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“Tead Head” Basic Moving Mouth Puppet Head Instructions

“My hand is the soul of the puppet”

- Sergei Obraztsov

A hand puppet begins with the puppeteer's hand. The magic and beauty of some of the best puppets – characters like Kermit the Frog, or Lamp Chop or even the average sock puppet – is often found in their simplicity. While certain types of puppets demand complex and elaborate construction processes, ask almost any experienced puppeteer and they'll tell you that they'll take a simple, flexible fabric puppet over a large, elaborate one carved from foam or encumbered by complex mechanisms or animatronics any day.

This “Tead Head” Pattern is one example of an extremely basic moving mouth hand puppet. Building flexible, expressive puppets of this size is a great puppet building exercise precisely because they're so simple. It allows inexperienced puppet builders to tackle a simple project that's easy to complete, while those who have built puppets before can focus on their craft.

This is also a great pattern that can be customized to be any number of different characters!

Materials Required

- $\frac{3}{4}$ meter (or yard) of fabric. This can be any fabric (antron fleece, polar fleece, fun fur, etc.) but it's best to use a fabric that has at least a little stretch to it.
- 6 x 6 inch piece of vinyl (any colour will do)
- 6 x 6 inch piece of fun fur or shag fur
- 6 x 6 inch piece of felt
- 6 x 6 inch piece of vinyl
- Scissors and basic sewing supplies

Step One: Print and cut out your patterns

Print and cut out the pattern pieces. It's a often very good idea to copy the patterns on to a stiffer material like cardboard so that they are more durable.

Step Two: Cut out the material

Trace and cut out the patterns as follows:

- **Ears:** Cut four pieces from fabric, two reversed (this creates two matching pairs).
- **The head:** Cut two pieces from fabric, one reversed (this creates a matching pair).
- **The mouth:** Cut the full circle from felt.
- **Mouth plates:** Cut two half circles from vinyl (you can create the pattern for this by folding the mouth pattern along the dotted line).
- **Hair:** Cut two pieces from fur, one with the pattern flipped over

Machine sewing is generally not recommended, except for the puppet's mouth. How to machine sew puppets mouths will be covered in a future tutorial, but for now if you have experience with a sewing machine and wish to use it to sew the puppet's mouth, include an extra seam allowance (indicated with a dotted line on the pattern) when tracing and cutting out your patterns.

Step Three: Sewing

To sew the puppet head together, begin with the ears. Then sew the head, beginning with the darts on each side of the head pattern. Remember to place the ears between the darts as you sew them so they attach to the head.

Once the ears and head darts have been sewn, you can sew together the two head pieces by sewing Seams 1, 2, and 3. Then sew together the two hair pieces before sewing the hair to the puppet head.

The final step is to sew the mouth pieces to the head as explained in the video.

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