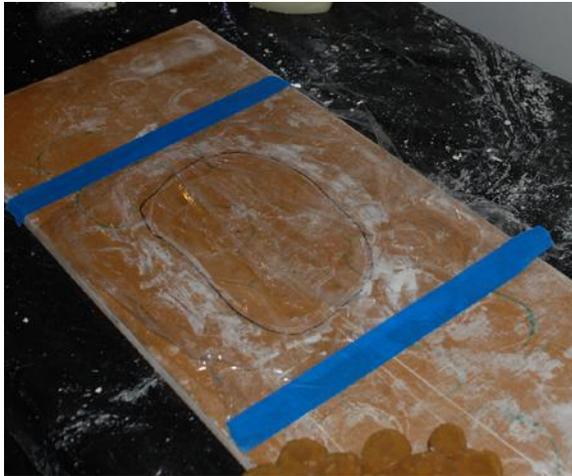


Castalot: Basic instructions

Class: Advanced Fusing Instructor: Jessie Blackmer



As the Castalot is very fragile right after setting you must either make the mold on a flexible board or on a board coated with plastic as shown here. On a flexible board you can secure your wax down by melting the edges of the wax to the board with a soldering iron. Otherwise use clay to secure your wax. If you are using clay as a positive it is best, but not absolutely necessary, to use a release on the clay I like Vaseline but you may use pam. (When you use Pam it is important that you clean any places where it has pooled otherwise you might mix Pam into your mold and cause problems.)



Once your positive is secured to the board spray it with hairspray so the water in the Castalot doesn't cause the mold mixture to bead off or create bubbles. Also mark a ring around the piece so you don't end up with a thin side. It is important when fusing or slumping into a void to create vents that allow air to escape. I use wire with a little blue masking tape flag on it. I push the wire flags into the positive on the high points and make sure the bottom of the flag is $\frac{1}{2}$ in above the surface of the positive.



When I measure out the dry I try to imagine the amount it would take to cover my positive to a thickness of $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. I then add cold water slowly to the dry mix stirring with a whisk till I get a mixture of even consistency about as thick as a milkshake.

(You could get quite specific about calculating your Castalot. If you had a positive that was 6cm by 4cm and 1 cm high you could calculate the surface area and then multiply by 1.25 cm (about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) that would give you the cubic centimeters (cc) of mold material necessary. I would measure out the dry to that number and then add water. This may give you a bit more than you need but better to have a little extra.)

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Once the mixture is the right consistency pour some on the positive then brush it into the surface of the piece. This pushes the mold mixture into the details and pops air bubbles on the surface.

If you are pouring castalot into a box (coddles/mold boards) don't forget to agitate the mold (banging on the table) to bring air bubbles to the surface.

Once you have the surface coated and brushed. You can add the remaining mold material and move it around with the spatula till you have an even 1/2 inch coating. (or until the level of the Castalot reaches the little flags) You will know when the mixture is setting because it will begin to crumble when you try to move it around.



It is important that you don't make too little Castalot. If your Castalot fully sets and you add more because of a thin spot, the patch may delaminate from the main mold after pre-firing. It is important to determine early on whether you will need more material to cover your positive.

Once your mold has started to set you can remove your vent pins and leave it to set up for a good 30-45 minutes.

Once set you can gently flip it over. If you have used Clay you can carefully pick your clay out. If you have used wax you can steam it out with a steamer. (I like Wagner power steamers)



Pre-fire your mold to 50 degrees Fahrenheit above your glass forming temp. Once fired the mold can be carved and cleaned. (do not use water) It is important to eliminate any undercuts. Spray with isopropyl alcohol and kiln wash till you have a light coating. Then fill with glass and fire.