
Hand Sew Farm Animal Finger Puppets with Kata Golda

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Hi, my name is Alison Kaplan and I have a company called Kata Golda. We make things out of wool felt with an emphasis on hand stitching. Because of the nature of my work, I end up with a lot of felt scraps so one day sitting at my desk, I made these little guys. Little finger puppets. We're gonna be making these five animals. We'll have templates to make the small characters which can be enlarged to make the larger characters. We'll be working on these facial expressions to make your characters come alive. This is a great project to use up all of your scraps.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- This is a great project to use up your felt scraps because you don't need a lot of materials to create these finger puppets. But let me tell you what you do need. You need the downloadable templates, tracing paper, some kind of marking utensil, ruler. To stitch on the features and to assemble your puppet, we'll be using embroidery floss. Here are lots of variety of colors. Then you'll need needles for sewing. I like to use sharp size five and the reason I like sharps is because they have a larger eye than some of the other needles. They're easier to thread. Then you need a paper scissors, snips and have a real sharp tip, and fabric shear. Here we have the felt for five finger puppets. Each finger puppet uses two pieces of felt that are different colored and they're roughly 2.5 by 3.5 inches. The colors of wool felt that I've chosen to use for the animals are a light pink and a peach for the pig. A deep yellow, a light yellow, and a red for the chick. A dark brown, a tan, and a red for the dog. An oatmeal or off-white, and a white for the rabbit. And an orange, and an off-white oatmeal for the cat. The top layer is the front and the layer that's in the back is the back. These are the colors that I've chosen. They're kind of realistic colors but any colors work. I like to use this wool felt but you can use a felted wool sweater or any fabric that won't fray. I have kits available on my website for the materials needed for this project.

Chapter 3 - Make Finger Puppets

Stitch facial features

- All of the finger puppets come together in the same way. There's two pieces of felt that get blanket stitched around the perimeter. We're gonna work on the pig start to finish. I cut out my template on a heavier stock paper. So using my fabric shear, and just holding the template to the felt, I cut around the perimeter here. And don't worry if you're not exactly accurate, because you'll get an opportunity to trim. And that is one of the beauties of working with felt, because the edges don't fray. Don't forget your little snout here with the scrap. I'm cutting the back template with the peach and the only difference is that there's a little tail piece added on to the template piece. It's really nice to have a really good scissors to do this because, if you don't your edges can get really, kind of messy. And it can be pretty frustrating to work with. So once you've cut out your pieces, the templates just don't matter anymore. Here is where you just wanna make sure that your felt pieces match each other. Now when I make the template, the front and the back, I designed it so that the two sides are not symmetrical. So it's easy to tell when you have them lined up correctly. And you will probably have to go in and do a little bit of trimming, to really get them to lay well on top of

each other. Okay, now what we're gonna focus on, which is kind of everybody's fear when they're making things, is how do you get these features onto your felt. Before I stitch on the features, I like to trace them, because I feel like my motor memory remembers them better if I draw them first and then go right into the stitching. I'm going to trace the features, the facial features, and the hooves. And this is only to just help me remember where I'm gonna be stitching. And it really works. Okay, I can see that the snout is just a tiny bit lower than the eyes. And the hooves come in lower than that indentation for the neck. It doesn't matter if you do this really accurately, it's just a place you're going to refer to. Okay, I'm ready to stitch. So I have my needle threaded with the black thread, two strands, coming from a six-ply embroidery floss. So I've taken off two strands. I'm gonna tie a knot, one, two, and I want them to land right on top of each other. And just for placement, and getting kind of oriented to where all the features will go, I'm gonna put the snout down first. So I know that's gonna be centered on the face and a little bit lower than halfway between where the neck indents and the top. I'm gonna go in once, so this is like a satin stitch. One, or it could be two running stitches right next to each other. But, and two. The placement of the other nostril is equidistant from the edge as the first nostril that you created. And you can see that the nostrils that I'm making look a little bit more like lines and the ones on your template look a little more like circles. So it doesn't really matter, just make sure you like it. Okay now for the eyes. The eyes are set pretty far apart, kind of equidistant between the edge of the nostril and the edge of your pig. And they're just a bit higher than the nostril. So I'm gonna go in, and stitch these little circles. I didn't cut my thread and I'm not re-knotting, I just moved right over to the eye. And I'm just gonna keep going until I like the shape and then I'm going to attempt to create the exact same eye on the other side. It doesn't always work for me. I don't always get the perfect eye set on the first try. Sometimes I'll have to go, I'll do the second eye and then I have to go fix the first eye. And then sometimes I just have to take them both off and start again. Alright, so I'm pretty happy with this eye. And again, I'm not cutting my thread, I'm just moving the thread along the back side. A little above the nostril, equidistant between the nostril's edge and the edge of the pig. And I'm not looking at my template now. Now, what I'm looking at is the other eye. I want it to match the other eye. So I've kind of created a little box and I'm gonna fill in the box with stitching. For these two steps, for the snout and the eyes, we used two-ply. For the rest of the features, we're going to use one-ply. Okay, now I'm gonna tie off on the back. I'm gonna try to make one knot land really close to the felt and then I'm going to try place this second knot that I'm creating right on top of that. And if I don't really feel secure, that I got them knotted too on top of each other, I might just put a third one in there. I'm gonna cut my thread. These features, I did with two-ply. The rest of the features, the little circles, half-circles that are going to the ears, the little mouth, and the hooves, be stitched with one-ply. So this is the piece of thread that I used to pull off the two strands we used. So there's four, this is four-ply now. So I'm gonna separate one strand off of this. And never start trying to separate from the top because then you'll create a big knot. So I start from the middle. I pull out one piece and I don't tug, I just gently pull it apart. And when it feels like it's gonna get stuck again there, I just tug on that a little bit. You wanna pull gently. If you pull too quickly, you'll create a big knot. So just keep pulling gently and you'll get what you want off of the thread. I'm gonna thread my needle. It's important that you don't have your thread too long. If it's really long, it's gonna tangle. So I never use a thread longer than 18 inches. I like to measure it out. 12, and six. Not exactly, but roughly that measurement. So here's my single ply thread. Now because this thread, if knot the bottom, it's still gonna pop through the felt, I do one stitch like so and I'll show you how I knot. And now I'm creating that inner ear. So I do the one stitch and then I tie these two together. One, two. And don't worry if

