
Sew a Luckyjuju Owl Doll with Katia Ferris

Chapter 1 - Sew a Luckyjuju Owl Doll

Overview

(gentle music) - Hi, I'm Katia Ferris. I'm an artist and designer living in San Francisco. I've been designing and making cloth dolls under the name Luckyjuju for about eight years. In this class, we're going to be making an owl doll with hand-embroidered eyes, contrasting wings, and legs that are hinged at the hips. We'll also be accessorizing with a dress, pom poms, and a bow tie. We'll be sewing on the machine with straight stitch and zigzag stitch. We'll be hand embroidering, and we'll close the doll with ladder stitch. Based on your fabric choices, you'll end up with a doll that's either spooky or sweet. (relaxing music)

Materials

- For this class, you'll need your printed PDF pattern. You can print out your coloring page to play with fabric options. For fabric A, you want to choose a light to mid-weight woven without too much stretch. I've chosen a linen-cotton blend with a metallic thread. Heavier quilting cottons or good quality muslins also work well. For the fabric B, any coordinating fabric can work well. It should be a similar weight and stretch to fabric A, and you definitely don't want something that is less stretchy than fabric A. You'll need some medium weight interfacing, and you'll also want a marking tool to transfer your pattern to your fabric. I use a disappearing ink pen that is air and water soluble. You'll need three pairs of circles for your eyes. You can use felt for all three, but I like to use glitter vinyl to give a little bit of sparkle. You can use any fabric that's a little bit thicker that will not fray. I've found that a 1/4 inch hole-punch is really helpful for cutting out the pupils. You'll also need embroidery floss. Again, I use a sparkly silver color. You'll need thread and needles. You'll want fabric scissors, pinking shears, some snips, some paper scissors, and when it comes time for stuffing, tweezers, or hemostats, a chopstick, and Poly-Fil stuffing. For the pom-poms you'll need yarn and a pom-pom maker. For the bow tie, any woven fabric will do. Quilting cottons work really well for this and 1/4 inch ribbon. For the dress you'll need a light-weight woven such as Swiss dot or cotton lawn, as well as the 1/4 inch ribbon again, 1/4 inch elastic, and a safety pin. You'll also need straight pins, a sewing machine with coordinating thread, an iron and ironing surface.

Sewing the doll

Sewing the face

- Once you've cut out all your pieces for the owl doll, you should have two body pieces, two head pieces, four wing pieces. I've used a combination of the body fabric and coordinating fabric. If your fabrics have a right and wrong side, make sure you've cut them out in mirror image. The mask piece and mask interfacing. Your three sets of circles for the eyes. I've used my quarter inch hole punch for these smallest pieces, and I've used the same black felt for the beak. Now we'll be transferring our marks from our pattern onto our face piece. The outer marks are for the interfacing. I'm just marking the interfacing on this side. Now we'll flip this piece over, and mark the mask piece. Now we'll flip it back over and pin our interfacing. Now we'll bring this over and iron on our interfacing. Give it a minute to make sure all your glue melts. Now we're ready to pin the mask on the other side.

