
Make Paper Clay Christmas Ornaments with Courtney Cerruti

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(playful music) - Hi, I'm Courtney from Creative Bug. And one of my favorite things about the holidays is actually decorating the Christmas tree. And some of the fondest memories are actually the stories that come with those terrible ornaments you made when you were a kid that are probably half broken by now. But I'm gonna show you how to make a handmade ornament that's a little more sophisticated. We're gonna make ornaments using paper clay which is an air dried clay. So you don't need an oven for this. I'll show you how to use gold leaf. Cut out little shapes. And actually stamp messages or words into your ornaments. And then once they dry, I'll also show you how to paint them. And you'll have an ornament that you can place on the tree and have a little story to tell with it. But also something that you can use as a package topper to wrap gifts for the holidays. (playful music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- To make your ornaments you're not gonna need a lot of supplies. Probably most of these things you might have lying around the house already. The one thing you will probably want to go out and get is the paper clay, that's what we're gonna make our ornaments from. And that needs to be nice and fresh. And you can find that at most art supply stores and craft stores, look in the kids aisle for that. You also need some kind of rolling pin I'm just using a dowel. To create our words, we're gonna use fondant alphabet stamps. And these work really well because they make a really deep impression into the clay. And you can also get those from the craft supply store. You also need some cookie cutters. You can also use jars like how you would make biscuits would be fine too if you just wanted circle ornament. And then to decorate your ornaments you'll need a set of watercolors, some water, and brushes. I'll show you how to make some impressions with rubber stamps. And I'll also show you how to use rubber stamps with ink to decorate the ornaments once they're dry. Gold leaf. And if you want to use your ornaments to wrap packages you might want a bit of washing tape and some twine or ribbon to make your gift extra festive.

Chapter 3 - Make Ornaments

Roll out clay and cut shapes

- The paper clay comes usually in like a metal foil-ey kind of package, to keep everything nice and fresh. I opened this one this morning. And we're just gonna work with this a little ball at a time. Tear off a bit, just work with a handful at a time. I'm just gonna knead it into a little ball, and then we'll roll it out. It's like working with wadded clays. Can use a rolling pin, or I'm using a dowel here. Just like anything, you wanna kinda flip it and turn it. You don't wanna roll this too thin, because it can be hard to handle, nothing thinner than an eighth of an inch. I think usually a quarter inch size is pretty good. You can kinda smooth out little imperfections as you go, or just keep flipping it over. Using a cookie cutter, or you can even use like a jar lid, or anything to make an impression and cut through the paper clay. You're just going to cut into your paper clay. Give it a nice firm press. You can kinda wiggle it. Just like when you're cutting out cookies. You can also tear the paper clay away from the cookie cutter if you find that more helpful. And you'll get these little edges, 'cause remember this is

