

How-to series: *Metal Clay*

Skill level: *Easy*



*Modify a texture to suit
your creative vision.*

by Patrik Kusek

*W*ith this simple yet sophisticated design you'll be able to quickly add dimension to any of your projects. This technique will help add volume and structure to boring flat designs without a lot of extra work. Plus, this technique will work in numerous form factors such as brooches and pendants. Adding dimension will add yet another technique to your design tool box and give your work that polished professional look.



Photo 1

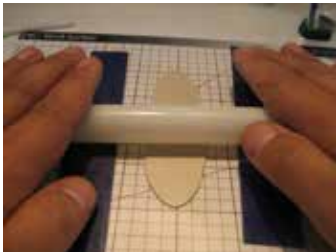


Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

Start off by choosing a texture and shape that is suitable to add dimension to. In this case we used <https://vipottersupply.com/> "Rocker B". This set comes with 12 designs in a variety of sizes.



"Rocker B"

Next (photo 2) roll out a strip of PMC+, 4 cards thick, long enough to accommodate the design of the earrings. Be sure to lubricate the work surface. I recommend Slik Balm. Not only is it great for releasing stubborn textures but it is also good for your hands because it all natural and has aloe.

(photo 3) Press the leaf texture into the clay firmly, be sure not to press too hard as the pattern may come thru the back of the earrings.

(photo 4) Take the pin tool and cut through the clay by loosely tracing around the shape of the leaf. Be sure to lubricate the tip of the pin tool to ensure a clean cut.



Photo 5

(photo 6) Check the earrings to be sure they are completely dry. In our case, the side against the glass was still wet while the surface facing outwards was dry. If this happens, take the earrings off of the glass and put them back into the dehydrator or on a warmer to dry completely.

(photo 7) Once the earrings are dry, sand and shape the edges to conform to the shape of the leaf. Start with a "fine" grit sanding sponge. Once the shape has been established then continue to sand with progressively finer grits until smooth to the touch. Remember to sand the back of the earrings as well. The better your piece is sanded and finished the more professional it will look.

(photo 5) Instead of drying the earrings on a flat surface, use a small drinking glass. Look for drinking glasses that have the appropriate curvature for your design. The larger the glass the less curved the earrings will be. Be sure to lubricate the glass before laying the wet clay earrings on the surface.

Use two pieces of polymer clay as supports to stop the glass from rolling around. Next put the glass and earrings in to a food dehydrator to



Photo 6



Photo 7

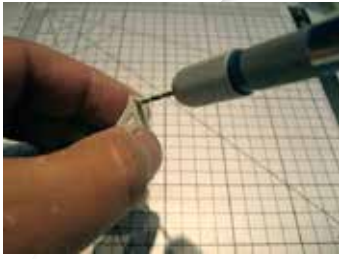


Photo 8

(photo 8) Using a hand held drill. Drill a hole approximately 1/8 of an inch from the edge of the top of the earring. Be sure to support the top of the earring from the back to prevent breaking.



Photo 9

(photo 9) Using vermiculite (shown) or alumina hydrate*, support the earrings during firing on a kiln shelf. Simply place a pile of the vermiculite in the center of the shelf. Place the earrings on the vermiculite making sure they are fully supported underneath.

** If using alumina hydrate remember to use the appropriate safety gear. I use the 3M Dust and Mist Respirator*



The vermiculite or alumina hydrate will not burn in the kiln. The earrings, if fired directly on the kiln shelf, will have a tendency to flatten out during the firing process. Using vermiculite or alumina hydrate will prevent this from happening and allow the earrings to maintain their shape.

Next fire the earrings according to manufacturer's instruction.

Finish in the usual manner by using the brass brush or tumbler. Add earring wires. Enjoy!

Patrik

Supplies

PMC ± 18 gram package

Earring Wires

Tools

Basic PMC Tool Kit

Card Deck or Graduated Slats

Rocker Tool "B": Item #ROCKER-B

PMC Work Surface

Sanding Sponge Set

Vermiculite or Alumina Hydrate

3M Dust and Mist Respirator

Kiln: Paragon SC-2 KILN or torch

Tumbler

Food Dehydrator

Warming Pad

Drinking glass

Polymer Clay



About the Author:

Patrik's experience in the worlds of design and fashion helped shape his creative vision and brand. He is a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising and The Academy of Art University. He worked as a Fashion Stylist at Macy's San Francisco and was the owner and Creative Director of Wallop Design Group, a graphic design and branding company. He currently is able to pursue his passion as a jewelry artist and instructor. He teaches metal clay workshops in the San Francisco Bay Area and internationally. Patrik is a member of the PMC Guild and is both PMC Guild Certified and Art Clay Certified. He is one of 9 senior instructors for Rio Grande and teaches PMC certification workshops internationally. He was a featured artist on HGTV's "That's Clever." Patrik's work has been published in numerous books and publications. He is also the recipient of the 2007 Saul Bell Award 1st place in PMC. Patrik has also recently been featured in Ornament Magazine.



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