

Learn how to make Magical Mirrors with 'POWERTEX'

Designed by Birdy Heywood



A LITTLE ABOUT POWERTEX

Powertex is an environmentally, water based fabric hardener and comes in a great range of colours. If using natural fabrics that completely absorb it, after 3 weeks it is entirely weatherproof. The Transparent however is not weatherproof unless varnished afterwards with Powertex Easy Varnish. Powertex is more than just a fabric hardener as it comes with a great range of related products. Textures, colour pigments, moulds, Stone Art Clay, Fibres, Bister (A water based product that sprayed on to a canvas gives amazing effects) Check out the website for a list of trained tutors in your area. www.powertex.co.uk

Creating the Coloured Clay and Paints

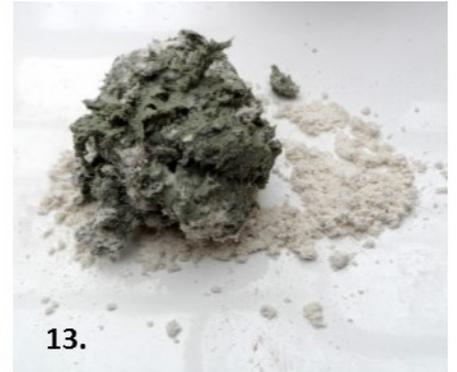
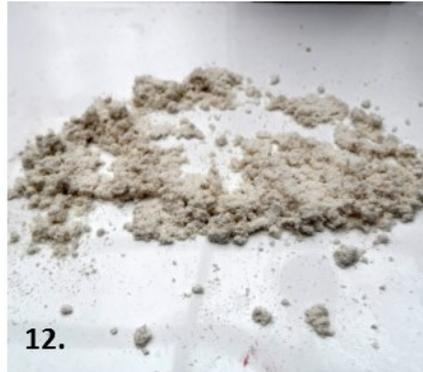


I have been working with Polymer Clay for over 30 years and I wondered what it would be like to create similar things out of Stone Art Clay. In 1. you can see all the lovely colours I mixed in readiness and also the little flowers made from the Powertex Daisy Mould. 2. Shows my little tubs of rainbow colours. The paints were made by mixing Transparent Powertex with some of the Colour Pigments. If you would like the shades to be more pastel then mix in a little Ivory Powertex to lighten it up. When mixed cover with cling film and the colours will last for quite a few days. The little plastic shot glasses can be washed out afterwards to use again. I will explain next how the Stone Art Clay was created.

Creating the Coloured Clay



To mix a nice green shade I used a little plastic container that once contained a tasty strawberry mousse. Powertex does not stick to plastic so it can be washed out and used again. I mixed Yellow Ochre Powertex with an equal amount of Green Powertex. I added a little Stone Art powder and stirred. Then kept adding a little more and stirred it in.



I kept adding the Stone Art a little at a time until the mixture was nice and firm and came away easily from the sides. Next just like when making bread dough, I sprinkled a little of the powder on to a ceramic tile then added the clump of mixed clay. Then I kneaded it until it was no longer sticky adding a little of the powder when needed.



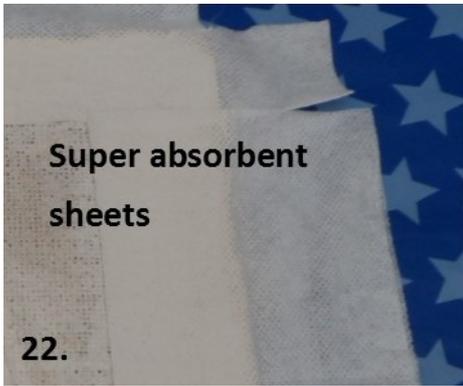
14. Like a responsible 'recycler' I washed the tile, the spoon and the container. **15.** Shows how I created a little lilac daisy. I placed a tiny ball of yellow clay in the centre of the daisy mould. The Lilac Clay was created by mixing a little Lilac Colour Pigment with Transparent Powertex before adding the Stone Art Clay. I just pressed it firmly on top of the yellow and hey presto, a beautiful daisy! With some of the clay I added Ivory Powertex to create a lighter colour. Experiment! **Remember to wrap the clay in cling film and it will remain pliable for quite some time.**



Some of the little flowers I created using the daisy mould and Bramble Leaf Veiner.

Flexible Texture Sheets used for the mirrors. Available from www.clayground.co.uk Daisy and daisy leaf mould available from www.powertex.co.uk. Bramble Leaf Veiner available from www.sugarcity.co.uk

Just a little bit more info before we get started on decorating the first mirror tile.



