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Welcome to Metal Clay Connections...

It is the dawn of a new day for PMC artists! It is my distinct honor and privilege as the editor of our new newsletter to bring you some of the best information about PMC available anywhere. Not only will this outstanding newsletter serve as a medium, for exchanging valuable information about our wonderful medium but it will also provide each and every one of us with an opportunity to contribute some of our own ideas, techniques, and thoughts. Be part of the process!

Submit your original articles to me so that we can all grow by learning from each other. I want to personally thank Earl Roberts, Mary Ann Devos and Ken Devos for having the confidence in me to honor me with this assignment. I would also like to thank Shige Ikuta and Dennis Nakashima for providing us with consistently superior products that allow us to give wings to our muse. In order to make this venture successful I will need your help. Please read my guidelines for articles submissions and contact me if you would like to submit an article for consideration or if you have questions.

I look forward to a fantastic voyage!

Linda Bernstein, Editor

Mission Statement

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and educate. To this end you will find herein some of the following areas:

- Major articles by Senior Instructors and others
- Editorial
- Interviews
- Projects
- Gallery section
- Event announcements
- Hints and Tips
- New products
- Technical information
- PMCC news
- Senior Instructor News
- PMCC Certified member news



Tips and Techniques: Textures on Metal Clay by Alice Alper-Rein

An outstanding characteristic of metal clay is its ability to easily accept rich textures. A symptom of catching metal clay “fever,” is that it causes metal clay enthusiasts to see texture possibilities everywhere they look. Here are some obvious and some unique methods for finding, creating and transferring those textures to metal clay:

1. Do you have a collection of rubber stamps that you don’t use for PMC work because they are copyrighted (items stamped with them can’t be offered for resale), or you don’t like the image anymore, or the image is too large for jewelry scale, etc... Remove them from their wooden blocks and **CUT THEM UP** into small pieces of varying shapes and sizes and then **REASSEMBLE THEM**. Use reposition-able glue or tape to mount the small pieces onto a wooden block or flexible piece of plastic, so that if you don’t like the resulting textures, you can take the whole thing apart and start over again. Avoid copyright issues by creating your new stamp with images that are indistinguishable from the original. Each time you settle on a design that you like, mix up some RTV molding compound and press it into the design to permanently capture it.

2. Some artisans prefer to roll out their metal clay and then press a lubricated rubber stamp or photopolymer plate onto the rolled out clay. Others prefer to lay the rolled out clay on top of the lubricated texture stamp and press the clay into the stamp. Try both methods to see which one works best for you.

3. We’ve all been there-so what can you do with that lump of PMC clay that was left out, unwrapped and is now a hard solid lump? Or that syringe clay that dried up before it was used up? Well, if you’d like an alternative to turning it into paste or trying to reconstitute it back into lump clay, try grating it up or chopping it up into various size “crumbs” which can be sprinkled or dusted onto PMC slip for a wonderful texture on your next PMC creation. An old cheese grater can be used to make PMC flecks to add a coarse texture to a project.

*Please note that once these items are used with PMC, they should not be used with food.

4. Express yourself by typing some words, phrases, an alphabet or number pattern, etc... onto PMC Sheet using a manual or electric **TYPEWRITER**. This method can also be used to sign and date your work and to mark its silver content. Here’s how: Tape a piece of PMC Sheet to a piece of typing paper with as little of the tape overlapping the PMC sheet as possible. A glue stick can be used in place of the tape to secure the PMC Sheet to the typing paper. Insert the typing paper into your typewriter and type away! The textured PMC sheet can be cut into sections and added to your PMC project with PMC slip or fired first and then cut into sections to use in future projects. What’s a typewriter? For those of you born in the computer age, a typewriter is a keyboard device (electrical or mechanical) for printing words on individual sheets of paper by striking with raised letters through an inked ribbon. Boy, do I feel old. Ha ha! If you’re not lucky enough to have saved one of these almost extinct machines, try garage sales or e-bay to locate one for use with PMC. And in your search, pick up some typewriter parts. Typewriter keys and balls are also wonderful texture tools for metal clay.

5. Office supply stores and craft stores carry rubber stamp kits that allow you to create changeable message

stamps in different size fonts. The kits come with hundreds of mini rubber stamps of upper and lower case alphabet letters, numbers and punctuations. Also included are wooden or plastic stamp holders in different shapes and sizes. Choose the stamp holder of the desired size and shape and slide the mini letters into the channels using the provided tweezers. Roll out your PMC to the desired thickness, oil up your newly created word stamp and impress your thoughts right into your work! These stamps can also be used to sign and date your work and to mark its silver content. Making Memories® has come out with a line of rubber stamp alphabet kits, ornament kits, date kits and phrases kits that are mounted on magnetized sheets. Using them is as easy as removing the letters you need from the magnetized storage case and attaching them to the magnetic base.

6. Integrate nature's "thumbprint" creatively into your projects by pressing the backs of leaves, blossoms and twigs into rolled out clay even when your final project does not mimic shapes found in nature. Some of the patterns created by nature can be found in the produce aisle of your local grocery store. Explore the rich texture possibilities in the vein structure on lettuce, cabbage, spinach and other leafy vegetables. Fresh herbs and spices like mint and basil work well too.

