



The featured metal clay pendant retains the intricate detail of the mold that was made from a found object. The diameter of the pendant is 1 1/8 in. (29mm).

METAL CLAY PENDANT

Silver Wreath

*Use a mold to make a pendant from
a favorite trinket.*

by Linda Facci

Moldmaking is a quick way to transfer the texture and shape of a favorite object to metal clay. The pendant in the featured necklace is made from the mold of a button-sized piece of decorative brass. Removing the center of the design created a wreath shape and left an open space to accommodate a spray of chain dangles. The finished pendant hangs from a simple leather cord that fastens with a sterling silver hook-and-eye clasp.



◀ A texture sheet is used to give the back of the pendant a low-relief pattern.

Make a mold. Select a button or other object that is approximately 1½ in. (29mm) in diameter. To select a mold-making compound, see “Making a Good Impression.”

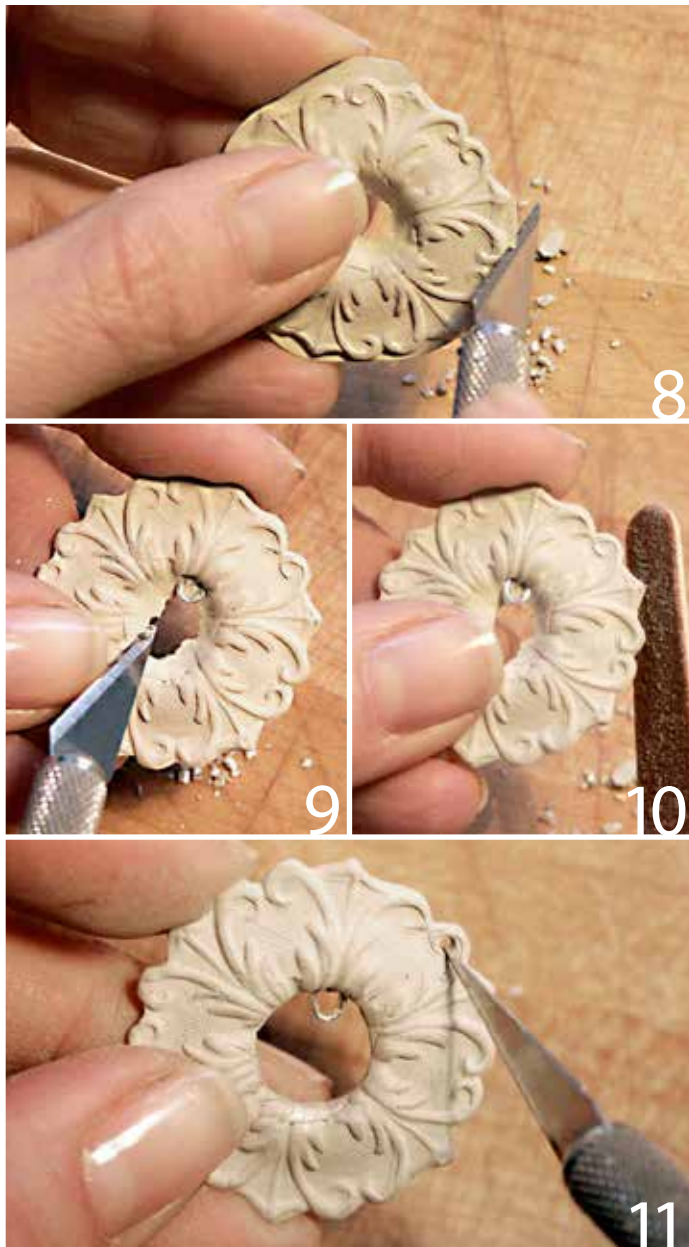
For this project, I used a polymer clay mold-making compound. *Editor’s Note:* The warmth from your hands can make this type of compound too soft to hold its shape. To prevent your mold from being distorted, chill the compound in a refrigerator before making an impression of your object.

Press the object into the mold-making compound, remove the object, and then bake the polymer clay mold according to

the manufacturer’s instructions [1]. Once the mold is cool, oil it lightly with olive oil or natural hand balm. If you use a two-part, silicone mold-making compound, follow the manufacturer’s instructions to make the mold.

Make a U-shaped wire. Cut a ½-in. (13mm) piece of 20-gauge (0.8mm) fine-silver wire. Use roundnose pliers to bend the wire at its midpoint, creating a U [2].

Press metal clay into the mold. On a flexible Teflon sheet, roll 15–18g of metal clay into a ball. Press the ball into the mold [3]. Work the clay away from the center of



making a good impression

There are several readily available mold-making compounds that are relatively inexpensive and easy to use.

Polymer clay formulas. If you prefer a product that does not require mixing and has a nearly limitless working time, your best bet is to use a polymer clay formula. Sculpey makes two products that work well for making detailed press molds: Super Elasticlay Moldmaker, which was used in the featured project, and Super Flex Bake and Bend clay. These products must be cured in a conventional oven according to the manufacturer's instructions. Once cured, the molds remain flexible and can be used many times.

