
Needle Felted Peeps with Rad Megan

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Who doesn't love these little Easter Peeps? Marshmallowy teats, they're like a staple of just about every holiday nowadays, and I have to confess that my sister is probably one of the grossest people on earth, because she likes to eat Peeps when they're at least a year old. I find that totally disgusting. So I didn't really want to support this stale marshmallow habit of hers, and instead decided that I was going to needle felt her a batch of her own Peeps. It's small, it's an awesome gift, it's a great place to start, because we're going to be adding some color, shaping the body, cutting away the ears, and it's just a great place to start so that you can build and have more complex projects in the future. So, here we go. Needle felted Easter Peeps.

Chapter 2 - Creating Peeps

Starting Basic Shape

- What I like to do when I'm starting any needle felting project is, if I'm kind of mimicking the shape of something else, I like to take a look at it and kind of break it down into really basic shapes. So when you look at this shape of a peep, the rabbits anyway, they kind of look like squatty snowmen to me with bunny ears on top. So that's exactly what I'm going to try to mimic as I am felting. So I like my yellow peep, it's kind of traditional so I'm gonna take some yellow wool roving, and this is sort of a medium thinness, you can still see, the fibers are nice and long, but it does have more of a coarseness to it. So it's gonna be a little bit quicker to needle felt than say a super fine merino roving which is really, really long fibers and really brushed but it takes a long time to needle felt and it's halfway between that and something that's a little bit more chunky, has kind of little bits in it. I don't want any grass bits or any leaf matter, I want something that's pretty nice and fine because I really want it to look like the marshmallow candy that everybody loves. So I'm gonna take a length of my wool roving and I'm just gonna wrap it around my hand. Everybody's hand is different size so don't worry about it being too large or too small right now. But I just kind of want to get a basic oval shape. And, in fact, this is too much, just let me pull some of that off. Just wrap it around to kind of get a nice starting point and just eyeballing it I want to compare between the original and what I'm making. Now, these fibers are going to compress, but not so much that you're gonna end up with a little dinky tiny peep. So this is a good size for me to start and I'm basically just going to take my barbed needle and start tacking all over the roving. Now, what this is doing, this needle has little notches in it and every time I poke into the roving it's pulling the fibers back up and it's kind of matting the entire thing, matting them together and we're just creating one solid piece of felt. You can see I'm keeping it down on the pad, safety first. I have my fingernails down on the piece so that if I poke myself I'm poking my nail, not my skin. And basically I'm just gonna start out kind of a general oval shape. And you can see I'm keeping my needle going straight in and out, straight up and down. I'm not bending it once it's inside the roving. There's a strong possibility you're gonna break your needle if you kind of wiggle it around once it's inside the fluff and nobody wants to receive an Easter peep that has sharp needles inside. That's not cool at all. So we want to avoid breaking our needles and just keep stabbing it until it starts to compress. And this is gonna take a while so you really want to keep your eyes on your needle and just poke the heck out of it. You can also use the ends of the sides of your pads, too. So if you want to kind of get a different angle on

things you can kind of move it over to the side. You can hold it off up on the top if that's the angle you need. Right now I'm still just kind of working on getting this general oval shape so I'm just kind of going to town poking all over this thing. It's almost funny how violent this looks and you just end up with something really sweet at the end. Every needle felter I know kind of comments on that. If you have a stressful day job, this might be the craft for you. And, honestly, this is kind of going too slow for me so what I will do sometimes is grab a second needle and if you can hold onto both of these safely I would recommend this. That just kind of speeds everything along. If you feel like they're kind of crossing over and you might break something off, then I would invest in a multiprong needle. This one has five different needles in it, it hurts like crazy if you poke yourself. So for real keep an eye on your fingers. You can see every time I'm pushing down this multi prong needle into my wool, this safety gauge is popping back. So now I'm getting five times the pokes for less work. This isn't a great tool for doing finishing, but really kind of getting you started, just making the basic shapes, felting a lot of fibers at once, it's really a super good tool. So I do really like this one because it has a little safety shield. There are some multi-prong needles that kind of look more vintage. They're made of wood and they kind of unscrew so you can replace all the needles, but I can-- I'm so accident prone sometimes it's kind of ridiculous so any extra safety feature that I can buy into, I'm all about it. Now, I'm noticing that I'm getting to the point where I need to stand this guy on edge and I don't feel like this is really secure. I always like to keep a nice solid base when I'm working on something and this has the potential to poke through and get my finger so I'm gonna go back to these double needles because I have a little bit more control over just using two in my hand at once. And if you're not comfortable holding these two or if they're kind of sliding around, just stick with one, it'll just take a little bit longer than normal, but you'll get there and the result will be awesome.