7. A PMC syringe can be used to add texture and design elements to rolled out clay.

8. Use a putty knife to add a stucco-like texture to your project using thick PMC slip.

9. It's fun to fill an eye dropper with watered down PMC slip to drizzle some texture onto your project.

10. Oil up the handle of a patterned fork or spoon and use it to texture PMC to make a beautiful ring or a pair of earrings.

11. Pencils are inexpensive, yet valuable texture tools. Carve some pencil erasers with one-of-a-kind designs and use them to texture PMC. The point end can also be used as a PMC texture tool. Roll out some clay and texture it by rolling over it in several directions with a hexagon shaped pencil.

12. MAGICSTAMP® is reusable, moldable foam that will allow you to create your own textures from found objects. Available at crafts and rubber stamp stores, Magicstamp® comes in packages of a variety of geometric shapes, as thin sheets, in blocks and in a grab bag of odd shapes. Here's how it works: Heat the foam with a hair blower or embossing heat tool for 30 seconds (300F). Press the heated foam against an assortment of found objects, textures or a dimensional surface and hold for 15 seconds. The impression will remain until the foam is reheated. Permanent impressions can also be "engraved" on a Magicstamp® with a pen or pencil. Suggested textures: grains of rice, bark, shells, crumpled paper or aluminum foil, beads, jump rings, botanicals

13. Create a raised texture by pushing a small lump of PMC Clay through a section of the cotton mesh, square grid canvas meant for needlepoint. To visualize what the PMC will look like when pushed through the canvas, picture meat as it comes through the many holes of a meat grinder, but in square tubes. Needlepoint canvas is available in most craft stores and sewing centers. The canvas is measured in threads per inch. Look for mesh number 14 which has a small interlock grid. Mesh number 10 has a more open weave. Each weave will yield a slightly different result. The needle point canvas will burn away as the kiln fires, so consider that when planning your design and leave some clay at the back of the mesh to hold everything together. Substitute brass, copper or steel mesh cloth for the needlepoint canvas. These won't burn out.

14. Did you know that the local office supply chain store (Staples or Office Depot, etc...) will turn your text into a rubber stamp while you wait?

15. My new favorite PMC tools are combs that I make myself by hammering varying amounts of long, stainless steel straight pins through ½" strips of balsa wood (any soft wood will work) I use them as texture tools by pulling them lightly, either straight across, in a wavy fashion or crosshatched on rolled out PMC. Poking the

clay repeatedly with the comb also produces an interesting texture. Commercially made combs and hair picks can be adapted for this use.

16. The next time you're in the craft store, visit the fabric paint aisle and pick up a bottle of dimensional paint. Two types I've tried are Puffy Paint and Slick Paint made by Tulip. Any color will do. Here's how these paints relate to PMC: Using the long nose applicator tip that comes on the bottle of dimensional paint, practice drawing designs, doodles, dots, assorted shapes and writing words with the paint on thin sheets of clear acrylic or on sheets of non-porous paper, like heavy stock, glossy photo paper. When you have a design(s) you like, let the paint dry for 24 hours. For the puff paint, after the 24 hour drying period, use a warm hair blower or a warm iron on the back side (not the side you drew on) to gently "puff the paint" for added dimension. You've just created one-of-a-kind texture plates for use with PMC! It's a bit more challenging, especially controlling the thickness of the extruded line, but the same technique can be achieved using any temperature glue sticks and a glue gun. One caveat, you must either write words backwards, or use a 2-part RTV molding material to make an impression of the words you've written for them to appear properly when impressing them into PMC.

17. Convert the textured bottle tops from pill bottles, soda bottles and cleaning products into PMC texture wheels. Here's how: Puncture or drill a hole at the center of the bottle cap. Slide the cap onto your needle tool. Roll out some PMC clay. Lubricate the textured bottle cap with some olive oil. Grasp both ends of the needle tool, with the texture "wheel" resting on the rolled out clay and roll away!

18. Use the photopolymer technique, borrowed from the printing industry to turn your own black and white artwork, logo, text and high contrast photos into impression stamps to use with PMC. Whether you hand draw your artwork, logo or text, use your computer to draw images or gather copyright free clip art, it will be necessary to print out the images using your computer. Scan them in if need be. Print them out on clear acetate/transparency sheets preferably on a laser printer (although an ink jet print will work) Make a layered sandwich of a cardboard square, foam, the photopolymer material, your transparency, ink down and a square of window glass, held together with small clamps or just your fingers. Expose under UV light or in bright sunlight for the recommended time for the photopolymer material you have purchased. Use a soft brush under running water to scrub the photopolymer plate. Black areas of the design will scrub away (since they haven't been exposed to the light) while exposed clear areas will harden, creating a raised texture stamp. After washing, expose to light again to cure. See http://www.silverclayart.com/solar_demo.htm or purchase kits from www.pmc123.com Store these plates in a dark place.

19. When preparing artwork and photos for photopolymer plates, use photo software to remove gray tones, increase contrast and reverse text and images.

20. When using a black background around artwork on a transparency sheet in preparation for creating a photopolymer plate, print it out so that the black background extends to the edges of the photopolymer plate to avoid imprinting ending and starting lines/borders around your artwork.

21. Black areas printed on transparency sheets prepared for transferring designs onto photopolymer plates won't allow the UV rays to pass through to the plate and will therefore wash out, creating depressions in the resulting photopolymer plate. These depressions in the photopolymer stamp will fill when pressed into metal clay. Therefore, black areas on transparencies will create RAISED metal clay images. The opposite is also true. Clear areas on transparencies used to create photopolymer plates will harden after exposure to UV rays and won't wash out. Since they will be raised images on the photopolymer plate, these raised images will create depressions when pressed into metal clay.

