



Coiled in Color Melanie Schow

Admiring the vast color palettes used by her beading friends, Melanie tried using brightly colored enamel-coated copper wire in her work. It started with some sculptural pieces, and she liked the result so well it was soon incorporated into her jewelry designs. This necklace is a fun, free-form piece and can express almost any mood.

FINISHED SIZE 20"

Materials

19 assorted 5mm fiber-optic rounds and 8–10mm acrylic rondelles in blue and green
7 bright green and blue 15mm vintage Lucite faceted rounds
1 blue/green 25×38mm lampworked focal bead
11 silver 8×5mm bead caps
13 silver 8–10mm daisy spacers
1 silver 3" head pin with decorative tip
5 silver 7–10mm jump rings
15" of silver 4×6mm oval chain
20-gauge coated wire in bright green and blue

18-gauge dark blue coated wire
16-gauge sterling silver dead soft wire
14-gauge sterling silver dead soft wire

Tools

Long and short round-nose pliers
Flat-nose pliers
Chain-nose pliers
Flush cutters
 $\frac{3}{8}$ " and $\frac{3}{32}$ " round mandrels
 $\frac{3}{32}$ " bezel mandrel
Bench block and hammer
Hand drill and vise (optional)

Power Coils

- Wrap coils by hand around a mandrel or use a hand drill to turn the mandrel: Secure the mandrel and one end of the wire in the drill; bend the wire away from the mandrel at the chuck. Guide the wire between your thumb and forefinger to wind the wire onto the mandrel.
- If making your own jump rings, use the 16-gauge silver wire.

armature

1: Leaf. Cut 30" of 14-gauge wire to work the entire armature as follows:

Loop: Use the base of the long round-nose pliers to form a simple loop at one end of the wire. Use flat-nose pliers to bend the loop up perpendicular to the wire.

Spiral: Using short round-nose pliers, grasp the wire parallel to the loop and bend the wire around the tip of the pliers (Figure 1).

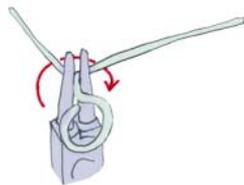


Figure 1

Use chain-nose pliers to continue the spiral for three full turns. Form a leaf point by bending the wire over the short round-nose tip and continue the spiral around to the opposite side of the point (Figure 2).

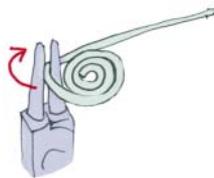
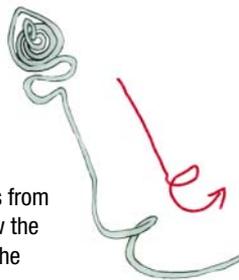


Figure 2

Tendrils: Using short round-nose pliers as a mandrel, work two 180° bends spaced even with the width of the spiral. Use chain-nose pliers to make a 90° bend even with the leaf point. Use the $\frac{3}{8}$ " mandrel to work a loose 2-wrap coil, 2" from the end of the spiral (Figure 3).

Figure 3



Note: Figures from here on show the backside of the necklace.

2: Crescent frame. Shape the top half of the crescent with your fingers. Use long round-nose pliers to form a simple loop $4\frac{1}{2}$ " after the tendrils. Work a 4-wrap spiral parallel to the loop as before, omitting the leaf tip and finishing with the wire in position for the bottom half of the crescent (Figure 4).



Figure 4

Bumper: Protect the loop with a ledge behind the spiral by bending the wire up at the bottom of the spiral so that it is parallel with the loop, then make a second 90° bend even with the depth of the loop, bringing the wire back in line to form the bottom curve of the crescent (Figure 5).

Figure 5



Finishing: Bend the bottom of the crescent so that the bottom wire crosses the top wire $3\frac{1}{2}$ " from the end. Work 2 wraps from front to back around the top wire, leaving a $2\frac{1}{2}$ " tail. Roll the tail up into a spiral at the base of the leaf and trim the wire (Figure 6).

Figure 6

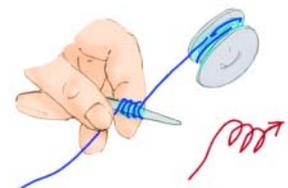


embellishments

3: Coils. Cut 5' of 20-gauge blue wire and coil the entire length around the round $\frac{3}{32}$ " mandrel. Slide the coil off the mandrel and set aside. Repeat using bright green 20-gauge wire to make 4 green coils and set aside.

4: Shell coil. For a wide-end coil, pull 12" of 20-gauge blue wire from the spool and hold it $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the end of the bezel mandrel. Wrap the spool wire toward the tip to form a cone-shaped coil (Figure 7). Once coiled to the tip, pull 4' of wire from the spool and trim. Slide the cone off the bezel mandrel and onto the round $\frac{3}{32}$ " mandrel and continue coiling with the 4' of wire. Place the wide end of the cone end back onto the bezel mandrel and wrap the initial 12" tail. The finished spring should measure about 7".

