



# AZTEC ADORNMENT

*Make beautiful and bespoke textures for unique chunky copper jewellery. By Jade Cameron*

Jade is a jewellery designer in her own time whilst working as the stock manager for Metal Clay Ltd. She loves working with copper and creating on-trend pieces.

Express your creativity time and time again by carving your own texture mats to create bespoke rustic copper jewellery. Combined with colourful patinas you can easily enhance your copper designs and really make your jewellery stand out.

## MATERIALS

- 50g art clay copper
- Art clay work surface
- 3mm spacers
- Acrylic roller
- Rubber texture sheet
- V shaped carving tool
- Cool slip
- Non-stick balm
- XI gel
- Brass brush
- Sanding pads
- 3M polishing papers
- 2.5mm drill bit
- Pin vice
- 2 x copper jumprings
- Niobium copper earwires

## RESOURCES

[www.metalclay.co.uk](http://www.metalclay.co.uk)

## CONTACT

[www.metalclay.co.uk](http://www.metalclay.co.uk)  
[support@metalclay.co.uk](mailto:support@metalclay.co.uk)



### STEP 1

Take your rubber sheet and carving tool, you can either pencil out your design first or create a freehand design. Place your rubber sheet on a non-slip surface. Hold your mat still as you start to push the carving tool through the surface of the sheet. (Be careful, the carving tool is extremely sharp). You will need to apply some downward pressure, but not enough to pierce the other side of your mat. If you do not apply enough pressure when carving your texture will be too shallow.



### STEP 2

Get your workspace set up; you will need your non-stick work surface, spacers, roller, rubber texture sheet, Cool Slip, balm and Art Clay Copper. Cover your tools with a light coating of Badger balm; this will stop your clay from sticking. Place the 3mm spacers either side your work surface and roll out your clay. Make sure your clay is completely smooth when you have rolled it out.



### STEP 3

Now your clay is rolled out, you are ready to prepare your texture. Spray a light mist of Cool slip onto your texture, the fine mist will reach all intricate areas and stop your clay from sticking. Decide which part of your texture you would like to use for your piece and gently lay it on top of your clay, do not push down onto your texture at this stage.



### STEP 4

Gently roll your roller over the texture sheet. Do not apply too much forward pressure, as you do not want to distort your texture. The depth of your imprint is dependent on the depth of your carving; take this into consideration when applying pressure. Peel the texture sheet off and you should be left with your imprinted design.

### Designer tips

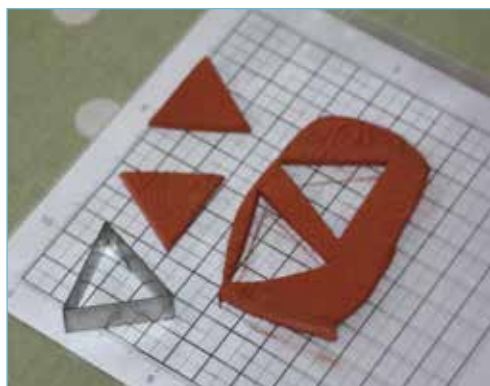
- If your rubber mat is too tough to work with, you can warm it slightly and this will make it softer and easier to carve.
- When carving, if you do not apply enough pressure your carving tool can skim across the mat and ruin your design.
- For matching pairs of earrings, use the same section of your texture mat to create a more uniform look.

### Fashion Inspiration



Leopard print top, £18  
 Bronze midi skirt, £35  
 Knee-high boots, £59  
 All [www.dorothyperkins.com](http://www.dorothyperkins.com)





### STEP 5

Take your cutter and apply some Badger balm to it, this will give you a smooth cut and will stop the cutter and clay from sticking. Cut two shapes and remove, store any excess clay in an airtight container. While the clay is still wet try not to handle it too much as it may distort the shape, but if you see any imperfections now is a good time to smooth them out. Leave your clay to dry – air dry for 24 hours, on a hotplate or oven (150°C) for approx. 10mins. Make sure your piece is completely dry.



### STEP 6

When the piece is dry you are ready to drill the holes for the earwire to go through. Take a pin vice and a 2.5mm drill bit and hold the pin vice completely vertical to the piece. Rest the head of the vice in the palm of your hand to keep the drill steady. Turn the drill with your fingers, until you have drilled all the way through. Be gentle; applying too much pressure at this stage may crack your piece.



### STEP 7

Refine the pieces. This is important, as this is the easiest time to get rid of any imperfections and sharp corners. Use sanding sponges to gently sand the sides, making sure you don't sand away any of the texture. Don't forget the back of the piece. You may only need to use the softer grits. Once you are happy with your piece you are ready to fire.



### STEP 8

Art Clay Copper can be fired with a torch or straight on a kiln shelf (I prefer to cover in carbon on the kiln shelf). Fire the pieces in the centre of a pre-heated Kiln at 970°C and hold for 30 mins. We always recommend you follow the manufacturing instructions. Once the pieces are fired, safely remove them from the kiln and quench in cold water immediately. The piece is now ready to brush and add patina. Brush with a brass brush or if you have any fire scale try using a stainless steel brush.

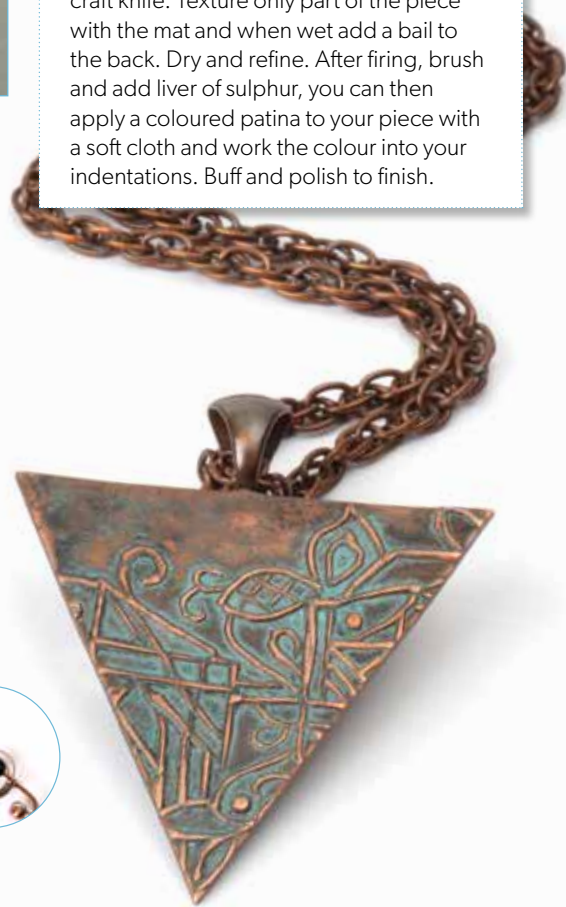


### STEP 9

Take the brushed piece and drop it into some warm water with a couple of drops of liver of sulphur; it will turn black almost immediately. Once you have got the depth of patina you want, take the piece out, rinse and dry. You can now brush or polish the piece to the preferred shine, leaving a lovely dark patina in the grooves of the texture. With pliers add a jumping through the pre-made hole and attach earwires.

### Extra Project Make a pendant

Make a template for the size you wish to make your pendant. When the clay has been rolled out, place the template on top and cut around it using a clay pick or craft knife. Texture only part of the piece with the mat and when wet add a bail to the back. Dry and refine. After firing, brush and add liver of sulphur, you can then apply a coloured patina to your piece with a soft cloth and work the colour into your indentations. Buff and polish to finish.



### DON'T MISS!

Next month *Karen Caine's musical treble clef wirework*

