

DAS Polymer Clay Review

Product Type: DAS Smart Polymer Clay
Origin: Italy

Overview

DAS Polymer Clay is a relatively new entry in the polymer clay market (2017) from the well-known Italian brand DAS, traditionally recognized for its air-dry clay products. The polymer clay is packaged in a double pack, with each pack divided into two one-ounce sections. This review focuses on the red variant of the clay and evaluates its handling, conditioning, curing, and post-bake performance.



Handling and Conditioning



Upon opening the package, the clay's texture immediately stood out. It has a smooth, firm consistency that closely resembles Pardo Polymer Clay, lacking the tackiness often associated with brands such as Fimo or Sculpey. This makes it comfortable to handle and easy to condition, even straight out of the packet. The clay conditioned quickly using a pasta machine due to the unique nature of split blocks in each packet. It did not leave any color transfer or residue on the hands, which is a notable advantage for those working with highly pigmented shades.

When forming a test piece—a poppy flower—the clay rolled out evenly and responded well to shaping and fine detailing. Except, it was observed that uncured pieces of DAS Smart Polymer Clay do not adhere naturally to one another. A moderate amount of warmth and pressure was required to create a reliable bond between sections. While this may be a disadvantage for some applications, it can also be beneficial for artists who prefer greater control when assembling intricate designs.



Curing Process

The test samples were baked at 130°C for 40 minutes, which is 10 minutes longer than the manufacturer's recommended 30-minute cure time. The longer bake was chosen to ensure full polymerization and to evaluate the clay's heat tolerance.



After curing, the clay exhibited a slight sheen and a minor color shift from its unbaked state. The poppy petals spread and flattened slightly during baking, indicating that the clay may soften more than expected under heat.

Durability and Strength Testing

Post-bake, the cured pieces were subjected to flexibility and breakage tests. Sheets rolled to various thicknesses (settings 0, 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9) were examined for strength.

Unfortunately, all samples fractured easily during handling, and the poppy sculpture broke almost immediately upon being picked up.

This brittleness raises concerns about the clay's suitability for structural or wearable applications such as jewellery or sculpture details that require a degree of flexibility and impact resistance.

Based on these findings, I decided to rerun the test again. This time using a slightly higher temperature than recommended, as experience has taught me that a higher temperature generally means stronger results or at least this is true with most other brands.

I repeated the process of making samples in a variety of thicknesses, (atlas setting 0,2,4,6,8) there were cured at a range of 140° - 149° so 10 to 20 degrees hotter. Most brands tolerate this range well with just some colour shift, however the DAS clay had little or no colour shift but it did bubbled and blistered which is what Kato used to do if you exceeded its upper limit of curing temperature. You can see from the image below there is significant blistering and there is also a waxy bloom on the surface very similar to the results you see with the old Pardo clay. This waxy bloom was easily removed with a swipe of isopropyl alcohol.



Whilst these both seem like negative points the strength of the clay was vastly improved, none of the tile samples broke when the stress test was repeated. Image 3. In conclusion, and it is just my opinion based on this initial test that the DAS clay needs to be cured 10° hotter to get a good strong result, but with careful monitoring otherwise the clay could quickly become too blistered.

I should add that I need to do further research with curing times, temperature and scenarios to give a fair assessment of this clay. Others out there probably have done this already. I did watch one YouTube video but it was used to create a small sculpture and no comments were made about the curing time or result.

Final Assessment

DAS Polymer Clay offers an excellent working texture and pleasant conditioning experience, making it enjoyable for artists who prioritize precision and control during the creative process. However, its lack of flexibility and overall brittleness after curing at the recommended temperature settings and for inexperienced clayers it significantly limits its versatility. I would be concerned about its strength and wearability in my Jewellery work, however for creating sculptures it would not cause the same concerns.

It may perform well for millefiori canes or as a decorative surface layer when combined with a more durable polymer clay brand. However, for standalone projects or pieces that require resilience, this product may not meet professional expectations.

Pros

- Smooth, non-sticky texture similar to Pardo
- Easy to condition and handle
- Minimal color transfer
- Suitable for precise canework

Cons

- Poor post-bake flexibility unless the temperature is increased
- Tendency to flatten or distort slightly during curing
- Requires extra effort to bond uncured pieces

Overall Rating: ★★★☆☆ (3/5)

While DAS Polymer Clay has promise in terms of texture and handling, its fragility after curing prevents it from being a reliable choice as previously stated it required more testing for me to find a comfortable range to get the best out of this clay. I know other UK artists have worked with the clay so don't just take my work for it.