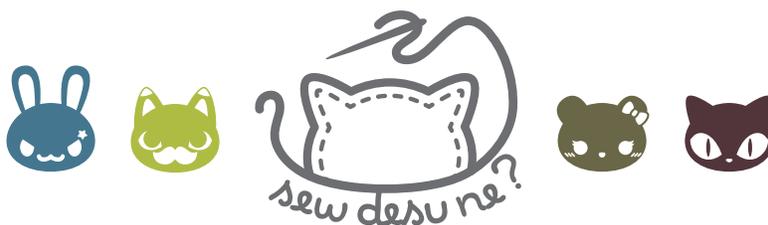# susuwatari tote

susuwatari tote

SEWING TUTORIAL

susuwatari tote

This project is simply a large tote bag with a contrast bottom and detailed handles, but the inspiration was to decorate it with the susuwatari (soot sprite) characters from My Neighbor Totoro & Spirited Away. Adding them is completely optional of course.

DIFFICULTY: ■ ■ ■ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

This is super simple to put together. The handles are a bit tricky, but that's likely the hardest part you'll face.

MAKES:

one bag that is about 17" wide, 17" tall, and 4" deep

MATERIALS & TOOLS

- ½ yd. of medium to heavyweight fabric for main bag (denim or canvas would be great – I used a home décor canvas)
- ½ yd. of medium to heavyweight contrast fabric for bottom section and handles (denim or canvas would be perfect – I used an interfaced faux suede)
- 2/3 yd. of lightweight fabric for lining (I used quilting cotton)
- Either various fabric paints for painting your image or:
- Appliqué supplies:
  - 10" x 10" scrap of appliqué fabric for sprites (cotton or felt)
- 5" x 5" scrap of white appliqué fabric (cotton or felt)
- 2" x 2" scrap of black appliqué fabric (cotton or felt)
- 10" x 10" piece of light or heavy duty fusible web
- Matching sewing thread
- Basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1. Print out the project pattern, pages 8-16
2. Assemble the printed pattern pieces
3. Lay out the pattern pieces on your fabric and cut them out
4. Mark the fabric pieces with the guidelines from the pattern

1 Start by applying your soot sprites to the front of the bag. This involves a lot of sewing, so you may want use the pattern as a freezer paper template and paint the sprites on with fabric paint, or simply iron them on with heavy duty fusible web. Either way, use the guidelines from the pattern to get the right placement. I chose to go the hard route and ironed them on with light fusible web, then did a zigzag stitch around each sprite.
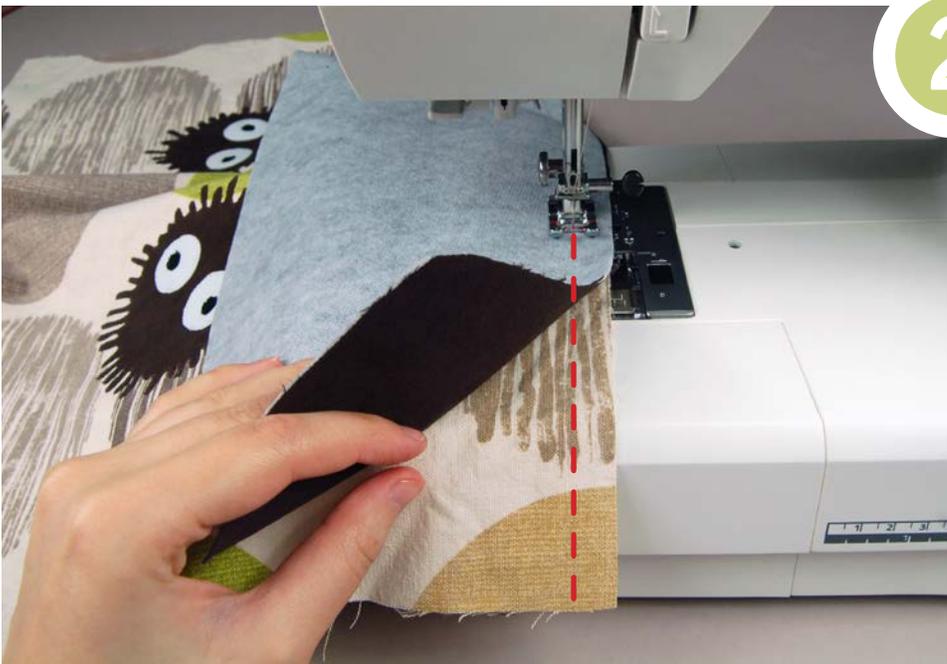
2 With your appliqué finished, next you can apply the bottom contrast section to your bag. Line up the long straight edge of your contrast section to the bottom edge of your bag, then sew the two in place. Open out the seam allowance and press it flat. Repeat this with your bag back piece and the other contrast section.

