

Plique-à-Jour Bracelet Project



Combine silver drops and sparkly resin to make this stunning bracelet. By Clare John

Clare says: "I have created richly coloured plique-à-jour cold enamel drops to put on this chain bracelet. Plique-à-jour means 'open to light'. This is when enamel does not have a backing so it looks like stained glass when held to the light. I am so often asked how to do this technique so here is an explanation. To add sparkle I have embedded cubic zirconias in one of the drops. This bracelet and earrings will be perfect for festive parties."

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- ✓ 50cm x 1mm silver square wire
- ✓ 20cm x 0.8mm silver round wire
- ✓ 17cm x silver plain oval 5 belcher chain
- ✓ Silver toggle clasp
- ✓ Hard silver solder
- ✓ Easy silver solder
- ✓ 2 x 1mm cubic zirconias
- ✓ 2 x 2mm cubic zirconias
- ✓ 30gm jar red sparkle resin
- ✓ 30gm jar pink sparkle resin
- ✓ 30gm jar lilac sparkle resin
- ✓ 15gm bottle of hardener with pipette
- ✓ 3 x clean acrylic block
- ✓ Round & chain nose pliers
- ✓ Parallel pliers
- ✓ Piercing saw and blades
- ✓ Files – needle and large
- ✓ Planishing hammer
- ✓ Flat plate
- ✓ Buff stick and buff paper
- ✓ Snips
- ✓ Flux and flux brush
- ✓ Soldering torch
- ✓ Soldering blocks
- ✓ Soldering tweezers
- ✓ Pickling acid and pickle tweezers
- ✓ Barrel polisher
- ✓ Plastic cups, mixing sticks
- ✓ Miniature scales
- ✓ Plasticine

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1



Use round pointed and parallel pliers to turn up 19 little tear drops from the square wire. They do not need to be the same shape but should be roughly 10mm long on the outside. Make sure the sides are straight by squeezing with the parallel pliers. The two sides should overlap one on top of the other.

STEP 2



Cut the excess off by cutting along the side of one of the sides. This means the wire will be cut at the correct angle to meet the other side. Twist the wires with pliers so that they meet and adjust if necessary so that there is no gap between them. By doing this you do not have to file an angle.

STEP 3



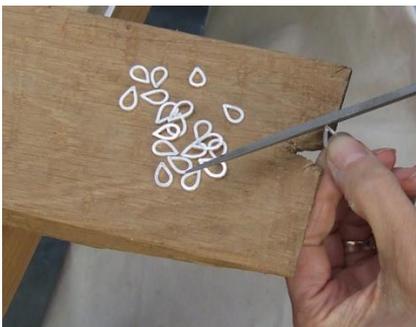
Solder each drop at the angle where the wires meet. Do several at a time and make sure that they have plenty of flux on them. Use a fine flame and hard silver solder as there is another solder joint to make later. Put each drop in the pickle to remove flux, wash and dry thoroughly.

STEP 4



File off any excess solder and then hammer flat on a flat plate with a planishing hammer. Make sure the hammer has a polished surface so that the silver is not marked. The drops need to be as flat as possible to make sure that the resin will not seep under.

STEP 5



Use a large file to file a flat at the point of each tear drop. Make, cut and close 19 jump rings out of 0.8mm round wire around something that is 0.8 or so in diameter. Use a needle file to make a flat on the join of the closed jump rings. Solder the jump rings to the flat you have filed with a fine flame and easy silver solder.

STEP 6



Pickle, wash and dry drops. Clean the flat surfaces with a buff stick if you think any need tidying up. Thread all the drops on a piece of wire and polish in a barrel polisher. If you want you can polish them on a polishing wheel although it is fiddly and time consuming. I have not given my drops a high shine finish.

STEP 7



Divide the drops into 3 and attach them to acrylic blocks with Plasticine round the edges. Position them so that the jump rings stick out over the edge slightly. It is important to have the drops as flat as possible with no excess Plasticine under or over the drops. Pick up the acrylic blocks and look from underneath to make sure there are no gaps where resin could seep through.

STEP 8



Make 3 pots of sparkle resin - lilac, pink and red. Use 1.4gm of each resin to 0.7gm hardener. Resin should be mixed 2 parts to 1 part hardener by weight for resin to cure (or set) properly. Follow safety instructions and wear a suitable barrier cream to protect your hands and work in a well-ventilated room.

STEP 9



Take a clean cocktail stick for each colour and carefully add a small drop of resin to the large part of each drop. Do not overfill because you do not want the resin to run over or to be higher than the level of the silver wire. Put a dot of resin on the acrylic block so that you can test it to check how the resin is setting.

STEP 10



After an hour check test the sample dot to see if the resin has gone tacky. When it is tacky add some cubic zirconias to one of the red sparkle drops with tweezers. If you add the cubic zirconias before the resin is tacky they will sink and fall over - then they will not sparkle. Leave the resin to cure hard overnight in a warm dust free place.

STEP 11



When the resin is hard, clean away the Plasticine and gently lift the drops by levering up the jump ring. The resin will not stick to the acrylic block. If the resin has seeped under the silver it can be scraped off with a finger nail- do not use anything sharp which will scratch the silver. If desired the silver and resin can be polished with micro-mesh polishing cloths.

STEP 12



Solder toggle catch to chain bracelet. Group the tear drops in threes and attach each group with a jump ring made from 0.8mm round wire. Attach evenly along the bracelet and attach one drop next to the catch ring. The jump rings cannot be soldered on because the resin would burn with the heat of a torch.

DESIGNER TIPS

Tip 1: Use clean acrylic blocks with no scratches so the resin drops are easy to lift off.

Tip 2: Cubic zirconias keep their sparkle in resin but crystals do not.

Tip 3: Have another piece of jewellery ready to put excess resin in so it is not wasted.