

## Beyond “Water on Mars”

This demo is based on Staci Louise Smith’s “Water on Mars” YouTube video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeQe\\_EgzWJo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeQe_EgzWJo)



The demo has three steps:

- Making the Molds
- Creating the beads
- Surface treatments – before and after-baking treatments

### **Making the Molds [scrap clay]**

1. Roll 20-50 balls of various sizes from very small to pea-sized.
2. Roll a 10” – 18” log with a diameter of about 1/8” – 3/8”, depending on the purpose of the mold.

The log does not have to be even.

- a. Keep scale in mind: The log diameter for earring molds should be smaller than the logs used for beads for necklace or pendants.



3. Taper one end and begin to coil the log. Add a single ball or groups of balls randomly as you coil.
4. Continue to coil, adding balls of various sizes, individually and in groups. Small gaps between coils is okay; it will create ridges in the beads.
  - a. Options:
    - i. Leave an opening at the beginning of the coil.
    - ii. Consider adding texture to coils.
    - iii. Use ball stylus tools to create impressions within the balls in the mold.
    - iv. Twist rope as you coil.

See photos next page.



Starting coil.

Finished coil- 2"-3" diameter. Finished coil-3"-4" diameter.

5. Make additional molds to allow for variety of impressions. Smaller molds in the photo are for earrings. Two molds in the middle-right of the photo are textured using a bead pin for indents.





For oblong beads, make molds with vertical ropes instead of in a circular pattern. (This is not part of the Water on Mars YouTube video.)



6. Bake molds for at least 30 minutes. For durability, baking for 60 minutes is recommended.
7. Within five minutes of removing from the oven, spray with ArmorAll.
8. Allow to cool. Wipe off the excess ArmorAll from both sides. Molds are seasoned for use.

### **Creating the Beads [bead clay]**

The molds make organic-style beads. Clay with inclusions, such as white or gray granite, or translucent with inclusions, are good options. Other types of inclusions, such as dried flower petals, spices, or embossing powders, chalks, glitter, bits of baked polymer also work well. For good impressions, particles need to be small and/or flexible.

#### **Seasoning the molds:**

When molds are seasoned, it is not necessary to spray ArmorAll or water before each impression. If clay begins to stick during bead impression, spray mold lightly with water. To season molds again, wipe molds dry, spray with ArmorAll and allow ArmorAll to dry on the surface before using again (several hours or overnight). Wipe both sides of the mold before using again.

To re-season molds faster, place molds in the oven for 10-15 minutes to heat, remove from the oven and immediately spray with ArmorAll. Allow to cool, and wipe excess ArmorAll from both sides of the mold.

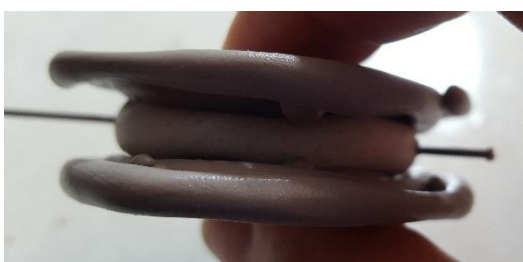
### Making a round bead:

Using well-conditioned clay, make a ball that will produce a bead of the desired thickness when impressed on the mold. Keep in mind the size of the hole you will need for stringing.

Flatten the ball of clay slightly and press firmly onto a section of the mold.

For a double-sided bead, firmly press the flattened ball between two molds at the same time.

If you prefer to pierce the hole in the bead before baking, pierce the bead while holding the clay between the two molds.



### Making oblong beads:

Using well-conditioned clay, roll a log to consistent diameter for the entire length.

Cut log into pieces of the same length.

Slightly flatten the piece of the clay log lengthwise and press firmly onto a section of the mold.



For a double-sided bead, firmly press the flattened ball between two molds at the same time.

## Surface Treatments

This is the fun part! Surface treatments can be done before or after baking (or both). Try combining some of the techniques below. Consider different and complementary surface treatments on opposite sides of the bead.

### Treatments to try BEFORE baking:

- Coat a bead with chalk powder, Pan Pastel, mica powder, or Perfect Pearls powder before impressing the clay into the mold(s).
- Apply chalk powder, Pan Pastel, mica powder, or Perfect Pearls powder only to ridges or recesses of the bead after removing from the mold(s).
- Apply metal leaf before or after impressing.
- To produce a ceramic look, mix liquid clay with alcohol ink and apply to recesses. Can only be done on one side at a time.
- Mix mica powder/Perfect Pearls with water and spritz the bead.
- Use a toothbrush to spritz beads with alcohol ink.
- For a very rustic texture, place impressed beads into a Ziploc bag with salt (table or kosher salt – or combo) and shake to coat. Rinse salt off after baking.
- For a different textured surface, mix table salt and embossing powder, mica powder, or Perfect Pearls in the Ziploc bag and shake to coat. Rinse salt off after baking.

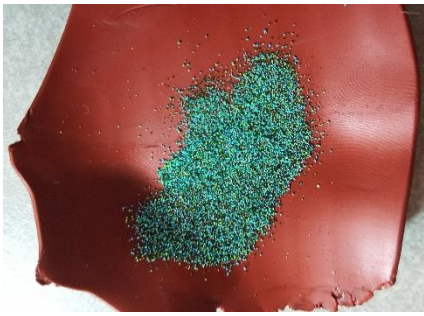
### Treatments for AFTER baking:

- To highlight the ridges, lightly sand them to let the bead color show through the surface treatment.
- Highlight ridges with Pan Pastel, gilder's paste, Inca gold color or rub-n-buff type products.
- Coat with acrylic paint in one or more colors. Before paint dries, dab or wipe away paint with dry or damp paper towel.
- Try Swellegant surface treatments.
- Apply a mix of mica powder with sealer (like Varathane).

BONUS: Try using your molds for mica shift patterns!







Add embossing powder to raw clay. This is verdigris powder mixed into copper clay.



Chalk powder added before impressing with molds.



Clockwise from upper left – copper clay with embossing powder, white clay with coated with salt and heirloom gold embossing powder, three oblong beads with chalk highlights and coated with salt and three colors of embossing powder, two beads coated with green and rust colored chalks before impressing, white clay with gold and black embossing powder.