

## Artist Feature: Hannah Facey

by Lisa Cain

Hannah Facey is in the third and final year of her degree course, “3D Design in Glass” at the University of Creative Arts, Farnham.

I had difficulty getting in touch with Hannah for this feature and we played phone tag for quite a number of days. When we finally got to speak, Hannah’s opening words to me were, “Why on earth do you want to interview me? I’m just experimenting with PMC and glass. I don’t even know if I am going to continue to use PMC.” What Hannah didn’t realise is that we are all experimenting with PMC. I had seen photos of her work. I liked what I saw and wanted to know more.

Hannah grew up around jewellery. Her mother is the talented jeweller Ruth Facey, who is well known in the contemporary jewellery world here. But Hannah wasn’t attracted to silverwork. Glass has been her fascination for as long as she can remember.

“I still have some molten twisted glass I found in the ruins of a burned down house when I was 6 or 7 years old,” she says. “I was intrigued by the shape, form, and light. And I was captivated by how much the glass had changed its form, even though I didn’t really know that when I was 6. This is what I am now exploring in my degree work.

“I decided to study at Farnham because the University of Creative Arts has such a fantastic glass department. We have two furnaces, four Glory Holes, 10 kilns, sand-blasting, acid-etching and enamelling equipment. Excellent facilities and helpful technicians make for a great creative environment.

“I actually heard about PMC during a car journey conversation between my mother and Ruta Brown. Ruta is well known for her beautiful organic looking folded silver and gold jewellery, and she often incorporates stones and opals in her work. She had just been on a PMC course and was telling us about the workability of the silver clay. This planted a seed of curiosity about whether I could use PMC with my glass. When I asked around at Uni, I was delighted to find that the technician in the jewellery department, Rebecca Skeels, had extensive knowledge of PMC and had been working



This paper weight started life as a blown glass bubble made with furnace glass. After Hannah made the bubble she cut grooves into the side of it with a grinding wheel and inlaid some PMC into one of those grooves. The bubble was heavier at the top and although it was only fired in the kiln at 600°C for 30 minutes, it slumped into the paperweight shape you see now. Hannah burnished the PMC by hand after the firing. Photography by David Facey (01264 366260)

with PMC for years. Although we don’t speak the same language when it comes to the glass, she has been ultra helpful.

“So far I have had mixed results in my experiments, but there are still many lines of inquiry to explore. Time and temperature affect both the glass and the PMC so there are many variations to play with. Then there is the colour of the glass and the way silver affects the colours. I’m playing with using the raw PMC straight out of the package and also conversely small fired silver pieces. There are lots of ideas I haven’t tried yet, like [using] cold raw PMC in hot glass blowing, hot PMC in hot glass casting, and so on.

“The majority of my work at the moment is lost wax glass casting and I am pushing the limits in this area by exploring different glass thicknesses. Most lost wax glass is thick and heavy. I am producing thinner work or combining thick and thin – which is not easy to do! I’ve made bowl forms and quite a few non-utilitarian sculptural items; ‘look-at’ pieces to capture the

eye. These are fun because they are open to interpretation by the viewer. Some of my shot glasses and tumblers explore thick bases and thin sides so I get to see how different the same colour can be in a dense and sheer contrast.

“I like the fact that PMC allows me to incorporate a medium I am familiar with from being in my mother’s workshop, but I don’t have to invest a lot of time to fabricate the silver pieces I want to use. The immediacy of PMC [allows me to] explore my ideas relatively quickly. All this experimenting is not cheap though! I am not sure how much longer I will pursue the PMC/glass combination. These trials are a bit of a meandering river and I don’t know where it will take me. But I do know my course ends next June and then I will be off to New Designers in July.”

# Artist Feature: Kate Williams

by Lisa Cain

Kate Williams has a first class honours BA in Applied Art, Jewellery and Metalwork, and is currently studying for her Masters in the same subject in Wrexham, North Wales. She combines traditional jewellers' techniques with PMC, taking her inspiration from her passion for old-fashioned treasures like Victorian buttons and antique lace.

Kate has been making jewellery for more than five years, using a variety of materials, including resin and sterling silver in addition to PMC. Her current work is a collection called "Grandmother's Garden." Here she tells us about her PMC experiences.

"I heard about PMC over a year before I actually tried it. I found it quite hard to imagine that you could buy a piece of clay, make something and then have it turn into silver. Pretty unbelievable! I did consider it 'cheating' in a way because I spent many years training in the traditional methods of jewellery making.

"I use Kernowcraft as a jewellery supplier quite often and I noticed they had PMC on special offer so I decided to give it a try. I made a press mould PMC piece and was amazed that the lump of grey clay turned to silver in front of my eyes! I was hooked!

