Collin College - Continuing Education

Course Syllabus

Course Title: Jewelry Making with Silver Metal Clay I

Instructor: Paula Beckett

Ms. Beckett studied art at Broward Community College in 1997 in Davie Florida. After moving to Texas she spent the next few years taking several beading classes and wire wrapping classes at local bead stores. During 2004 and 2005, Ms. Beckett took 4 semesters of traditional metal fabrication classes with master metal fabrication artist Sue Gordon at Brookhaven Junior College. During this learning period she fell in love with metal clay. She gained her certification to teach metal clay by Senior Metal Clay Artist Sallie Bly in June of 2006. Earlier this year (2010) she traveled to France to take workshops with the world renowned metal clay artists Holly Gage and Angela Crispin.

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Course Description:
An introduction to the fun and excitement of making your own fine silver jewelry. You don't need metalworking experience. Silver metal clay is remarkable clay made of microscopic particles of fine silver mixed with an organic binder to give it the consistency of clay. The metal clay can be rolled, textured, molded, carved and shaped to create earrings, pendants and charms. You will have the opportunity to create these pieces while learning the basic metal clay skills using lump, syringe and paste forms of the clay. Create a life like leaf out of metal clay paste, accent your pieces by adding 24k gold foil using the ancient bonding technique of Keum-boo. Learn how to fabricate a bale and create a tube bezel using setting burs; learn how to wire wrap and add findings and make wire clasps.

Materials Needed: Supply fees for this class are $292.42. All tools, gold, fine silver and sterling silver are included in this fee. Payable to Paula Beckett on the first day of class.

Hours: 24

Course Prerequisite(s): None

Outcomes:
1. Learn the properties and the composition of the clay
2. Find what stones and findings can be fired into the clay
3. Discover how to roll, texture and shape the clay
4. Learn how to keep the clay moist, to repair cracks, to attach it to itself both wet and dry
5. Learn how to finish the piece using files and sanding paper and how to fire the piece with a simple kitchen torch
6. Discover the ancient art of Keum-boo using an electric burner

* What is Silver Metal Clay? Metal clay is clay made of very tiny particles of fine silver, an organic binder and water. Once the clay is shaped, dried and fired what's left is a piece of silver that is .999 pure silver, in contrast to sterling which is .925 pure silver. The jewelry that can be made is beautiful. The instructor teaches the student to shape the clay, to add texture and then to fire the pieces with a crème brulee torch. Student can then add 24K gold using the keub-boo method and finally adding beads.
Lesson Plan

Session 1: Making earrings.
Discuss the nature of the clay. Observe a demonstration of rolling out the clay and adding texture with a stamp, lace or a texture plate. Learn how to cut out the piece, place and add a hole, dry and torch fire. Finish the piece with a mat finish or burnish to a high shine finish. Learn how to make paste.

Session 2 and 3: Bales and Bezels.
Make a small pendant to which a cubic zirconium set in a bezel will be added. Learn how to set stones that can be fired with a torch or in a kiln and learn which stones can’t be fired. Stone setting will be taught using a 4 mm setting burr, drilling through dry metal clay. Decorate with syringe and add a bail.

Session 4: Molds
Learn how to make a simple charm using a molding compound, then add metal clay to that mold. Different finishing techniques will be taught including satin finish, shiny finish and a patina finish which will be accomplished by adding liver-of-sulfur or black max.

Session 5: Silver Leaf
Keum-boo – Learn how to pick out a leaf that will work best with metal clay paste. Observe a demonstration of the consistency the paste should be in order to attach the leaf and how many layers are needed to produce a beautiful fine silver leaf. Begin the pendant to which we will add gold foil during session 6.

Session 6: Complete Keum-boo pendant
Fire and prepare pendant to attach 24k gold foil. Learn to cut or punch out the foil without ripping it. Learn how to use Klyre Fire to adhere the foil and how to use three types of burnishers.

Session 7: Finishing
Finish all projects, ask questions, understand finishing techniques.

Session 8: Put it all together
Learn how to attach jewelry pieces using various wire wrapping techniques and how to make wire clasps.