

Creative Wire Wrapping as Form and Embellishment

by Carmen Alvarez-Keefer

Before I started with PMC, I had taken silversmithing and casting classes and learned many wonderful techniques, and discovered Tim McCreight and his book, "The Complete Metalsmith." I still wanted to include stones in my work, and at the time did not have a set up for a torch to solder settings and findings for my pieces, so I discovered wire wrapping as an interesting way to include stones and create settings for jewelry. I took classes from Ellsworth Sinclair ("Moods in Wire") and Marge Helwig (invented the wig jig) who taught me how to wire wrap. I took polymer clay classes from Nan Roche ("A New Clay") that taught me how to create melliflore beads to wire wrap. All this put me in a perfect position to be introduced to PMC. I also had a unique perspective when I worked with the clay because I loved wire wrapping. It seems natural to me to want to incorporate metal and wire in clay!

The first thing I discovered when I started combining wire wrapping and metal clay is that some metals will melt at PMC firing temperatures. Here are melting point temperatures of some metals that are commonly used for wires and findings:

Lead	621F
Tin	360-370F
Pewter	750F
Copper	1984F
Yellow brass	1749F
NuGold	1886F
Nickel	2651F
Pure silver	1760F
Sterling	1640F
ure gold	1947F

Copper, NuGold, and nickel wire are inexpensive wires that can withstand a regular firing and would be excellent as well as sterling and and pure silver wire for wire wrapping and adding to PMC.

Most wires will develop fire scale, (though pure silver wire will not). You could apply a product to them before firing, or as I do just use a wire brush to brush off the scale after the work fired, or tumble it clean in a jewelry tumbler. You can also coat the wire with PMC.

But the sky is the limit! Consider using the wire as your form and a design to model PMC around and showing through! Here are some ideas for where we have built with VERY LARGE WIRE!!



Consider all these wonderful Skeletons! How could you wrap wire to make these shapes? How could you make jewelry or sculpture using these shapes? How could you apply PMC to them?



Could you make a layer ring or necklace with flying Buttresses?



or a bracelet from this tunnel?

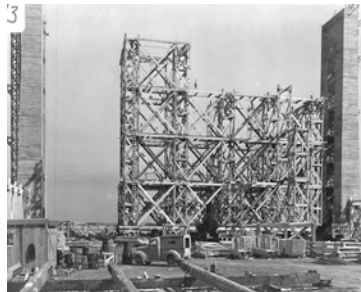


or a pendant, earrings from this shape?

You may ask why would you want to? Many reasons....

For stability when you are crating a complex 3-D shape

For embellishment!



For the ease of manipulating the clay to create what you want!



We see these structures in nature and made by man and woman!! You could start a picture file to inspire yourself!!

+ pictures are from free files on the internet site "Pics4Learning,"
www.pics.tech4learning.com