3

Next we'll sew the sides and bottom of the tote. Layer your bag front and back with right sides together, and sew along the side and bottom edges, skipping over the corners (we'll sew those next).

4

Fold the corners of the tote bag at an angle so the side seams and bottom seams match up. The raw edges should line up nicely, and you can now sew along this edge to give some depth to your bag. Now you'll want to go back and repeat steps 2-4 for your lining pieces, except remember to leave an opening in the bottom of the lining for turning it right side out. After this is all done you should have two tote-bag shaped pieces.

5 Next we'll sew together those pieces. Nestle the tote bag into your lining with right sides together and match up the raw edges along the top. The side seams should match up for the best look. Sew all the way around the perimeter.

6 Turn the tote right side out from the opening in the lining, then press the top seam you just made nice and crisp. Edge stitch along this seam to keep your lining from peeking out of the bag. The main body of your tote bag is now complete! Next are the straps.

7 For your straps, you'll want to take one of your strap pieces and fold it in half along the fold line indicated. Sew along the perimeter of the shape, being sure to skip over the opening in the side for turning the strap right side out. Trim the seam allowances in the curved parts to make turning easier, and be sure to clip very closely into the corner of the handle to achieve a really crisp look. Then turn the strap right side out with a chopstick or similar tool, tuck under the seam allowances in the opening, then press the whole strap firmly so the result is crisp.

8 To get a real professional look, we're going to edge stitch around the perimeter of the straps, about 1/8" or less inside the edge. This will also close up the opening you left from the previous step.

9 Line up the ends of your strap to the front of your bag, using the pattern guidelines for proper place-ment. Then edge stitch the ends of the strap again to hold it in place. Stitch both ends of one strap on the front, then both ends of the other strap on the back, but be sure you don't twist the strap along the way. Now fill your tote with awesome stuff because YOU'RE DONE!
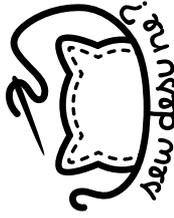
Susuwatari Tote

P A T T E R N

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MAIN BAG & LINING

Cut 2 from main fabric
Cut 2 from lining fabric
5/8" seam allowance
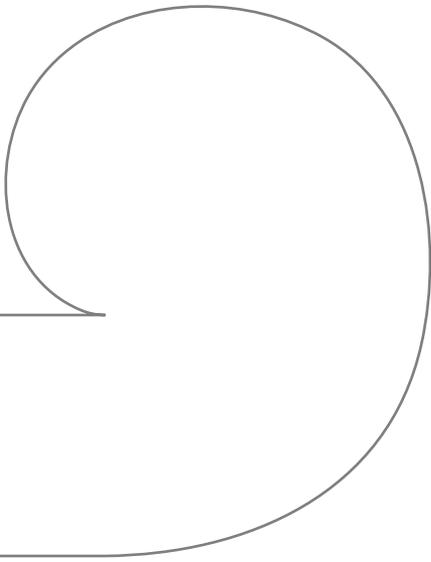
handle placement
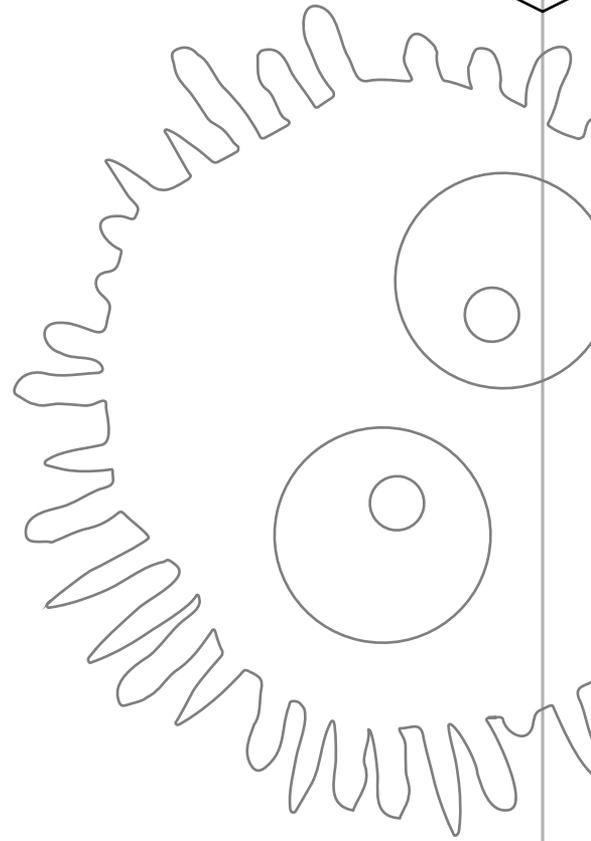
A1 A2