you long threads on the back, 'cause I'm gonna trim those before we attach the back side. So I'm just gonna create a little c shape in this ear. I like to create this stitch by using a running stitch instead of a back stitch, because with the running stitch I can go back in and fill it in. I can outline where I'm going and if it's not correct, it's easy to rip out. So here I am, filling in the running stitch. So it creates one line. And I can't travel with my thread to the other ear. So what I'm gonna do here, is tie it off, one, two. And now I'm gonna do the other ear. Like to put my finger back here, oops. A little knot there, to hold the thread so it doesn't come through. Then do the same thing. Go in there and tie a knot. And then create that c shape, which I'll go back in and fill in. And then I'll tie it off. We're gonna use, so I have this long thread here to tie it off, go, one, two. Now I'm gonna do the hooves, using a single ply of thread and using the running stitch. The placement of the hooves is below where the face indents. And again, I will look at my template for the first hoof and I will refer to the first hoof for the second one to try to make them match. I'm using one-ply. And I didn't knot my thread that time, but I'm holding it with my finger back here so it doesn't come all the way through. But this is an example of why I like to use the running stitch. If I didn't like this, I could just pull my thread and start again. Alright, now I'm going back in, and connecting the stitches. And lastly, I'm gonna put one little line to differentiate the hoof from the leg. And now I'm gonna tie a knot. One, two. So for the second hoof, we're trying to make it just like the first one. This is a little trickier than you might expect, trying to match two sides and make them exactly symmetrical. So just accept that they will not be exactly symmetrical and that will give your character a little more character. And we're doing it the exact same way, running stitch. And then we'll fill in the running stitch, by connecting the lines. And then we're gonna make that, one little line there. Now I'm gonna tie these two pieces off on the back. I'm gonna trim, since it's the last features, I'm gonna trim those threads and then any other threads that seem a little bit long. Okay. Now, here's our little pig. All the features are finished. The dog and the cat are done exactly the same way, using the running stitch, and filling it in later. And the satin stitch for the eyes. And the rabbit and the chick are done mostly the same way. And there's a few additional characteristics which I will show you later.

Attach front to back to finish

- All of the finger puppets come together the same way. We have the back piece and you lay the front piece on top and you make sure they're lined up correctly. So now I'm gonna start sewing the blanket stitch around the perimeter of the pig. I'm using a thread, which is, roughly, 18 inches long, two ply, and of the same color as the pig. So I'm gonna start in between the layers and I'm not tying a knot. So, I'm coming in between the layers. Keep a little tail out, like that. And I'm going into the back layer and then back up into the front layer and I'm pulling my thread, keeping a loop there and going through the loop. And then, I'm gonna test that, to see if it's tight, or it's gonna hold. And I feel like it might come out, I'm gonna do it again. Into the back layer, out the front layer. Keeping that little loop, going through the loop and pulling it tight. That will suffice as a knot. There's no need to tie another knot there. And know, I'm gonna move on and do the blanket stitch. You won't get the full effect of the blanket stitch when the tail is there because you're not going around the tail. You're just dipping into the tail and then back up to the front layer, and wrapping it around. And now, you're going around both layers, wrap your thread around and pull your needle. I prefer to work the blanket stitch right to left, but you might be more comfortable working the other direction. In fact, it's really hard for me to work the other direction. So, it doesn't matter which way you go. I'm trying to evenly space the stitches as I move along the perimeter of the pig. Here, through the two layers, wrap around my needle, pull my thread. I didn't get a real rhythm going. And, move pretty

