DETAILS AND TEXTURES

"I create large works from polymer clay, and in my sculptures, it's the fine details that give them expression and recognition," explains Anastasiia Merkushina. She showcases four of her favorite textures, including the intricate dragon's eye detail. This feature can be incorporated into a larger polymer clay sculpture or used as a standalone piece — perfect for transforming into a ring, pendant, keychain, and more.

ABOUT ANASTASIIA MERKUSHINA

Born in a small town, for Anastasiia Merkushina, art has always been a passion. She has been sculpting with polymer clay for over ten years, creating alien creatures, which are a blend of real animals, mythological images, and imagination. "Even as a child, I had a knack for crafting and selling things at local fairs," she says. Nowadays, she is running a company of thirty people, crafting and selling unique sculptures and toys from different materials, including polymer clay.

www.giftofmercury.com

PRODUCTS IN THE ADVENT CALENDAR

FIMO POLYMER CLAY - LIGHT PINK
Light pink Fimo polymer clay is Anastasiia's favorite color to use as a base for her sculptures and artworks. It can easily be painted over with pigments or paints.

FIMO BEAD PIERCING NEEDLES
Ideal not only for piercing beads and objects but also for sculpting and adding fine details to polymer clay. The package contains 50 needles. Why not create your own texturing tool by bundling them together?

LIST OF TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- polymer clay
- glass cabochon 20 mm
- acrylic paints
- Lucy Struncova's Color Pigments
- synthetic brush
- silicone brush
- metal spatula
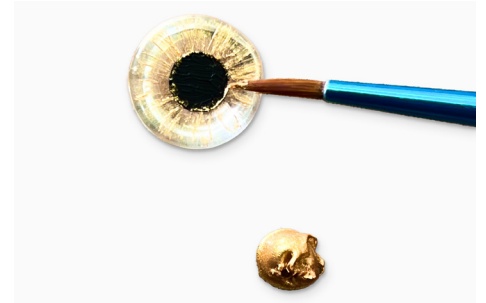- bead piercing needles
- cone brush
- ball tool

DRAGON EYE
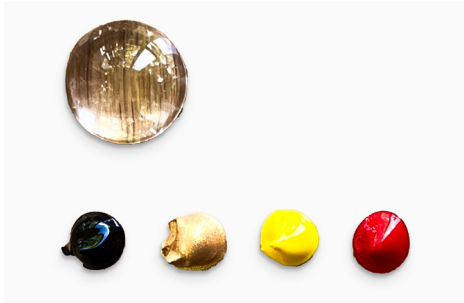
Let's start by creating the dragon eye. You will need a glass cabochon and black acrylic paint along with colors of your choice, in this case, yellow, red, and gold.

First, on the flat side of the cabochon, draw the pupil of the eye – the shape can be any, whether round or cat-like.

Next, pick the lightest shade in gold. Make thin radial lines extending from the pupil.
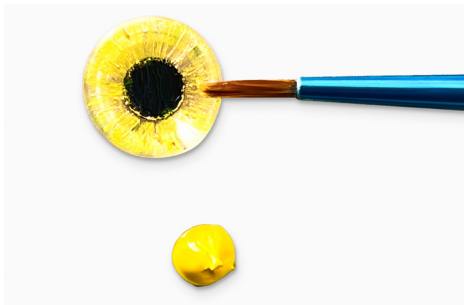
For the next layer, use a darker yellow color, and add more lines. If you've applied too much paint or it's not transparent enough, you can remove it with a brush, or completely wipe the paint off with a wet wipe and start again.

The more layers of paint and radial lines, the more realistic the eye will look. Create orange by mixing yellow and red.
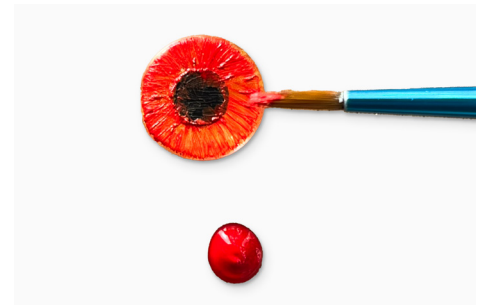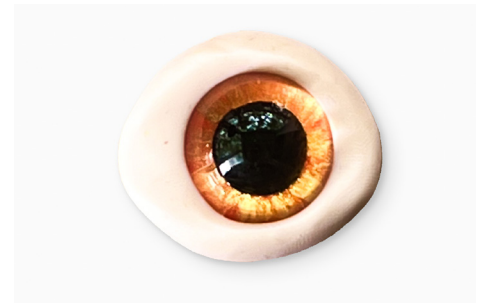
Finish with a layer of red. As a final layer it is optional to apply a varnish for acrylic paints or any universal varnish to protect the painting. Be careful not to damage the painting when placing the eye on the clay.

Let the eye dry for a few minutes, take a small ball of polymer clay, about 2 cm diameter.
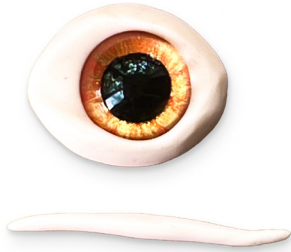
Sculpt the base for the eye by flattening the ball.