Two-part silicone compounds. Products such as Rio Grande's Cold Mold, Belicone's Belicold silicone rubber, Suze Weinberg's Mold-n-Pour, and Puffinalia's Miracle Mold are all two-part silicone mold compounds that do not require baking. Mixed in equal ratios, these compounds, known as "room temperature vulcanizing (RTV)" mold compounds, set in approximately 10-15 minutes without needing heat or pressurization.

the mold [4] so there will be less clay to remove later when you carve an opening in the center of the pendant.

Add texture. With the metal clay still in the mold, press a lightly oiled texture sheet onto the exposed metal clay. Carefully remove the texture sheet to reveal the subtle relief pattern on what will be the pendant's back [5].

Remove the metal clay from the mold. When the clay is almost semi-dry (see "States of Dryness for Metal Clay"), gently remove it from the mold and set it right-side up on your work surface [6]. Do

not allow the clay to reach the semi-dry state before you attempt the next step.

Insert the U-shaped wire. Determine the top center of the pendant; you will insert the U-shaped wire below this point. Lightly oil the wire. Use needle-nose pliers to grasp the U at its bend. Support the pendant in one hand and gently insert the ends of the U into the pendant so that the U protrudes into the center opening [7]. Use a fine-tip paintbrush to apply a dab of metal clay paste around the wire to ensure that the ends are securely embedded in the clay. Set the piece aside until it's completely dry.

Remove excess clay. Use a craft knife to remove excess clay from the perimeter of the pendant [8] and from the opening [9].

Refine the edges. Support the pendant in one hand and use an emery board or 600-grit sandpaper to refine the edges and untextured areas of the pendant [10].

Make holes for jump rings. Use the position of the U-shaped wire as a guide to measure and mark the location for two holes so that they're centered at the top of the pendant. The holes in the featured pendant are $\frac{9}{16}$ in. (14mm) apart.

materials

- Fine-silver wire: 20-gauge (0.8mm), round, dead-soft, ½ in. (13mm)
- Metal clay: 15–18g
- Metal clay paste
- Sterling silver chain: round, cable, 9 in. (22.9cm)
- 2 gold beads: 1mm
- Sterling silver head pin: 24-gauge (0.5mm)
- Sterling silver wire: 24-gauge (0.5mm), round, dead-soft, 2 in. (51mm)
- 2 sterling silver jump rings, 18-gauge (1.0mm), 3mm inside diameter
- Leather cord: round, 2mm diameter, 16 in. (40.6cm)
- Sterling silver crimp ends with attached hook-and-eye clasp: 2mm inside diameter

tools & supplies

- Button or other found object
- Mold-making compound
- Oven (dedicated to nonfood use)
- Olive oil or natural hand balm
- Wire cutters
- Pliers: roundnose, needlenose
- Flexible Teflon sheet
- Texture sheet
- Fine-tip paintbrush
- Craft knife
- Emery board or 600-grit sandpaper
- Kiln, kiln shelf; or handheld butane torch, firing brick, tweezers
- Finishing items (choose from): brass brush, tumbler with steel shot and burnishing compound, liver of sulfur



Place the tip of the craft knife on one of the marks and twist the knife to make a hole [11]. Remove the knife, and turn the pendant over. Reinsert the tip of the knife in the hole, and twist. Repeat to make the second hole.

Fire. Fire the pendant according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Finish. Use a brass brush with soapy water to polish the pendant. Or, place the pendant in a tumbler with steel shot for a high polish. If desired, apply a liver of sulfur patina according to the manufacturer's instructions [12]. For more information about ways to finish metal, see Basics.

Attach chain dangles. Cut five pieces of chain as follows: one 2¼-in. (57mm) piece, two 1¾-in. (44mm) pieces, two 1½-in. (38mm) pieces.

Slide a gold bead on a head pin and make the first half of a wrapped loop (see Basics). Attach the loop to one end of the long chain, and finish the wraps.

Cut a 2-in. (51mm) piece of 24-gauge (0.5mm) sterling silver wire. At one end, make the first half of a wrapped loop. Slide

the chains onto the loop in the following order: short, medium, long, medium, short. Finish the wraps.

Slide a gold bead on the wire stem [13]. Make the first half of a wrapped loop above the bead. Attach the loop to the pendant's U-shaped wire, and finish the wraps [14].

Attach the pendant to a cord. Insert one jump ring into each hole in the pendant, and close the jump rings. Cut a 16-in. (40.6cm) piece of leather cord and thread it through the jump rings. Attach the crimp ends of a hook-and-eye clasp to the cord (see Basics).

States of dryness for metal clay

Wet	Clay contains a lot of moisture and is very pliable
Semi-dry	Clay contains some moisture, but is firm and holds its shape
Mostly dry	Clay is nearly devoid of all moisture and is rigid
Completely dry	Clay contains absolutely no moisture and can be fired