Studio PMC
Member Magazine of the PMC Guild
Fall 2006 • Volume 9, Number 3



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Studio PMC
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On the Cover: "Funky Candy" by Angela Baduel-Crispin. PMC over ceramic bisque. Watch for Angela's instructions for making these beads in a future issue of Step by Step Beads!

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As I PMC It: Riding the Price Roller Coaster

by Suzanne Wade

No one likes it when prices rise on PMC. Buyers hate the sticker-shock they get from that last line on their invoice. Suppliers, who like happy customers, hate price increases because they make buyers grumpy and less inclined to buy. And manufacturers hate the resulting lower sales growth, since that's bad news for the stockholders.

So if no one wants to see prices rise, why is everyone charging more for PMC this year?

The answer lies in the global market for precious metals. Like gold and platinum, silver responds to the economic principle of supply and demand. When there are more buyers than sellers, buyers offer more dollars (or euros, or rupees, or yen) to persuade a seller to sell to them, instead of to competing buyers. When there are more sellers than buyers, the seller may drop the price in order to attract potential buyers.

Lately, there have been a lot more buyers than sellers. Although mine production has increased, silver's use in jewelry and other industrial uses, coupled with increased interest in precious metals for investment, has grown faster. The result is that silver has risen from the neighborhood of $7 an ounce a year ago, to $11 an ounce this July.

What made this year's soaring prices particularly startling was the fact that they follow several years of stability. When PMC was first introduced, silver was around $7 an ounce. The price varied somewhat over the years, but hovered in the $5 to $7 range. With mostly small variations in market price, Mitsubishi was able to set a flat suggested retail price and leave it untouched for years at a time.

With the sudden volatility of silver prices this year, though, Mitsubishi has had to rethink that approach. The response was not swift: It wasn't until January that they tendered the first price increase, by which time silver's market price was nearly $10 an ounce. A second increase was forthcoming when silver hit $15 an ounce in May.

According to Kevin Whitmore, product manager at Rio Grande, the company is now offering more frequent updates to PMC prices. These regular assessments are more in keeping with the price structure of gold PMC, which has always been based on the market price of gold.

Why, you may be wondering, didn't anyone in the PMC world foresee the rising price of silver? The primary answer is that the markets are so complex and there are so many interrelated factors to consider that no one, not even the experts, can fully predict what the markets will do. Like picking stocks, a knack for predicting precious metals prices is generally the province of very lucky, very wealthy speculators.

The best any PMC supplier can do is to keep an eye on the market and adjust accordingly. More frequent pricing from Mitsubishi may mean that the company will be in a better position to lower the price of PMC in response to a sudden drop in the market price of silver. But in the short term PMC artists are probably just going to have to adapt.

If you're selling PMC jewelry, one way of adjusting to market realities is to consider revising your own prices for finished goods. Even if the piece is made of PMC purchased before prices rose, there is nothing dishonest about raising the price on pieces now in your inventory to cover the cost of buying more PMC to make another.

Don't simply assume consumers will be resistant to those price increases, either: After all, the material's intrinsic value is one of fine silver's appeals.

You can also use the rising price of silver as a goad to explore new artistic directions. Exploring mixed media and incorporating other, non-precious materials can lead you in whole new directions, and also keep your PMC expenses within your budget.

If you've been working with PMC long enough to have saved up a healthy collection of failed projects and other bits of scrap PMC you have no other use for, the rising price of silver also makes this a good time for a trip to the refiner. Rio Grande offers refining services, or contact Manufacturing Jewelers and Suppliers of America at www.mjsa.org for a list of refiners who serve the jewelry industry.

While the bill from your PMC supplier can be a source of dismay, remember that the rising price of silver isn't all bad. Consumers know silver is worth more, too — and that can be a silver lining when it comes to polishing the reputation of our favorite shiny substance.

On the Surface

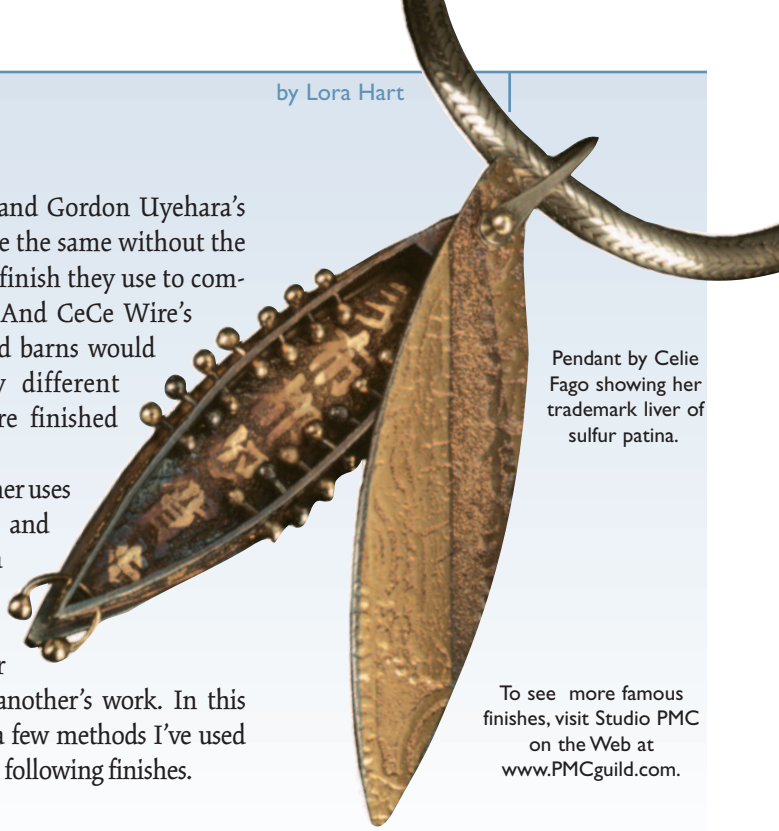
by Lora Hart

Many processes can be used to make a beautifully unique jewelry element. Metal clay artists may spend countless hours doodling on napkins and in sketch books before carefully executing their idea in fresh clay, using any number of tools and texture materials. They might perfect the dry piece with a succession of sanding papers, burs, or files and fire it only when they feel it's flawless. But there are more choices an artist must consider after the component comes out of the kiln.

