



THE BOOK OF BUNTING

A design project

by Rhiannon Lassiter



Rhiannon (2024)

Rhiannon Lassiter

I like to make craft projects and I've started documenting the process as part of my continuing education in design and production.

Making portfolios for my personal projects gives me the opportunity to practice layout and design ideas.

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Christmas bunting

December 2017



Rhiannon (25 December 2018)



The first time I made bunting

I think I got the idea at a Christmas market, of making my own decorative bunting. I'd been experimenting with making dolls' clothes that year, and that got me interested in buying 'fat quarters' of fabric. And I saw the perfect set of fabric for cheery Christmas bunting.

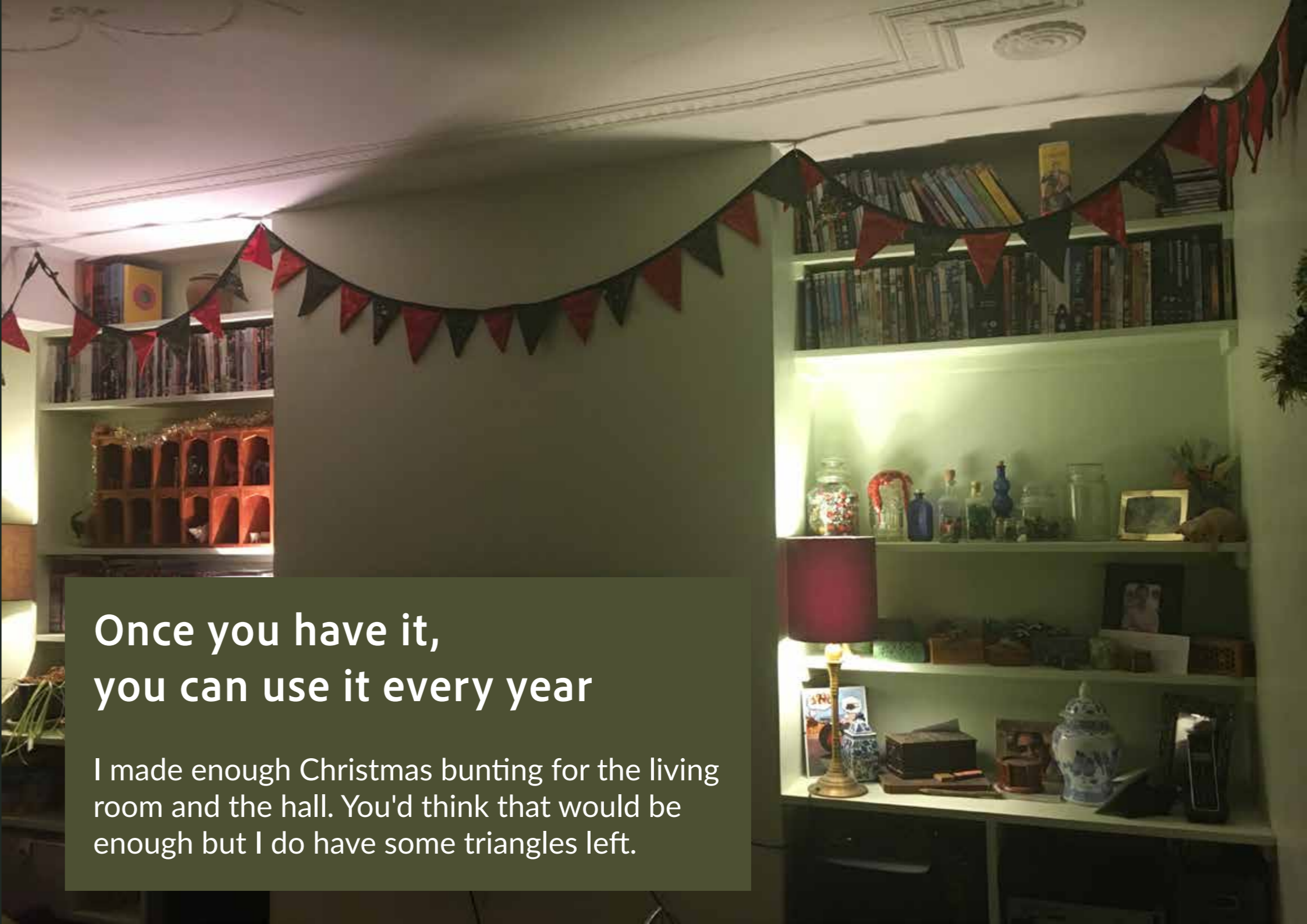


A bunting machine

I didn't just stick to one set of fat quarters. I created three different strings of bunting in the end: trees, stars and reindeer. I also went through a brief phase of doll photography. These cameos will soon be replaced with cats.



