

The MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma Home Study Programme – Grade 1

If you can't travel to study with us in Cornwall, you can now study the Diploma at your own pace and in your own time at home. Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 are now available to buy and Grade 4 is planned for 2013.

Guided by Lisa Cain in a relaxed, informal style, you'll learn all about silver metal clay - both brands and all varieties. You'll then be guided to complete the projects that make up the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma Grade 1 course, the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma Grade 2 course or the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma Grade 3 course. Packed with tips and hints, demonstrations and information, this is the closest thing to taking a private class with Lisa you can get - without leaving home! Check out the buzz we've been getting since launching the Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma.

Grade 4 of the Diploma has two routes if you come to Cornwall: you can choose the teaching metal clay module or the silver metal clay design and construction module. These classes will require you to come to Cornwall to study with us in person or attend a live class at your nearest MCSJ Diploma Support Centre if they are running a class. In 2013, we intend to launch a Grade 4 course especially for Home Study Students. Once you've successfully completed all four Grades, you'll be awarded our Diploma and your name will be added to our Silver Metal Clay Diploma Holders Roll of Honour page.

How does the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma work?

It's very simple. You buy the Grade 1 Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma through our online system, this is the first step. When the pack arrives, you watch the DVDs, print the project tutorials, slides and resources that are on the CD and then make the seven projects that make up the Grade 1 Diploma course. All the materials and resources are included in the pack but you'll need to have your own tools. You can also arrange a visit to one of our MCSJ Diploma Support Centres to use theirs.

The Home Study Course pack includes detailed information about the standards we're looking for in your finished pieces – both on the DVDs and on a Criteria Sheet included in the pack. You can take as long as you like to complete all the pieces; there are no time pressures with the Home Study Course.

When you've made all the projects, you pack them up carefully, send them to MCSJ by Recorded or Special Delivery and we evaluate them. If they meet our standards, you'll get them back together with your Certificate. If some pieces don't meet our standards, we'll send them back to you with detailed feedback on what you need to do next. You can resubmit pieces as many times as you like for evaluation.

When you've completed the Grade 1 Home Study, you have the choice of coming to Cornwall to continue your Diploma journey or sign up for the Silver Metal Clay Grade 2 Home Study Diploma Course . If you aspire to become an official MCSJ Diploma Support Centre, you'll need to take the Grades 2 to 4 in Cornwall with us.

How do I enrol for the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma?

There's no enrolment required, just buy the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Grade 1 Course from our online system. You can join the Home Study programme at any time so when you're ready, it's ready! You can study at your own pace and then send your pieces to us when they are all complete.

I live outside the UK, can I still sign up for the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma?

Yes, you can, we have students from all over the world studying the Diploma at home. On our buying options page for the MCSJ Silver Clay Home Study Diploma you'll find shipping costs to countries outside the UK. The Diploma is recognised worldwide. The DVDs are region neutral in PAL format which means they will play on most computers and many modern DVD players. Some DVD players and TVs that are NTSC may have a problem playing the DVDs so check whether your equipment will play a PAL DVD before purchasing.

Do I need to sign up at a certain time of year?

One of the benefits of the Home Study Diploma is that you can start it any time you like. You don't have to enrol or follow any schedule or term. Simply buy the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Grade 1 Course from our online system when you're ready and then study at your own pace. The Home Study Diploma will be available to buy 24 hours a day/seven days a week just like any other product. You can study around your work and family commitments and gain the qualification in a way that works for you.

Can I pay for the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma by instalments?

Yes, you can. Contact us by email or phone to set this up. You simply pay the non-refundable deposit of £100, then monthly payments to suit your budget until the cost is paid off. You can pay by cheque each month or call to pay by credit card. We'll send you a reminder when your payment is due. Alternatively we can keep your card details safely on file and take the payment each month automatically. PLEASE NOTE: Nothing will be sent to you until you have paid the full cost of the Grade you are buying so please make sure you are familiar with the way the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma works before asking to set up an instalment plan.

What's in the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Grade 1 Home Study Diploma pack?

The Home Study Course pack contains:-

- Two 90-minute DVDs showing basic techniques and all the Grade 1 projects - have a sneak peek at the DVD content [here](#)
- All materials and resources including silver clay for each project - with a retail value of over £140
- A CD with additional information and project guides for you to print
- A voucher for one free kiln firing session with one of our Diploma Support Centres or with us [here](#) at MCSJ

The pack also contains all the materials and resources you need to make the Diploma projects.

Here's a complete list of what you get:-

- 5g PMC Standard
- 12g PMC+
- 10g Art Clay Silver 650
- 9g PMC3
- 5g Syringe Clay + nozzle
- 43cms of 0.8mm Sterling silver round wire
- 28cms of 0.8mm copper wire
- Citric acid
- Plastic tongs

- Starter pack of found textures
- Teflon card
- Playing cards
- Starter pack of straws in assorted sizes
- Pot for oil
- 2 x slip pots
- Cocktail sticks
- 3mm round cubic zirconia faceted stone
- Two part moulding compound
- Small sea shell
- Cork clay
- Skeleton leaf
- Dust mask
- Polymer clay

Can I just buy the course without the materials and resources?

