

Hands-On Studio Workshop

Presentation Proposal

Resin & Recycling: Creating Found Object Memory Jewelry

One person's trash is another person's treasure. By preserving seemingly valueless items—the penny you found on your luckiest day, the Cracker Jack prize that you treasured as a child, or the “jewel” from your grandmother's earring, for example—in resin, the artist can transform found objects into wearable, meaningful art.

I propose to offer a workshop in creating found object memory jewelry. The workshop would begin with examples of found object jewelry, and demonstrations of cold connection techniques. Participants would be encouraged to bring broken jewelry, jewelry findings and small objects and images with personal meaning to include in their piece. Participants would learn about the various methods for mixing and pouring resin, available tools and techniques, and how to find, combine and alter objects. Each participant would leave with a completed pendant or pin and a better understanding of found object art.

I am an elementary art educator from Maine. My favorite artist is Joseph Cornell, and I am fortunate to have attended workshops with J. Fred Woell and Tim McCreight. I prefer to create jewelry and sculpture, but I am also a Certified Zentangle Teacher. My favorite words include juxtapose, contrast, collage, assemblage. I love mixed metals, and I am drawn to romantic, vintage and steampunk materials. I am one box away from being featured on “Hoarders” but I usually can find just the thing I need!

Cold Connections:

Jewelry makers say “cold connections” when they refer to ways of connecting pieces together without the use of heat, such as soldering. You can glue, rivet, tab, stitch, etc., pieces of metal together.

Riveting—tube riveting is a common way to join pieces, but it takes some practice. You match a tube rivet with the right size hole and pound the tube ends flat to “planish” them. Wire rivets are harder because you have to hold onto the wire and pound it down. Eyelets are another kind of rivet, and eyelets are easy to set with the right tools.

Tabs—Cutting tabs in thin sheet metal is simple; it just requires a good pair of cutters, something to sand them smooth like a needle file, and a pair of pliers to fold them over. They can be wrapped around or inserted into a slot.

Stitching—You can make holes with a Dremel, but this is easy to accomplish with a metal punch and wire. A good metal punch makes the work go faster. A bead reamer can help smooth rough edges on the holes.

Screws—special micro screws for jewelry making can be ordered from many sources, including Amazon. Eyeglass repair kits often have small screwdrivers and screws that can be used as well.

Glue is considered a cold connection. Both E6000 or Goop are good glues for jewelry making, but there are many brands of jewelry glues. Buy them in the smallest tubes possible; they start to dry up the second you open them.

Tools:

A hole punch that works on metal is important. Euro Punch and Bead Buddy are two brands that work well. Also a two-part hole punch like the kind made by Tim Holtz works for very flat pieces.

Pliers come in a lot of styles such as flat, needle nose, chain nose, etc. You need a good set if you intend to do a lot of jewelry making, but you can get by with just a couple for simple jobs.

A bead reamer and/or a metal file are useful for smoothing edges.

Wire snips are usually part of a pliers set, but for thinner wire, heavy scissors or shears will do.

Shank removers are especially designed to cut off button shanks, but can be used to cut other things; they are found in the sewing sections of craft stores.

Metal shears are necessary if you plan to cut up thin sheet metal.

Hammers come in lots of styles too, and many are made for texturing metal sheets.

Rivet setters are necessary if you want to join pieces of metal without glue or soldering. There are lots of types of rivet setters, some easier to use than others.

For some pieces of jewelry, tiny metal brads can be used to connect pieces. This depends on the materials and construction methods.

Paper punches in the size and shape of the bezels are a great idea (since cutting perfect circles, ovals or squares is hard), if you can find the right shape and size. Some are sold with the bezels.

Other simple tools you want to have on hand when working with resin are a pen or pencil for tracing, a good eraser, packing tape for covering holes, tweezers, toothpicks, needles or pins, straws, a craft knife, scissors and cheap brush for brushing Mod Podge or another paper sealer on to your images (to prevent them from running and blurring).

Colored pencils and metallic markers can be handy for adding texture, color and shine.

