

Do It Again

Abayomi Dolls



THE DOLL MAKING STORY

The Abayomi doll originates from the Yoruba culture in West Africa. During the transatlantic slave trade, African mothers would sometimes take pieces of cloth from their skirts and make these dolls to remember their children and to generate hope. The dolls became symbols of resistance. People throughout the African diaspora continue this dollmaking tradition to affirm cultural connections to the past and embody this resilience spirit for future generations.

MAKING THE DOLL

Making your own Abayomi doll is fun and simple. You can upcycle any fabric that is available or select a piece that holds special meaning to you. Using scrap fabric provides unlimited ways of creating an Abayomi. The only skill that is required is tying knots and cutting. Gather your fabric scraps (four 9"x12" pieces), string, yarn, scissors, and any additional items you may want to add. You can use found objects such as buttons, beads, feathers, shells, metal wire, or foil to adorn your doll. Think about how to fashion your Abayomi to commemorate an important event or memorialize someone dear to you. Remember to share your Abayomi with others to spark memories, hope, and resistance when you are finished.

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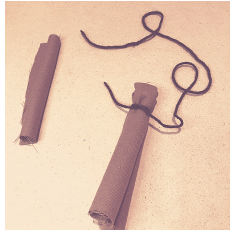
Simple Abayomi Doll Making Steps...

1



Cut two pieces of fabric: one 6"x9" and the other 9"x12". Roll the fabric into two coils measuring 6" and 12". Fold the 12" fabric coil in half.

2



Wrap the folded coil with string or yarn one inch from the folded edge. Tie it tightly with a knot. Separate the ends and place the other 6" coil equally between the two ends and near the tied area.

3



Bring the two ends of the 12" fabric coil together. Wrap the folded coil again with string or yarn so that the 6" coil is held firmly in place. Tie the string or yarn tightly with a knot.

4



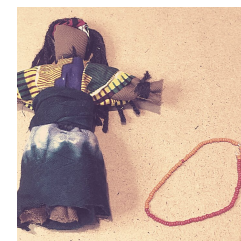
Wrap and tie off the ends of the coils (the arms and legs of the doll) with string or yarn. Cut additional yarn or string and thread it through the opening of the doll's head. Tie, knot, and style the doll's hair.

5



Cut two pieces of colorful fabric into rectangles (5"x 8"). Cut a small opening in the center of one piece and insert it over the head of the doll. Wrap the other rectangle piece around the waist of the doll.

6



Wrap and tie additional fabric around the waist and head of the doll. Add beads, buttons, feathers, shells, foil, or metal wire to adorn the doll.