



Light summery earrings

Discover the unique properties of PMC+ Sheet and create these light, summery earrings with stones you can match to your outfit. **By Julia Rai**

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

This idea comes from US artist Barbara Becker Simon. Using

PMC+ Sheet and fine silver wire, these earrings look very simple and they're certainly light, but they can be tricky to make. PMC+ Sheet feels like fabric and is dry right out of the packet. It reacts badly with too much water so it requires careful handling. Half-drilled stones finish the look.

RESOURCES

PMC+ silver metal clay sheet, silver:

www.bluebelldesignstudio.co.uk

Half-drilled garnet beads, fine silver wire, findings:

www.kernowcraft.com

CONTACT

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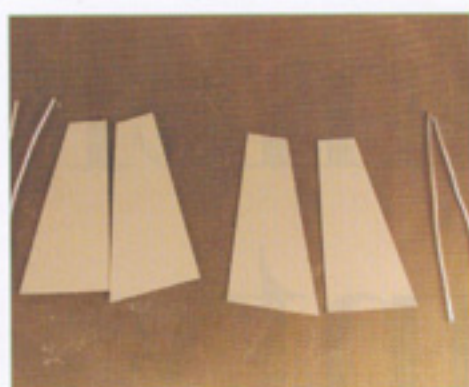
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MATERIALS

- Pack of PMC+ square silver metal clay sheet
- Small amount of silver clay
- 30cm (12in) 0.5-0.8mm (24-20 gauge) fine silver wire
- Earring wires
- 4-6mm half-drilled garnet beads
- Teflon sheet
- Roller
- Playing cards
- Small round cutters
- Tissue blade or sharp craft knife
- Small paintbrush
- Tweezers
- Steel brush
- Ball burnisher
- Sharp scissors
- Pliers and cutters
- Two-part epoxy glue
- Tumble polisher or brass/steel brush

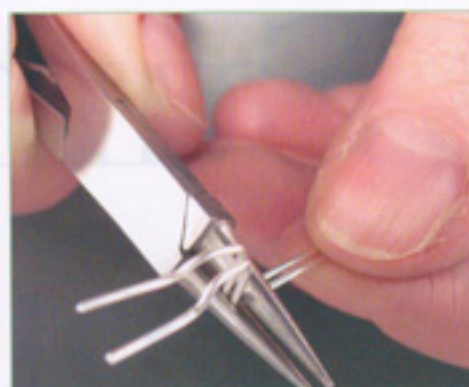
Designer tips

- Once opened, PMC+ Sheet keeps indefinitely as long as it doesn't get wet.
- Small offcuts of PMC+ Sheet can be melted using a torch to form fine silver balls, which are great to keep for embellishment.
- These earrings are light and surprisingly strong but they won't stand up to rough treatment so store them carefully.



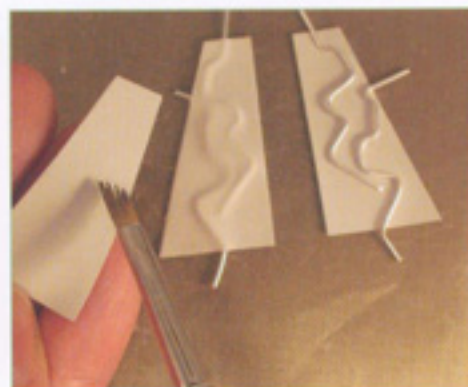
STEP 1

Take a bit of time to plan your design on paper and use shapes that make the most economical use of the PMC+ Sheet. Carefully plan the wire requirements by practising with cheaper copper wire, allowing enough to bend shapes and still have some wire protruding at the top, bottom and sides. For each earring cut two identical pieces of PMC+ Sheet and cut the fine silver wire to size.



STEP 2

As you're making earrings, the bends in the wires need to be identical in each one but also a mirror image of each other. The easiest way to get the bends identical for each earring is to bend two wires at the same time, one for each earring. Use round nose pliers and push the wire into the shapes you planned. Keep checking how they fit onto the cut PMC+ Sheet.



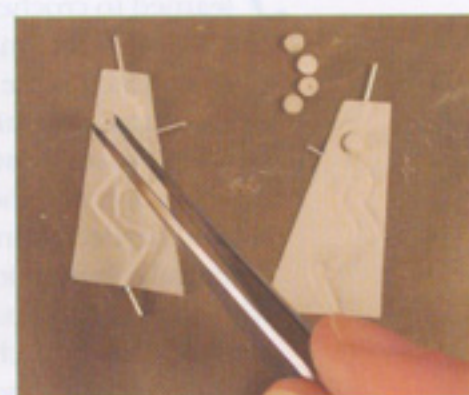
STEP 3

Lay the bent wire out on one piece of each earring and when you're happy with the arrangement, take them off, very lightly dampen the surface of the PMC+ Sheet with a paintbrush and lay the wires back on in the correct position. Push down gently so they stick. Lightly dampen the top sheet and lay it exactly on top of the bottom sheet. Lightly press down around the wires.



STEP 4

Make sure you handle the earrings with dry hands and avoid putting them down in puddles of water. PMC+ Sheet will disintegrate if it gets too wet so be very careful at this stage. Allow the earrings to dry, and then check all around the edges to make sure the two sheets have stuck firmly together. Use a damp paintbrush inside any gaps and press them together so they stick.



STEP 5

Using a ball burnisher, gently press down to mould the sheet around the wires. Trim any excess sheet from the edges using sharp scissors so the layers are flush. Roll out silver clay four cards thick and punch out some discs using small round cutters. Allow these to dry and sand the edges smooth. Use a little water or syringe clay to stick the discs to the earrings for embellishment.



STEP 6

Kiln fire the earrings for two hours at 800-900°C. Support the earrings on a rubber block and polish using a brass or steel brush. You can also tumble polish them but don't put them in the tumbler with heavier pieces. Mix up some epoxy glue, stick the beads to the wires and allow them to set. Bend a loop into the top wire and attach to earring findings.

Extra projects Make a necklace and a charm

NECKLACE

Use the same technique to make a larger focal piece for a necklace. Use top drilled semiprecious beads for a statement piece. Add strips of PMC+ Sheet, punched out shapes, balls or discs to add interest.

CHARM

This technique will also make an interesting charm for a phone or bracelet.

