

Clay Puzzled Spiders

By Artist Michael Harbridge

See this technique in action! Video recording of the live webinar available at www.ifiredarts.com.

Materials List

Moist clay
(preferably with some sand or grog)

Supplies by ClayPuzzling.com
(Clay Puzzling Globe Molds of choice depending on size)

- BD316 Jumbo 10.5"
- BD306 X-Large 9"
- BD307 Large 7"
- BD308 Medium 5"
- BD309 Small 3.75"
- BD061 X-Small 3.25"
- BD410 Mini 2.75"

PPT2 Press Tool with light
RSET-POT1 Clay Tool Set
PB3 Project Board
EXTRUDE2 Short Extruder
HDS Hollow Dies for extruder
PS02 Mini Extruder

Brushes by Royal & Langnickel
SG825-6 Stiff fan
SG250-3 Round Gold Taklon
SG595-0 Liner Gold Taklon

Slip (compatible with clay body chosen)

Assorted glazes by Mayco
SC15 Tuxedo
SC16 Cotton Tail
SC12 Moody Blue
SC74 Hot Tamale
EL137 Black Adventurine
S2723 Grape Devine

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Clay with sand or grog was used with this project because it helps give support and strength to the legs and body. When we completed ones with smooth clay, it required the larger globes stay in half the mold to set up, where those constructed with sand/grog clay could come out right away. Raku clay was used on the samples shown. The small spider was raku fired.

Step 1) Flatten chunks of moist clay between your fingers. Generally, about a quarter of an inch in thickness is sufficient. However, thicker clay may be needed on larger items, shapes which will have textures added, or items where parts are adhered .

Step 2) Place the pieces of clay inside one half of the mold, making certain to slightly overlap adjacent chunks. Compress clay with your fingers or a towel periodically. The clay should not pull apart if compressed properly. The harder you press, the less texture will be noticeable on the outside. Go right up to the edge of the mold.

Mold
BP306



Place a stake in the ground and place the spider over the stake so it appears to be walking on plants in the garden.

Mold
BP309



This little guy was made during the live webinar and was given a mohawk using the mini extruder. Create these in kids classes or camps and let the kids personalize them.

Step 3) Complete Steps 1 and 2 to fill the second half of the mold.

Step 4) Once both halves have been filled with clay, run your fingers over the surface to make certain all of the clay parts are attached well. Make a long coil about a half inch thick and attach it around one half of the mold, just below the edge, not above. This coil will be used to join the two halves. Remove any clay above the edge of the mold.

Step 5) Pick up the other half of the mold and wrap your fingers around the edge to prevent the clay from falling out as you turn it over and place both mold halves together.

Step 6) Band the mold with a Velcro strap and use a PPT2 Press Tool with Light to press the coil from one side of the mold so it attaches to the other. Once the clay is dry enough to stand on its own, carefully remove it from the mold.

Step 7) Once it's removed from the mold, clean up seam lines by using the metal rib and wooden tools from the Royal RSet-Pot1 Pottery Set. Add clay to fill in any gaps or openings along the seam line. Do not use water to smooth at this point; getting too much water on the item will cause it to collapse. Use water after completely dry.

Step 8) Place the clay globe in the center of the project board. Roll balls of clay and flatten slightly for the eyes. Score the backs and area where they will attach, add slip and press together. Give a slight twist as you attach so they lock together.

Step 9) Use the needle tool to cut open a mouth. Use the wood tools to form the bottom lip with clay you pull outward. Add teeth or a tongue.

Step 10) Use the sharp edge of a wood sculpting tool to add texture. Start between the eyes and work up, and follow the contour around the eyes and over the body. Texture the entire body, leaving the eyes and mouth. Use the wooden tool to poke texture in the eyelid area.

Step 11) Load the hand extruder with clay and attach the round hollow die bracket inside the end. Connect the die attachments. If you are making small spiders, the large hole die can be used instead of the hollow dies. Extrude several long strands for the legs. The legs don't all have to be the same length, as some will be up and some will be down.

Step 12) For small spiders, pinch the tip of the legs, scratch in texture, score, slip and attach. Position as desired and leave on project board to dry. For large spiders with hollow legs, pinch the tip of each leg together to a point and scratch in texture. Position legs and attach with slip.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *When you attach the legs, you will likely pinch the end of the hollow coil together where it connects to the body, completely sealing off and trapping air. It's very important to be sure you poke small holes with the needle tool in any areas where air can get trapped. Sometimes the legs can kink in the middle or down where it bends out to a foot, so be sure to vent all areas. I prefer waiting until the spider is completed, and then poke holes on the underside of any areas suspected of air traps.*

Step 13) You can add hair by using the mini extruder and slipping into place. Always try to press individual coils into a grouping because they can break off easily, even after firing.

Step 14) Allow to dry sufficiently before firing to cone 04, or appropriate temperature for the clay body selected.

Step 15) Apply three coats of Black Adventurine to the body and



legs of the large spider. Apply it to half of the eyelids. Paint the lower section of the eyes with Stroke & Coat colors. Apply three coats of Hot Tamale to the mouth. Apply two coats of Grape Devine to the eyelids.

Step 16) Fire to cone 06.

Colorful Raku Spiders

This spider was created with raku clay and glazed with RG650 Jade Gloss Raku Glaze from ClayPuzzling.com over everything except for the eyes and mouth. They were done with Stroke & Coat. It then went through the raku firing process.

Step 1) The glaze firing process is an important factor. A digital kiln works best when fired to 1,730 degrees Fahrenheit with a hold for 10 minutes. After that hold, allow the kiln to drop to 1,680 degrees and hold at that temperature while pulling items from the chamber.

Step 2) Gently lower the piece into a metal can lined with several layers of newspaper, allowing the paper to ignite. Hold the object in the flames without touching the sides and then gently set the piece in the can. Close the lid on the can and try not to open the lid until the item has cooled..

Step 3) Clean objects as they come out of the can with a stiff brush to remove ash.



Mold
BP361

Raku firing is one of the most exciting and rewarding ceramic processes. The more you fire, the more you learn. There are so many factors that go into how your piece will turn out; the temperature you pull at, the temperature outside that day, how fast you go into the can, how fast the paper ignites, how long you hold the piece in the flames before you set it down, and how quickly you get the flames out when you put the lid on the can. No two firings or pieces will turn out exactly the same. The application of the glaze and the entire firing process play rolls in the final result.

Due to the technique and firing process, raku is not designed to hold water and is for decorative purposes only. Art collectors around the world will pay top dollar for intriguing and unique raku shapes and designs. Do not place raku items in direct sunlight for extended periods to avoid loss of color.