

# Sharon's Corner

## Scrap Mokume Gane Tutorial

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I devised this technique to deal with the copious amounts of scrap clay I am currently producing. I joined a Facebook group in January of 2014 called “52 weekly cane project”, and we are doing 1 – 3 canes weekly. I am not very skilled yet, so I create a lot more scrap than I normally do. There are lots of methods available to use up your scraps, and as much as I love them, I wanted to try something different with my scraps. I know there are other tutorials that use scrap to make mokume gane, but I hadn't seen any of them when I came up with this one, and it's different enough that a tutorial could help others to recreate what I have done. I hope you like this method and that this tutorial helps you to create your own mokume gane treasure. If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for visiting my corner of the internet!

Sharon K. Mhyre

What you will need:

Pile of scraps, (or you can just use chunks of clay).

Pasta machine, (or a lot of time and patience to roll out the slabs).

Blade for cutting, (or knife, or something else sharp that you can cut with).

Different texture tools, (ball tools, knitting needles, or other implements of destruction).

Imagination, (but since you are here I will assume that you already have that).

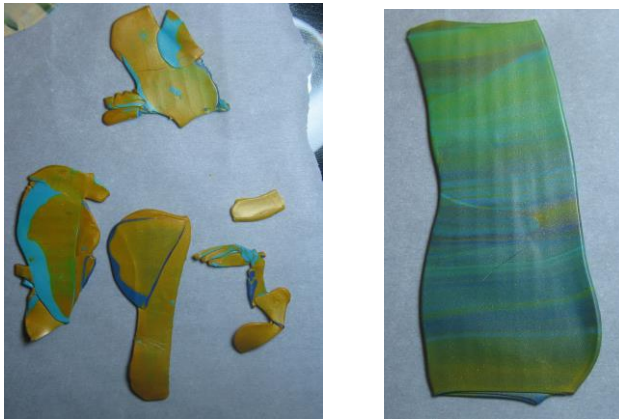
Try to pick scraps that complement each other. I leave some sandwich bags near me when I am working on a project and place them into separate bags. I color coordinate them with the scraps already in the bags so I don't end up with mud color when they are combined.



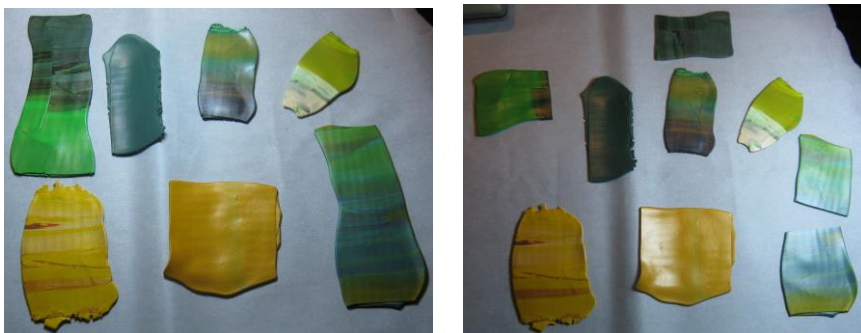
If your scrap isn't separated, try to do your best to separate it into different piles as it really helps to make the colors stand out. After you have separated it, pick the piles that you want to work with and put the rest aside.



Once you have the piles of scrap you are going to work with, pick one pile. You want to feed it through the pasta machine a little at a time so that you can control how it blends. After you have fed each bit from that pile through, assemble those scraps into the order you want to blend it. You can feed it in however you want to create your blend. You don't want to blend it too much because you will lose distinct, separate colors and it will become one solid color.



After you have done this with all of the piles you will have slabs of all different sizes and shapes. Don't worry about this, but you do want them to be around the same size. If any of them are longer than the others, cut it in half to make it closer in size for when you stack them. It doesn't have to be exact, you are going to be mashing it together into one block, but you don't want to have to mash TOO much.



Ok, so now you have a bunch of uneven skinner blend slabs. It's time to start stacking them. You can put them in any order you want, but I like having it go from light to dark or medium. It seems to make the colors stand out better. Now that they are stacked, it's time to mush them together. Make sure you keep the top slab as the top or when you cut into them it will be layers rather than the mokume gane patterns.