Finishes can have as much of an impact as design and execution. Can you imagine Celie Fago's beautifully textured pods and lentils without her trademark colorful liver of sulfur patina and golden Keum-boo?

Hadar Jacobson's and Gordon Uyehara's work just wouldn't be the same without the softly antiqued satin finish they use to complete their designs. And CeCe Wire's bright silver silos and barns would evoke a completely different emotion if they were finished any other way.

Each jewelry designer uses a unique set of tools and methods to achieve a particular look, even when the final outcome may look similar or even identical to another's work. In this article, I've included a few methods I've used to produce each of the following finishes.



Pendant by Celie Fago showing her trademark liver of sulfur patina.

To see more famous finishes, visit Studio PMC on the Web at www.PMCguild.com.

Brushed Satin

As we all know, a freshly fired piece of PMC appears white due to the rugged topography of the metal crystals. To produce the reflective silver surface that we're all used to seeing, the crystals need to be pushed flat. The flatter the crystals, the shinier the surface. In addition to brightening the silver, this procedure also work hardens the metal, giving it more strength and density – quite a bonus if you ask me! The first step in this process is to create a silvery matte finish, getting into every microscopic nook and cranny with the chosen tool. The harder and longer you work to compress the metal, the brighter and shinier the surface will become. Change the direction of your stroke every so often to avoid causing furrows or drag lines in the silver.

Brushes. The most common way to begin this finishing process is to use a wire brush. But even here you have a few choices. Fine silver metal clay registers at 2.5 on the Moh's hardness scale, as does brass, but steel comes in at 6. Because steel is harder than PMC, it will deliver a brighter surface than brass, which creates a softer, more satiny look. Since there is a possibility that using steel will leave noticeable scratch marks on a perfectly flat piece, I like to save the steel brush to use on highly textured surfaces which are naturally less reflective (and which help conceal slight flaws), and use brass to finish low relief or flat metal clay elements. To minimize the chance of abrasions while using any wire brush, make sure that it is one designed for the jewelry industry. Jeweler's brushes are made with much finer wire and are great when used on highly textured surfaces. Used by itself, a brass brush will leave a yellow, pewter-like finish on silver. To avoid this, lubricate the scrubbing action with soap – any kind will work.

Metal wool. Very fine metal "wools" can also be used to perform an initial polish. Super fine (#0000) steel wool available at the hardware store and fine bronze wool carried by boating supply stores can be used in the same way as brushes. Work over a piece of newspaper because metal fibers will shed as you scrub. Rinse both the piece and your hands when done to avoid transferring the particles to inconvenient places. (3M produces synthetic steel wool, but I've found that even the extra fine version leaves visible scratches on fine silver.)

Motor tools. Steel and brass brushes mounted on steel shanks can be used with motor tools like a Dremel or flex shaft machine and will produce a slightly brighter finish than the same brush used by hand. "End" brushes are especially good at reaching into tight areas like the inside of a bail. Wear safety glasses when using any motor tool accessory. The wires of the brush may fly off and lodge themselves in skin and clothing, but running the machine at a lower speed (around 10,000-15,000 rpm) will help to minimize this annoying effect.

I like the 3M 220 grit Radial Bristle Disks for the initial polish on my pieces. The ¾" red abrasive pinwheels are designed to be stacked on a mandrel three to six at a time and although they may appear dirty after a few uses, will work effectively until the bristles break off the base. The recommended speed for this tool is 15,000 rpm.

Mirror Bright

After giving your piece a brushed surface, you may decide to continue the polishing process to bring out a mirror shine. This is especially effective on a perfectly smooth surface. The details of textured designs may be harder to appreciate when viewed from more than a few inches when they have been given a mirror finish, but you can create contrast by burnishing only the high areas to the brighter shine, leaving the lower areas with the original brushed finish.

Burnishers. Metal, glass, and agate burnishers, used with a bit of force, will create



PMC pendant with brushed satin matte finish.



PMC pendant with mirror finish.



PMC pendant with Black Max hydrochloric acid patina.

a highly reflective surface. Rub only the smooth sides or belly of the burnisher across the surface of the metal, as their sharp edges or tips may scratch the silver when trying to reach into depressions. To safely polish low areas, use a ball burnisher. This is a pin-like tool with a metal sphere on the end that is used by graphic artists to emboss lettering.

Sandpaper or finishing paper. Wet/dry sandpaper from the hardware store is available in grits as low as 60 and as high as 2000. The higher the number, the finer the grit. Start with the lowest number necessary for the job (usually 400 for finishing fine silver) and move up in succession to the highest number. Finishing sheets from 3M use the same number designations as the gray paper, but the grit is finer and will create a truly beautiful mirror finish. Changing directions with each grit will allow you to see when the marks from the previous grit have been removed.

Motor Tools. 3M Radial Bristle Disks can also produce a brilliant shine. Start with 220 to create the original brushed surface and keep changing grits, going from red to blue to pink to peach and, finally, light green. I like to use one mandrel per color, placing five to six disks on each, so it's easy to simply pop a new mandrel in the flex shaft. The little bristles of this tool get into all the nooks and crannies of the piece, so if you want to selectively polish only the high points, use another tool. Run at around 15,000 rpm.

Silicone polishers are hard rubber tools manufactured by various companies, which come in a variety of shapes mounted on steel shafts. Available in coarse, medium, and fine/high-shine, they are great for smoothing bumps, removing unwanted material from repairs, and taking down sharp points that didn't get smoothed properly in the bone dry stage. The coarse and medium are pretty aggressive, so for simple polishing, use only the fine/high-shine polisher. These are especially good for concentrating on the high points of a textured design. Run no faster than 8,000 rpm.

