

ARGENTIUM GUILD NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2, JANUARY 2012
ARGENTIUMGUILD.COM

SPECIAL EDITION FOR THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN SILVERSMITHS



DEAR ARGENTIUM GUILD MEMBER

This Argentium Silver Guild Newsletter is distributed to our Members bi-monthly - keeping you up-to-date with all things Argentium. We would love to hear from you, so if you have an Argentium related story to tell, article to feature or photos to share, please contact info@argentiumguild.com.

IN THIS EDITION



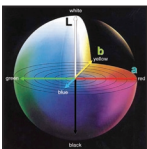
WHAT'S NEW?...

New 'Events' section on the Guild website



FEATURED MEMBERS

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Article: The colour of silver - colour measurement explained



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MEET THE INSTRUCTOR

Patricia Tschetter - honorary Argentium Certified Instructor

WHAT'S NEW?...

EVENTS SECTION ON THE GUILD WEBSITE



The www.argentiumguild.com website has been updated with a new Events section. You can now go straight to this section to view classes and events being run in 2012 by our valued Certified Instructors: Ronda Coryell, Cynthia Eid and Patricia Tschetter and find classes being run by Jewelry Studies International, Bijoux-de-terre and Wired Up Beads. Tradefairs for 2012 are also listed.

If you have any exhibitions/events relating to Argentium Silver that you would like to be listed on the site, please email info@argentiumguild.com.

COMING SOON...

MARKETING SUPPORT



Downloadable point of sale artwork to support your business.

KEEP IN TOUCH

You can keep in touch with us through Email, Facebook, Twitter and our Blog.



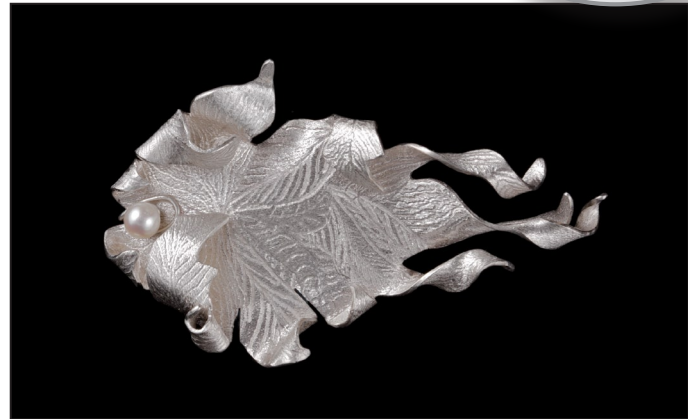
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FEATURED MEMBERS (December 11)



Joana Miranda www.joanamirandastudio.com
Born in Portugal into an artistic family, Joana Miranda's life and interests have always revolved around the arts. Her many years of training and experience as a professional performing musician has instilled a deep sense of discipline and dedication to honing her craft. That skill, combined with a keen visual eye, has led her to become an award-winning jewelry designer and talented bench jeweler. Argentium is Joana's metal of choice. Joana's work is available exclusively at 3rd Ward Jewelry, Milwaukee.

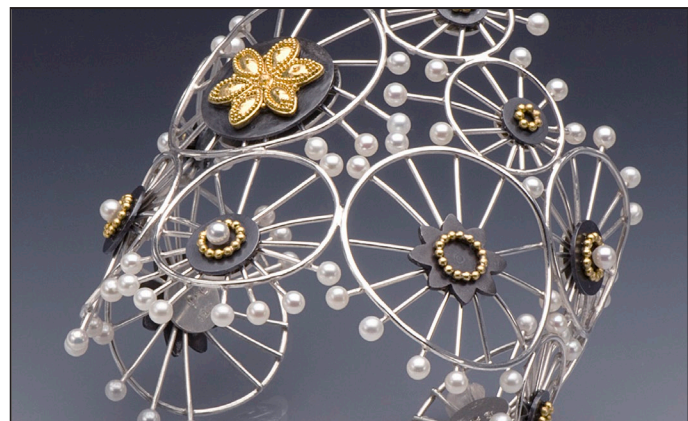


Jan Peyser www.janpeyserjewelry.com
"Free-flowing forms in nature captivate me and I delight in making seemingly inflexible sheets of precious metal reflect movement in graceful and sculpturally engaging jewelry. I studied the principles of working with sterling silver at the Mendocino Art Center in northern California. Today, I work with Argentium Silver because of its tarnish-resistance, luminosity and durability. I value Argentium's extraordinary utility and supportive role in realizing my designs as artistic statements and sculpted elegance."