Figure 7



5: Shell spiral. Cut 13" of 18-gauge wire and pass through the shell coil, leaving a 1" tail on the wide end of the coil and a 5" tail on the other end. Use chain-nose pliers to make a 90° bend 4" from the wide end of the coil. Use small round-nose pliers to grasp next to the bend, parallel with the 3" section, and turn the 4" section around the jaw to begin the spiral (Figure 8). Finish turning the spiral with your fingers, adjusting the coils evenly around the first bend (Figure 9). Keep the end of the shell

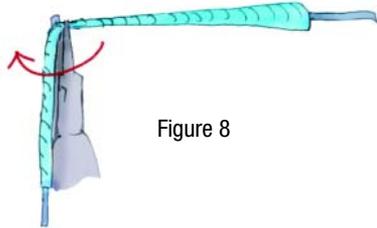


Figure 8

coil in place by bending the 18-gauge core wire down at a right angle to the opening of the shell. Use the 3/8" mandrel to wrap the remaining 3" into a loose spring, being sure to hold the shell securely while wrapping so as not to pull it out of shape.



Figure 9

6: Stitching. Use wire to "stitch" beads and coils to the armature:

Focal bead: Without cutting the 18-gauge wire from the spool, string accent beads and spacers, the focal bead, and more accent beads and spacers so that they reach across the crescent frame. Secure the loose end of the wire around the armature with 4 to 5 tight wraps (Figure 10). Trim the tail flush at the armature and tightly squeeze the end with chain-nose pliers to eliminate any sharp edge. Cut

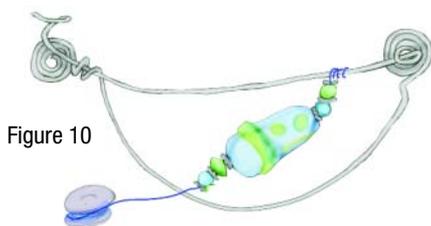


Figure 10

the wire from the spool with a 2" tail and repeat to secure the other side of the focal bead.

Shell: Use the 18-gauge wire core of the shell spiral to secure the back of the spiral to the top wire near the second loop, with the loose tail coil wrapped around the lower armature wire. Use the core wire to string 1 bead cap, 1 accent bead, 1 bead cap, and the blue coil from Step 3. Loosely wrap the wires around the armature and secure the end of the wire (Figure 11).

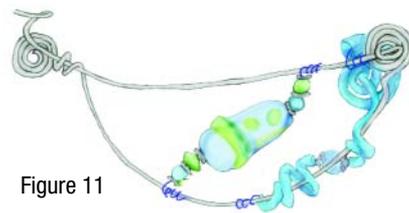


Figure 11

Open spiral: Cut 12" of 18-gauge wire and string a green coil from Step 3. Beginning with a 2" tail, work the coil and core wires into a loose 2-wrap spiral. Secure the tail to the armature crescent, opposite the shell (Figure 12a). Use the other end to string 3 accent beads and the second green coil. Keeping the beads and coils snug, loosely wrap the coil and core wires around the lower crescent wire (Figure 12b). String 1 bead cap and 1 accent bead and trim to

