

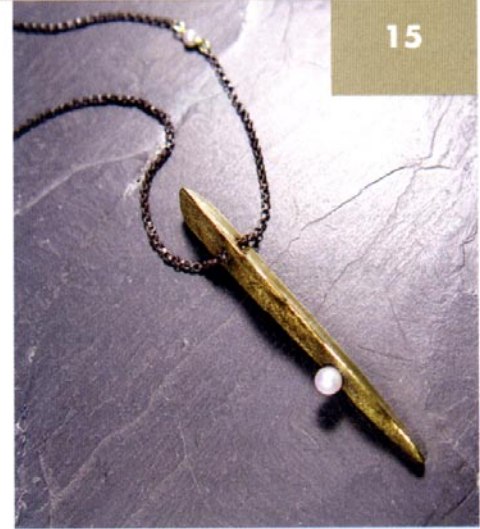


## Happenings

15

### Beyond the Mines

A gold PMC piece by Shahasp Valentine was part of a recent exhibit of the work of California goldsmiths organized by the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento California. The exhibit was offered in conjunction with "Beyond the Mines: The Art of Gold," a touring exhibit of gold artworks organized by the Society of North American Goldsmiths, which made its first appearance at the Crocker Art Museum. The "California Gold" exhibit featured the works of 40 artists from the state, including Shahasp, Petra Class, Marilyn and Jack daSilva, Jennifer



*Knife Edge Necklace #26. 24k PMC and cultured pearls, by Shahasp Valentine.  
Photo by Hap Sakwa.*

## Working with Gold: Shahasp Valentine

Shahasp Valentine combined original PMC and gold PMC to create this mixed metal pendant, called Wave Necklace #14. "I use original PMC because of its malleability and similar texture to gold PMC," she says.

This design derives from Shahasp's Knife Edge design, one of which can be seen on page 15. "To create Wave Necklace #14, I started with the rough Knife Edge form, and attached a small roll of gold PMC at the crest along the entire length, using PMC+ slip," she writes. "With texturing tools, I meld the two metals and form the wave shape."

Shahasp says she doesn't sketch or otherwise plan the design in advance. "The shapes just flow through me," she says. "I've found that if I try to think about it or force it, the pieces turn out contrived or simply uninspired."

Once shaped, Shahasp embeds fine silver posts for the pearls into the wet clay. The pendant is then fired for two hours

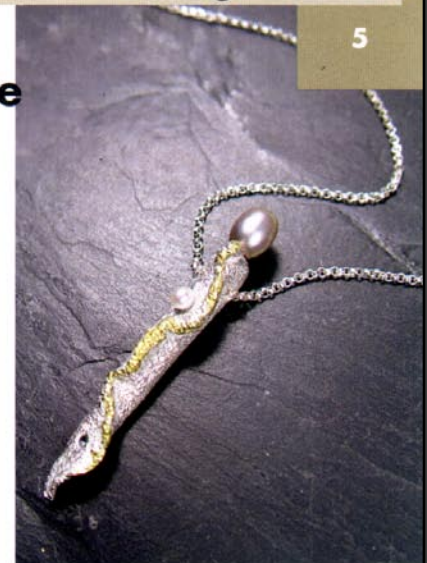
at 1650°F. "I have found with necklaces that I can get away with firing gold PMC at the silver temperature, as they don't take much abuse or wear, like a ring would," she notes.

To finish the pieces in this series, Shahasp first uses 3M Radial Bristle Disks, a wire brush, or a wire wheel, followed by sandpaper, files, and wire brushes to create a matte finish. Finally, the high surfaces are burnished with a stainless steel burnisher. "I use a lot of tools meant for ceramics and acrylic fingernails in addition to traditional jewelry tools [for finishing]," she notes. "If the piece is going to be oxidized, that's the first step before any brushing. I like the texture I can get if the piece is oxidized right out of the kiln."

Finally, the pearls are fixed on their posts with a two-part non-yellowing epoxy. The result: a mixed metal piece that looks grown, rather than man-made.

## Working With Gold

5



"It's almost as if the best pieces create themselves," says Shahasp. "These are the moments that make me feel like I'm doing the right thing in life and in art."

*Shahasp Valentine is a San Francisco jeweler who creates a line of jewelry she calls "Precieux." Her work has appeared in Studio PMC on numerous occasions.*