Align it with your marks and pin in place. We're going to attach the mask to the face piece with zigzag stitch. We're gonna stitch across here and then again across here. We're gonna switch to a zigzag stitch. We'll use a stitch length of 1.5 and width of 3.0. We're going to begin and end with a back stitch and position your piece so that when the needle comes down on the right side, it's coming just off the mask fabric. Now we'll do the other side. If you need to trim any fabric off the sides, go ahead and do that. Now we'll attach our first layer of eyes. I'm going to pin these into place. And we'll sew them on the machine. For the eyes, I'm gonna switch from the zigzag to a straight stitch. 2.5 is fine for the stitch length, but I am going to adjust the tension to about a three to avoid the stitching making an indentation in the felt. We're gonna be stitching right along the edge of the felt. And we'll start and stop with a backstitch. I'm gonna go over the top of my first stitches and then backstitch. Now that I have attached both of these eyes, I'm going to continue with the next layer, attaching these two in the center and pinning. We're going to sew these with the same settings. Again, we'll be sewing right along the edge and backstitching at the beginning and end. I'm sewing over my stitching and then backstitching. I'll repeat on the other side. Now we're going to switch to hand embroidery. We're going to start with the pupils. I've threaded my needle with polyester thread. We're gonna center the pupil and you'll want to use a pretty good size needle since we'll be coming through six layers of fabric. You'll just want to stitch around. I find it hard to see the black on black so I just go around a couple times until it feels secure. Try to stitch as close to the edge as possible. And then secure your knot on the back. Snip your thread. And repeat for the other side. With both of our pupils sewn on, we can now switch to our metallic embroidery floss and add our iris detail. I've cut a 20-inch length of embroidery floss and halved it so that I can use three strands for one eye and three strands for the other. I like to think of this as cutting a pizza into eight slices. I'm going to go like this, like this, like this, and like this, and each line is two stitches. We're gonna come out from just off the felt, go in at the edge of the eye, come out the other edge, and cut across in a straight line. Now we'll secure it on the back. This metallic embroidery floss can be very slippery, so I like to make sure to get three or four really good knots. And do it again on the other side. With our eyes complete, now we'll attach the beak with our polyester thread. Center the beak and we're going to use whipstitch. I'm going to come up in the corner and I'm gonna put in three stitches to anchor the corner. One goes this way, one goes that way, and one goes this way, all leading into the same anchor point. It's hard to see black on black, but now we're just going to whipstitch across the top. Back at the corner now, I'll anchor with the three stitches. Coming back up through the same hole, right over the corner, and then once more coming off the side. Lastly, I'm gonna put two stitches just here to keep the beak from flapping. And I'll secure it on the back. Clip. Our face is complete.

Sewing the wings

- Now we're ready to move on to the wings. We're gonna pin them together, make sure to have right sides facing. I'm gonna do this one first. We're gonna sew on the machine with a 1/4 inch seam allowance all the way around to here, leaving this section open. We're gonna use a straight stitch with the same stitch length, but we're gonna readjust our tension to normal. (sewing machine whirring) We'll backstitch at beginning and end to secure. (sewing machine whirring) I'm going to pivot at the corner. And pivot again. And pivot again. First thing we'll do is clip the bottom here, and we're gonna clip in to this angle here. Next we'll use our pinking shears along this edge, and this edge. This will help our seams lay nice and flat. Now we're ready to turn the wing inside out. I start at the bottom, pull the fabric together, and then use my thumb to kinda tuck the tip of the wing in

through the middle. And I like to use a chopstick to help push it all the way through. We'll take this to the iron and press it. I'm just gonna use my chopstick gently to make sure all the fabric is pushed out. I'm gonna run it along the seams. And here I'm just using the side of the chopstick, not the end. I don't want to poke through my fabric. And I'll press it down. Continue all the way around the wing. Repeat these steps for the other wing.