B1 B2

A1 A2
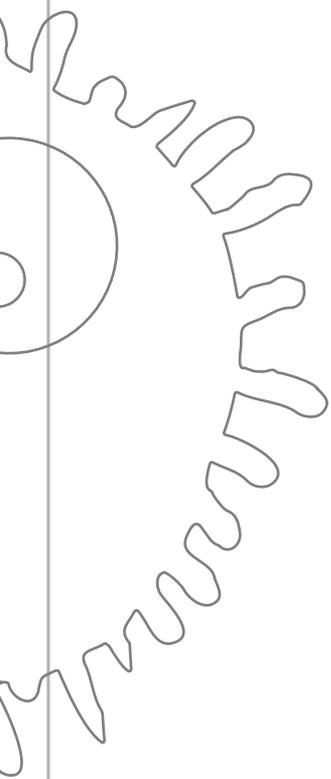
A3 A4

applique placement
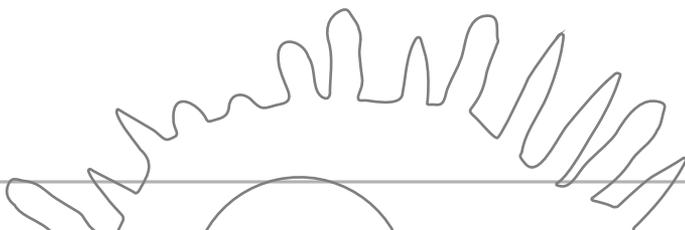
B3 B4

A3 A4
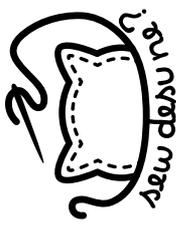
Suswatari Tote

P A T T E R N
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TOTE BOTTOM
Cut 2 from contrast fabric
