

Feature



A Walking Jellyfish

Janna Standridge

Ever see a jellyfish square dancing, or

working the register in a department store, or handing out candy at Halloween? Here is a truly magical summer project: a Walking Jellyfish.

In the beginning this was an idea from a kids Halloween costume book and a PBS program on jellyfish, but like any good costume, it quickly morphed into so much more.

When you have all the supplies gathered, it only takes about one afternoon to glue it all together and wear that night. Here is what you'll need to get started: pick your favorite color (I chose shades of turquoise but you can choose any color in the rainbow, have fun).

Supplies

Here are the supplies I used to create my Walking Jellyfish.

- 1 straw sombrero (I used a kids size, just make sure it fits your head)
- 1 yard felt, (pick a deep shade of your chosen color)

- 1 tape measure, at least 60"
- Fabric glue or a hot glue gun & glue sticks
- 24" x 20 feet large bubble, bubble wrap (you may not use it all)
- 1 pair craft scissors
- 1 roll clear packing tape
- 1 set Cool Light LEDs, at least 10 ft. or longer (battery operated). Check the wedding aisle at the craft/fabric store or outside lighting at the hardware store.
- 1-1/4 yard x 54" (approx) sheer fabric with glitter or iridescent in fabric (Topper fabric)
- 1 skein white Fuzzy/Lumpy Yarn (Red Heart "Buttercup" or Bernat "Pipsqueak" or James C. Brett "Fluffy Chunky" are good)
- 1 skein Eyelash Yarn (I used Martha Stuart Craft, "Glitter Eyelash")
- 1-2 rolls of 1/2"-1" ribbons (use various widths & shades; include some sheers, iridescent, sparkles, textures)
- 1-3 rolls of 1"-3" wire edged ribbons (use a variety of widths, shades, sparkles & textures)



Front view of Walking Jellyfish.
Image: Jean Martin

Some Supplies for Walking Jellyfish



Kid's size straw sombrero



Battery-operated LED light string



Large bubble wrap



Sheer iridescent fabric (body)



White fuzzy/lumpy yarn



Sheer glittery fabric (hat)



Tulle or fine net



Martha Stuart Glitter Eyelash



Red heart buttercup yarn



Glittery wired edged ribbons



Sheer and sparkly ribbons



Sheer drapery panel



Back view of Walking Jellyfish. Image: Jean Martin

- 10-25 stick-on Fish, 2”-3” long (check the scrap book isle)
- 1 long dress or shirt and skirt or pants (mottled pattern or solid in deep shades) *
- 1 pair flip flops or other footwear (matched color or nude work best)
- 1 pair gloves (same color as the rest of outfit) (short gloves if wearing a long sleeve shirt, long gloves if a short sleeved shirt)**
- Water based makeup (usually comes with applicator) **
- 4 ½ yard x-54” tulle, or very fine net.
- 1 54 x 84 sheer drapery panel or equal fabric (Sparkle or iridescent fabric if you can find it) This could also be the same as the “Topper” fabric you use to cover the hat
- 10 Pins, straight or safety

Assembly

1. Heat glue gun and glue stick if you are using one.
2. Cut the felt & glue it all over the sombrero except inside the crown.
3. Fill in the hollow of the brim with rolls or balls of bubble wrap. Add a couple of layers over crown. Tape in place as needed.
4. Tape together enough sheets of bubble wrap to cover from the edge

of inner crown, up outer brim, over crown & around the other outer brim within 1” of inner crown.

- a) It should look like a mushroom cap when you’re done - (*a walking mushroom! No no no, that’s another costume*).
5. Measure from the inner crown, up the outer brim, up and over the crown and down the far edge.
 6. Cut a circle from the sparkly “topper” fabric with a diameter equal to the over-the-crown measurement *plus 6”*. Set this aside.



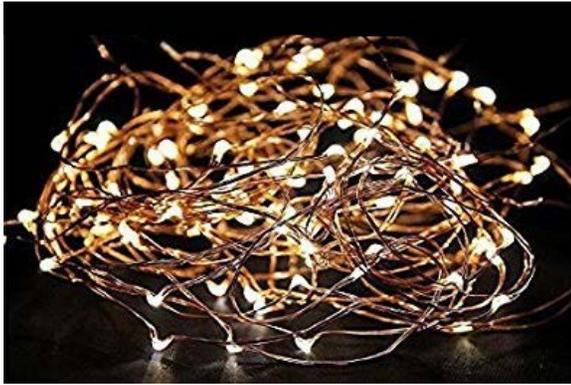
Cover sombrero with bubble wrap.



7. Measure your head. Cut about 36”long x 18”-20”wide strip of your sheer “topper” fabric, set this aside.
 - a) This wraps around your hair like a scarf or turban when you get dressed so you need about 10” beyond your head measurement to tie into a knot (or sew into turban if you have time).
 - b) Cut remaining pieces into 1-1/2” to 2” streamers.
8. Place the LED battery pack in the inner crown and run enough line to go up the back of hat and on to the bubble wrap filled brim (You need to be able to easily turn the lights on/off and add/remove batteries).
9. Lay the LEDs all over the bubble wrap, be sure to distribute evenly, tape down if needed.
 - a) Test lights in a darkened room and adjust pattern as needed.
10. Center the sheer round “topper” fabric on top of bubble wrap and



Run line from battery pack into hat.