22. Did you know that PMC Sheet/Paper can be embossed with tools meant for paper crafts? Like paper punches, embossing tools come in geometric shapes, alphabet letters, numbers, designs, animal forms, insects,

etc... Unlike paper punches, embossers make an impression, but don't cut through. PMC sheet will hold the raised image created by an embosser. When the PMC embossed image is fired and then a patina is applied, the highs and lows of the embossed area stand out prominently.

23. Create some unique texture tools by cutting or burning designs into small sections of PVC pipe using linoleum carving tools and/or a wood burning tool. If you've taken a fair amount of metal clay technique classes, odds are you've collected several PVC or plastic rolling tools in the class kits. This is a great way to recycle those extra tools.


24. Substitute stickers for the wax or nail polish resist when using the water etching technique to create texture on your metal clay project.

25. Try the tear-away polymer clay technique when a low relief image is desired. You'll need to print out your artwork using a toner based printer or copy machine. Polymer clay is rolled out and burnished to the printed copy. When the paper is torn-away from the rolled out clay, some clay will stick to the toner image and text, creating a texture sheet that can be used to create a low relief texture plate for metal clay.

26. Did you know that photopolymer plates CARVE easily with micro carving tools? So, if you're not happy with the way your photopolymer plate turned out, or you'd just like to fill in some spaces between design elements, use micro carving tools to add or remove design elements.

Alice Alper-Rein
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[Jewelry By Y2A, Ltd](#)
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	<p>Fun with Photopolymer...or... Divine Custom Stamps By Sherry Fotopoulos</p>
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What could be more fun than making a custom stamp with your child's first scratchy signature? Use it to make a pendant and then make a stamp of the footprints from the birth certificate to create matching earrings! Ever wanted a portrait of your pet on a bracelet? Now it is all possible. PMC is such a new material, compared to other art media that we're still developing new and different ways to work with it. Often techniques and materials from other art media and other industries turn out to be perfect for use with PMC. That is exactly the case with photopolymer plate material. It was developed

for the printing industry. Today all newspapers and magazines are printed with photopolymer plate material, instead of the zinc plates of yesteryear. While the process is easy, you must pay attention to details. The photopolymer plate material is light sensitive. That is, it hardens (or crosslinks) when exposed to UV rays. And, it is so sensitive that the image used to create the stamp must be absolutely flat and pressed against the plate material during exposure. Without the correct pressure, light will "leak" in under your design and spoil the stamp image. Also, the image must be very dense. By that I mean that when printing the image onto the transparency you should have the printer set to dark for a heavy coating of toner. And last, but not least, there is a specific order for arranging the exposing unit, transparency and photopolymer plate material. This is shown in Fig. 5.

Let's get started! First select the text, design, line drawing or a very high contrast black and white photograph. Use your computer scanner or a Xerox machine to enlarge or reduce the image to the exact size you want. Next print the image on clear acetate (transparency film) using a toner type printer. If you don't have access to a toner printer, be sure to ask for the special transparency film used for inkjet printers at your local office supply store. Trim the transparency to size. In a darkened area, use scissors to cut the photopolymer plate material to the same size as the image (Fig. 1). Place the exposing unit on a flat surface and remove the glass (Fig. 2). Place the photopolymer plate material on the foam and remove the thin clear plastic layer from the photopolymer plate (Fig. 3). Place the image, toner side down, onto the photopolymer plate (Fig. 4). Place glass on top. See Fig. 5.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

