

Adding colour to PMC and Creative Metal Clay

Liver of Sulphur

Liver of Sulphur is a patina which 'colours' the metal. It can be used on silver, copper and bronze clays.

Available in dry lump form, liquid and gel it, offers the possibility of adding colour to jewellery. Should you for any reason not be satisfied with the result, it can easily be removed by heating the piece with a torch or in a kiln. This will remove the colour and return the metal to its original, fired state.

Liver of Sulphur has a smell similar to rotten eggs. As it has a limited shelf life this also acts as a useful indicator that it is still active. However, it can be a bit overpowering so it is recommended that you use it in a well-ventilated area.

Of the different forms the gel is probably the easiest to use as it can be used straight from the jar or diluted with hot water, depending on the strength of the solution required. A standard solution is made by mixing a small amount of the gel in hot water.

Once the solution is mixed it will start to work straight away. Therefore it is important to have your items ready and polished. Start by dipping the item into the solution. This enables you to check the colour as it develops. Once you have achieved your desired colour place it in some soapy water to stop the liver of sulphur from continuing to work. Note that as the solution cools down the colours obtained will also begin to change. For this reason if you are making jewellery items to match it is best to dip them close together. Especially earrings should be done simultaneously.

As you only make up enough of the solution to cover the item, a little goes a long way.

The colours that can be achieved range from yellow-gold, rosy-amber, red-mauve, bluish-purple, purple-black and black. The colour is dependent on:

- The amount of liver of sulphur used
- Water hardness
- Temperature of the solution
- Polished finish of the piece

The most popular colours are the blue and purples. These are achieved by using soft water. In contrast the yellow and brown colours are obtained by using hard water.

Tip: Keep your Liver of Sulphur in a cool dark place. One night near a warm radiator is enough to stop it working. For a longer shelf life use the Liver of Sulphur gel.

Disposal: Liver of Sulphur is biodegradable and will start to decompose after a few hours. Once you have finished working with it place it on a sunny windowsill where the yellow solution will turn cloudy white. The solution will no longer be active and can be flushed into the sewage system.

Platinol

Platinol is a liquid solution that can be used to give a piece of metal an antique or aged effect. What it does is oxidise metal such as silver to make it look as though it has been left 'unpolished'.

Platinol is easy to apply and, like Liver of Sulphur, can easily be removed by heating the copper, silver or bronze metal clay object.

Available as a dark solution Platinol can be applied with a paintbrush or cotton wool bud. Simply dip the paintbrush into the solution and paint on the polished metal object. The dark colour will appear instantly. Paint on as much as is required. Any excess can be removed with a cloth or piece of kitchen towel.

To prolong its shelf life, Platinol should be kept in a cool, dark place.

Health and safety

1. Skin care - wash with water
2. Eye care - flush with water
3. Swallowing - drink water or milk and induce vomiting

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