



MINIATURE CABOCHON EARRINGS TUTORIAL

by Corina Tettinger

Tutorial for earrings without using glue



Corinas gorgeous beads and earrings are available at: <http://www.corinabeads.com>



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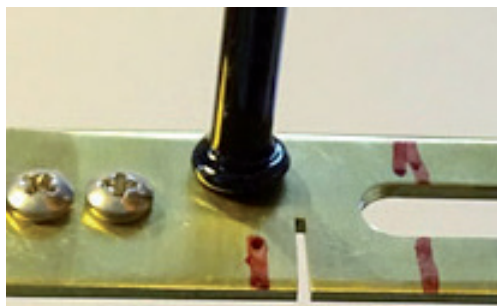
WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- * ear studs made of surgical steel by Vetromagic
- * a tool to hold the ear stud (take a look at page 6)
- * tweezers, pliers, eg. the top half of a lentilpress
- * a clear glass rod
- * glass rods in the colors you like, and/or frit, powder, murrinis...
- * fibre blanket, vermiculite, annealing bubbles or kiln



Before you start:

Pay attention to the „change of hands“.....sometimes you hold the glass in your right hand, sometimes in your left...it definitely helps to do that!



Heat the tip of a rod of glass.

This color will be the BACKING for your earring. The amount of glass you melt determines the diameter of the finished earring.

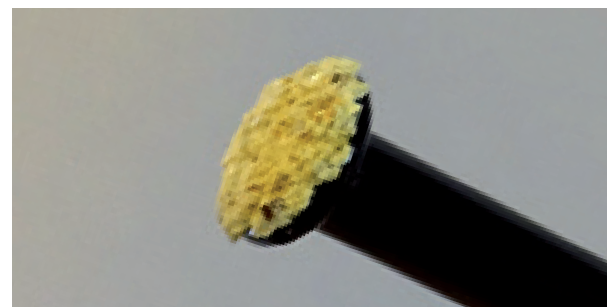
Push the rod onto a flat surface, like creating a maria.

Gently heat the front of the maria. Be careful not to lose the flat shape.

Tipp:

If you want to use powder, enamel, frit or silver, the entire surface has to be equally hot - pay attention to the color of the glass, the CENTER of the maria tends to stay colder, which will show up as a darker color.

Decorate flat side of maria.





In this example I push the maria into a jar of silver-brown powder by Vetromagic - but you can also use frit, murrini or whatever you can think of.

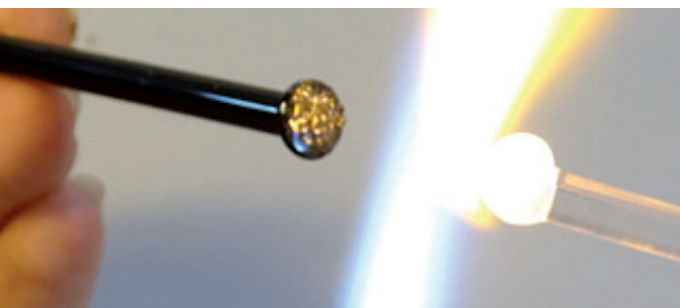
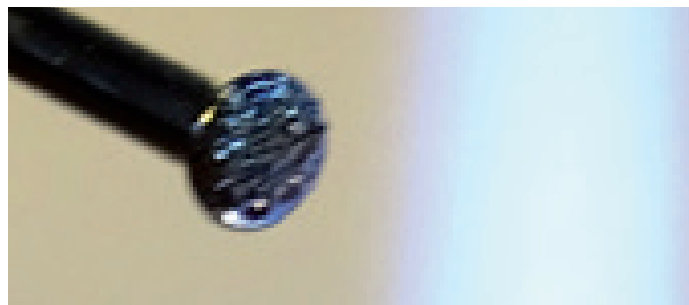
Gently melt in decoration. If you only have a thin layer of powder or frit, heat is usually enough, but if you apply a murrini or something larger, use a curved tool to gently push the murrini down.

If you have any kind of **silvered glass/powder/frit**:
Reduce now.

Keep the maria warm, but out of the flame, and heat the blob of clear at the same time.