Cut 2 from lining fabric
5/8" seam allowance
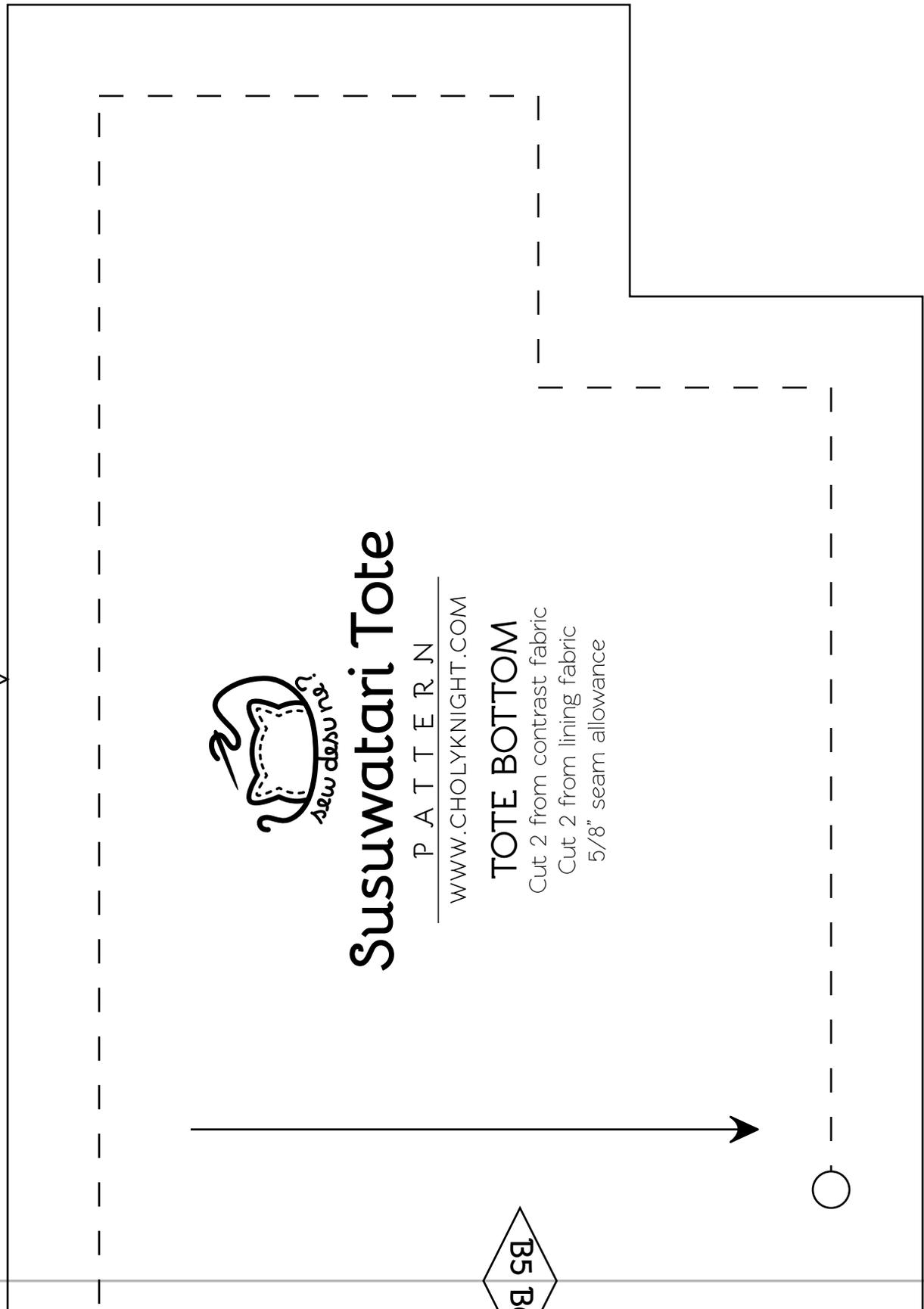
B5 B6
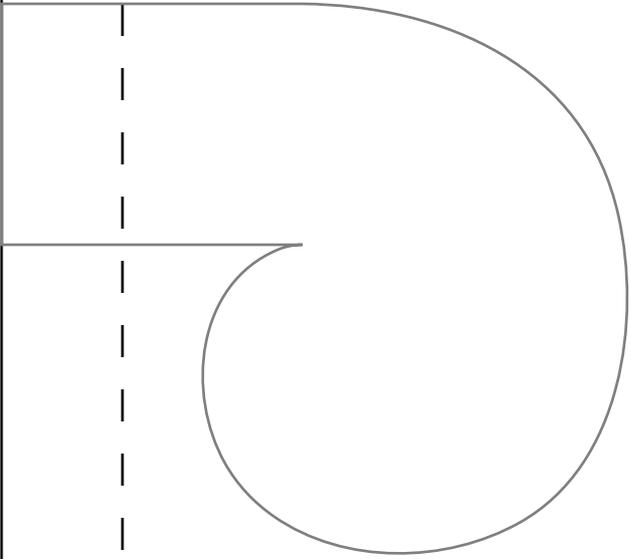
handle placement
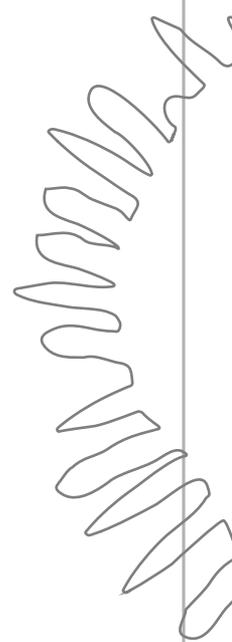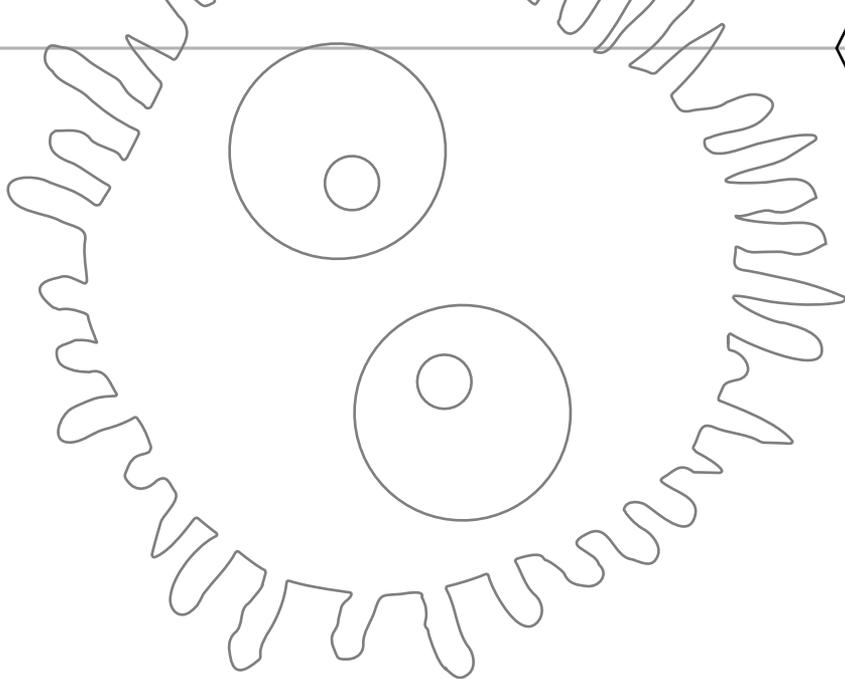
C1 C2
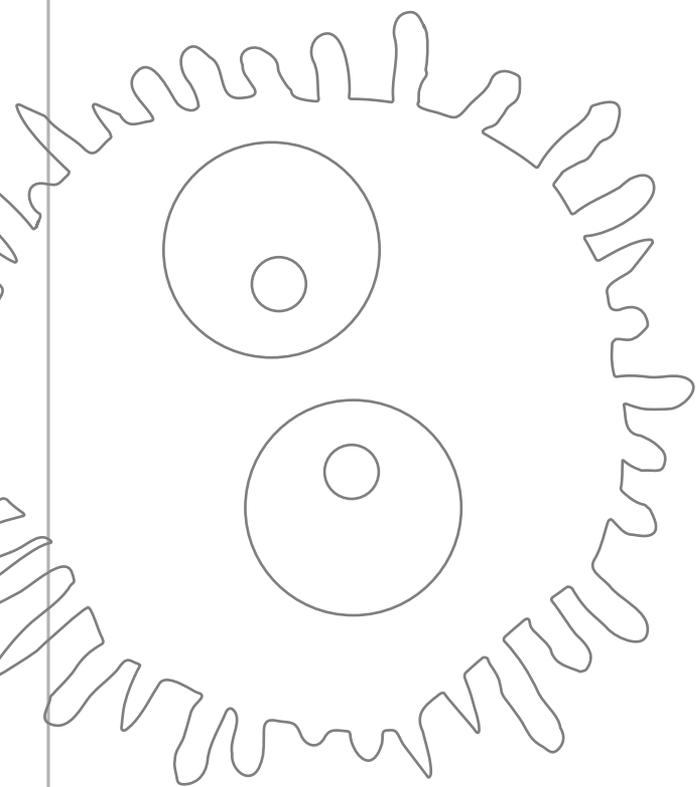
C3 C4

