



Inspired by MATISSE

Wire Pendant Project



(The Budge and the Mermaid by Matisse 1953)

By Ruth Ball for The Bluecoat Display Centre, Liverpool

Make a wire pendant inspired by the artist MATISSE

Aim: to have fun and learn a new skill

Objective: to make a wearable pendant

SKILLS – wire wrapping / wire bending / hammering / burnishing – fine motor co-ordination

You will need:

- a table to work on
- a hard surface or a metal block for hammering
- silver or copper wire / a tube bead / and a round bead
- a pair of round nose pliers and a pair of flat nose pliers
- wooden sticks / knitting needles are useful for bending shapes (optional)
- a pair of wire cutters / a small pot for the off cuts
- burnisher (steel or agate)
- ordinary hammer
- fine hammer
- string
- ruler
- pencils
- safety glasses

USEFUL links

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLgSd8ka0Gs>
- <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/7/327>
- http://www.henri-matisse.net/cut_outs.html

Objects that look like Matisse shapes

- oak leaves
- seaweed
- flowers
- shapes in water

BRIEF

Find out about the artist Matisse. Look at his CUT OUT series.

You can find many images on google – type in “Matisse cut out paintings”

He also created a series called Jazz which had lovely bold designs.

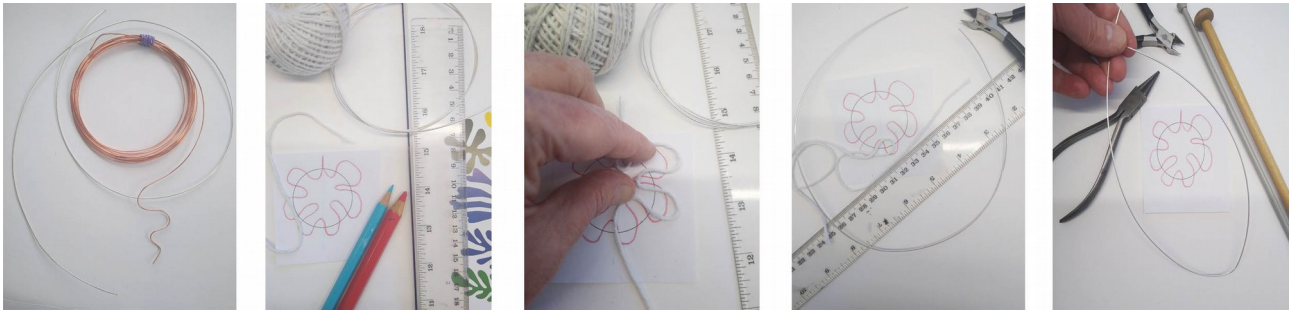
Google “Matisse Jazz series” - There are also some great books about his work.

Once you see the shapes in his cut outs you will also recognise natural forms that have the same organic shapes. If you like drawing or taking photos you could extend the project to find your own forms and work with individual shapes that are specific to your own inspiration. Find shapes that you like that would look good as a jazzy pendant. Matisse works mostly with colour but look at the outer shapes of his cut outs for exciting lines. Keep it simple and have fun!

Health & Safety

When cutting wire, it is recommended that you should wear safety glasses. Cut away from yourself and make sure your fingers are away from the cutting edge. Use a small pot to cut into, making the trimmed wire fall into the pot and not fly over the desk.