Place the dry eye carefully in the center and flatten the clay around the edges to give it a slightly oval shape.
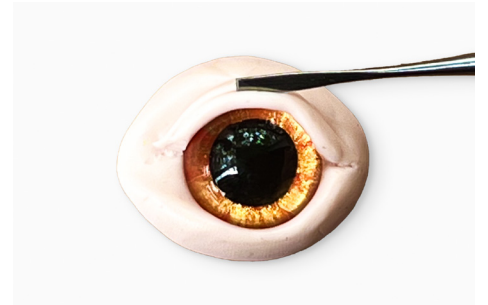
To create the eyelids, take small pieces of polymer clay and roll them into a snake, thin at the ends and thicker in the middle.
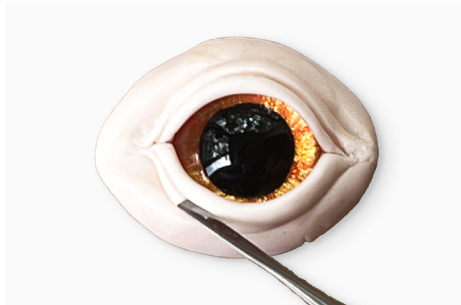

Place this snake around the eye, slightly covering the edge of the glass.

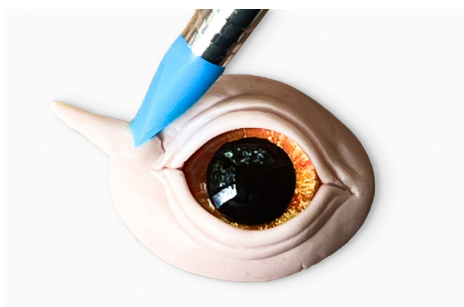Use a flat spatula to add creases to make the eyelid more realistic.

Then, press it in at the base of the corners of the eye using the ball tool.

Make the lower eyelid in the same way.

Make spikes. Size can vary depending on your preference by rolling clay out on one end to form a cone.

Smooth it with a silicone brush and repeat with the other spikes.

Place the first row of spikes at the outer perimeter. Make them smaller as it goes above the arch of the eye.

Once the first row of spikes is complete, move on to the second row, repeating the same process but making the spikes smaller and placing them between the larger ones.

After all the spikes are attached and smoothed out with a silicone brush, it's time to add texture. Use the ball tool to create small, irregular circles.

Add texture at the base of the smaller spikes with the same tool.

Additionally, you can color it with Lucy's powdered pigments in the shades of your choice.

SKIN TEXTURE

For creating the first skin texture, roll out a ball of clay using a pasta machine or by hand.

Make small squares for sample plates.

Trim the edges using a spatula tool. Prepare four plates for practicing textures. Do not bake them yet.

Use the ball tool to draw a pattern starting with irregular ovals, resembling leaf shapes with pointed ends.

Around these shapes, draw other leaf-like or microscope cell-like forms, tightly packed together.

This unique pattern gives a natural look, adding realism to any surface. Don't be afraid to make it random or chaotic, as nature itself is often unpredictable.

Once the surface is covered in texture, soften it and make it rougher with the cone brush, gently rolling it over the surface and pressing slightly to leave small, barely noticeable dots and grooves.

FUR TEXTURE

For a fur texture, start with sparse lines drawn with a thick needle. The direction of these lines should follow the natural growth of the fur.

Draw the lines deep enough to be visible but not too deep.

After creating the primary lines, you add additional lines, which will form the individual strands of fur.

Guide the line in such a way that it constantly returns to the main line, forming waves or thin blades of grass.

Use a thinner needle and apply less pressure to split the thick strands into finer ones.

Continue refining the texture depending on your design.

CURL FUR TEXTURE

When creating curl fur texture, first sculpt strands with pointed coils of clay.

Roll them into spirals and place them on the surface.

On top of these, create texture by drawing curved lines that follow the shape of the curls. It is recommended to cover the entire surface with spirals first, and then split them into individual strands by drawing lines.

Draw the lines similarly to the fur texture from the previous step, using a flat tool like a spatula.

Another option is to use bead piercing pins. Any of both will create grooves of varying thickness, which is needed for a natural curly fur look.
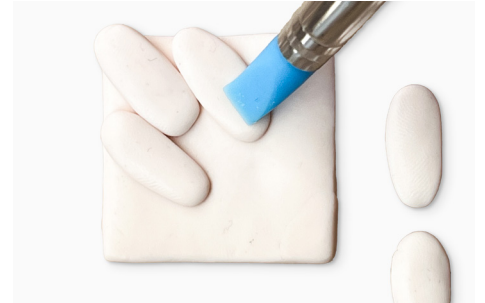
FEATHER TEXTURE

Start by sculpting the feathers. Make a few clay logs.
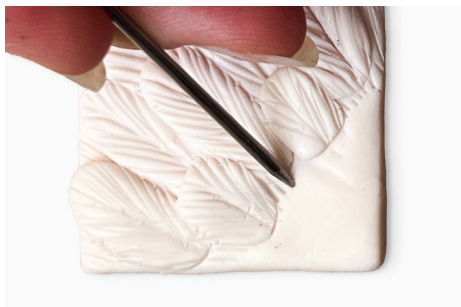

Flatten them into oval shapes.

Attach them easily with a silicone brush.

Create the texture and grooves on each feather using thick bead piercing pins. Starting with a central line.

It's most convenient to attach one row of feathers at a time, adding texture to each as you go.

With each row, you can reduce the size of the feathers to show how the feathered surface is made up of different-sized feathers.

You can also add fur or fluff at the base.

After working on the textures, you can color them using Lucy's pigments to highlight the texture.

ADDITIONAL INSPIRATION

Discover the enchanting toys and sculptures of Anastasiia Merkushina, each one feeling like it's stepped out of a magical story. She begins by sculpting her designs from polymer clay, a material she loves for its flexibility and detail. Her creations range from whimsical fantasy creatures to custom designs, all crafted with care and imagination. To bring them to life, she adds soft faux fur, shiny glass eyes, and vibrant paints. Truly inspiring!