

Valentine's Day Crafts: Gem Paperweights with Courtney Cerruti

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Valentine's Day is the perfect holiday to give a little token of your love and what better than something that is handmade? I'm going to show you how to make a sweet little gemstone you can place on your desk or put in a windowsill. We're going to make it out of a really simple kids' material, oven-baked clay. We'll sculpt it into a gemstone and then you can stamp a little message on it. I'll even show you how to add a touch of gold for a sophisticated look. (calm music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- To make your gemstones, you're gonna need a couple of simple materials. You're gonna make your gemstones using a polymer clay. This is Sculpey. You can also use Fimo, or if you're comfortable with another brand, that's fine too. These are some little bits I had left over and here's a brand new package. You wanna make sure that whatever colors you're using, if you're gonna bake them together, that they all bake at the same temperature, so you can just check the packaging for that. This comes in like a soft kind and a hard kind. I'm gonna talk about the ins and outs of both. I'm using a softer kind. You're also gonna need a cutting board and you can use a paring knife or an X-ACTO blade to cut off your edges. If you wanna add some gold, you'll need metallic gold spray paint, a pair of gloves are always handy to have, and you'll need masking tape. If you'd like to stamp a message into your gemstone, then you'll need these metal stamps. They're used usually for jewelry making and you can find them at the craft store. They come in different sizes. You can even potentially find a vintage set. We're using a small set today.

Chapter 3 - Create Gem Paperweights

Shape gems and stamp

- The technique for making your gems is going to be the same no matter what color you're working in. Remember I said that there is a soft version of this polymer clay and there's a soft version. The soft version is going to be easier to work into a ball, but the harder version is going to give you a cleaner cut when you're making your gemstone and you'll see what I mean in a minute. I'm using the soft version just because I want to get into the cutting process right away. You just want to roll this into a rough ball and you'll see that my hands are turning pink, this red color, or if you were working with a magenta is going to stain your hands temporarily. You just want to wash them before you move on if you were working with a lighter gemstone later. Once it's in a ball, I can take my paring knife, and you want to do whatever is more comfortable for you. You can slice off a section in your hand much like you were peeling an apple, or you slice on your cutting board. And I've done one flat slice on the top, now I'm going at an angle working from that top flat slice out toward my edges. And the cool thing about making gemstones or these geometric shapes is you can just kind of make them up as you go and if you don't like it, you can always smush this back into a ball and start again. That looks kind of like a ruby which is really nice on the top, or some other kind of gemstone, it just happens to be red. I want to make this round part also nice and graphic so I'm going to come in from the edge and then cut down toward the cutting mat and you can see that I get that nice crisp line there. Do that all the way around our gemstone until we have nice clean cuts on all sides. And

then this is where you can kind of take a look. Now, the very bottom is flat, it's got a little bit of roundness but you're not going to see that. That's where this is meant to rest, especially if I'm going to stamp a message in the top. I can smooth out any cracks just with my finger. If you need to recut an edge, you can. Sometimes I'll also just take my knife and kind of tap if I need to flatten out something. And then this guy, we've got one more round edge here, let's cut that off. Just tap on those bottom edges. That gemstone is ready for a message but I'm going to set him aside and show you how to make another gemstone before we stamp our messages. These little scraps that we've cut from our sculpey can just be rolled into a ball and you can make a little tiny gemstone as a little partner. You can just keep doing that until you've used up all your sculpey. You can also mix sculpey together. If you're working with the harder sculpey, it's going to be more difficult to initially round it into a ball to begin with, but when you make those cuts on your gemstone, they're going to stay really crisp even as you handle it. The softer sculpey I like to work with just because I can get it into that ball really quickly, but as I'm handling it and cutting each little slice, I need to be careful not to mush the ones I've just cut because it is so soft. Now, because my hands are pink, I'm just going to wipe them off with a baby wipe. You can also run them under the water with soap and all that pink will come off, it's not permanent. And you may want to just wipe down your board and your blade too, especially if you were going to a really light color like the peach or to a white. And I'll work with the silver, it's already in a ball sort of. If I want to cut a longer gemstone, I can with my hands just work it into more of a rectangle or oblong shape. And we can cut it. I'm standing it up on its edge to get that first initial cut. Let's tap down that edge, I dragged my knife a little bit so it was kind of pulling on it. And then from here, same thing. We're just cutting at an angle from that top cut down on the sides. Get rid of any of those little pills. If you need to wipe your knife off again, you can. Just so you get nice clean edges. Good. That edge is not that crisp. I can either take my knife to tap it, try to crispen up those edges there. And now I've got this bottom edge to contend with so we're going to cut down at an angle from the outside toward the cutting board just like we did on the other one. This time we're just working with a longer shape. And this last one. And this guy is slightly rounded. I might want to just in my hand so I don't smush any of my sides, cut that just so it's a little flatter just so it sits really nicely. That's lovely. These guys you can make into a little tiny shape later. Once your gemstones are cut, you're ready to stamp your message. For our red gemstone, let's do something sweet but maybe traditional. How about XOXO. So we'll take those out. You definitely want to make sure you've got your right letters before you stamp, and if you'd like, you can practice on a little ball of clay just to get your technique. You're just going to press softly into the surface and if you press too hard, you'll see that you get that circle which is the actual stamp. I don't like the circle. If you want the circle you can, but otherwise, it's easier just to press softly but firmly to just get a nice X, a nice clean X. So you can practice, you could even make this flat on one side if that helps you and you can practice on there. Now we can move to our gemstone and we're just going to double-check one more time, make sure we have our X in the right orientation and just press X. And then we've got our O, make sure it's in the right orientation. X again. And O. That guy is ready to be baked off and let's do our silver gemstone. How about something like you're a gem. We'll start with our Y. Straight up and down and press. O. U, double check your orientation every time you stamp. We don't have an apostrophe, I'm just going to go for the R. You can make a little apostrophe with the tip of your knife if you like. Or you can leave out punctuation entirely. E. So we've got you're. Just do our A. And then finally the word gem. This would be such a cute little gift to give to a coworker or a girlfriend, for your mom. Double-check that M on my last letter, I don't want to mess up now. You're a gem! Let's attempt that apostrophe.

