





## Have you met or heard of Julia Rai? If not, then I'd like to be the one to introduce this delightfully focused artist to you!

and Gifted Artist

Entrepreneur

She captured my attention in the very early stages of my fascination with metal clay. Her artistic resume is quite impressive. Her many accomplishments include being Director and

or evening cruising through the many wonderful articles and opportunities this site offers metal clay enthusiasts. I think you will appreciate the store which features some of the funniest/cutest products for metal-clayers. There will be more about Julia's other accomplishments at the end of this article, and on the website. I hope Julia didn't think I was interrogating her with my questions about how she approaches the business of being a full-time working artist. After all, many of us, I think, would LOVE to be fulltime artists. So from that perspective I asked, and Julia shared her story with me.

Web designer of the popular website, Metal Clay Academy. If you haven't visited this site, you should! In fact, I recommend you make an appointment with yourself to spend a nice afternoon

Her background in business was beneficial as she began to build and shape her business around the concept of teaching others and sharing her love for metal clay.

Always a crafter who enjoyed learning new things, in 2004 she took her first class in working with

6 MetalClayToday.com • Spring 2012 For Julia, one of the things about metal clay which keep her interested is the immediacy of

Fine Silver. She was immediately hooked, and by 2007 she began teaching.

Silver is probably her favorite clay to work with because it is so fool-proof. Currently, she is experimenting with the new Sterling Silver Clay. She does work with the other brands and styles of clay. Julia likes the patinas you can create with the base metals.

the material. The satisfaction of creating anything in clay is quick! And, the materials allow for designs which can be accomplished with fewer materials, and more quickly, than any traditional metal-smithing techniques. She really favors using metal clay to build her three-dimensional designs. She calls it kitchen table art, because anyone can create in metal clay with items found

You won't find a lot about Julia's family on any of the websites she is featured. This part of her life she prefers to keep separated from her professional life. Her family supports her, and is creative in their own fashion, but currently do not share her love of working with metals. Luckily for them, Julia cheerfully gives her metal clay creations to family and friends.

> level 4, her current level in the program.

We had a chance to discuss her work in the Metal Clay Masters Registry Program.

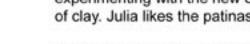
Julia was the first artist to attain level 3, and again first to

There have been many conversations with her mentors about what makes Good Design versus Personal Taste. I liked this rather obtuse concept, because it really does make you

think! What is it that makes Good Design? How does that relate to Personal Taste? Julia told me that Tim McCreight advised her to "Ask yourself

what it is about a design you like."

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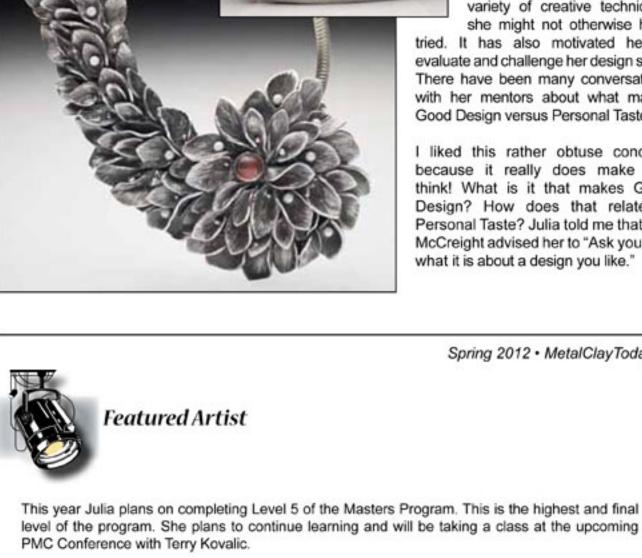
Pearl Leaf Necklace

Mayan Bead

around in the kitchen!

Inspiration for Julia comes from the world of science fiction and fantasy films. She appreciates the magical worlds of sci fi and will often stop a movie to make a quick sketch of some shape or figure which intrigues her. Her favorite artist is Roger Dean, an international artist and designer, well known for his album covers from the 70's.

Julia told me this prestigious program has led her to learn a variety of creative techniques she might not otherwise have tried. It has also motivated her to evaluate and challenge her design skills.



In parting, I asked Julia to share some words of wisdom for artists just starting out. Julia said "Think about what you want to

You'll also be able to learn from her as she continues to present classes. As a prolific writer, Julia's plans include more articles

where you put your work. Enter those shows and events attended

And, "Choose carefully

do, learn all you can and at the end of the day... be

the best you can."

and tutorials.

by people who will appreciate the time, beauty and skill of the work you offer." Julia Rai – http://www.juliarai.co.uk Roger Dean - http://www.rogerdean.com/ Tim McCreight - http://www.brynmorgen.com/

yramid Metal Clay Academy - http://www.metalclayacademy.com/index.html Metal Clay Masters Registry Program - http://www.mastersregistry.com/



Plique A Jour Earrings

Julia's work has been featured in a number of publications including PMC Guild Annual and The Art and Design of Metal Clay Jewelry Calendar. She was on the jury that selected the work for inclusion in the Calendar for 2011 and had work included in the calendar for 2012. Her work was included in the Crafthaus New Directions: Powder Metallurgy (Metal Clay) in a Sheet Metal World book. She has exhibited her work at the UK PMC Symposium 2009,

Terry Kovalcik – http://www.terrykovalcik.com/

She won third prize in the Bead Dreams Competition 2010 and first prize in 2011 in the metal clay category. She was a finalist in the prestigious Saul Bell Design Award Competition 2011 in the Metal Clay category and she won first prize in the metal clay category of the British Bead Awards in 2011.

the PMC Conference Cultural Messages Exhibition 2010, the Bead Dreams Exhibition 2010 and 2011, and on the Metal Clay Masters Registry website.