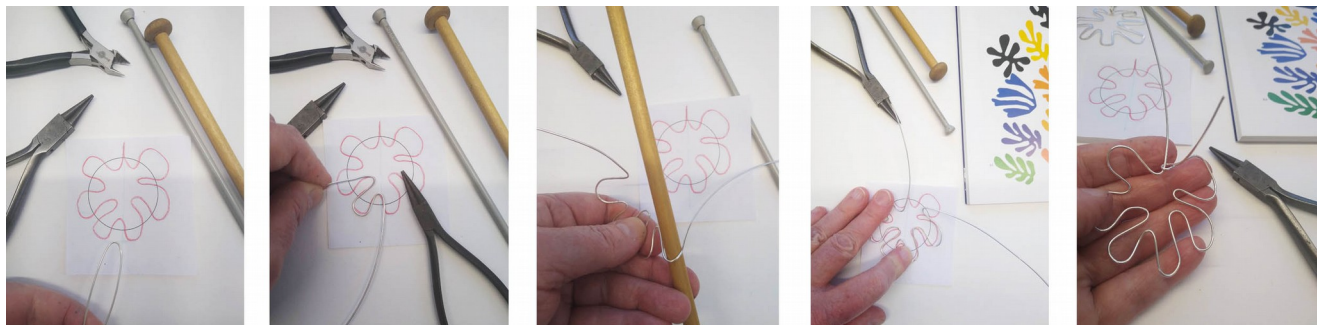
METHOD



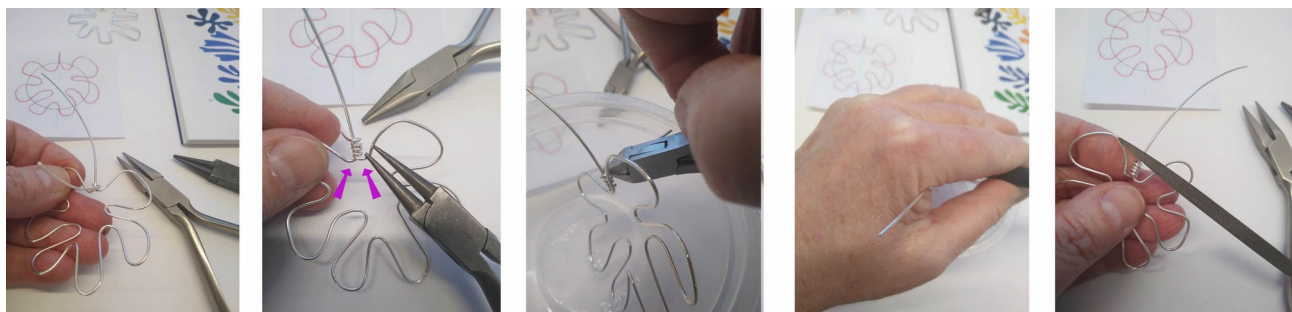
Select the type of wire you want to use. I like silver best, and copper is good too, both metals are soft enough to bend. Brass is too hard. Some aluminium wire is OK but it can be too soft. A good thickness to use is 1mm round wire.

To start, draw a circle the size that you want to make your piece. Add a line down the centre to give you a guide to work to for the stem of the shape. Sketch your motif around the circle. Draw your own version. You don't have to copy exactly.

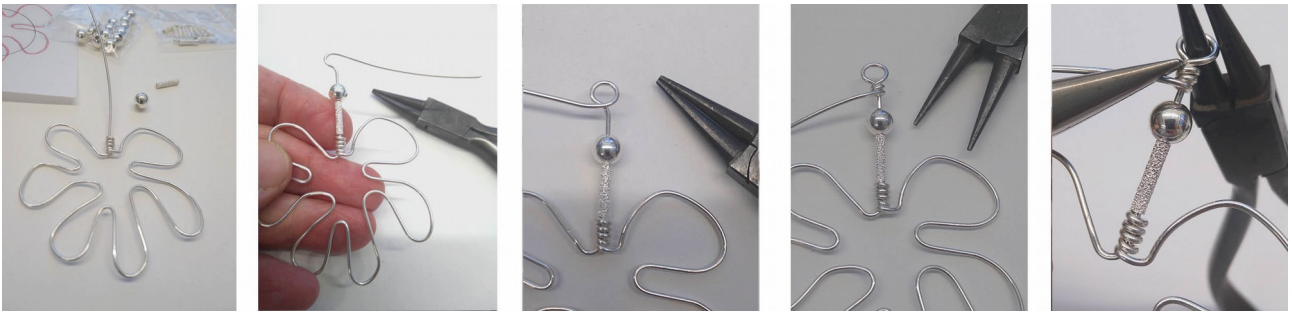
Next use a piece of string to wrap around the drawing and measure the length of the shape. Cut the string and then measure the length on a ruler. Don't skimp on wire as its good to have a bit extra for the fitting. In my demonstration I used 40cm length which created a 6cm diameter pendant. You may need more or less dependant on shape / size.



