MIXING COLORS

The minimalist designs of Rita Botelho embody simplicity—but her work extends far beyond the surface. Each creation holds layers of meaning, intricately woven from her personal memories, crafting narratives that are both authentic and original. While her designs may seem simple at first glance, they reveal a deeply thoughtful process. At the core of her work lies a vital element: color. Explore her article to uncover her inspiring reflections on color and design and discover how she transforms memories and compelling stories through her art.

ABOUT RITA BOTELHO

Rita Botelho is a Portuguese artist known for her minimalist and conceptual jewellery designs. She launched her brand, Piino, in 2019, creating timeless pieces that highlight the natural beauty of polymer clay. Rita's designs are simple yet impactful, often blending functionality with originality to tell a story. Her work reflects her commitment to intentional living and sustainability, emphasizing quality and lasting value. Through platforms like Patreon, she inspires a community of makers while balancing her passion for creating and teaching.

www.atelier-piino.com
www.instagram.com/atelier_piino

PRODUCTS IN THE ADVENT CALENDAR

FIMO MAGENTA, YELLOW, BLUE, BLACK, WHITE
Explore the primary colors of Fimo Professional and use them to test Rita's approach to mixing colors. These perfectly saturated hues, containing pure color pigments, are ideal for creating wonderful color mixes and blends.

MY THOUGHTS ON COLOR

Color is endless. It is maybe the best metaphor for the infinite. They not only appeal to our rational brain but also to our emotional one. We can literally feel through colors, and we influence those future feelings straight from the beginning - when we start mixing blocks of polymer clay and develop a possible color palette.

Colors tell stories, build experiences and enrich our personality the same way flowers and trees do within a garden. A life with color is a life with purpose and meaning. Color is never unintentional. Is just not a judgeable action.

The same as light, every nuance of color has the power to evoke new emotions, giving rise to timeless beauty. This creates an impression that evolves continuously, always rooted in its unique essence and lasting impact.

STORYTELLING THROUGH COLOR

Any memory can become a spark for creativity. My childhood memories were filled with energy and happiness, which made it easy to draw inspiration from them. The challenge wasn't in finding that inspiration, but in harmonizing it with a minimalist style that blends design, shape, and color. At the same time, I wanted it to communicate all the freedom and joy of my childhood. I sought to share that magical balance where the individual and the world around them feel connected.

Those moments at the beach, playing in the sand during my childhood, were the best representations of freedom and happiness: feeling free with our body and mind, facing challenges without being afraid of falling, finding balance in life, and being confident in who we are... It was just the perfect metaphor!

Looking back at those times, my whole visual concept and the name „Piino" (pino means handstand in Portuguese) made perfect sense when I started my own brand. I am aiming to create a world where the simplicity of design reflects the purity of a childhood experience—one where both the creator and observer can feel that same magic—a seamless connection between past and present. It's about capturing the essence, not the details. And colors became a very important part of it.

In my artwork, I currently have a permanent palette of 14 different colors of polymer clay that are essential for my storytelling. I truly enjoy giving each color a name connected to my childhood memories—salt, sand, earth, hot, sun, etc. They all reflect my pure joy of playing at the beach in Portugal.

