

# The PMC Studio

Precious Metal Clay – Your Questions Answered!

**Q: Is PMC as good as 'real' silver?**

*A: This is probably the question The PMC Studio gets asked more than any other! And our answer is always the same: PMC is fine silver so in fact, it is even purer than Sterling Silver! We see it as the most exciting and innovative form of silver in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Q: How do you get the silver/gold into the clay?**

*A: In fact, it isn't clay at all, but pure silver that has been finely ground and turned into a clay substance. When fired, the binder and water is burned off returning it to its original state – fine silver.*

**Q: How does PMC differ from working with sheet silver?**

*A: PMC should really be seen a complementary medium to Sterling Sheet. Sheet is ideal for creating large, smooth items. Due to the fact that it is sterling silver and because of the manufacturing process, sheet will be structurally stronger than PMC. However, PMC is ideal for creating patterns and textures as it can easily be moulded or sculpted. The use of certain construction methods and polishing means that most structural issues can be overcome.*

**Q: Can PMC be combined with other materials?**

*A: PMC can be combined with any other metal ranging from copper and brass to gold and platinum. You can solder onto PMC, pickle and oxidise it. In addition, PMC can also be combined with glass and ceramics – basically with any material that can withstand a constant heat of 600°C.*

**Q: How flexible is PMC?**

*A: One of the key advantages of PMC is the fact that it can be re-fired many times, which means that you can add it to an existing piece at any time. For example, if you are making a ring, you can create the band and the top separately. These can then be put together, using paste, before or after firing. And if you don't like the result you can simply change it as many times as you like!*



**Q: It sounds fun for the amateur, but is it really a suitable medium for the professional jeweller?**

*A: Most definitely! As some of the country's top designers will testify, any jeweller willing to try this unique new product will discover its endless possibilities. Nobody – whether expert professional or first-time amateur – looks back once they have opened that foil-wrapped package...*



**Q: Is it necessary to say that an item is PMC when I get it hallmarked or offer it for sale?**

*A: As PMC is fine silver, there is no need to state that it is PMC. When selling work, you may find that customers get confused between what they consider to be "real" silver (ie. Sterling) and Fine Silver. However, for your Assay Office, it is useful to know that an item is PMC so they can take this into consideration for their marking methods. (The PMC Studio recommends 3D laser hallmarking).*

**Q: What courses does PMC run?**

*A: We offer a comprehensive training and development programme in the UK, with over 100 courses and hands-on demonstrations per year. Our approach is based on a modular system, where you pick and choose your courses depending on your ability and interest. We offer a basic range of courses aimed at complete beginners or those wishing to refresh their skills, and intermediate courses for on-going development, plus Certification courses and monthly master classes for those who are continuing their learning. We regularly update courses as there's always something new to discover in the world of PMC!*

**Q: Do you do anything to foster and encourage creative design with PMC?**

*A: We have an annual PMC Design Competition, with an award ceremony and exhibition at a new restaurant/gallery in London's Hatton Garden, arguably the most famous and historic jewellery district in the world. We are delighted to have secured sponsorship for the Design Competition from J. Blundell and Sons, one of the UK's oldest jewellery suppliers dating back to 1839!*

**Q: Any tips for a new PMC artist?**

*A: We have a few basic suggestions:*

- *Save time and money by taking a basic course from a good instructor. Good technique means you won't learn any bad habits. Your finished work will look better, you get to know exactly what tools work for which job, and more importantly, you won't waste any clay. A good course may cost a little more, but is a sound investment. Cheaper courses may mean more students, less materials and tools and possibly the need to invest in another course to give you the confidence to go it alone.*
- *Keep your work simple and keep it small. You may be pleased with your first efforts but once you have mastered the basic skills well, your work will look so much better, and you will find that you won't want to wear anything that looks over-fussy or has obvious mistakes in it, such as a wonky stone or a crooked bail.*
- *Keep your clay in optimum condition by rolling it out no more than 3 times (UK weather conditions prevail of course). It also helps to use a pack size relative to the design you are creating, as once the pack is opened, it only has a certain shelf life. The last thing you want to do is to have to store half-used packs of clay.*

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**The PMC Studio UK Distributors of Precious Metal Clay**