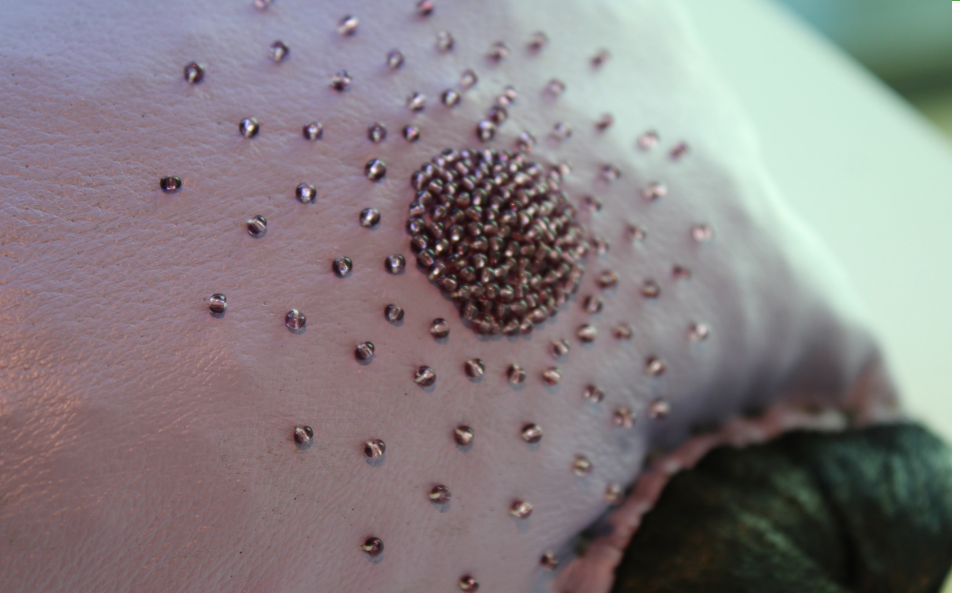


# Craft Kit 43: Soft Sculpture



"Ћуџwíŋ áyapi" by Kite (left), "Purple Mass" by Natani Notah (right)

Kite & Natani Notah

IN THE REALM OF MIRACLES

*August 5–September 25, 2022*

108 CONTEMPORARY

*Art. Craft. Design.*

# Welcome to 108|Contemporary!

We are a non-profit gallery in Tulsa, Oklahoma that specializes in contemporary craft. From August 5 through September 25, 2022, we are hosting the *In the Realm of Miracles* exhibition by two artists, Kite and Natani Notah. Let's look at the exhibition before you make your own soft sculpture.

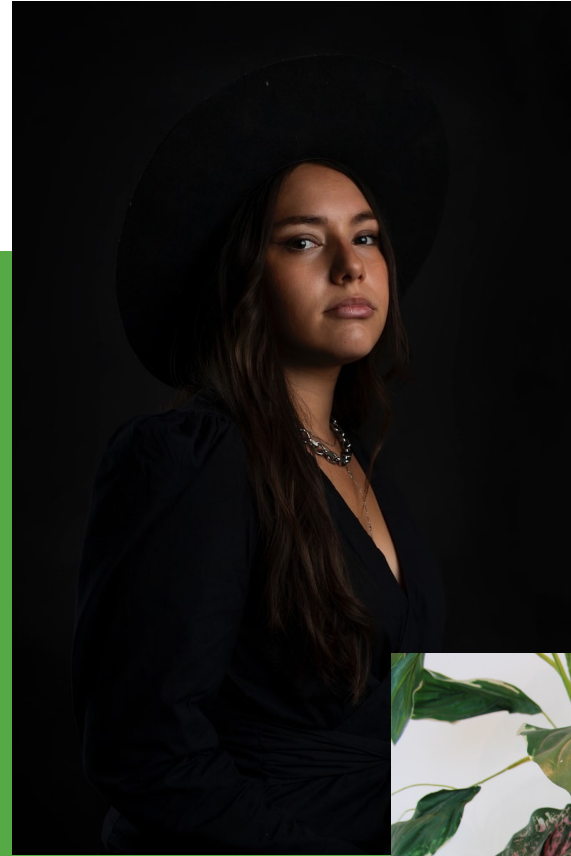
On the way we'll ask ourselves some questions. There are no wrong answers! When you view fine art and craft, your experience will be unique and personal. Perhaps the person next to you will have different answers to the same questions. By hearing each other's perspectives, we may find new and exciting ways to interpret each work.