Once the stack is mashed together, you need to cut it in half. It's at this point you will see all the layers in between. Don't stack the two halves yet, you still have to manipulate it on one side of each block first.



Now it's time for the fun part. You get to take out your aggression on these poor defenseless blocks of clay. Take one of the blocks and use whatever tools you want to distress one side of the block. Use the top or bottom, not the sides that have the layers, (that will come later). You can use whatever tools you want. Do this to the second block as well, also on only one side.



After you have done this to both stacks, you are going to mush each of them together again till it doesn't show what you did, this is called healing the stack, (I call it hiding the evidence). When you are done healing them, you are going to stack them one on top of the other. Make sure the two healed sides are facing each other when stacked. I do it this way because sometimes when the stack is too high, you don't manage to reach the inside when you are distressing it. This ensures there is pattern all through the stack.



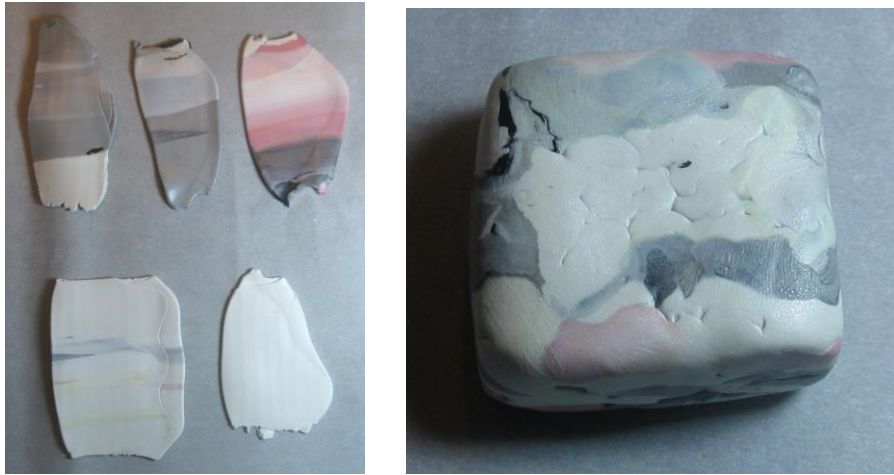
Continue distressing both top and bottom of the stack. You also want to do the sides, but not as much as you have done on the top and bottom.



Once you have finished distressing all the sides, it's time to heal the block again. You can also heal in between distressing each side, it gives you a different look than just doing it at the end. Now that the block is healed, set it aside to rest for at least an hour, more if it's hot where you are. If you want it to be faster you can put it in your fridge or freezer to speed up the process. I usually have a second group of scraps waiting to be used. I let the first one rest while I work with that one.



Here is the second group of scraps that I set aside earlier. I do the same series of steps for this one as well. By the time I am done, the first one is ready to be worked on again.



I cut the first block into slabs, making sure that I cut from top to bottom, not on the layer side. Then I lay the slabs out in front of me to figure out how I am going to arrange them on the slab of clay I will be rolling out.



While I am deciding, I roll out a slab of clay in a complimentary color to the slabs I just cut. I usually roll the clay on setting #5 on my atlas pasta machine. This is thin, but not so paper thin that it's hard to work with. I arrange the slices onto the slab of clay in a way that is pleasing to me. Now, you can do this a couple of ways at this point. You can either roll it even using a roller and some wax paper to smooth it out. This tends to distort it less, but it also tends to be a bit uneven and doesn't fill in the spaces very well. I usually roll it through the pasta machine. I start at 0 and work my way up until I like what I see. It usually averages out to about 3. If you go up much farther than that you will make the pattern stretch and distort a bit. Sometimes that can give a good effect too, so use your judgment to decide what you want.



I do the same with the other block. You can decide to keep it all on one slab, or separate them as I did in the first group.





Here is an example of another scrap mokume gane that I put all on one slab of clay and worked it carefully together before running it through the pasta machine.



And finally, here is what I did with that slab of scrap mokume gane, and another one that I didn't show. I made these two bracelets and sanded them very smooth. I put a coat of ren wax on them, and now they have a satin smooth finish.



Thank you so much for your interest, and for coming along on my first tutorial. I hope you liked it and that it helps you use up lots of scraps! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thanks for visiting my corner of the internet!

Sharon K. Mhyre