

# Pearl-ex Mica inks and stamp pads

Marie Segal 2004

Mica powders are so wonderful with their sparkling qualities and metal effects. But the new mica inks are so much more than that. There are so many colors to work with and the effects are outstanding. With the re-inkers, I am able to treat them as paints too. I haven't been working with these that long but I find that I have a little more control with these than I do the powders; for one thing they are just not as messy. I am able to apply the micas to almost any surface while the powders get everywhere and have to be mixed in Pearl-ex Varnish to paint with them. So if I want a small line or have to put metal look on something that the powders can not be brushed onto, I can take a small brush and place it just where I want it to go.. Another benefit is that I can use them with stamps also! These are very permanent on almost any surface and they clean up with water if not left to completely dry. Heat setting will also substantially increase the resistance to wearing or fading. With both of the inks that we are using here the possibilities can be mystifying to say the least. With the Pearl-ex inks there are also 3 interference colors available red, blue and violet, they will work the same way as the interference powders on black or darker color they will be the color they say they are and over white or lighter colors they will put a red, blue, or violet cast to the color they have been stamped on or painted over. The interference color will also enhance all of the other colors of Mica inks.

Over-lays or multiple layers of inks are fun to do with the interference colors also make some wild translucent collage pieces.

**What they work with** They also work well with almost anything- clay, oven bake clay, air dry clay, glass, and fabric, wood, papier-mâché and endless others. They dry rather rapidly depending on the surface that they are used on. The humidity in the air is also a factor involved, more humidity more drying time. A heat gun can always remedy this on most surfaces.

**Re-freshen the pad with water** I prefer to keep my pad saturated at all times with the re-inkers, but a spritz of water with a spray bottle will refresh the inkpad. Spray lightly with a small mist of water over the surface of the pad and place the plastic liner back and lid back and let sit for a couple hours. Do not drown the pad with water. Work the surface of the pad with a stamp by stamping all over the surface many times. The pad will then be much easier to work with.

If the pad hasn't been used in a while it may feel dry. Use the water method to get it going. If your ink in the refill gets thick add a couple of drops of water to the bottle and gently shake together. I have also found that when my pads get tacky if I take a 1/2" flat brush and brush water over the surface, this works nicely for me.

**To refill the pad with a re-inker** place a bead of the same color ink on the pad at one end go back and forth like sign wave, with a Popsicle stick smooth the ink bead around on the pad by dragging the stick from one end to the other at a slight angle similar to frosting a cake, when you see no more blobby (technical term) ink you can start stamping or add more ink if you need to.



This to me is the only way to use these pads I never re-freshen them with water but always with the re-inkers. I get very clear images this way!

**Clean up** if you catch the ink fast enough you can clean up with soap and water. Make sure you wash all your plastic pallets, stamps, and brushes as soon as you are finished or it will be harder to get the ink off. This stuff is really permanent when dry and almost impossible if heat set. I don't think of this as a disadvantage, it is truly an asset to me in the things I make. I don't care for peeling or flaking after the piece is done, I just have to be a little more prepared when working with the inks. If you happen to get the ink on your clothes they have to be washed with soapy water immediately or it might be in your best interest to paint or stamp those clothes. This might be a new project for you.

Polymer stamp cleaners will also work at a later time if the ink has set up but this is not a good practice to keep.

**Brushes and stamps** of all kinds can be used with the re-inkers and treated like acrylic or oil paint. Can you just see a little dot of interference blue for the highlight in the eye of your portrait paintings?



I have a technique that I just love, even though I was an oil painter for a good many years, I prefer what I call stamp and highlight with projects that I have to make a lot of need to let go at a reasonable price on the retail or



wholesale market.

This method is to stamp the images you want on to the thing



of your choice and let dry or dry with your heat gun. Highlight the outside edges with a liner brush using the same colors or different colors to accent the images. A foam applicator brush is awesome for covering a larger surface area. I even use the inks and pads as acrylics and cover entire surfaces.

**Foam Stamps** I like to use foam stamps, the kind you make or the store bought ones, also they seem to apply the ink to the surface in a nice smooth layer.