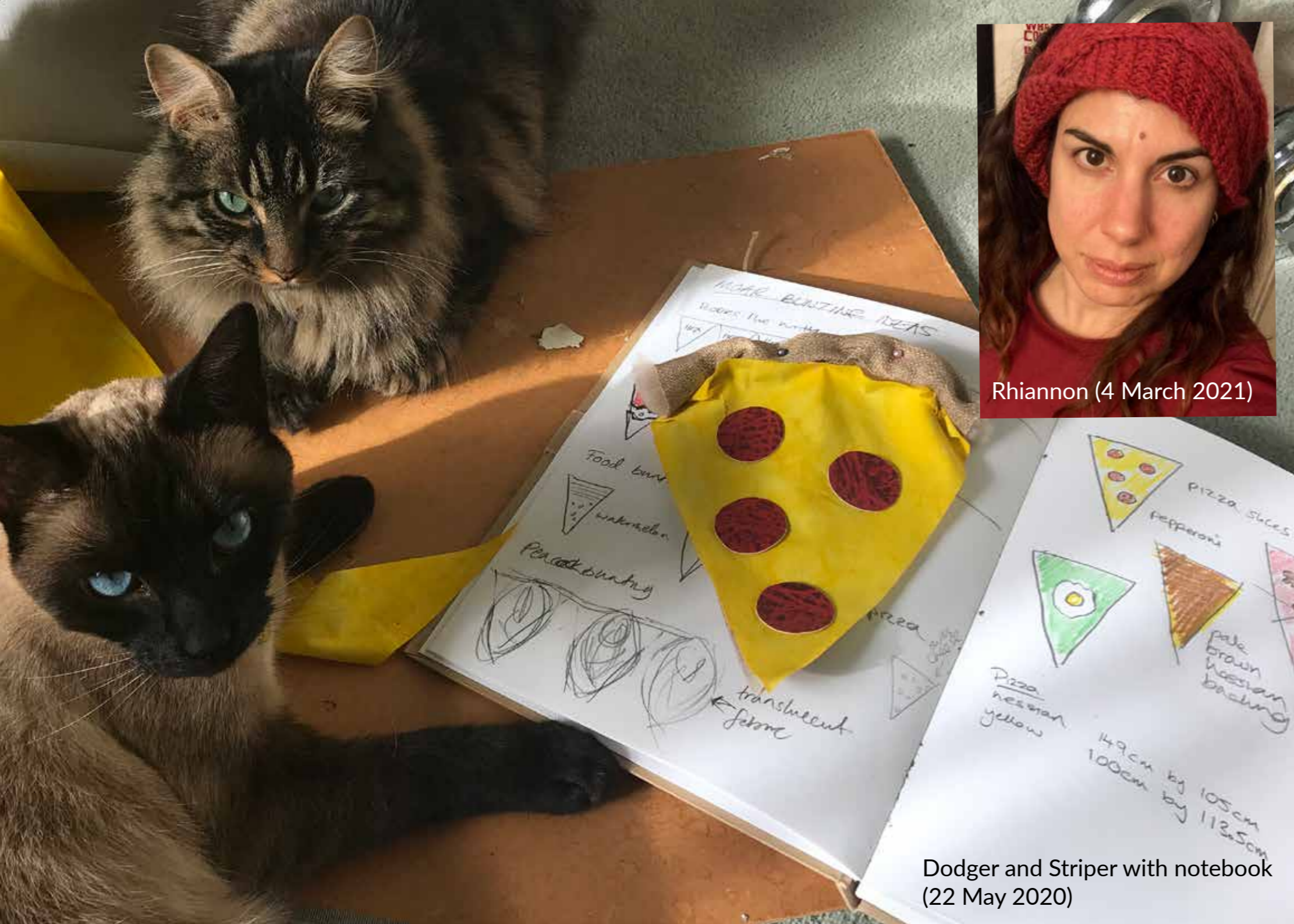
Even my dolls have a sewing machine.