If you do not use silvered glass:

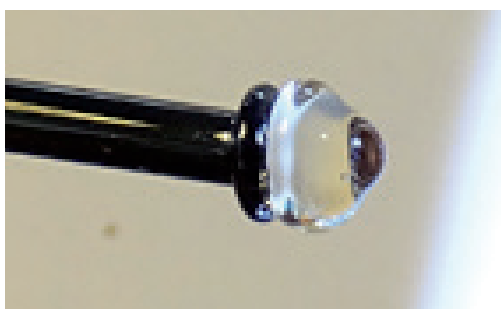
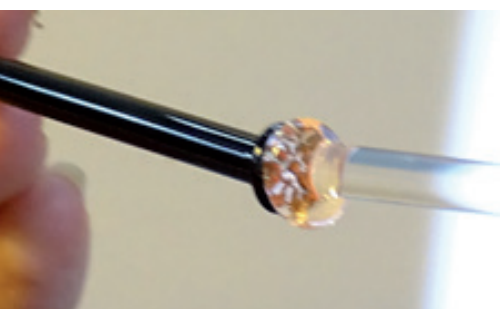
You can keep your decorated maria warm higher in the flame.



Push the clear blob evenly onto the maria, then melt off the clear rod.

If possible, you want to melt the clear rod off in a way that it has a „pointed tip“.

Tipp: If that doesn't happen, reheat the clear and roll it on a marver to point the tip!



Shape the face of the earring.

You can do that just by using heat, but it's much easier and faster to use a curved surface. You could use the top of a lentil press, or a regular shaper.

The shape of the earring face depends on the depth of your tool, you can see in my collection of „sample earrings“ that they can be either very flat (or even completely flat...) - or very domed....it all depends on what you like...



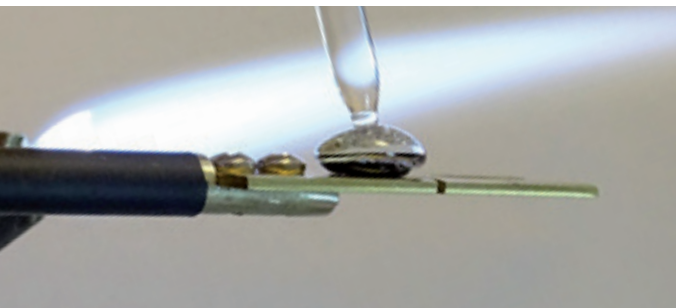
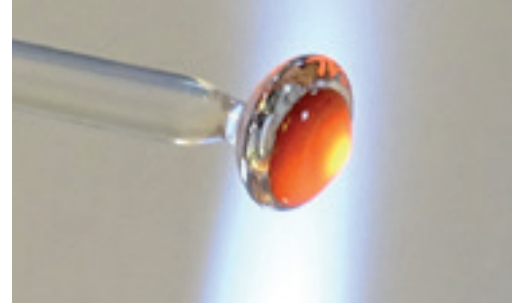
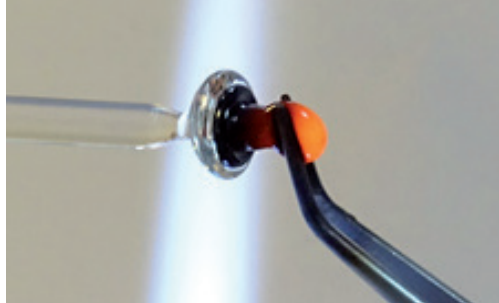
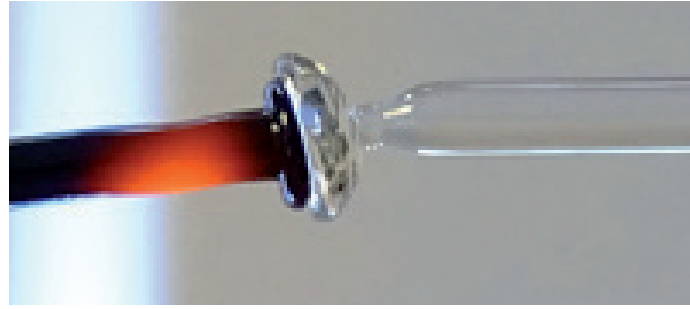
Punty up to front with pointed clear rod.

There are all kinds of theories about „puntying up“, I am sure you heard „cold seal“ and „hot seal“...as long as you have a clear front on your earring, it doesn't matter all that much.

I would recommend to keep the earring dome cooler than the tip of the clear punty.