I'm going to use my knife but I'm actually going to use the dull end, the back end. And we'll just tip it in to make a little apostrophe. Once all of your gemstones are cut and you've stamped your messages, you're ready to bake these guys off. You want to double-check the packaging because different brands and different colors might have different baking times. Mine says to bake it at 275 for 15 minutes for every quarter inch thickness. Now, because we've made gemstones which are essentially like little balls, we're going to have to do a lot of baking time. I actually had to bake mine around an hour but I sent a timer to check it every 15 minutes. They need to be pretty firm and you want to use like a glove or a tea towel to just kind of gently press the surface to make sure that they're firming up nicely. If you've made gemstones of different sizes, you're going to want to bake all the small ones together and all the large ones together otherwise they'll bake at different rates just like you would with cookies, you don't want tiny little cookies and massive cookies to be in the oven at the same time because one is going to burn and one is going to be underdone. Same holds true for your gemstones. Once you bake them off I'm going to show you how to add a little gold touch.

Spray paint gems and finish

- Once all your gemstones are baked, they're gonna be really hard, rock hard even. And they are ready for some spray paint, if you'd like to add it. It's a good opportunity to add a little bit of glam, and glitz, with the metallic spray paint. You could also try a different color of paint, something that's opaque. This is also an excellent fixit, if you've burned any of your gemstones. I tried these peach guys, and I baked them a little too long, and these are gonna be an excellent candidate for spray painting. We're gonna go ahead and make this guy gold. Put on my gloves. And you wanna spray paint outside, in a well-ventilated area. And you may wanna work on some scratch paper, or some cardboard, or something. We'll move these guys outta the way. And let's just spray these two little ones all gold. (can rattling) (spraying) Go ahead and rotate them, it's better to rotate your paper, just because they might be tacky. (paper sliding) (spraying) (paper sliding) (spraying) And then you wanna let these dry. Those are gonna be really cute all gold, and it's a nice opportunity, there's not a lot of the clay that comes in a really brilliant, really metallic, saturated gold, so the spray paint is perfect for this. But it's also nice to just give a little golden touch to one that you didn't burn, maybe a red one. Let's pick this one that we did X O X O on. And we're gonna use our masking tape to tape off a section. (tape tearing) Could use painter's tape, too. Maybe we want just a hint of gold, and we just do a portion, or we can actually get this all the way in half. You can have your tape follow along the lines of your gemstone, if you want, but you don't have to, it's really up to you. So if I do that, we'll go along that side. You can just kinda twist and manipulate this. Have it bisect our X O X O. And just run it down to the underside of the gemstone. The bottom doesn't matter, but we're just gonna tear this off so it doesn't creep up. Press all that down. We wanna just cover that little open spot, 'cause we don't want that to be gold. Let's see, and maybe we'll just clean up that edge, too, so I'll grab one more piece of masking tape, and just really come right to that edge. There we go. Lovely. So now everything hidden by the tape will stay red, and everything exposed will become gold. Put your gloves back on, otherwise you'll wind up with gold fingernails. (spray can rattling) And spray this in the same way. (spraying) (paper sliding) Rotate. (spraying) (paper sliding) (spraying) (paper sliding) (thudding) Go ahead and let this dry completely, before you remove the tape, otherwise, you're prone to sticking your thumb into the wet spray paint, and you'll leave a mark, and ruin that glossy finish we just laid down. Carefully remove the tape, once the spray paint's dry. Find a spot to hold it. (tape peeling) There you have your half and half. Half red, half gold. Can

couple this with a little tiny gemstone of each. They'd be really cute put on a card. This guy is a gray variation. We made a silver one earlier, this one's actually like a charcoal gray. Here's one of the gemstones that doesn't have a message, which I think is a nice little piece, just on its own. Here's one that's entirely gold. And, and even a little marbled one, you can combine two different colors of clay just by smushing them together, spreading them apart, and then rolling them back into a little ball. And you have a nice little grouping, that you can give as a gift. You can pair these handmade gemstones using different colors, using your metallic spray paints, they'd be so cute placed next to a bedside, or put on the breakfast table on the morning of Valentine's Day.