
Sew a Luckyjuju Puppy Doll with Katia Ferris

Chapter 1 - Sew a Luckyjuju Puppy Doll

Overview

(gentle piano music) - Hi, I'm Katia Ferris. I'm an artist and designer, living in San Francisco. I've been designing and making cloth dolls for about eight years now under the name Luckyjuju. For this project, we're going to make a puppy dog doll. We'll cover my favorite fabrics and materials, and we'll sew and assemble the doll. We'll be sewing on the machine, adding embroidered elements by hand, and you'll have the option to add detail with fabric marker. Lastly, I'll show you how to knit a simple ichord scarf for your new friend. These simple dolls have a lot of personality and make a great gift for children of all ages.

Materials

- To make your puppy, you'll need two to three woven fabrics and coordinating felt. For the body piece, I recommend light to mid-weight wovens. Linen cotton blend is great. Good quality muslins work well, as well as heavier quilting cotton. For the coordinating fabrics, they should be the same weight and have a similar amount of stretch. For the felt, I recommend 100% wool felt. Polyester and blends pill and wear very quickly. Included in your pattern PDF is this coloring page which can help you make decisions about fabric choices. If you choose just one coordinating fabric, your ears and limbs will match. If you want to play around with some other options, you can have them mix and match. You'll need your pattern pieces, and you'll wanna cut those out and transfer the markings to one body piece. You'll need two shades of embroidery floss, black and pink, and needles. Tweezers or hemostats are really helpful. I use a chopstick to help me poke out little fiddly pieces. You'll need a variety of scissors, paper scissors, fabric scissors, little snips. And pinking shears are optional, but very helpful. You'll need a marking tool. I use an air and water soluble ink pen. The fabric marker is optional. I use a gel roller. You'll also need about three ounces of Poly-fil stuffing. You'll need straight pins. And for our I-cord scarf, I'm using size 10 needles, chunky yarn, and a darning needle. Lastly, you'll need an iron, an ironing surface, and your sewing machine and coordinating thread.

Sewing ears and arms

- After you've cut out your pattern pieces, you'll have two body pieces, you'll have four ear pieces, two in fabric A and two in fabric B, you'll have four arm pieces, four foot pieces, snout, and your two spots. We'll start with pinning the ears together. You'll wanna put right sides facing and pin your pieces together. I use straight pins with a glass head so that I don't have to worry if I iron over the pin. And we can take these over to the machine. We're gonna sew from here around to here with a quarter-inch seam allowance. Be mindful of this notch right here. I'm going to set my stitch length to 1 1/2. I like to use a smaller stitch length when sewing dolls because it makes them more sturdy. I'm going to backstitch at the beginning and end of my line. (machine whirring) I like to keep my sewing needle in the down position so that I can pivot as I'm coming around curves. I just take it slow, stitch by stitch, and lift my pressor foot when I need to to get around those curves. (machine whirring) And backstitch. (machine whirring) Once we've completed that process for the second ear, we're gonna clip our curves. You'll want to take a pair of sharp scissors and cut little tiny triangles all around the curved areas. You want to get in pretty close without going through the stitching line.

Carry that all the way through. You don't have to do the straighter parts, but you'll wanna do it here. I've personally found that using pinking shears is a much faster way of doing this. (scissor clacking) I'm gonna stop here and use my other scissors to make sure that I get in close to this little corner right here. Now we're going to turn our pieces right side out. This is where I like to use my chopstick to push out the fabric all the way to the seams. Once you have it all nicely flattened, you can press it with your fingers or take it to the iron for a quick press. For the arms, we're gonna repeat the process that we did with the ears. We're going to pin them together, sew them, clip the curves, turn them right side out, and press them. I'm gonna use my chopstick to help me turn it right side out. I'm gonna pull the pieces apart, insert my chopstick, the not-pointy end, and pull my arm over the top of it. Now I'll use my chopstick to press out the seams. Next we'll be stuffing our arms and ears. The ears are only lightly stuffed. You're just gonna take a tiny little bit of our Poly-Fil stuffing and put it in the back of our ears, along the back seam. Just a little bit. I'm gonna use a pin to hold this in place. And repeat for the second ear. Just enough to give it a little bit of dimension. The arms we'll stuff until about half an inch from the top. Gonna use the wide part of my chopstick to push down the stuffing. You want the stuffing to be firm but not lumpy. There. Repeat for the other side. You want it to be a little bit looser when it gets to the top. You wanna stuff really firmly for about 2/3 of the way up, and then let it get thinner as you get towards the top. Then you just wanna make sure that your arms match. If you need to pull out a little stuffing to make them even, you can do that.

