

Organic brooch



Learn how to make a curved brooch with a raised platform for an embeddable brooch finding. By Julia Rai

designer tips

- When designing your brooch, think carefully about where you're going to put your cut-out element to make sure you have enough space for the brooch finding. Remember the brooch finding should be towards the top of the brooch to sit properly when it's worn.

Julia teaches metal clay classes regularly in Cornwall and London. She runs the Metal Clay Academy, the largest and most comprehensive independent online resource for anyone interested in metal clay. She really enjoys making curved or dimensional pieces which can be a challenge, especially when making brooches. Embeddable findings are a great choice for brooches as a viable pin and catch mechanism can be tricky for non-silversmiths to make. This project shows a method for using the Metal Clay Findings' brooch pin with a curved form.



MATERIALS

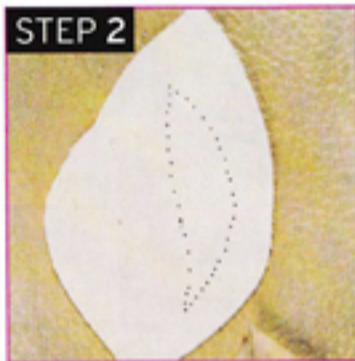
- 30g of silver metal clay
- Metal Clay Findings embeddable brooch findings
- Metal Clay Findings fine silver balls
- Silver metal clay paste
- Greaseproof or tracing paper
- A curved surface - a large light bulb or similar
- Small stencil brush
- Texture plate
- Olive oil
- Small amount of polymer clay
- Pin tool
- Small drill
- Craft knife
- Clay shaper
- Cocktail sticks
- Teflon work surface
- Paintbrush
- Emery board
- Small files or sandpaper
- Brass or stainless steel brush or tumble polisher
- Parallel action pliers

EXTRA PROJECT

Make a matching pair of earrings by using a photocopier to reduce the size of the original design. If your design is asymmetric, make sure you flip the pattern over when cutting out the second earring so they are a matching pair. Use the Metal Clay Findings embeddable clip earrings or the embeddable ear wires. Have some fun, maybe by making the earrings upside down compared to the brooch, like you see here!



STEP 1
Design your piece on paper first. This piece has a pierced area and also a textured element added to the base piece of the brooch. Trace your design using greaseproof paper and cut it out. Roll out the clay three cards thick and then lay your pattern on the clay. Using a needle tool or craft knife carefully cut around the design of your brooch base.



STEP 2
To cut out the pierced area, use a needle tool and punch through the greaseproof paper pattern along the lines of the cut out element. This transfers dots to the clay showing where the cut out area is in your design. Using a sharp craft knife carefully cut around the line following the dots. Remove the clay from the cut out area using a needle tool.



STEP 3
Lightly oil a gently curved item - a large ball shaped light bulb is perfect but anything that has a gentle curve and is non-porous will work. Lay your brooch base piece on the curve making sure it is lying flat against the surface with no trapped air. Leave it to dry. To prevent the curved item from rolling, use pieces of polymer clay to anchor it.



STEP 4
Trace the textured element from your original design onto greaseproof paper and cut it out. When the brooch base is dry, make the textured element. Roll out clay two cards thick, texture it and cut it out using your pattern piece. Wet the surface of the brooch base and stick on the textured element. Check for good contact with the base, especially at the edges. Leave to dry.



STEP 5
File the edges where the texture is laid to ensure it's flush with the base. Wet your finger and gently rub over the join of these two pieces to blend the layers, adding a little thick paste if necessary. Texture the base of the brooch using thin paste and a stencil brush. Use tiny files or sandpaper to smooth the edges of the cut out area.



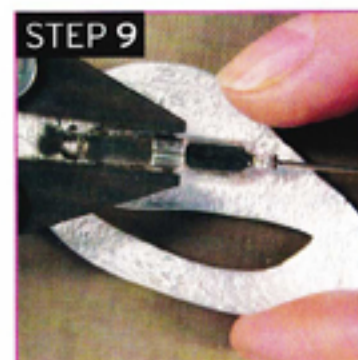
STEP 6
The findings have two parts: a fine silver embeddable mount and the brooch element, added after firing. Roll out a flat platform slightly longer and wider than the brooch element. This needs to be at least five cards thick for the mount element to be embedded securely. Paste the platform on, ensure the top is flat and smooth the ends into the back of the brooch.



STEP 7
While the clay is still moist, gently push the mount into the platform until the base is in contact with the clay. Allow this to dry. Fill any gaps around the base of the mount to ensure it is securely embedded. Texture the whole back of the brooch including the platform, using thick paste and a cocktail stick or needle tool to make a random pattern.



STEP 8
The brooch is embellished with fine silver balls which are fired in place. When the brooch is completely dry, mark the positions of the balls using a pencil. Remember that the brooch will shrink but the balls won't. Carefully drill a small dip for each ball and stick them in place using thick paste. Clean up any excess paste with a damp paintbrush and dry thoroughly.



STEP 9
After firing, fit the finding into the mount, making sure the notches in the finding are between the jaws of the mount. Using pliers, squeeze the jaws closed to hold the finding securely. With sandpaper, smooth any sharp areas, then tumble or brush the brooch to achieve the finish you want. Patinate if desired.

DESIGNER DETAILS

Julia Rai
www.metalclayacademy.com
info@metalclayacademy.com