

# *Aura* 22 **A New Idea in Gold Embellishment**

## *Concept*

Tiny particles of pure gold (91.6%) are blended with fine silver particles (8.4%) to create a precious metal with deep yellow color and the ability to fuse to silver at low temperatures. The result is a layer of gold that is considerably thicker than is possible with electroplating.

## *Uses*

Aura 22 is ideally suited to work with all versions of PMC™. It can also be used on wrought fine silver and, with care, on sterling that has been properly prepared (see below). Unlike electroplating, Aura 22 requires no special equipment. Because it can be painted on, Aura 22 offers gestural responses unlike any other gold layering process. It is especially recommended for heavily textured surfaces, and for embellishing areas that would be difficult to cover with alternative techniques. Aura 22 involves almost no waste and a relatively small investment. A one gram package can usually embellish 20-30 objects.

## *Applying*

The proper consistency of the material is a creamy paste that spreads like nail polish. Each package comes with a bottle of media, which can be used to refresh the Aura 22 if it dries. Use only a drop or two, allow to sit for a few minutes, then stir with a scribe or a large sewing needle. Using too much media can result in a pale color, so be conservative.

Fire the metal clay at any of the recommended schedules, then apply Aura 22 before burnishing, tumbling, etc. If the metal is oily, soapy, or tarnished, heat clean it by heating to about 1000° F, either with a torch or in a kiln. The temperature is not critical—just hot enough to burn away any residue that might inhibit the fusing. When in doubt, burn it out.

Apply an even layer of Aura 22 with a paintbrush. Uneven thickness will show up as different shades of gold. Two layers are usually sufficient, but three layers will guarantee a rich gold color. Allow the Aura 22 to dry between layers, usually 20–30 minutes. Do not force drying (for instance with a hair dryer) because this hardens the outer surface and traps moisture inside. There is no problem with allowing the Aura 22 layer to wait several days before fusing.

## *Fusing*

### **Kiln**

Preheat a kiln to 1472° F (800° C) then insert the work for approximately 10 minutes.

### **Hot Plate (Keum-boo Method)**

Set the object on a hot plate, heat to Medium-High, until a piece of wood chars when touched to the PMC™ object. At this point, turn the heat down a little and burnish with a steel or glass tool.

### **Torch**

Set the dried work onto a soldering pad and heat it slowly until the silver glows with a radiant red color. When this color appears, fusing occurs instantly. Metalsmiths will recognize this as the color just beyond the flow point of hard solder.

## *Finishing*

Polish the Aura 22 layer by hand burnishing, brass brushing, rubbing with fine steel wool, or tumbling. At this point the work can be soldered, enameled, and colored following usual procedures.

## *Safety*

Aura 22 contains a binder that burns off during the fusing process. The gases released are not toxic, but we recommend that you do not inhale them. Do not lean directly over the work during fusing. If media gets on your skin or in your eyes, rinse well with water.

## *Preparing Sterling*

Aura 22 works best on fine silver, but it can be used on sterling. Prepare the object by creating a layer of fine silver on sterling by depletion gilding. Heat the piece until it oxidizes to a dark gray, then quench it in jewelers pickle. Rinse in water and repeat the process at least six times. You can apply Aura 22 now or, even better, paint on a layer of PMC3 slip (paste). Allow this to dry, then paint the Aura 22 onto this layer. Fusing and finishing follows the steps described above.