Rotary Tumbler. The easiest way to achieve a bright overall shine is to drop your pieces into a rotary tumbler after the initial wire brushing. Jewelry pieces and stainless steel mixed shot are placed into the barrel, set on the motorized base, and left to tumble for 30 to 120 minutes. The longer you allow the machine to run, the shinier the pieces will become, but be aware that the longer they remain in the tumbler, the greater the flattening effect. As a result, if you have a piece with very fine texture, you may want to run it for only 30 to 60 minutes. Textures with a higher relief can be allowed to remain in the machine for maximum brilliance. For best results, fill the barrel with distilled water to about half an inch above the media (shot and pieces) and add a drop of dishwashing liquid or professional burnishing compound as a lubricant. Change the tumbling liquid every two or three uses to avoid contamination.

Patinas

Patinas can provide contrast to highlight the beauty of the texture, mimic the exotic color of a different metal, or when used with a resist, create a design that resembles metal inlay (see "Ir-resist-able Patinas," Fall 2004).

Antiqued Black. Hydrochloric acid based patina solutions, such as Black Max™ or Silver Black™, will immediately turn your pieces a deep, dark black. You can dilute hydrochloric acid solutions with water for a slightly lighter shade of gray, but I find that it doesn't make that much of a difference. String the piece on a piece of dental floss or craft wire to dip into the liquid, or use a thin paintbrush or pointed cotton swab to place patina in select areas. Neutralize the acid by soaking the patinated piece in hot water and baking soda for a few minutes.

Liver of Sulfur. Liver of sulfur (potassium sulfide) is very sensitive to both light and air and will quickly decompose if not used and stored carefully. I like to place a few of the army-green chunks in a small ziplock bag and then into a black 35 mm film canister. This allows me easy access without subjecting the entire can to the elements. Never use a damp finger to retrieve the liver of sulfur from the container as this will also cause it to break down. Liver of sulfur has the very strong (and unpleasant) scent of rotten eggs, so work in a well-ventilated area. For a dark patina, mix a strong solution, dissolving a pea-sized chunk of liver of sulfur in a cup of hot water. Dip the piece multiple times until you reach a color that you find attractive, then stop the action of the patina solution by plunging it into an ice cold



Hydrochloric acid patina followed by steel wool.



Liver of sulfur patina in shades of blue.



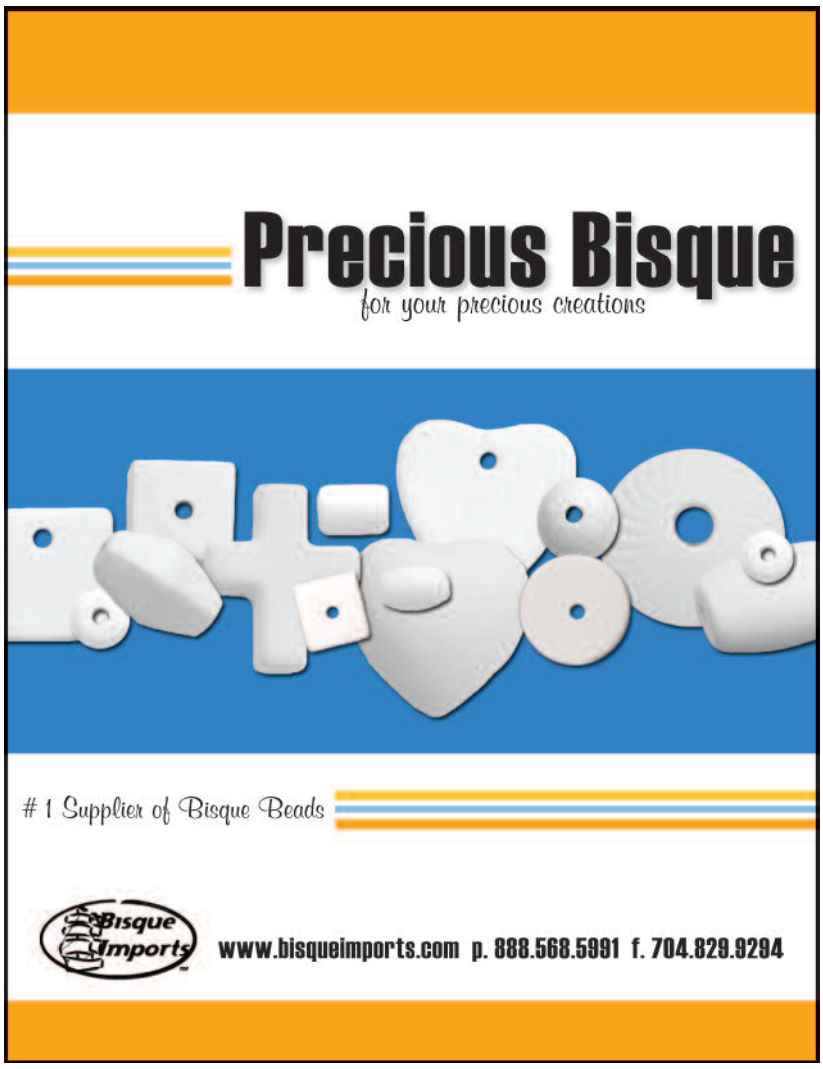
Liver of sulfur patina in gold tones.

bath. Liver of sulfur develops a different, but very beautiful bluish shade of black than hydrochloric acid does.