Once you have it, you can use it every year

I made enough Christmas bunting for the living room and the hall. You'd think that would be enough but I do have some triangles left.





Rhiannon (4 March 2021)

Dodger and Striper with notebook (22 May 2020)

Pizza bunting

May 2020 - April



Pizza bunting was my pandemic project

The initial inspiration was a triangle. I'd made bunting before, and it's essentially a collection of triangles, and what's more triangular than a pizza slice? Then I started to consider the base, the crusts and the toppings. The project expanded at an alarming rate.



Cheese and pepperoni

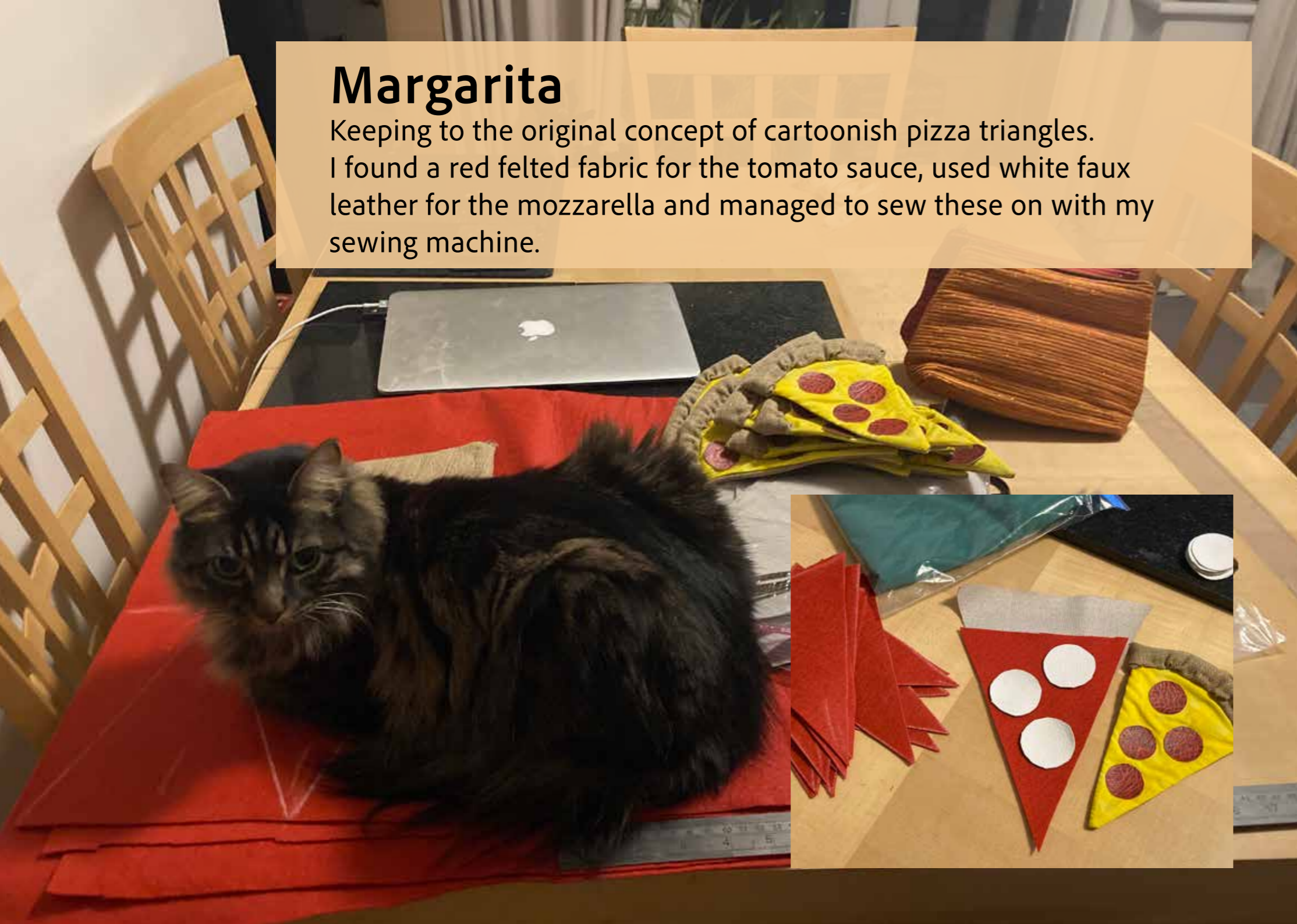
I wanted it to look both cartoonish and like pizza. I found a lightly batiqued yellow cotton fabric, used vinyl for the pepperoni and ended up having to sew these by hand.

