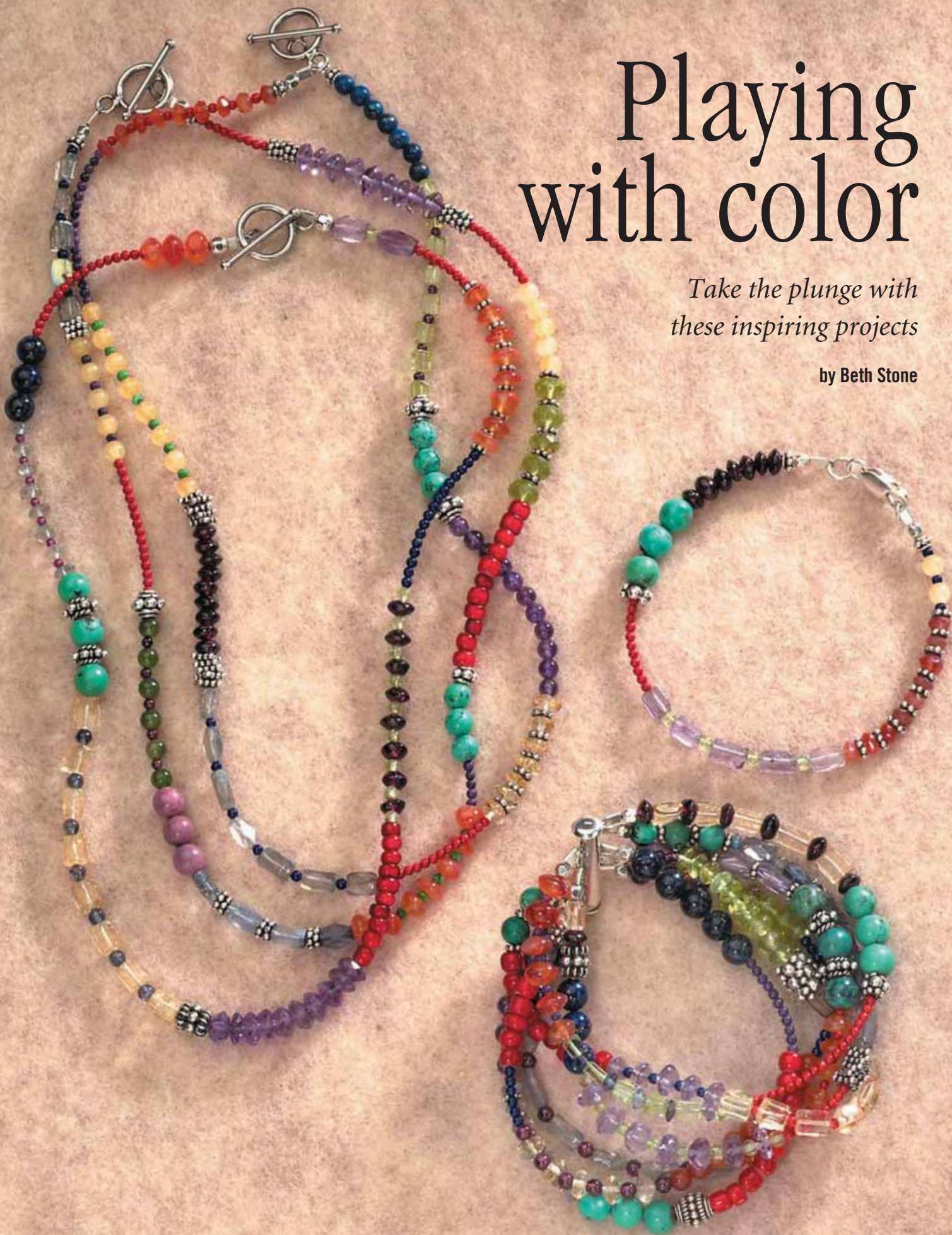


Playing with color

Take the plunge with these inspiring projects

by Beth Stone



Take a long, hard look at your stash of beads. The bracelets and necklaces shown here require the brightest, boldest, and liveliest in your collection. Bring out your gemstones, crystals, metals, glass, and pearls in all manner of shapes, sizes, textures, and finishes. It's best to have your assortment laid out in front of you before you get started.

The next step is to try out various bead combinations. Now's the time to go beyond the familiar and comfortable color pairings you normally use. When you've found a new combination you like, set it aside and keep going. Let the beads surprise you.

When you're ready to start stringing, work in small sections and change color and texture every 1 to 2 in. (2.5-5cm). Incorporating silver or gold spacers among your beads will add definition to each color block and lend a sense of continuity to your finished piece.

stepbystep

My jewelry pieces are easy to string; the challenge is to design a pleasing and joyous array of colors. Experiment freely with your beads and be willing to do some rearranging before you crimp the final crimps.

bracelet

① Determine the finished length of your bracelet, then subtract the clasp measurement to establish the length of the beaded strands.

② Add 3 in. (7.6cm) to the length determined above for finishing the ends and cut 6 pieces of beading wire. String a crimp bead on one strand, thread the strand through a loop on the clasp, and go through the crimp again (photo a). Tighten the strand so it encircles the clasp loop with some ease, leaving a 1-in. tail. Crimp the crimp bead (see "Basics"). Repeat, attaching 2 strands to each clasp loop.

③ String a colorful mix of beads and spacers on each strand. The end beads must have holes large enough to accommodate two passes of beading wire, so you can hide the tails inside them (photo b). Check the way the beads look together and make any changes before you attach the strands to the other half of the clasp. Add or remove beads, if necessary, so the strands are the same length.

④ Lay out the bracelet strands in parallel lines and place the second clasp half next to the unfinished ends. Make sure the clasp is correctly positioned so it will slide into the other half.

String a crimp bead on a beaded strand and go through the corresponding loop on the second clasp half. Go back through the crimp and a bead or two. Tighten the wire and check the strand for gaps between beads. Leave a little ease so the strand hangs freely, then crimp the crimp bead (photo c). Repeat

with the remaining strands. Trim any exposed wire tails.

single-strand necklace or bracelet

Make an easy single-strand necklace or bracelet using the same basic stringing and finishing techniques.

① Cut a piece of beading wire about 3 in. longer than the desired length of your necklace or bracelet. String a crimp bead, go through the loop on one half of the clasp, and continue through the crimp bead again. Crimp the crimp bead.

② String multiple color blocks as shown in my pieces at left. When you've reached the desired length, string a crimp bead and go through second half of the clasp, the crimp, and a few beads. Tighten the loop and crimp the crimp bead. ●

Beth would love to hear from you. Contact her at bnshdl@msn.com or at home (248) 855-9358.



a



b



c

materials

multi-strand bracelet

- Assorted 2-6mm gemstones, crystals, metal beads, and seed beads
- Assorted Bali silver spacers
- Flexible beading wire, .013 or .014
- 12 Crimps
- 3-strand Slide clasp

single-strand necklace or bracelet

- Assorted 2-6mm gemstones, crystals, metal beads, and seed beads
- Assorted Bali silver spacers
- Flexible beading wire, .013 or .014
- 2 Crimps
- Toggle or lobster claw clasp

Tools: crimping pliers, wire cutters