



Silver Clay Workshop

Claire Argyle went along to enjoy a day of silver clay at the Craftworx Studio, with senior Art Clay instructor Tracey Spurgin

I am not very good at reading instructions at the best of times, I am even worse when trying to read instructions and drive at the same time, meanwhile hoping that no Police car is around to see me driving without undue care and attention. Consequently, I arrived at the Craftworx studio 45 minutes late, but Tracey was gracious about my tardiness and I soon caught up with the rest of the group. In fact for a girl who cannot follow written instructions, I found it quite easy to follow. Tracey demonstrated how to make each pendant piece and then you would try and replicate her, albeit not looking anywhere near as professional or steady on the hand, but if you had any problems or doubts a very patient Tracey was on hand to ask. Tracey also told us the dos and don'ts of handling the silver clay, which honestly I did listen to, I just inadvertently often forgot.

ABOVE: Hard at work in the Craftworx studio
RIGHT: Syringing clay to make a hollow form pendant
BELOW: Claire finishing off one of her clay pieces



Fiddly

On the Introduction to Silver Clay course, we got to make three pendant pieces. The first was made out of lump clay, one half was textured and the other half was smooth. I decided to copy Tracey's design of jointed love hearts because I figured it was easier to copy a design as I was running late and did not have the time to come up with something new, plus I liked Tracey's design.

This piece of jewellery, I felt was the most complex and fiddly of them all to make, in fact the hardest bit was making the hook to fit on the back of the charm, it took me four attempts and even then Tracey had to resuscitate the last attempt. So I personally think this is the hardest piece to make because there were a lot more parts to it and therefore more chances of you messing something up. I could give you a step by step instruction of how to do it but then there would be no reason for you to go on this silver clay course!

Lovely Leaf

The second pendant I got to make was a leaf pendant, which is quite easy it just involves painting clay paste on a leaf such as a sage leaf, then using the hairdryer in-between layers to dry the paste. The hardest thing about this is holding the stem of the leaf whilst trying to blast the leaf with the hairdryer as your finger gets rather hot. After 7 layers of silver clay paste and hair drying in-between my thumb was suffering from heat exhaustion. In fact, I kept asking Tracey 'am I nearly there yet' I am 31 but acted like a 13 year old, but Tracey has the patience of a saint and you need that with me!

Iced beads

Lastly was my favourite piece to make, it was a hollow form pendant using a silver clay syringe. It's a bit like icing a mini cake, admittedly I had never iced a cake so this was a first for me. I have suffered from RSI for over 4 years and this was the only part in the whole day where my RSI wanted to remind me that it was still there and that's because you had to hold the syringe and constantly squeeze the plunger down. You can take breaks and I have to admit I did take two breaks but I personally think that this item was the most fun as it is very quick and simple to do!

I have to say the shopaholic in me could have had a field day in Tracey's Craftworx cabinet but unfortunately none of the items are for sale, she has the most amazing silver clay designs such as a turtle and an enamel dragonfly/butterflies earrings, I would love to be able to make the turtle and the earrings but I am afraid mine would never look as good as Tracey's. **B**