FEATURED MEMBERS (January 12)



Birgit Kaler www.twosilvermoons.com
"Five years ago my jewelry making hobby turned into a full time career. I studied at the 'Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts' in San Francisco and also took classes at the Pratt Fine Arts Center and the North Seattle Community College. After reading Cynthia Eid's article about Argentium's wonderful qualities, I decided to give it a try. Since then it has become my favorite metal. I especially appreciate its fusing qualities for granulation work, as well as its heat hardening attributes to give extra strength and durability to my personalized custom wedding bands."



Patricia Tschetter www.tschetterstudio.com
"I have two goals for my jewelry: one, to be distinctively contemporary and two, to be accessible. I want my work with granulation to be contemporary and not solely based on historical examples of granulation. To achieve this I use oxidized Argentium silver and colored gold with 22kt yellow and/or white gold granulation. The combination of contemporary materials such as oxidized silver with gold granulation creates a more affordable look. Lately I have been exploring the theme of nature, her beauty and sinister side."

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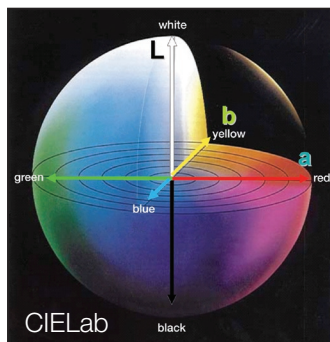


COMPARING THE COLOUR OF SILVER

How do you assess the degree of polish or lustre on a silver item? What is the difference in colour between an item which has been silver or rhodium plated and an Argentium Silver alloy? Is there a difference in colour between different silver alloys? All of these questions go through our minds when we examine a finished piece for quality or consider the merits of a different silver alloy for our work.

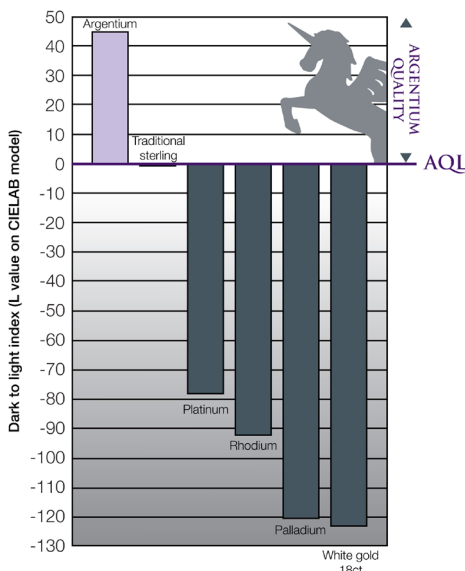
Reflected light forms the basis of colour measurement systems. Simply, you take a light of known intensity, shine it on a surface and measure how much light is reflected. This gives a simple measure of the brightness and whiteness of the object being tested. To standardise the test you can specify the power of the light source and the angle at which it is shone at the test object, but how can this principle be used to test for colour?

White light can be split into different coloured components. (This gives me an excuse to include the iconic Pink Floyd Dark Side of the Moon album cover, which shows white light being split into separate colours by a prism!) So to measure colour we need only to do the same thing in reverse - shine a white light at an object and measure the coloured components reflected back, rather than the overall amount of white light. This is the principal behind the Yellowness Index, the colour measurement system used to determine which white golds are white enough not to require rhodium plating. (For those interested, the Yellowness Index is based on ASTM standard D1925.)

