



The Skinner Blend is a simple method for creating sheets of graded color - seamlessly from one color to another. Introduced to the polymer clay community by Judith Skinner, I believe this technique has had the greatest impact on the look and face of polymer clay. Here is a simple way to assemble a Skinner Blend of more than two colors.

How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

katopolyclay|projects





How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

step 01

Select your five colors - these are transparent tints that were made by mixing 4 parts of translucent to 1 part of color.



step 02

As if you were making a simple two part Skinner Blend, begin by cutting two right angle triangles of the two outermost colors. In this case the magenta tint and the red tint. These sheets were folded in half, stacked one atop the other, and then I made two cuts creating the right angle triangle shape.

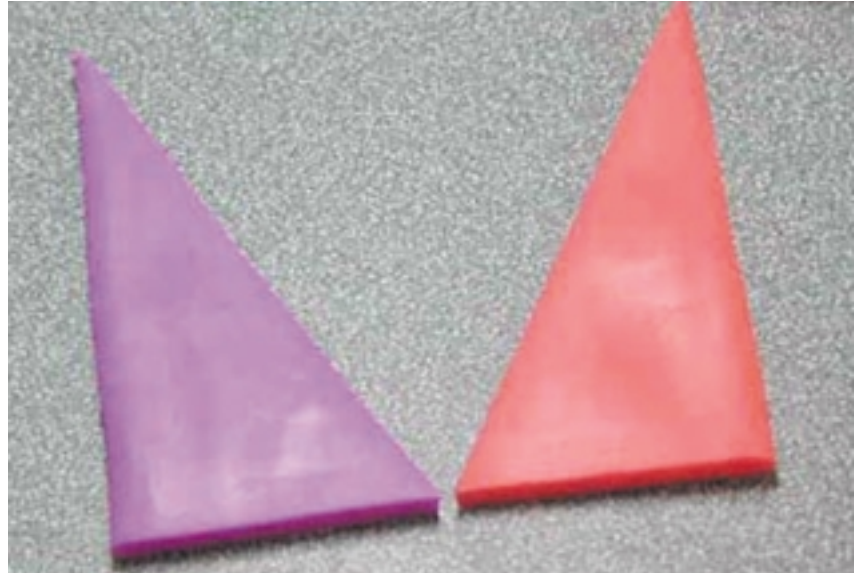




How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

step 03

In order to establish the sizes and shapes of the three center colors, separate the magenta tint and red tint sheets, open them as shown, revealing the exact shape of you'll cut.



step 04

Fold the center color sheets in half and stack them atop each other.

Place the magenta tint and red tint triangles on the stack as shown.

Following the diagonal sides of the two triangles resting atop the stack, cut down through the three sheets.

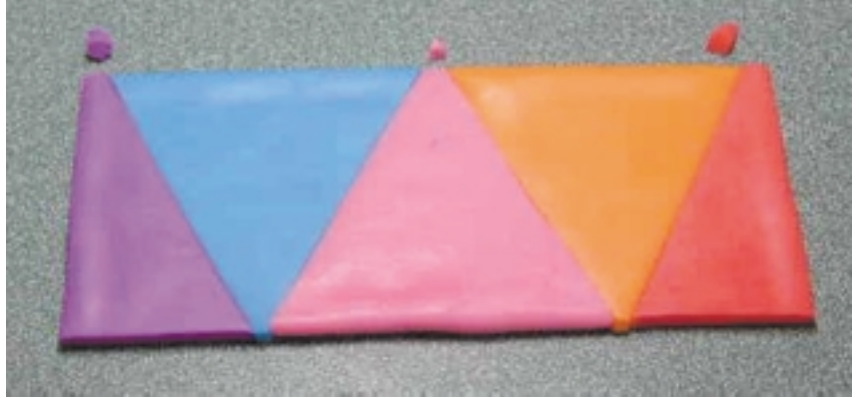




How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

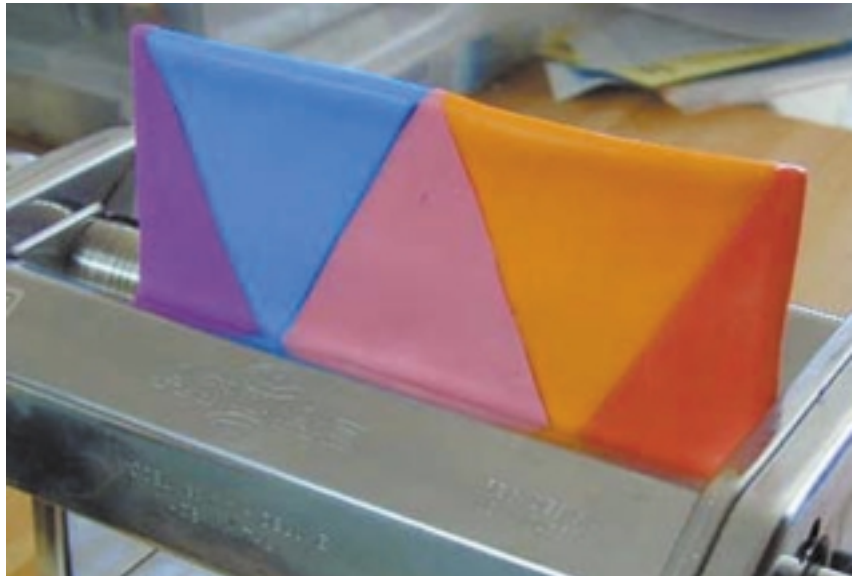
step 05

separate sheets and arrange as shown, joining triangles by pressing meeting edges together.



step 06

On the thickest setting of the pasta machine, roll the sheet through, making sure that all colors physically touch the rollers.

