

Craft:

transforming traditional crafts



Make
your own
hypertufa
planter

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JAPAN STYLE

"SUPER CUTE!"

32 PROJECTS THAT ROCK!

Blushing finger puppets,
knitted kimonos, & more



CROCHET
PULL-TAB
FLOWERS

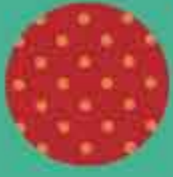
SEW A TOKYO
PUNK T-SHIRT

TRANSFORM
SODA BOTTLES
INTO POP ART

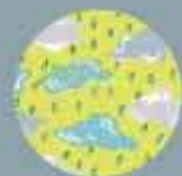
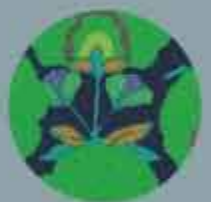


STITCH THESE
TINY KITTIES

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Craft: ^{Volume 03}

transforming traditional crafts™

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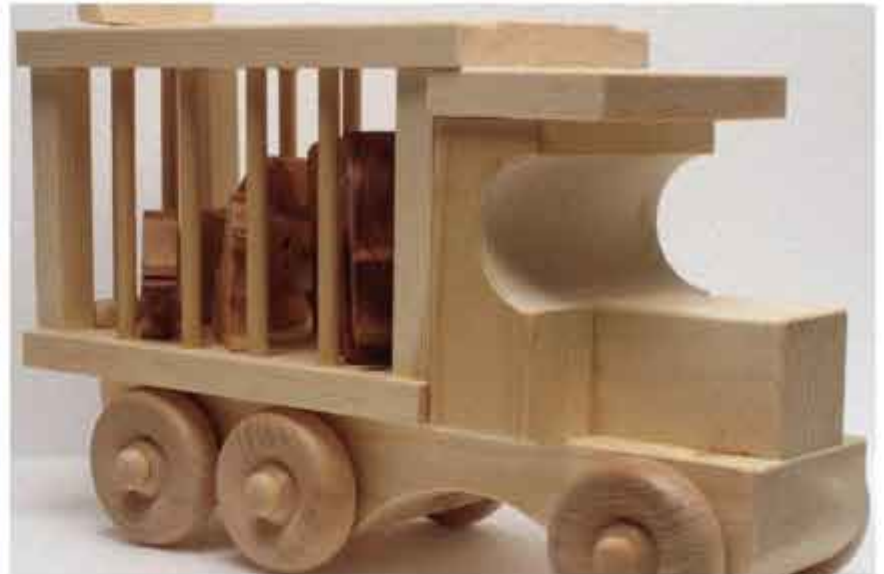
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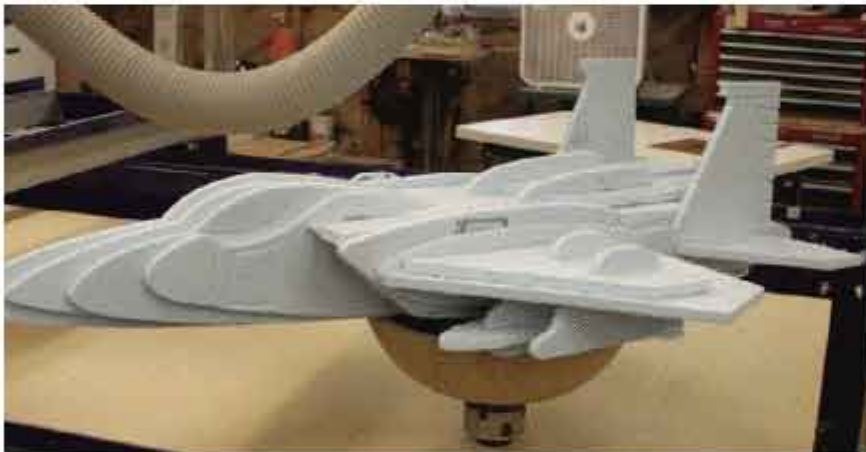
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Craft:™ Projects

Finger Puppets

Stitch a pair of theatrical puppets that light up with excitement.

