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## **Cricut Crafts: Make Halloween Shadow Puppets** with Courtney Cerruti

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### **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

#### Overview

- [Courtney] Hi I'm Courtney. I'm an artist and the author of, *Playing with Image Transfers and Washi Tape 101*. Also do set design and create DIY content for Creativebug. We love a good holiday DIY and Halloween is one of our most favorite holidays to play with. I've designed a suite of shadow puppets that evoke both the spooky of Halloween and kind of have this root in tradition across all cultures over a very long period of time. You might think of those Balinese shadow puppets or maybe even the Victorian ones. The ones I've designed are delicate and detailed making them perfect to play with for both kids and adults. We're gonna cut them both out of card stock and wood veneers so that you really dive deep into that Cricut machine and figure out how to do some troubleshooting along the way.

### **Chapter 2 - Materials**

#### Materials

- To make your shadow puppets, you're going to need your Cricut Explore and a computer, of course, I'm just using a laptop. You want to make sure that you have the blue cutting mat for this project, this is the Lycra mat and it's going to make your life a lot easier. You also want to have all your Cricut tools handy because the scrapping and this little weird dental pick thing is going to come in really handy for our little details when we need to correct some cuts. We're going to be using a hot glue gun. You want to make your shadow puppets out of a wood veneer. You can buy this in sheets usually at the craft supply store. It's a thin layer of wood on top, with a paper-like backing. It comes in different finishes. You can also get it in different sizes, I think they make it even up to a 12 by 12. You can also do a classic card stock in a black or a gray, you could use a patterned paper for this even, if you wanted. Some scratch paper is good to have on hand. These little dowels we're going to use to create our stick. You can even use just wooden bamboo skewers if you have those lying around. And then, as an option, if you want to paint your skewers or your dowels, you can have some craft paint, I have it in silver and a little brush, and ribbons if you want to add a little flair to your shadow puppet. We're gonna provide the templates for you, they're all made from Victorian clip art, and so those will be ready for you in the design space.

### **Chapter 3 - Make Shadow Puppets**

#### Cut out shapes using Cricut

- You wanna cut your shadow puppets one at a time, and I'm gonna start with the crow shadow puppet. So I've opened the file and it's on my design space. You can see it here, when it imports. It's about 6" high, or 5.5" high by 7" wide. If I click on that shape, I get a little bounding box, which if I drag at the corner you can see that I can change the proportion of the crow without distorting it's actual shape. So I can make it larger or smaller depending on how large a shadow puppet or how small a shadow puppet I want. But it's not gonna make the crow in this weird distorted shape if I use that corner dot to drag it. So I'm gonna move it back to about 7" because I think that's a good size. Bring that image just slightly off of these measuring guides at the top on the left hand side. And then that's the only thing we're gonna cut. It's really simple and straightforward, so we're gonna go ahead and press the "Go" button. It's the green button at the upper right. It's gonna bring up a little

cutting dialogue, and I can mount my sheet of veneer onto my mat. Because my crow is less than 7" I can use a smaller piece of paper. I'm not using a full 12 x 12 sheet here. I'm using the blue light grip mat and I'll just place that guide in the upper left hand corner. I can bring it over to my machine. The machine has two little guides here that I need to slide the mat under. And then I'm gonna press the mat right up until this first bar that has these little bumpers on it. This is where our blade actually slides back and forth. I'll go back to my computer screen and select "Go" at the bottom right hand corner of my screen. That brings up a second preview box which allows me to load my mat. And my machine's always gonna remind me, so if I go to my machine there's this little "In" arrow, "Out" arrow, it's like insert and eject, and it's flashing, so now I need to actually load the mat. (machine sounds) Once I load the mat, this little Cricket "Cut" button is gonna start flashing, but I need to select my settings before I can actually go ahead and cut my shadow puppet. If you look at the dial there's paper, vinyl, iron-on, light card stock, card stock, fabric and poster board. We're not cutting any of those, or anything that's similar to those. We're actually gonna change the dial to "Custom" and then we're gonna go back to our computer and at the bottom of our screen there's a little button that says "Material Settings" and this is a place where Cricket has preloaded some custom settings that are somewhat standardized. I'm gonna select the felt. It shows me the actual cut pressure, it also shows me how many cuts it's gonna make. So the felt setting is gonna cut twice in exactly the same position. If for some reason you need to cut something twice, you don't want to cut it, eject the mat, and re-cut it, because you have a chance that it's not gonna line up exactly. You want to select a setting that does a double cut, so cuts the entire shape once, and then does it again. Felt does that, so I'm selecting the felt pressure. I'm gonna select "Done". You can see here that felt is in my selected material and we're good to go. We can press our "Cut" button. (machine sounds) Once your machine has gone through both cuts you can go ahead and eject your mat. You're just gonna press that flashing "In" and "Out" button again. And we can peel away our negative shape. And we're left with just our crow. He looks really good. We're gonna set him aside, and then I'll show you how to cut one out of card stock as well. I'm gonna open a new template that I have saved, or you can create a new document and select "Insert an Image". I'm gonna select the Witch puppet. She's a pretty fancy witch, actually, and she appears on the screen. She's already sized, and I've designed all of these templates so that they fit on 8.5 x 11 paper. But you could of course cut this on a larger sheet, like a 12 x 12. If you wanted to resize her to make her bigger, because you are using a 12 x 12 sheet, that's totally fine, you can just use that bounding box I showed you earlier. This one's sized and ready to go, I can grab my card stock, place that in the same way I did my veneer just lining it up on the upper left hand corner, smoothing it down. I'll feed my mat into the machine just up to that first bar. I need to select the "Go" button on the screen in my design space. That gives us a preview of our cut which looks really good. That's gonna prompt our machine to also load the mat so that little back and forth arrow is gonna start to flash. I can go ahead and press it to load the mat all the way. And my "Cut" button's gonna pop up but I need to change my settings because I'm not cutting the veneer this time, I'm cutting the card stock. Rotate your dial to the feature that says "Card Stock" and then now you can press "Cut". (machine sounds) Once your machine has stopped cutting you can eject your mat and we get to remove our shadow puppet. Let's get this stuff out of the way. Peeling this guy is the fun part. And working with the card stock makes this easier. We can peel her. I'm doing this gently because she does have a lot of little parts. That looks awesome. And then you're gonna take your little tool that looks a little bit like a hook or like a dental pick, and remove, or pop out those last little scraps of paper that are in all those tiny little details. All these little pieces have already been cut they just need a little help being