opening for turning (lining only)
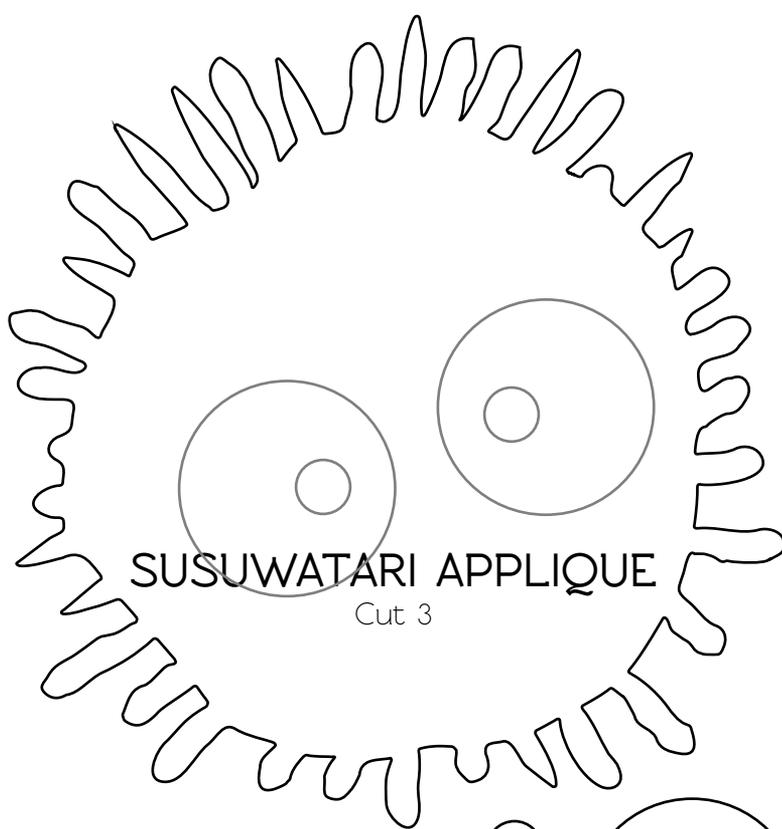
C3 C4

SUSUWATARI APPLIQUE
Cut 3

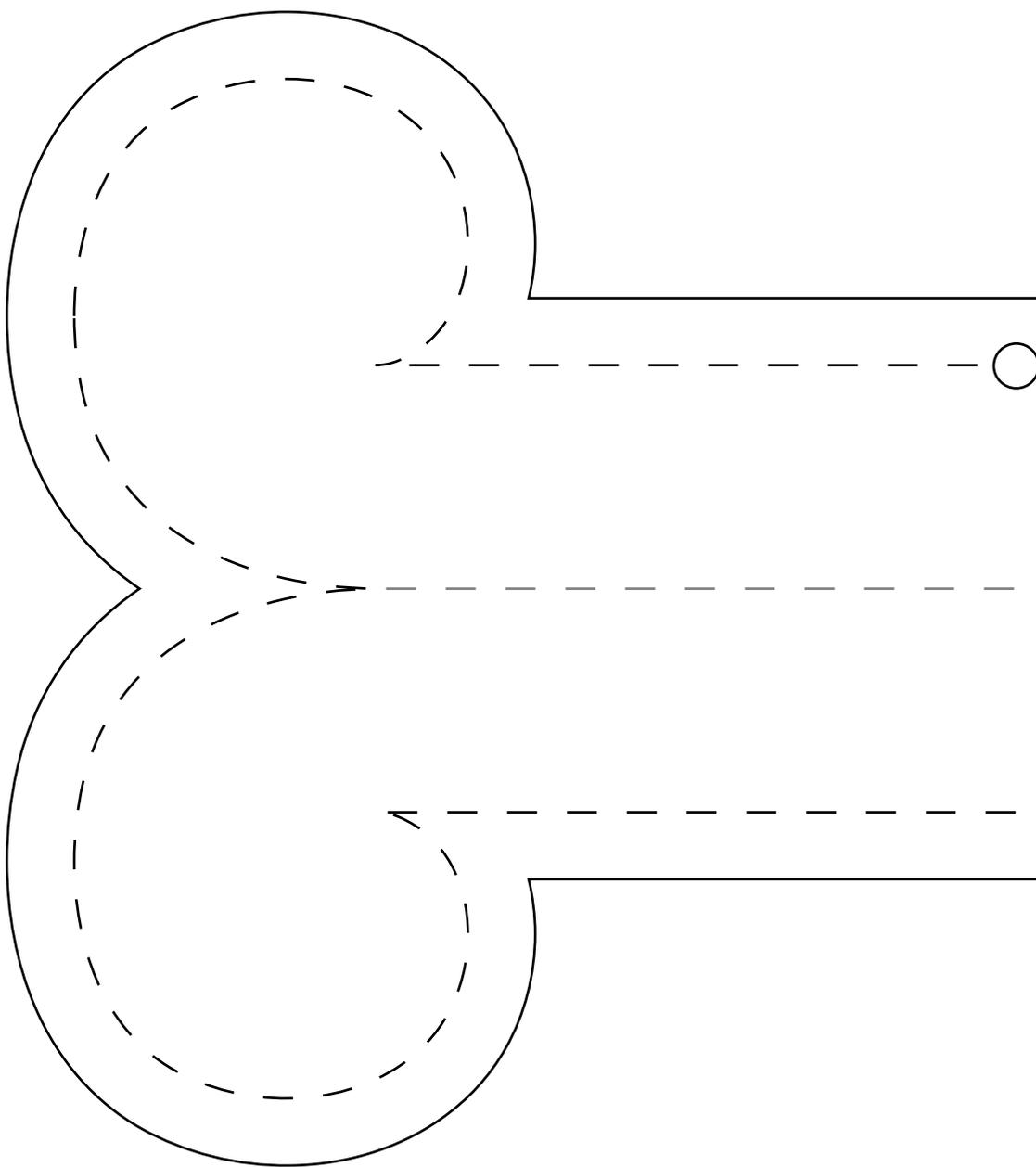## PUPIL APPLIQUE
Cut 6 of black
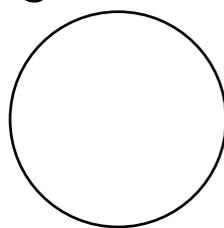
EYE APPLIQUE
Cut 6 of white