I like also to keep my pads covered at all times when not in use, as they tend to dry



rapidly in the open air. The little clear liner that is provided on top of the inkpad under the lid is for this purpose you can keep this on the pad if you don't want to keep removing the lid. When I am stamping I set my pads upside down on the lid and pull the stamp pad from that, I "stamp" the stamp

with the inkpad and set the pad back into the lid and the liner. I re-ink the stamp every time I want to place the stamp in a new area. The more you stamp with one inking the fainter the image gets.

**Designer dots and the Kemper wire shapes also called KD tools** can be used to put images on to the surface of things also. The wire tools are used the same way they are used in decorative painting.

**Drying the ink on oven bake clay** I find that the ink takes a while to dry on the oven bake clay. You will have to experiment a little to find out. I stamp images on to the raw sheet of clay quite a bit. If you stamp one layer, one color of images, and then you want to stamp others I suggest your use your heat gun between layers or let air dry completely before the next layer. I also suggest that you hold the heat gun at least foot away from the surface of the clay and continually move over the stamped area. I don't like to leave the heat gun in one area for very long because I don't want to change the surface of the oven bake clay by baking it. I usually stamp the surface, go do something else and let the stamped sheet dry naturally. Then I stamp the next layer of color or images and on up in the layers, each layer is treated the same way by drying it before going to the next.

When stamping on baked clay I treat it like any other plastic except I put it back in a 250 degree preheated oven for 15 minutes shut off the oven and let cool. You can also set the inks with your heat gun never leaving it in one place for very long and since the clay is baked you can hold the heat gun 4- 6" above the surface as long as it is always moving. If you leave the heat gun to long in one place on the clay, you can burn it

**Direct to paper** it is fun to use just the inkpad or re-inkers to color your project. You can do this several ways if you just take the corner of the pad and press to the surface, which is one way. I like to apply several colors of ink to the surface like a mottled background so to speak and then stamp with black, indigo, or sepia on the top layer with a finer lined more intricate focal type design. I find that wiping the pad across surfaces does not cover as well and actually seems to remove some of the ink from the surface, like when I am doing this on glass the stamp pad will remove some of the ink from the glass if I wipe instead of press the pad to it. This really a problem on glossy surfaces as opposed to porous surfaces like paper or mat board, as a matter of fact you do almost anything you can do with other inkpads on the surface of paper as you can do with these.

Another method of transferring the ink to the paper is to hold the pad and press to the surface of your paper and twist the whole pad clockwise you will get circles with little lines.

With the re-inkers they can be treated like acrylic paint on the surface of paper. I use one of the little plastic palettes and put my ink colors a couple drops at a time in the little wells and brush on to the surface. Remember the thicker the ink the longer it takes to dry. I clean the palette immediately when I am done with it.

We also carry little bottles with different size liner tips that are just great and can be easily cleaned after usage with soap and water.

The thing I really like about the colors of inkpads and re-inkers is how I can treat them like paint as well as ink.

**Stamping on glossy surface** is somewhat more difficult. When you ink up the stamp place it where you want it to go and press on the back firmly and straight down. It will feel like there is butter or oil between the stamp and the surface if you move the stamp in

any way. Press direct and firmly to the surface. Stamping on curved surfaces is there for a trial, but can be done with patience and time.

**Using rolling Stamps** is another way to embellish frames and surfaces that are somewhat flat or symmetrical. I like to take plain mat board black frames and roll the stamp on the pad. Do this until the whole roller is covered and roll on the surface of the frame with the gold ink or another color if you want. The longer and more careful you are, making sure that the ink is on the whole surface of the roller, the better results you will have. This will jazz up the frame for little or no cost to you.



The frame shown here was rolled with gold-blue and a holly stamp roller and then highlighted with gold-blue and red-gold being applied with a paint brush.

**Stamping in layers** using the interference colors in layers on black gives the impression of an opal or oily surface. Start with one color and stamp collage like over the surface. Let it dry or heat set it. Stamp a different interference color over this layer you can stamp with the same stamp or a different one. If I am using different stamps I use the bolder or more ink-applied stamps on the bottom layer and the more open and thinner lined stamps for the top layer, but that is just the way I do it.