# Who is Kite?

A member of the Lakota Tribe, Kite's work in this exhibition focuses on the contrast between indigenous hunting practices and those of settlers. "Many indigenous people throughout the world hunt with respect, honoring animals in the same way they honor family members," Kite said. "We're all kin in some way. Settlers, however, are often bad family members."

- What do you know about hunting in different parts of the world?
- Take a look at the found sculpture *Iyátakunipi kte šni (they will come to nothing)*. How does it make you feel? What could this piece be saying about settler hunting practices?



Kite (left) taken by Tulsa Artist Fellowship, "Iyátakunipi kte šni (they will come to nothing)" (right) by Kite



Kite's usual artwork is generative, meaning that it offers a positive view of the world or possible solutions to problems. For *In the Realm of Miracles*, however, her work is critical. Critical artwork shows problems in need of solutions.

- Given what you know about Kite's work, what could *Ĥuŋwíŋ áyapi* be critiquing?
- What might a generative work about hunting look like?
- Kite uses the techniques of traditional Lakota Beadwork in a modern way. Do you know any traditional or cultural crafts?



"Ĥuŋwíŋ áyapi" by Kite

## Who is Natani Notah?

Natani Notah is a Dine' artist who focused on two types of artwork: collage and soft sculpture. She prefers abstract work, meaning her pieces don't look exactly like anything you've seen in real life. Her creative process involves reacting to current events and processing her emotions. Notah also talks about her art as a way of releasing pent-up energy!

- Have you ever had the urge to just...do something? What do you do with that feeling?
- Looking at Notah's collage, what current event do you think she's processing? What does it remind you of and why?
- Notah says she finds abstract art to be a safe place to experiment and express herself. Why might she feel that way? Do you think you would feel safe experimenting in abstract art?



Natani Notah (right) taken by Tulsa Artist Fellowship, "Carrying On" (left) by Natani Notah



# What is soft sculpture?

What materials do you think of when you hear the word, “sculpture?” What textures? Perhaps you think about marble, wood, glass, or even ice. Soft sculpture, however, is a 3D piece of art that is not hard or rigid. Notah’s sculptures are made of leather, felt, faux fur, beadwork, and are stuffed with plastic corn kernels. Some other significant soft sculpture artists include [Senga Nengudi](#), [Claes Oldenburg](#), and the [Yarrenyty Arltere artists](#) of Australia.

- What is the difference between soft sculpture and a plush toy?
- Why might you choose to make a sculpture soft or pliable?
- Take a moment to look at Notah and the other artists’ work. Who made representational—things you’ve seen in real life—soft sculpture? Who makes abstract art?

“Pinky and the Brain” by Natani Notah



“Floor Cake” by Claes Oldenburg



“RVSP” by Senga Nengudi

Notah talks about her soft sculptures as the limbs of human-animal hybrids. She sometimes uses them for performance art, cradling them in her arms or even knocking them off pedestals!

- Pick one sculpture and name the emotion you feel looking at it. Now imagine that you're doing performance art with the sculpture based on that emotion. How would you interact with it?
- Kite and Natani discussed their work before the exhibition. Kite said that her *Ἥνη* was partly inspired by “what scared her” about Notah’s work. Can you relate?
- She and Kite both like that their art prompt more questions than they have answers. What questions would you have for these artists?



(Top): “Jane Roe” (left), “Purple Mass” (right); (Bottom): “Hero Twin” (left), “C-Section” (right)  
By Natani Notah

## Soft Sculpture Step-by-Step Instructions

Now that you've seen examples of soft sculpture, try making one of your own! Notah's inspiration was the relationship between humans and animals, rest, classic art, mending and healing, and the shapes and colors from her collages.