Yes, you can. If you already have access to the materials and resources that are included in the pack, you can buy the DVDs, CD of resource notes, voucher for a free kiln firing session and the course paperwork only at a reduced price. You will be eligible to send in your work for evaluation but **YOU MUST USE THE CORRECT CLAY AND RESOURCES FOR EACH PROJECT.**

What is the process for studying the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Grade 1 Diploma at home?

Once you receive your pack, we suggest you start by watching the Basic Skills DVD all the way through. This will give you a good idea about what you need to practice before you start making your projects. You can also explore all the resources on the CD. This contains all the slides from the DVDs, project tutorials and useful additional information.

On the Basics DVD, Lisa will introduce you to silver metal clay and cover the following topics:-

- Types of silver metal clay - PMC and Art Clay
- Types of PMC - Original, PMC+ and PMC3
- How to tell the difference between types of metal clay
- What is sintering?
- Working stages of metal clay
- Ways of drying metal clay
- Trying out your ideas in polymer clay
- Rehydrating metal clay while you work
- Reconstituting dry metal clay back to soft clay
- Rolling out metal clay
- Texturing both sides of the clay
- Making holes in soft clay
- Drilling holes in dry clay
- Setting stones in metal clay
- Using a syringe
- Refining and sanding dry pieces
- Firing basics
- Torch firing basics
- Polishing and burnishing
- Basic silver smithing skills - making jumprings
- How to open and close jump rings

- Melting a ball on the end of sterling silver wire
- Using citric acid pickle
- Making earring hooks

Once you feel confident about the basics, watch the Projects DVD. Lisa will demonstrate all the projects, showing you how to make your pieces to the standards we require from our Diploma students.

The projects are as follows:-

- PMC+ Earrings
- PMC Standard Earrings
- Leaf Bead
- Pendant with Fold Over Bail, Syringe Detail and Found Texture
- Stone Set Pendant
- Cork Clay Bead
- Shell Charm

In the Home Study pack is a form containing all the criteria we will be using to evaluate your finished pieces. Make sure you are familiar with these before you make any of the projects.

What do I need to provide myself?

You will need to have all these tools to complete the projects. The course pack DOES NOT CONTAIN THESE TOOLS:-

- A clay roller
- Spacers for rolling different thicknesses of clay – playing cards work well
- Fine pointed metal tweezers for picking up gemstones or manoeuvring hot metal clay
- A small plastic refillable spray bottle for water
- Clay shaper
- Palette knife - metal or plastic
- Steel burnisher
- Soft, large brass brush for brushing just-fired silver
- Heatproof fire brick for firing – two will make sure you don't burn worktops
- Stainless steel mesh
- Butane torch
- Sanding pads, salon boards or nail files
- Tissue blade
- 3m polishing papers in multiple grits as fine as possible
- Scalpel or craft knife
- Needle tool
- Wire cutter
- Flat nose pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Half round pliers
- Round nose pliers
- Needle File Set
- Jewellers Saw Frame
- Saw blades size 2/0

You can arrange to visit one of our MCSJ Diploma Support Centres to use their tools and facilities for a small fee. All the metal clay suppliers also sell these tools.

You'll also need access to a kiln for two of the projects at Grade 1. In the Home Study Diploma Grade 1 pack there is a voucher for one free kiln firing session from one of our MCSJ Diploma Support Centres or from us here at MCSJ. Call the Support Centre to arrange an appointment or to let them know you will be posting your pieces. You must make sure your work is carefully packed to avoid breakage. Your pieces will be returned fired and unpolished - allow 28 days for the return of your work.

How are my Silver Metal Clay Diploma Grade 1 pieces evaluated?

The MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma is widely recognised as the most thorough and comprehensive metal clay qualification in the world. The standards for passing are rigorously applied and this is no different for Home Study students.

Once you've completed all the projects - made, fired and polished, and the earrings have their ear wires made and attached - pack them up and send them to us at MCSJ. All the details about this are in the pack together with the forms you need to fill in and send with your work. We will also require you to sign a declaration verifying that the pieces you send to us are your own work.

We will let you know when your work arrives safely. It will be evaluated in the same way as we evaluate students' work when they come and study the Diploma with us in Cornwall. You should allow 28 days for the evaluation process.

What happens when I pass?

When you pass, you'll receive feedback on your work plus the Grade 1 Certificate, along with all your silver pieces, posted back to you.

What happens if I don't pass?

If you don't pass, you'll receive feedback on the project(s) that need resubmission with details about what you need to do to meet the criteria. In some cases you may need to make the piece(s) again from scratch. We will not supply more metal clay for you to do this. You can either use any metal clay you had left from your projects – providing it is the right variety – or you can buy more from any of the metal clay suppliers in your country. Make sure that the metal clay you buy is the right kind for the project.