Embroidering the face

- Now I'm going to move to the body piece. We'll be attaching our felt pieces to this body piece where we've already transferred our markings. The only tricky bit can be attaching the snout and centering that correctly. So I'm going to show you a quick tip for how I mark that on the body piece. I've already poked holes with a pin along the snout outline, and now I'm just going to lay that over the body piece, positioning it correctly, and I'm going to use my marking pen to just dot right through those little pin holes, which will help me align my snout correctly. Here are my markings and, as you can see, I've already done that for the eyes, as well. Now I'll use these marks to lay my piece just right and pin it in place. The marks will disappear. And I'll do the same for my two spots. Now we'll bring our body piece to the machine. Be sure to adjust your stitch length back to a regular length of about 2.5. I'm also going to lower the tension a bit so that the stitching does not cause an indentation. I'm going to sew right along the edge of the felt, and be sure to backstitch at the beginning and end of your stitching. (needle clicking) Now we're going to repeat that for the spots. Now I'll be moving away from the machine and working on hand embroidering our face details. I don't usually transfer my markings for this portion, but I do use the pattern as a visual guide to help me know where to put my stitches. We're going to be using regular embroidery floss, and I separate out three strands and use just three strands at a time. So I just, just three strands at a time. I have my needle already threaded, and I'm just going to eyeball my pattern. Okay, now we're going to run our stitches down for the mouth, and we're going to do that by coming up through the center of this lowest line of stitching. Got to get underneath your stitching. And center it. The rest of our stitches will be backstitches for this line. Okay, one more stitch. And now I'll do the mouth. Come underneath this last line of stitching and then in on the other side. And tie off. Next we'll be embroidering our little whisker dots, and we're going to use a French knot for that. So we're going to take our pink embroidery floss which I've already threaded three strands. I've separated my six strands in half, and I'm just using three strands for my French knots. I'm going to come up through the back, pull my thread through. I'm going to hold the embroidery floss with my left hand and wrap

it twice around my needle. Now I'm going to go right next to the hole that I came up through, put my needle down. I'm going to gently tug on the embroidery floss here and then push my needle all the way through. Let's do that again. Drawing my needle up from the back. Holding the thread with my left hand, I'm going to wrap it twice around my needle, and I'm holding those stitches or those wraps on my needle, and I'm putting it back right next to where it came on. Then I'm going to grab this floss that's wrapped around the needle and just gently tug it. Don't pull too tight, otherwise you'll have a hard time getting the needle through. I'm going to draw my needle through, and there we go. Continue making whisker dots until you have about five or six on either side, and your piece looks something like this. Now we're going to work on the eyes. You can use embroidery floss and embroider your eyes. I'm going to use this Gel Roller permanent fabric marker. I really like the precision that I can get using this tool. I'm going to use my pattern piece just to lay underneath my fabric here in case the marker goes through. And I've got my spots marked on here from my transfer earlier, but I can see they might just be a little bit crooked. So, as I draw in my eyes, I'm going to be accounting for that. I'll probably be drawing a little high here and a little lower here, so. And just keep filling in until I have a nice dark, rich color and clear outlines. And I just want to make sure that my two sides are pretty even. And there you go, instant cute.

Assembling the doll

- Once the marker has dried on your eyes you can attach the feet to the body. You're gonna attach them to both the front and the back and be mindful that your toes are facing inward. There's a longer portion that is on the inward side. My fabric doesn't have a distinct front and back, but if yours does make sure that you're attaching with right sides facing. So we're gonna pin these together with right sides facing. Once you've pinned all four feet we're gonna bring them over to the machine and we're gonna stitch across each foot using a 1/4 inch seam, being sure to backstitch at the beginning and end. And we're also going to reset our stitch length to 1.5. Now we're going to press out our seams. Now we're gonna move into assembling our doll. First thing I'm gonna do is flip the two body pieces right sides together. And I'm going to align them at the seams here for the feet and at the neck. And I'm going to pin them into place. We're gonna fold back this piece and get our arms ready to attach. First thing we need to do is just clip off the very tip of the arms here. I'm going to line them up, take my scissors and just cut that little bit right there. Now I'm going to align the bottom of the arm with my mark here. And this one with my mark on this side. And we're gonna pin those in place. Now we'll attach the ears. Now we're going to fold the body back up and pin the two pieces together. Making sure to align at the neck. I'm going to pin all the way around and once I have the ears and the arms sandwiched then I can remove those pins. As I come to the portion where my opening marks are I'm going to be sure to put a double pin here to remind me of my start and stop points for my sewing. I'll just hold this here to keep it in place. This may seem like a lot of pins and it is, but when I bring it to the machine to sew, which we're gonna do next, I don't want it to move around while I'm sewing. We are going to sew around from point A to B, all the way around using a 1/4 inch seam allowance. Our stitch length is still set to 1.5, so that's perfect. I'm gonna backstitch at the beginning and end, as usual. When I come to the corner I'm going to pivot and continue around. When you get to these seams you just wanna double-check on the back that your seams are laying flat. Coming up to my double pins. I'm going to backstitch to secure it. Now I'm just going to run an extra line of stitching at the arms and at the crotch, just to make sure that it's secure. Now we're going to clip our curves. First thing is in here in the crotch we need to clip up to this second line of stitching. This will help our doll to have nice clean seams and for the fabric to lay

evenly. I'm going to use my pinking shears around the curves. Coming back to my scissors I'm going to clip into these corners, avoiding my lines of stitching. And then finish up with my pinking shears around the head. We're ready to turn it right side out. I like to start by drawing the arms out through the opening. Next I do the head. I fold it and then tuck it through that opening. I use the chopsticks for the feet. I pull the fabric apart, kind of pinch it in, and I can even use my chopstick to push it all the way through. Okay, our new friend is right side out, but he's looking a little funny, so we're going to use our chopstick to push out all our seams. I'm just running the side of the chopstick along the seam. Don't use the tip, because there's the danger that you might poke right through. When I get to this opening part this is where I'll be closing with the ladder stitch later after our puppy is stuffed, so I wanna make sure that I have them well aligned. Just to finish up I'm going to fold the ears down and just lightly iron them, so that when our puppy is stuffed his ears will face forward.