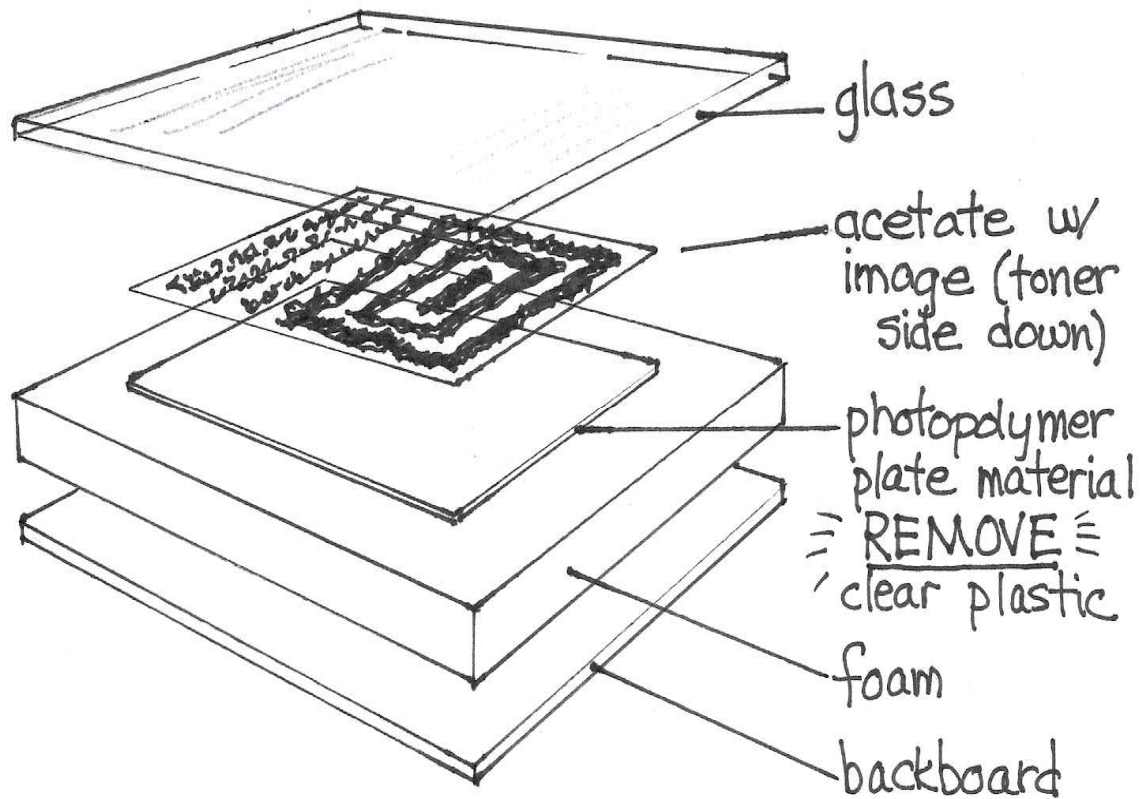


Figure 5

Compress the exposing unit by gripping it along the edge and squeezing it by hand. Now place the glass side against your body. This will prevent any light from getting to the photopolymer material. Walk outside and turn the glass side of the exposing unit toward the sun. Expose the plate material for 90 seconds to 2 ½ minutes, depending on the brightness of the sunshine and cloud cover. Be careful not to stand in the shade. Now place the glass side of the exposing unit against your body again while you return indoors to a running water source. Remove the photopolymer plate material from the exposing unit (Fig. 6) and scrub under running cold water. Do NOT use soap or warm to hot water, as it will dissolve all of the plate material!! Scrub with a soft plastic brush (or a toothbrush). This may take longer than you think. Imagine you are scrubbing up a 3-week old jell-o spill. You can't just swipe it with a cloth. The same idea applies here. When the stamp is as deep as you desire (or when all of the water-soluble plate material is removed) pat the plate material dry with a lint free cloth. Return outside and expose the photopolymer plate to sunshine for 3 minutes. You may do this by simply laying it on your open, flat palm (Fig. 7). Voila! Your stamp is ready to use. Use Badger balm or olive oil as a separating agent just like with all other molds and stamps (Fig. 8). Trim (Fig. 9), dry, finish and fire according to the appropriate firing schedule.

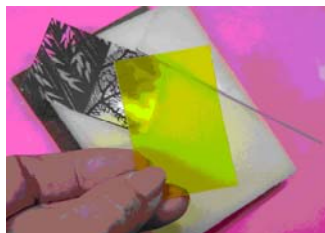


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Using Photopolymer Plate Material Indoors

Sometimes one is unable to use direct sunlight for exposing the photopolymer plate material. Do keep in mind that even in overcast conditions UV rays penetrate the clouds (as when you get a sunburn on overcast days). But temperature can keep us indoors! This is the time when having an indoor exposing source is valuable. NOTE: These directions are applicable to "line art". That is, any drawings, lettering, or images that are black and white, as opposed to half tones or photographic negatives. Both "grow lights" (used for plants) and "black lights" emit UV rays. The higher the wattage of the bulb, the higher the UV rays emitted from the bulb. Some experimentation may be necessary to determine the exact time of exposure and distance from the bulb that gives you the best results. The addition of an aluminum foil reflector (shiny side down) behind the bulb will help concentrate the UV rays onto your photopolymer plate material.

The most important factor for exposing the photopolymer plate material with a bulb is the distance from the bulb. I suggest that you hold the exposing unit between 2-4 inches from the bulb. Choose "your" distance and do not vary from it for any reason. Next important is the time of exposure. Time of exposure will vary between 2-10 minutes. The further from the bulb you hold the exposing unit, the longer the time necessary to harden the photopolymer plate material to create your line art stamp.

To determine "your" perfect distance and time for exposing, select a black light or grow light bulb with a minimum wattage of 75 watts. Arrange a narrow strip of photopolymer plate material ($\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4") in the exposing unit with a fairly dense pattern on the transparency as for making a photopolymer stamp. Cover all but $\frac{3}{4}$ " of the plate material with a strip of the black plastic wrapping material that the plate material is wrapped in (Fig. 10). Place the glass over this arrangement and expose for 60 seconds, holding the exposing unit 2" from the bulb. Remove the glass and expose an additional $\frac{3}{4}$ " of the plate material. Replace the glass and expose the plate material for another 40 seconds, holding the exposing unit 2" from the bulb (Fig. 11). Repeat this procedure until you have exposed the entire strip of photopolymer plate material. You will have exposed the plate material for 40, 80, 120, 160, 200, and 260 seconds at a distance from the bulb of 2 inches.

Use the plastic scrub brush under running water for two minutes to wash out as much of the plate material as possible (Fig. 12). Now test your strip by pressing in into polymer clay or metal clay. You will see portions of the strip that are underexposed (no pattern or soft rounded edges), correctly exposed (crisp edges with full detail) and overexposed (Fig. 13). Use the correctly exposed time and distance for future photopolymer stamp making. From the results of this particular example (75 watt blacklight bulb, exposed photopolymer plate material 2" from bulb), I will expose future photopolymer plate material for 4 minutes (240 seconds). Safety Note: When using black light bulbs, do not look directly at the bulb when it is turned on. The UV rays that are emitted can damage (burn) the nerve endings in your eyes just like looking into the sun!



