



DESIGN & MAKE

BY HEATHER LUKE

*Rolled Blind*





# Rolled Blinds



*Rolled blinds are just that – fabric rolled up and held in place with ties. These have no fittings. They can be raised or lowered but need some help, so are best suited and designed for windows where the blind remain down most of the time. To shield a view, direct the eye, or direct light.*

*This blind is double sided. We chose linen for both sides in poppy red and taupe, and then for the ties a silk taffeta slightly to the roasted tomato side of poppy to front the taupe linen.*

We design and make rolled blinds for a variety of situations. These were designed to create an intimate space, the remit to rebalance a bay window area with a high ceiling, to direct the eye low, and to allow some light to filter through. For the same reasons, they stay lowered so that the light comes into the lower half of the room, and to confirm this feeling, the walls and ceiling are painted in a similar poppy red. As soft as a real poppy with all its nuances – warm and joyful not at all bright and sharp.

The roofscapes beyond, over Bristol, are stunning, especially at night when the vista is transformed into magical city light – and for watching the annual hot air balloon festival. Here there is plenty of light from the other side of the room, if there hadn't been we could have made the blinds in off white or cream or light taupe to equally good effect.

The inherent simplicity of rolled blinds allows them to fit into almost any environment – the choice of fabric perhaps the determining factor. We used linen sheeting for these, with silk taffeta sash ties, so that the finish detailing is closer to couture than it might be.

Rolled blinds suit small cottage windows, and garden retreats – because they look good and are easy to manage, because they take little fabric and are simple to make. Here, any sort of linens, stripes, chintz and small prints can look good, one lined with another.

# Design notes

- \* These can be the perfect solution for really tall windows where they'll remain in place most of the time- just requiring a tall step ladder for vacuuming and cleaning.
- \* Good for kitchens and guest bedrooms, children's bedrooms and studies, back halls, anywhere they may or need to stay partially lowered and can be reached easily to roll up and down.
- \* Perhaps the best thing of all about these blinds is that for something that looks so very good they are incredibly easy to make. Of course there are details and detailing to attend to, but in the first instance they can be made with a pre-finished material such as a tablecloth, or for a small window a tea towel and finished with bought tape, ribbon or string. Or a hessian bag, a flour sack, even a dust sheet.
- \* We made these blinds with the front and back in equal materials, however from a design point of view there are many options and possibilities for interesting combination- stripes and checks, florals, tiny prints with a plain or shirt stripes or tickings with trip with wool flannels..... and so on...
- \* The only thing I'd say is to watch the weights of the combined materials in terms of how heavy they could become but also, and perhaps more importantly, how much space they will take up when rolled - the diameter of the roll at the bottom.
- \* Also if they will be raised and lowered often, how much the material will crease- there's no point in all the work for them looking like a dish rag, for the sake of a different fabric choice !
- \* Thinking about the materials and the option for design variations - the back can come around to the front to create a border, and to make more of the 'second' fabric; they could both be bound at the sides so adding a third party into the equation; the second fabric is not necessarily the least important ; silks don't like sunlight; the fabric at the back will need to be one that will tolerate, and accommodate, all weather conditions.
- \* The ties too are prime candidates for some design flair, originality and experimentation. There are so many interesting and well coloured tapes, braids, ribbons and cords to design with, that can be bought from market stalls or haberdashers. Even garden string can be plaited into perfectly sensible cording.
- \* As with everything else, there is no substitute for trying it out - use blind cord or strips of offcuts to see which look you prefer. If in doubt use a simple woven heading tape or India tape pro-tem and add the perfect thing when you find it...
- \* The number and placement of the cords, ties or sashes affects the shape of the bottom edge, the drop or swag between them and the drop at the sides.