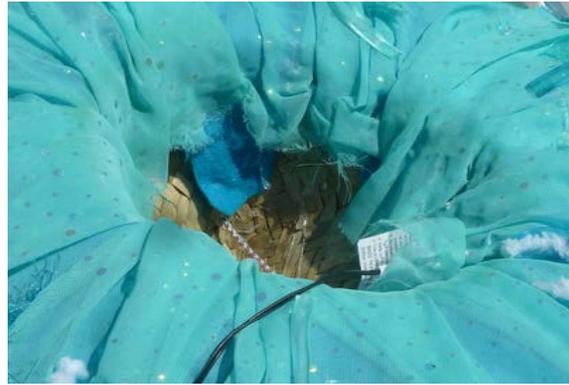
Testing LED lights over bubble-wrapped hat.

lights. Check lights again to make sure they show through fabric. Now is time to make these changes before you glue things in place.

11. Gather the fabric to the underside of crown with one hand. Use your other hand to support the crown and gently flip the hat over like a pancake.
12. Still holding the fabric with one hand; pleat fabric all the way around the underside of brim, putting any extra fabric into the inner crown.

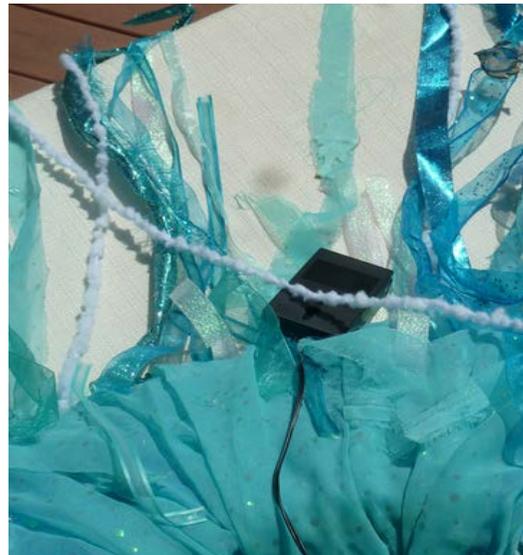


Center sheer fabric on top of bubble wrap and lights.



Gather fabric to underside of crown.

13. Glue all the layers into the crown, alternating sides as you glue. Snug the fabric as you go around (not too tightly) Trim excess fabric about 1" or 2" inside the crown and glue down.
14. Put on the hat, measure from the top edge of the outer brim to the top of your ankles (you don't want to trip



Streamers attached to hat.



Ribbons and yarns glued around the outer brim.

on a tentacle).

15. Measure out from your face about 2-3". Gauge down the length to your ankles. (Breathing tentacles [ribbons/yarn] is not advised and can tickle too) Remove hat.
16. Using all the different kinds of ribbons & yarns, cut various streamers in different lengths.
 - a) Make *at least* 1/3 of them the white fuzzy/lumpy type yarn.
17. Glue ribbons and yarns randomly all the way around the outer brim (not inside your 2"-3" breathing space). Mix the depths, lengths, and types of ribbons & yarns (this should not be a solid line of fringe); leave enough space so you can see through the streamers.

18. Flip hat over and put it on. Check to see if you can see through the multiple layers of ribbons easily (peripheral vision is not an option). Look in a mirror, check for any gaps in overall placement: add more tentacles if you like.
19. Remove hat, crown up. Place it on something so the ribbons hang down.
20. Scatter the Stick-on Fish at different levels and depths throughout the tentacles (but not right in front of your eyes).

If any changes are needed to the hat, now is the time to make them. Otherwise, this part is done and you can start getting dressed.

Dressing

First layer. Apply your makeup all over your face, ears (backs too), lips, neck (front & back), chest & upper back (about 2" deeper than the outline of your clothing).

- a) If you're wearing short sleeves or a tank top, be sure to apply make-up to any areas that show above your long gloves (including back of the arms).



Stick-on fish to decorate costume.



Janna Stanridge in Jellyfish makeup. Image: LiPo Ching/[Bay Area News Group](#).

- b) Try not to have a thin or streaky appearance. When you're done, the only feature that should stand out should be your eyeballs.

Second layer. Put on base clothing (shirt and long skirt/pants or long dress) these hopefully are in deep colors.

- a) Now add footwear & gloves.**
- b) Wrap your hair with the scarf/turban.



Third layer. Take the tulle; it should reach at least from your ankles to your shoulders. Fold it

Notes:

* Skirt - another good alternative is an apron of 4" vertical bias cut stripes overlapping about 1". The Western Fashion Inc. Gypsy Frill Belt could also be used over the skirt, pants or dress.

** Gloves and Makeup - Fall/Halloween is the best time to find the largest selection of colors. Costume and party stores are the best places to look.

over itself creating at least a double layer. Drape it around you like a long robe. Be sure to fold the tulle around your arms. It will resemble a kimono. Pin the front closed from neck to waist. Pin "sleeves" at cuffs.

Forth layer. This layer goes over the tulle layer. Turn sheer drapery panel or "topper" fabric sideways and fold over so it goes from ankle to shoulders. Repeat "kimono" draping and pinning steps as in Third Layer.

Fifth layer. Turn on lights in the battery pack; tuck battery pack into inner crown. Put hat on, detangle your tentacles. Now you're a Walking Jellyfish!!

Remove your headpiece before getting in a car or trying to drive.

Janna Stanridge designed a senior ball gown that morphed into a dress for a Dickens Faire and later into a bustle confection. A love of history, experience in modeling, photography, and theater trained her to look for details that make a costume distinctive. When [History San Jose \(HSJ\)](#) offered extensive multi-day costume classes, Janna took everyone, and soon began creating historical costumes from the skin out. Volunteer work to photograph, conserve, and catalog HSJ's textile, fur, and hat collections gave her added insight into the construction and detailing of garments from 1830-1980s. [Portraits of the Past](#) through HSJ, and [Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild](#) events and classes inspired her to craft and wear many historical and imaginative costumes.