

## LIZARD



by Kathie R. Kerler

In the March 2016 issue of *American Quilter* magazine, I wrote about the collaboration by Art Quilts, Etc. of Nevada to create VIEWS OF THE MOJAVE, a quilt inspired by the Mojave Desert. Dollmaker Mary Ashcraft researched lizards native to the Mojave to create a representative reptile rather than a specific species for that quilt. The following is her method for making the lizard, but the techniques apply to all types of dimensional animals and other elements.

### Materials

*Note: Requirements are based on 42" usable width of fabric.*

Lycra, or similar synthetic fabric, in a snakeskin print for lizard top – 10" x 5"

Brown cotton for lizard underside – 10" x 5"

Large orange transparent colored beads size 8/0 for lizard back

Small amber transparent colored beads size 11/0 for head and tail

Delica transparent rainbow round beads, dark brown for stripes on back

Gold sequins – to be placed under size 8 beads on back

Cording – 6"

Freezer paper

Open toe foot (optional)

Fabric glue in small bottle with a fine applicator tip – Mary recommends Grrrip or Aleene's

Small, sharp scissors

Hemostat 5" to 7" (optional) – for stuffing 90/14 Topstitch machine needle

Beading needle for handwork – Mary prefers Bohin France Patchwork & quilting size 9

Stuffing – Mary prefers Soft and Crafty by Fiberfill

10mm eye – may be a moving eye, animal eye, or a button painted to look like eye

Button or upholstery thread, dark brown – for sculpting

Button and carpet needle – for sculpting and attaching the claws and eyes

Perle cotton Size 8 – for wrapping the claws  
 Silamide beading thread  
 Small tip needle nose pliers  
 Stuffing tool – Mary prefers Barbara Walters’ brand  
 Two 12" chenille stems approximately 12" long  
 26 gauge copper or gold colored wire, 18" long –  
 used to form claws, available in jewelry  
 department of craft stores

### Stitching tips:

- Stitch the lizard fabric sandwich with the cotton side down.
- Set your stitch length to 1.5 and use an open toe foot (if available) to see better and achieve greater accuracy.
- Stitch slowly and lift the presser foot frequently for smooth curves.

### Preparing the body

Trace the outline of the lizard onto the dull side of the freezer paper.

Place the top and underside fabrics right sides together and pin at the four corners. Press the traced freezer paper, shiny-side down, on the lycra fabric side with a warm iron.

Stitch through the freezer paper/fabric sandwich around the outer circle of the tail with a short stitch (photo 1). Knot one end of the cording close to the end. Separate the two fabrics and insert the cording into the tail, extending the knotted end outside the lizard.

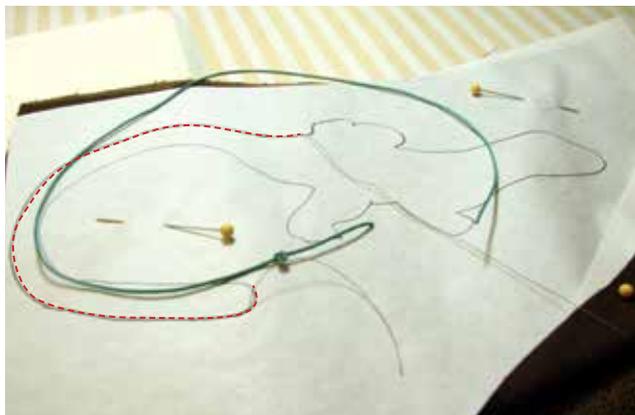


Photo 1

Stitch over the cord and continue stitching around the entire outline of the lizard, while keeping the cording inside the tail free.

Gently remove the paper from the fabric and use small, sharp scissors to trim seams to slightly more than 1/8".

Apply a thin layer of glue to all raw edges around the outside of the seam. Take care not to get glue into the inside of the body or on the right side of the fabric. Allow the glue to dry.

Cut a 1/2" horizontal slit between the legs on the lizard's underside. Pull the knotted end of the cord to turn the tail right-side out. Turn the rest of the body right-side out, as shown below. *Tip: Use a hemostat to catch the seam allowance to help turn fabric right-side out.*



Photo 2

Trim off the cord close to end of the tail, leaving the knot inside.