**Stamping on fabric** it is probably a good idea to wash and prepare the fabric as if you were going to paint it or dye it. Iron the fabric to make sure you have nice flat surface area to work on. I like to put some kind of mat board or paper under the surface of the fabric where I want to stamp it. The ink will dry rather rapidly on these surfaces too, especially when applied with some type of stamp as opposed to a brush. And sometimes when stamping the inks on to silk and other porous open weave fabrics the ink will show and come through on the backside. When painting on the surface of fabric it is probably a good idea to dry the ink as you go with the heat gun. I also move the heat gun over the area all the time to dry it evenly and not get any bubbling in the thicker areas of the painted surface. This also is a great idea when you have a lot of things to stamp on the surface and larger areas to cover. Once the stamped images are dry, I like to iron the images with a piece of baking parchment between the iron and the ink surface. I use the iron setting recommended for the fabric I am using.

Canvas, canvas bags, aprons, shirts, pants, and things like this are just asking for the pearl-ex stamp pads.

So what if you don't like your curtains and bedspread, stamp 'em!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sheet sets would make a nice gift don't you think??????

**Stenciling on clay and fabrics** I like to use the sticky backed transfers they are easier and seem to have less ink transfer under the stencil and sharper lines when finished and have found some great ones from Rubber Stamp Plantation, they also have a ton of other cool products including Hawaiian themed rubber stamps; their info is at the end of the hand out. For stenciling on fabrics treat the same way as painting and follow the directions that the company gives you on their stencils. Using a smaller stencil brush ¼" to ½" round, work the ink into the tip of the brush, holding the brush straight up and down push it on to the fabric and bring it back in short strokes, you will be able to tell when you need to load more ink in the brush, you can see the ink get lighter and lighter. Stencils on clay are fun too. You treat almost the same way as fabric and if you are using the sticky backed stencils they pull clay away from the surface where they are attached,

this is ok and will pull less and less clay away from the surface the more you use your stencil.

Roll out clay on the thickest setting in your pasta machine or about 1/8" thick.

Place the stencil to the surface of the clay.

With your stencil brush, press lightly on the surface of the stencil to attach it.

Load up the brush with ink and punch the color into the surface of the clay as you do with the fabric holding the brush straight up and down as you use it. This looks somewhat like paving and is very nice.



Pick up the edge of the stencil with a craft knife or needle type tool and gently remove the stencil from the surface, you may have to loosen each corner one at a time to get it free. It will become easier and easier to do this once the stencil builds up a little clay on the back of it. If you are using a stencil that is not sticky backed you can place it on the surface of the

clay and roll something over the top to flatten it to the surface of the

clay. Some plastic stencils are not compatible with clay and should be washed with soap and water and all clay removed to lengthen the life of your stencils. Cut around the outside edge leaving 1/16" allowance around the stenciled area.



Bake according to manufacturers directions. This will set the ink as well as baking the clay.

**Stamping on plastic type fabrics and vinyl's** Shower curtains are the most fun to embellish with these inks and if left to dry properly will be water resistant also. I really don't suggest ironing or using a heat gun on the thinner plastics, just give your self plenty of time for your project even if that means doing it a few days before you need it.

Plastic party tablecloths are also very fun and can make a very inexpensive tablecloth look quite elegant. Stamp on to the surface and depending on the texture of the surface will determine how you should handle the stamp as was talked about above in stamping glossy surfaces.

Stamping on plastic boxes and containers is also a good idea. Think about dressing up your plastic shoeboxes if they are somewhere they can be seen in your room and what about personalizing your Tupperware and other plastic containers. You won't lose them at work. On the outside away from food would be my choice. They will be just fine if the ink is dried properly and washed with warm soapy water and a soft sponge where they are stamped. Slick surface rule applies.

Stamping on purses, briefcases and other vinyl surfaces is a way to embellish and personalize your things.

And don't forget about vinyl furniture. You can see where this going, buy those re-inkers you are going to need them.



**Stamping on other inks** I love to cover or dye the area with the Piñata inks also a Jacquard Product, and let that dry and then stamp over with the pearl-ex ink. The Piñata ink colors are very vibrant and with the Pearl-ex ink used over the top it gives my things a very elegant and rich quality in my opinion. The beads shown are oven bake clay with Piñata applied and dried and Pearl-ex gold ink stamped over that. Also if the Piñata ink is not completely dry it will tint the gold ink.



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