

KARINE THIBOULT (MADEMOISELLE TIKAL)

SEW  
CUTE TOYS

24 GIFTS TO MAKE  
AND TREASURE

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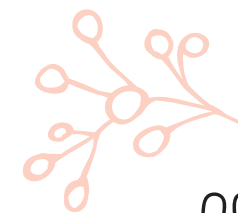


**Karine Thibault** is a journalist, designer, photo stylist and author who blogs under the pen name Mademoiselle Tika. Karine lives in France.

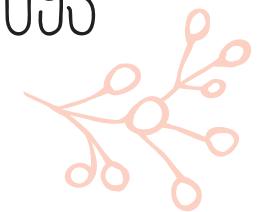
After studying at the Beaux-Arts in Rennes, Karine joined a major Parisian fashion design school. She then became a design and fashion journalist.

Karine is the author of several books on crafts and pastimes, including French knitting, stamping and printing, and decorating with pompoms and tassels.

Follow Karine on Instagram @mademoiselletika



SEW CUTE TOYS





KARINE THIBOULT (MADEMOISELLE TIKI)

PHOTOGRAPHS  
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## A FEW TIPS...

### TOOLS AND MATERIALS

#### YOU WILL NEED

Iron • Tape measure • Sewing scissors • Pins • Needles • Knitting needles • Embroidery hoops (or frames) in various sizes • Embroidery needles • Carbon or transfer paper • Tracing paper • Ball-point pen (black) • Erasable marker pen (for the embroidery) • Wooden chopstick or turner for turning your work the right way out • Soft toy stuffing • Sewing machine

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Most fabric will need to be washed to remove any coatings and to avoid any shrinkage. For young children, opt for organic cotton and soft materials.

The ironing stage is important! Your fabric must be nice and flat before you cut it. For a perfect finish, you will also need to press all of your seams with an iron.

In terms of sewing thread, opt for polyester rather than cotton, as it is stronger.

**Tip** If you can't find a thread colour that is a perfect match for the fabric, go a shade darker.

### WHAT IS THE GRAIN?

The grain means the direction of the fabric's warp – the threads parallel to the selvedge. Taking into account the direction of the grain when making your projects will ensure that what you make holds its shape well, without pulling or creasing.

### TEMPLATES (PATTERNS)

To enlarge the templates in this book, enter the enlargement ratio into a printer or copier. You do not need tracing paper for these templates. All the templates fit into an A4 (21 x 30cm/ 8¼ x 11¾in) format.

### SEAM ALLOWANCE

Unless otherwise indicated, you should add a seam allowance of 1cm (¾in) to the edge of each pattern piece as you cut it out.

### USING TRACING, CARBON OR TRANSFER PAPER TO COPY THE TEMPLATES (PATTERNS)

Place the tracing paper on the enlarged, real-size template and trace with a pencil. Then lay it on the right side of the fabric, and slip some carbon paper between the two. Draw over the traced lines with a pen to transfer them onto the fabric. Do not cut out the toy pattern before embroidering; you will need enough fabric to position it in the embroidery hoop. Once you have finished the embroidery, cut out the toy, adding a 1cm (¾in) seam allowance around each piece, unless the instructions state otherwise, and do the same for all other pattern pieces (legs, ears, etc.).

**note** It is quite tricky to transfer the pattern lines onto felt fabric. When using felt, it might be easier to cut out the template from the printed page and draw around it.

### CUTTING THE FABRIC

To cut cleanly, lay the fabric on a flat surface in front of you. Cut with one blade of the scissors resting on the table – the blade should not leave the table – while holding the fabric flat with the other hand, just behind the scissors. A rotary cutter also works very well.

### CUTTING OUT THE MIRROR IMAGE

To cut the front and back of the toys identically, and ensure they match perfectly when sewn together, fold the fabric in half, right sides together, place the template on top then cut around, through both layers.