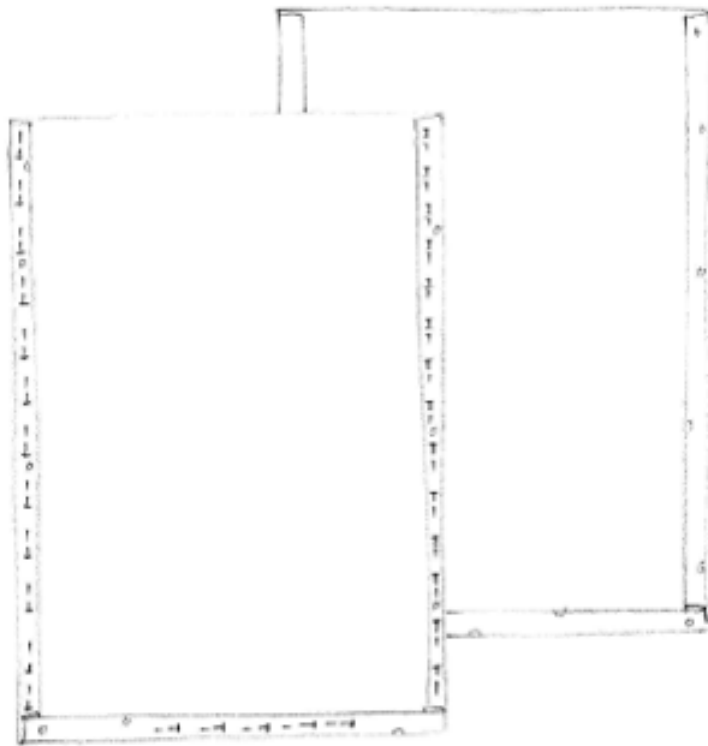
# Make

## PREPARE

1. Measure the window and plan the fitting, according to the Basic Techniques information. Think about the sashes or cord, how long you want them to be. Will they be tied, knotted, left loose or finished in some other way?
2. Plan the fitting position and the finished blind size. Fit the batten. Decide whether the blind will fit to the front or to the top of the batten. Refer to the Basic Techniques for how to stitch the touch-and-close tape in position. For this project we have fitted to the top of the batten.
3. For this blind you'll need two pieces of fabric, one for the back and one for the front, each to the exact size of the space to be covered plus 3 cm (1¼") for each side hem and heading and an allowance for any rolls at the hem when the blind is fully lowered.
4. Cut out the fabric, neaten the edges, trim selvages and remove any margin marks. Join any widths with flat seams and press them open. Refer to the seams information in Basic Techniques.
5. Make up the sashes or cut your cords or ribbons to length.

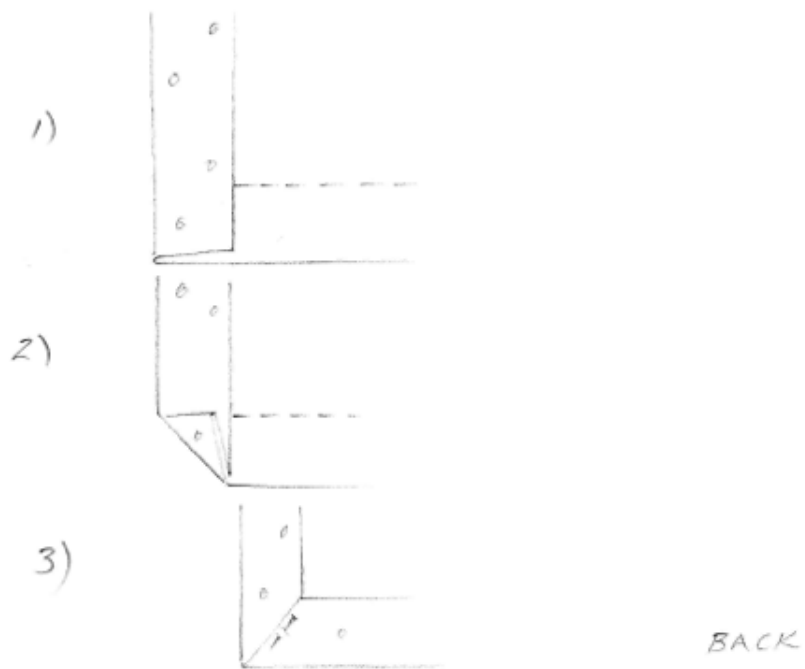
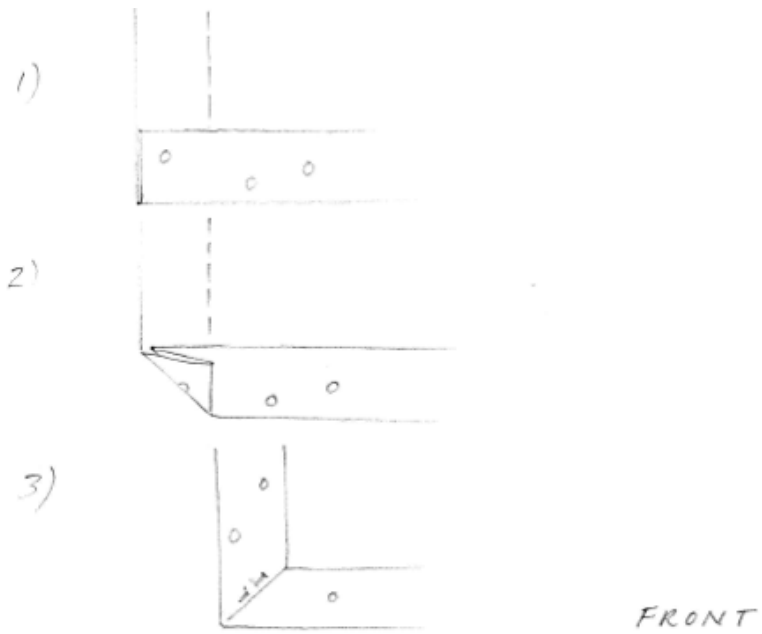
## TO MAKE THE BLIND