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TULIP®

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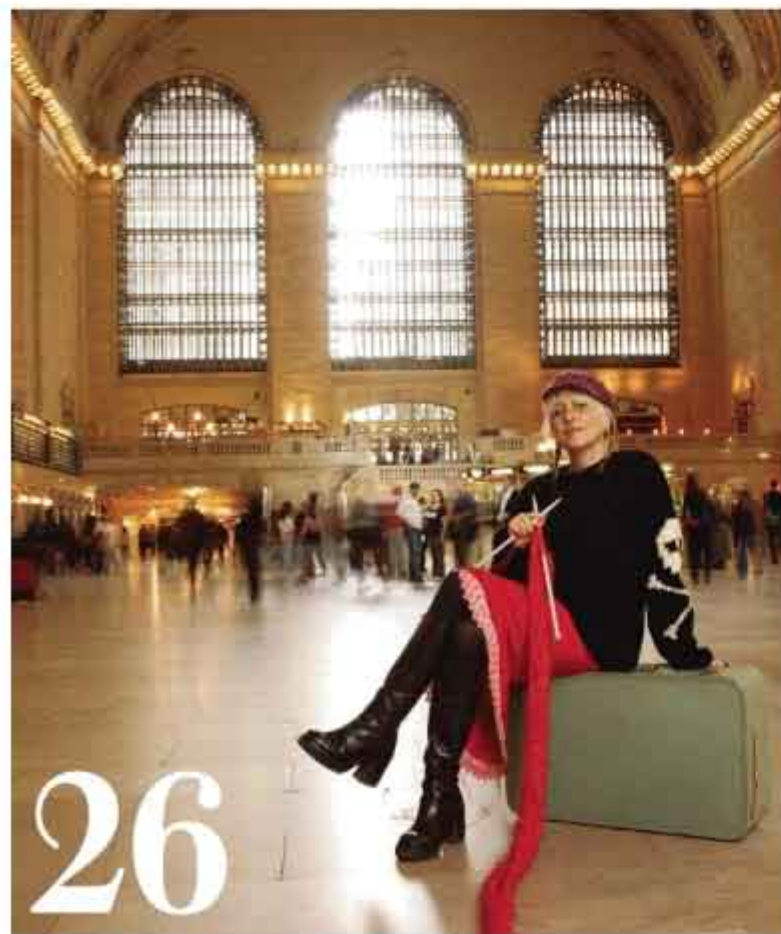
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ON THE COVER

Our cute cover kitties are part of Aranzi Aronzo, a line of Japanese characters found on everything from dishes to purses, socks, and slippers. Learn how to make them on page 54, a project excerpted from *The Cute Book*.

Photographed for CRAFT by Garry McLeod; styled by Ameliana Kamstra and Sam Murphy; kitties stitched by Lindsey North.





Carla Sinclair
Welcome

» Carla Sinclair is editor-in-chief of CRAFT magazine.
carla@craftzine.com

From Mud Balls to Mizuhiki

CRAFT celebrates the trends and traditions of Japanese crafts.

The first time I saw a photograph of dorodango, I thought the smooth, glossy spheres were made of some type of metal or stone. The spheres looked heavy, like fist-sized cannon balls that varied in color — from black to mustard-yellow, tomato-red, and marble-white — and were so shiny I was sure you could see your reflection if you looked closely. They were gracefully stacked on top of each other, like an arrangement of modern art: beautiful, abstract, and mysterious. Then I read the accompanying article and learned that these elegant sculptures weren't made from an exotic fine material at all; in fact, they were nothing more than balls of dirt.

An ancient pastime whose roots are unknown, making hikaru dorodango ("shiny mudballs") was a Zen-like activity that had almost been forgotten. Then, about five years ago, a Kyoto research professor reintroduced dorodango to a Japanese elementary school, sparking a fad that quickly swept across the country. Many schoolchildren in Japan are now obsessed with carefully shaping mud into balls, and then spending hours, even days, polishing them with their hands until the surface becomes as shiny as a billiard ball. The varying colors depend on the type of soil used. (There's a nice gallery of mud spheres at dorodango.com.)

We wanted to feature dorodango in CRAFT. But only half-believing these mudballs could look as amazing as they did in the photos we found, we asked O'Reilly Media's Jason Arnold if he would try making dorodango with his 9-year-old daughter. After a few botched attempts, they produced gorgeous dorodango that looked like glazed pottery, fresh from the kiln. Arnold shares the ancient recipe with us in our Play column ([page 140](#)).

Dorodango, which straddles both ancient and trendy crafting in Japan, is emblematic of a country where traditions and trends seem to coexist seamlessly. Kimonos, origami, and traditional gift-wrapping

are thriving with a pulse as strong as that of Blythe dolls, retro monsters, Harajuku fashion, and the pop world of "Super Cute." And it's both the ancient as well as the modern crafts of Japan that have seeped into Western culture. Search "Japan" on etsy.com and you'll find more than 2,300 handmade items, ranging from necklaces made of vintage Japanese glass to a *Speed Racer* shrug, a tote bag of Japanese fabrics, a "Harajuku-style cellphone charm" that lights up, and a modern pendant made from 17th-century-inspired yuzen paper.

Kimonos and origami thrive alongside Blythe dolls, retro monsters, Harajuku fashion, and the world of "Super Cute."

It's in this spirit of interlacing the old and the new that we bring you our Japan-themed issue. *Project Runway's* Diana Eng gives us "street style" with her punk Harajuku T-shirt project ([page 82](#)), and then goes traditional with a decorative mizuhiki knot ([page 21](#)). Syuzi Pakhchyan of SparkLab shows us how to make kimono-wearing finger puppets that light up with emotion, LED style ([page 60](#)). Aranzi Aronzo of *The Cute Book* shows us how to stitch irresistible kitties ([page 53](#)).

Along with our Japan-influenced crafts, you'll get the usual bundle of inspiring how-tos and articles, such as using metal clay, crocheting pull-tabs, making one-week wine, reverse engineering a pair of pants, and dissecting a sewing machine. So welcome, or *irashaimasu!* ✕