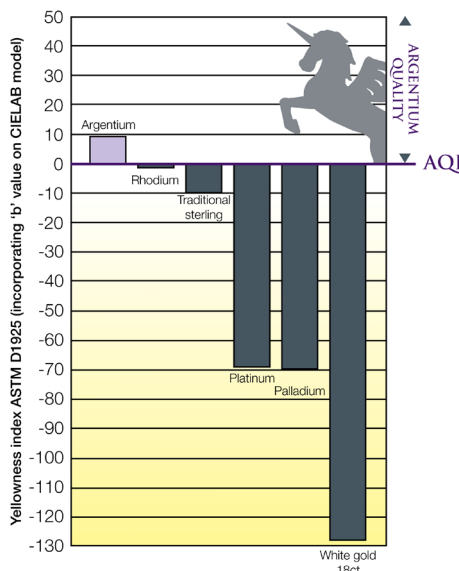


To take this principal of colour measurement further, there is an established technique called the CIE Lab system, where a spectrometer is used to detect the different wavelengths of light reflected into it. The diagram opposite shows how this system uses three values, or co-ordinates, to describe any colour in a quantitative way. The 'L*' co-ordinate measures the degree of brightness or lightness from 0 (black) to 100 (white) - this is also a measure of the reflectivity of the item. The 'a' co-ordinate measures the red-green colour component and the 'b' co-ordinate measures the yellow-blue colour component. So in this system a perfect pure white would have $L^*=100$, $a^*=0$ and $b^*=0$ and any colour can be described by L^* , a^* and b^* values.

Brightness chart
(dark to light measurement)



Whiteness chart
(yellow measurement)



These charts illustrate how Argentium Silver exhibits superior brightness and whiteness in comparison to other precious metals used in the jewellery industry. The Argentium Qualification Lines (AQL) identify set colour measurements required for Argentium Silver.



Charles Allenden

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YOUR ARGENTIUM - INTERVIEW WITH CYNTHIA EID (PART 1)



Award-winning jeweler, silversmith and educator, Cynthia Eid is a pioneer working in Argentium Silver and a Certified Argentium Instructor. Cynthia has kindly answered a few questions to give us an insight into her background, inspirations and experiences and to give us a few tips on working with Argentium.

Have you come from a creative background?

My parents were creative problem solvers and part-time craftspeople. My parents built the house that I lived in until I was 12 years old, and much of the furniture within the home. My father's father was a carpenter, and my father built homes, condominiums, and apartment buildings. My mother sewed, hooked rugs, and wove on a loom. She encouraged me and my brothers in any creative endeavors. When I was in high school, my mother helped me take over part of our basement to make candles and jewelry. She bought me the tools and materials that I needed and commissioned me to make things for her friends.

What made you choose metals as a medium to work in?

I started for two reasons: there was a jewelry program at my high school and I'd grown up admiring the work of Ed Niemi - he was professor of the Jewelry and Metals Department at the University of Illinois in Normal, Illinois, USA. I always enjoyed seeing his studio and what he made. I think that knowing him helped to make this seem more possible as a career. The more I work and learn, the more metal fascinates me. I love making objects that flow, like fabric or wax and yet we know how

strong metal can be.

You are a pioneer working with Argentium Silver – how did you first discover Argentium?

I was making large silver vessels, and found the time and effort spent preventing firescale to be wearying. Somewhere, I heard that a new sterling alloy had been invented that does not have firescale. I asked everyone I knew if they'd heard of it and where I could get it, until finally, I was able to buy it.

The first 'almost Argentium Silver' alloys I worked with were apparently experiments made by Handy and Harmon in New York, NY, USA. When I finally found a source of the 'real stuff' in England, the costs and difficulties of buying silver internationally were overwhelming. Then, a factory in Finland began producing Argentium Silver. John Lefgren, an early investor, began importing it to the USA in 12" x 12" x 18 gauge/1mm sheets. Jeffrey Herman, director of SAS (the Society of American Silversmiths) introduced Mr. Lefgren to USA silversmiths at an SAS symposium. 2-3 years later, at a subsequent SAS meeting, I met Peter Johns, the inventor of Argentium Silver. Excited to meet him, I showed him images of my work in Argentium and we struck up a friendly working relationship, exchanging information, working together for the improvement of



Bracelet detail

Argentium Silver and Argentium solders. By the time that Argentium Silver was produced in the USA, I realized that I had been working with Argentium (instead of standard sterling silver) for over 6 years. I wrote articles and began teaching about Argentium for two reasons: I wanted to share information about this amazing new material - just as you want to introduce your 'true love' to all of your friends and family - I thought everyone would want to know about it. To me, Argentium Silver is like Mithril! (Mithril is the magical silver that protects Bilbo and Frodo in the Lord of the Rings books.) I also wanted to help Argentium International be a healthy business. I know that being a wonderful product is not always enough to make something a successful business. I don't ever want to go back to making everything by rolling down or laminating 18 gauge/1mm thick material imported from overseas!

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Digit-al Waves

How has Argentium Silver changed the way that you work and design?