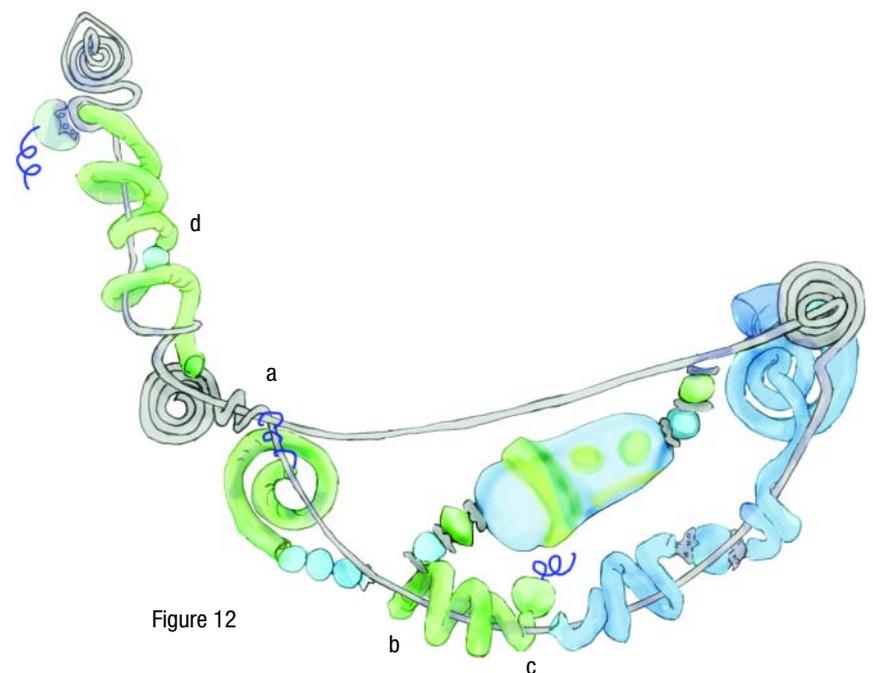


Figure 12

1"; use small round-nose pliers to coil the end, securing the beads (Figure 12c). Attach the remaining 2 green coils to wrap up around the leaf of the armature (Figure 12d). Continue adding beads and/or more coils as desired; keep in mind that wire elements add weight quickly, so keep your design light and airy.

7: Clasp. Cut 4 1/2" of 16-gauge silver wire and string a 15mm round to the center. Cut 7" of 20-gauge wire and wrap it three times around the first wire next to the bead, leaving a short tail. Shape the wire snug around the bead and repeat on the other side (Figure 13). Finish the

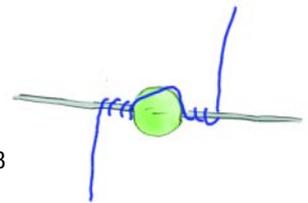


Figure 13

wraps by flush-cutting the wire close on the back side and pressing the ends down with chain-nose pliers.

Hooks: Use short round-nose pliers to form a P-loop at each end of the wire, bending them in opposite directions. Squeeze the loops flat with flat-nose pliers. Use long round-nose

pliers to bend each loop back toward the bead (Figure 14). Harden the wire by hammering the loops. Use 1½" of wire to form a figure eight and attach it to one of the loops; repeat for the second loop. Make a third figure eight and set aside.



Figure 14

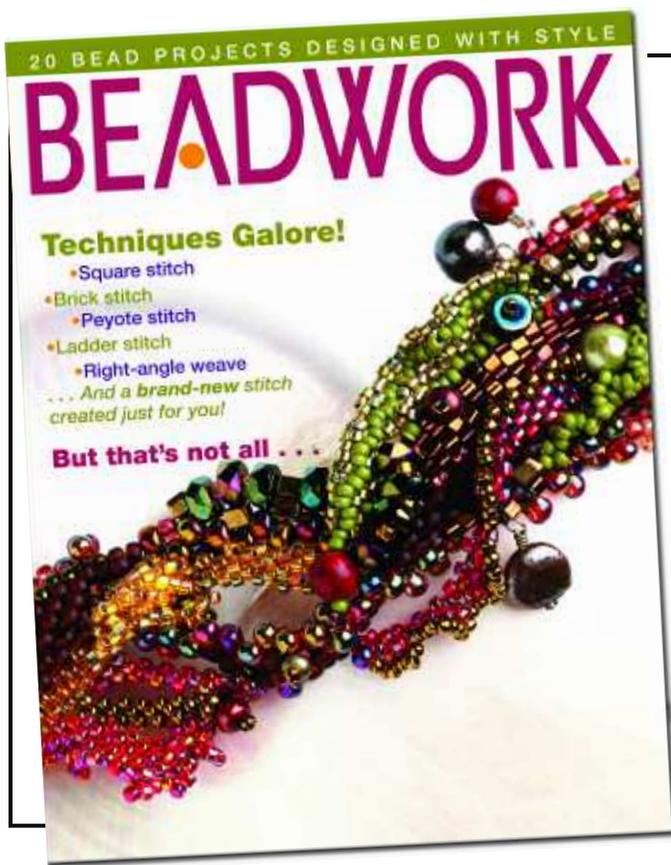
Links: Cut 4" of 16-gauge wire and form a simple loop; string 1 bead cap, one 15mm round, and 1 bead cap and form another loop, attaching the link to the second loop of the armature. Repeat to make a second link, attaching it to the first link. Cut 8" of chain and pass through the second link; attach both ends of the chain to one side of the clasp. Repeat for the other half of the necklace using 7" of chain.

Dangle: Use the head pin to string one 15mm round, 1 bead cap, 1 accent bead, and 1 spacer; form a wrapped loop that attaches to the third figure eight. Link jump rings together to form a short chain to attach the dangle to one side of the clasp. ♦

Melanie Schow has been working with wire and beads for twelve years and teaching for eight. She also designs jewelry for her business, Solamente. Her classes are offered at The San Gabriel Bead Company and Creative Castle, both in Southern California. See more of her colorful wire-work at bendwire.com.

RESOURCES

Check your local bead shop or contact: Vintage Lucite beads: The Beadin' Path, beadinpath.com. Lampworked bead: Sarah Hornik, glassbysarah.com. Colored wire: Paramount Wire Company, parawire.com. Other beads and findings: Creative Castle, (805) 499-1377, creativecastle.com.



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