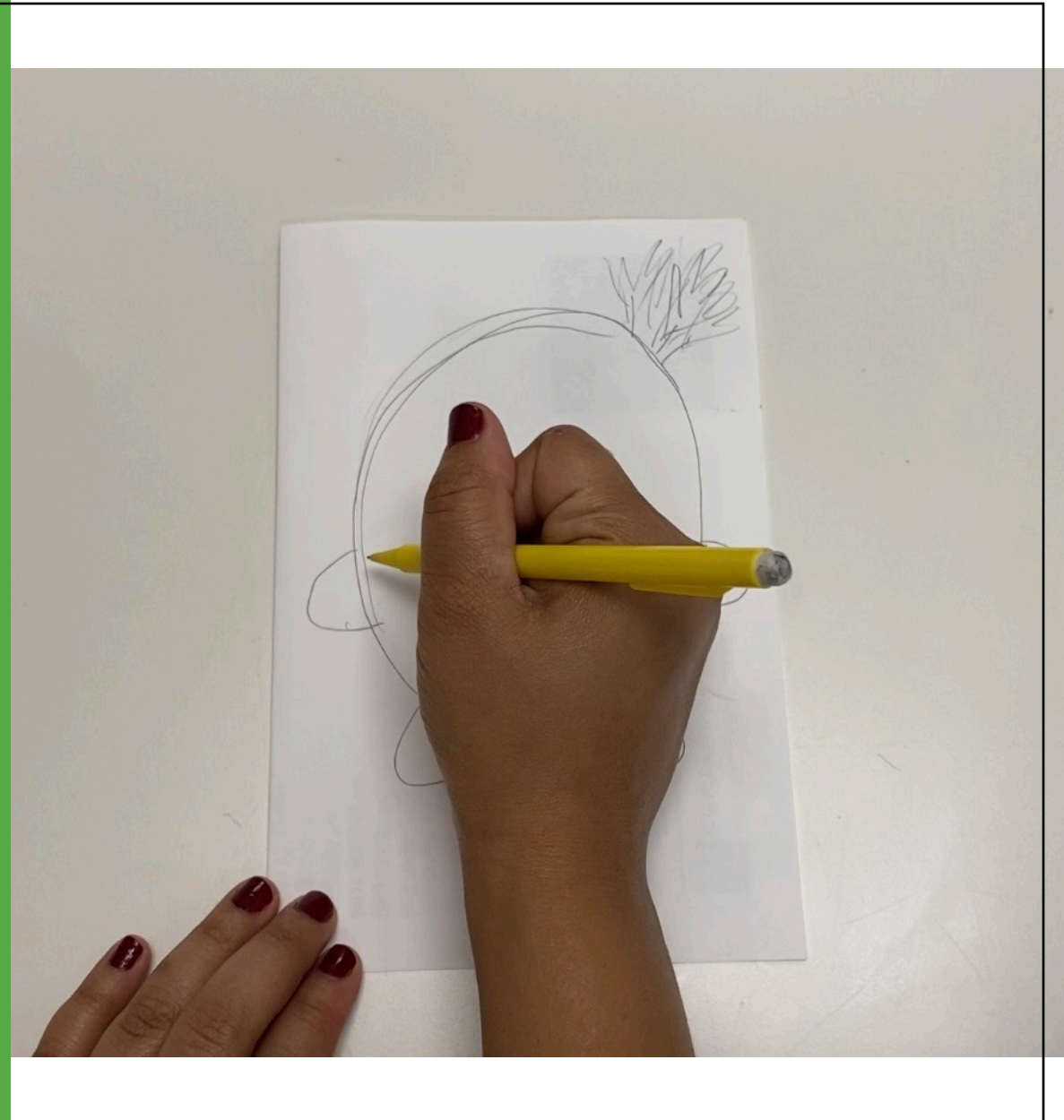
# Materials

You will need:

- Felt
- Filling
- Thread
- Decoration materials (Beads, feathers, googly eyes, yarn, etc.)
- Needle
- Scissors
- 1 sheet of plain paper
- Pencil or pen
- Glue (optional)

