



Ai Weiwei's Free Speech Craft

Ai Weiwei is a contemporary Chinese artist and activist. As an activist, he has been openly critical of the Chinese Government's stance on democracy and human rights. While Ai's art has been lauded internationally, the frequently provocative and subversive dimension of his art, as well as his political outspokenness, has triggered various forms of repression from Chinese authorities. Ai Weiwei has been arrested numerous times in China.

In response to this suppression of free speech, Ai Weiwei created a piece of art called a "caonima." Caonimas are supposed to be a type of alpaca. Ai's artistic caonimas, however, lack a mouth and symbolize the suppression of free speech and free expression in China. Made out of socks, buttons, cotton wool, and beans, Ai's caonimas are an easy craft that, when finished, display solidarity with the artist and his quest for free expression.

The First Amendment Museum has a caonima at the museum and the following pages are directions on how to make your own.

*When complete, upload a picture of your caonima onto Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook and share it with us by tagging us at: **Twitter:** [@1stAmendmntMus](https://twitter.com/1stAmendmntMus)*

***Instagram:** [@thefirstamendmentmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/thefirstamendmentmuseum) **Facebook:** [@firstamendmentmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/firstamendmentmuseum)*

*Don't forget to tag Ai Weiwei himself at **Instagram:** [@aiww](https://www.instagram.com/aiww) and **Twitter:** [@aiww](https://twitter.com/aiww)*

How to make an Ai Weiwei sock puppet

Step by Step Instructions

Credit to Artspace.com

Materials Needed:

Old socks
Scissors
Marker
Sewing needle
Buttons (for the eyes)
Dried beans
Wadding or cotton wool
Thread

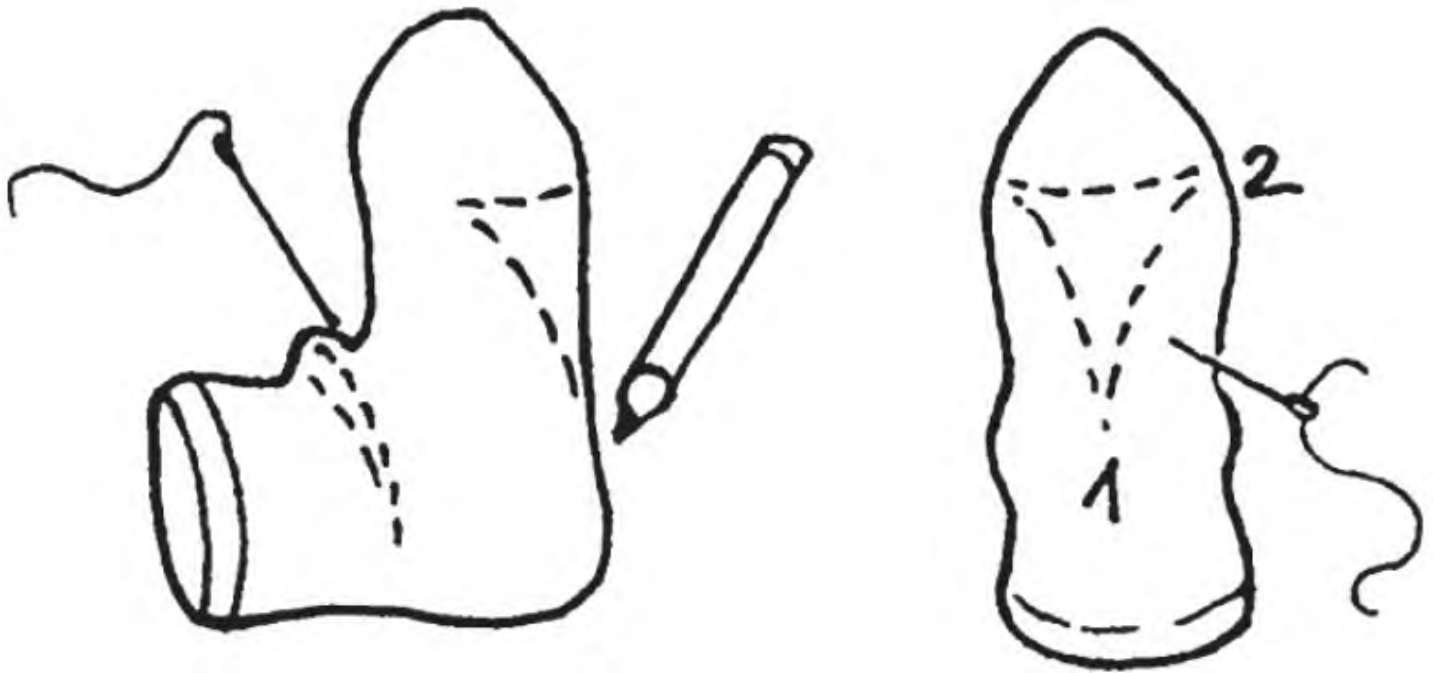
1. Choose socks and turn them inside out.



