

*"I'm a little bit of a fabric lunatic." — John Malkovich*



**MARCH 2013**

## *"Sew the Giraffe"*

Last month we "embraced chaos" through mixed-media experimentation. This month we'll slow things down a bit with a single assignment:

[Make a Stuffed Giraffe](#)

You are free to interpret this however you like, as long as you end up with a stuffed animal by the end of the month!

\* \* \*

## Slowing Down with Hand Sewing

Even if you use a sewing machine for some of the large parts, there is a good chance you will spend a lot of time on your project hand-sewing, either just by adding ears and tails to your stuffed giraffes, or by embroidering spots and other details.



I want to encourage you this month to truly relax into the hand-sewing part as much as you can.

We live in a busy world, and I think are conditioned to think that if we aren't super fast and extremely productive, we aren't "accomplishing" anything.

Confession: When I sat down with my mountain of sewing the spots ahead of me, I felt a bit stressed about it, thinking I didn't have the time. But as the hours passed, the slow, meditative work began to work its magic. It turned out to be one of the best studio days I've had all year!

The creative process NEEDS us to slow down — it's the second of the four "steps" of creativity we talked about in January (W.R.A.P. - Wrestle, Rest, Aha!, Produce).

In the same way taking a walk, a nap, or a bath are “rest” times, working on embroidering my giraffe spots those hours had a similar effect, and I was (surprisingly) able to come up with some creative solutions in *other* areas of my life. Not to mention, it was just fun to relax.



### “Slow Art”

After experiencing the benefit of slowing down with hand sewing, I went to the internet to search out “artists working slowly” and was reminded that there is a “movement” out there right now — *Slow Art* — which advocates appreciating an art work in itself as opposed to a “rapid, flitting witnessing of art common in a hectic societal setting.” And then,

Another interpretation of **Slow Art** relates to creating art in a slow way. This practice is about being mindful of detail, valuing the history inherent in re-usable materials, putting time into creating small items. The practice encourages the maker to be naturally meditative as they create. “Slow” ends up being a way of being....

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slow\\_Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slow_Movement)

## Slow Minds

(This one's just for fun.)

In my slow-creativity search I also found the following article which really made my day!

[http://smarteconomy.typepad.com/smart\\_economy/2010/04/the-link-between-creativity-white-matter-the-thalamus-and-slow-thinking.html](http://smarteconomy.typepad.com/smart_economy/2010/04/the-link-between-creativity-white-matter-the-thalamus-and-slow-thinking.html)

There is a LINK between being a slow thinker and creativity! Apparently, my inability to think of choice things to say in an argument is actually a good thing when it comes to being creative:

Sheer mental speed or thinking power or intelligence (which happens in "grey matter") is not the same as creativity and takes place in different parts of the brain (in "white matter") and through a different pathway. Slower brain connections turns out make you more creative, counterintuitive as that may sound.

For the "fast thinkers" among us, though, don't worry!

Jung emphasizes that creativity and intelligence can still go hand in hand. Each appears to be controlled by white matter in a different region. So theoretically, there's no reason why someone might not have high integrity in the cortex, producing intelligence, but low integrity between the cortex and deeper brain regions, leading to creative thinking. "They appear to function relatively independently," he says.

Still, comforting research for us "Slow-Brains!"

\* \* \*

So what do you think about S L O W I N G D O W N this month?

Does it scare you? Excite you?

Let's find out!

# INSPIRATION FROM AROUND THE NET

I spent some time looking for stuffed giraffes at flickr, pinterist, and etsy. So many cool ways to stuff a giraffe! Here are a few of them:

<http://whilshenaps.typepad.com/whilshenaps/2012/04/softies-for-sale-series-selling-individual-toys-one-at-a-time.html>

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/fede\\_shop/2566947929/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/fede_shop/2566947929/)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/123109155/giraffe?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_13&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+softie&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=2&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/123109155/giraffe?ref=sr_gallery_13&ga_search_query=giraffe+softie&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=2&ga_search_type=all)

<http://desaccord.bigcartel.com/product/girafe-circus3>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/phizzy/5973512975/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/wendi/2658015897/>

<http://nuno-runo.blogspot.com/2010/10/giraffe.html>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/merwing/5893855623/in/pool-54791047@N00/>

<http://www.migadepan.com.ar/515-giraffe-jirafa-girafa-kameelperd-girafe/#>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ahpets00/4701422266/>

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/anne\\_made/6428215399/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/anne_made/6428215399/)

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/littleloveblue/3950510447/>

<http://www.migadepan.com.ar/774-morena-and-mabel/>

<http://pinterest.com/pin/85920305363119816/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hopskipjump/4458476445/>

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/99446577/giraffe-soft-sculpture-animal?utm\\_campaign=Share&utm\\_medium=PageTools](http://www.etsy.com/listing/99446577/giraffe-soft-sculpture-animal?utm_campaign=Share&utm_medium=PageTools)

<http://cultofcrochet.wordpress.com/2011/04/14/almost-one-piece-giraffe-pattern/>