Using the needle nose pliers, fold over each end of the chenille stems to “kill” the sharp ends, making them as smooth as possible. Tape about 1" down from the crimps, making the ends rigid. Slide one stem into the tail and the other into the body through the 1/2" slit. The stems give the body some form, making it easier to stuff.

Use the stuffing tool of your choice to stuff the tail, then move on to the body. The stuffing should be medium to firm. If it's too hard, sculpting will be difficult.

Whip stitch the slit in the underside closed.

Using the carpet needle and heavy thread to match the lizard body, sculpt indentations into the body with stitches, following the lines on photo 3. To do this, start at the beginning of each line and insert

the needle from the underside, leaving a 3" tail. Take the needle to the back after making a small stitch, and make a square knot with the thread and thread tail. Use your fingernail to press the seam line down then take small, short stitches from front to back, adjusting pressure and shaping as you go.

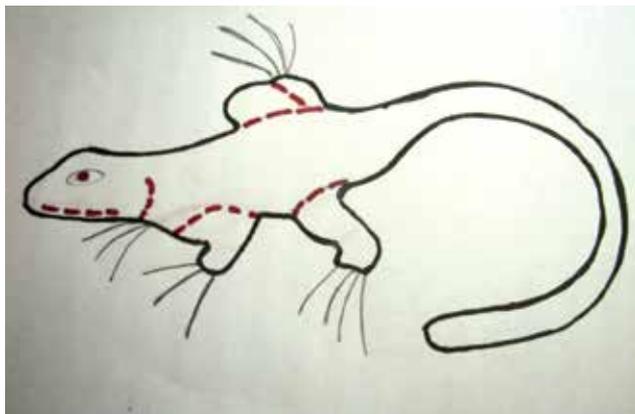


Photo 3

### Adding the details

Sew on the eye, pulling tightly enough to cause a slight indentation.

Cut a 1" x 1" piece of the top fabric. Fold it in half, right-side out, and glue the wrong sides together. Holding your thumbnail over the fold, cut out a half-moon shaped piece. Run a bead of glue on the cut edge. Position the piece with the folded edge over the top of the eye and then around the bottom of it to make an eyelid. Hold it in place with straight pins as shown until the glue sets.

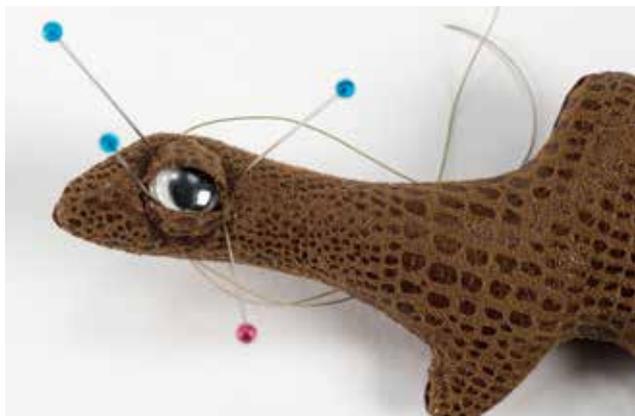


Photo 4

To make the front claws, start 5" from one end of the 26 gauge wire and fold it back 1½" to make a finger. Make two more. Shape them with needle nose pliers, as shown in photo 5.

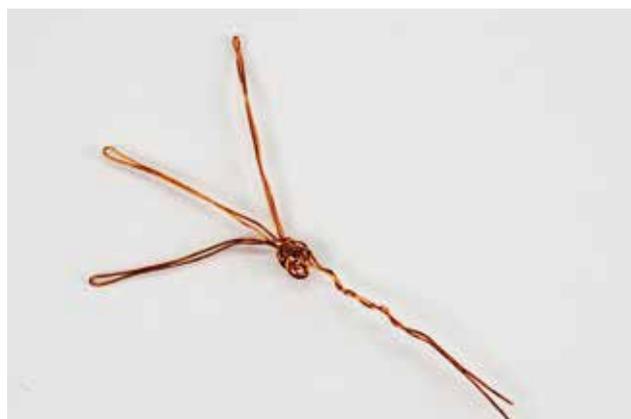


Photo 5

Wrap perle cotton around each finger (photo 6). After wrapping, form a small circle with the end of the wire and stitch it to the underside of the front leg. Make another front claw and position as shown in photo 3. Make and add two claws with four fingers for the back legs.