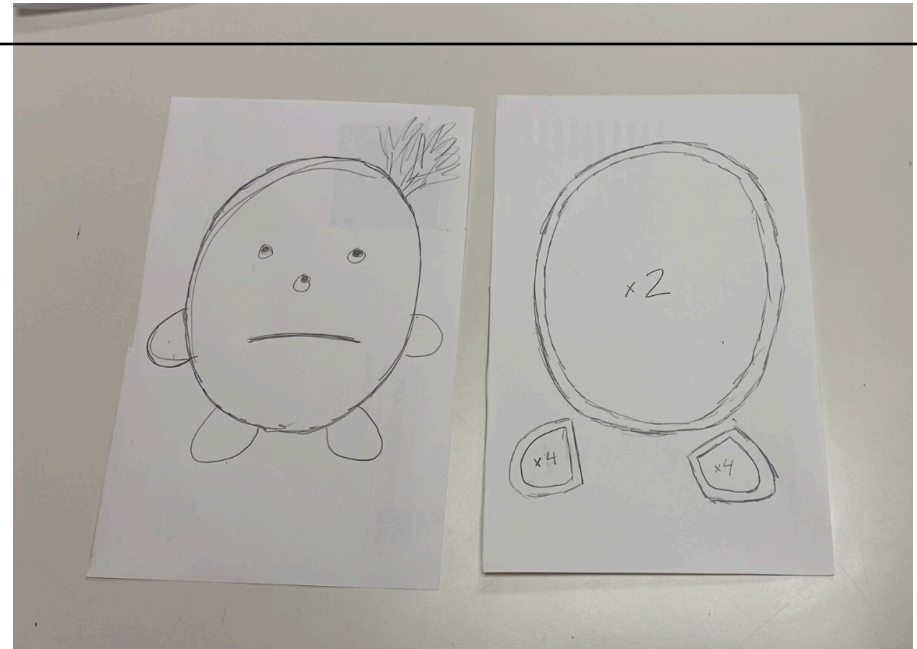
## Step One:

Plan your soft sculpture. You'll need to cut all parts from one sheet of felt, so sketching your sculpture first will help you make sure you have enough material.



## Step Two:

Create a template by drawing the pieces you'll need on the plain paper. Cut them out.





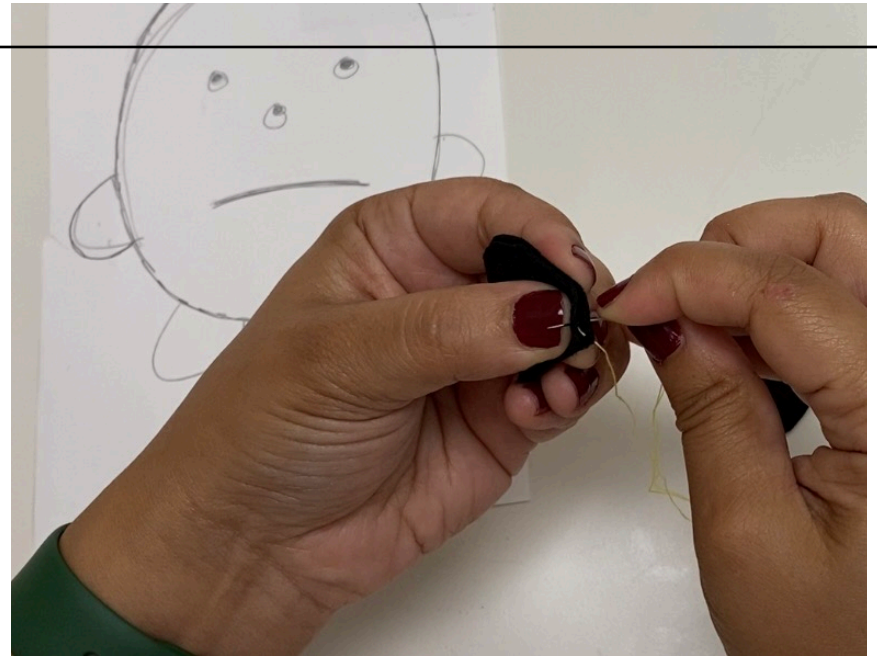
## Step Three:

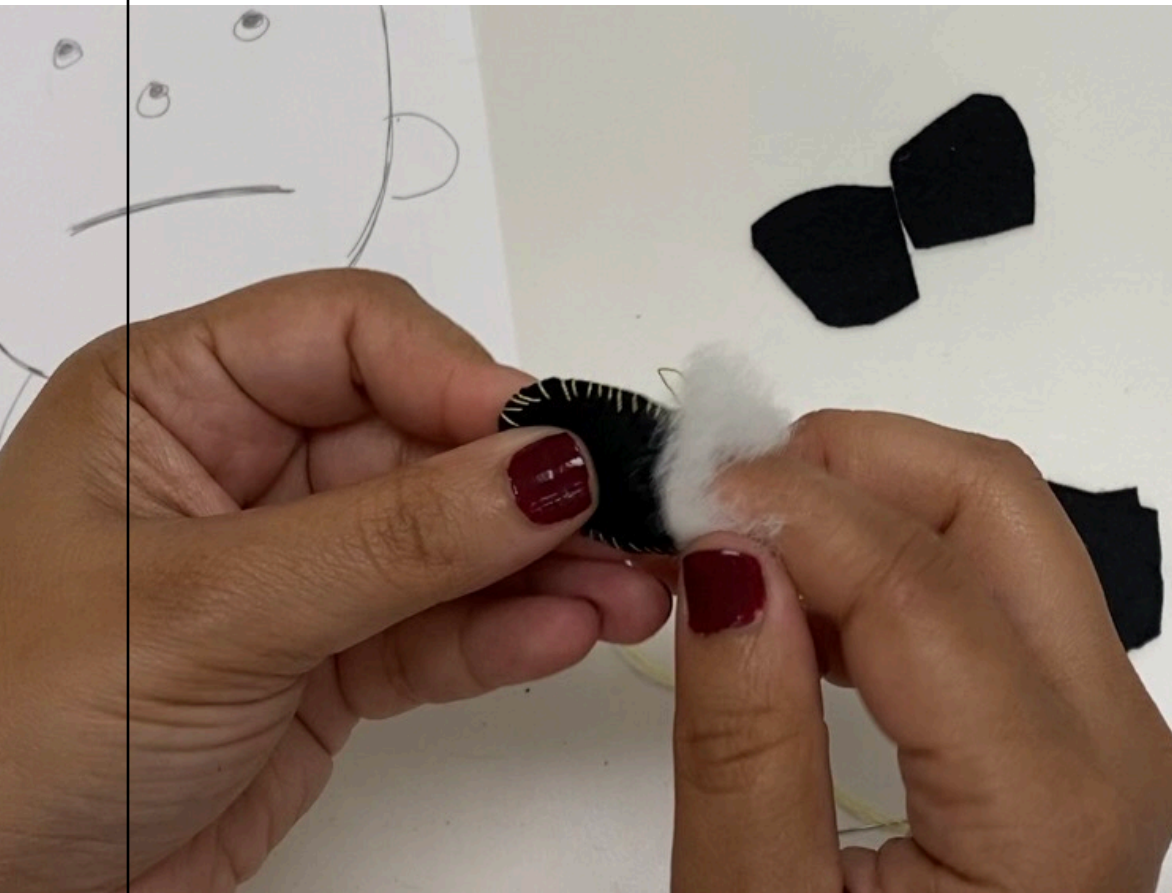
Pin a template piece to the felt and cut around it. You'll need two pieces of each.



## Step Four:

Sew the edges of your sculpture together with a simple running stitch (in and out). Stop before you close the shape.





## Step Five:

Stuff the sculpture with filling.  
Use your pencil to push the filling  
into any corner.



## Step Six:

Sew the shape closed.

## Step Seven:

Repeat Steps 3–5 as needed.







## Step Eight:

Add any decorations.

## Step Nine:

Display your soft sculpture  
with pride!

Share your soft sculpture with us  
on social media by tagging  
[@108contemporary](#) and using the  
hashtag [#108craftkits](#)!



## Other Resources

Learn about our other Craft Kits:

- <https://108contemporary.org/craft-kits/>

*In the Realm of Miracles* Walkthrough:

- TBA

Soft Sculpture Step-by-Step Video Instructions:

- TBA