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How to Use This Book

This handbook is intended both for beginners and experienced users of metal clay. It introduces tools and techniques through projects, as I do when I teach “hands-on” in the classroom. In this spirit, instead of beginning with a lengthy section describing the tools and materials, I introduce the tool kit briefly at the beginning of the book. I then open with a very detailed project, “Collage of Textures”, followed by a thorough description of the finishing process of the piece prepared in the project. These two chapters, which are also demonstrated on my DVD, *Workshop at Textures Studio*, form the basis for the rest of the projects. My experience as a teacher tells me that people who have completed the first project from beginning to end are able to complete any of the other projects, regardless of their personal level of experience. Most of the projects rely on knowledge acquired through previous projects, so the book can be regarded as one continuous course.




The book is divided into two main sections, corresponding to the types of techniques introduced: texturing and forming. The Forming section has two sub-divisions: one focusing on using molds and the other on using flexible metal clay. I have not tried to cover in this book all possible techniques of texturing and forming; I have focused on those that have worked best in my years of experimentation.

New techniques are introduced through new projects. These include some basic metal fabrication techniques that are required either to construct a piece or to assemble it. Explanations of these techniques are aimed toward people with no experience in metal fabrication. The index at the end of the book makes it easy to find a specific technique whenever you need to use it. For readers who don't own a required piece of equipment, the book presents alternative methods for completing the project without it.

Any type of metal clay can be used for any of these projects. The book notes thicknesses of layers for high-shrinkage and low-shrinkage clay. If separate measurements are not given, the thicknesses are the same for both kinds of clay. Sizes are given only for high-shrinkage clay. If you use low-shrinkage clay, you can determine the size of each piece yourself, since the firing process will not change their size by very much.

Following this introduction is a list of the basic clay tools required for the projects. Finishing tools are introduced in the chapter “Finishing” (page 8). Throughout the book additional tools are introduced and pictured.

Table of Contents

How to Use This Book		iv
Tool Kit		v
Texturing		1
Collage of Textures		3
Finishing		8
Concave Earrings		15
Landscape Earrings		18
Concentric Circles		26
Ocean View		29
House Earrings		32
Hinged Earrings		37
Miró Pin		41
Mountain View		44
		
Forming		48
A. Forming with Molds		49
Blouse		50
Treasure Bag		55
Just a Bag		58
Pasta Earrings		61
Pillow Pendant		64
Rocks		69
Hollow Box Earrings		73
Donut		77
Hidden Bail Pendant		80
Friendly Stone		82
Cocktail Glass		85
Inlay		88
Pill Box		91
		
B. Forming with Flexible Clay		94
Rubber Band Earrings		96
Twisted Washers		98
Cross-armed Earrings		100
Wire Earrings		102
Knots Bracelet		106
Open Weave		110
Woven Earrings		113
Three Hollow Forms		115
Forming with Molds and Flexible Clay		117
		
Index		122

- Enlarge the holes with a file or a bead reamer.

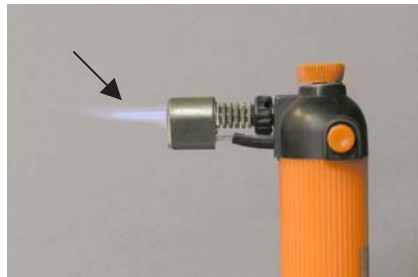


- Attach the tubes to the earrings with slip, dry, and reinforce with clay.



- After firing, cut one inch of 20-gauge fine silver or argantium sterling wire.

- One end of the wire can be balled up with a butane micro-torch. The flame has two parts: the outer darker part and the light blue inner part. The hottest spot is the tip of the inner flame.



- Hold the wire with cross-lock tweezers at a 90° angle to the tip of the inner flame until the end of the wire balls up. Remove the wire and cool it down in water.



- Insert the wire through both tubes.



The size of the ball is limited by the gauge of the wire. If the ball gets too big for the gauge it will fall off. To practice try balling up different gauges. Ball the wire a little, ball some more, and continue until the ball falls off. This will give you an idea of how far you can go with every gauge.



A wire balled up on one end can be used as a head pin.


11. Attach the bail to the top of the picture with slip, dry, and reinforce with clay.



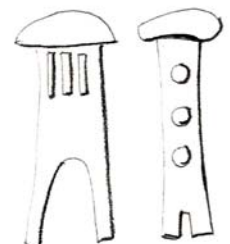
Ocean View by Linda Milani. The space for the sun was filled with resin enamel.

12. Fire the piece and finish.



 If the stone does get stuck in the bezel, carefully drill a hole at the back of the bezel to push the stone out.

13. Set the stone as in the Landscape Earrings project (page 23).



The piece on the left was inspired by the gate to Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. Use the template on the left to recreate it, and the templates above for a pair of earrings. Enlarge or reduce the templates as needed.