Melt off original rod. Focus the flame on the rod you started out with. You want to heat it somewhere close to the maria, but it's not necessary to get all the way to where the rod „meets“ the flat back.

Pluck off excess glass. Switch the punty into the other hand, heat the excess glass and „pluck“ it off with tweezers. This usually takes 2-3 turns of heating and plucking, it doesn't have to happen in one step.

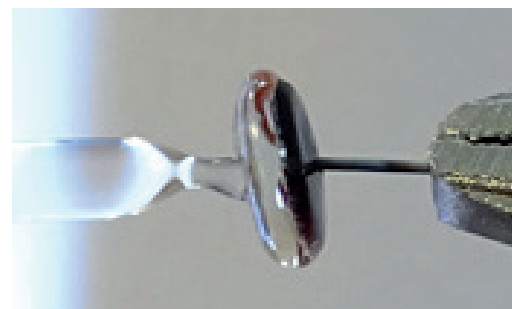
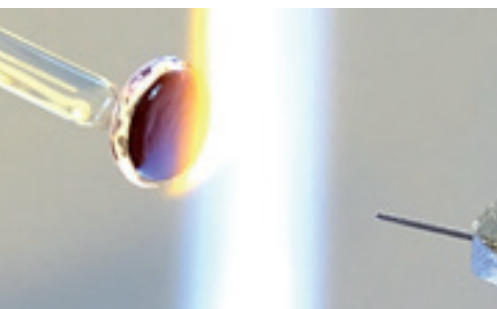


Heat and flatten back.

Again, the flattening doesn't happen in one quick step, it is safer to heat the back, flatten it a little, heat again, flatten, until you are happy.

This looks good! - Now: Anchor the pin

- gently heat the back of the earring. It should be hot, but not so hot that you'll lose the shape
- at the same time, bring the tip of the pin to a bright glow
- push the pin into the center of the back

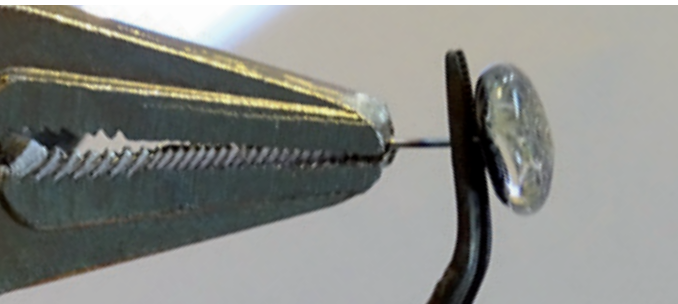


Melt off the clear punty.

Pluck off remaining clear with pliers.

You don't have to remove all the clear unless the front of your earring is a different glass than clear.

Flamepolish the front of the earring.



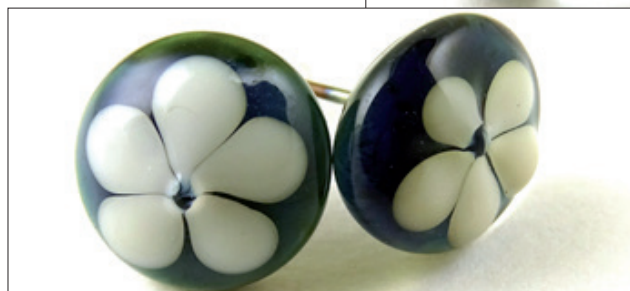
Now hold the pin with tweezers, release the handle and put the earring into your annealing kiln.

If you don't have a kiln you can still make earrings. There is so little glass that you should be fine cooling it off in a fiber blanket, vermiculite or Japanese annealing bubbles. But don't forget to make the whole earring nice and warm before you put it into the vermiculite/annealing bubbles!