"PMC provides me with a whole new way of producing silver prototypes without the hassle of creating wax pieces for casting and waiting two weeks for them to come back. The immediacy is great, and I can see straight away if my idea will work in metal. Then I can send the piece to be cast in sterling. Speeding up my experiments has given me more confidence in my casting work. I also really like the way the shrinkage of the clay increases the detail contained in my work.

"We were never told about PMC in my jewellery courses. I learned about it independently. I have had mixed reactions from college tutors regarding PMC. They are aware of it, but I think they are trying to ensure that we have a good grasp of traditional techniques so they steer us away from something so new. There is almost an air of disapproval toward PMC from the teachers, even though they haven't used it. Most of the other students aren't aware of the usefulness of the material either. So I haven't discussed it in the workshop much, but PMC continues to influence my art. It is perfect for picking up all the fine detail of the textures and shapes of the antique treasures I love to work with.



Mixed media necklace-the large resin beads show off colourful fabric given to Kate by Mary Ann Devos.



Detail: Resin & fabric beads with black volcanic lava and silver PMC beads.



PMC earrings

"I think it will take a while before PMC is seriously considered as a jewellery tool within education. We need to have talented and well-known jewellers producing high quality PMC pieces in order for it to catch on. In the meantime, I feel like I have discovered something special that can enhance my traditional skills. PMC is not a cheap material for a student though, so I contacted Lisa Cain about finding some funding. She gave me lots of helpful advice and peo-

ple to contact, and I am delighted to say that I now have sponsorship from the PMC Studio to enable me to experiment further. I have even been asked to write about my experiences for their newsletter. I am very grateful for the help given to me by the PMC Guild in gaining that opportunity and I am thrilled to be written about here in the magazine."

You can see more of Kate's work on her Web site [www.kswjewellery.co.uk](http://www.kswjewellery.co.uk)

# Educating PMC Artists

## How do you go about learning to work with PMC?

If you are reading this magazine then you probably already know something about PMC. But how did you get started? Lots of people hear or read about PMC, buy themselves that first package, then have a disaster of some sort—melt down, breakage, confusion and panic. Next you might buy a book or decide to attend a class. Classes with a good teacher are invaluable and can save you some expensive mistakes. Books are often easier to understand after a class and are helpful reminders as we progress. There are also some great videos that show techniques and projects to inspire and educate. It's useful to be able to pause the DVD while you try it out for yourself!

In the end though, what really improves our ability and understanding of creating with PMC the most is plenty of practice.

One of the big advantages of working with PMC is the low waste rate. If you decide you don't like something or realise you can do better, simply chop it up, re-hydrate the clay and go again! This really enables us to practice freely.

As in life, we often learn the most from our mistakes. We need to take a philosophical view of these "failures," and try to look at PMC mistakes as learning curves. This is especially useful for those who want to run classes or teach others about PMC. If we have worked with PMC for any length of time, we will have made most of the classic mistakes ourselves. These frustrations pay off by making us better prepared to guide students, who benefit from our firsthand knowledge.

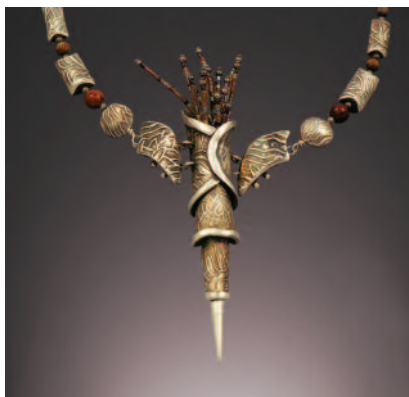
Conversely, our teaching provides us with useful tips and tricks, too. We all have moments in a class when we think "Ah-Ha! Oooh I like that. I'm going to use that." It is often said, and no less true for it, that teachers

learn from their students. Those teachers then carry their discoveries along to other classes, spreading information and guidance. This is one of the things we are really paying for when we attend classes.

Besides spontaneous discoveries from students, who teaches the teachers? In the United States, two active certification programs have trained almost 3,000 people in technical skills. One of these programs has been adapted here in the UK, and is making strides in developing a cadre of trained artists. We are also lucky to be the first country to have an independent qualification course, started just this year, called the Diploma in PMC Proficiency. One-quarter of the course is specifically aimed at producing good PMC teachers, a facet that has been missing from previous training programs. This will surely help to improve the standard of teaching in the PMC field. (You can read more about the Diploma on the News page.)

How do we know if the class we sign up for will be a good one? There are no guarantees, but you can learn a lot speaking to a tutor before signing up for a class. Find out how long the teacher has been working with PMC, what he or she hopes to achieve in the class, how many other students there will be, what facilities are available and so on. During the conversation you will get a feel for how this tutor will respond to you and your questions, which may help you to decide if this is the class for you. If the class is listed on the PMC Guild website, you will soon be able to read reviews of your tutor and leave feedback after you have attended a class. Any teacher worth their salt never stops learning.