Assembling the doll

- We've completed the owl face and the wings, and now we will pin our head piece to our body piece with right-side spacing. And we'll take it to the machine, and sew across here. We're using the same straight stitch, the same tension, and we're going to lower our stitch count to 1.5. Now I'll press the seams open with my iron. You want to repeat all these steps for attaching the head to the body, for the back piece. And, I've already marked on the back of the back piece our markings from the pattern. Now we're going to assemble our owl. Put the face on the bottom, and lay your body piece over. I start by aligning the legs before moving up to the wings. I want to make sure that the piece is aligned at the neck seams. Now we're going to fold down the back piece and place our wings. First thing to do is to clip off just this tiny little bit off the tips of our wings. Now you'll need to think about which fabrics you would like to have as under wing and outer wing. You'll be laying them like this. And, once you turn it right-side out, the fabric that's face down will be the under wing, and the fabric that's face up will be the outer wing. We are going to align these so that there's just the tiniest bit of overlap, and this little corner is coming up to the seam right here. Go ahead and pin that in place. And repeat for the other side. Now, because we don't want our wings to get sewed into the seams, we have to do a little bit of maneuvering here. We're going to fold the wings back so that they'll be in the center of the body. Take care that you're not coming out too far here, and try to have a straight line here. You can pin this into place, if that's helpful. Be sure that you're placing your pin so that you'll be able to reach it. Your opening will be here, so you'll need to be able to reach in through the opening once you've sewn your owl, and pull that pin out before you turn it around. Just double check that you won't get caught in any of the seams, and now we can fold the rest of the body up again, aligning at the neck. And now, you can complete pinning all the way around the owl. I'm just finishing up pinning my owl. Make sure that you are pinning through the front and back of the fabric over the wings. Now we're ready to take our owl to the machine and sew. I'm going to use the same settings as I did before. I like a lower stitch length, because it gives the doll strength. I'm gonna start at my point A, with the back stitch, at the beginning and end. Make sure that your seams are laying flat as you come up to the neck. And when you get to the next seam, you can pivot your needle. I'm coming to my mark. I'm going to back-stitch to secure it. Now I'm just gonna run another line of stitching along the wings, and at the crotch, for extra strength. I just ran the stitches right along the outside of our first line of stitching. Now we're going to clip our curves. We're going to clip at the crotch, the neck, and also at the ears. Careful not to clip into your line of stitching. Now, we'll use our pinking shears to cut around all the curves, the bottoms of the feet, and all the way around the head. We're almost ready to turn the owl right-side out. But before you do that, depending on the type of fabric you've used, you may want to add some interfacing. My fabric has a tendency to fray, so I'll simply iron on interfacing on the front and back, right at the opening. Flip over, and repeat on the other side. Right over the opening. This just helps to stabilize your fabric, and will make it easier when we're ladder stitching the owl closed. Remember to pull the pin out if you've put one in. And now we can turn your owl right-side out. Let's start with the wings. And then the head. I fold it, and push it through the opening. Now I'll use my chopstick for the legs.

Actually, I just brace the chopstick against myself. And we're ready to press out our seams, and poke out our ears. Now I'm going to poke out the ears, very gently, using the tip of my chopstick. And finally, we need to iron down the opening here. Take care that the front and the back match, because you'll be sewing along this seam when we're closing up our owl with the ladder stitch.

Stuffing the body

- Before we begin stuffing, we'll need to mark on the back of our owl where we'll put the line of stitching for our leg hinges. Use any straight edge and your water soluble pen and mark across each leg. You're just going from the corners of the crotch outwards. Now we'll stuff our legs. I find a chopstick very helpful for this process. You wanna stuff down pretty well towards the bottom. And then as we come up the leg, the stuffing can be a bit looser. Stuff to within about a half an inch of the line and place a pin to hold your stuffing in place. And now I'll stuff the next leg. Now I'll take it to the machine. We'll be using straight stitch once again and the same tension, I'm going to increase my stitch length to two point five. I'm going to stitch right over my line securing at the beginning and end with backstitch. (sewing machine humming) Come right to the corner and backstitch. And I'll repeat for the other side. Now we can take out our pins and continue stuffing the body. Next, I'm going to stuff into the corners of the ears. I'm going to use my large tweezers. I grab a little bit of stuffing. Push it into the corner taking care not to pull any of my stitching. Kind of winding it around and holding it with my tweezers. I'm being careful not to poke my tweezers through the fabric. Now I can switch to using my hands. I'm moving from side to side trying to stuff evenly. Now that our owl is stuffed, we're gonna close it up with a simple ladder stitch. I'll be using my polyester thread and a needle that I already have threaded and knotted. A ladder stitch, I'm gonna go in through the opening and come up through the seam. We'll be sewing along the seam here in the channel that's made by the fold in the fabric. Then I'm gonna come directly across from it and do the same thing. Now that we're coming to our opening, I just continue along the channel here that's made by the fold. And then I come directly across and do the same on the other side. Make sure your stitches are not too big otherwise you'll have a gap. I'm gonna push this stuffing in and draw my stitches tight and continue on. At this point, you may need to add a little bit of stuffing. I'm gonna hold my thread tight here and holding it in the back here. And I'm gonna take my tweezers and just push a little bit of stuffing down along the seam. Getting a little close to the wing here. But now we're just gonna go underneath one of the stitches along the seam here and tie off our thread. Gonna give it one last tug and hold my thread in place while I tie a knot. Now we're going to insert our needle into the seam, push it out the back, pull our thread through, give it a little tug, and snip. And our thread will disappear. Give it a little squeeze to distribute the stuffing and we're ready to accessorize.