In addition to developing a dark antiqued look, you can use liver of sulfur to create a beautiful rainbow of colors on your silver jewelry. For best results, use a piece about the size of a peppercorn and dissolve in one cup of warm distilled water. The resulting liquid should be lukewarm to tepid and the color of straw. Using a more dilute solution and developing the patina slowly will make it easier to control the progression of the colors. Liver of sulfur patinas begin developing as a light golden yellow and then progress through copper, red, and blue before going to black. Create a dipping station using the bowl of warm liver of sulfur solution, a bowl of cool water and a final bowl of icy water. To enhance the blue spectrum, include a tablespoon of salt in the solution or, for vivid pinks, the same amount of ammonia. Dip for one or two seconds in warm solution, following with a dip in the cool water. Move back and forth between these two liquids until you reach a color you're happy with, then arrest the color development with a plunge in ice water. While these colors are lovely, they are not as stable as the darker shades and will continue to react with sulfur in the air until they darken completely. They may last for quite a while in the crevices of a highly textured piece, but liver of sulfur on high points may change sooner than you'd like. Try extending its life by using a sealer such as Renaissance Wax or an acrylic spray.

Rotten Eggs. No, really! Placing a piece of silver in a plastic bag along with a peeled, sliced hard-boiled egg for a few days will develop a dark patina on silver. After it's colored to your satisfaction, toss the egg! This is a great last minute save or a practical science experiment for you and your seven-year-old to enjoy together.

Lora Hart *began her jewelry-making career in 2000, when an actor's strike left her idle in her 17-year career as a make-up artist. Since then, her jewelry has been featured in galleries in Southern California and she has taught extensively in the Los Angeles area. Lora can be reached via e-mail at LoraHartJewels@earthlink.net*



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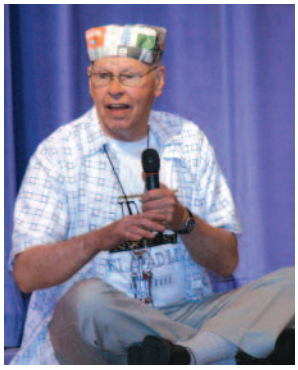
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PMC Conference 2006 Report

The Third Biennial PMC Conference opened on July 20 at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, with more than 350 enthusiastic PMC artists on hand to sharpen their skills, share their work, and talk about all things PMC. Attendees came from across the country and around the world, including representatives from the U.K., Australia, France, Greece, Canada, and Japan.



Bill Daley inspired both new insight and laughter in his keynote address.

Potter and educator Bill Daley launched the conference by encouraging PMC artists to find their own voice. "Art has to be what you are about," he said. "If everybody is going left, go right. Be different, be aberrant, be egotistical." Bill shared what he called his Hero Slides, objects and images from around the world that he looks to for inspiration. In a talk that was part stand-up routine and part art history lecture, he encouraged the group to go past information to transformation. Pens were busy as he tossed potent phrases like candy to the crowd. Among others, he described the art-making process as the act of becoming, leading us to focus less on our results and more on the ways we get where we're going.

That theme carried throughout the conference, as presenters encouraged attendees to adapt techniques to bring their own ideas to life. Robert Dancik emphasized choosing the best joining method as a way expressing a connection between materials, Vera Lightstone encouraged attendees to explore the human figure as a way of expressing themselves in PMC, and a panel discussion on design with Chris Darway and Barbara Becker Simon playfully delved into the elements of good design.

Other presenters at the conference included Elizabeth Agte on "The Relativity of Marketing"; Alice Alper-Rein on "Thinking Outside the Jewelry Box"; Linda Bernstein on "Polymer Clay for the PMC Artist"; Maggie Bergman on "How to Make Polymer Plates"; Lisa Cain on "Speaking to Skeptics"; Tonya Davidson on "Engineer Effective Ways to Hang PMC Pieces"; Bruce Paul Gaber on "Photographing Your PMC"; Holly Gage on "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Liver of Sulfur"; Ruth Greening on "Set Up of Work Areas"; Lora Hart on "Casting Call"; Louis Kappel on "Plique-a-jour with PMC"; Doris King on "Combining PMC and Sterling without Solder"; Hiroshi Kitayama on "Textures in PMC"; Jeanette Landenwitch on "Setting Stones in PMC"; Nancy Miller on "PMC and Teens"; Maryanne Mott on "Quilling and PMC Paper"; Yvonne Padilla on "Polishing and Finishing PMC"; Hattie Sanderson on "Creative Ring Techniques – Beyond the Basics"; Thackery Taylor on "Soldering PMC"; Lisa Walsh on "the Ins and Outs of a Co-op Gallery"; Marian Ward on "Fusing Techniques for PMC and Fine Silver"; Judi Weers on "Fooling Around with Mother Nature"; Jean Whittington on "Craft School – Immerse Yourself"; CeCe Wire on "Ceramic Techniques Adapted for PMC"; and J. Fred Woell on "Studio Teaching as a Business."

Hand-outs from many seminars are available at the conference Web site, www.pmc-conference.com.

The conference also included a full schedule of demonstrations in two demo rooms. Demonstrators included Robert Dancik, Celie Fago, Judi Weers, Kathy St. Martin, Yvonne Padilla, Marianne Mott, Hattie Sanderson, Sherry Fotopoulos, Mary Ellin D'Agostino, Lora Hart, Doris King, and Maggie Bergman.

Conference participants also enjoyed two social events, an opening night dessert



Shirley Gerard Bailey, Lora Hart, and Angela Baduel-Crispin enjoy the opening reception.

reception and a Saturday night cocktail party. The cocktail party provided the stage for the presentation of the Guild's first Fusion Award, which honors an individual's contributions to the metal clay community.



The Southern Arizona Alchemists and NewMetal Artists pose for a "sister chapters" photo.

The 2006 Fusion Award was given to Woodrow Carpenter, the founder of Thompson Enamel, who was chosen for his lifetime spent developing and distributing lead-free enamels, an essential component in the work of many PMC artists.



Tim McCreight answers a question for a conference participant.

