



Hadar Jacobson



By Julia Rai
UNITED KINGDOM

Hadar Jacobson is a metalsmith – largely self-taught – who came to the US from Israel in 1997. She always has been fascinated by textures, so she was thrilled to discover metal clay. "Struggling with sheet metal to create textures, I was only too happy to find a medium that I didn't have to fight with. It was love at first sight," she says. The first piece she made with metal clay was a collage of textures, which she still teaches to beginners and is the first project in her first book.

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Hadar says she is influenced mainly by everyday objects and scenes, by the architecture of Gaudi and Hundertwasser, and by the paintings of the Bauhaus movement. A good example of these influences in Hadar's work is a piece called "Gaudi Dress." It's a very large piece, measuring 11.5 cm x 6.5 cm x 2.5 cm, and it took quite a few months to make. All of it, including the chain, was made from high-shrinkage silver clay.

A recurring theme in Hadar's work is looking in from the outside, or looking out from the inside. Hadar says, "I guess the best example is a piece I call 'The Room' or 'Is there anybody in there?'"

Hadar's studio is in the garage in her back yard, where she works, teaches and takes photos. She says most of her studio furniture "consists of stuff that I have collected at recycle centres. It started in year 2000 as a small workshop and a guest room, and over the years the guest room disappeared and work benches took its place. Most of the week it's filled with students, both local and from out of state. Organising it is a lost cause. Every time I try, I forget where things are. I spend most of my time there, 10 or sometimes 12 hours a day."

Hadar teaches classes at her studio in Berkeley, CA once a week. "There is not just a single thing that I teach in a class, since all students work on their own projects. What I like about teaching the most is the interaction with the students, especially when we try to solve problems together and figure things out," she says. Recently, she also has started to travel to teach. I asked Hadar – a very experienced teacher – what tip she would give to someone who is new to metal clay. "Don't try to create your masterpiece right away. Wait till next week." Good advice!

When asked what her favourite tool is, Hadar said, "I just love tools,



Gaudi Dress



Is there anybody in there?

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ARTIST PROFILE



"I like the steels because of their colours. The pearl-grey steel was a big surprise for me: I found out that if I inlay copper in it, after firing this beautiful bronze colour halo appears around the copper. You start with 2 colours and end up with three. I am working now on mokume-gane patterns with combinations of copper/bronze and copper/bronze/steel. I also think that its magnetic nature opens a whole lot of possibilities."



all of them. More than everything else, I love tools that are converted from their original purpose, like a gum stimulator converted into a clay shaper, or a trash bin converted into a light diffuser. I like low-tech solutions. When I shop for tools I never ask what it was meant for, but rather, what I can do with it."

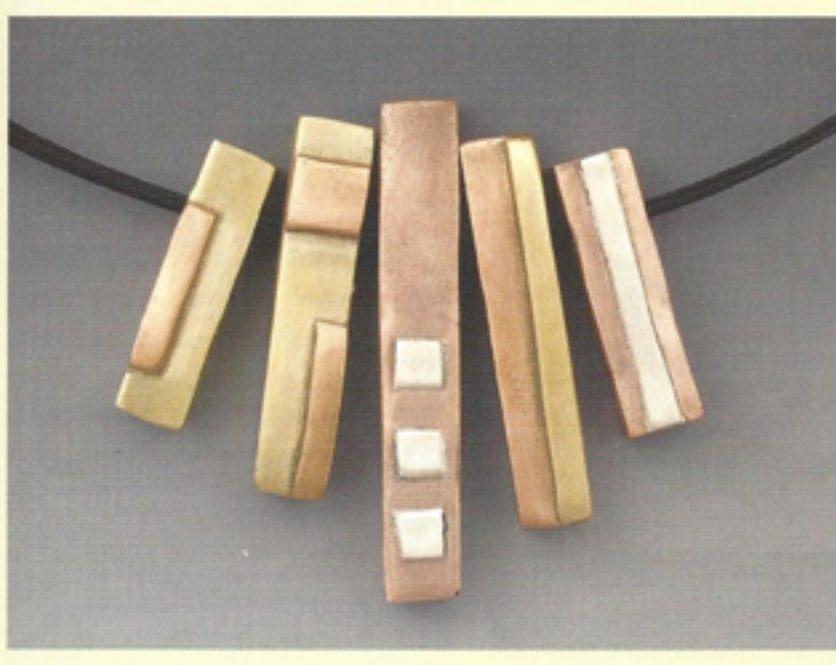
Hadar sells her work at a local gallery and in her online store, but she finds it a conflict to teach and sell at the same time. Since she gives her students and readers full permission to use her projects for both personal and commercial purposes, she has decided to take herself out of the picture and now regards her pieces mostly as samples.

I was interested to find out more about Hadar's creative process. "It's hard to analyse a creative process," she says. "Most of it is not conscious. I don't like planning, and I don't care if things don't turn out the way they were planned. One great thing about metal clay is that if you don't like something you made, you don't have to fire it. You can always turn it into something else." Hadar also uses techniques from metal fabrication, but "only when I can't find a way to do it with metal clay only. I think it's essential for a metal clay artist to learn about metal fabrication and assembling techniques also."

Hadar has developed her own line of copper, bronze, white bronze and steel clays in powder form, which she sells in her online store. "My main motivation in developing new metal clay is my personal attraction to mixed metal jewellery," she explained. "In my work I have combined silver clay with copper, bronze, and brass sheet and tubing, but

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what I really wanted was to be able to work with them as metal clays. I love silver for the textural potential, and I think that in this respect it is still the best metal clay. But for colour, I like the combination of silver with other base metals. The thing I like most about white bronze specifically is that, unlike silver, it actually fuses with copper and doesn't have undesirable reactions with bronze; it makes it possible to elegantly combine the three colours in one piece."

Hadar's blog (www.artinsilver.com/blog/) provides product support for her Hadar's Clay™ copper, bronze and steel clay powders and serves as an evolving tutorial for working with base metal clays.

To find out more about Hadar's work, books and classes, visit her web site at www.artinsilver.com.



JULIA RAI has been working with metal clay since 2004 and teaching it since 2007. She holds the MCSJ Higher Metal Clay Diploma, PMC Certification from Rio Grande and Art Clay Level 1 and 2 Certification. She also holds the City and Guilds 7407 Further Education Teaching Qualification. She teaches a variety of subjects for several jewellery schools in the UK. She is also the Director of the Metal Clay Academy. Her spare time is currently taken up with working on projects for the metal clay Masters Registry and she has achieved Registry III. <http://www.juliarai.co.uk>

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