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How are Silver Pendants Made?

There's something about the cool white glow of a silver pendant, which has captivated our senses throughout human history. Since ancient times silver has been used to make coins, decorative items, and silver pendant jewelry, from this precious metal. It has maintained its popularity throughout the ages with artisans, due to its pliability as well as because of its strength.

There's a lot that goes into the making silver pendants, from the time that it is brought up from the mine, to the time the silver pendant is sold on the general market. The silver pendant that is gracefully resting around your neck has gone through many transformations. In most cases by the time the silver arrives to the artist, it is ready to be utilized in crafting jewelry according to what method he or she may choose. The artist has a variety of options as to what form of silver he or she would like to work with. Often the artist is able to purchase pre-rolled sheets of silver in a variety of thickness or rolled wire in several different gauges and shapes, as well as silver blocks or scrap pieces of silver, that the artist uses to melt down and then pour into a mold, which is called casting.

Silver pendants can be made using different techniques, and can often represent the artist's unique style. One of the older forms of working with silver, because it is so soft, is to roll the silver out and then a rough shape, which will become the silver pendant, is cut out. Often the cut piece would be then pounded out with a mallet to flatten the silver and to temper it. Silver pieces were also sometimes pounded over some kind form, which would give it shape and definition to the silver pendant. Pounded silver often has a very unique look to it because of the marks left by the mallet, it also ensures that each piece is one of a kind, and no one will have a silver pendant just like yours.

Another method, which is also very old, is called casting. Casting is when pieces of silver are melted down and then poured into a mold and allowed then to harden. The process of making the mold is an art form in itself and is commonly referred to as the lost wax method. The artist takes softened wax and basically sculpts the wax into the desired shape he/she wishes the finished silver pendant to be.

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This is then placed into another mold, and plaster of Paris is then used to encase the wax sculpture, leaving an opening at the top. Once the plaster has dried it is then heated up enough to melt the wax within the plaster, leaving the shape of what will be the silver pendant inside.

The artist next melts the silver, until it becomes liquid than pours into the mold. Once the silver has solidified, the mold is then broken open and the silver pendant is then removed once it is cool enough to be handled.

The silver pendant is now ready to be finished with hand tools, such as filing down any burrs along its edges and then buffed and polished to the shining gleam we have come to expect with silver jewelry. Once completed the silver pendant is then ready to be packaged and sold on the market.

About the Author

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