As in past conferences, the most valued part of this gathering was the opportunity to share ideas with other PMC artists. Mealtimes in the campus dining halls became brainstorming sessions, shuttle bus rides an opportunity for shared inspiration, and late night chat sessions in the dorms encouraged artists to explore new directions. The most common refrain from departing artists was the realization that they had enough ideas and new techniques to keep them busy for two years — until the next PMC Conference.



Bill Daley demonstrates the art of the paper hat.



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Please include your name, address, country, phone, e-mail address, a brief bio, photo credit, plus the size and materials used in your piece.

Editor's Note:
These are just a few of the pieces exhibited at Revolution/Evolution: Contemporary Work in Precious Metal Clay, an exhibition held at Purdue University in conjunction with the 2006 PMC Conference. To order a CD with the complete exhibition catalog, Guild members can send a check for $5 shipping and handling to PMC Guild, 1921 Cliffview Lane, Florence, KY 41042. (The CD is $14.95 plus $5 shipping and handling for non-members.)



"Sea Seed No. 2" by Claire Holliday



"Secret Meeting Place" by May Bartrum



"Teapot Bat" by Toni Ellis



"Silver Torso" by Vera Lightstone.



"Shield Necklace" by Patti Leota Genack

by Suzanne Wade



"Aztec Memories" PMC with liver of sulfur patina and Aura 22 accents.



"Autumn Feathers" PMC with liver of sulfur patina and Keum-boo.



"Shield of Light" PMC with Aura 22.

Angela Baduel-Crispin

"I'm always in search of visual harmony and balance," says Angela Baduel-Crispin. A bit of paua shell, a highlight of gold keum-boo, or a single pearl may be just the element needed to embellish and complete her designs.

"My basic reason for adding anything is first about visual harmony, which also implies balance. Sometimes a piece needs to be balanced out by some other material in pure terms of lines or design," she says. "So that's when I see a pearl in a corner, or some gold highlight to bring something else out. These embellishments should add something to bring the whole piece out, and not compete within the design."

The exact material can be almost anything: her pieces have incorporated plastic grass, coconut shell, and soda-can tabs. Some of her favorite embellishment materials, though, are gold keum-boo, pearls, and leather.

"I really like touches of gold for the contrast it provides," she says. "Gold allows for texture, which is great since what I like the most is to play with the material itself."

"I also like pearls, for the touch of elegance, yet the less perfect the better for the feeling of spontaneity and uniqueness," she adds. "Black ones give a great touch to silver due to the contrast, and they're a lot less conventional. I also like the mix with leather, leather cord, and suede that I cut and shape."

Incorporating those materials may be the beginning point or a last touch of the design. "I don't think I have many rules," Angela says. " If I have a stone I really want to use, or a piece of coconut [shell] with a particular shape that I like, then I go from there, searching for balance and adding things here and there until my eye is comfortable. [Other times], I'll just cook up a design, and I will have the stone or bead or pearl in a little drawer somewhere that fits perfectly. It's sort of like Legos or a puzzle, where each piece comes to mind as if the whole picture were already in my head."



"Bloom" PMC with black pearls, ebony, onyx, bone, and polymer clay.



"Pampille Rouge"

Linda Facci

Linda Facci's classically inspired PMC pieces drip with stones – white topaz, smoky quartz, citrine. "I just love that sparkle, that little bling bling that makes [my work] look like antique jewelry," says Linda. "I'm always thinking, where am I going to put the stone?"

That love of sparkle began early in Linda's career. When she was a child, her father, a mold maker, would bring home sheets of tin, and Linda would cut and fold the tin and glue rhinestones on to make her own jewelry. "To me it was just like silver, like a Coke can," she says. "I even sold some of it. So when I found PMC, it was, Wow!"

Today, Linda's pieces begin with PMC shaped using one of her extensive collection of molds. Once the piece is fired, she selects stones and beads to embellish it. "I don't really plan it out," she says. "Sometimes I'll just make a bunch of pieces and see what looks good with each other."

Her selection also depends on the colors produced by the liver of sulfur patina she often uses. "Sometimes [the patina] might have more gold, and then I'll add more gold beads," she says. "But if it shows more grey or purple, I'll choose stones [to complement those colors]."



PMC pendants on sterling silver chain, embellished with sterling beads, white topaz, CZ, fine silver wire, and 18k gold beads

Facci also likes combining gold and silver. "I think it's a rich look," she says. "I always think of it as you can wear it with anything, then."

As design director of *InStyle* magazine, Facci is also in tune with the colors dominating the fashion scene. "I looked at the summer forecast of colors, and there were a lot of blues and whites," she says, noting that she has incorporated some of those colors into her current pieces. "But sometimes it's just what I have in my little box of beads."



PMC earrings with gold vermeil, champagne CZ, and champagne quartz.



PMC and CZ pendant with sterling silver chain and sterling, quartz, and turquoise beads.



PMC necklaces on sterling silver chain or leather cord, with sterling beads, fine silver "danglers", 18k gold beads, CZ, mother of pearl, and chalcedony.

Carved PMC Pendant

by Nancy Hamilton



Finished pendant

In December 2005, I received a call from a potential PMC student who had discovered my number at the PMC Guild Web site. As we spoke, I discovered that she was a professional jeweler and an expert wax carver. I wanted to study wax carving, so we decided to alternate being teacher and student.

At that time, I had little idea how fortuitous meeting Anita would be. Not only had I discovered a wonderful, multi-talented friend, but what she had to teach me also changed the way that I create PMC jewelry. Until our meeting, I had done all my work with PMC in the wet state. Since discovering carving, I have learned to add details in the dry clay, using carving tools instead of my fingers, which has allowed my work to become increasingly intricate. My work has also benefited from my experiments using supporting molds with PMC. One of my favorite designs includes large petals created by laying wet PMC over Paperclay molds.

