

Cold Carved Glass Cabochons by Gil Reynolds



Here is a fun, simple and exiting carved cameo project made with glass clay. It involves making some glass “cookies” (don’t try and eat them) that have two layers of different colors of glass clay that you can carve. It is kind of like making you own “flash” glass. When you carve through the top layer you can see the underneath color. These can be fired so that they still have a dimensional texture yet the surface is nice and shiny. These make great cabochons for necklaces, belt buckles, broaches or even elements for fused plates and tiles.

Mix in a bowl and spoon out small cookies on a paper towel and place on top of a kiln to dry. I like to put them in an old broiler pan. Heat the kiln at 500 degrees per hour to 1375 and hold for 30 minutes. This will dry the cookies from the bottom up and eliminate moisture bubbles popping in your glass. Come back the next day and your cookies will be dry and hard.

Make you base layer with 2 parts glass powder and 1 part Fuse Master Liquid Stringer Medium (LSM). I like to make a fairly large batch so I have enough clay to make a dozen or so projects at one time. To do this I mix 2 cups of clear glass powder and one cup of LSM. I want a rich white color for the base so I add 1 ounce of Fuse Master Lead Free Opaque Enamel #LF 128 Bright White.



Peel each cookie off of the paper towel and shape with a piece of coarse sand paper. The glass you sand off is not wasted, just add water to the sanded dust to make more clay.

The smoother the top surface, the cleaner the detail when carving so I use a damp sponge to smooth the surface of the cookie.



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Mix a glass clay cover coat of a contrasting color. I use 1 part glass powder and 1 part LSM. Because I am using clear powder I get my color by adding 1/8th tea-spoon of Fuse Master Lead Free Opaque Enamel #LF 119 Black for every tablespoon of clear glass powder. The mix should be fairly creamy. A dollop (about 1/4 teaspoon) of the mix should travel down a 45 degree ramp at a rate of about 3/4" in 10 seconds. Dip the top of the white cookie into the black mix like you were dipping chocolates. Place them on a paper towel and dry on a hot kiln. I use the same 1375 for 30 minutes that I used with the white.



Sand off any black drips on the edges and you are now ready to carve your design. Any pointed tool will work. I like to use

the tip of an X-acto knife to both slice and scrape. The top layer should be thick enough that you can lightly sketch the design before you carve to deep. This allows you to make slight changes as you go that will not show up in the finished piece.

Sweep away the carved dust frequently with a soft dry brush.



You can fire to many different temperatures depending on how you want the finished piece to look. The lower the temperatures will give you maximum dimension and minimum gloss. High temperatures will decrease dimension and increase the glossy surface. Here are several firing schedule to consider:

Max dimension/ dull grainy surface - 500 DPH to 1335 for 15 minutes.

Nice gloss and strong dimension - 500DPH to 1400 for 15 minutes (this is what I used in these examples).

Flat as a pancake but real shiny - 500 DPH to 1465 for 15 minutes.

Keep in mind that any mixture of glass powders or frit will shrink when fired. These cookies can shrink up to 40 % when fired to full fuse.

Some fun variation to try include;
- adding glass piping to the carved out areas to introduce a third color.

- add an additional topping so you have three color to carve through.

I hope you have fun with this project and come up with some unique variations and some stunning finished pieces.

Keep a Warm Kiln,

Gil Reynolds



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