



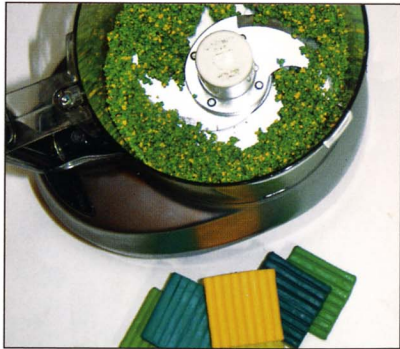
Tips from the Artist

The illustrations I make for my books are created with polymer clay. As a picture book artist and former early childhood arts educator, I believe that polymer clay is a wonderful, friendly, pliable and colorful media for both children and adults to work with. As a fine artist, I love to create art with an array of colors, patterns and textures, and to make things with my hands—just as children do!

My studio is actually a lot like a kitchen. In a refrigerator I often store my clay. I should say "polymer clay" because it is not like clay dug from the earth, but it is actually a moldable factory-made material that is often referred to as the "new clay". I have a variety of shaping tools including a pasta machine, food processor, cake decorating tools and a variety of recycled objects I fashion into sculpting and texturing tools. And there is even an oven in which the clay is baked after the pictures are pieced together. The original art in this book is not flat, which is very satisfying to me because it speaks to my love of both sculpting and painting. The art is called "relief sculpture": sculptures projecting from a flat surface. To create the

two-dimensional illustrations you see in my books, the relief sculptures are photographed (with careful attention to lighting).

Polymer clay offers people of all ages unique ways to communicate and express ideas, as well as to experiment using textures, patterns and colors. You will find many colors available in art and hobby stores - even some translucent and glow-in-the-dark colors. I encourage you to let your imagination soar while you have fun creating your own colorful clay "Jungle Friends"! I would love to see some of your own creations and hear what discoveries you have made. Contact me through the "Authors & Illustrators" section of Dawn Publications' website, www.dawnpub.com.



There are many tools and machines I work with to create my pictures out of polymer clay. One of my favorite gadgets is my food processor. Look at the backgrounds of all of the pictures in this book—I made all of those little balls by tossing different colors of clay into my food processor.



It's fun to work with molds. Sometimes I create molds out of polymer clay and sometimes I mold my clay around objects to capture their shapes, patterns and textures. For the butterflies in this book I created their wings by molding very thin layers of clay over seashells.



I love sculpting with polymer clay. I use my fingers and lots of different sculpting tools to shape and form the subjects in my pictures. Here I am using small knitting needles to sculpt the face of one of the howler monkeys. Some of my sculpting tools are very tiny so I can create fine little details in places where my fingers are too big.



Research is often an important part of creating my art. I go to libraries, museums—and anyplace I can go to learn about the subject matter in my pictures. I also do a lot of research using my computer but my favorite way to do research is going out in nature. Much of my research for this book was done by visiting a zoo and conservatory close to my home.