The following pendant project uses both these techniques. I prefer Original PMC for carving because the higher shrinkage allows me to work in a larger format, but the technique will work on any type of PMC. For carving tools, I prefer Wolf's Tools, which were originally designed for wax carving. Other options are dental tools or carving tools sold for linoleum printing, wood carving, or polymer clay. Razor knives (e.g. X-Acto knives) also work fairly well and they come in a large variety of shapes and sizes.

Step 1. Copy the mold pattern, adjusting the pattern size if you are using any other clay besides Original PMC.

Step 2. Form the mold into a three dimensional shape using both the pattern and the side view. Be careful not to create an undercut at the bottom edge of the mold: It should slope gently outward without cutting back in. Undercuts make removing the clay very difficult. Dry the mold material according to manufacturer's directions. Sand and file the mold to refine both the shape and the surface. (See Figure 1)

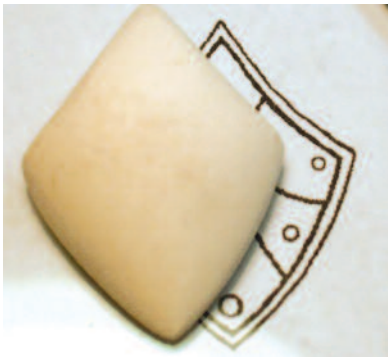


Figure 1.

Step 3. Lubricate the mold with olive oil or use mold release to prevent the clay from sticking. Roll out the PMC to 2.25 mm or 7 cards thick. Drape the wet clay over the form and gently push it in and around the mold to follow the contours. Trim off the excess. The clay will probably not be as crisp as the mold; just get it as close as you can.

Step 4. Remove fingerprints, gouges, and cracks with a damp brush; use slip where necessary. Place the supporting mold with the PMC onto a cup warmer or into an oven to dry thoroughly.

Step 5. While the clay is drying, pinch off a lima-bean-sized piece of clay and roll it into a tapered rod 2mm thick in the center and 9.5 mm long. Spritz the rod with water and cover with plastic wrap. Let it sit for five to 10 minutes.

Step 6. Place the rod onto the pattern and use a damp paintbrush to manipulate the tapered end into a curlicue, matching the pattern. Using the brush, push the remaining rod into place. Curl the other end. Duplicate this procedure for the other side, reversing the curls. When the clay is dry to the touch, move it to a drying device. (See Figure 2.)



Figure 2.

Step 7. Create the other four smaller curlicues and the inverted "V" but do not attach to the main piece yet. Let dry.

Step 8. Carefully insert the blade between the supporting mold and the clay and pry the piece off. As the PMC dries, I have found it shrinks tightly around the mold and the bottom edge may tilt in slightly, making it difficult to remove. If this is a problem, remove some of the PMC at the bottom and sand down the mold so that the PMC fits smoothly on and off the supporting mold.

Step 9. Using either a large, flat file or 320 grit sandpaper, level the bottom edge of the piece.

Step 10. Find the center point by using a small square to determine the vertical center and draw a line with a pencil from top to bottom, then then turn the piece 90 degrees and repeat. Draw lines that divide the piece as shown in the pendant pattern. Don't worry if these measurements are slightly off, as long as the lines drawn next intersect in the center.

The lines between Point B and Point D and between the two Points C don't have to be perfectly straight. What is important

is that all the lines intersect at the center point and that the lines appear balanced and visually pleasing. (Figure 3)



Figure 3.

Step 11. Mark the bottom trim by measuring 2 mm up from the bottom edge, all the way around the piece. Connect the dots.

Step 12. Place the supporting mold back into the PMC piece to support the fragile PMC. Unfired PMC is delicate, so when carving or sanding be careful not to apply too much pressure. As my friend Anita says, "Pretend that you're holding a cloud." Carve the lower 2 mm edge first. Using either a razor knife, a square edged dental tool or a graver, cut a channel along the pencil line, circling the entire pendant. Cut the groove about 0.5 mm deep.

Step 13. Cut the radiating lines. With your carving tool, cut grooves into the clay, starting from the center (Point E) and spreading outward. I carved a "starfish" shape in the center first. Holding the graver like a pencil and close to the point, push the graver through the clay. Go slowly and in 5 mm increments, if necessary. If you haven't carved PMC before, it's a good idea to practice on a piece of scrap clay first.

If you mess up a line, pinch off a tiny piece of clay and roll it into a thin snake, apply a little water to the area to be repaired, and push the clay into the scar. Using your finger, smooth off the excess and set the piece to dry. Start again.

Step 14. With your carving tool, create a beveled edge around the top segment. Place the point of the blade in the groove and angle the blade 45 degrees. Slowly, and with controlled, short movements, drag the blade along the edge of the segment. Don't press down with the blade; it's more of a sideways movement similar to peeling a potato. Repeat this process with each segment until you have beveled the edge of the entire piece. (Figure 4)



Figure 4.

Step 15. If necessary, re-cut the grooves 1 mm deeper. Use the flat edge of the carving tool to shave off the sharp points and angles. When you are finished, it should be a smooth, sloping surface, like a small, grass-covered hill.

Step 16. Fold a small square of 320 grit sandpaper in half, and half again if necessary, to get a stiff, sharp edge. Run the sandpaper along the grooves and over the sides of the segments to make those small, rounded hills. Switch to 400 grit and repeat the process. Do the same with 600 grit. The final outcome should be a smooth, rounded surface with no marks. (Figure 5) Be careful that you do not sand away your planes and flatten the piece. Set aside.



Figure 5.

Step 17. Roll out a 2 mm thick rod. Using the ruler cut the rod into five 2 mm increments. Roll these sections into balls and set aside.

Step 18. Using a pencil, mark where you want to place the balls. Check that the marks are symmetrical on each side and that they are centered within each segment. With the ball bur, cut small depressions where the marks are. (Figure 5) If the bur slips, follow the instructions in Step 13 to correct the error.

Step 19. Dab a small bit of slip into the circular depression that you carved and push the ball into place. Repeat for the other balls.

