## Autumn Treasures

A Must Keep

Product Review

Projects

### Project Level: Beginner to Intermediate

### Materials:

- \* Aussie Clay Gold Bronze Standard
- \* Siligum moulding compound
- \* Leaves, nuts and berries for moulding
- \* Findings of your choice: chain, beads,
- beading wire and crimps, jump rings & fasteners
- \* Valved respirator
- \* Mixing bowl & palette knife
- \* Cling film
- \* Water spray- distilled water preferred
- \* Lubricant olive oil, coolslip, badger balm
- \* Roller
- \* Scalpel/needle tool
- \* Small files, sandpaper, sanding pads
- \* Pin vice
- \* Texture tile "Feathers"



- \* Programmable Kiln
- \* Medium size steel pan
- \* Activated coconut carbon
- \* Thick kiln blanket
- \* Thermal protected reverse action tweezers
- \* Tumbler (Rotary or Magnetic)
- \* 3M polishing papers
- \* Pro polishing pad
- \* Sunshine polishing cloth

### Optional:

- \* Rotary tool with 3m radial discs yellow, blue and mint green
- \* Electric manicure tool



Step 1: Wear a dust mask to mix Aussie clay powder following instructions. It should be silky, pliable and not sticky. Wrap in cling film and leave for 30 mins - 3 hours to allow moisture to permeate the clay.





Step 2: Collect leaves, nuts and berries. Leaves should be soft with well defined veins; berries should be under ripe.



Step 3: Mix together equal proportions of blue and white Siligum (each part being slightly larger than item to be moulded). Knead thoroughly until it's an even colour without streaks. Press item into Siligum on a flat surface. Leave for at least 20 minutes. It will be fully cured when a cocktail stick leaves no mark.



Step 4: Press clay into moulds or roll over textured mould. Remove immediately and lay face up on an oiled playing card. Remove excess clay with a needle tool or scalpel. Leave to air dry on a flat surface for a few hours to avoid warping then dry with heat by your preferred method.



Step 7: Fire pieces following Aussie Clay's instructions, and using firing tips on following page. Base metal clays have a narrower range for sintering than fine silver. They may be affected by some variables: ramp speed; hold times and environmental factors such as humidity or the user's location in relation to sea level.



Step 5: Make test strips to check sintering after the first stage of firing. Test strips are expendable, but I always make strips that have potential to become jewellery if sintering is successful. Roll out clay to 1.25mm (5 cards) on to a texture. Cut your shapes (long earrings make good test strips), dry and refine with the other pieces.



Step 8: Hand polish piece using 3M papers, pro polishing pads and a polishing cloth. Alternatively, use your preferred polishing method e.g. tumbler/rotary tool.



Step 6: When dry, Aussie Metal Clay is quite hard and difficult to break. Refining by hand is possible but slower than usual. I like to use tiny metal files and an electric manicure tool. Again, please remember to wear your mask when sanding.



Step 9: To restore the kiln patina, polish your pieces to a high shine and then use the Stage 2 programme but with a hold of just 30 mins. Cover the pieces in carbon, fire and cool down before opening. Use Liver of Sulphur for contrast.



**Step 10:** Assemble your pieces with findings of your choice.



# Firing Tips for Aussie Clays

• On the first time using AMC follow the 2 stage firing as per packet and use test strips. Stage 1 Ramp at 700°C to 500°C hold for 30-45 minutes to debind. Cool to 200°C. Stage 2 ramp at 815°C to 780°C, hold for 2- 2.5 hours and cool. Many people have success immediately, but there are a number of variables that can affect outcome and this will give you a baseline for making adjustments to find the perfect sintering stage for your kiln.

• Use only activated coconut carbon and place a layer 18-20mm deep in a small - medium stainless steel pan.

• Place a layer of thick kiln blanket on top of the carbon and place your items on the blanket, sufficiently spaced apart so not to overheat each other.

• Do not cover with a lid, just fire open.

• Place your test strips where you can find them without disturbing the rest.

• If you have a SC2 consider removing the vent plug in the top, this has worked for many users.

• If you have used the Stage 1 programme with the FULL ramp without success, try again with a slower ramp. This helps SC2 users. As an example I found a ramp of 500°C to a target temperature of 500°C with a 50 minute hold worked for us.

• Cool down fully and check your pieces, they should be a consistent dark grey colour on both sides. Check them with care, they will be very fragile.

• Once sintered, cover the pieces with a layer of carbon to the same depth as in Stage 1. If you don't want your carbon to turn to ash, put a lid on the pan. Programme the kiln for Stage 2 as per packet instructions. Leave to cool to room temperature and don't expose to air until fully cooled.

• Remove your test strips first and do bend and twist tests for sintering. If they are fully sintered you can remove the rest, if not, you can run the entire programme again.

• Some Aussie Metal Clay users use single firing programmes which involve burying pieces in carbon from the outset. If you are good at programming kilns and find this works for you it is a very low maintenance method of firing, it just requires patience to not peek.

• Join Aussie Metal Clay's Facebook Users' Group "Aussie Metal Clay Hints, Tips & Artistic Design" where you can get advice and support from the makers of AMC and other experienced users.