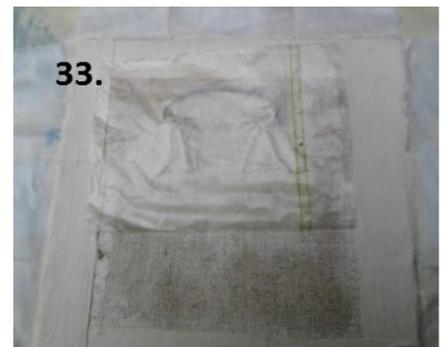
This is rather a funny story really, but true. When I was chosen to be on the Powertex UK Design team this year, there were these sheets of sort of soft cottony stuff in with my samples. I recognised it as a material I had used ages ago with a different fabric hardener and had found very useful. I wanted to use them on my mirrors so I asked Tracey Evans of Powertex UK Headquarters where I could find more. She answered that it was just the packaging but thought it might be clinical swabs. Well I got the proof a couple of weeks later when I had quite a bit of it plastered to my face after an operation on my sinuses. Great stuff and I will be using it in future projects too. Not a very flattering photo of me though.



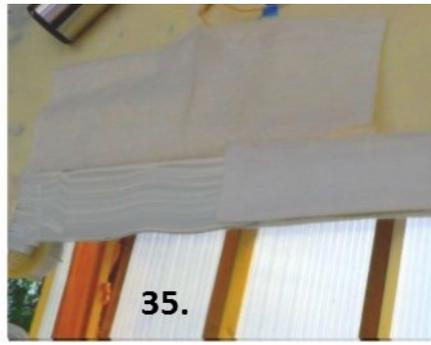
Now the exciting part begins! **26.** Shows how I bent a length of gardening wire so that it had a loop on each end. **26.** I also cut out two lengths of t-shirt material. **27.** I used jute for the back of the mirror because it is really absorbent. Besides I was given quite a quantity of it. I laid the mirror tile on top of the jute then cut around it so that about an inch protruded on the sides. I must also add that most of the project can be created in a seated position. Also no need to dip large bits of fabric into the hardener as I designed this project so that I didn't have to stand for any length of time.



28. Using a paintbrush I painted a generous layer over the whole of the back of the mirror. **29.** As I mentioned, jute is really absorbent so it was easy to paint a little more over the surface to bond with the Powertex on the back of the mirror. Oops, nearly forgot.....I used Ivory Powertex. **30.** I used a hair dryer to dry the back slightly before using a pair of scissors to trim the jute so that it was flush with the edge of the mirror.



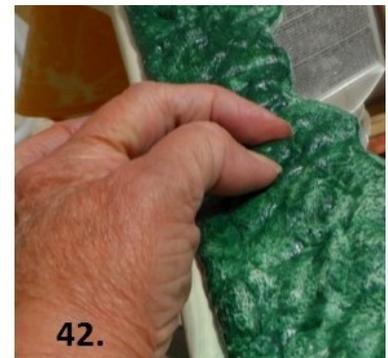
31. I fixed the wire to the back of the mirror ensuring the strips of t-shirt material were well saturated with the Powertex. Now it was time to use the clinical swabs from picture **24.** They were so easy to attach to the back of the mirror just using the paintbrush and Powertex. One could use ordinary material but that would require dipping it into the Powertex so that it was entirely saturated. I don't get messy if I don't have to! I applied each folded sheet so that it overlapped by about 1 ½ inches. Next I used a hair dryer to dry the edges then laid a plastic bag over the wire hanger so that I could turn the mirror over.



34. I turned the mirror over and used a paintbrush to coat a layer of Ivory Powertex directly on to the top of the mirror. **35.** After I had folded it over I added another thin coating of Powertex. You will be surprised at just how easy it is using these absorbent sheets! I repeated the procedure all the way around until all the sheets were neatly adhered to the mirror.



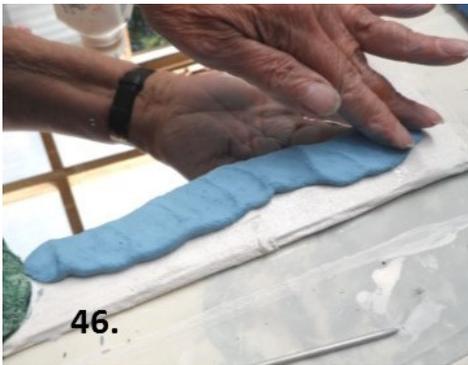
37. As you can see I wasn't too careful to get it all even. I like to have wet wipes handy to clean up the over painted bits and paper towel to dry it. Much easier to keep it clean as you proceed. **38.** Some Stone Art Clay I had mixed earlier. I used Ivory and a dash of Transparent Powertex. This was to be grass so I laid it on quite thickly leaving little lumps and bumps. **39.** A wire brush is great for creating texture! (You could also use Green Clay instead.)