Step 20. After the piece is dry, remove excess slip from the surface of the piece using 400 grit, then 600 grit, sandpaper. Try not to touch or put any pressure on the balls.

Stay Tuned

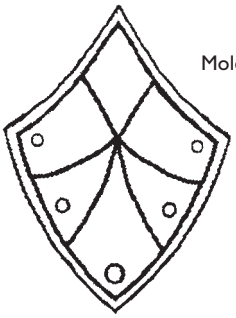
Next month we will cover finishing the top, joining all the elements together, creating the bezels and finally, carving and attaching the back.

Nancy Hamilton *has been making jewelry in one form or another for more than 10 years, and has taught both jewelry fabrication and PMC. Her PMC jewelry was recently exhibited at "Revolution/Evolution: Contemporary Work in Precious Metal Clay" at the 2006 PMC Conference. Her work can be found at the Mendocino Art Center Gallery and through her Web site, www.bellaluloo.com.*

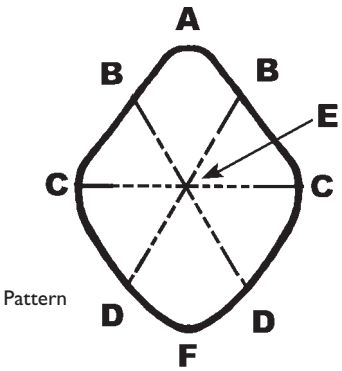
Pendant Pattern



Top Pattern



Mold Pattern



Pattern

Member News

Holly Gage's "When Peace Talks" pendant was recently named a 2005 Narcissus Award Finalist. The pendant, which was featured in *Studio PMC* in Summer 2006, was selected by the editors of *New Age Retailer* magazine as one of the top 30 body, mind, and spirit gifts for 2005 from more than 4,500 entries. The pendant was cited for its "harmonious and uplifting message of peace and love within its unique design."



Kathleen Meier was chosen as one of 11 artists in the South Texas / San Antonio area to embellish a violin for the Cactus Pear Music Festival, an annual charitable event presented by members of the San Antonio Symphony. The violins were exhibited around the state through July, then auctioned off to raise money for Cactus Pear's educational outreach programs. Kathleen's violin, entitled "Spirit of Symphony" used PMC+, PMC Sheet, and fused glass to represent the musical muse spilling out her energies into the world.



PMC artist **C. Jill Hofer** is receiving local and national attention for her line of Braille jewelry, sales of which benefit charities for the blind and visually impaired. Hofer's work has been featured in articles in the *Arizona Daily Star* newspaper and national jewelry trade magazine *JCK*.

Hofer created her Web site, www.anice world.com, in an effort to build a business that would support the causes she cares about. Ten percent of Jill's sales go to local and national charities. Her most recent line of Braille jewelry was developed in partnership with the Alexandria, Virginia-based Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, which sold the jewelry at their annual conference.

Robert Dancik presented an exhibition of new jewelry at the Westport Arts Center in Westport, Connecticut this summer. The show, entitled "The Map Only Shows the Way" featured an opening reception and an artist's talk.

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PMC Guild News

The PMC Guild has announced a new program to honor outstanding PMC teachers. The Distinguished Teacher Awards will be presented twice a year to individuals who have inspired their students through the high caliber of their teaching.

"Any member who has taken a class or workshop in PMC is invited to share their opinion of their teacher," says PMC Guild Executive Director Jeanette Landenwitch.

Nominations will be accepted July 1 to Dec. 31, and Jan. 1 to June 30. A nationally known educator will make the final selection of award winners. Bill Daley, a well-known potter and teacher, will be the Distinguished Teacher Awards' first judge. To nominate an exceptional instructor, visit www.PMGguild.com for more information and a nomination form.

As part of their mission to improve PMC education, the PMC Guild has also announced the creation of a new review system for PMC classes. The program will allow individual students to post comments and reviews of classes and instructors in the Guild's Class Listings section on their Web site.

The review system, similar to those found on eBay and Amazon.com, will allow Guild members to share their experiences with particular classes and instructors. Post your own review or read what others have to say about a class you are considering.

"The Guild is not involved in rating anyone," Director of Communications Tim McCreight emphasizes. "Rather, in our commitment to providing practical benefits for our members, we are offering a forum through which people can share their experiences with others."

To check out the new review system, visit the "Class Listings" section at www.PMCguild.com, select a class, and click on the "Details" button. A summary will appear with a link offering an opportunity to "Read Reviews."

Saul Bell Award Winners

Ivy Solomon of Ivy Woodrose in Oak Park, Michigan, received first place honors in the PMC category of the 2006 Saul Bell Awards for her pendant, "Rowling Cottage." The pendant's sterling silver sheet and wire structure features several compartments holding intricately textured PMC+ and filled with Colores epoxy, as well as bezel-set diamonds and a pearl. **Amy Sorensen** also contributed to the winning piece.

The second place winner was **Barbara Fernald** of Barbara Fernald Jewelry in Islesford, Maine, for a necklace of sterling silver beads alternating with hollow-form beads made of PMC+, PMC Paper, and Aura 22.

Finalists in the PMC category also included **Claudia Atkins** of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania; **Deborah Fehrenbach** of Deborah Marie Fine Jewelry in St. Johns, Michigan; **Kate McKinnon** and **Anne Mitchell** of Kate McKinnon Design in Pacific Grove, California; **Annamari Mikkola** of New Canaan, Connecticut; and **Amy Randall** of Amy Randall Studio in Plano Texas.

Winners were chosen by a panel of judges that included Peggy Jo Donahue of Jewelers of America, Tina Wojtkielo Snyder of *MJSA Journal*, designer Remy Rotenier of Remy Design, Paul Menke of Kabana, Mitch Horowitz of *JCK* magazine, designer, jeweler and studio owner Mike Rogers of M.M. Rogers & Co., and Hedda Schupak of *JCK* magazine.