made out of really fine paper pulp. And you can just use your finger to smooth those down. If you're doing this with little kids, and you're working for an entire afternoon, and the clay starts to dry out, you can always take a cup of water, and kinda dip your finger into it to help reactivate the paper clay, but I wouldn't do this right off the bat, because working with this really slippery is harder, so just wait 'till it really starts to dry out, or crack to bring in the water, just a little tip. Just like cookie dough, you can reuse this. If you need to add more, just tear off some more. Roll it out, I love to use vintage cookie cutters. See, as my little horse fits in there. So you can get some cool shapes. And often vintage cookie cutters, especially these aluminum ones, they really get bent out of shape, so you wanna really press hard, and this is one where tearing it away usually is a little more effective. Again, just using my finger, if you need a little water to just smooth down those papery edges. We're gonna do a few more, and I'll show you how to just use the top of a jar or a cup to cut out some basic circle shapes. Just incorporating these two pieces together. These dowels are easy to use, especially with kids. But you can also just use a rolling pin. This is a little thick, this is like half inch, so let's just get this a little thinner. Okay good, just like your grandma made biscuits, you can use a jar... Just press and twist. That guy was a little thick, so it didn't go all the way through, so I get really fuzzy edges on this. You can see, that was so thick that that jar lid couldn't go all the way to the table, so I have really fuzzy edges there, it looks like ravioli. Just gonna smooth those down, and you can keep this as is, but you can also kinda roll it now, make it a little thinner. Which is totally fine. Just shape that a little by hand. Another danger of getting too much water mixed in or on your work surface, is that then these guys get really sticky and they're hard to get off the table, and you wind up misshaping them a bit when you pull them away. Before these dry, we wanna stamp our designs into them, and put a hole in each ornament, so that we can hang it, or use it as a gift topper. You can use a barbecue skewer, or even the back of your paint brush for this. You wanna place a hole that's big enough to get whatever you're gonna put through here, so, if it's twine or yarn, a bigger hole is better. Using something really fine you can make a smaller hole, I just like to make a larger hole, because I don't know what kind of ribbon I might wanna use. You can pick them up if you need to. These aren't gonna bake in the oven, they're not like cookies, so you don't have to worry about things stretching or changing, they're gonna air dry, so however you place the holes now, that's how they'll be when you're finished. And we can add some stamp designs to these using our fondant alphabet stamps, which give us a nice deep impression, and we can create words with those. Or we can also use rubber stamps, or anything else that will leave a texture in the surface of the dough, or clay. These alphabet fondant stamps are made out of plastic, and they come with a little holder for you to slide each letter in to create your words. And remember you'll actually need to put these in backwards, so starting with the last letter, and then adding the letters that way, because when you stamp it, it's gonna be in the right orientation, if you're working with little ones, that means you may need to help them with their letters. So this one will say joy, and just flip it over, and just gonna press right into the clay. Oh, my joy slipped a bit. So these little holders are not totally fool proof, sometimes they have like little sticky spots, or they're extra slippery, and so you can see that my joy isn't perfectly aligned. And that's okay, if you're doing this with kids, this is part of the fun. If you're making these perfect little clay discs, or paper clay discs, and you want them for packages and you wanna fix it. If you're impression isn't too deep, you can use a little bit of water, just like you would with regular clay, and smooth it out, but this guy, I pressed really deep, which I actually would love that kind of impression, and so, to fix this one, I would actually need to re roll it, which is fine, you can re roll this, you have a fair amount of time to work with this clay. This will give me an opportunity to make this not as thick also if I wanted to adjust that. Get rid of my ravioli