My style is very clean, minimalistic, and delicate. Not many artists choose to create in minimalism within our polymer clay community. Creating a simple piece of jewelry, whose design relies on shape, a single color, and a clean finish, is more challenging than one might think.
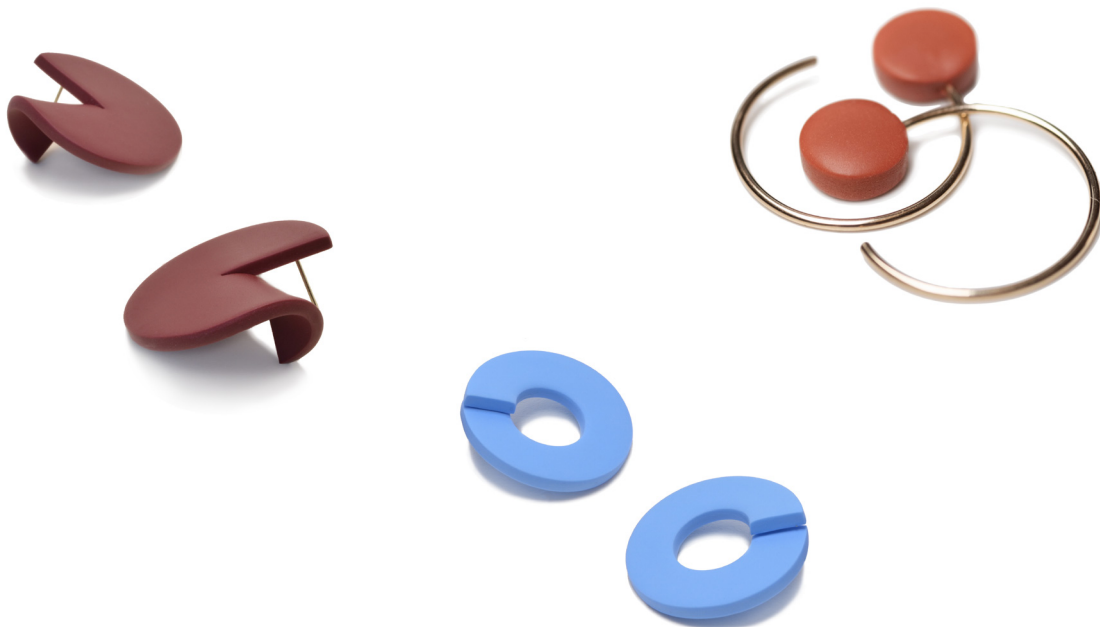
My goal is to discover unique color tones that reflect the essence of my brand and choose color names that guide my clients on a journey through Piino's storytelling. For that reason, my color collection is permanent, which means the color recipes must be very precise so the results are always consistent. I have clients who are so passionate about a particular color that they request it in every design they order.

If you are familiar with color therapy, you may know that certain colors can contribute to our mental, emotional, and even physical well-being. I believe there is something about the tonalities I choose that evoke a sense of uniqueness, calmness, and happiness. Perhaps you have favorite moments of your life as well that could inspire you to create a unique color palette?

THE START OF COLOR MIXING

Curious about my process of mixing colors? I use the principles of the subtractive primary color systems, CMY (Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow) and RYB (Red, Yellow, and Blue). Fimo Professional, though a harder clay to condition, has the significant advantage of containing pure color pigments—something you can now try for yourself with the Polymer Week gifts found in the Advent Calendar.

I always start with two colors, mixing them in equal parts, and from those results, I add a little bit of other colors if necessary. To adjust the tonality, I add white to make them lighter, beige or light grey to make them more pastel and less bright, or black if I want to make them much darker. However, I usually prefer to use other standard colors with darker shades instead of strong black.

COLOR EXPERIMENTS

When experimenting and searching for a new color, I always start with a wheel using three primary colors: yellow, blue, and magenta or red. Creating different wheels with variations in the tonalities of each of these three primary colors allows me to discover colors that would otherwise be very difficult to achieve on a small scale with clay.

To avoid waste, I start with the smallest possible amount of clay. I also write down every single recipe for a new color I create, even if it's not the color I'm looking for. In the future, I often find myself liking colors that I didn't appreciate as much in the past.

MIXING COLORS

When creating my own color palette, I work with a small circle cutter that I use to cut whole circles , or cut them into divisions as small as sexteen portions. Then, working with several sheets conditioned on the same thickness setting of the machine, I use this method of working with circles to easily remember the ratio between individual colors.