The first place winner in each category receives a $2,500 Rio Grande gift certificate, while the second place winner receives a $1,000 Rio Grande gift certificate. This year's grand prize winner, **Eva Martin** of Eva Martin Jewelry in Queensland, Australia, for her sterling and 18k gold cufflinks, received a $10,000 Rio Grande gift certificate.

The deadline for entries for the 2007 Saul Bell Awards is Sept. 22. For entry guidelines and forms, visit the competition Web site at www.saulbellaward.com , or contact Rio Grande at 505-839-3247 ext. 13247, e-mail hideyo@tbg.riogrande.com.



Ivy Solomon



Barbara Fernald



Deborah Fehrenbach



Annamari Mikkola



Claudia Atkins



Amy Randall



Kate McKinnon and Anne Mitchell

Local Chapters

Nearly 40 current and future members of local chapters gathered to compare notes during the 2006 PMC Conference at Purdue University.

Chapter members discussed shared challenges, such as finding meeting space, and offered updates on their activities in the past year. The unique character of each group became quickly apparent, as each laid out a different set of priorities and plans for the coming year.

"Each chapter has its own unique personality," said CeCe Wire, PMC Guild local chapter liaison. "Each are specific for what people in their communities want to get out of it."

Linda Bernstein reported that the Windy City chapter has grown to 50 members, with 15 to 20 attending meetings regularly. One of the chapter's attractions is the kiln that Linda makes available to members for firing pieces during the two-hour meeting. The chapter will celebrate its first anniversary this fall with a birthday cake and a new president, Sherry Viktora.

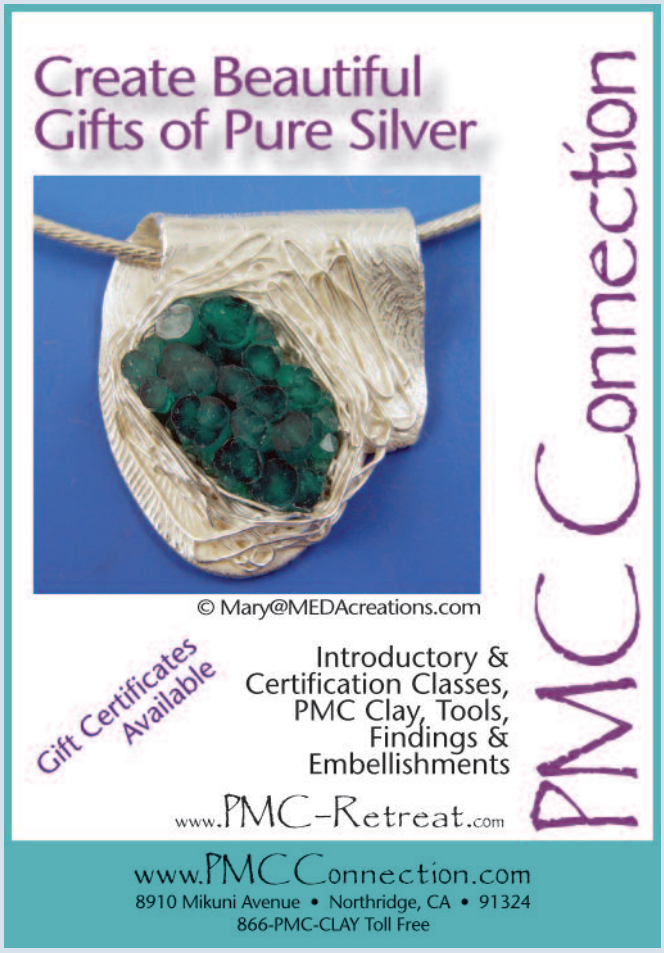
The St. Louis Chapter held its first member show at a local gallery, reported Claire Taylor. All the chapter's members participated, and although the show did not result in sales, the members considered it to be a good learning experience. The group has established a lending library and is also working on a tips book for members.

NewMetal artists reported that a heart charm necklace the group put together and donated for auction raised $200 for the Jewelers for Children charitable foundation. The group is also planning a Christmas sale this winter.

The Southern Arizona Alchemists has begun plans for their third annual PMC reception, held in conjunction with Rio Grande's Catalog in Motion at the Tucson gem and mineral shows. The group also invited other chapters to "audition" as a sister chapter, with the group planning to invite sister chapter members to visit them during the gem shows, with the group returning the visit to their sister chapter as an escape during Tucson's scorching summers.

The Northeastern Ohio chapter has grown from five to 27 members. The group recently invited Michael David Sturlin to come to Cleveland and offer a workshop; by joining together, the group was able to get a good discount off his usual workshop fees.

Mary Cay, a well-known Denver potter and teacher, presented her "glaze kiln jewels" to the Denver chapter of the PMC Guild at their April meeting. Mary's "kiln jewels" are high-fire glazed ceramic cabochons, designed to be fired in place in PMC. She gave chapter members samples, and asked them to test them, noting any changes in color, adherence, and overall suitability for use in PMC. If the chapter's experiments go well, she plans to photograph the pieces and prepare an article on their use.



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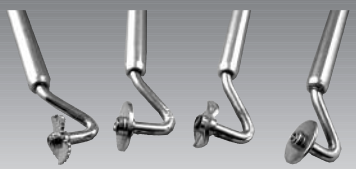
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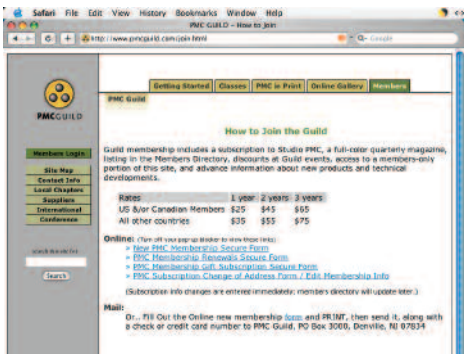
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