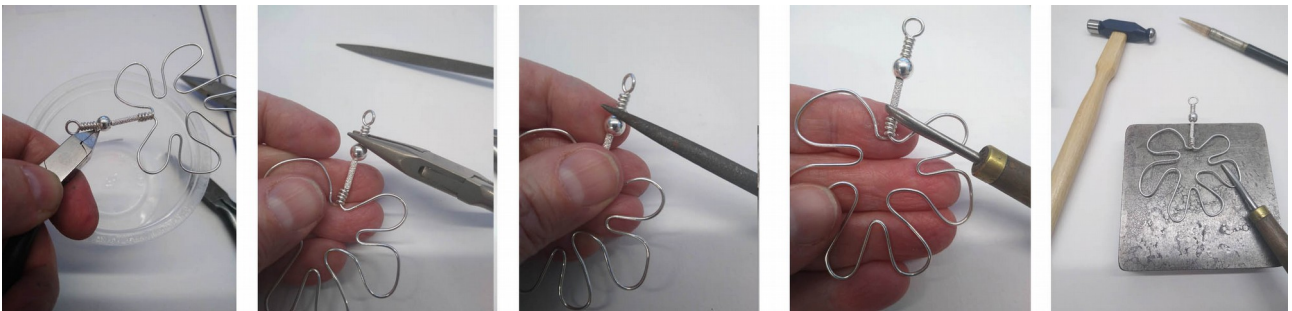
Start bending the shape from the base of the design. Begin in the middle, you need to work up from the bottom towards the top so that you can create the fitting. Bend one side up and then the other. You can use your pliers to bend the shape or bend the wire around a found object such as the knitting needles! Your fingers are also good tools!



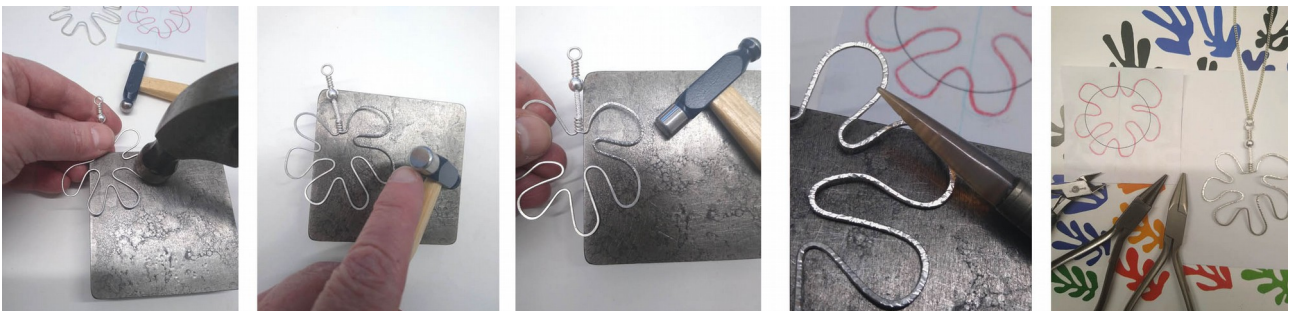
When you reach the top of the shape start wrapping the right side of the wire around the left side. Use your round-nose and flat nose pliers, and pull tight with your fingers. Wrap four times and tighten with the flat nose pliers. At the base of the wrap bend the wires into a "U" shape curve either side. This keeps the design secure. Trim the spare wire carefully. Cut away from yourself and into a pot. Cover the wire with your hand as you cut to avoid the wire flying up and causing a problem. File the end to make it smooth. (Wear glasses)



Now add the tube bead and the round bead onto the wire stem that remains. At the top, using the round nose pliers make a right angle and bend the wire into a circle. Then wrap the wire back around the stem. Wrap three or four times to match the previous wrap section. You will need both pliers to wrap and hold.



Trim the wire into the pot again. Again be careful not to let the wire flick up. Hold downward and keep it over the pot and guard with your hand. Remember to wear safety glasses. The final thing to do with the created fitting is to make sure the twisted wrap is tight. Use the flat nose pliers for this. Then file the wire edge and burnish the ends at each point. You can now decide to stop the piece if you like. If you stop here just give the wire a burnish to make sure it is hardened up. Burnishing also helps give a bright polish!



If you want to give the pendant a sparkly finish you can work on a bit. Use an ordinary hammer to flatten the wire on a hard steel block. Use the flat side of the hammer to spread the metal out. Again this will harden the metal. Hammer both sides.

Next using a small hammer, hammer the wire with the edge of the hammer. Make short blows and alternative marks so that the metal catches the light. Again do this both sides. When you are happy with the texture you have created, burnish the wire to give it that extra twinkle!all you have to do now is add a jump ring and attach to a chain!



! Always work safely and have fun !