

FLOWER RING (using the Ringmaker)



You'll need: 20gms of clay (you need to start with more than you will actually use), a half round ringmaker, cool slip, 2cm of .8mm fine silver wire, file, sandpaper, small amount of paste, a ½ drilled semi precious stone (I used a 5mm round half drilled semi precious amethyst "Q010" from the Art Clay NZ website, 1.00mm drill bit and pin vice, stainless steel brush, agate burnisher, silver polish and cloth, clear epoxy glue, baking paper, toothpick, gladwrap, moisture pen and spray bottle of water.



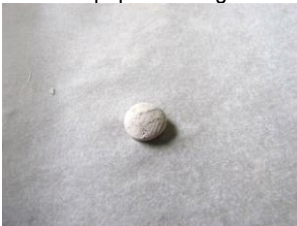
Step One: Get everything out that you need and open up the ringmaker and spray with a little bit of Cool slip.



Step Two: Condition all of your Art Clay Silver and roll in to a thick disc/ball shape. Make sure you clay has no lines or dry spots as this will cause cracking of the ring which you'll have to repair later. Push the clay in to the centre of the base mould. Close the mould with the upper part. While pressing the mould together with one hand, push the clay in to the ring-shaped space from the hole using both the thumb and the index finger of the other hand. Make sure that the clay is spread to all corners. If you see any spot where the clay has not reached, push it further to eliminate the gap.



Step Three: Insert the middle block in to the hole and turn the mould around so that the hole in the base faces you. When the inserted middle block touches the clay, start applying pressure with your fingers from the other side of the hole as well. Continue applying the pressure from both sides until the middle block is inserted all the way down. Collect the clay removed by blocking and push down the middle block all the way and remove it. Remove the upper part slowly. Slightly twist the upper part and try not to touch the ring while removing. Leave the ring in the base part and let it dry. You can either let it stand at room temperature for a while or use a hairdryer on a cool setting. When the clay is almost dry you should be able to take it out of the base and then let it stand to dry completely. Do not use a hairdryer on a warm or hot setting as it can damage the acrylic the ringmaker is made out of. Smooth the dried ring with sandpaper starting with the roughest and working through to the finest (red, blue, green) and set aside.



Step Four: Using some of your left over clay make small round balls and squash them flat with your fingers.



Step Five: Arrange them in to a flower pattern, using a little paste to stick them on to each other. Work from the bottom up, decreasing the size of each petal as you go up. Use the bottom of your craft knife (or a rounded object) to press in to the centre to make a small dent big enough to hold the base of the stone. Dry.



Step Six: Use a 1.00mm drill bit to make a hole about 3-4mm deep in the centre of the flower. Fill with paste and then place the wire in the hole. Dry.



Step Seven: File one edge of the ring flat and add some paste to this area. Place the flower on top being careful not to knock the wire. Dry.



Step Eight: Pack the ring carefully with fibre cloth so it is sitting upright. Be careful not to pack it too tightly otherwise it will crack when it shrinks as its firing. Fire for 5 minutes at 800oC.



Step Nine: Once the ring is cool, snip the end of the wire to a height of approx 1cm (so it doesn't get knocked so much while you are polishing). Then brush with a stainless steel brush, the agate burnisher and then rub over some silver polish with a soft cloth. Alternatively brush with a stainless steel brush and then place in a jewellery tumbler.



Step Ten: Place the stone on to the wire and see how it sits. You may need to trim the wire again if need be. Working on some baking paper, mix up a small amount of epoxy glue with a toothpick and place a small blob on the tip of the wire. Place your stone on top. Leave to dry for a minimum of 10 minutes.