

# Cats in the Sampler

by Dilys Fronks

When I demonstrate techniques to my students, I often use scraps of fabric from my stash, making use of the value of the fabrics (light, medium and dark), rather than the colour. As you can imagine, these demonstration pieces, often in different size blocks, pile up. Cats in the Sampler was my solution for joining them all together.

Using black for the lattice and cat silhouettes has given the variety of scrap fabrics definition and uniformity. Placing the blocks on the fronts of 'boxes' gives an added dimensional interest to the design. This quilt would make an excellent self-teaching project with scope for hand and machine work. Speed methods have been given where appropriate. However, if you wish, you can of course sew many of the blocks using templates.

There are twenty one different types of block in this quilt (Fig.1). Over the next three issues of the magazine, there will be instructions for the different styles of block. Five traditional blocks are not described in detail - one patch, log cabin, crazy, clamshell and square in a square as it is assumed you understand their construction. If you prefer, you can repeat some of the other blocks described here, or include your own favourite block designs.

**Finished size:** 64 x 99" (163 x 251cm)

This fits a 4'6" bed lengthways, but with no overhang at the sides

**Skill level:** Intermediate

## Materials

### Based on 115cm fabric

- ❖ Light weight cottons are recommended
- ❖ 3m of plain black fabric
- ❖ Lots of fabric scraps in light, medium and dark tones
- ❖ 173 x 262cm of wadding (68 x 103")
- ❖ 173 x 262cm of backing fabric (68 x 103")
- ❖ 0.75m of fabric for binding
- ❖ Template plastic or tracing paper
- ❖ Sheet of fine sand paper for hand appliqué
- ❖ Freezer paper or similar for machine appliqué
- ❖ Sharp fabric markers for light and dark fabrics
- ❖ Neutral thread for hand or machine piecing
- ❖ Black thread for appliqué
- ❖ Invisible thread for machine appliqué and quilting
- ❖ Quilting thread for hand quilting
- ❖ Black embroidery thread for whiskers and tails

## OPTION

If you prefer, you can think beyond multicoloured scraps to use a single colour palette, (eg light, medium and dark blues), or use a certain type of fabric such as Fossil Fern. The choices are endless!