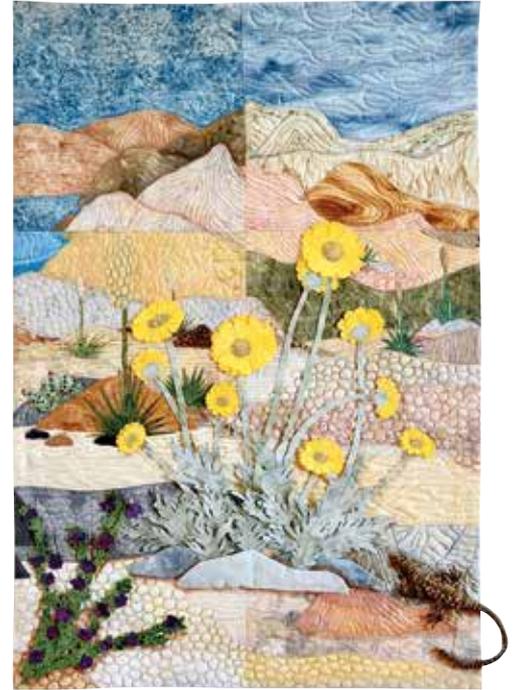
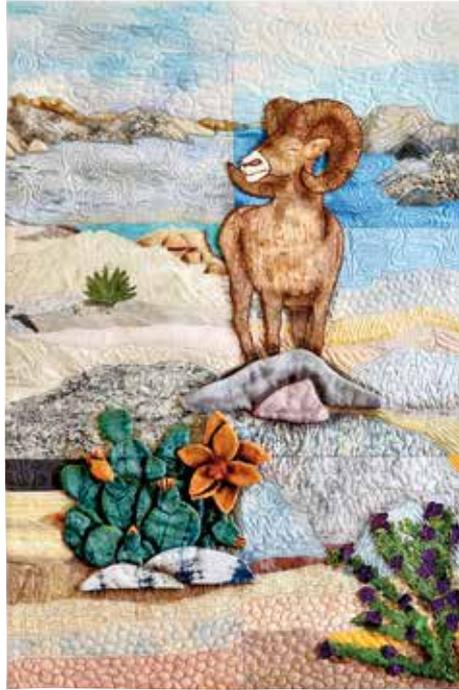
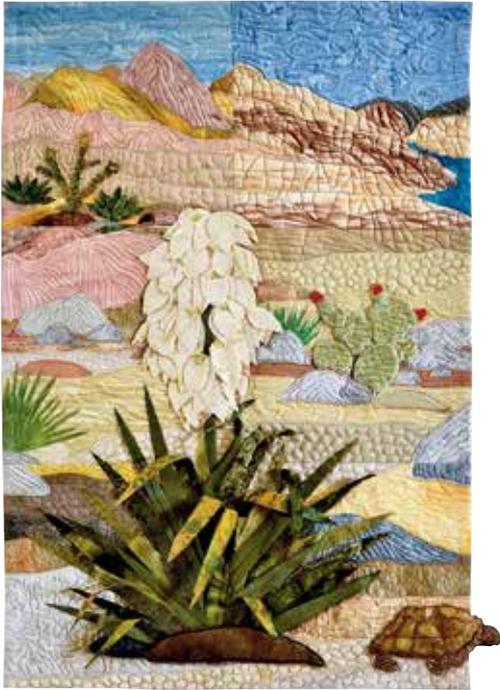
Photo 6

Bead the lizard as shown in the photo, or in a manner pleasing to you. Use the gold sequins under the size 8 beads only. Mary doesn't worry about knots on the underside of the animal, so she brings her thread up from the underside, but you can pull the knots through as for hand quilting, and bury them in the stuffing if desired.

The lizard is ready to appliqué onto a desert scene of your own.

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VIEWS OF THE MOJAVE, 72" x 36", by Art Quilts, Etc.

