

Salted Enamel Bracelet – Steven James

This is another enameling project with paints. If you've worked with watercolors before, you may remember the trick of using salt to absorb and ultimately draw the watercolors to a specific area of a painting. This technique incorporates that concept, but when the project is fired with the salt, it ultimately leaves behind an intriguing texture.

Materials:

Copper shapes
Black Counter Enamel
Background enamel color (I used Titanium White for best effects)
Enamel Paints
Small paint brush
Basic table salt
Water for painting
Copper cleaner, old toothbrush and small towel
Kiln brick, trivet, torch, bent nose pliers, tweezers
Sifter, dust mask, magazine sheets
Metal punch

Instructions:

Before cleaning your copper, use your metal punch to create a hole in the copper. Clean your metal. Once dry, add a counter enamel to the project. Once your piece is coated, use tweezers to carefully place it onto your firing trivet. Pour any unused enamel back into the original container, being careful not to mix any colors.

Fire your metal and allow to cool before removing the fire scale with copper cleaner. Cooled projects can 'bathe' in a watery Penny Brite solution for several minutes – the citric acid in the solution can help start the cleaning process – so consider adding your pieces once they have cooled.

Once the fire scale is removed, add the background color. Fire the enamel and allow it to cool completely.

Work on a cool trivet to complete the salted design. Prepare a watery solution of your enamel paint color and apply to the surface of the project, add additional water if it appears to dry. Next, carefully drop a small amount of salt onto the surface of the metal and allow the salt to absorb the paint. Allow the salt/paint mixture to dry for about five minutes and then begin to fire. Don't be alarmed by some of the small bits of salt jumping off of the project. Continue to fire until the enamel paints have set and the salt has started to settle into the background color. Allow to cool before removing from the trivet. You may notice some salt embedded into the glass. Don't worry. Once the project is completely cool, simply immerse the project into water and allow the salt to dissolve.

Try Something Different!

Once you understand the steps and are comfortable with this technique, try creating faux coral using a bright red enamel background with black paint. OR how about a faux turquoise using a light/greenish blue with green paint?