Also hand sewn are the stuffed crust pieces, which are filled with spare insulation from food delivery services like Hello Fresh. I saved this material like a squirrel and it came in handy.



Margarita

Keeping to the original concept of cartoonish pizza triangles. I found a red felted fabric for the tomato sauce, used white faux leather for the mozzarella and managed to sew these on with my sewing machine.



Giardinera

A final style for my pizza trifecta. I used a green cotton for the base sauce, sewed on felt shapes for the sweetcorn and mushrooms, and sewed on black faux leather for the olives.



Now the project is coming together.

I could create more types of pizza... But surely I have enough now?

The next stage is sewing them together, I needed a darning needle and embroidery thread to sew them on to the binding. I don't actually know how many hours I put into this project because I broke it up





Tricolore pizza bunting

The final product. Installed in April 2021.
Comprises the cheese/pepperoni, margarita,
and giardiniera slices.



It exists!

Like Frankenstein I have made something.

Once there was only a conception of bunting + triangles = pizza. Now there is a decoration and a piece of craft work I can be satisfied with.



Rhiannon (October 2024)

Autumn bunting October 2024

I wanted the feel of autumn leaves.

The different colours and fabrics are all backed with orange. I made this from my fabric stash instead of buying anything new and found a variety of fabrics scraps for these.

My sister had given me a big bag of ribbons when she was decluttering and I used them in the binding, backed on to a green ribbon for additional strength.

