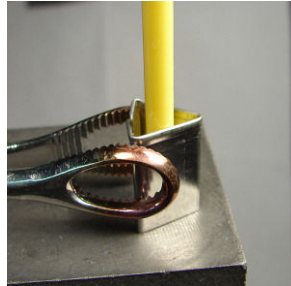


## Making Small Runs of Murrini Using Miniature Steel Clay Cutters As Optic Molds

By Mary Lockwood



Hold triangle mold with pliers down against a fireproof base snugly. I am using my graphite marver here.



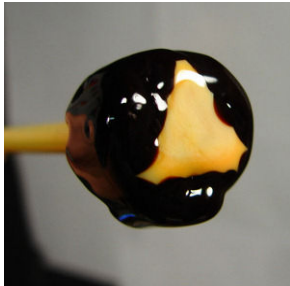
Soften the end of a 5mm rod with your flame so it is pliable. Push straight down into the mold. Remove **immediately**.



Here is what the end of your cane should look like now. About one half of an inch long and wide.



Swipe molten background color glass onto the triangle. You are trying to build up the flat sides to get a round profile.



You can see here it is starting to flesh out and become round. I add less glass to the points, more to the sides.



Add a glob of clear glass to the face of your cane. The ends of a pull are waste, so you might as well waste clear.



Attach a steel punty to the clear glob and melt off the glass rod. Flatten the new face of the cane with your marver and cover with clear.



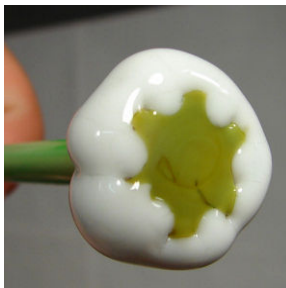
Attach a second punty opposite the first, heat your gather to molten and pull down to desired thickness. Here are chips of the cane.



Here is the result of a six pointed star mold from the same set. I'll make a star murrini here but usually I use these to help with tentacle canes or vine canes to aid in stripe placement.



Fill the valleys of the molded glass with your background color. Filling these carefully helps keep your points sharp. The white should be very soupy hot.



Keep filling and adding soupy hot background color and building your cane to get a round profile at the face.



Encase around the outer diameter with clear for stability. White is a weak color of glass and the encasement will help control it later when you use it.



Just as with the first pull, add a cap of clear to the face, attach a steel punty and melt off the glass rod. Flatten the second face and add a clear cap of glass.

Add the second punty, heat the gather evenly and pull to desired diameter.



Here is a shot of the finished cane before it is cut into chips.

Be creative! One of the molds in the set I have is a teardrop shape. This can be used to form flower petal shaped pieces that can be combined together to make flower murrini.

There is also an oval that looks like an eye.



Here is a shot of the glass after it has been molded with the 5-pointed star.

The more pronounced the difference between the valleys and points of the mold, the more difficult it is to use the mold. I found in the set I use that this 5-pointed star is the trickiest because the glass wants to stick to it. Save this one for last as you practice.



Image is copyright  
Makin's  
[www.makinsclay.com](http://www.makinsclay.com)

Here is a picture of the Miniature Clay Cutters that I use.

They are Makin's Brand and can be purchased at major craft stores like Michael's. Whichever brand you pick, be sure they are solid metal (no plastic collars that can't be removed) and be sure they aren't glued or simply folded over at the seam. This brand is welded closed and I'm pleased with them.

These little steel clay cutters are fun to play with and practice your cane building skills. Keep in mind however; this is not their intended purpose. Nothing replaces a high quality optic mold for ease of use and durability. If you find yourself getting addicted to canes or wanting to make large quantities, graphite or metal optic molds are worth the investment. I find that the high quality molds are great for shapes I use a lot, but for experimenting and to shake things up a bit, these are a fun, inexpensive diversion.

Have fun and play safe. ~~Mary