

Random use of PMC

A group of teenagers from Richard Lander School have started their own business with the help of the Young Enterprise scheme.

The group chose the name "Random" and each person in the group agrees on their role within the business so now they have a director, accountant, web designer and so on just like any business in the adult world. From the planning stage through opening bank accounts to selling their product, they are responsible for every aspect of running the business. Help and guidance is on hand from business advice mentors and tutors but essentially it is the group that run the venture.

Random decided to develop a business which sells recycled glass jewellery and have been doing very well, even winning the "Best Newcomers" at a recent show. Their mission statement is "to be a successful company designing, making and selling

Students from Richard Lander School practice their PMC designs in plasticine.



quality recycled products. We openly operate in the UK and at the same time help to save the environment."

After researching on the Internet they decided to spend their training budget on a course at the Mid Cornwall School of Jewellery to learn to use PMC.

The ease of working with PMC and the minimal set up costs made PMC ideal for use with their recycled glass jewellery. As

one of the students said, "Using real silver alongside our recycled glass makes the jewellery pieces more valuable. Selling more items will mean our business is a success."

The Young Enterprise scheme gives teenagers a very direct experience in all aspects of running a business. It will be no random accident when these budding entrepreneurs succeed in the real business world.

Business Feature: PMC Studio

The PMC Studio, which became the new official distributor of PMC for the UK in 2005, is run by Helen O'Neill with some assistance from her husband Kevin. With Helen's background in beadwork and Kevin's understanding of the business world, they have the skills that complement each other to make a successful PMC business. Their aim is to provide everything for the PMC artist, including clay, kilns, tools, and an on-going education programme.

Their studio and offices are located in Amersham, Bucks, not far from London with easy access off the M40/M1/M25. They are also just short walk from the train station. The spacious studio has been refurbished and newly equipped with PMC



The light & airy workroom in Amersham.

training in mind. Classes include a regular Open Studio every Tuesday 10.30-2.00, Certification classes and Masterclasses. They have a class to suit every ability.

On the subject of education, company director Helen says, "Our aim is to provide a comprehensive training programme that is nationwide. Our own team of Senior Instructors teaches all our courses, plus we have invited a number of international artists to run special classes for us here. We

are proud to be the only company in the UK offering a certification class which will also entitle students to a discount on PMC."

Helen has a busy schedule lined up, travelling around the country to spread the word about PMC. She will be attending jewellery trade fairs at Earls Court and the NEC in Birmingham as well as the hobby craft fairs. "This is a very busy year for us! It is great to get out to meet the public face to face." Helen also finds time to produce an informative customer newsletter every other month, full of interesting articles.

The PMC Studio has a skilled team standing by to help with your enquiries. You will find Hamish and Sharon at the other end of the phone, ready to deal with your orders and available to help with your technical questions.

For more details you can visit the website www.thepmcstudio.com or call 0870 8500151.

PMC Guild UK: Report from the Director

I love my job!

For years I have been enthusiastic about working with PMC and, with the creation of the UK PMC Guild, I am discovering there are a lot of other people who feel the same way. I get to hear PMC news from all over the country and, also, from around the globe! Best of all, I get to share the news and make new connections. Artists from all across England have been in touch to offer congratulations on the first issue of the UK magazine, with plenty of willingness to help spread the word about the UK Guild. In fact we had 20 new members in March alone! So you see, Precious Metal Clay is really catching on in the UK!

One of our first undertakings was to launch a dedicated website for the PMC community. This site is now available at www.pmcguild.co.uk, an address that I hope you'll want to bookmark. The site offers many features, but let me describe a few to tempt you to investigate further.

Search for a Class

Anyone with access to the Web can now track down a PMC class in a matter of a few clicks. A sophisticated database allows visitors to search by location, tutor, or date. Just a few days after the site was launched, there were over 30 classes posted for all to see. This highly visible site is linked to the primary site of the international PMC Guild, which means that our classes are literally before tens of thousands of potential students. Wow!

Don't forget, as members of the PMC Guild, you can post relevant classes on our searchable database so people can find you. A visit to the site will quickly lead you through the simple steps; within a few minutes your classes appear for all to see.