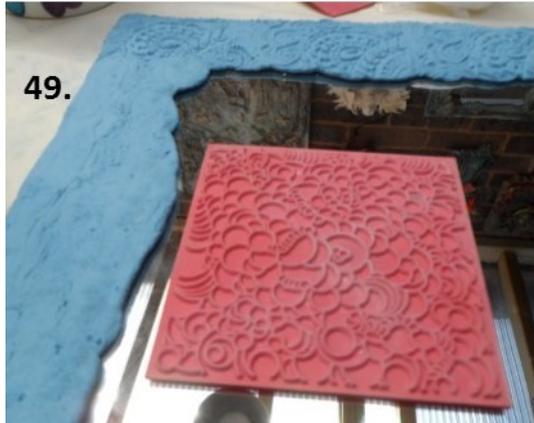
40. This is where the 'Paint' I had mixed earlier came in. It was made with Transparent Powertex and Green Colour Pigment. **41.** After I had coated it all I used the hair dryer to dry the surface, then very gently, with a wet wipe stroked over the top to remove a little of the surface colour. Then I dried it again before pinching here and there with my fingers to give the grass even more texture. This works well at this stage because the clay will still be soft enough to manipulate.



43. For the blue clay to adhere to the mirror I coated a layer all the way round. If halfway through adding the blue you find it has dried out, you can always add a little more. **45.** I love this shade of blue. I created it with Blue Powertex and also Ivory and Stone Art Clay. If you do not have Blue Powertex then use the colour Pigments instead. The Clay is wonderful for just spreading it out with your fingers. I created a long sausage shape laid it slightly over where the wet Ivory had been painted and pressed the inside down first to create a nice, neat contour. Once stuck down I just pushed the clay towards the edge.



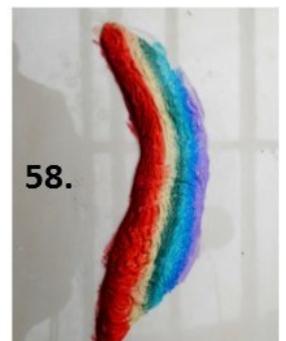
46. I gently manipulated the blue clay and coaxed it to the edge adding more when needed. 47. Next I chose one of my texture sheets and pressed it firmly all over. 48. I covered the top with the blue and chose a different texture sheet and did the same. (I love these texture sheets because they are flexible and can be pressed over the curved bits.) When I later dry brushed Ivory Powertex over the surface the patterns really showed up.



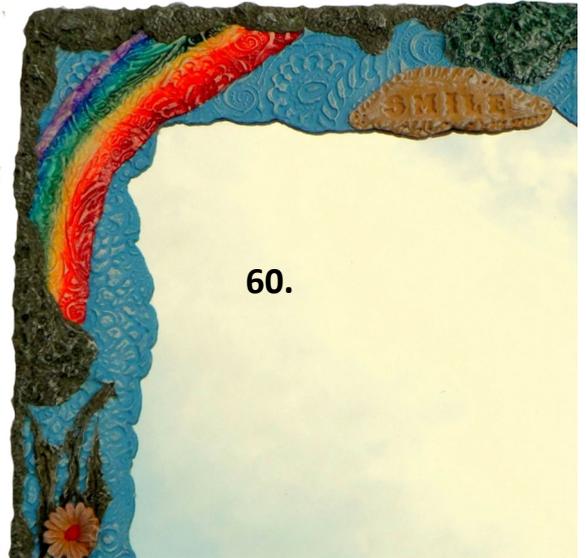
49. I chose another different sheet for my final side. 50. It doesn't show up too well but I also created some brown clay using The Stone Art, Ivory and Bronze Powertex. I then formed some long, thin, sausage shapes for the tree trunk. I must apologise for the bad quality of some of the photos but it isn't easy to create and take photos in between. 51. I added some Transparent Powertex so that the tree had something to adhere to.



