



Clay Techniques with PMC

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A. Slip Trail Technique

What you will need for this technique:

- Original PMC
- slip made from Original PMC
- craft knife
- an empty syringe
- plastic work surface
- hot plate or java warmer
- course emery board
- 3M green scrubby
- liver of sulfur

1. Roll out the PMC to the thickness of mat board.

2. Use a craft knife and cut any shape you like.

3. Mix water and metal clay to the consistency of thick cream. This will create a thin slip. Load into a syringe. Squirt onto the PMC slab in a random pattern. This technique, borrowed from ceramics, is known as slip trailing. Allow the slip-trailed pattern to continue beyond the work surface. Allow the slip to dry. Add another layer of slip and let dry. Repeat layering as often as you like to create an interesting surface texture.

4. Allow the piece to dry. Lift the shape off the surface and break away the excess slip. Set the piece on the java warmer to drive off any remaining moisture. File the edges with the course emery board.

5. When the slip is completely dry the piece is ready to be fired. Fire flat on a kiln shelf for the long fire- 2 hours at 1650°F / 900°C.

6. Your choice of finish. For this technique I prefer to wire brush, then apply a black patination of liver of sulfur. To finish the piece rub with a green nylon dish pad to remove the patina on the higher surface.

B. Water Etching Technique

Water etching is a technique borrowed from pottery/ceramics. I learned about water etching from Professor Emeritus Dick Luster in his home studio in Greeley, Colorado. I have adapted the materials to use with silver metal clay, but it is essentially the same technique.

What you will need for this technique:

- 14 grams of PMC+
- pair of craft sticks
- nail polish
- #0 watercolor brush
- nail polish remover
- moist towelettes (Wet Ones™)
- plastic work surface





1. Roll out the PMC+ to the thickness of craft sticks and cut any shape you like for your design. (The thicker the slab of clay the better for this technique. This will give a deeper relief surface, thus a more dramatic effect.) Put on a hot plate and cure to bone dry. Use nail polish and a #0 watercolor brush to paint a design on the dry clay surface and let the nail polish completely dry. Immediately wash the watercolor brush with nail polish remover so you don't damage the tip.

2. Rub a moist towelette over the surface of the clay. The moist towelette will pick-up the silver clay wherever it is exposed and this area will "etch" away. The areas covered with the nail polish will resist the etching process and stay at the original height (craft stick thickness). Continue "etching" until the desired depth is reached. If the slab of metal clay gets overly wet and mushy, (mushy, a technical term) stop, let the metal clay air dry to bone dry and then continue etching.

3. Dry on the hot plate to bone dry. Refine the edges on both pieces using the fine/pink emery board.

4. To fire, lay flat on a kiln shelf and fire at 1650F for 10 minutes.

5. After the pieces have cooled, finish with a wire brush with soap and water to get a satin finish.

OPTIONAL STEPS (6-8) - ENAMELING

6. Enameled pieces look great with a high polish so tumble for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Remove the pieces from the tumbler with tweezers. While still holding with tweezers, rinse well with clean water, dry with a paper towel and set aside for the enameling step. Avoid touching with your fingers because the oil and dirt will resist the enamel and the enamel will not fuse in these areas.

7. Using a 60-mesh sifter, dust a 1/8" inch (3 mm) layer of pale color transparent enamel on the etched piece. Carefully place the piece on a kiln shelf without losing any of the enamel powder. A small metal spatula is useful for moving the enameled pieces.

8. Preheat the kiln to 1500F (800C). Place the kiln shelf in the kiln for about 3 minutes. This amount of time is a general guide, because each enamel color has its own fusing point. When the surface is clear and glassy remove from the kiln and let air cool. DONE!

C. Raku Glaze Fired Technique

What you will need for this technique:

- PMC3
- craft knife
- coarse emery board
- raku glaze
- respirator with cartridges to capture fine dust particles
- plastic container with an airtight lid
- permanent marker
- steel wire, 20 gauge, 10-inches
- large tin can, 32 ounce
- shredded newspaper
- wooden board (soaked in water)
- brick, or similar weight
- matches
- heat resistant gloves
- long handled tweezers





1. Roll out the silver clay to the thickness of 3 or 4 playing cards on a flexible work surface. Cut out your desired shape and allow to dry. Sand the edges with the coarse emery board. This gives a good "tooth" on the edges for the glaze to stick.
2. Fire at any of the firing schedules for PMC3. I fired my pieces flat on a kiln shelf at 1650°F for 10 minutes.
3. While the pieces are firing mix the raku glaze. There are a variety of commercially prepared raku glazes available from ceramic supply shops. I have tried several different colors and had success with all of them. These glazes are typically sold in powder form and need to be mixed just before use, because once mixed they will lose their effectiveness after a day or so. Please follow the instructions for your safety. Wear a respirator with cartridges designed to capture fine dust particles and place approximately 1/4 C of the powder in the plastic container. Add water and mix to the consistency of table cream. Once the dry particles are dissolved you may remove the respirator. Firmly attach the lid and shake the glaze mixture for one minute. Allow the glaze to sit and the air bubbles will come to the surface. With the permanent marker date and label the glaze color on the container.
4. After the PMC pieces are fired it is time to step up an area to raku. Raku involves fire and smoke so I suggest setting up outside. You will need a table with: the glaze, coffee can, shredded newspaper, wood board, brick, matches, butane torch, tweezers and gloves.
5. Hook the earrings on a paper clip. Stir the glaze to make sure it is evenly mixed and dip the earrings to coat them with glaze. Hang them to dry and dip again in well-mixed glaze. The mixture should be as thick as table cream (pancake batter).
6. Remove the earrings from the paper clip and hang from steel wire secured with tweezers. Take the large tin can and fill with shredded newspaper and place this on an old cookie sheet or heat resistant surface. Have the wet board, a brick (or something similar you can use as a weight), and matches standing by.
7. Wear heat resistant gloves and hold the piece by the wire with long tweezers. Heat with the torch until the glaze is molten (looking wet and glassy). When the glaze is molten drop the piece into the can with shredded newspaper. The newspaper should catch on fire, if not, toss in a lit match or light with the butane torch.
8. Wait for the newspaper to have a good flame, 6" high or so, then place the wet board on top of the tin can quickly followed by the brick. Allow the piece to sit in the can for 10 minutes. Allowing the newspaper to burn then closing the container tightly to cut off the air supply creates an oxygen-reduced atmosphere. The newspaper will burn until the oxygen in the can is depleted and the fire will go out. This is important because the beautiful and interesting raku glaze can only do its thing in an oxygen-reduced atmosphere.
9. After 10 minutes, remove the piece from the newspaper ash and wash with soap and warm water. The smoky residue will wash away revealing a stunning glazed surface. You are done baby!

