

**STEP 1**

Sketch your design ideas on rough paper first and then use Scratch-Foam or heavy watercolour paper to draw a picture depicting weather-related motifs. You can draw directly onto the surface with a soft pencil, which will make an indent in the surface strong enough to make a texture in the clay. Alternatively, you can make the indent deeper by using a ball burnisher and going over the lines again.

**STEP 6**

Alcohol inks give a lovely vibrant colour to silver and are very durable without having to be sealed. Use a glass or ceramic tile to dispense a small amount of ink. It dries very quickly as the alcohol evaporates, so do a small area at a time and dispense more when necessary so there's minimal waste. Use a very fine paintbrush to put the ink exactly where you want it.

ALL-WEATHER BRACELET

Celebrate the best of British weather with this all-weather charm bracelet. By Julia Rai

Julia is co-director of the Cornwall School of Art, Craft and Jewellery where she teaches a variety of classes. She holds the prestigious Metal Clay Masters Registry credential at level four. We Brits love talking about – and complaining about – the weather! No matter if it's sunny or rainy, the weather in Britain is our national obsession so celebrate all our weather types with this pretty charm bracelet. Use rubber stamps, Scratch-Foam or heavy watercolour paper to create your own unique motifs for the charms.

MATERIALS

- Silver metal clay
- Chain bracelet or loose chain and a clasp
- Small teardrop-shaped, top-drilled beads
- Silver pinch bails
- Approx. 5cm of small chain
- Jumpings
- Rubber stamps
- Cutters
- Scratch-Foam® or thick watercolour paper
- Ball burnishers
- Pin tool or craft knife
- Tissue blade
- Soft, clean brass brush
- Polishing pads and papers
- Alcohol ink
- Liver of Sulphur

RESOURCES

Silver clay:
www.bluebelldesignstudio.co.uk
Beads, findings, pinch bails:
from advertisers in this magazine
Scratch-Foam®:
www.amazon.co.uk
Alcohol ink:
www.thestampattic.co.uk

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**STEP 2**

Roll out your metal clay onto a subtle texture like leather so you get an interesting back on the charms. Oil the texture lightly and roll down to four cards thick. If you're using the Scratch-Foam or heavy paper for your texture, add one card back so you have a stack of five cards on each side. Place the texture on the clay and roll once to emboss the image.

**STEP 3**

Transfer the clay to a piece of Teflon so you can put it directly onto a hotplate to dry without lifting it. Using a fine pin tool or sharp craft knife, carefully cut around your design. Oil the pin tool or knife frequently so you avoid dragging the clay. The finer your pin tool, the cleaner the cut will be.

**STEP 4**

Create more charms using the same technique or use relevant rubber stamps. Dry thoroughly and then fire the charms using a butane torch or in the kiln. Brass brush, tumble polish or polish by hand. Liver of Sulphur gives a range of colours to silver as long as you mix up a weak solution and dip briefly to build up the colour. You can also paint it onto specific areas.

**STEP 5**

Add a Liver of Sulphur patina to the charms you want to have this finish. This is particularly good for deep textures or to show detail. Polish up the high spots of the design using polishing papers so you get a good contrast between the black and silver areas. To ensure you only polish the high spots, wrap the polishing paper around an emery board before using.

**STEP 7**

While the ink is drying on the coloured charms, hang the beaded raindrop elements. Take a short length of chain about 2cm long and attach a teardrop bead to the bottom using a silver pinch bail. This can be fiddly so close the bail using pliers so it is just open enough to slip the bead in. Squeeze the bail closed using pliers so it attaches to the chain.

**STEP 8**

Add two more teardrop beads to the chain in the same way. Make another teardrop chain and then lay the charms and bead chain drops out next to the chain to decide which charm to put where. Here we have two charms next to each other, then a bead chain drop. This formed a bracelet with two charms, a bead drop, two charms, another bead drop and then two final charms.

**STEP 9**

Attach the charms and bead chain drops to the bracelet using chain nose pliers and jumpings. Make sure each charm is attached securely by closing the jumpings really well. This is especially important for the fine chain drops as even a small gap in the jumping joint can cause the chain to slip off. If you're using loose chain instead of a ready-made bracelet, add a lobster clasp.

Designer tips

- Use polystyrene cups or takeaway packages instead of Scratch-Foam to make your own textures using this technique.
- Practice using rubber stamps with polymer clay so you know how hard to press using them with your metal clay.
- Make your own fine pin tool by embedding a sewing needle into a handle of polymer clay and baking it so it's really durable.

Extra Projects
Make a pendant and earrings**PENDANT**

You can also make a cloud pendant using the Scratch-Foam or heavy paper and add blue dropbeads as the raindrops.

EARRINGS

Make a pair of earrings using rubber stamp smiley and sad faces. Add the words 'rain' and 'shine' with a sharp tool and oxidize to show the detail.