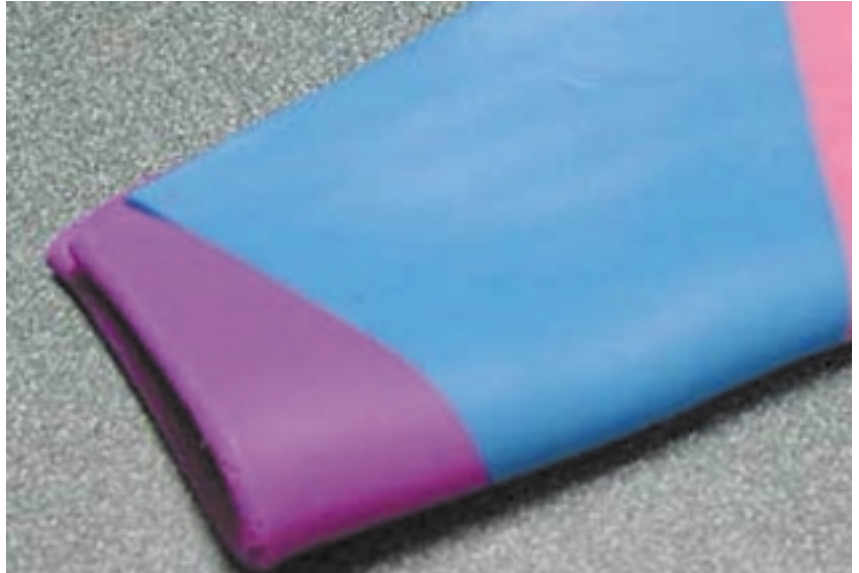




How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

step 07

Each time after, fold the sheet so that the same color edge lies on the same color edge, place the fold on the rollers and roll through.



After 10 times, folding and rolling through, the sheet will look like this.



Here's the finished blend





How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

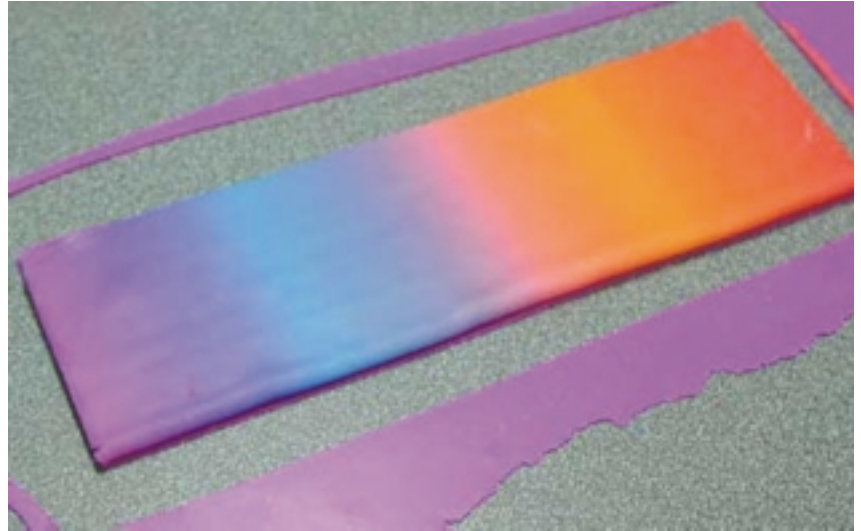
step 08

Fold the sheet in half, as if you were continuing the Skinner Blend - do not roll through.

Trim the sides neatly.

Roll a thin sheet of a contrasting color - in this case, magenta.

Lay the Skinner Blend strip on the magenta sheet and trim sides.



step 09

With an acrylic rod, thin and taper one end of the sheet

- this picture illustrates that I chose to taper the red tint end, rather than the opposite magenta tint end.

From the tapered end, roll up tightly



Here's the finished cane



How to Make a 5 Part Skinner Blend

step 10

Roll medium thin sheet of white. Cut thin slices from the translucent based canes. Place a few slices on the sheet, then roll smooth with acrylic rod. Continue, until you are pleased with the design. Place decorated sheet on a 1/8" thick sheet of black clay. Roll with an acrylic rod to force out any air pockets there might be between the two sheets. Free cut the shape using the Nublade Kato.

Roll a thin sheet of black. Cut a long strip wide enough to cover the sides and long enough to wrap around the perimeter of the pendant. Line one edge of the strip with the top of the pendant, pressing the strip of clay to the sides as you go. Trim the ends neatly so they meet and do not overlap. Smooth joint with fingers. Turn the pendant over and trim any excess black clay away. Smooth the joint between the strip and the bottom of the pendant with fingers or acrylic rod.

Using a bamboo skewer the same diameter as the cord you'll use, drill 1/4" into the pendant at two selected hanging points. Bake at 275 degrees F for 1 hour.

Finish: You may leave the piece as it is or choose to use one of the following optional finishes.

Matte: Using 320 grit, then 400 grit wet/dry sandpaper, sand the piece in water. Actually, I wet the piece, wet the paper, then sand above a bowl. Rinse piece and buff on denim, polar fleece or soft flannel.

High gloss with glaze: Follow instructions for Matte Finish. Apply water based glaze to dry piece.

High gloss with electric buffer: Follow instructions for Matte Finish. Using light circular motions, buff piece on an electric buffer (I use a Foredom Variable Speed Electric Bench Lathe) fitted with an unstitched muslin wheel.

Glue cord into pendant!