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

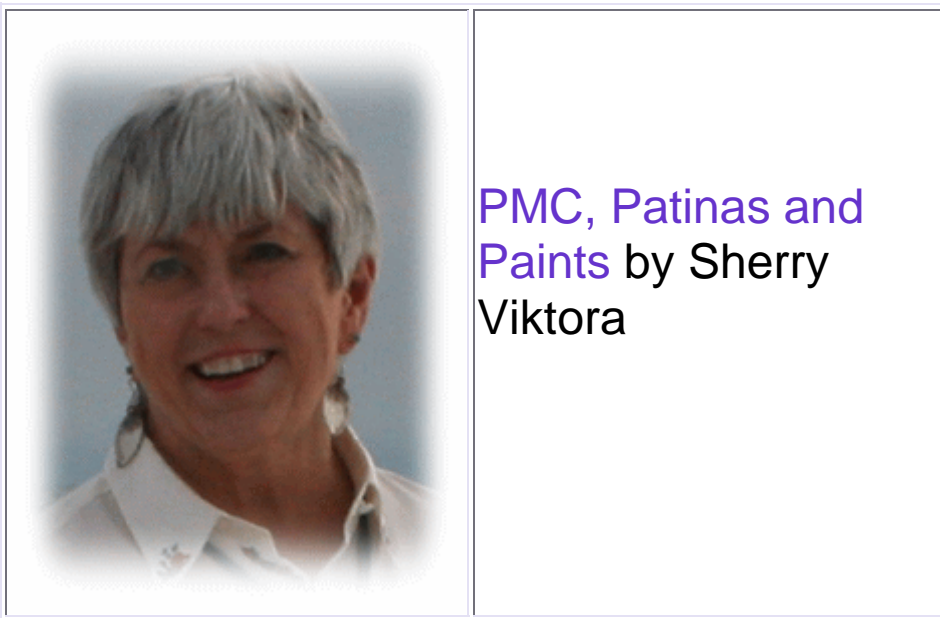
Figure 13

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PMC, Patinas and
Paints by Sherry
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There are several ways to add color to your bright PMC creations. I am going to discuss 3 of them which are fun, easy, and allow you to play with your colors.

Liver of sulfur

Liver of sulfur is a potassium sulfide chemical. When mixed with warm water it produces colors on your PMC, ranging from light yellow gold all the way down to purple black, depending upon the strength of the mixture and duration of time the piece is exposed to the chemical. LOS is available from many jewelry and PMC suppliers, and can be purchased in as small as 1 oz. packages of granules. These need to be kept in airtight, dry containers. When exposed to oxygen and/or water, the granules oxidize into potassium sulfates, and your LOS no longer works well. Liver of sulfur usually comes in chunks of varying sizes and may need to be broken up into smaller pieces prior to mixing. I like to mix my liver of sulfur very dilute and take more time to get my color, because it gives me more control and sometimes the light gold is as far as I wish to go. If you put a granule the size of $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pea into a 6 oz. cup of hot water you will get a nice light yellow mix. If you're going for the darker colors, or want to get there quickly, make your mix more concentrated. The important thing is that your chunks dissolve quickly, turning your solution a clear yellow. If that doesn't happen, your LOS could be deteriorating, and it will be very hard to get your patinas. Some people like to add a couple of drops of non-sudsing ammonia or even sea salt to their LOS, believing it makes the purples more prominent. I will discuss that later.



Lime of sulfur

Lime of sulfur is similar, being a calcium polysulfide, but is cheaper and can be easier to use, since it is already in liquid form. It is called Bonide-lime of sulfur spray (garden centers carry it) and comes in a 32 oz. bottle under \$20, a lifetime supply for a whole army of PMCers, I think! (Thank you Cynthia for introducing me to this and sharing both your information and lime of sulfur with me) In order to get almost instant colors, put 4-6 drops of lime of sulfur and 4-6 drops of non-sudsing ammonia into a cup. Hot tap water hot is good enough usually, or you can microwave the water, then add the chemicals. I use a small mug warmer to keep my solution warm. You can either dip your pieces into the water completely, partially, or use a brush or q-tip to put the chemical right where you want it. If you are doing the latter, you will need to re-apply it several times to the spot until you get the color you want. The process is the same which ever solution you are using.



The following points are the same, whether you use Liver of Sulfur or Lime of sulfur

1. The more polished and smooth the surfaces of your pieces are, the more brilliant the colors will be. If you have any white or unpolished surfaces, they will tend to look dirty brown.
2. Your colors will progress from a light gold to a darker pink gold, then on down into the blues, purples, and to an iridescent black .
3. When your piece is where you like it, IMMEDIATELY neutralize it in cold water, with a little baking soda in it. If you aren't sure, you can just rinse in cold water and still put it back in to get more color. I like to wash them in soap and water when I am all done, too.
4. I have tried BOTH the Liver of sulfur and Lime of sulfur with and without the ammonia, and have gotten great colors both ways, (and not so great colors, too I'm afraid). I do, however, have well water which may have chemicals that impact my results. Polishing is more important, I believe than anything for "zingy" color. If I'm not getting good color, I make up a new solution and start over.
5. PMC colored with either patina is not totally stable and can darken with age. This is a variable response, sometimes not happening for a very long time, but eventually the colors will not be as brilliant. I have tried jewelry lacquer, floor wax and museum wax with VERY poor results! The purple is dulled immediately. Keeping the pieces in plastic will slow the process, and they can be cleaned and re-done. If I'm selling a piece, I tell the customer about the possibility.