D1D2

E1 E2

D3 D4
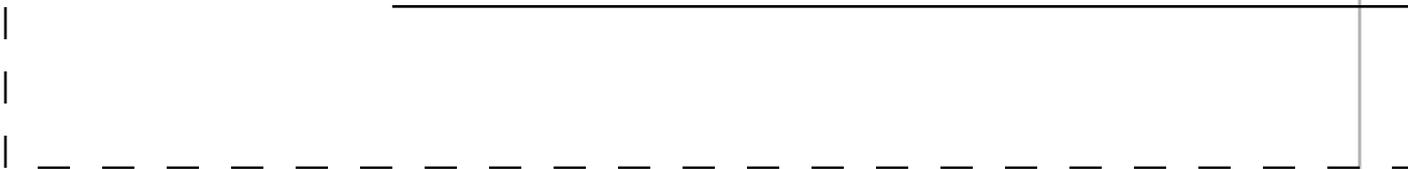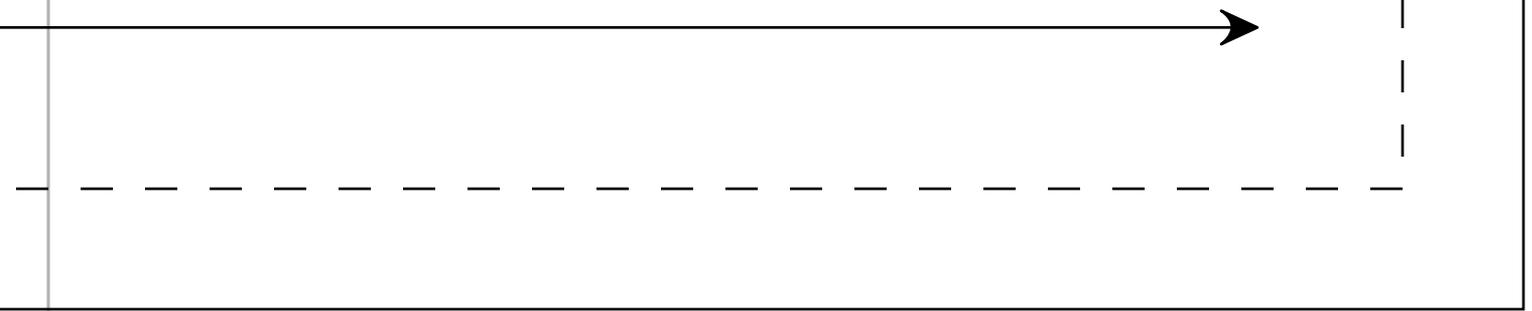
E1 E2

opening for turning

E3 E4

Susuwatari Tote

sew desu ne?

