

Twist-and-Slice Earrings

This project is modified from my book Metal Clay Practice. If you want to make mokume-gane patterns, this is a good place to start.

Materials: Friendly Copper, Friendly Bronze, Pearl Grey steel XT.



1. Roll a layer of copper (6 cards thick); bronze (3 cards thick); and steel (1 card thick). Out of each layer cut a rectangle using a rectangular cutter, 40 mm x 20 mm.



2. Stack the rectangles, copper first, then bronze, then steel.
3. Cut the stack in half lengthwise.



4. Stack the 2 halves: be sure not to attach copper to copper or steel to steel.



5. Twist the stack with your fingers, starting from the middle. Keep twisting, right side to the right, left to the left, trying to keep the twist as even as possible.



Twisted layer earrings with Friendly Copper and silver clay, fired at 1350°F/730°C in a brick kiln.

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6. Roll the stack back and forth on the working surface until the surface becomes smooth with no cracks.



7. Using two wooden blocks, shape the twist into a rectangle.



8. Dry the rectangle for a few minutes, flipping it over again and again. In about 2 minutes the outer layer will harden and the shape will not be distorted when sliced.



Each time you make these earrings the design will vary slightly. The specific design depends on the number of layers, the number and precision of twists, and the precision of the slicing.

9. Use a pencil to divide the narrow side of the rectangle in two halves. Slice it in half with a tissue blade.



You can use a miter box to slice the stack in equal parts.

This is where you say "Wow"!

10. Dry the slices thoroughly.



Do not sand the front of the earrings unless you have to; sanding will change the design, and the earrings will not be mirror images of each other. It is better to fill cracks with clay then sand them.

11. Sand the back of the slices with a nail polisher and/or a sponge sanding pad until they reach the same thickness.



12. The back of the earrings are not mirror images of each other but can be left as they are. Frame each earring with a 2-cards thick strip of Friendly Copper.



13. Drill a hole at the top of each earring.

14. Insert bronze eyelets or embeddables in the holes, seal, and dry.

15. Fire the earrings in carbon for two hours at 1510°F/820°C (brick kiln); 1560°F/848°C (muffle kiln). No pre-firing is required.

16. Finish the earrings following the instructions in the document entitled "Finishing Fired Metal Clay" on the right-hand pane of my blog.



You can make these earrings in other shapes and styles. See "Twist and Shape Earrings" in *Metal Clay Practice*, p. 37.