1. Place the main blind fabric right side down onto the worktable, sweep the metre rule over to smooth out every ruckle; press out any creases. Fold the sides over by 3 cm (1¼"). Fold the hem up by 3 cm (1¼"). Pin all around. Do the same with the other piece.



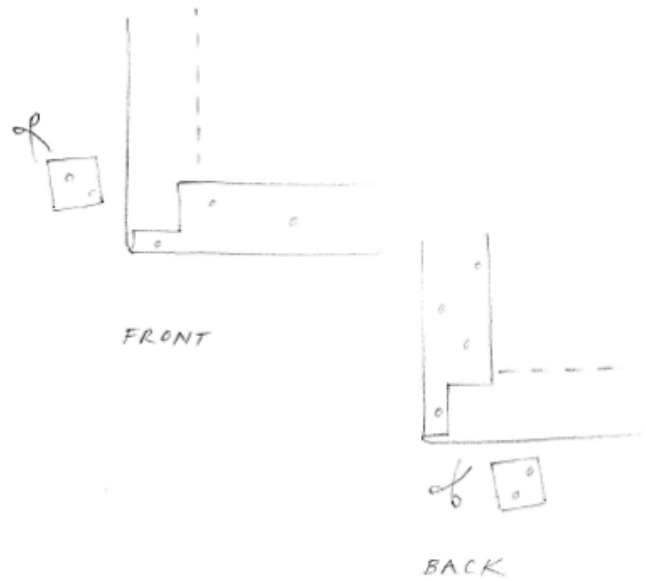
# Make

- Mitre the corners, the front one and the back one in opposite directions, as shown.