quickly once you feel comfortable, doing this. And you will notice as you do this that they might become unmatched, the two sides. In that case, I'm gonna take my small snips and cut the bigger layer a little bit. And then continuing my blanket stitch. There are things you want to consider about your stitch length. One is, the stitch length along the perimeter. And the other is, The stitch length, the depth from which you're going into the felt. Both should be consistent. On some instances, the felt isn't exactly matching up, I might choose not to trim it. Instead, just pull them over so they match. My thread is getting awfully short so I'm gonna add another piece of thread. And you might think, " Well why didn't you just cut a longer one?" Because I, probably, would have gotten frustrated and made a big, knotty mess. That's why. To add another piece of thread complete your last stitch. And, we're working with two ply here, so ... separate carefully. And before I thread my needle, I'm going to attach the two threads together. Here I am attaching a new thread, and I try to get that knot as close to the last stitch as I can. So, there's one, and ... two. And for now I'm just going to tuck those inside. In the end I will trim those threads. And I thread my needle, and I just continue working til the end. And, you can't even see the knot. When you get to the very bottom you're gonna finish the way you started. So you did one blanket stitch, and then, you're gonna do another blanket stitch in the same location. And, if you don't feel that's secure you could just do one more. And then, I'm gonna stick my needle and thread, sort of, in between the layers, like that. Pull it up, and snip. The reason I left these tail threads long, if the knot came out then I would have to retie the knot. But, now we're completed. So, I'm gonna go in and trim these threads. And the real goal with trimming them, is just so they don't show. Doesn't really matter if they're a little bit long inside there. Okay, finished.

Chapter 4 - Variations

Making other animals

- The chick and bunny each have an additional step. You do the details the same way and add the back piece the same way. But here we're creating a negative space in the ear of the bunny. And here we're adding a third layer in the head of the chick. Let's start with the bunny. I've already stitched on all my features, but before I attach the two layers, I need to cut out this space in the front layer for the ears. So I'm gonna use my snips. They're very sharp. And cut out an inner ear. I'm gonna repeat that on the other side. Before I stitch the perimeter with the blanket stitch, I'm gonna attach these inner ears using a whip stitch. So I have my off-white thread. I'm gonna go in between the two layers. I did not tie a knot. I'll leave a tail, and I'm gonna go into the back layer and back up through the front layer and catch my thread. I'm using two-ply thread here. So I pull a little, and it's coming undone, it's not secure. I'm gonna go in one more time, exact same place, catch my thread, and pull. And now it's secure. Now I'm gonna whip stitch the inner ear. I'm gonna go into the back layer, and catch the back layer up through the front layer, back through the back layer, up through the front layer, and around and around until I reach my starting point. I'm just traveling around that inner ear space. You could use a blanket stitch for doing that inner piece, but I think the whip stitch has a better look. When I get to my starting point, I'm actually gonna go in between the first and second layer and come up the bottom right of the inner ear and then I'm gonna whip stitch this perimeter. And come all the way around. I've come up the same hole where I started. I'm gonna go back through that hole again. And before I pull it tight, I'm gonna go through the loop, and I'm gonna do that one more time. And through the loop, and that will be like a knot. Back in between the two layers, cut my thread, and cut my thread. Now the inner ears are stitched and the puppet comes together by stitching the perimeter the same way you did the pig. Now, we're gonna talk

about the chick. The chick comes together the same way by stitching the perimeter, but I'm gonna show you where you're gonna add a third layer to the chick. And that's how it's different from the others. I've already started assembling my chick. I've worked the perimeter here. Now I'm adding a third layer. I'm sandwiching this red piece between the back and the front. And I'm gonna continue blanket stitching. I'm gonna go, make sure you go through the two layers behind, and then come up through the front layer. Through the two back layers, up through the front. Wrap your thread and pull. And now, here I'm moving on to just attaching the back and front piece through the two layers, wrap your thread, and pull. Through the two layer, wrap your thread, and pull. You continue the blanket stitch until you reach the end of your chick. Now you've made a little farm family. The templates are this size, but you can enlarge your template to 150% and make a puppet the big size. It's a great way to use up little felt scraps, and now that you know this technique you can make some of your own animals.