Adding definition

- So I'm getting to a point where I got a nice little oval shape and there are a couple of things that are happening. We cut this little wrinkles in here some little indentations and that's basically from either the wool compressing and kind of this natural wrinkles just developing or it's just from over-poking in certain areas. And the way that we get rid of those is wherever the wrinkles are the worst you kinda put them face down on your mat and then you'll poke from the back right out over where the wrinkles are. Now, the reason we're doing this is because all the fibers are kind of blowing out and they're filling in all the wrinkles from the back. So that doesn't look great as it is but the more I poke from the back out the better the wrinkles are gonna fill in. And the other thing about where we are right now is that we've basically reached a point where I can feel that this has a nice thickness inside but the edges are still a little loosey-goosey I can feel they that haven't been felted as much as the center. So I can kinda roll this in my hands. Squish it around a little bit to kind of get the fibers to feel like they're at an even consistency throughout the whole body and just that little like fluffing around really kind of helps even out the texture throughout the oval. Now the next step as you'll notice our rabbit is not a perfect circle. So he's got this large bottom part and then sort of a center head and then the ears we'll deal within a second. But I wanna start developing the round body shape so I tend to kinda eyeball it and I will poke with my fingers, just push in and create this little like bunny abdomen down here. It's a little bit more I leave a little bit more than halfway on top and when I think that that looks good, proportional I will just take where my fingers are and just start poking a straight line just to kind of shape the body. And if I just poke in a straight line back and forth, back and forth that's gonna create this little valley and you can see already that it's really

forming nicely. So I'm gonna pinch it again I think I'm just gonna flip it over because I like that I have more nails over here to protect myself from pokes. So, just start poking again. And it doesn't have to be super precise but if you're in the neighborhood of the same line over and over again, you're gonna see, okay. So it's not a perfect circle but that's fine we can start poking it from all angles. From the bottom, from the top. Okay, so before you go too far I have one part of the head done but I really just want to compare and see if I'm in the ballpark as far as proportion goes. It is really easy to let your needle felting projects get massively bigger, I don't know why it is but it's just easier to kinda work large. In this one though I do kinda wanna stay at a similar size. The little peeps, I just find them sort of adorable. So I think proportionally it looks pretty good and I'll double-check this again when I make the ears but one trick I have for checking my proportion is I hold the peep up about a foot or so in front of the original and just kinda close one eye and I can see that they are pretty proportional. I can see the bottom of one pretty much aligns with the bottom of the other and generally the ears are about the same height. So we're looking really good proportionally. So I'm ready to finish the head and get working on those ears. Okay, so I've got one side of my head totally done. I'm gonna do the same finger-squish I did before and just going to town. And I do have another trick up my sleeve for even further defining the head, the space between the head and the body. So once I feel confident that my fibers are felted enough to cut let's see, I think we're almost there. Okay, that's pretty good. There's definitely a change in the shape but I do want it to be more dramatic like my little guy here. So I'm gonna take my trusty scissors and just give these little corners a snip. And then I'm gonna turn it over snip it again really just kind of work to define that curve. So I want it, that's looking better already. I just really want it to be obvious that there is a little head and a little peep body so I don't wanna cut too much into the the ear portion because I haven't really felted that too much and I am gonna do a final trim of my entire rabbit when I'm done. So right now, I can see that I've got my little head and my little bunny body and he's turning to look pretty darn adorable. All I need to do is work on ears a little bit. So I'm just gonna set that guy down. Just kinda reinforce the fibers because I am about to cut this guy's head open for the sake of art. So right now what I'm doing is just kind of building a path really from where I'm gonna cut. I wanna have really, nicely matted fibers so that things don't kinda fall apart when I cut these ears. So you can start forming the ears by kind of poking down in the middle and you can see that the two little bunny ears are starting to become more defined. So I'm gonna poke it from this other side as well. And it's really taking shape nicely. So I feel good about these. And I'm always testing I'm always squishing the little fibers to see how they feel. To make sure that they're dense in every portion of what I'm working on. Here you go, okay, so that's pretty good for for what I'm ready to do. So I'm gonna take my scissors and this can be really scary for people but just kinda go with your gut you wanna eyeball where the top of the head is and not cut into the head. So I usually start with one swift cut. And let's check and see how far I've gone down and now the big unveil... Bunny ears! (makes funny bunny sound) But they're freshly cut. So there are these fibers that's are just kinda jagged and have a hard edge. And you know, over here it's not totally perfectly formed ears, so we're just gonna do a teeny bit. Bend one of these ears all the way back and then just felt right inside and this is just a kind of blend the fibers together. This is another point where you could if you're so inclined open it up and just put on the corner of your pad so that you can just work in there and then this is gonna pull all the fibers straight down through that cut area and it's just gonna blend everything together really nicely. And you know the more you can poke in the ears the better too. We really worked the heck out of that body and head and the ears feel just a little bit ummm, just slightly less stable than the body. It's not a bad thing but you know 'cause rabbit ears are little