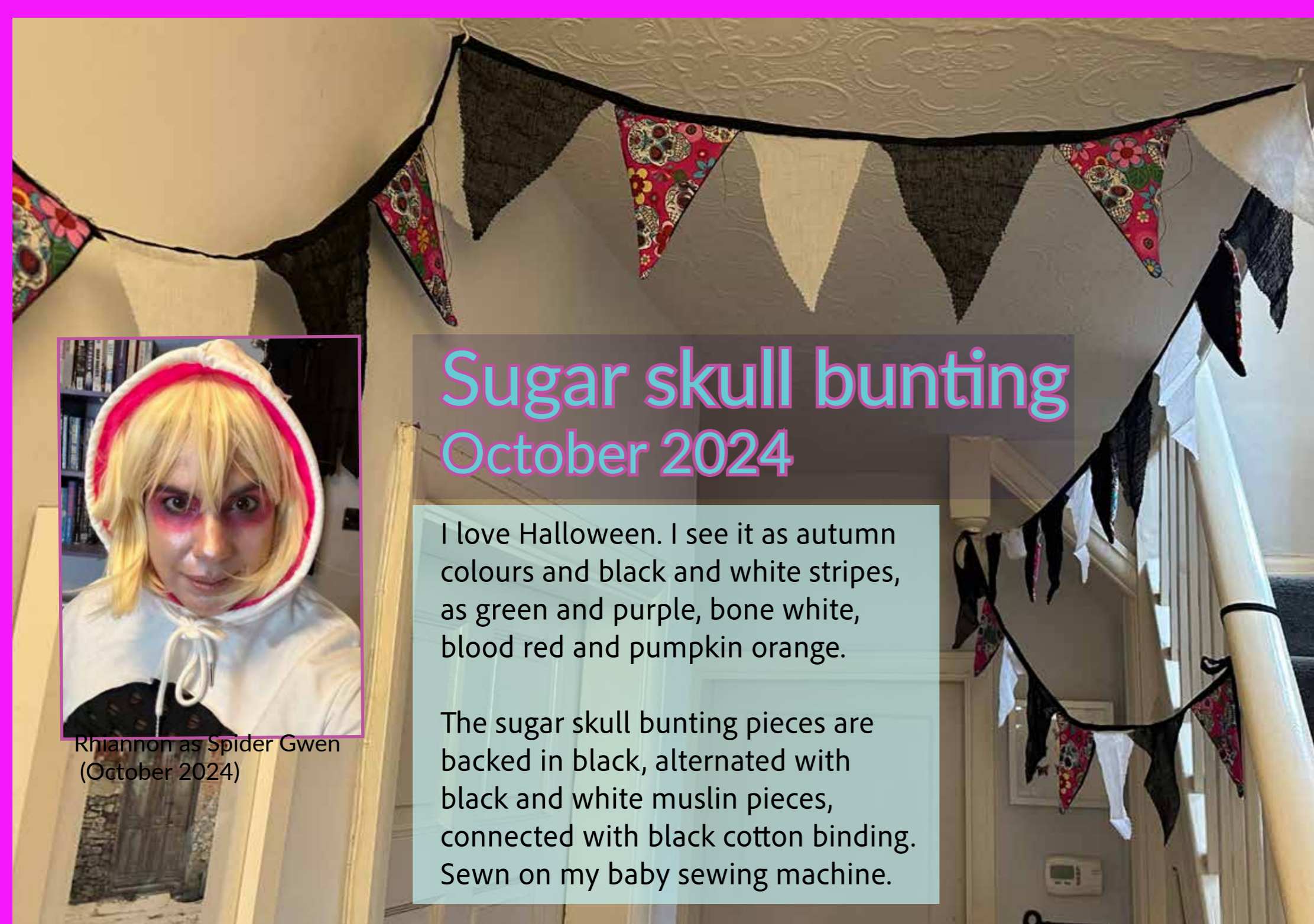




Striper helps with layout



Party time!