Your first submission to us is free and the cost of returning the pieces to you by insured delivery is included in the Home Study pack price. If you don't pass first time, each subsequent re-submission MUST be accompanied by a cheque for £10 to cover evaluation, return postage and packing. Students outside the UK can pay this by Paypal or credit card. You can resubmit pieces as many times as necessary until you pass.

I have other metal clay qualifications; do I need to start at Grade 1 to get the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma?

To gain the full MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma you need to successfully complete all four Grades. The curriculum has been developed into its current form and includes working with both brands of silver metal clay and all varieties. The knowledge and skills gained at each Grade builds on the previous one so it's essential that you follow all the Grades in order. We do not recognise any other metal clay qualification as a credit towards the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Diploma.

What if I need help?

All the skills and techniques you need to pass the Silver Metal Clay Diploma are included on the DVDs in the Home Study pack. If you need extra help or advice, there are a number of ways you can get this.

You can always call or email us at MCSJ if you need help or advice. We also have a Facebook Group specifically for our Home Study students. This is a secret group so you won't find it by searching on Facebook. Membership of the Group is by invitation and full details of how to do this are included in the Home Study pack.

Alternatively, you can make an appointment with one of our MCSJ Diploma Support Centres if you have one near you. The Support Centres offer a variety of services to support Diploma students which they charge for. Please note these are not included in the price you paid for the Diploma Home Study pack.

One service you may want to use is a critique of your work before you send it in to us. All our Diploma Support Centres that offer this service have staff that have been through the Diploma and know the standards we're looking for. If you buy a critique session with one of them, they will advise you on any changes or amendments you need to make to bring your pieces up to our standards*.

The Diploma Support Centres are also authorised to run classes to support the skills, techniques and projects required for the Home Study Diploma. They will charge a fee for these classes and this is not included in the cost of the Home Study pack. All our Diploma Support Centres have voluntarily signed up to our Teaching Code of Practice which means you have peace of mind when choosing any training from them.

* Please note, a critique session with one of our Diploma Support Centres does not guarantee your pieces will pass the final evaluation. The Support Centre staff will give you guidance on the standard of your work and give you suggestions on how to rectify any problems. Final evaluation will be by Julia Rai or Lisa Cain and their decision is final.

What is the return policy for the Home Study Diploma?

Please note that we DO NOT offer a refund on the Home Study kit. Due to the nature of the intellectual property contained on the DVD and CD, the Home Study cannot be returned. Your order is a firm commitment to buy and there is a very full and clear description of exactly what is included in each box as well as several clips to show the type of video quality contained on the DVD.

We will, however, replace faulty merchandise only when it is returned to us in original packaging.

Tell me more about MCSJ Diploma Support Centres

To support the MCSJ Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma, we've teamed up with a group of talented artists and teachers, all of whom have experienced the MCSJ Diploma first hand. Most of them are full Diploma holders, some are on the way to becoming full Diploma holders. Each of them has been through a rigorous application process to become authorised as a Diploma Support Centre. They are authorised to offer a number of services which support the Silver Metal Clay Home Study Diploma course. These Support Centres are dotted around the UK and also in several countries in Europe.

Support Centres staffed by full Diploma holders offer a range of services from kiln firing and open workshops to running classes supporting the skills and techniques required by Home Study students.

Our Support Centres staffed by people who are still working towards the full Diploma are authorised to offer kiln firing services and open workshop days for students to use their tools and facilities. As soon as they pass the full Diploma, they will be authorised to offer the complete range of services.

One of the things we've asked all our Support Centres to sign up to is a teaching Code of Practice. This Code aims to lay out some fundamental aspects of running a good class. It is a Code of Practice designed to improve teaching standards. We are not interested in prescribing what our Support Centres teach; instead we aim to provide an umbrella set of goals that all teachers would want to aspire to.

This provides students with peace of mind when choosing a teacher for their metal clay journey. When you choose a teacher who is part of our team, you can be sure they will provide a safe and supportive teaching environment and offer you value for money. If you have any problems, we have a Code of Practice Assurance Process.

When are the other Diploma Grades going to be available for Home Study?

The Silver Metal Clay Diploma Grade 4 Home Study will be available in 2013. The two Grade 4 options, Teaching Metal Clay Effectively and Metal Clay Design and Construction will only be available as a live class. To gain the full Diploma you currently need to study one of the Grade 4 classes with us in Cornwall until the Grade 4 Home Study class is launched. We are expecting to offer these classes in other venues around the UK and the world at some date in the future. Please contact your nearest MCSJ Diploma Support Centre to ask them if they plan to host a Grade 4 class in the future.

Can I join the Loyalty Card Programme as a Home Study Diploma Student?

Yes. Visit our Loyalty Card page and sign up for the Loyalty Card within a week of signing up for the Home Study Grade. We'll stamp your card and send it to you. Home Study students will need to send us their Loyalty Card when they sign up for Home Study Grades so we can stamp their card.