

WELCOME TO FESTIVAL OF CRAFT



KINUSAIGA
Painting with fabric
Modern Style
Kimekomi

WELCOME TO FESTIVAL OF CRAFT

For a follow along tutorial please click on the link
below to take you to our You Tube Channel.

A like and follow really helps us produce more
top quality tutorials



Scan me!

THE ART OF KINUSAIGA

A Complete Guide to Modern Fabric Inlay

Introduction: The Magic of No-Sew Patchwork

Welcome to the beautiful, meditative world of Kinusaiga. Originating in Japan, it means "painting with fabric." Traditionally, artisans used exquisitely patterned silk from old kimonos to create these fabric pictures. Today, this traditional art form has evolved into Modern Fabric Inlay.

Designs are carved into a foam or traditionally wood base, and small pieces of fabric are tucked into the grooves to fill each section with colour and texture. The finished result looks like a mosaic or stained-glass panel and requires no sewing, no glue on the fabric itself, and no previous experience.

Watch the Video: If you are a visual learner, you can watch the full, step-by-step Kinusaiga tutorial on YouTube! Just search for Festival of Craft to follow along with these exact techniques in action or use the QR code on page 2.

Chapter 1: Tools and Materials

One of the greatest joys of modern Kinusaiga is its minimal barrier to entry. You likely have many of these tools in your home already.

Essential Supplies

1. **The Base:** High-density foam board. Approximately 2 cm (3/4 in) thick is the "sweet spot" for beginners. It provides deep enough grooves to hold fabric securely while being easy to cut and highly resistant to warping. Avoid anything thinner than 3 mm (1/8 in).

2. **The Fabric:** Thin, tightly-woven fabrics are ideal. Silk, habutai, cotton lawn, and lightweight, satin tuck cleanly. Avoid stretchy knits, thick upholstery, or loose weaves.
3. **Adhesive Sheet:** Double-sided sticky sheets or low-tack adhesive (for attaching the pattern to the board).
4. **The Cutting Tool:** A sharp craft knife or scalpel. You will go through blades quickly.
5. **The Tucking Tool:** A seam ripper (the hook-tipped sewing tool) doubles brilliantly as a tucking stylus. A metal nail file or flat cuticle stick also works.
6. **Fabric Scissors:** Small, sharp detail scissors for trimming excess fabric.
7. **Tacky Palette Materials: (OPTIONAL)** A scrap piece of smooth plastic (like an old folder or acrylic block) and a can of repositionable spray adhesive (spray tack).
8. **Craft Glue:** A small bottle of PVA or basic craft glue with a precision tip (or a toothpick).

Chapter 2: Preparing Your Canvas and Design

Before you touch the fabric, you must prepare your base. A good foundation ensures a crisp, professional-looking finished piece.

Step 1: Transfer Your Pattern Method 1

Print your pattern at 100% scale (always check "Actual Size" in your print settings, never "Fit to Page"). Apply a double-sided sticky sheet to your foam board, do NOT peel the top protective sheet. Tape the printed pattern firmly onto the top of your board. The pattern is now ready for cutting—you will carve directly through the design, adhesive sheet and into the foam.

Step 1: Transfer Your Pattern Method 2

I prefer to print directly onto the double sided adhesive sheet. Adhere this to the foam and cut piece by piece as you work.

Add Your Margin if a border is required: Add the margin to your paper template, leaving a 1 to 1.5 cm (3/8 to 5/8 in) border of fabric on all sides. This border is the exact margin you need for tucking. Oversized is always safer than undersized!

Step 2: Scoring the Foam (General Rules)

When you begin cutting your design (which we will cover step-by-step in Chapter 3), keep these rules in mind:

Depth: Aim for 3 to 4 mm (about 1/8 in) deep. On a 2 cm board, this leaves plenty of solid, stable base beneath your cuts. A light, steady pass with a fresh blade is better than pressing hard. Keep your knife blade sharp!

Angle: Hold your blade perfectly perpendicular (90 degrees).

Curves: To cut curves cleanly, you can practice rotating the board rather than your hand. Keep the knife still and pivot the board into the blade in small increments.

Chapter 3: The Kinusaiga Technique (Step-by-Step)

For this method, we will work piece-by-piece, scoring and peeling the pattern away as we go. This acts like a jigsaw puzzle, helping you keep track of complex designs and ensuring you never lose your place.