### OVERCASTING

Overcasting is the process of sewing along the edges of fabric to prevent fraying. When time is short, people sometimes skip the overcasting stage. This is a mistake – your work will start to come apart over time and the seams will split. For toys this is an essential step! Use overcast stitch on your sewing machine or overlocker/serger; alternatively use a narrow zigzag stitch.





## NOTCHING FOR A PERFECT FINISH

Notching is the process of cutting small V-shapes – a few millimetres wide – into the seam allowance of your fabric every centimetre ( $\frac{3}{8}$ in), or even every 5mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$ in). It is essential to notch around curves and to debulk corners on your makes so that no messy creases appear when you turn your work the right way out. This stage should be carried out after sewing the seams.

## TECHNICAL MATERIALS

**Wadding (batting)** is used to provide volume.

**Double- or single-sided iron-on interfacing** (such as Vliesofix) is used to secure appliqué or stiffen the fabric and make sewing easier. Lay the interfacing on the wrong side of the fabric and iron on top of the peel-off backing so that it adheres. Cut out the desired shape and stick to the other piece of fabric. Stitch around the appliqué.

**Self-adhesive glitter fabric** creates an attractive finish. Simply iron it onto the fabric in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and peel off the backing paper.

## STUFFING

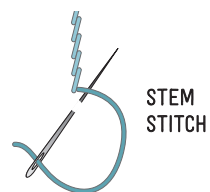
Start by stuffing the corners, then finish with the centre and the area closest to the opening.

## EMBROIDERY

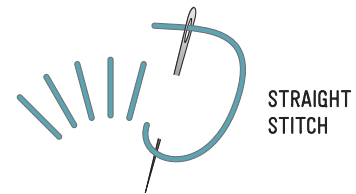
Place the fabric right side up in an appropriately sized embroidery hoop. Use the screws to tighten the hoop.

Decide whether you want to use two or three strands; this will determine the thickness of the embroidery. Personally, I use a wool darning thread as I find it more attractive.

Use **stem stitch (or backstitch)** for eyes, mouths and any continuous lines of embroidery. Bring out your needle on the right side of the fabric. Insert the needle 3mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$ in) further on, from right to left, holding the yarn under the point with your thumb. Bring the yarn back out in the middle of the first stitch and continue in the same way.



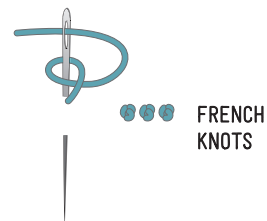
For the noses and hair, use **straight stitch**. As its name suggests, this is a very straight stitch and is used for filling.



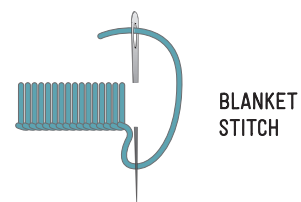
**note** : Embroider around the nose or eyes using stem stitch and use straight stitch to fill.

**Satin stitch:** Stitch straight stitches close together to fill or outline your desired shape. Alternatively, set your sewing machine to zigzag stitch, with the minimum spacing.

For whiskers, use **French knots**. Bring your needle out at the required spot. Then wrap the yarn twice round your needle, pulling it tight. Next, reinsert the needle as close as possible to the place where it first came up, keeping the yarn tight and pressing it against the fabric. Finally pull the needle through, keeping your thread nice and taut.



**Blanket stitch:** Bring the needle up through the fabric, 3mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the edge. Take the yarn over the edge and bring the needle back through, from the underside of the fabric, 3mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$ in) to the right of the first hole. Pass the needle through the loop of the first stitch and continue in the same way.



**Ladder stitch:** Ladder stitch is used to sew openings closed in a neat and pretty way. Turn under the raw edges of the seam allowance. Bring a threaded needle up through the fold on one side of the opening then take the needle across to the opposite side and down through the fold. Bring the needle up a little way along, then bring it down directly across on the first side. Bring the needle up a little way along the first side, then take

it down directly on the second side. Continue in this way along the seam, then pull the thread to pull the edges together. The wire can no longer be seen!