The cost to members is a delightful Zero. This is one of the benefits of being a member.



PMC Guild UK website: www.PMCGuild.co.uk

Discussion Board

One of the defining features of the PMC community is the willingness to share. Those readers who have visited the discussion board at the primary Guild site will also know that the discussions are archived, which means that even questions asked and answered a year ago are available now. Our UK Discussion Board is a bit thin at the moment because it just started, but we count on our members (i.e. you) to use the discussion boards and establish local area groups to strengthen the network of PMC artists.

By the time you are reading this, I will be making preparations to attend the third PMC Conference in America. I know there will be other Brits attending, and I look forward to seeing some of you there. For those who can't make it, I will be happy to report back in the winter edition to share the experience. Hopefully it won't be long before we have our own PMC conference here too!

As I thought about what to put in this issue, I asked myself, "Who is working with PMC?" The versatility of the material makes it appropriate right across the age and skill range. At one end of the spectrum, we see young children making PMC birthday treats, and teenagers running their own business from school. PMC is also making its way into the range of materials used by students in our Universities.

New for this issue are the 'Top Tips' which I had great fun compiling. These are the little studio tricks that make life easier. I'll bet that you have discovered a few along the way and I hope you want to share them with others. Send your ideas and I'll do my best to fit them into future issues.

If there is anything I can do to help nurture the UK PMC scene, please contact me.

At your service!

Lisa Cain



Hannah Louise Lamb

For some people, PMC is love at first sight. The ease, the speed, the lovely, malleability! Er, for some... It is interesting to ponder why we choose the paths we do. Why do some people choose to work in clay, some in textiles, and some in metals? I suppose that teachers, mentors, and exposure have something to do with it, but I think the reasons might run deeper, to include things like the smells, the feel, and the inherent nature of the materials. Say what you will about metal, for all its bling-bling appeal, the material itself is ornery. It resists almost everything we try to do to it—cutting, bending, and joining all require special tools, and control of those tools can require years of study and practice. I think one of the things that draws jewellers to metal is its resistance; the fact that you need to work hard to impose your vision upon it.

Given this, Hannah Lamb's initial reaction to PMC was perhaps predictable. She is a trained jeweller, having started at Grantham College, then progressed to a BA (Hons) from Glasgow School of Art and an MA from the Royal College of Art. Along the way, she developed a personal style characterized by intimate scale, delicate finishes, and precise piercing. For more examples, visit her website at www.itchyfingers.org/hannah.

Far from love at first sight, when Hannah first learned about PMC, she had little interest. As a self-employed artist in her first year of business, the idea of reaching into a wildly different medium was both unappealing and impractical. Yet, given a chance to attend a sponsored studio retreat, she found herself face to face with something totally alien to her familiar comfort zone.

"It's easy for a studio artist to get completely involved in what we do, so it's really important to take time out, give yourself some head space, and try something completely different. For me, the most exciting reason to try PMC was that the clay would

not allow me to exploit any of the skills or techniques I normally use."

Hannah's line of jewellery is all about flat—as graphic as wallpaper (which, in fact, she cites as inspiration). The brushed surfaces impose a clean neutral quality that makes a contrast with the sentimental and iconographic nature of her designs. Now, enter PMC...

"I found the material interesting," she says cautiously. "I make everything flat and clean, with no tool marks. With PMC there is no choice: you can't help but leave fingerprints and tool marks." For some people, this collision between familiar methods and a contrary material would not end well. But in Hannah's case, she was forced to abandon her usual approach, and the results were dramatically un-flat.

Setting aside her saw and files, she returned to the same tools we all started with in the nursery: our fingers. Hannah pinched a bit of PMC to make an evocative double wedge. She did it again, and again, and again. The ease and speed of the process lead her to explore the power of multiples. After firing, she burnished the edges of each small form (there's that precision again), which made a delicate contrast with the fingerprints visible in the clay. Before we knew it, these pinch forms had invaded the studio like an army of ants. Every kiln load saw a few dozen more, and in the end, they found themselves made up into earrings, a necklace, and a bracelet. The piece shown here allows the forms to simply spill forth from a cradle that was made by taking the texture of a tree trunk. Fingerprints? Tree bark? This is a far cry from the graphic pierced images we associate with Hannah's work.

