



GEOMETRIC EARRINGS

Try the hybrid 960 metal clay to make these big but very light geometric earrings. *By Julia Rai*

Julia is co-director of the Cornwall School of Art, Craft and Jewellery where she teaches a variety of classes. She holds the prestigious Metal Clay Masters Registry credential at level four.

Mixing PMC Sterling with PMC3 or Art Clay Silver gives you a stronger clay with the benefit of open shelf firing. The strength of this mix allows these earrings to be thin and light but still strong enough for everyday wear. The trend towards big, bold jewellery can sometimes be prohibitive when working with metal clay, but not with this design.

MATERIALS

- 15g PMC Sterling
- 15g PMC3 or Art Clay Silver
- Jumpings
- Teflon sheet
- Graduated set of cookie cutters
- Cocktail sticks
- Emery board and small files
- Pin vice or hand drill
- 1mm drill
- Earring findings
- Polishing tools
- Liver of Sulphur XL gel (optional)
- Pliers

RESOURCES

PMC Sterling, PMC3:
www.bluebelldesignstudio.co.uk
 Art Clay Silver:
www.creativeglassshop.co.uk

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Designer tips

- To make large designs with cut-out elements, you will always need more clay than you actually use to ensure you can roll it out big enough for your largest cutter.
- Always move the pieces onto Teflon before cutting out the middle part as it's very hard to successfully move a narrow frame without it losing its shape.
- The 960 mix clay is so called because it contains more silver than Sterling (925) but less than fine silver (999).

DON'T MISS!

Next month *Nicola Beer's silver clay butterfly ring*

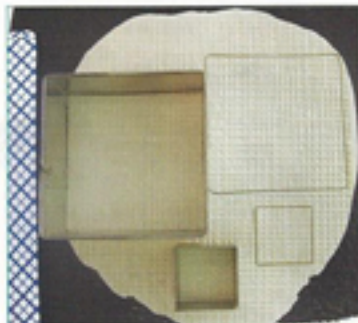


Easy Project



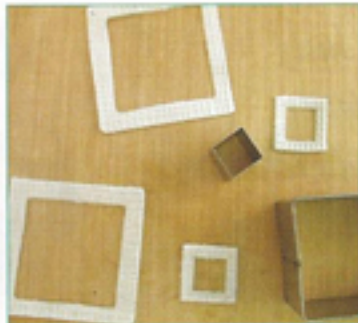
STEP 1

Take equal amounts of PMC Sterling and PMC3 or Art Clay Silver and mix them well together. Make sure all the marbling that results from the two different coloured clays has completely disappeared. Rolling the mixed clay out between two oiled pieces of plastic and folding or rolling it up several times is a good way to blend the clays together completely. Take care not to trap any air inside.



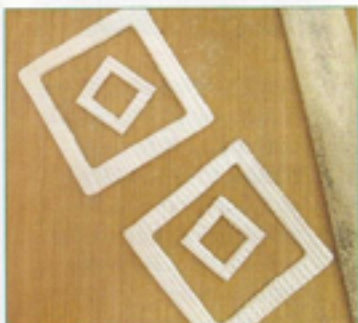
STEP 2

Choose a texture for the front and the back of the earrings. Nesting cutters work well for this design so choose two cutters which will form the outside frame and the inside frame of the earring design. The frames should be 3mm–6mm wide depending on the size of the pieces. Roll the clay out to 0.5mm (two cards) thick, texture and cut the outside shapes of both pieces.



STEP 3

Transfer the pieces to Teflon sheet, especially if you've used leather for the back texture. This will allow you to put them to dry on a hotplate without disturbing the shape. Cut the centres out of the pieces creating the frames. Take time to ensure the centres are equal if you like an ordered look or cut them in a quirky way if you prefer something a little less formal.



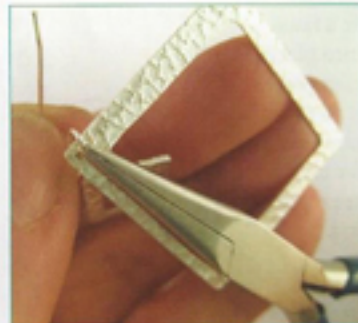
STEP 4

Once the frames are dry, carefully refine them using your favourite sanding tools. For a geometric shape with straight sides, an emery board is perfect to ensure the edges are straight. Drill two holes in the outside frame, one to attach to an earring finding, one to hang the inside frame from. Drill a hole in the inside frame too. Open shelf kiln fire at 815°C for one hour.



STEP 5

Polish the fired earring elements using a brass or steel brush, polishing wheels on a Dremel or tumble polish. If you like an oxidised look, use Liver of Sulphur gel in a cup of hot water and dip the frames until you get the desired result. Polish back the oxidation from the high spots of the texture using polishing papers or an impregnated cloth.



STEP 6

Assemble the earrings using jumpings to connect the outside frame to the inside frame. The inside frame should dangle freely and move, so join together a series of jumpings that are large enough to give movement and swing. Attach the outside frame to the earring finding either with a jumping, or use a piece of chain to give extra length.



Extra Projects Make a pendant and a bracelet

PENDANT

Use the same cut-out technique to make a large focal pendant with two or more frames linked together by a jumping.

BRACELET

Create a shape with a double cut out and thread a suede and leather necklace through, doubling it up, to make a funky bracelet.