edges. Give this a quick one-over, just to get rid of that ridge that you get when using the jar. Place your hole in that, you could also wait to place the hole, especially if you have a lot of words you're trying to align, but I think it's fine to place the hole now. It's up to you. Just wanna make sure you do it before you let them dry. Let's just try to make sure that that word stays together. Just try to eyeball it as best you can. Give it a good press, and it says joy. Okay, so that one looks good, we'll set that aside. If we wanna do a word like peace, that's another holiday word, just slide these in the little holder, that looks good. Press, so that impression I like actually, just a bit deeper, so I'm gonna very carefully line up my letters again. Give it a good press. And this is pretty easy to do with these fondant letters. I have just a little bit of cracking right there, 'cause I pressed really hard. I can just take some water, and smooth that out, which is fine. Again, it's all part of the charm, it really is not a big deal if you get a little cracking. Set that guy aside. While we've got peace in here, why don't we stamp one of these small little discs. And another word that I feel like is very Christmasy, is the word Noel, so we should know the drill by now, we'll just slide these guys on. And these work better than rubber stamps for letters, because you get a much deeper impression, rubber stamps wouldn't give you that for words. And we'll do a little small one again, for Noel. Feels a little slippery, so I wanna make sure, it kinda stays in place. And I got a little cracking there, 'cause these have been sitting for a minute, I can just get rid of that with some water. If I need to re press I can. There we go, there are a few other different ways to decorate these while the paper clay is wet. And then there are ways to decorate it once it's dry. So while these guys are wet let's do a couple other things. I'm gonna show you how to stamp with a rubber stamp, I wouldn't recommend this for letters and phrases, because you don't get as deep of an impression. But for just a little bit of texture, or decoration it can work really nicely. Just have a rubber stamp with a starburst, or a sunburst pattern. We're not using the rubber stamp with ink, we're just using it to create a pattern, so you're going to use it to make an impression, in the surface of the paper clay. And then the other thing I like to do while this is wet, is add some gold leaf, and if you haven't worked with gold leaf before, it's a finely hammered sheet of metal, this is not real gold of course, this is imitation gold. It's pretty fragile and delicate, so if you're working with kids you may need to help. You also might want to quickly just wipe off your hands. Just give them a quick wipe, they don't have to be perfect, but they shouldn't be super wet or super dirty. You can actually do this to more than one at a time, I know that I just wanna have like a nice clean line of gold here, so I'm gonna line these up where that gold will fall. And carefully gonna just lay that. And you can move this a little. And then I'll start by just tapping. And then I'll use my dowel to just roll that in place. And these do need to be fairly damp, I wouldn't say wet, but they do need to be damp for this process. So, if you need to add some water you can, but you don't want a slick surface, 'cause the gold leaf won't stick to that either. And then you tear this away, if you've not worked with gold leaf before, you just tear away from the edges. So there I have a little mess, and I can fix that in a minute. There too, so this looks like it's getting kinda dry. Anywhere where it comes off, that means it's too dry. A little cracking is good, I love that look. That is expected, but here and here need a little help. So, we'll add a bit of water, but remember, I said it shouldn't be slick, I'm gonna use a rag or a paper towel or something just to just blot that off. And then these little bits you can use, they're not ruined, gold leaf can be very economical 'cause you can just kinda re use it and replace it. You just wanna pat it in place until everything sticks. If you feel like you're having a hard time with this, you can also just use a tiny, tiny bit of glue. A little bit of Elmer's glue will work too. And I like to let those just dry, before I remove the gold leaf just that's hanging off the edge, so I don't tear away too much. And when you have your gold leaf out, you'll notice that little flakes start to gather sort of everywhere on your table, and

it's a great opportunity to start incorporating it into the clay itself, so grab a ball of clay, and if you have a lot of little flakes going, you can use that, but I'm just gonna tear some of this, just evenly distributing it. Just kinda tear apart your ball, and re smush it together. You can pick up some gold leaf on the table. This is how I started doing this, 'cause I just had it everywhere and I was like, don't fight it, just add some more. And when you're happy with it, you can roll it out, and make an ornament as you would any of the ways I showed you, you can put a word into this, or just make a circle that has a little bit of gold leaf running through it. Pull away from this... Don't forget to give this one a hole as well. These need to dry completely before we can add ribbons, or start to paint them, and that can actually take anywhere from a day or two. And the way you can tell that they're dry, is they go from this putty gray color, to white, and they're almost like a porcelain. I like to dry them on a cookie sheet, or just on a flat surface overnight, and then flip them so that that backs can start to dry as well, and you can kinda rotate them over the one to two day period. You also should wrap up your clay if you have any left. I like to use my entire package of clay, and you can make dozens of these ornaments, and it's really fun, 'cause then you'll have them to wrap packages with, or give as gifts for the holidays. But if you do have any clay left over, you need to wrap it really really well, you may even wanna spray it with a little bit of water before you wrap it up, because it does tend to dry out, and it's not gonna work for you if it's not wet and workable.