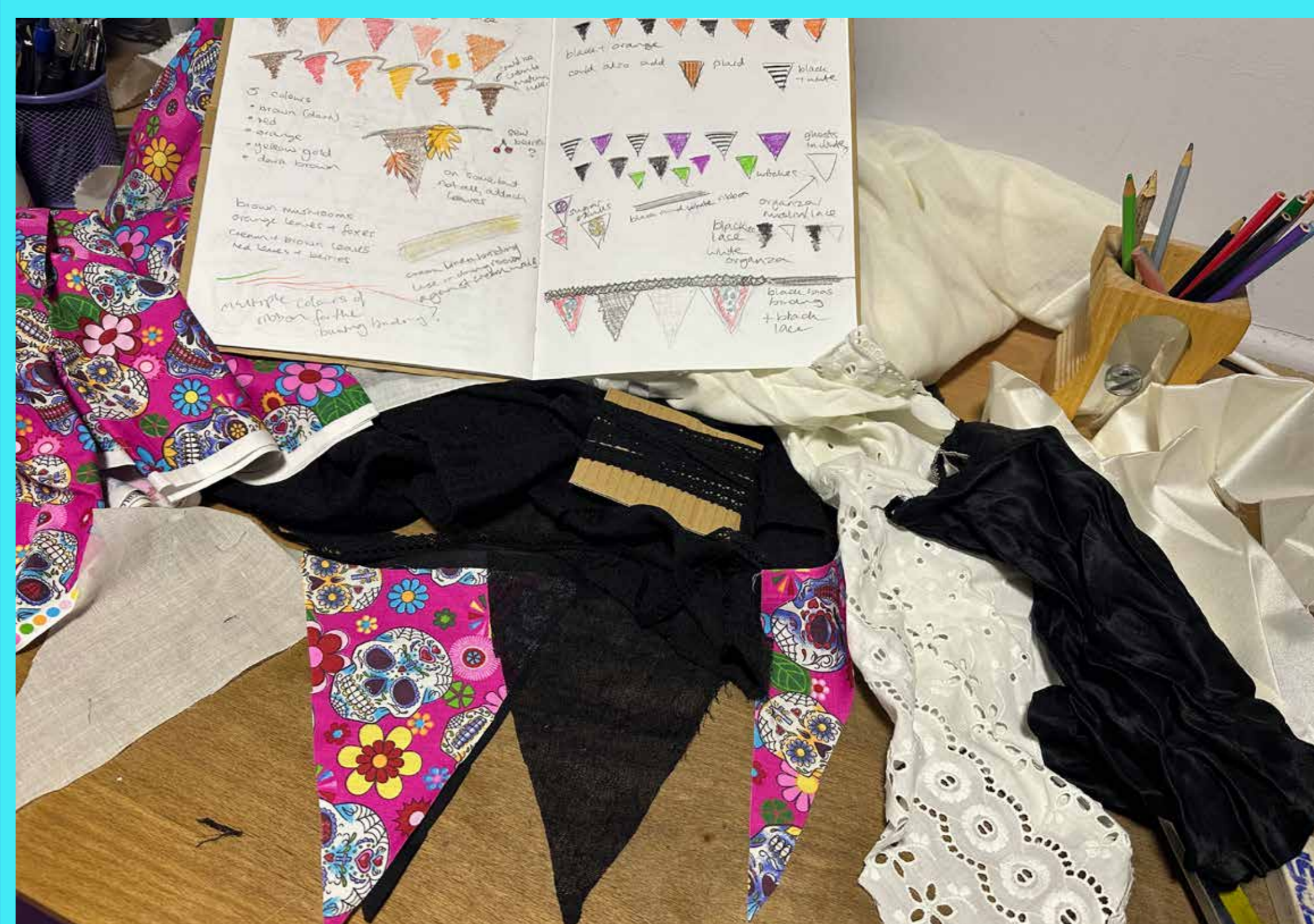
Sugar skull bunting October 2024

I love Halloween. I see it as autumn colours and black and white stripes, as green and purple, bone white, blood red and pumpkin orange.

The sugar skull bunting pieces are backed in black, alternated with black and white muslin pieces, connected with black cotton binding. Sewn on my baby sewing machine.



Rhiannon as Spider Gwen
(October 2024)



What's next in bunting?

This project has gone in a dangerous direction with the seasonal slant. I have bunting for Christmas and Halloween, and also for Autumn.

It would be nice to have all four seasons. As one bunting comes down the next goes up. After all the cuphooks are already there.