Step 1: Score and Peel

Identify the first section of your design you want to fill (starting from the centre and working outward is usually best).

Use your craft knife to cut along the outline of just that specific section,

pressing 3 to 4 mm (1/8 in) deep.

Once scored, use the tip of your craft knife or seam ripper to lift and peel away the paper pattern for that single piece, exposing the bare, adhesive covered foam underneath. Leave the rest of the paper pattern attached to the board.

Step 2: The "Light-Tack" Template Technique (Optional)

Instead of guessing the size of your fabric, use the exact piece of paper you just removed from the board! Because the adhesive layer stays on the foam, the paper you peeled off will not be sticky on its own. Here is a brilliant trick to turn it into a temporary template:

Create a Tack Palette: Spray a very light mist of repositionable spray adhesive (spray tack) onto your scrap piece of smooth plastic.

Tap the Template: Take the piece of paper you just peeled from the board and lightly tap the back of it onto your plastic palette. The paper will pick up just enough of the spray tack to become slightly sticky, without getting saturated or clumpy.

Bond to the FRONT: Press the tacky side of the paper template onto the front (right side) of your fabric. It will hold perfectly still while you work. Make sure to leave the extra fabric around every shape for tucking into the grooves.

Crucial Tip: Do not place the template on the back of the fabric! If you place it on the back (as you might in traditional sewing), you will cut a mirrored, reverse shape that will not fit into your board's grooves. Always stick your template to the side of the fabric you want to see.

You now have a piece of fabric cut to the exact shape you need, correctly oriented, with the perfect margin ready to tuck.

Step 3: Position and Anchor

Lay your newly cut fabric patch over the exposed adhesive area on the foam section. Gently press and smooth the fabric down into the newly cut groove at two opposite points to anchor it in place.

Step 4: Tuck the Edges

Tuck opposite edges alternately (top, bottom, left, right) to keep tension even and stop the fabric from puckering. The fabric should sit snugly; a gentle, even push with your stylus tip is sufficient. Do not jam it in.

Pro-Tip for Short Margins: If you realize you cut your fabric just a little too small and the margin isn't quite long enough to get a secure tuck, don't panic! Use a toothpick to smooth a tiny drop of fabric glue into the groove, then use your tucking tool to press the short fabric edge down into the glue to permanently secure it.

Step 5: Trim and Move On

Once the fabric is tucked fully into the grooves the excess fabric at the corners or edges can be trimmed off with your small detail scissors. Once your first piece is fully tucked, select the next adjacent section on your pattern. Score the lines, peel the paper, prep your template, cut your fabric, and tuck. Repeat this piece-by-piece process until your canvas is completely filled!

Chapter 5: Professional Finishing Techniques

How you finish the edges of your foam board transforms your project from a

craft exercise into a professional piece of wall art. In Kinusaiga, this is called "resolving the perimeter.!!!" Once all internal fabric is tucked, check that all threads are secured in the grooves.

Method 1: The Mitred Corner Wrap (Refer to the video)

This technique wraps the main background fabric around the thickness of the foam and secures it to the back for a frameless, canvas look.

Apply a thin layer of PVA glue or strong double-sided tape to the vertical sides of the foam and 1/2-inch border on the back of the foam.

Pull the top and bottom flaps of your oversized background fabric taut, gluing them smooth against the vertical sides and wrapping around to the back.

The Miter Cut: At the corners, you will have side "wings" of fabric extending out. Make a 45- degree cut originating right from the corner tip of the foam, cutting across the fabric wing.

This cut removes the excess fabric that causes bulky, messy corners. Fold the remaining triangle of fabric tightly around the corner point, smoothing it against the vertical side and wrapping the remainder to the back.

Method 2: Applied Binding (least attractive).

This method is simpler but offers a contrasting decorative edge.

Using your sharp craft knife, trim the excess background fabric flush against the outer perimeter groove. Do not wrap this fabric around the side.

Apply double-sided tape or glue to the vertical foam side. Press a coordinating fabric strip or ribbon firmly to the side, then fold the top and bottom edges of the ribbon neatly over the top edge and onto the back of the board, folding the corners like a gift box.

Method 3: The Perimeter Flush Tuck

A hallmark of refined modern Kinusaiga work is a perfectly crisp, borderless frame effect. Cut a very precise, straight groove around the entire perimeter of your design area, typically 3mm (1/8 inch) from the absolute edge of the foam board.