Stuffing and finishing

- Now we're ready to stuff our puppy. I'm gonna start at the feet. Then do the head, and then work into the middle. I recommend using more polyfill than you think you need. Overstuff because as time goes on, the polyfill will compress and your doll will get floppy. You'll want to move from side to side to make sure that your stuffing is even, especially on the head. Make sure to push into the corners. It really does require a lot of stuffing, more than would think. Okay. It's looking pretty good. Just a little more. Once you feel like your puppy is looking good, just take a look around and make sure, look for lumps or any kind of empty spots or spots that aren't as well filled in. And then we'll be able to add a little bit of stuffing during the ladder stitch process if we need to. To complete assembly on our puppy doll, we're going to close it up with a ladder stitch. I've threaded my needle with polyester thread for strength. I'm gonna come in through the opening, and into the seam, just a little ways down. Then I'm going to run my needle into this channel in the folds of the fabric. Then you're gonna go directly across and find that channel between the two fabrics on the other side. The stitches need to be pretty small. And directly across from each other. The fold that we made when we were ironing is helpful. I'm gonna go about halfway up, and then I'm going to compress the stuffing down and pull my thread. I'm gonna pull this tight. And now I'm going to take a minute to look at my doll. And see if I need to fill stuffing into any areas. I'm holding the thread here in this hand. And I'm resting the needle in the puppy. And I'm gonna take a little bit of stuffing and with my tweezers, add a little bit of stuffing, so that the body is even. Check in the back. You wanna do a stitch or two past the opening. So I'm gonna tighten up my stitches gently. And then I'm going to look for one of the stitches that we sewed on the machine in the seam. And I'm going to slip my needle underneath it, and tie a knot. I'm holding on to this thread here, to keep the stitches tight. And I like to slip my needle through the loop, and hold it. It's hard to see. And hold it to maintain that tightness, and then pull. And my needle is in the stitch. And then pull it out. Tie a few knots to secure it. Now, I'm gonna take my needle and push down through the seam right next to the knot. And I'm gonna come out somewhere along the back. I'm gonna pull that out. Pull it tight. And snip. And your thread disappears. And there you go. You have a puppy.

Scarf

- One of my favorite things about making dolls is accessorizing them. For this puppy, we are going to make a simple I-cord scarf. If you've never knit before, I-cord is a really great way to start. I'm using chunky yarn and size 10 needles. You want to be sure to use either double-pointed needles or circular needles. Lead yourself four to five-inch tail and make a slipknot. I'm using long-tail cast-on.

You wanna put your thumb and forefinger through the two pieces of yarn. Slip underneath the outer strand on your thumb and underneath the one on your pointer finger and then pull tight. Under, over, through, tighten. What's different about I-cord is that you would typically turn your needles and start working this way. With I-cord, we never turn the needle. We simply slip the stitches to the other end of the needle and knit across your three stitches. Make sure to use the working yarn and knit your three stitches. Pull that last one tight. Again, rather than turning your needle, we're simply going to slip the stitches to the other end and knit our three stitches. Continue on until your piece measures about 14 inches or whatever length you'd like. I've knit to about 14 inches, and I've snipped my working yarn. I've slid my stitches down after my last row, and I'm going to thread the yarn onto my darning needle. Make sure that your working yarn is coming from the left, and then you're going to insert the darning needle through the loops from right to left. Just feed it through all three loops and gently pull. I'm going to come back in through that first loop to make a full circle. And pull gently to tighten up my stitches. And I'm going to come underneath this loop. Draw my darning needle through and go back through that loop to make a simple knot. Don't pull too tight. And now we are simply going to insert the darning needle in between the stitches and draw it down through the tube we've just made. Be careful that your needle doesn't come out anywhere. And just draw it all the way down. You can even scrunch up the scarf a little bit. Then pull it out. And draw your yarn all the way through. Can take your darning needle off. Gonna take my scissors. I'm gonna pull the yarn. Snip, and then that end will just go right into the tube when I pull on it. We're gonna repeat on the other side and just draw our yarn down through the tube and snip. There we go. Feel free to play with the I-cord scarf. You can knit it to really any length you want. Here I've knit it to two to three times the length, and it's extra cozy. We've covered the basic techniques you'll need to make a stuffed animal. Feel free to play around with fabrics and patterns to make yourself a new friend.