At first, I simply enjoyed the freedom from worrying about firescale. Very soon, I appreciated how malleable Argentium Silver is - how much further it can be formed or forged before needing to be annealed. Then, I began to enjoy not needing to clean and polish so often. Being able to make jewelry of thin metal so that it is light and then harden it in an oven so that it is strong is especially delightful at the current price of silver. But, until recently, Argentium did not change my designs very much, I simply appreciated having such a marvelous metal to work with.

Now, I am incorporating more fusing and granulating into my designs. Previously, these processes were not appealing to me. Argentium is so easy and fun to fuse, that I am enjoying using granulation as a detail or feature in my designs.

Is there a particular silversmithing technique/skill that you haven't yet explored that you would like to master?

I have renewed excitement about enameling. I did a little bit in high school and college but then got absorbed by forming metal. In particular, I am working on enameling on Argentium Silver.

What motivates you to keep being creative?

That's what makes life fun, and keeps life interesting!

Whose work do you admire and gain inspiration from?

I have worked closely with Betty Helen Longhi while writing a book together for the past seven years. The more I see of her work, the more I love it. Betty and I learned a lot from each other about synclastic and anticlastic forming. (We sent the final text and photos to our editor/publisher, Tim McCreight of Brynmorgen Press, before the end of 2011. We expect that 'Shellforming for Jewelers and Metalsmiths: Creative Paths to Form' will be available by early 2014.)

"Once again, I was 'in love' with a new metal forming process, and became consumed with it."

You work in different scales - do you have a preference for the type of work that you create?

New challenges and variety keep me excited and enjoying life. I loved making the six-foot wide copper and bronze wall sculpture on the wall of a synagogue in Nashua, New Hampshire, USA. On the other hand, I recently had a good time making a small pair of earrings with tiny granules for a diminutive sister-in-law.

Your microfolding and forming techniques create wonderful shapes and textures - how did you discover these techniques and how long did it take for you to master your skills?

Metal forming mesmerizes me. The way that fold forming and microfolding make complex forms out of a single piece of metal is what excites me. When I am learning something new, I become totally immersed in it - that's my personality. The more you know about working in metal, the more quickly you learn new techniques, building on established techniques and knowledge. I attended a two-day foldforming demonstration by Charles Lewton-Brain and then spent the following week making copper samples of everything that he had shown. Then I started making jewelry, flatware and vessels using fold forming.

A few years later, I received a microfold brake and a booklet about microfolding by Jack Berry. The next day, I made a silver and gold brooch using as many techniques as I could from the book. Once again, I was 'in love' with a new metal forming process, and became consumed with it - having fun combining microfolding with all my other favorite techniques - hydraulic press forming, fold forming, synclasting...

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Do you find any benefits using Argentium Silver for your forming techniques?

Recently, I was hammering on a small vessel, when suddenly I saw that the metal had torn - right in the middle of the form. Had that been traditional sterling silver, I would have had to solder the metal, then carefully clean up the excess solder, which would show more and more as it tarnished differently from the sterling. However, since this piece is being made of Argentium Silver, I was able to fuse the metal together.

Whether I am raising, forging, foldforming, microfolding, syncasting, or anticasting, Argentium Silver moves, stretches and compresses farther than traditional sterling before needing to be annealed.

If you could give three pieces of advice to give to anybody starting their own jewellery making business, what would that be?

Keep having fun. Don't let the work become drudgery, or the work won't internalize your excitement - that's what sells a piece.

Keep costs down to minimize the financial pressures by combining your studio with your home, rather than renting an expensive space.

Make a family member your business partner, so that you can trust the person taking care of the money, you can then focus on the creative metalwork.

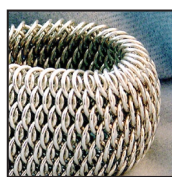
Part 2 of Cynthia's interview will be the next Newsletter.

MEMBERS' GALLERY

Send us a photo of your work for us to show in the Members' Gallery - we can include a link to your website or blog.



Sonja Reschke



Bridgette Rallo



Elizabeth Wong



Kay Ivanovic



Phillip Baldwin



MEET THE INSTRUCTOR

We are delighted to announce that Patricia Tschetter is now an honorary Certified Argentium Silver Instructor - we recognise Patricia's wonderful skills and dedication to Argentium over the years.

Ronda Coryell, of Jewelry Studies International, is working hard to establish an official Certification Programme for new Instructors. We will keep you informed of developments.

KEEP IN TOUCH

If you have an Argentium related story to tell, would like to be a Featured Member, have photos to share, or if you have any events coming up - please contact:

info@argentiumguild.com

We look forward to hearing from you.