Decorate ornaments

- Decorating is the fun part. And you can use watercolor paints or acrylic paints to paint onto your ornaments. You can also use rubber stamps with ink this time, unlike we did when we were just making an impression into the wet clay. My ornaments have dried for a couple of days and they're fragile like a ceramic or porcelain would be, but they've turned from gray to white, and they really have a ceramic feel. They're really beautiful as is if you want to pair them with a little gold ribbon. But I'm going to show you how to decorate them as well. I want to stamp using a rubber stamp in some permanent ink on this guy. I have this aqua color and a star stamp. Let's get a nice coating of ink on that. This is just like stamping paper. I'm going to press down firmly. Don't wiggle too much. And you get a nice clean impression. You can stamp any of your ornaments. You just want to make sure you let them dry before you add a ribbon and that only takes a few seconds, especially if you're using a quick drying or matte stamping ink. It's a little bit of twine. We'll feed that through the hole we made earlier. Tie that off and then give it a trim. This is ready for our Christmas tree or to give as a gift or to use as a package topper. These ones I'm going to paint with watercolor. Because this clay is made from paper, it actually takes the watercolor really nicely, almost like a paper would unlike a watercolor paper. So just dipping into your water color until you get a nice amount of paint. You have to get these juicy because they're all dry right now. I'm gonna paint right onto the surface of your ornament. You can paint stripes, you could do washes. This is really easy to play with. Do whatever you like. You could also paint into these letters. I'm gonna paint around them instead using a light touch so that just the clay underneath that whitish clay shows. Just carefully going around. You can see the paint will start to absorb into the ornament itself. Make sure to get all the way around the letters, because that's what's gonna make that impression look nice and crisp is just painting around it. This is really fun for kids too. Although I'm an adult, I guess, and I love it. So kids and adults. Carefully, I'm gonna go into that negative space for the P. There's a little tiny space there for the A if you want to try to capture it. Give that a second to dry and we'll add a ribbon to that. These horse shapes remind me of those Swedish Dala horses so I'm going to paint this horse like a Dala horse. Give it a little decoration with some dark blue paint. This is his little saddle. I'm doing a

monochromatic traditional blue and white. This would be really fun to paint a bunch of different colors. You can go onto the edge, especially, this is a thicker ornament if you want to go to the edge to finish the edge you can. You really don't have to be precise about any of this. Sometimes it's helpful to look at a picture of something, but the nice thing about these little horses, there almost like blank paper dolls, all these ornaments are. You can paint any pattern. You can even do an overall pattern. You don't have to make this horse look like he's wearing anything in particular. You can just do little doodles and squiggles. Just a simple little curly-q line can be effective. It's very loose. Just like the blue and white. It's very classic. Give his feet some attention here. A little swoosh. And let this one dry. Painting this does not have to be precise at all. They can be very free form. I want to show you some other ones that I did that maybe would be even easier to do. You can do something like falling snowflakes will little dots and dashes. That's very easy and it gives a really sweet little overall pattern. There's our joy. Those look really cute together. Here's one that I made that just has gold leaf. It doesn't have anything stamped on it, which I think would look really nice with an all black or an all craft paper wrap. Here's one that says peace, that I applied the gold leaf first while the clay was wet and then stamped into the gold leaf to create that gold on gold tone versus the piece we just painted. Here are some little ones that have the gold leaf mixed in for winter wishes and noel. We've got the joy that we made. This one dried on a surface that got moved and so it ruffled a little. It's not perfectly flat, but I think that's okay too. There's our little horse that we just painted, and here's his little red friend. These ornaments are all ready for your holiday tree, but if you'd like to use them to wrap a gift with I'm gonna show you how to do that. I love craft paper or even just a standard craft box, but you can do any solid wrap with this. You could do a dark color or a bright color. Then choose a patterned paper as the belly band or as a little strip that you're gonna wrap on top of your gift. You can use regular tape, but you know I'm gonna use washi tape. So center this strip. I'm gonna tape it on the back. I'm pulling it taut. I like the contrast between this ornament that I painted earlier and the white and off-white of this wood grain paper. So we'll use that ornament. Then you can pick a twine that coordinates or maybe contrasts. I like this twine. I like something with a little bit of sparkle. So we'll add this on top of our band. If you have someone's finger, that's the best part. That was the part I used to do for my mom before I could wrap my own gifts. I would just be the finger for the bows. Then you can thread this on. I like to do a double knot and clip about an inch to two inches out. But you could also do a bow. I think that makes a really lovely package. I have a few others. Here's one with our horse that has just gold leaf on the legs. Another little one where I did some simple wavy watercolor lines, so simple to do. And then a little one that has the gold leaf mixed throughout. Best of all these ornaments are handmade. You might want to include who the ornament is to, or if you made it and maybe the year as well. And you can paint that or write it on the back with a pen. Then every time you pull out the ornament box to decorate the tree you'll have a little reminder and a story to go along with the ornament as you hang it.