So, if not love at first sight, is there hope for this relationship? It's probably too soon to say, but that doesn't mean that the experiment with metal clay wasn't valuable. PMC offers a powerful contrast to a metal-working tradition that is thousands of years old. What a great opportunity to reexamine what we know and how we work.



PMC Object, 8" long, with random scatter of pinched elements.



Pendant, Oxidized silver and cerise silk



Hannah Louise Lamb at work with PMC.

PMC UK News

Free Photo Shoot for UK Guild members

The PMC Guild UK is offering experienced makers an opportunity to have professional quality shots taken of their work on June 24, from 10.00 to 4.00.

At our first meeting in December, the PMC Guild identified the problem of getting good quality photographs of jewellery, so we have come up with a solution. Top photographer Clive Carpenter has very kindly agreed to lend his expertise to the Guild for a day to take digital photos of your PMC work. He has also generously offered to refine the pictures and burn them onto CD that participants will receive after the event.

Clive brings to the event a wealth of experience in craft photography. You can see examples of his work at his website, www.clivecarpenter.com. He is also fully insured to handle your pieces with confidence.

A professional photography session would normally be a substantial cost, so this is a great opportunity and yet another benefit of PMC Guild UK membership. In return the UK Guild may want to use some of your images so you will be asked to sign a Release Form on the day.

Each member will have a time slot of approx 30 minutes and places are limited to ten – assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. All places must be booked in advance.

The photo shoot will take place at the Mill Arts Centre in Banbury. The venue is

ideally situated just off the M40 and is also within walking distance of the train station.

To book your time slot or for more details contact the PMC Guild UK on 01726 816600 or email Director@PMCGuild.co.uk. Full details will be available on the website www.pmcguild.co.uk

Conference News

Plans are confirmed and excitement is running high for the third biennial PMC Conference, which will be held this year in Indiana, USA in late July. Conferees will spend three days mingling with peers, attending seminars, viewing several exhibitions, and visiting with a host of vendors. As in the past, the conference is preceded by a wide selection of workshops hosted by Rio Grande and PMC Connection. Enrollment is well ahead of previous years, but this venue can manage thousands, so we're not worried. Details, costs, travel suggestions, lodging options, and more are available at www.PMC-Conference.com

Conference Flags

If you are planning to attend the PMC Conference in Indiana this July, let us know you are from the United Kingdom at registration where we will have Union Jack flag stickers available for your nametags. This will make it easy for Brits to spot each other and meet up!

Top Tips

This will be a regular feature where you can share your discoveries. Please send us the little things that make life easier or save you time when working with PMC.

When you open a new PMC syringe, take the nozzle from the old syringe and put it straight on the new one. That way you don't waste PMC that is in the nozzle. You can also use all the spare new clean nozzles as mini hole cutters. Snip the ends of the tips to give holes of various sizes that are nice and small. Perfect for cutting jump ring or earring hook sized holes.

PMC3 can be a little sticky in the plastic wrapper. I used to spend ages trying to scrape it all out and getting in a right mess. Now, once I have used my clay I just let the plastic sit out to dry with the little remnants in place. When it is all dry I just scrumple the package over my slip pot or work area and all the little dried bits of PMC come away in seconds.

Use a refillable Pump 'n' Spray from Lakeland (the cookery shop chain) to give a fine mist of olive oil on anything I want to keep non-stick. You pump air in to propel the oil by moving the lid up and down so there are no environment-harming CFCs involved and when it's empty you just refill it. It's really useful on things like the clay extruder where you need to get oil down inside the tube to stop the PMC sticking. Best of all, the Pump 'n' Spray only costs £4.95 full of 200ml extra virgin olive oil!

When I am doing intricate work, like syringing on detail, I always put the piece I am working on onto a playing card. That way I can move the card to get to different angles without squashing my syringe work. It's a sort of mini work mat that is fairly mobile.

Join the PMC Guild Today!

YES! sign me up today!

- one year membership£20
- two year membership£35
- three year membership£45



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