Accessories

Sewing the dress

- For our own dress, we're gonna need our three pattern pieces, quarter-inch ribbon, two pieces, and quarter-inch elastic. My ribbon is cut to two nine-inch lengths and the elastic is three and one quarter inches long. I've transferred my markings onto the bodice piece. Before we begin assembly, you'll want to finish the edge of the bodice. You can sew a seam, run a zig-zag stitch along the edge. I'm going to use pinking shears. (shears snipping) Lay the bodice over the front piece with right-side spacing. You'll want the edge of your ribbon against that marking. And you'll want the

ribbon to lay at an angle coming out towards the corner. I'm going to pin it in place and do the same for the other side. Continue pinning along the edge and around the armholes. We're gonna sew from A to B with a quarter-inch seam allowance, take care not to sew over the ribbon. We're gonna use the same settings that we used for our owl. (foot dropping) (machine whirring) Now we'll just need to clip our corners and curves. I'm going to use my pinking shears around the armholes. (scissors snipping) Turn your dress right-side out and press the seams open. Now we're going to sew two lines of basting stitches, a quarter-inch and three quarters of an inch down from our top seam. I've set my machine to it's longest stitch length, and lowered the tension to three. I'm going to do one back stitch here to secure this edge of my stitching, but I'll leave the other end loose. (machine beeping) (machine whirring) Leave a long tail and repeat a half an inch down. You'll want to take the top two threads and gently pull them to gather your fabric. Continue gathering the stitches until the width of your piece is two and a half inches. I'm going to put two pins through the stitches here to hold these gathers on the edge, on the end, in place, while I sew. I've given the dress a light press to set the gathers, and now I'm taking it to the machine. We'll reset the stitch length to two-point-five, and adjust the tension back to five and a half. We'll be running two lines of stitches, one below each line of basting stitches, just below. (foot lowering) (machine whirring) Take care not to sew over your pins. Securing with a backstitch at the beginning and end of each line. (thread pulling) And remove our basting stitches. Now we're going to make a casing on the back piece. If your fabric has a right and wrong side, make sure the right side is faced downward. I'm gonna use this helpful little hemming gauge to help me. First we're going to fold over a quarter of an inch, and press. Then we'll fold over again, three eights of an inch and pin into place. Then we'll run a line of stitching along the first folded edge on the machine. The next step is to feed our elastic through. Use your safety pin to draw the elastic through the channel. You'll need one that's small enough to fit through. Pin the safety pin through the top of your elastic and start feeding it through. Secure the end with a pin. Then continue feeding your safety pin through. When you get to the other side, you'll wanna pin it into place, being sure that your elastic hasn't twisted along the way. And you can remove the safety pin. Now we'll be pinning our back piece to our front piece, right sides together along the sides. You'll want to stitch from top to bottom. We'll sew each side with a quarter-inch seam. (machine whirring) Be sure to back stitch over the elastic to secure it in place. Now we'll just need to finish our edges. If you have a serger you can use that. Pinking shears work. I'm going to run a simple line of zig zag stitch, right along the edge. I'll set my machine to a zig zag stitch. You want the left side going into the fabric and the right side coming just off the edge of your fabric. Now we can take out our pins and finish our bottom edge. I like the look of a raw edge so I'm just going to sew a line of stitching a quarter-inch up from the bottom. Going back to a straight stitch with a two and a half length. And my tension at five and a half. Now I'll turn the dress right side out. And we can try it on our doll.

Making pom poms

- One of my favorite ways to accessorize dolls is with pom-poms. There are lots of ways of making pom-poms. The one I've found to be the fastest and easiest is to use a pom-pom maker. My favorite pom-pom maker is this one by Clover. This one comes in the extra-small set, and this is the larger of the two that come in that pack. It unfolds like so, and it pulls apart into two pieces. To get started, I'm going to cut a length of my yarn so that I'll have a way of tying my pom-pom onto the owl. I'm gonna cut about 20 inches of yarn and leave it to the side. I'll take my pom-pom maker, unfold one set of hinges, take the end of my working yarn and I'm going to hold this edge and secure it with my