bit floppier than the rest of their body but you know, you don't want them to fall apart, so just kinda working them a little bit to help shape them and so we can prevent them from looking like they were just sliced. So you can kinda see the difference as one has more of a rounded, softer edge and this one still a little bit sharp looking. So I'm just gonna... I'm actually gonna grab two of these guys at the same time so I can really get in there and knot all those fibers together and keeping my hand away from the needles edge as always keeping my bunny flat on the pad. Utilize that corner again. I can feel even the resistance from when I'm just poking down that the density throughout this entire project is about the same now and that makes me really happy. I don't have any crazy creases that I have to worry about. Although I do wanna tell you if you do end up with creases because you have over-poked in a certain area there's another simple fix besides just poking you know, let's say this was where you had a crease and you know, if this doesn't work just poking it from the opposite side you can always take a little bit more fluff and kinda just patch it in. So even if you made a totally unproportional peep and you're really dissatisfied with it like I can expand this whole body just by adding more wool roving and poking it right in. It's no problem at all. That's why I love this craft so much because you can really do anything you can add, you can subtract it's really forgiving. Not so much when you poke yourself but as far as what you're making you have a lot of leeway. So, I'm really happy with this. It's super fuzzy and I need to trim it up but it looks very similar to the original. All it needs is a face.

Final touches

- I'm gonna go ahead, I'm gonna trim it first just because I think it looks better when it's trimmed up. So take your sharpest pair of scissors, it's gonna just be really frustrating if you have a dull pair and I'm gonna hold it right against the body of the peep and it's like I'm giving him a shave. I'm just gonna kinda go around and get rid of all the extra fluff. I'm gonna do it on the ends. If there's any extra shaping I wanna do, if I wanna really kind of reinforce that this is a dramatic dip in his body where his head meets his body, I could do that now. Or I could just kind of clean the whole project up and I am happy with the overall shape, so I'm just gonna kinda clean it up. I am seeing, this is something to think about when you're needle felting. These fibers tend to pick up just little strands of other colors and when you're working on a really small project, they're noticeable so take the time, you might even need to grab some tweezers if it's really kind of woven into the rest of your bunny, but I just like to clean it up as much as possible. And then that way when you put your face on, once you've got a nice trimmed bunny, it's like the big finale, it's really exciting. So any kind of clean up we can do right now is just gonna make it look even more marshmallow like at the end. Isn't that what we all want? Absolutely. Okay, so I just got a little bit more ear fuzz to clean up and it looks pretty darn good. So I also kind of give him a little roll in my hands just because, you know, like the oils in your hands kind of help mat down any extra fly aways, any strays. Then when you hold it up you can see, if you hold it up against something that's nice and dark you can kind of see where all the strays are. This can be a challenging craft to photograph actually, so if you're taking photographs for your blog or, not your store, but if you're taking them for a gift or just to give to somebody, whenever you're needle felting getting rid of as many strays as possible is really gonna help your camera focus on what you're doing and it's just gonna make your piece look better over all. Okay, I think I've gotten the lion's share of the strays, so all we have to do is put on the face. Meep, meep, meep. So cute! Eee! Okay, so we're about to put on the face. All we need is some brown wool roving and I am gonna use this really long fibered stuff because it's just super easy to work with. I'm going to consult my original peep for eyeball and nose placement. I'm about to do

