

Layered Leaf Pendant

This beautiful design technique captures the fine texture of a natural leaf. Can be worn as a pendant, brooch finding added for a pin, or leaves can be added to pottery for a natural enhancement. Finished size depends on the leaf you choose.

MATERIALS

10 gm Art Clay Silver Paste

Oval jump ring

Leaf with nice veining on back – This will be the design of your pendant. (See *Finding the Perfect Leaf*)



ADDITIONAL TOOLS & SUPPLIES REQUIRED

- ✚ Paint Brush, non-stick surface, craft knife, bamboo skewer, stainless steel brush, metal pin, pin vice, 1 mm drill bit, water, Liver of Sulfur, 2 glass cups
- ✚ Firing equipment
- ✚ Cord or chain for finished necklace.

Drying Methods – may include hairdryer, oven, or toaster oven set below 250°F, food dehydrator, warming tray. Piece also may be left to dry naturally. (See *Drying Chart*)

Firing Methods – include either by electric kiln, hand-held butane torch, or gas stovetop burner. (See *Firing Chart*)

PROCESS

- ✚ Take a small amount of paste out of the jar and place into a small container or lid of the paste jar. Add water to dilute paste to a thin, skim milk consistency. Paint the reverse side of the leaf (the side with the veining) with a complete coat of paste. Dry. Add a second coat of thinned paste by dabbing paste onto the prior coat. Brushing will pull the prior layer away from the leaf. Allow to dry again.
- ✚ For the 3rd and subsequent layers, use full strength paste and dab the paste onto the leaf. Beginning with this layer, the paste will be thick – Do not *paint* with the paste – drop by brushfuls onto the leaf and even out the paste layers. Dry thoroughly between layers.
- ✚ To determine the correct thickness of the leaf—when to stop adding paste—hold the leaf in the palm of your hand – the weight should be a good, substantial weight that you would expect for a pendant or brooch. The leaf should be thicker than 1mm.
- ✚ Turn the leaf over and remove any extra paste from the front of the leaf with the craft knife. If you have paste on the front of the leaf when you fire, it will remain on the fired piece.
- ✚ Examine leaf for any areas on the back of the leaf that are sharp or bubbled. Smooth away with a small file or sandpaper.
- ✚ Fire according to **Firing Chart**.



Liver of Sulfur Technique

- ✚ After firing and brushing your leaf with the stainless steel brush, you may leave it with either a matte finish, burnish with an agate burnisher or tumble for an even shinier look. Use a pin vise with a small drill bit to make a hole for your jump ring. After this step of finishing, you are ready for some color.
- ✚ Clean your pieces thoroughly with baking soda and water. Rinse and dry. Remove 1 piece of Liver of Sulphur – a patina agent -- about the size of your thumbnail and place into a clean glass cup with one cup of steaming, not boiling water. Stir well with either a bamboo stick or skewer. VENTILATE YOUR AREA WELL – Liver of Sulphur has the odor of rotten eggs.
- ✚ Dip quickly into the solution and then dip into clean water. Repeat dipping into the solution and clear water until you reach the color that you want for your leaf.
- ✚ The great part about Liver of Sulphur is that if you decide you do not like the color, with about a minute of re-firing, the patina is removed. You will need to re-polish your leaf after the re-firing.

FINDING THE PERFECT LEAF

Pick a fresh leaf for your project. It can be kept fresh in a plastic bag with a spray of water until you are ready to use it. PLEASE NOTE: You will be painting on the back of the leaf.

Shape

1. The general shape of the leaf should be interesting. Less interesting shapes can be combined into groups. Contrasting shapes and sizes can make beautiful collage pieces.
2. Ruffled edges or bug holes can add a great design element to your piece.
3. You should be careful of sharp points on the leaf edges; when they become solid metal they can scratch or tear clothes.
4. The leaf should be firm. Weak, limp leaves do not hold their shape well.
5. Long, narrow leaves can roll or curl.
6. Keep the stem on the leaf to provide a handhold.

Texture

1. The vein structure gives you a beautiful texture. The veins should be pronounced.
2. Feel the veins to make sure that they are tactile, not just visual. Sometimes the leaf may look interesting but the clay will not pick up the texture if it is not defined. When you cannot feel the texture of the leaf, the clay will reflect that fact.
3. Leaves should not be too waxy or hairy, because they are difficult to coat with paste.
4. Thick, moisture-filled leaves may split during firing.
5. Pods make interesting pieces, and usually split open during firing, making a great place for setting a stone.

Color

1. The leaves can be beautiful in bright silver.
2. Accent the dark vein structure by purposely tarnishing a leaf with liver of sulfur.
3. Specific liver of sulfur solutions can create wonderful ranges of color from gold, to magenta, to blue, to purple and black, depending upon the length of time the leaf is exposed to the liver of sulfur solution.

Reinforcement

1. A single leaf should have a layer of Art Clay about 1mm thick to ensure a strong and durable piece. Grouping leaves into a collage, or adding clay as design elements can significantly increase the strength of a piece.
2. Going over the leaf edges with a burnisher strengthens it and gives it the look of finely finished jewelry.



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