thumb. Now I'm going to start winding around the pom-pom maker from one side to the other. Squeezing them together to fill in this area tightly, and then I'm gonna come back around. And back again. Keep going back and forth until the arm is full. I'm gonna hold the yarn up here and close the arms, and clip the yarn. Now I'll unfold the other side, and repeat, pushing my loops over as I go, and back to the other side. When you feel like both sides are about even, close the arms and snip your yarn. Now we'll be cutting along this channel between the two sides of your arms. You'll need sharp scissors. Then I'll turn it over and do it on the other side. Now we'll take the length of yarn that we had cut, fold it in half, and lay the center of it right through that channel we were just using to cut through, and pull it. Now you'll want to tie a knot. Pull as tight as you can without breaking the yarn and tie one more knot. Now the fun part. We're going to open up these hinges. So push up here on one side, turn over your pom-poms, push up on these hinges, and now we'll take our two sides and pull them apart. And we have a pom-pom. It's a little shaggy. You'll need to trim it, which is a messy job, so you might want to put a piece of paper or a bowl underneath your work area. Take your sharp pair of scissors and just start trimming. Keep trimming your pom-pom until you get a shape that you like. Sometimes it helps to give it a little roll and fluff, until you like the shape. I really like the look of combining several pom-poms to make a really cute accessory for our owl. I'm going to tie these three together. Just gather them together and tie a simple knot on either side, and on the other side. Let's try them on our owl. Gonna go around the back and come around the front again, and just tie one single knot. I also like to secure the ends. There we go.

Sewing the bow tie

- What's more dapper than an owl in a bow tie? I'm gonna show you how to make one now. We've got our bow piece, our knot piece, and a 16 inch length of 1/4 inch ribbon. I've transferred my markings to the back of the bow piece. Now I'm going to fold the bow piece right sides together and pin. And I'll fold my knot piece wrong sides together lengthwise and pin. We are going to sew with a 1/4 inch seam straight down the knot piece and on the bow piece we'll come up here to our marking and then again from here down to this corner. I'm gonna use a straight stitch, 2.5 stitch length, and a normal tension of 5 1/2. Oops. When I get to my marking I'll backstitch to secure. Let's clip the corners and work on our knot piece. This piece we'll trim with our pinking shears. Get pretty close to the stitching line without going through it. Now we'll press this open using our chopstick. There. Now let's turn our bow piece right side out. Now I'll take these to the iron for a press. Now we just need to close the opening with a ladder stitch. This is the same stitch we used to close up our owl. I'm coming in through the opening up into the seam and we're gonna sew along the fold. Come across and through the fold on the other side. Cross over. Through the fold. Slip your needle under a stitch and tie off. Then you can just slip your needle down into the bow tie, draw your thread through, and snip. Now we'll take our ribbon, find the center point, and lay it just 1/4 of an inch down from the top of our knot piece. Place them wrong sides together, if your ribbon has a right and wrong side, and secure. We'll sew this on the machine with a simple zig-zag stitch to secure it. I'm going to set my machine to the zig-zag stitch. Lay your piece under the foot and remove the pin before stitching. Now we'll fold this piece right sides together and sew 1/4 of an inch down. I'm going to pin it to keep it from sliding while I'm sewing. I'm gonna switch back to the straight stitch. If you sew through the ribbon a little bit it's not a problem. Now we'll just trim this piece with our pinking shears. And turn it right side out. I'm going to use my tweezers to help me draw that ribbon through. Now we'll fold our bow piece and insert it through the knot piece. Fold it in half and then fold the tops down like an accordion. This is the hardest part of making a bow tie,

fitting it through the knot. I use the tweezers, I insert them into the knot piece and then grab ahold of my folded edges of the bow piece and just try to shimmy, shimmy them through. Okay. Slide the knot to the center of the bow and then scooch the seam behind. And this takes a little bit of adjusting to get it to lay just right. So fiddle with it until it looks good. And then, as you saw, this was a pretty tight fit, but you'll be giving this to a young child to play with you might want to sew a couple stitches between the knot and the bow to secure them together. I'm gonna go around the back and tie a knot in the back. There we go. He's ready for a night out on the town. How sweet are these two? I love how the accessories really give them an opportunity to let their personalities shine.