Paints

Glass paints are a wonderful and easy way to add permanent color when you can't, or don't wish to use enamels. Sometimes you can't get the depth that you achieve with multiple coats of transparent enamels, but there are advantages.

1. Glass paints (vitrea and porcelaine) are available at hobby shops such as Michaels and Hobby Lobby and run about \$5.00 for a jar that will last you a lifetime! They can be mixed to make more colors if you don't want to invest in the 40 or so colors available. They can be painted onto raised surfaces where enamels are difficult or impossible to be used.
2. You do NOT need a kiln! You can torch fire your PMC, polish it, then paint it using either brand of glass paint. After drying for 24 hours, they can be placed in your oven at 300 Deg. For 40 min. and are then permanent (dishwasher safe if you happen too want to do that).



Sherry Viktora
Senior Instructor
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[Sherry Viktora](#)
[Out on a Limb](#)



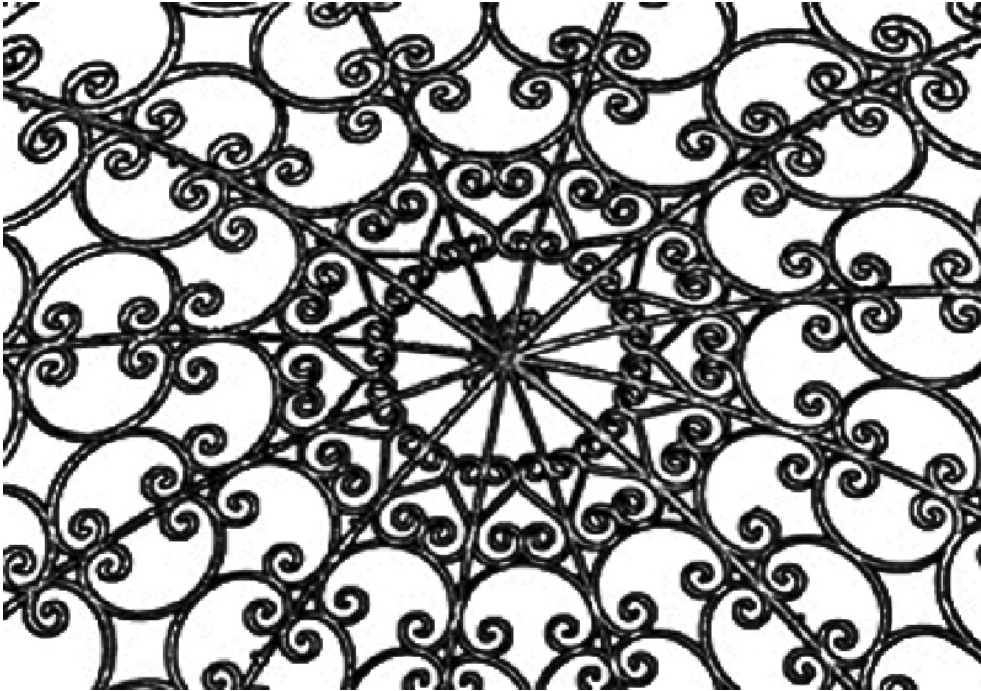
Photo Polymer Plates in Action with Your Own Photos by Amy Ikenn

The thing that intrigues me most about PMC is that the inspirations are endless. I've enjoyed making jewelry that echoes shapes around me and always have an eye out for new possibilities. In addition to my artwork, I've always been a big camera geek – before digital editing I experimented with all sorts of filters and exposure tricks to create photos that are more than just a picture. When I first heard about Photo Polymer Plates almost two years ago it was immediately apparent that this would be the obvious union between my photos and my jewelry.

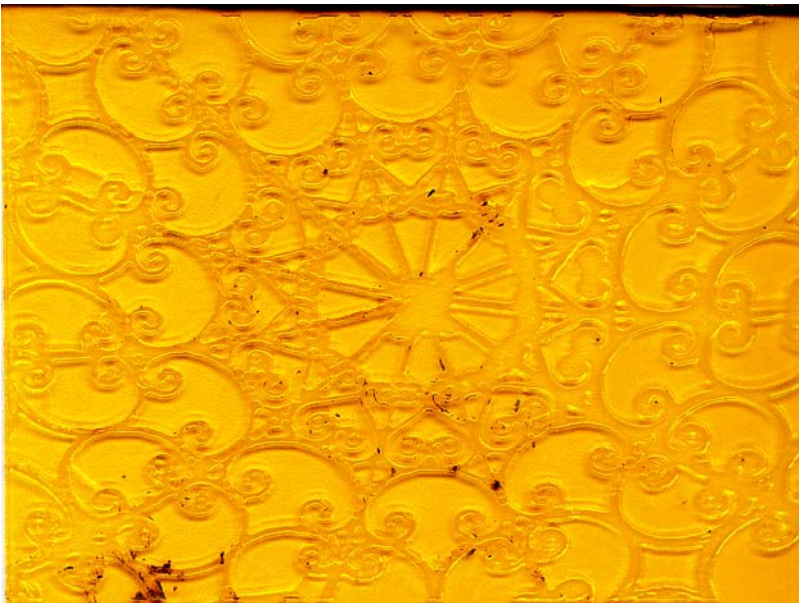
I started with the obvious subjects: pictures of my children and hand drawn doodles. Once I saw how well this technique worked I went in search of less obvious items. My favorite PPP implementation came out of a recent trip to Jamaica. The resort we stayed at had beautiful wrought iron gazebos at the end of a pier and my husband and I were sitting in one. I looked up and realized that the top of the gazebo had an amazing pattern against the night sky. I took several pictures to make sure I had it just right and here is what I came home with:



I couldn't wait to make use of this pattern so one of the first things I did when I got home was use Photoshop to reverse the colors and convert it to a purely black and white picture:



Finally, I printed it out onto a transparency and made my PPP.