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/97226762/giraffe-plush-made-to-order?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_44&ga\\_search\\_query=plush+giraffe&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/97226762/giraffe-plush-made-to-order?ref=sr_gallery_44&ga_search_query=plush+giraffe&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/113325904/personalised-baby-toy-name-giraffe?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_22&ga\\_search\\_query=plush+giraffe&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=2&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/113325904/personalised-baby-toy-name-giraffe?ref=sr_gallery_22&ga_search_query=plush+giraffe&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=2&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/80319544/tiny-walking-giraffe-micro-dollhouse?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_5&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+plush&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/80319544/tiny-walking-giraffe-micro-dollhouse?ref=sr_gallery_5&ga_search_query=giraffe+plush&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/116487439/one-felt-plush-toy-jungle-theme-safari?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_18&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+plush&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=5&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/116487439/one-felt-plush-toy-jungle-theme-safari?ref=sr_gallery_18&ga_search_query=giraffe+plush&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=5&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/113985066/mccalls-6672-kids-room-wall-decorations?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_36&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+plush&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=19&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/113985066/mccalls-6672-kids-room-wall-decorations?ref=sr_gallery_36&ga_search_query=giraffe+plush&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=19&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/121941083/giraffes-stuffed-animal-wall-hanging?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_23&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+plush&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=17&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/121941083/giraffes-stuffed-animal-wall-hanging?ref=sr_gallery_23&ga_search_query=giraffe+plush&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=17&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/116878878/gem-giraffe?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_37&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+plush&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=17&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/116878878/gem-giraffe?ref=sr_gallery_37&ga_search_query=giraffe+plush&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=17&ga_search_type=all)

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/93292654/vintage-josephine-the-giraffe-sewing?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_40&ga\\_search\\_query=giraffe+plush&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_ship\\_to=US&ga\\_page=10&ga\\_search\\_type=all](http://www.etsy.com/listing/93292654/vintage-josephine-the-giraffe-sewing?ref=sr_gallery_40&ga_search_query=giraffe+plush&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_page=10&ga_search_type=all)

<http://nectarimports.com/product-twoolies-handmade-wool-giraffe>

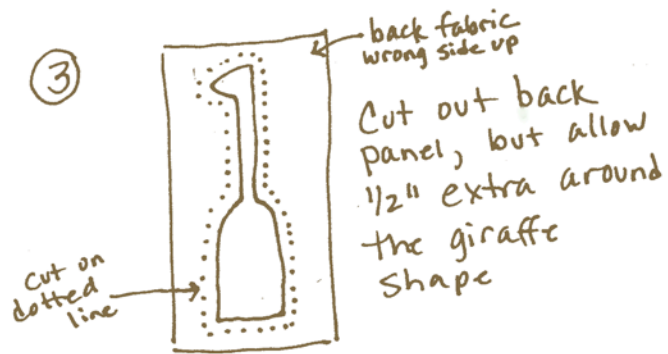
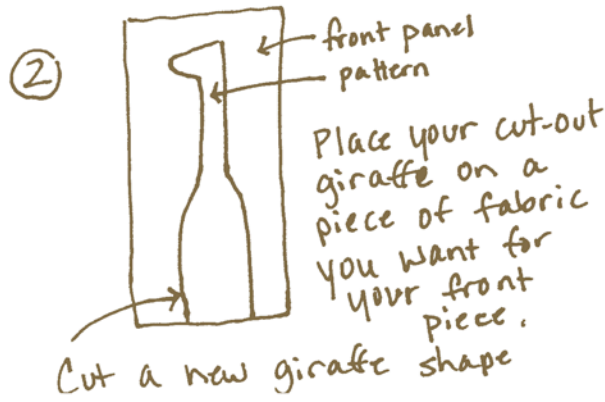


## THE HAND-SEWN GIRAFFE

And starting on the next page is a quick “how-to” of the giraffe I made (though I can’t emphasize enough that you do NOT need to follow these instructions, but are free to interpret “stuffed giraffe” in any way you choose! This is just “in case”).



Cut out a shape kind of like this from a piece of scrap fabric (this will be used as your "pattern.").



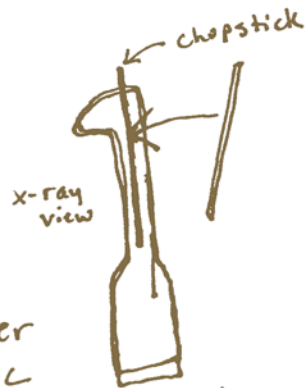
- ④ Place together, wrong sides facing. Fold over the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " portion of the back panel and begin stitching together. Sew all around, leaving the bottom open.



- ⑤ Add stuffing to the head, neck and upper part of the body.



- ⑥ Take a dowel or cheap chopstick and push up through body + neck, and out the top of the head ... later you will sew fabric around the "horn" sticking out.





⑦

Once you cut the legs, sew + stuff. as per step ④. If you have trouble in the crotch area, cut out a piece of back fabric to "patch it!"

Cut out space btwn legs

Cut slit in back panel.

⑧

Add fabric around horn and sew to head, on sides and on top.

Stitch

stitch

⑨ Add an ear.

bonch end

thread

Hand-Sew into place

⑩ Add an eye and spots using buttons, embroidery, etc.

etc.

buttons!

embroidery floss

Happy Sewing!  
Carla