

Making Fabric Dolls

(Adapted from a pattern in “Sew Somerset” Winter 2013)
February 2013 project for the Lakeside Quilting Guild

These dolls have a body and head that is stuffed with fiberfill, then fabric legs and arms are attached, before drawing on facial figures and making hair or painting hair directly on the head. Additional details can be added such as an apron, necklace, pompoms, scarves, simple hats, and whatever else your creativity desires. Have lots of fun making these dolls. (A store such as JoAnn’s has the supplies.)

* An asterisk next to the item means I will bring some of that to share. Don’t be put off by the length of the directions—just refer to the pictures.

Supplies for one doll

Templates for the body and head *

18”x 12” piece of small scale pattern for the body *

12”x6” piece of plain fabric for the head in whatever color you would like, muslin or a similar fabric *

Fabric scraps for the arms, legs and other additions *

Polyfill stuffing

Buttons, beads, ribbons, pompoms, and other embellishments

Yarns and other materials to make hair (optional)

Colored pencils, superfine tip colored marking pens, paints and extra small brushes for facial features *

Textile paint for the hair *

Paint brushes for applying paint for the hair *

A plastic sheet with depressions for paints and disposable cups for mixing paint *

Acrylic spray fixative (must be used outside, in a well-ventilated room or a room with a ceiling fan, such as an interior bathroom) *

Thread colors to blend with the fabrics or to contrast *

Glue: Elmer’s or fabric glue *

Embroidery floss *

Long needle (for sewing through the doll’s neck to attach the arms—they won’t cry!) *

Sewing machine; with a darning foot (if you wish to do free-motion embroidery, such as drawing a pocket on the “dress”)

Regular sewing needles, pins, other usual sewing supplies

Wooden or other tool to use to stuff the doll (I used wooden tongs for picking up toast)

Directions

Using the templates for the body and head, cut out two of each (for front and back)

If you wish to add a long apron, such as a “butcher block apron”, cut that out now as you will sew the neck straps in with the seam when you sew on the head.

Cut out fabric for the arms: two 2 ¼” x 6” pieces for each arm

Cut out fabric for the legs: two 2 ½” x 6” pieces for each leg

Make the arms and legs: with the wrong side of fabric up, fold over ½” fabric from one end, then fold a scant ¼” under lengthwise on both sides, then fold that together. (You are making a long piece of fabric with the raw side edges folded inside and one end folded inside.) Iron. Sew very close to the edge, along the long edge and the short, finished edge.

Sew one front body to one front head and one back body to one back head; iron the seams open. Place the pieces right sides together. Then, starting at the **lower** body edge, about 1” in from the corner, sew the front to the back all around the pieces, ending at the bottom of the body and leaving a 2-3” gap to stuff the doll. Turn the doll right side out and iron so that all the edges are crisp.

Stuff the doll. Do not sew closed yet (see next direction).

Draw the facial features now or after the doll is completed. (If you don't like your attempt it is easier to discard the doll now before you have spent a lot of time embellishing her.)

Attach the arms to the top of the body by using embroidery thread and a button, pushing the needle through to the other side and sewing that arm on with a button, ending at the first button; tie a knot and cut thread.

Sew opening closed at the bottom of the body, placing the legs with their seams facing out and the finished end at the end of the leg.

Embellish your doll however you like.

Draw facial features on the doll.

Make hair (directions to come) or paint hair on the head.

Add concentric fabric circles for a hat; attach with a bead or button.

Spray fixative on the face to set the markings.

Name your doll and enjoy. Make another one!

I will bring books with drawings of facial features to refer to or to copy and patterns for the hair. Each doll should take about an hour to make. If you use paint for the hair it takes about 1-2 hours for the paint to dry.

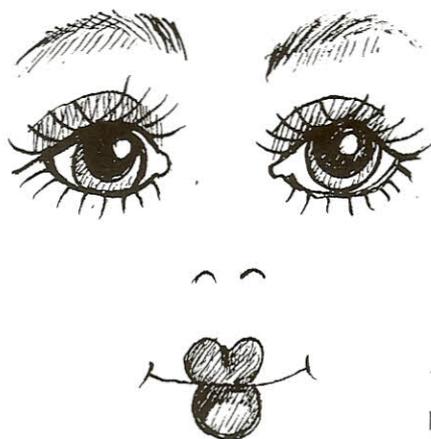
Drawing Facial Features

If you prefer to draw your own face, use the Feature Placement template to help you develop your own facial-features style. Feature placement and size (relative to each other) is the key to a good cloth doll face. If the eyes are too big you can't balance the face by giving her a small nose; all the features need to work together as a balanced unit. All of this is explained in the step-by-step photos and instructions. Feel free to choose any face for any of the dolls. Keep a copy of the color-face transfer nearby as reference for feature size, placement, and coloration as you create your own features.

Start with a single layer of flesh-colored fabric and a selection of permanent color pens with tips no larger than 01. Sakura Micron Pigma pens come as small as 05 and are great for small faces and details. Don't confuse an 005 tip, which is much too large for this scale doll with an 05 tip, which is acceptable.

... TIP

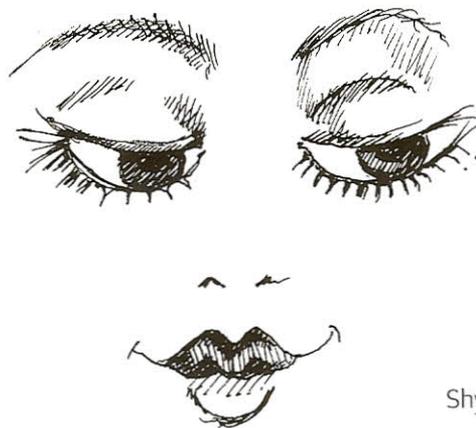
Begin by drawing the features on the side of the face that is most difficult for you. If you do your best work on your easier side first, it's hard to duplicate your work on the side you have less control over. You can also try turning the face upside down to create curves and strokes on the side that is harder for you. These tips will help keep the facial features balanced and look similar.



My Marie



Holly



Shy



Head
#5



Body
#5