To scale this small sample up to a larger amount of clay, you can easily convert this system into grams: for example, 1 part of clay equals 100g, and 1/2 part equals 50g.
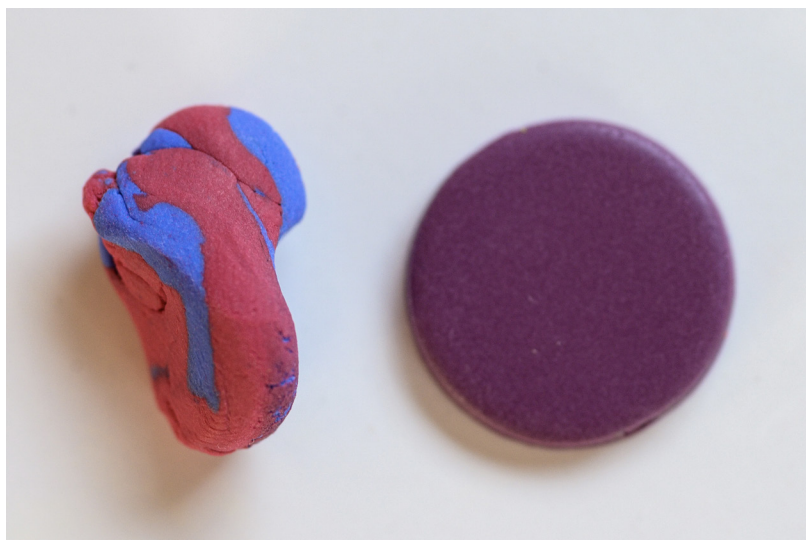
As a start use a circular cutter to cut out the three primary colors of the wheel system: yellow, cyan/blue and magenta/red. Use the same thickness for all the circles.

You can divide each circle into smaller portions with a blade. In this case cut it in half.

Mix to colors in equal parts to get a new one which would fall in between.

Remember to write down every single recipe you make so you keep a record of color mixes that may be interesting to use in the future.


Add equal or even smaller portions of other colors if necessary to change tonality. For example, use white to make them lighter, and beige or light grey to make them darker. Avoid black unless necessary.

Build your own wheel color system adding secondary and tertiary colors or even creating new wheels with slight color variations.

COLOR WHEELS

Notice, as an example in the photo, the difference between types of blue, warmth of yellow, and red/magentas and the results from combining different primary color choices.
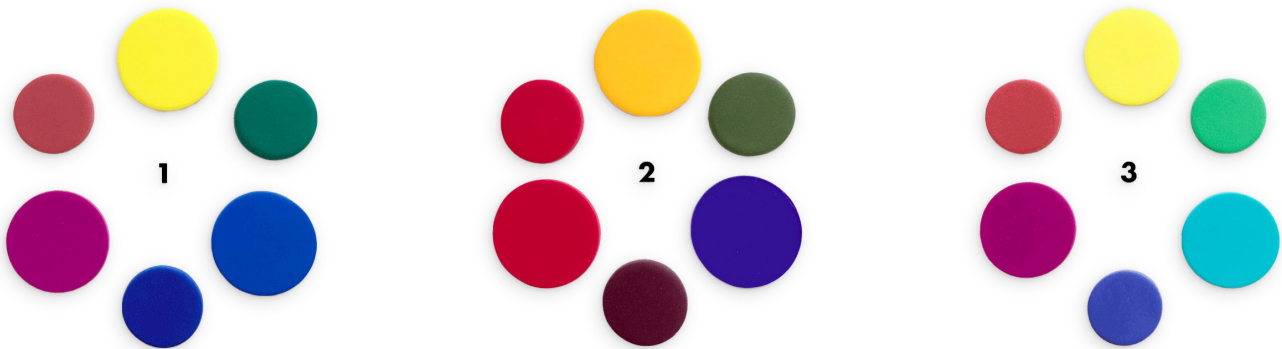
Wheel 1:
Primary yellow: Fimo Lemon (10)
Primary blue: Fimo Pacific Blue (37)
Primary magenta: Fimo Purpure (61)

Secondary colors work in the same ways 1:1 between two main circles.

Wheel 2:
Primary yellow: Fimo Sunflower (16)
Primary blue: Fimo Brilliant Blue (33)
Primary magenta: Fimo Cherry Red (26)

Wheel 3:
Primary Yellow: Fimo Lemon (10)
Primary Blue: Fimo Peppermint (39)
Primary Magenta: Fimo Purpure (61)