Of course, like most of my patterns, it sat and waited for the right piece of jewelry to evolve from it. A few months later I spent an afternoon with a friend sorting through and buying cabochons at a local rock shop. Looking for interesting ways to set my new treasures I went through my box of personal patterns and this once jumped out as the perfect setting. I made several pendants right away: The center of the pattern provided the

perfect focal point, and I never did use the entire pattern in once piece. Here are the results:



The beauty of these two pendants is enhanced in my mind by the special memory and place that helped to create them.

The thing I love most about using PPPs is that I can create my own unique patterns. I have made patterns from doodles with marker and pictures of a window in Florence. They help me to create beautiful works of art that are like no-one else's.

[Amy Ikenn](#)

PMC Artist and Instructor

[skewedjewelry](#)



An Interview with Earl Roberts

Tell me a little about your life and your life and family.

2 Grown children, Daughter an attorney in Dallas a son a budding Entrepreneur in Dallas. Heavily into boating and spend all my time when in town at the lake. I am involved with several companies that I own or am a partner in. My association with Mikuni is over 10 years old going back to my days at Paragon. They have been a great company to work with and I have benefited greatly from my association with them. The group of professionals that Ken and Mary Ann have assembled has been for the most part a joy to work with. (Now come on it's not all a bed of roses.). I am hoping to continue this work for sometime to come. (No, contrary to the rumor floated at the conference I have absolutely no intention of retiring anytime soon. I am having too much fun)

What did you do before PMC?

After a 5 year tour as an Air Force pilot I became involved in the Hobby and Craft business. I owned a small chain of Craft and Hobby retail stores, Been a major distributor in the Hobby Ceramic industry and since 1984 been involved in the manufacturing of all types of kilns and furnaces from hobby kilns to large industrial furnaces.

What inspired you to become involved with PMC?

I was involved with Art Clay when I was with Paragon. Some patent issues at the time caused Paragon to drop Art Clay. I left Paragon in Nov. 99 and was involved with Mikuni in marketing other ceramic products. Subsequently we began negotiating with Mitsubishi to become the second importer for PMC to serve the Hobby and Craft Market. Near the end of 2000 we reached an agreement and I recruited Ken and Mary Ann to join the team and the rest is as they say history.

What do you like best about PMC?

My likes or dislikes are not with the product, the product is outstanding and getting better every year, but with the people I have had the privilege of working with at MMC. MMC and specifically Mr. Akira Nishio have been very supportive of our efforts to bring PMC to a wider craft audience. As you know we have had stiff opposition to our program. But the success of our education program is undeniable thanks to the efforts of Ken and Mary Ann and we have proven that virtually anyone can become a skilled PMC artisan given the proper training.

What advice would you give to a new PMC artist?

Don't be afraid to explore. Have a question? Call us. We are eager to help.

What do you see as the future of PMC?

This is a loaded question. Our focus in the past has been to certify artisans in the hopes that not only would they become customers but also teachers and spread the knowledge. Given the current situation, heavy Internet discounting, the financial incentive to teach is all but wiped out. As you know PMCC lobbied long and hard to maintain MSRP pricing as a way for teachers generate the necessary additional income to allow them to teach. PMC is now being sold without regard to the value added by the process required to manufacture PMC or to the process savings it affords. This presents a big challenge to PMCC and we are reformulating our strategy to meet the reality of the Silver Clay market on 2007

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

The market is growing outside the U.S. Our partners in the UK, Australia, South Africa, Sweden, Spain and elsewhere are teaching using pretty much the PMCC model. In the years ahead there will be opportunities, as you know, to teach abroad. The prospect of being able to combine teaching PMC and travel is, I think, very exciting.

Thank you, Earl for letting us all get to know you a little bit better and keeping us up to date on new developments with PMCC.



From the Editor

Slow Down and Enjoy the Process

We can make things with PMC so quickly that sometimes we forget to slow down and enjoy the process. The best pieces I have ever seen, were not made quickly. Slow and steady wins the race. Every process has its steps and this one is no different.

Step 1 Design: First you need a creative and original idea perhaps inspired by some meaningful personal experience or observation. For me this is the easiest part, but it is not that way for everyone. Look to the things you enjoy and you will find inspiration. Family, pets, nature, history and personal interests or beliefs are only a few things that can inspire us.

Step 2 Development: Next, developed your idea into a design and sketched in the exact size it will be when finished. Decide what you are making; jewelry or sculpture, and the techniques you will use in the process. Don't forget to account for the shrinkage of the material you are using.

Step 3 Perfect: Work on the design sketch until it looks great. A good design will make a good final product. It will not improve in design when it is in metal clay. Design is the key to a top notch piece.