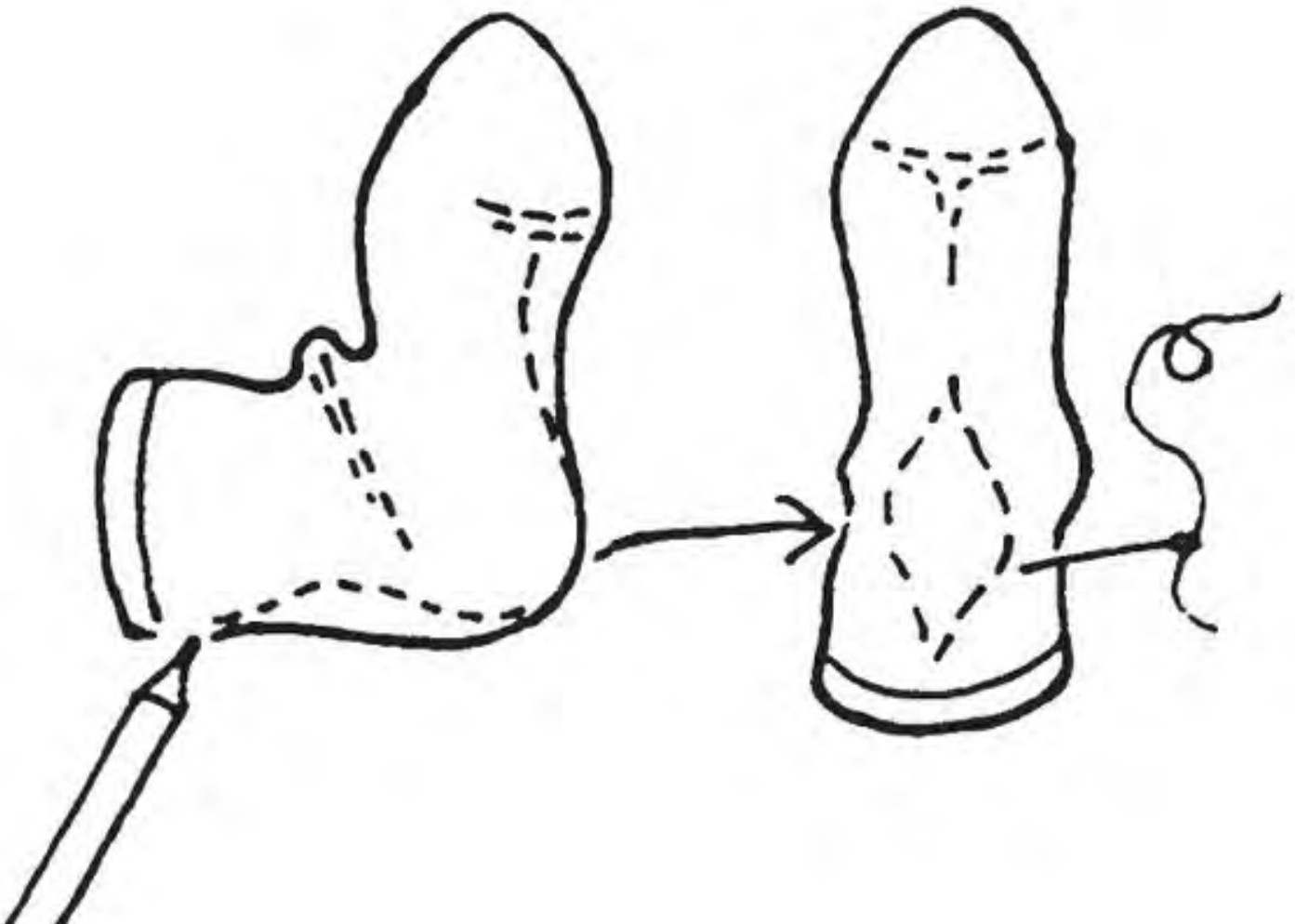
2. Use a marker to mark out the first area to stitch as shown.



3. Stitch together at marks, so that the sock forms a right angle. Mark the second area of the sole and sew the marks together.



4. Mark the third area to stitch and sew closed.



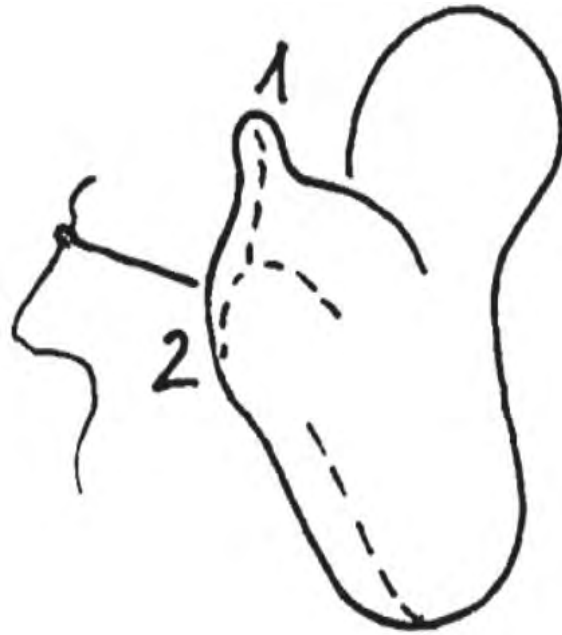
5. Turn the sock right side out. First stuff it with wadding, and then weigh it down with beans.



6. Finish off with a layer of wadding, to prevent the beans from slipping, and sew the top closed.



7. Sew the tail in two steps, from point 1 to point 2.



8. Mark eyes and attach buttons. Pull out two little ears over the eyes, and tie them with threads.