my spit trick. Again, not for everybody, but it works really well for me. So, uh, uh, uh. Lick my fingers a little bit. And I just twist the heck out of it. I like to get a really tight twist on these fibers, so tight that when you push them together, a little tiny loop appears and that is exactly what I'm going to use to make my bunny nose. I'm gonna start with the nose and then kind of position the eyes so that it looks as peep like as possible. It's kind of low on the face, they're all different. Every single one of these is printed a little wonkier than the next, but I'm just gonna kind of poke this right down, holding it with my fingernail. That's a little bit tiny, so I am gonna fold this sort of over itself, just so it's proportional. You can just kind of eyeball it. If you end up with a peep with giant balls, no big deal. You can pull the stuff right out. I'm just tacking it down and I'm gonna snip away the extra. Okay. That's pretty good. It's a little too long for my taste, so I'm actually gonna do what I told you not to do earlier, where I kind of poke my needle in and just gently, so gently, try to guide the bottom fibers more into the middle. Once I'm happy with it, I just kind of (squeeking) stab all over it and voila. The nose knows. I'm pretty happy with that. I'm actually gonna flip that guy upside down and just kinda poke around it to fill in any excessive poking marks that I had on his face. Now I'm gonna do the same spit and twirl, if you will, to make the eyeballs and they're really close to the nose. That's kind of what helps give these peeps their special look. It's definitely the shape, but their eyeballs are freakishly close to their noses. I'm just gonna start, kind of nice and snug, right, just almost in the same line as the nose. Just barely higher than it and just kind of poke it in. If I want to add more I'll just sort of turn that tail around and poke that down. I think that looks like a good size right there, so I'm just gonna snip off the extra. Get as close to the body as possible with my scissors. Then I'm just gonna do the same thing that I did with the nose, where I guide the fibers and just poke them from the top, try to push them into the center. Just try to make as perfect a circle as possible. You can stop now and have a pirate Peep, and be completely happy with yourself or we can finish strong and give this guy another eye. Twist that guy up into a little circle and for this one, I really want it to be about the same distance from the nose as the first eye was so, you know, eyeballing it, hee hee hee. And hook that guy right in. I'm gonna guide it with my nail a little bit. That looks like it's kind of a perfect size right there, so I might just do one more tack and then cut that off. If I feel like it's not enough I can add more. It's a little bit more challenging to add fibers when you're working really small, but totally not impossible. Just takes more time and more focused needle pokes. You don't just kind of go crazy. So, let's see. This one looks a little too low, actually. I'm gonna try to push it up, push that nose down. Really, now that we're almost done, we're in the homestretch so this is the point where you can just do any kind of finessing. If you see any weird puckers or any strange shapes that you're not happy with, you can kind of work it around, but you can also squish it and just kind of form it with your hands. Oh my gosh, it's so cute. (smooch) â™« Needle felted, Easter Peeps â™« They're so awesome, they're so sweet Ee, ee, ee, ee, ee, ee. Eeee!