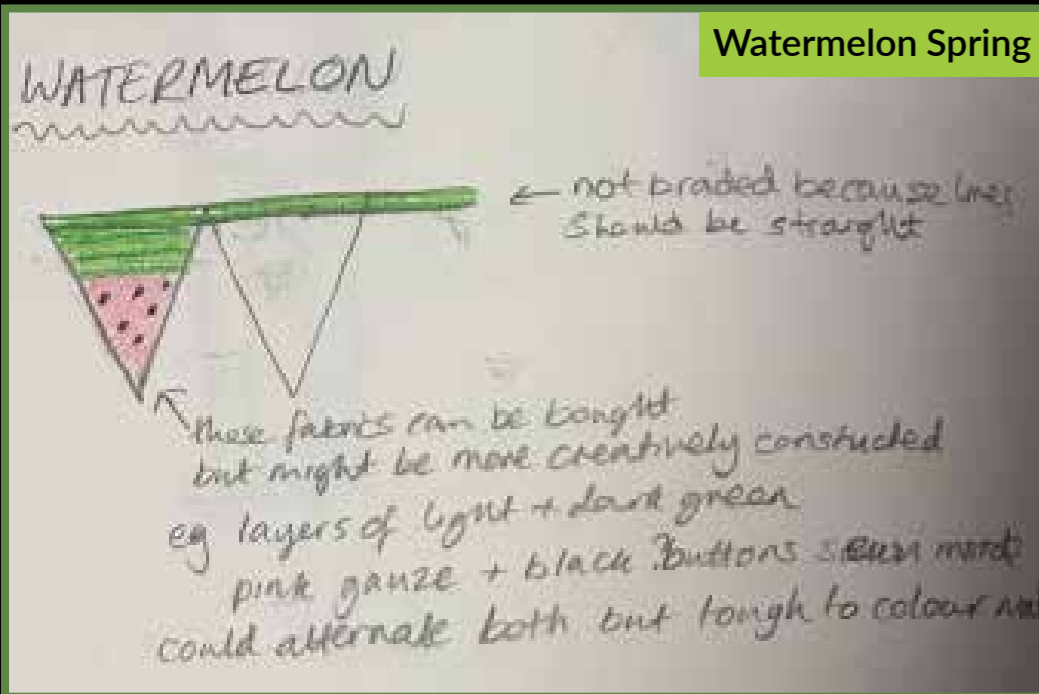
After a visit to the fabric shop



Summer skies



Summer skies



Watermelon Spring



Watermelon Spring



Extra Xmas



Winter snow

How to make bunting

Feeling inspired? Here's how to make your own bunting.

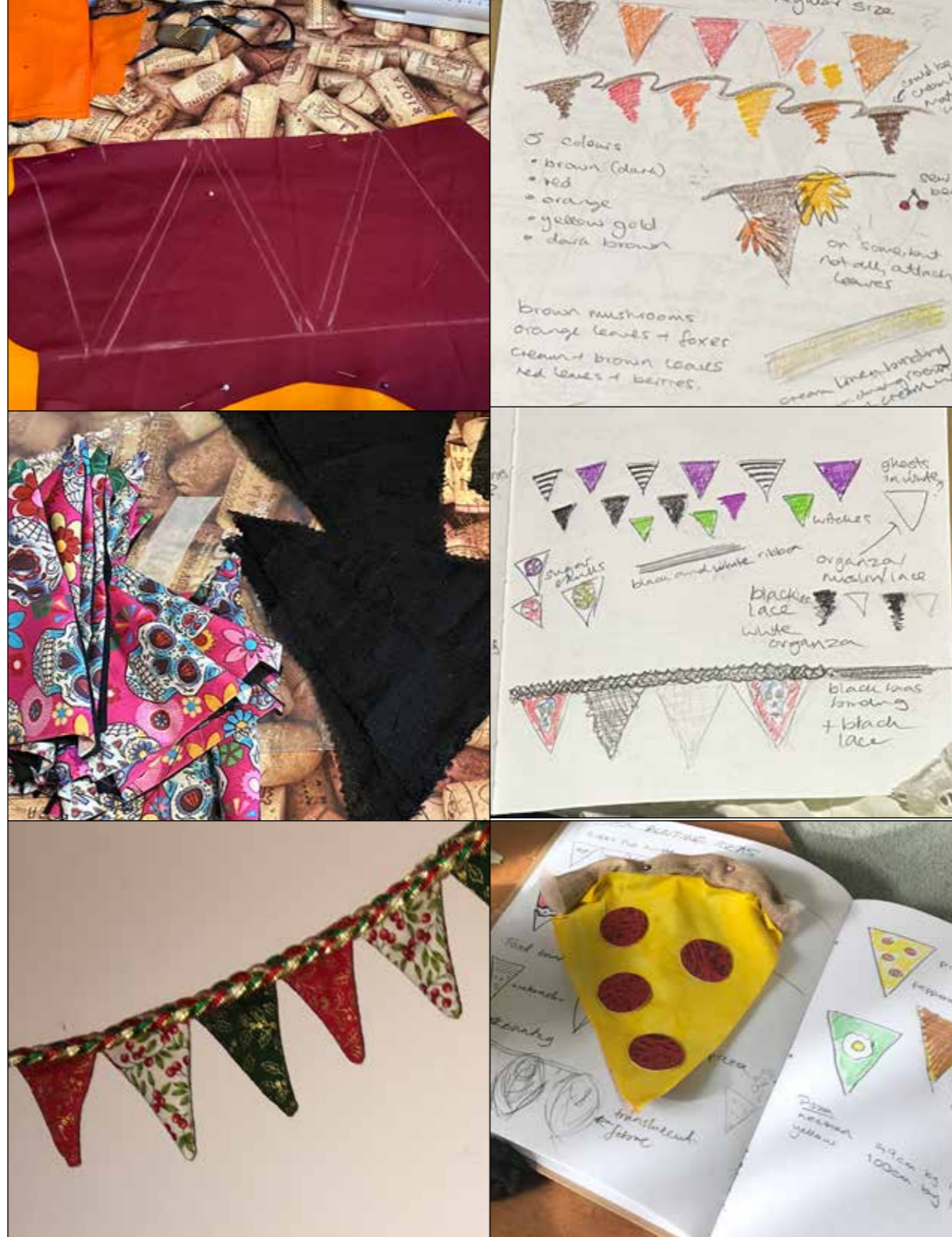
Bunting is essentially triangles. I cut out triangles that are 10cm across the top and 15cm at the apex of the point. You can cut out a lot of triangles from a single piece of fabric.