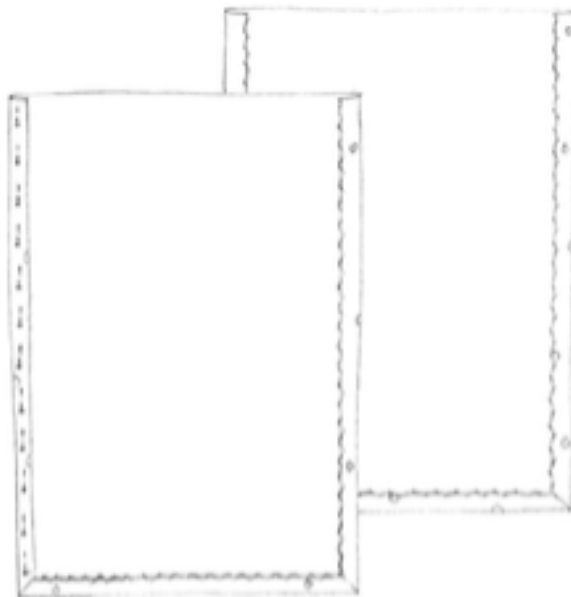


# Make

3. Trim the corners away as shown if they feel too bulky and don't sit well together.



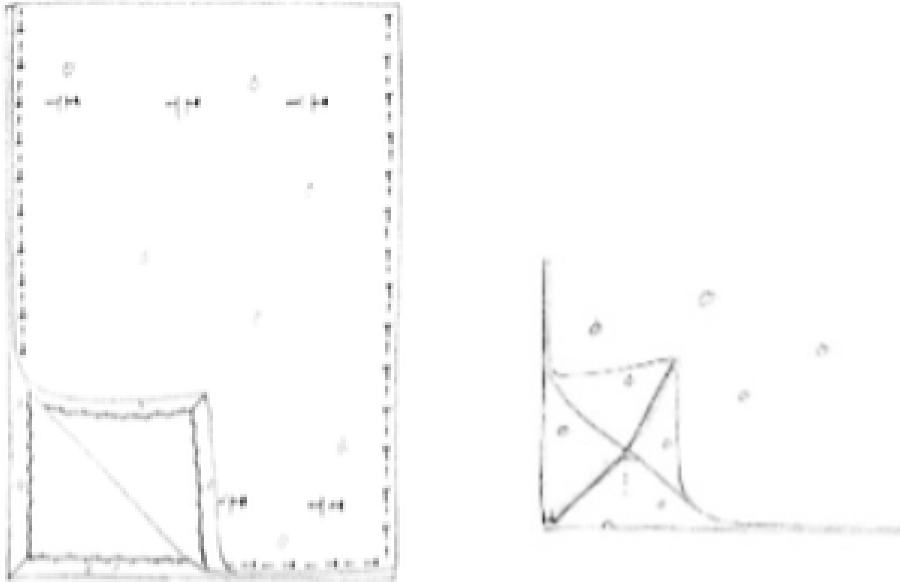
4. Herringbone the raw edges in place along both sides and hem, ladder stitch the mitres to close.





# Make

5. Place the front fabric onto the worktable, right side down, lower edge parallel to the worktable side. Smooth out any creases and press. Place the second fabric over, right side up. Match any seams, then lock stitch the fabrics together along each seam, and again twice within the fabric width. Match the mitres.



*Watchpoint!* You don't want the lock stitches to show, so with fine fabrics, unless layers want to move against each other, just lock stitch on any seam and where it won't show behind the pull-up tapes.

6. Ladder stitch the two pieces together around all three sides. Run the thread through the top layer for about 1 cm (3/8") then immediately into the fold below, take it along this fold for 1 cm (3/8"), then back into the top layer. Take care not to keep the thread at a good tension - neither pulling nor loose. Make a practice piece to get the pace and rhythm, then do it for real. It's OK to take time over this, to enjoy the work and make the best job of it. This is something that you'll be looking at..... Then press the edges lightly.



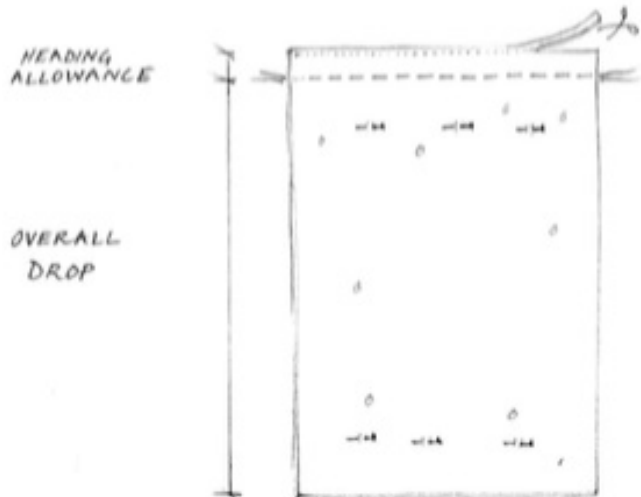
*Watchpoint!* Keep the work on the table the whole time - don't be tempted to pick it up.