Bezels:

They come in metal, plastic and wood and in all colors, shapes and sizes. The quality varies, as does the price. Start with some cheap ones, like bottle caps, until you are comfortable with the process.

Do you choose the bezel first and try to make the materials fit or chose the materials and then choose the bezel? This is up to you. The artistic process varies. Some people like a very small space which others need the biggest possible space for their materials.

What kind of materials do you put in your bezel? The possibilities are endless, as long as the item is small enough to fit. You can begin by putting paper in the background, you can even start with a small collage, drawing or painting. Mementos of all kinds make it special—family photos, old jewelry, charms, game pieces, coins, buttons, seashells, rocks, stamps, feathers, beads, etc.

Resin:

There are many brands of resin or resin-like materials you can use for this kind of jewelry, including, Easy Cast, EnviroTex, ICE Resin, all of which are two-part resin products. Some are called “jewelers grade” and they will be pricier. Some come in larger quantities that will make it more affordable for classes. Two-part resin can be tricky to mix and you cannot save it if you mix too much. Never dispose of resin in a sink, or try to wash resin cups. If you mix two-part resin, you have to throw the cups and stirrers away every time. Ventilation is always a good idea when working with resin and glue.

Miracle Gloss, Diamond Glaze, Mod Podge Dimensional Magic are all one part, easy pour resin-like products that are virtually fool proof. With a single part resin you only use what you need and you can dry it out quickly with a UV light. The enemies of resin are dust, bubbles and humidity. Bubbles can be removed by blowing on the resin with a straw or by breaking them with a needle. If you do not have a UV dryer, you need to leave the pieces very flat and protect them with a box cover or something to keep dust off them. Pieces that will not lie flat, such as earrings, can be cradled in a dish of rice. Glitter trays (available from Martha Stewart) are very useful for holding pieces as well.

Some Found Object/Memory Jewelry/Resin Jewelry Books:

[Art Mechanic: Ice Resin Idea Book](#) by Jen Cushman

[The Art of Plastic and Resin Jewelry](#) by Debra Adelson

[The Art of Resin Jewelry](#) by Sheri Haab

The Art of Resin Clay by Sheri Haab

Beyond the Bead: Making Jewelry with Unexpected Finds by Margot Potter

Boho Chic Jewelry by Laura Beth Love

Easy Cast Resin Jewelry by Marie Browning

Exploring Resin Jewelry by Heidi Boyd

The Fine Art of the Tin Can by Bobby Hanson

Flea Market Jewelry by Binky Morgan

Hip Handmade Memory Jewelry by Cathy Jakicic

Industrial Chic by Susan Lenart Kazmer

Jewelry from a Tool Box by Hannah Rogge

Junk to Jewelry by Brenda Schweder

Make It In Minutes Memory Jewelry by Liz Eaton

Making Connections: A Handbook of Cold Joins by Susan Lenart Kazmer

Making Designer Jewelry with Hardware, Gems and Beads by Nicole Sherman

Making Designer Mixed-Media and Memory Jewelry by Tammy Powley

Mixed-Media Collage Jewelry by Janette Schuster

Rejuvenated Jewels by Amy Hanna

Resin Alchemy: Innovative Techniques by Susan Lenart Kazmer

Resin Jewelry Making by Katherine Swift

Semiprecious Savage: Creating Found-Art Jewelry by Stephanie Lee

Steampunk Emporium by Jema Hewitt

Steampunk Style by Jean Campbell

Steampunkery: Polymer Clay and Mixed Media Projects by Christi Friesen

DVDs: Exploring Resin Jewelry-Making by Susan Lenart Kazmer

Mixed Media-Personalized Jewelry-Capturing Memories in Handmade Details by Jean Campbell.

Some Jewelry Lines & Designers:

Bead Landing Found Objects

Industrial Chic

Tim Holtz

Susan Lenart Kazmer

Lisa Pavelka

Vintaj

Steampunk

Blank Slate

Some Websites:

www.artbeads.com

www.objectsandelements.com

www.clothpaperscissors.com

www.resinobsession.com