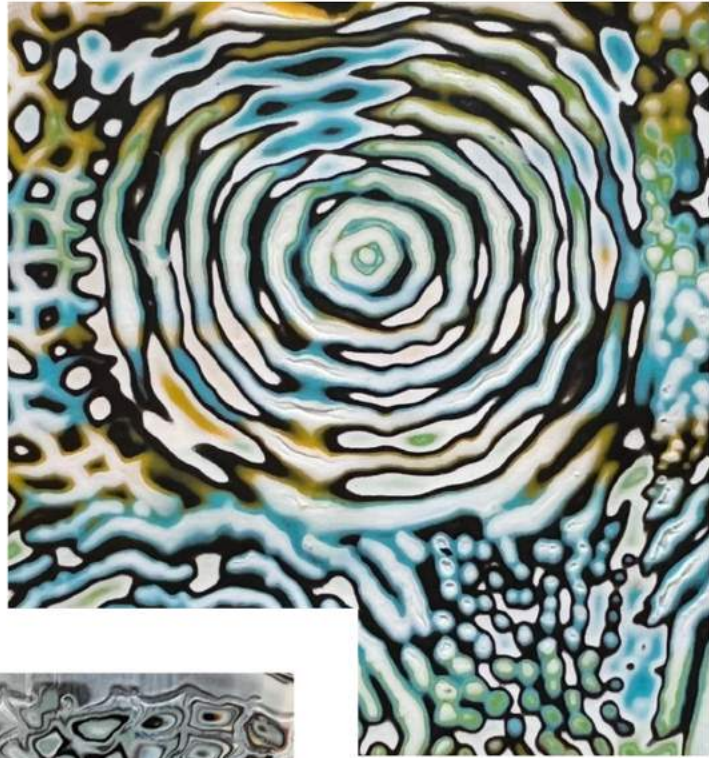
Wooden printing blocks



Look carefully at your design, there will be sections which make interesting pendants



Don't underestimate the power of colours in the final veneer



BACKGROUNDS

INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF
WHAT INSPIRED YOU
E.G LICHEN, MOSS,
POPPY HEADS



NATURAL MATERIALS
WOOD, CORK, HESSIAN
...



USE
COMPLEMENTARY
BACKGROUNDS



Edit with apps



1. Crop tightly to remove unwanted and distracting background



2. Enhance image by lightening your background

3. Add a simple frame to enhance. Not a fussy frame as this will distract



ADOBE
CREATIVE
CLOUD
EXPRESS



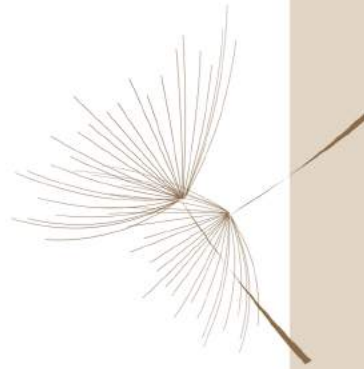
snapseed

Usually the free version of editing apps will have the basic tools you need





Trinket dish



Shallow rubber/cling stamp



Deep rubber stamp





**Use your scraps to
create patchwork
veneers**



Veneer
from two
colours



I find working with polymer clay to be relaxing.

you never know what results you will get. I've made connections with people all over the world who are supportive and will share ideas and give feedback.

I know none of these ideas are 'rocket science' but if they've helped you at all could you 'pay it forward' by being kind to someone or supporting a local charity.

im a trustee of the LimbBo Foundation and I know how much that support means - thank you jx



LimbBo
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