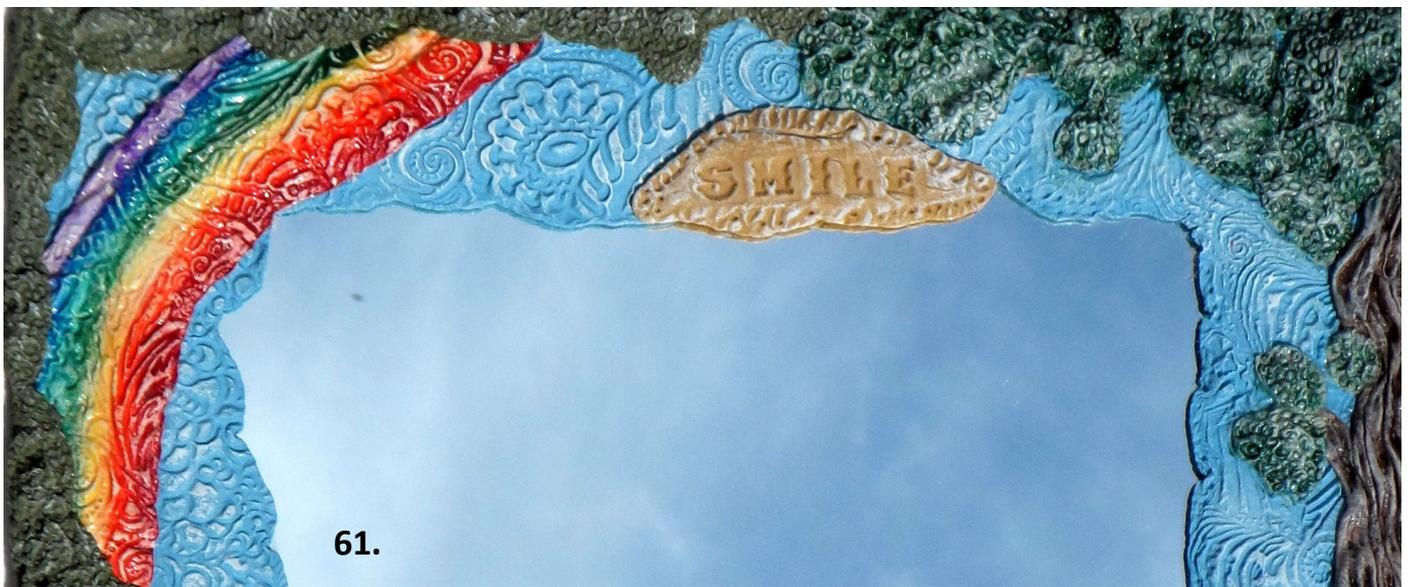
52. This whole project was an experiment for me so I tried creating little roots at the base of the tree. I didn't like them so later covered them over as you will see in photo 57. This is where things really started to come alive! 53. Using a small paintbrush I painted Bronze Powertex all over the tree, making sure it went into all the grooves. 54. I allowed it to soak in for a bit, so had a cup of coffee! Well a girl does need a break sometimes! Wet wipes are handy things and here was a good use for them. I very gently rubbed over the surface to remove the colour from the protruding bits. Later I dry brushed it with Ivory Powertex.



55. I have no idea where the little drinking straw came from which 'just happened' to be on my table (probably the fairies) so I used it to create some lovely texture on the blobs of green clay which I had added. As with the grass at the base I gave it a coating of the green paint. Photo 56. shows how it looked after I had dry brushed it with Ivory Powertex. 58. I still had a little of the plain clay left so formed it into a rainbow shape, stamped it with a texture sheet then painted on the colours with a paintbrush. This was then adhered to the mirror using the Transparent Powertex.



59. Once I had added the rainbow I realised it looked a bit lost and didn't reach the edges. Instead of removing it and creating a bigger one I decided to add a little more foliage to the corner instead. I think you will agree, it looked better like that.



61. It now just needed a finishing touch to the top. Instructions for using this Magic Mirror. You see if you follow the instructions a smiling face will appear! Look how great the dry brushed areas look! For those of you who do not know what dry brushing is: Place your brush into some Ivory Powertex then remove most of it on a paper towel and I mean MOST of it. Then lightly stroke over the raised areas. This will give your creation fantastic depth.



62. All the little flowers I had created using the daisy and leaf mould from www.powertex.co.uk were added using the Transparent Powertex. This mirror just seemed to evolve as I discovered more and more about the properties of the Stone Art Clay and mixing the colours. That is what it is all about, having fun and experimenting.



Just a little about the other two mirrors.



With both of these I began the same way. Stuck jute to the back then the hanger. With the stone mirror, I create some bronze Stone Art Clay and stuck it to the mirror using the Transparent Powertex. With a paintbrush I added more bronze and pushed the swab sheets in position leaving them wavy in places. I haven't any photos of adding the Stone Art Powder but will cover that in a later blog when I work with the lovely ammonite moulds again. (These are available from www.powerex.co.uk)



Some close ups of the lovely stone effect. This is great fun to do and it really does resemble stones and rocks.



I call this one my fancy mirror. I used the Texture sheets for this and had great fun doing so. This time though I applied coloured Bister with a paintbrush (another Powertex product) After I had applied the colour I varnished the whole thing.

I hope you enjoy the projects, Check out the other blogs on the Powertex website. Loads of inspiration and examples of how to create some really exciting projects.