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# be my valentine

Make something special for the man in your life with this double-sided pendant which hides a secret message only he will know about. Julia Rai shows us how.

This pendant is made in two parts which are joined to make it double-sided. The front has a masculine design emphasised using Liver of Sulphur patina, while the back holds a message together with your heart, coloured using glass paints. Hung on a rubber cord, this is the perfect gift for the man in your life.

## gather these supplies...

- Pendant measures 23mm x 15mm
- 12-15g Silver metal clay
  - Small amount of silver clay paste and syringe
  - Embeddable fine silver eyelet
  - Rubber cord necklace
  - Pebeo Vitrail Glass Paint – Crimson
  - Liver of Sulphur Gel

## tools required...

Roller, playing cards, paintbrushes, olive oil, small piece of leather, texture with a masculine theme, rubber stamp words, rectangular cutter, tiny heart shaped cutter, emery board or sandpaper, small needle files, Teflon sheet, steel burnisher, brass or steel brush, polishing papers, block of polymer clay, white spirit.



## About our designer...

Julia Rai

I'm an artist and teacher working predominantly in metal clay. I am co-director of the Cornwall School of Art, Craft and Jewellery and director of the Metal Clay Academy, an online resource for all things metal clay. I hold the prestigious Metal Clay Masters Registry credential at level four.

## shopping guide

Silver clay, paste and fine silver eyelets from Bluebell Design Studio – [www.bluebelldesignstudio.co.uk](http://www.bluebelldesignstudio.co.uk) – 07782 324258  
 Rubber cord necklace from Metal Clay Ltd – [www.metalclay.co.uk](http://www.metalclay.co.uk) – 01929 481541  
 Pebeo Glass Paint from The Craft Barn – [www.thecraftbarn.co.uk](http://www.thecraftbarn.co.uk) – 01342 836398



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## Here's how...



**1** Choose a texture which you think your man would appreciate. It could be something related to his favourite hobby or pastime, his star sign or maybe your finger print! Tattoo resources are a good source of ideas and Chinese letters or Egyptian hieroglyphics can hold a secret message on the front of the pendant as well as the back. If you know how to make your own textures, this will really help with your choice.

**2** Roll out the clay to a thickness suitable for your chosen texture – like the rubber stamp texture I've used here – roll out six cards thick to ensure you don't go all the way, right down into all the nooks and crannies using a paintbrush to get into every part. Roll in the texture and cut out the shape. Leave it to dry.

**3** Roll out the remainder of the clay five cards thick and texture if desired. I used a subtle leather texture which gives a good finished look. Stamp the words into the clay pressing hard enough for a good impression but not so hard it goes through the clay. Rolling the cutter gently all around can help to make a better impression. Cut out the same shape as before and then cut out the tiny heart.

**4** Dampen the back of the dry first side lightly with water then cover it with paste. Gently lift the damp second side and place it on top of the paste, pressing down lightly so it adheres well. Paste should squeeze out of the sides and inside the heart cut out, making a good connection all round. Don't worry about cleaning up the paste at this stage but make sure it doesn't spoil the outside textures.

**5** While the piece is still damp, pick up an embeddable eyelet with tweezers and slide the embeddable part carefully between the two layers at the top of the pendant. Make sure it slides in completely straight or you risk having it come through the side which is still damp. Gently press the damp side down around the eyelet so it is totally secure. Put the piece somewhere warm to dry or leave the pendant overnight.

**6** When the pendant is completely dry, use an emery board or a sanding pad to sand all around the outside. This sanding should remove all the paste which squeezed out the sides. Smooth the edges gently with a wet finger. Check for signs of a join and fill these with syringe, paste or clay if necessary, especially around the embeddable eyelet. Fire the pendant at 900 degrees C for two hours or with a torch. Leave to cool.

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Rubber stamp can be tricky to use with metal clay as it can be hard to gauge how hard to press for a good impression. Practice on rolled out polymer clay before printing your message into silver clay.



**7** Polish the pendant using a brass brush and then tumble polish or use a Dremel with polishing attachments. Burnish into the texture really well using an agate burnisher which is less likely to scratch your piece. Mix up a weak solution of Liver of Sulphur using hot water. Suspend the pendant on a paper clip and dip until it is as dark as you want it to be. Rinse well using cold water.

**8** Use polishing papers to remove the patina from the high spots of the texture on the front of the pendant. Finish by using a polishing cloth so you have a good high shine on the texture. Using a fine paintbrush, apply the Pebeo glass paint into the heart and the words on the back of the pendant, correcting any mistakes immediately with a damp cotton bud. Leave to dry overnight, then hang on a rubber cord.



## Variation...

### Hugs 'n' Kisses Earrings

**HERE'S HOW** Use the word stamps to make these cute earrings for yourself this time! Choose a cutter or stamp which gives enough space for the words and for a hole for a jump ring or ear wire. Texture both sides with something subtle like leather before imprinting the words. These earrings should be rolled out about five cards thick to allow for a good imprint. After firing, polish, patina and colour the words and hang on ear wires.

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