Step 4 Form Piece: Practice making this piece in polymer clay if your clay skills are still developing or if this is new techniques for you. If you are confident, go ahead and form your piece with PMC. If it is not right do not let it dry. Sometimes I will form a piece 6 times before I let it dry. Do not rush. I do not hesitate to do it over if needed.

Step 5 Refining: Refining of pieces is a step that is not often given enough time. Not only will you save hours later but your finished piece will be far better that if you did not refine it sufficiently. Saving time here may only be an illusion. Attend to every detail: and enjoy sanding, carving and embellishing your pieces. I call this your Golden Opportunity.

Step 6 Finishing: After firing, finishing the piece will bring the process to its culmination. Whether you choose a mirror finish or oxidize with liver of sulphur, finishing is as important as any other step. Choose a finish that will compliment your original design.

By following these steps carefully, meticulously and consistently, you will enhance your enjoyment while producing a quality piece. The results can be personally rewarding when you take the time and slow down.

Thanks....

Thanks to all the contributors in this issue: Alice Alper-Rein, Amy Ikenn, Sherry Fotopolous, and Sherry Viktora, for their creativity, support and timely submission of their material. Also thanks to Ken Devos, Mary Ellin D'Agostino and Jake Bernstein for their help with the details of proof reading.

Linda Bernstein

Gallery: Photopolymer and Patinas



Barbara Simon

Ring made with texture from photopolymer plate.



Rita Cheveli

Oxidation from liver of sulphur



Mary Schaudies

Texture from this photopolymer plate.



Rita Cheveli

Oxidation from liver of sulphur



Carol Babineau



Diane Brooks



Janet Pace

These photopolymer plates were used to make the 2 pieces below.



Janet Pace

Made from photopolymer plate above.



Janet Pace

Front



Janet Pace

Back



Carol Babine

Links



Register now for: PMC Connection 2007 Artists Retreat

Calling all PMC Artists! The second bi-annual International Artist's Retreat is being held from April 16th to the 22nd, 2007. Conveniently located in Dallas, TX. The Retreat, which was an astounding success in 2005, is expected to host some 150 students. We are excited by the list of talent to share with you. The specialty classes range from the high intensity intro workshop, entitled, Boot Camp to a two day Hinged Box Workshop with Patti Genack. Instructors are coming from as far away as South Africa to share their creativity, talent and expertise in this exciting medium.

Visit our website, www.PMC-Retreat.com to see a complete, day-by-day listing of all the great workshops available. Make sure you check to see how many of the discounts will apply to you! Whether you want to take a one day workshop or 7 days of workshops we would love to have you join us. Accommodations are comfy, the food is scrumptious and plentiful. We have activities planned for you each evening with a book signing Gala planned for Saturday night. There will be door prizes, raffles and a design competition. Just imagine, a week of non-stop PMC with other people who are as fanatical about PMC as you!

Please join us! If you have questions regarding the Retreat you may call my studio at 817-379-0533 or send an email with your question to Info@PMC-Retreat.com

Creatively yours,
Donna Saint John
PMCC Events Coordinator PMCC Senior Instructor

PMCC Senior Instructor Sites

<u>Jewelry By Y2A, Ltd</u> <u>Alice Alper-Rein</u>	<u>Artique</u> <u>Linda Bernstein</u>	<u>Silver Sunset Design</u> <u>Elisa Cossey</u>
<u>MED'A Creations</u> <u>Mry Ellin D'Agostino</u>	<u>PMC123</u> <u>Sherry Fotopoulos</u>	<u>Whim Wham Beads</u> <u>Patti Genack</u>
<u>Jericho Wind Arts</u> <u>Ruth J. Greening</u>	<u>Atelier PAW, Inc.</u> <u>Hiromi & Kent Hirakawa</u>	<u>Silver Clay.com</u> <u>Vera Lightstone</u>
<u>Eclectica Beads</u> <u>Irina Miech</u>	<u>Precious Metal Clay.Net</u> <u>Leslie Tieke</u>	<u>Parkstone Studio</u> <u>Donna Saint John</u>
<u>Glass Orchids</u> <u>Nancy Tang</u>	<u>Out on a Limb</u> <u>Sherry Viktora</u>	<u>Linda Kline Design</u> <u>Linda Kline</u>

PMC Related Sites

PMC Connection	The PMC Connection website, owners of this newsletter.
PMC Guild	The PMC Guild is an educational organization founded in 1997 to promote instruction, research, teaching and exhibition of Precious Metal Clay.
PMC in Scandinavia	Distributor and Senior Instructor for Scandinavia
PMC Connection Hong Kong	Our partner in Hong Kong
Ceramic & Craft Centre Australia	PMC Distributor in Australia
The PMC Studio	Our partner in UK

Contact Information

Editorial Calendar

Submission Deadlines

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We look forward to your submissions: PMC articles, photos and more. Please include your name, description of work PMC work, a short bio, address, e-mail, and phone. Articles and photos should be attachments. Image resolution should be 300 dpi for a 3" by 5" image size. Mail us a CD if the image is over 4MB. All articles become the property of PMC Connection.

Editorial Calendar:

April 2007 Kuem Bo
July 2007 Water etching
Oct 2007 Dichroic

Deadline for submission dates:

January issue Sept 1st
April issue December 1st
July issue March 1st
October issue June 1st

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