# Make

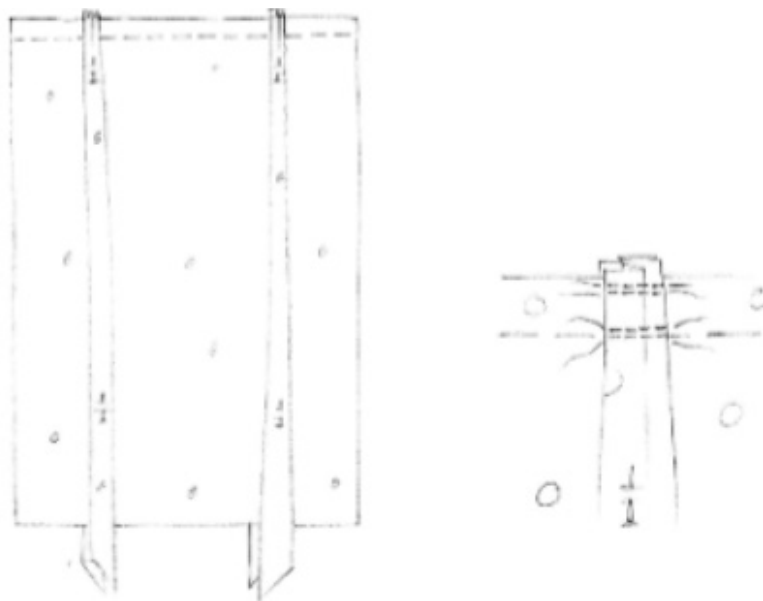
## TO MAKE THE HEADING

1. Measure from the bottom up to mark the overall drop with a line of tacking stitched through both layers. Measure from one side to the other at 20 - 30 cm ( 8" - 12" ) intervals. Use pins to mark the overall drop, then score a line between them to follow with the tacking threads. If the fabric won't hold a scoreline then make more markers, half way between these. From this line measure the heading allowance. Mark it with pins or pencil and trim away the excess.



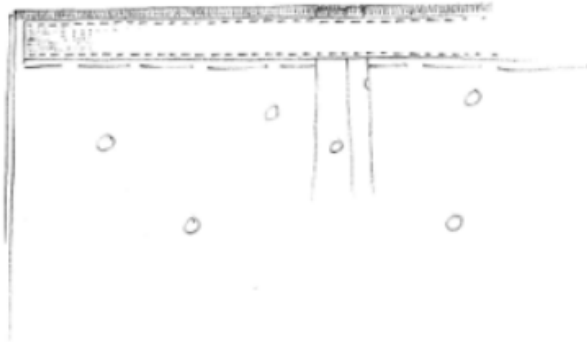
2. Pin the cords, tapes or sashes to the blind. Pin the loose ends done to keep them out of the way. Machine the tops to hold them in place securely.

**Tip!** If in any doubt, drawing pin the blind and the cords or ties to the batten and test first.

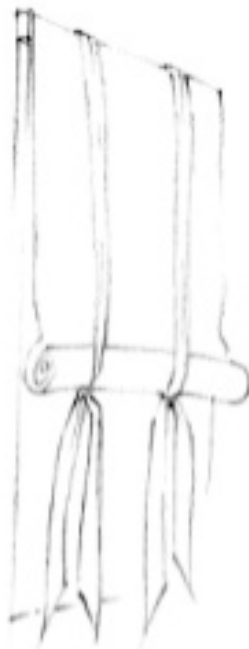


# Make

3. Stitch the touch and close tape in place, to the back of the blind, just clear of the overall drop line. Overlock or zig zag the other side, with the raw edges. Trim the ends.



4. Fit the blind to the top of the batten, roll up the lower edge and tie the ties...





An interior designers guide to home furnishings: something we all need help with, even if only for inspiration and encouragement to learn, to try, to follow our instincts, to learn by mistakes and to make it our own. We want to make furnishing homes the fun it should be - biographical, relevant to who we are, to what we are doing and where we're going. So every space needs our best consideration - how it is now, and how do we want it to be? Furnishings don't need to break the bank, although they easily can. They do though, need to be well thought out and imaginatively designed and made.

*Project No. Rolled Blind BL 001*

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