The sidebar lists some useful resources for continuing your PMC education.



Maggie Bergman "Necklace for urRu," 2005  
PMC, sterling, glass beads. 4" tall.  
Photo: courtesy of the artist.



Angela Baduel Crispin (France) "Swing It" 2005  
PMC, sterling chain.  
Photo: courtesy of the artist.

### Education Resources

#### Books

*Working With Precious Metal Clay*  
by Tim McCreight

*Creative Metal Clay Jewelry* by Cece Wire

*Metal Clay Jewelry* by Louise Duhamel

*The Art Of Metal Clay* by Sherri Haab

*Precious Metal Clay In Mixed Media*

by Mary Ann Devos

#### DVDs & Videos

*Push Play for PMC*

by Celie Fago and Tim McCreight

*PMC Basics* by Tim McCreight

*Contemporary Metal Clay* (3 DVDs)

by Hattie Sanderson

*PMC Beads* by Tim McCreight

#### Classes

The Chununga Tree

in Hazlemere, Buckinghamshire

The Mid Cornwall School of Jewellery

in Cornwall

The PMC Studio in Amersham

Find more UK classes at [www.pmcguild.co.uk](http://www.pmcguild.co.uk)

(Guild members can list their classes free of charge which is a great advertising tool.)

#### Websites

PMC Guild website [www.PMCguild.com](http://www.PMCguild.com) has an archived discussion board so you can search for hundreds of specific PMC topics. Lots of technical information and resources for teachers to print and use in their classes.

Yahoo Metal Clay discussion group is a friendly forum with a supportive, helpful community of metal clay artists from all over the world (free to join).  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MetalClay>

[www.squidoo.com](http://www.squidoo.com) has a good collection of PMC information.

#### Magazines

*Art Jewelry*, *Bead & Button* and *Lapidary Journal* are American magazines which often feature PMC projects. Any good UK news agent will be able to import the magazines for you or you can subscribe on the Internet.

# PMC UK News



Students work on their PMC pieces in the purpose built jewellery workshop in Cornwall.

## PMC Qualification Course

The UK is leading the way when it comes to innovation in PMC education.

The Mid Cornwall School of Jewellery has designed the first independent qualification for those working in Precious Metal Clay. The Diploma in PMC Proficiency is not associated with marketing, discounts or particular suppliers. The program is based on a high standard syllabus; one-quarter of the Diploma course centred on good teaching practice, with an emphasis on raising the quality of PMC classes. The course is recognised by the PMC Guild International and the grades of competency actually exceed the minimum requirements suggested by the PMC Guild.

The Diploma is awarded only after all four grades of PMC competency have been passed. These grades are:

- **Grade 1.** Foundation Skills in PMC Competency.
- **Grade 2.** Intermediate Skills in PMC Competency.
- **Grade 3.** Advanced Techniques in PMC Competency.
- **Grade 4.** Teaching PMC Effectively.

Individual competency certificates are awarded to students for each successful grade achieved. Each grade can be an independent learning segment or students can study several grades in sequence. Once per year MCSJ runs an intensive nine-day Diploma course with all four grades available in quick succession.

Classes for the first three grades each include an element of traditional silver working skills, which help take students' PMC work to a more professional level. For example, students learn to add hand-made sterling silver earring hooks, soldered jump rings, and unique brooch fittings, which helps their work stand out from the crowd.

MCSJ also encourages students to make their own tools and textures, and this forms a fundamental part of the curriculum.

Gaining the Diploma in PMC Proficiency shows a high level of commitment to PMC work. It is the most thorough training currently available for those who want to teach classes or work seriously with PMC. For more information about the program, contact MCSJ at 01726 817989 or e-mail [info@mcsj.co.uk](mailto:info@mcsj.co.uk).

## UK PMC Symposium 2007

A third speaker has been added to the line up for next July's Symposium in London. Kevin Whitmore will join us from America for our one-day event.

Kevin will share his extensive knowledge of firing gemstones in PMC. He works for Rio Grande in New Mexico and has been working with PMC for 10 years.

Jewellers will be particularly interested to know that many natural gemstones will withstand the low firing temperatures of PMC3. Even more appealing is the fact that the shrinkage of the silver clay will hold the gemstone in place so it is not necessary to build conventional stone settings. This is a great time saver with lots of potential!

## Small Treasures competition

Entries are coming in for the "Small Treasures" competition announced in the last issue of the UK supplement. This Christmas, why not spend some time making your own "small treasures"? Your entry could win you a great prize! Take a look at [www.pmcguild.co.uk](http://www.pmcguild.co.uk) for entry details.

## 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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## UK membership enrollment form

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