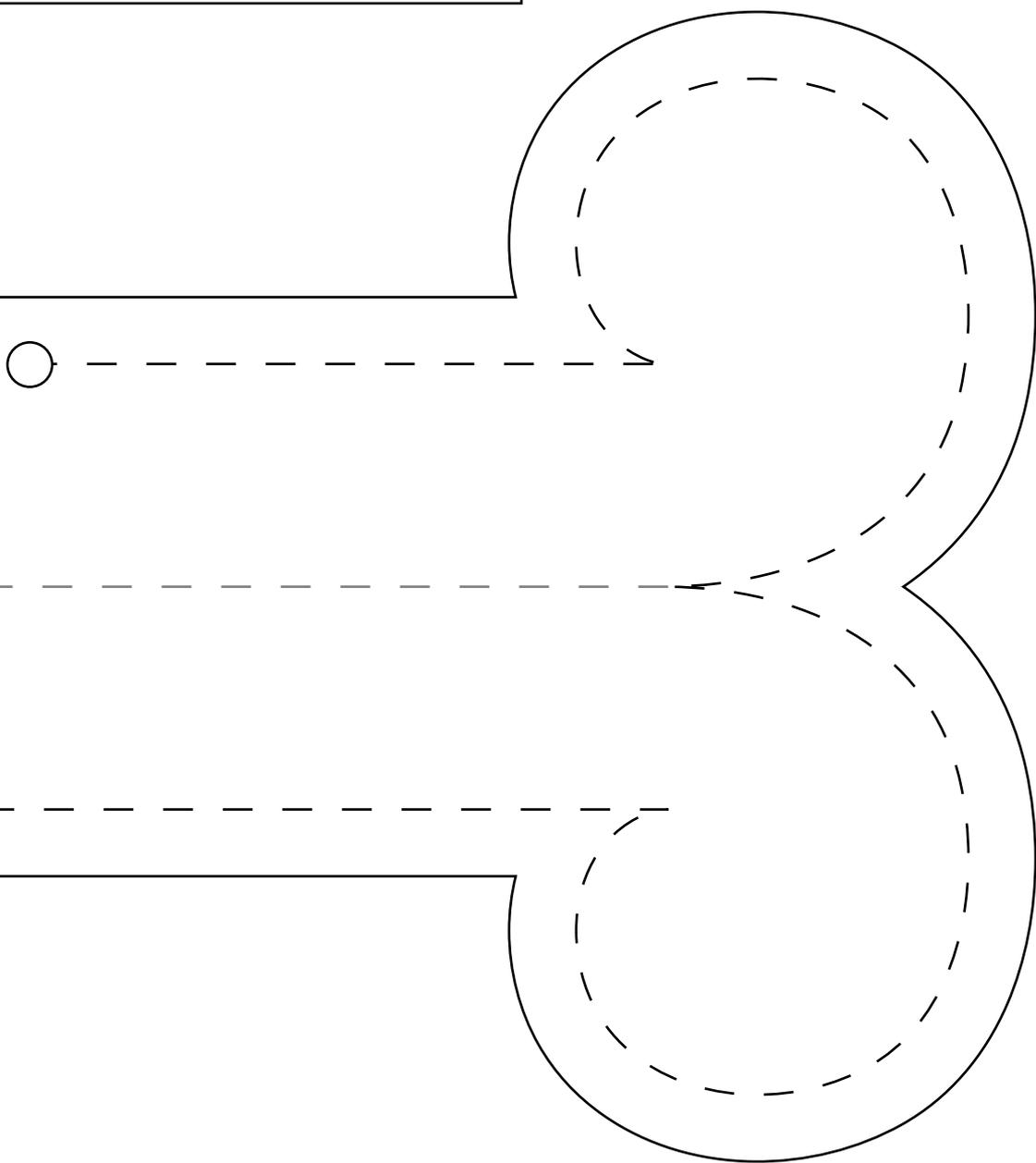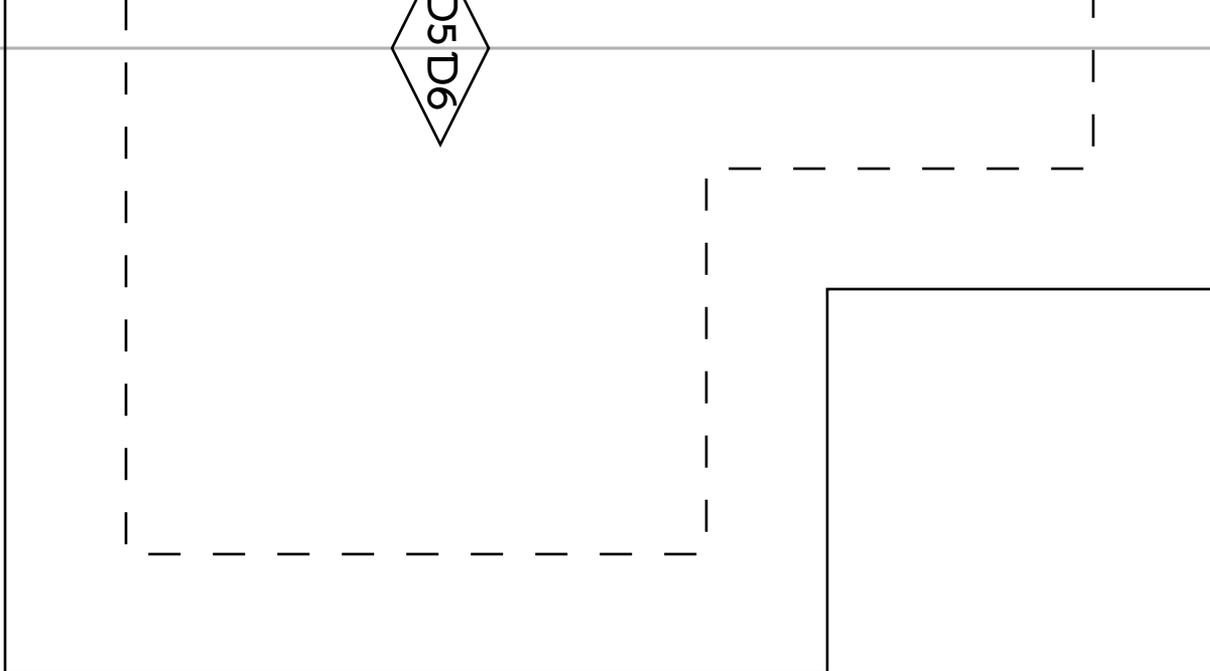### P A T T E R N
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STRAPS
Cut 2 from contrast fabric
3/8" seam allowance

foldline

D5 D6

E3 E4