FIRING NATURAL STONES WITH METAL CLAY

Most coloured gemstones, especially those below 7 on the Mohs hardness scale, cannot withstand the temperatures needed to fire Metal Clay. Many stones have natural inclusions which have a different rate of expansion than the surrounding material. When heated the different rates of expansion can cause the stones to crack or split. Perfect stones without inclusions would not have this problem.

Metal Clay tests reveal that other stones, river rocks, driveway stones and other rocks picked up on bush walks and hikes can be successfully fired. Many of these are rocks such as granite. When fired they not only withstand the heat but can change colour. Many contain red iron oxide which makes a beautiful stone when fired.

To test rocks and stones they must be placed in a kiln. Fire at 800oC for 30 minutes, using a slow ramp up to maximum temperature. Followed by a slow cool down period. You may be amazed at the treasures you have found!

These are positive results carried out in Metal Clay tests on the following natural stones.

Hematite	no change
Moonstone (white)	no change
Moonstone (grey)	darker
Moonstone (brown)	darker
Red Jasper	no change
Leopard Jasper	no change
Snow Flake Obsidian	no change
Star Sapphire	no change

PMC3 and Art Clay 650 Series – can be fired in combination with Glass and more stones than ever. Garnets, moonstones, peridot and chrome diopside can all be fired up to 650oC.

There may be others that can be fired successfully but they should always be fired first as a test. But be aware – you could loose them!