

Metal clay conference in Chicago

The team that attended the Chicago conference look forward to sharing the information and pictures with the delegates at the UK conference to be held in Jersey in October. To find out more, log onto www.artclayworld.org.uk.



Tracey Spurgin is a regular Art Clay Silver project contributor to 'Making Jewellery'. In this special feature article she shares with us her master class

Bathed in blistering sun I arrived at the Hilton Lakes Resort Hotel in Bloomingdale Chicago, two days ahead of the Metal Clay World Conference. This was just enough time to relax around the pool to recover from jet lag, before the beginning of the pre conference workshop on Monday 13th July 2009. The conference was sponsored by our hosts Art Clay World USA and Aida Chemical Industries. The meticulous planning and preparation made by Jackie Truty and Katie Baum was supported by their team as they pulled off a major event in the world of Metal Clay.

The pre conference workshops held from Monday to Wednesday gave us an opportunity to enrol onto master classes. Eleven master classes were set over three days. I chose to participate in the two day workshop delivered by Cindy Pankopf. This was the premier of Cindy's Caged Glass Beads class. Cindy began her presentation with a clear explanation of the process involved, showing beautiful

examples of her work. I was less experienced with glass than other people on the workshop, but Cindy's clear instruction and calm and relaxed manner, made the whole process easy to follow. However the two days proved to be quite a challenge. The technique was delicate and tricky and required a lot of focused concentration. I was reasonably pleased with the end result, but am looking forward to trying it again and putting my own slant on the technique. Overall it was an intense few days but very enjoyable.

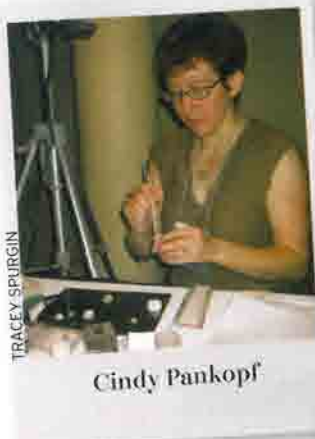
Wednesday evening was the VIP reception; a chance to meet and greet our new friends, presenters and artists, the people we were to spend the next few days getting to know a little better. I chatted with Hattie Sanderson, one of the top US Metal Clay artists. She will be visiting UK later this year, then again in the middle of next year to deliver some of her master classes both at my studio in East Yorkshire and for Emma Baird in Scotland. We also had a charm swap. We had all made 30-40 charms and swapped them with other artists. This was fun and a great way to meet new people and walk away with 30-40 completely different charms; a great memento of the event.

The conference proper began on Thursday morning with a banquet style breakfast. It was an informal arrangement giving us time to mingle with lots of new people and chat about all things metal clay. Thursday morning's official opening was made by Alan Revere whose reputation as the master's master

meant we were privileged to have him present at the conference. His key note address began by handing out some tin foil and asking us all to make a ring in foil. Curious where this was leading we all made a lot of rustling and a ring. The essence of his address was in making for pleasure and to give things for pleasure. He introduced a website called www.adornamerica.com to encourage us all not just to make for money but also to give away something for pleasure and make someone else happy. And so began the conference presentations. Some 64 seminars were made by 24 presenters. Many thankfully were repeated so we had time to catch most of the presentations. All were very interesting, some were hands on demonstrations some were PowerPoint presentations with detailed descriptions of technique or processes. The generosity of information sharing from these presenters was very refreshing and I feel rich in a wealth of knowledge that was passed during those sessions. During any free time we could browse the traders markets or view the works of other artists in the display cases. After lunch on Saturday was our last time to say our thanks and goodbyes and attend the brief closing ceremony.

What an amazing time we had, I am very much looking forward to trying out the new things I have learnt and the products I purchased as well as keeping in touch with all my new friends. To end my trip, on the last night I went up the Hancock tower to watch the sun go down and the light fill the air of down town Chicago.

thanks Art Clay USA!



Cindy Pankopf