You don't want your bunting to fray, so either cut with crimping scissors, or hem to a backing piece. For my autumn bunting I did both.

Backing fabric is useful for structure, for aesthetics and to assist your concept. My autumn bunting is all backed with orange, my sugar skull fabric triangles with black, my Christmas bunting is double sided. The muslin triangles in the sugar skull string are single pieces, crimp cut.

Bunting is sewn on to strips of binding fabric. You can use ribbon but it's not very strong.

I sewed different coloured ribbons for my autumn bunting on to a green binding, because I had only short sections of ribbon. That made for a messy job and I still have a lot of loose threads to cut off. I also made one miniature doll-size bunting using a section of braided ribbon from a chocolate box, which came out beautifully.



Design concepts

For great bunting you need a theme. Christmas is an obvious one (for those who celebrate it) but you might feel some pressure for your holiday bunting to be extra neat. Autumn is a great beginner project. I made mine out of scraps and it came out kind of raggedy and I think that's on theme for autumn.

Pizza was an amazing theme and I spent a lot of time achieving the effect I wanted. It involved handsewing the thicker stuffed-crust pieces and the toppings.

My idea for watermelon involves a mixture of gauze and heavier fabric so that will take some time to work out. Sketching out and mocking up some pieces gives you an idea of how they will look and work together.

You don't have to do whole rooms at a time. Start with a little piece of empty wall, and measure the width. Your bunting binding should be at least half again as long to make some graceful curves when you hang it.

Perfection is the enemy of the good. Some of these projects worked out better than others, some I took more time over, but it's immensely satisfying to complete a string of bunting and decorate your house.

Attaching the bunting

- Face the fronts. The placement of backing fabric is important. When you sew a piece of backing fabric on to a triangle you should face the printed front of your fabric on to the front of another printed piece (for double sided bunting) or on to the front of your backing fabric.
- Hem up the two long sides of the triangle. Leave the top piece open so you can turn the triangle inside out. You will then have any loose threads and the edge of the hem inside, and the design on the outside.
- Sew the binding across the top and seal the final triangle as you go. This is the lazy way of doing it and saves a lot of time. It wasn't possible with the pizza bunting design where the top was folded over and sewn around a stuffing piece.
- Break the project down into three stages. Cut out triangles, sew up triangles, sew triangles on to binding.
- Trim can be done before or after. You can always work on the same piece across more than one year to fully realise your vision.
- You should really iron your bunting for crisp edges, but a lot of creasing can be avoided by storing it flat.

Even more design ideas

- Cake slices are triangles. So are slices of pie.
- What if your bunting wasn't triangles? You could make leaves or stars or snowflakes.
- Working with kids? They could each draw on their own triangles with fabric paint, and sew or glue on buttons, letters or felt shapes. Make it match by giving them a theme like a white snowman on a green background, or by giving them stars and moons and a black background.
- Shields with their own heraldry would make a cool class project. You could attach each shield to bunting with safety pins instead of sewing on so the children can take their own home at the end of term. (Any leftovers become yours and after running the project a few times you'll have a permanent string in your classroom.)
- My gauze triangles in the sugar skull string are floaty and mysterious. You could make a string of fairy bunting in pastel gauzes, or flame bunting in red and orange net.
- Elemental bunting would be excellent. Earth, air, fire and water. How would you make this?
- You can make birthday banners with a person's name spelled out across one string and Happy Birthday across another.
- Quilted bunting would be impressive.
- Appliquéd or iron-on patches could work as fun additions and would be quite simple to do, creating a sticker or graffiti effect.
- Create a theme for a nursery or kids' bedroom. Animals, football, magic, space, there are so many great ways to make this look fantastic.



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