popped out of that space, and that's what this little pick does. It allows you to get into all those little tiny crevices and pull away any of the bits of paper that didn't come out on their own. Got a spot down here and then that little bit of her shoe, we can pop out. Perfect. Before you cut your next shadow puppet, you wanna clean off this mat, and that's what this little scraping tool is really great for. Just allows you to quickly clean away all those little tiny pieces that you could never peel off without a little tool. You can also use a credit card for this if you don't have the little scrapey tool. Go ahead and cut the rest of your shadow puppets in exactly the same way, whether you're gonna use the card stock or the wood veneer. Just make sure that you're gonna change those settings so that you have the right cut pressure. You still have a cat, two little girls and a skeleton to cut. Once you cut out all your pieces, I'll show you how to assemble them.

### Assemble shadow puppets

- Assembling your shadow puppets is super easy. You just need hot glue and either a barbecue skewer or a little dowel. If you want to paint your dowel in advance you can. I'm using some silver craft paint and I'm actually just gonna drizzle it on top. I'm using a foam brush. Then I can literally just roll these to get all sides. It's a quick, somewhat messy process. I can set these aside to dry otherwise they'll stick to my scrap page. I'll just cover this up to keep my shadow puppets pretty clean. I have some little dowels that are already dry, covered with a really soft coating of silver paint. Your shadow puppets can go either way. You wanna remember that you're gluing the stick to the back of the shadow puppet. You have to think about that depending on if you want your crow to face to the left or to the right. We wanna make sure that our stick is going perpendicular to our puppet so the puppet's oriented this way and that stick looks nice and clean at a 90 degree angle. We'll just add a little bead of hot glue, here, all the way to the center. Then just press that into place and let it just set up. It usually takes about a minute. That's the nice thing about hot glue is that it goes really quickly. We'll do that for all of our shadow puppets, deciding which way we want them to go. We'll have her facing this way. Figure out where our stick is gonna be. You don't wanna lay your stick over one of the negative spaces or openings, like the hand or this little negative space in between her arm because you'll see that from the front. You wanna consider that before placing your glue. I'm just gonna lay it right down the center of her dress here, right up to that center mark. The veneer gets glued in exactly the same way except there is a right and wrong side. The finish side of the veneer needs to be facing out. That means you should not be gluing to it. You need to be gluing to the back side of the veneer which doesn't have the wood grain. Find kind of our center point, depending on which way we want to orient the bird. I think this one we want it to, so that the bird looks like it's kind of upright when we flip it. Just let that guy dry. This one, you're gonna see the stick, because we'll probably, I might glue it from his leg here 'cause it's a nice vertical. You don't need a ton of hot glue just enough to make everything stick down. You wanna place the stick a good portion of the way across the body, that way after lots of use these don't get floppy and we've got that support there. Get our skeleton. The obvious place seems just along the spine here. Now, in your shadow, you are gonna see the stick, so if you wanted, instead of the center, you could also just glue along one of his legs, and then you'd hide this third sort of shadow. If you don't like the stick right in the middle you can glue the stick to one of the skeleton legs instead or even to both of the legs, but then you're gonna use your puppet differently. Remember these don't actually move, they don't have joints, and so it'd be easy to tear it if you did have two sticks. You just wanna think about what age child is gonna be playing with this. Gluing the stick right down the center is actually gonna give you the best use for it and it's gonna keep it the sturdiest. Let's move these

guys out of the way. I have a few other shadow puppets here I've already cut, including the two little girls. One just out of a solid charcoal card stock. This one I cut out of a card stock to begin with and then sprayed with a glitter spray paint, which turned out really cool. If you wanna add a little bit of ribbon to one of these, you can cut off a couple lengths. This is mostly for the fun of playing with this, almost like a wand. This is especially good for little kids. It's not really gonna function as part of your shadow in the same way. It's more decorative. You could just take off a yard or so. Tie them in a knot so you have a single place to glue from. Then we'll add a new bead of glue just right by the stick to lay in our ribbons. Just hold those there until they set which usually takes 30 seconds to a minute. Then you have a sweet little shadow puppet ready for some story time.