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Have fun! Corina

More tutorials and frit blends at
www.VETROMAGIC.COM

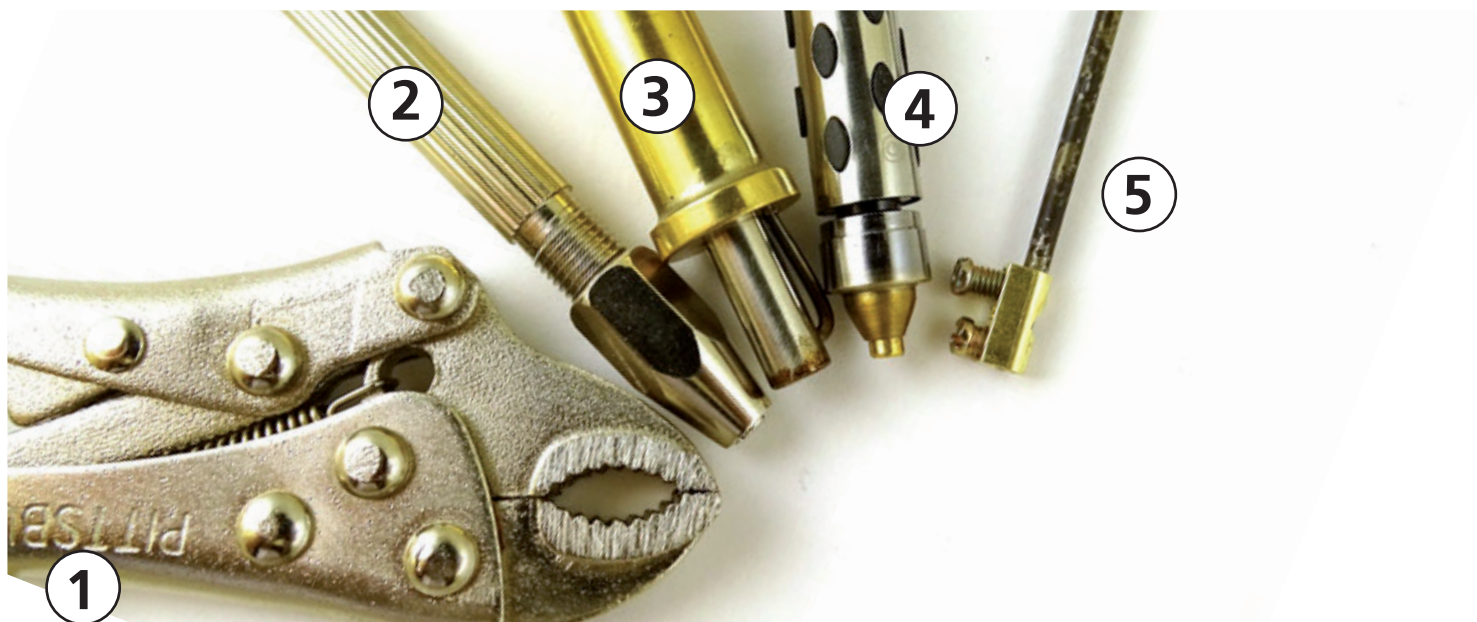


Frit and surgical steel accessories are available at
www.Vetromagic.com
and at our retailers!



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HOLDING TOOLS



How you're supposed to hold the tiny bit of wire? - Here are a few ideas!

① Midget Locking Pliers:

These work great as long as you just use them to push the pin into the earring back. If you use a method where you **MAKE** the earring on the end of the pin by adding glass directly to the pin they are a little awkward to turn. Apart from that, they are cheap to buy and easy to release the pin. Verdict: slightly uncomfortable but it gets the job done

② Pin Vise:

A lot of people who make stuff on wires (like bell-flowers) seem to like pin vises. They are inexpensive and nice to use when you want to turn the glass...a little time consuming to unscrew the tip and release the wire when you're done. It's also a bit difficult to place the wire in straight into the tip. Verdict: okay

③ The Italian Wire-holder:

This of course is the best, but it's very expensive (\$ 80) and very hard to find. I bought mine in Murano.

④ Mechanical Pencil:

This was a brilliant idea of mine - but it's kind of hard to find the right one. I bought a Pentel 365, and David (Mr Mango-beads) cut the tip off for me. I used it happily for a while, but then it must have gotten too hot and the whole thing came apart, probably because some plastic melted inside. Maybe if you quench it after each use, it will be okay. Verdict: slick but iffy.

⑤ The European Solution:

This one needs a little preparation - it uses a Terminal Block of wire connectors made of brass (brass is important, it will melt if it isn't brass!).

In order to use this, you have to cut away the plastic housing and then screw (an old) 3/32nd mandrel in one end, and a surgical steel earring pin in the other end.

In Europe, people prepare a bunch of these - make the earring at the end of the pin, and then pop the entire contraption into the kiln. Great idea!

If you have some other idea or suggestion, please let me know!

Corina

