

# MAKE YOUR OWN AMULET

## INTRODUCTION

Create your own clay amulet inspired by the invisibility amulets included in the [Invisibility: Powers & Perils](#) exhibition at OXY ARTS.



*Left: Photo of Amulet necklace believed to render the wearer invisible, Thailand. Photo taken by Gina Clyne.*

*Middle: Photo of 'Ahumu,' Amuletic headband, Asante, Ghana. Photo taken by Gina Clyne.*

*Right: Photo of amulet made with oven-bake polymer clay.*

The exhibited **amulets** are part of a collection from the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England. Often made by learned medicine practitioners and **shamans**, they were often non-Western in origin, and dismissed as 'non-scientific', despite their roots in complex knowledge systems—employing plants, herbs, and animal materials. Honoring their power and their fraught position in colonial-era museums, the curator has chosen to exhibit not the amulets themselves, but their photographs.

## VOCABULARY

An **Amulet** is an ornament or small piece of jewelry thought to protect or grant special powers to the one who wears it.

**Shamanism** is "defined by the recognition of a common wisdom based on ancient or indigenous spiritual traditions," according to the Center for Shamanic Education and Exchange.

## MATERIALS

- Any oven-bake polymer clay
- Colored sharpies and/or acrylic paint
- Access to a toaster oven or regular oven
- Chain, string, keychain, or whatever you might want to attach your amulet to
- A toothpick or any pointy object

## STEPS

- 1** Choose what color polymer clay you would like to use as your base. Think about the color in the context of what power/energy you want your amulet to channel. Then, warm up the clay in your hands by squishing it around until you can roll the clay into a ball.
- 2** Place your clay ball on a flat surface. Use the palm of your hand to flatten the ball until your clay is a flat, circular slab. It shouldn't be thicker than a 1/2 inch.
- 3** If you would like your amulet to have a frame, choose what color you want to use. Then, roll it into a ball.
- 4** Using the palms of both of your hands, roll the clay ball into a coil. You should apply even pressure while rolling the clay back and forth against the table until it makes a rope.
- 5** Once your coil is as thin as you want the frame to be, smush the coil around the border of your flattened circular slab to create a frame.
- 6** Using a toothpick or other pointy object, poke a hole in the top of the frame. This will be where you will attach your amulet to a chain, string, keychain, or earring post.
- 7** Following the bake instructions for your particular polymer clay, bake your amulet in the oven.
- 8** Once your amulet is baked, allow it to cool. Then, paint and decorate with acrylic paint and or colored sharpies! Think about what colors and designs might reflect the power you'd like your amulet to channel.
- 9** Using the hole you poked, attach your amulet to a string, chain, keychain or earring post.

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