Apply your background fabric, tucking it into all internal design grooves except for this final perimeter groove.

Using a brand new, razor-sharp blade, trim the background fabric flush right at the upper edge of this perimeter groove.

Use a flat metal tucking tool to apply firm, vertically downward pressure, locking the raw, flush-cut edge cleanly into the bottom of the perimeter groove.

Displaying Your Art

Framing: A simple clip frame or box frame works perfectly. You can also mount the board inside a shadow box. Standard photo-frame sizes are the most economical. *Double check the internal measurement of the frame. It is easier to have the frame ready before you start the project. This allows you to exactly measure the size needed.*

Frameless Hanging: Glue a sawtooth hanger or D-ring directly to the back of the foam board. The piece is lightweight and needs no heavy wall fixings.

Longevity: Hang your piece away from direct sunlight. Using UV-protective glass in your frame significantly extends the life of the fabric colours.

Chapter 6: Complete Beginner's FAQ

Q: What is Kinusaiga?

A: Kinusaiga means "painting with fabric." It is a Japanese art form where designs are carved into a base, and small pieces of fabric are tucked into the grooves to fill each section with colour and texture, requiring no sewing.

Q: Is there a video tutorial I can follow?

A: Yes! If you are a visual learner, you can watch the full, step-by-step Kinusaiga tutorial on YouTube. Just search for Festival of Craft to follow along and see all of these techniques in action.

Q: Do I need any experience to start?

A: Not at all! Kinusaiga is beginner-friendly. If you can follow a pattern and hold a craft knife safely, you have all the skills you need. Most people complete their first project in an afternoon.

Q: Can I use fabric scraps or upcycled materials?

A: Absolutely—that is the spirit of the craft! Kinusaiga has its roots in sustainability, repurposing small scraps that would otherwise go to waste. Old scarves, shirt fabric, or vintage kimono remnants all work beautifully.

Q: Can I mix patterned and plain fabrics?

A: Yes, and it often looks stunning! Use patterned fabric sparingly for focal sections and plain or subtly textured fabric for background areas so the patterns do not compete with each other.

Q: Can I re-use the pattern?

The printed paper pattern applied to the board is a single-use cutting guide. However, if you have the digital downloads in our workbook, you can print the design as many times as you like.

Q: Can I re-tuck a section if I don't like the fabric choice?

A: Yes! To remove a tucked piece of fabric, carefully put a very shallow cut into the fabric itself—just deep enough to allow you to get your tucking tool or seam ripper underneath it. Once your tool is in, peel the fabric off very slowly and gently.

Q: My adhesive came off with the fabric I took off to replace.

A: Removing a piece of fabric will usually take the adhesive layer with it.

To re-apply adhesive, use your saved paper shape to draw around the design onto a sheet of the double-sided adhesive. Cut it out slightly smaller than the shape, place it onto the bare foam section, and peel off the protection sheet. Cutting it slightly smaller prevents you from getting sticky adhesive over or inside the grooves!

The Problem, the Cause and the Solution Even the best crafters run into hiccups. Here is how to solve the most common Kinusaiga issues:	
Foam is tearing/crumbling .	A dull craft knife blade. Replace the blade. Cut with a smooth pulling motion; do not saw.
Fabric keeps popping out.	Groove is too shallow, fabric is too small, or fabric is too thick. Deepen groove slightly; cut a larger margin; switch to thinner cotton/silk.
Fabric margin is too short to tuck.	Underestimated the margin during cutting. Press a tiny amount of glue deep into the groove with a toothpick, then press the short fabric edge into it.
Fabric looks bunched/lumpy	Too much excess fabric crammed into the groove. Pull fabric out, trim the margins closer to the line, and re-tuck.
Adhesive peeled up when replacing fabric	Removing a tucked fabric piece takes the sticky layer with it. Trace your template onto double-sided adhesive. Cut it slightly smaller than the shape, press to the foam, and peel the backing.
Foam board is warping .	Press flat under heavy books overnight
I've cut completely through board	Pressing the knife too hard. Apply PVA glue to the cut, press closed, and let dry. It will be invisible once tucked.
Colours look muddy/dull The adhesive sheet/foam is showing through thin fabric.	Place a small piece of white tissue paper beneath the fabric before tucking.