

Clay on Gourd Tutorial by Chris Peters

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I use Creative Paperclay (Paperclay or clay) for virtually all of my gourd clay work. The exception is when I am sculpting and using wire armature. Then, I use Apoxie Sculpt but only at the joints and to attach the wire to the gourd. Paperclay is non-toxic, clean, convenient and light weight. Clean up with water. Tip: Don't let the clay build up on your fingers. Rinse them often for smoother clay results.



1. First, trace your pattern. Using parchment, tracing or similar paper, trace the design with a pencil, HB or softer. Mark this Side "A".
2. Turn the paper over and retrace it on the back side. Mark this Side "B".
 - a. Note: Steps 1 and 2 can be combined into one step by tracing the pattern backwards (in reverse). You can do this with a lightbox or holding the pattern (in reverse) up to a window to trace. This will create a Side B.



3. Roll out the clay onto a scrap of parchment paper in a size large enough for the pattern to fit. Thickness should be approximately 1/8".
4. Lay the pattern onto the clay, Side A up and Side B down.

Gently rub the pattern which transfers the pattern onto the clay.



Using an Exacto knife cut away as much excess as you can and still be able to handle the clay without tearing it. The excess can be returned to the package of Paperclay to be reused if it is still moist.



1. Flip the clay over and spread a thin layer of glue to the edges.
2. Slip the parchment paper and clay into your hand and press it on the gourd.
3. Press and gently rub the clay to get good adhesion, pressing out any air pockets. There is no need to scar the gourd surface. The glue I use has always held the clay in place. I use Aleene's Tacky or Aleene's Turbo Tacky glue.



1. Using an Exacto knife cut away the remaining clay excess. Press and smooth the edges. As much as possible, scrape away any excess glue. If some remains, don't fret, forgive yourself and move on. Once dry, you may choose to sand the dry glue (or not). In the painting stage, any remaining glue is often barely noticeable.
2. Smooth the edges with tools or fingertips. You can use a bit of water but only sparingly. Too much water will cause surface cracks. They can easily be fixed by filling the cracks with clay. Tip: keep your fingers clean.



1. Once dry, you can add more dimension by adding clay (glue it on) where desired. Fix any cracks at this time.
2. Once you have finished with the clay application, let it dry completely and then sand and define the details to your liking. Careful, Paperclay is easy to sand and carve. Use a light hand.
3. The final step before painting is optional but one I recommend. Prime the clay and gourd surface. I use gesso. Moisture from paint absorbs into the clay a little. Without a primer (gesso) more good paint will be needed and the clay will feel gummy until it re-dries.