**Metal Clay**

A New Way to Make Fine Jewelry

Traditionally, precious metals have been commonly available to jewelry artists only in forged forms such as sheets, tubes, ingots, or flakes. To transform them into jewelry, artists use metalsmithing methods (known as fabrication) to cut, hammer, or cast the metal. But in the 1990s, advances in powder metallurgy allowed the production of precious metals in a powdered form, which has become known as metal clay. Over the last decade, metal clay has become available in gold, silver, bronze, copper, steel, iron and more, and many jewelry artists are embracing its use as a new tool in making jewelry.

**Metal Clay: a new way to make fine jewelry**

To make metal clay, powdered metals are mixed with a small amount of inert organic binder and moistened to attain a malleable, clay-like consistency. This new clay-type format allows artists to work with precious metals in innovative ways that can’t be done with traditional metalsmithing techniques. It can be rolled, coiled, carved, and sculpted in myriad ways, and even used in 3D printing.

Once transformed into a work of art, the metal clay is dried and refined, then fired, usually in a kiln, to just below the melting point of the metal used. The small amount of binder burns out, causing the piece to shrink slightly and the metal molecules to sinter together tightly. For instance, powdered silver becomes fine silver, or 99.9% pure silver, with all the properties of fine silver, and will fuse without soldering to other fine silver components.

These jewelry pieces can then be worked and finished with traditional metalsmithing methods if desired. Many artists working with metal clay combine the best of both metal disciplines in order to create unique works of art. Today there are many different types of metal clay available to artists: gold, fine silver, sterling silver, bronze, copper, steel, iron, and more.

**You’re Leading the Way in Wearable Art!**

Be proud of your new work of art, completely hand-crafted in today’s newest way to create fine jewelry. You’re also supporting green technology, as recycled metals are the source for most metal clays. Your unique work of art should receive the same care you provide for the rest of your jewelry, normally just an occasional polishing with a jewelry polishing cloth.

**A Proud Member of AMCAW**

As a jewelry artist working in metal clay, I’m proud to be a member of the Alliance for Metal Clay Arts Worldwide (AMCAW), an international non-profit organization whose mission is to nurture artistic and instructional excellence in metal clay. AMCAW was established by leading metal clay artists in 2018 and has hundreds of members across the globe who are partnering to help shape the future of metal clay. Find out more at [www.amcaw.org](file:///Users/wendymcmanus/Downloads/www.amcaw.org).

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