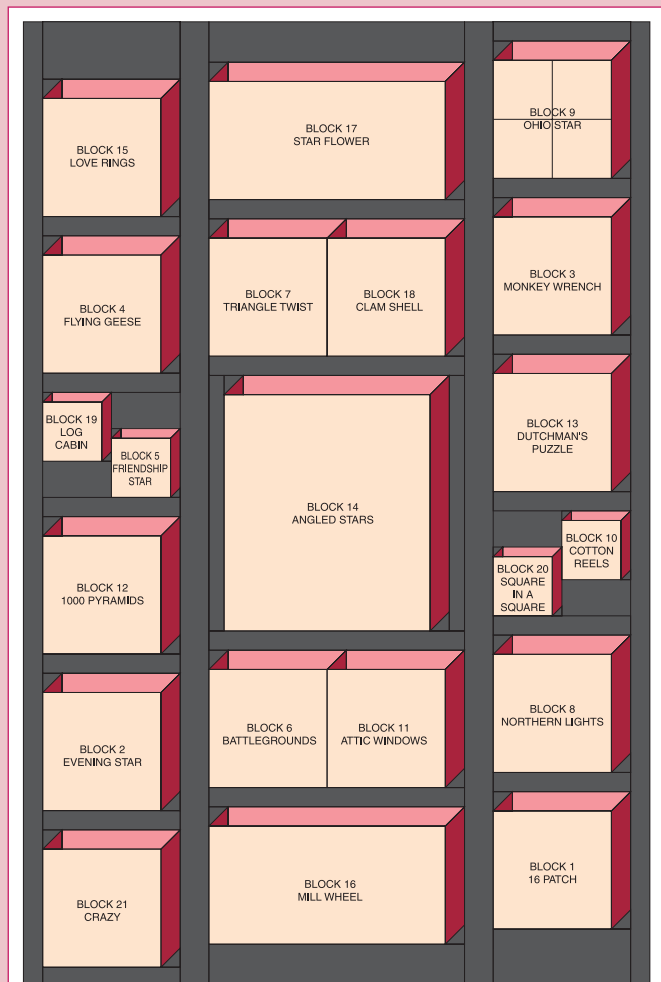
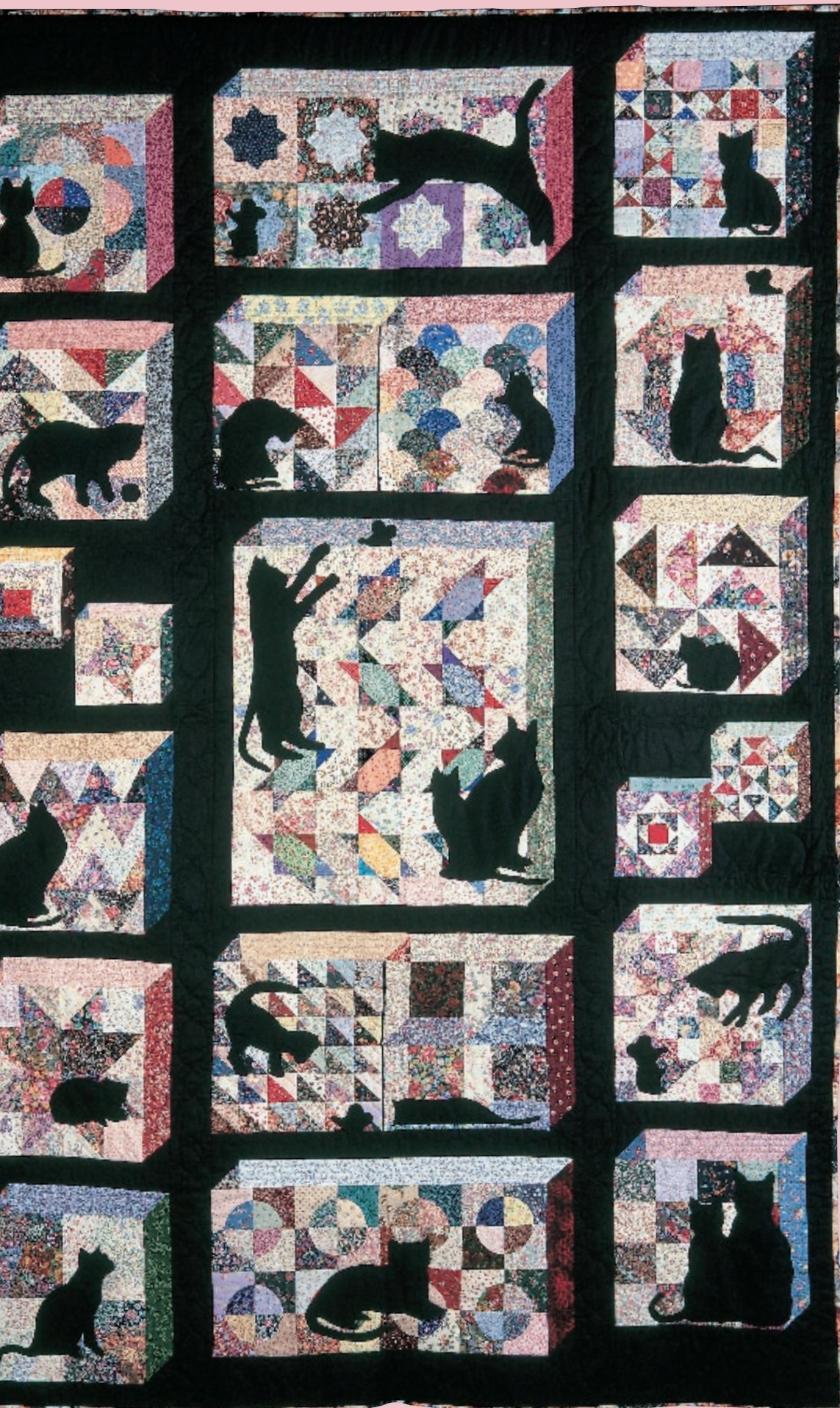


Fig 1. Cats in the Sampler blocks

### Half square triangles speed method

- 1 Cut the number of squares required for the block.
- 2 On the WS of all the light squares, draw a diagonal line.



### Fabric preparation and helpful hints!

- ❖ Sort your fabric scraps into piles of lights, medium lights, medium darks and darks and store them as such for ease of selection. The blocks are effective because of the contrasts between the values of the fabrics. So don't just select a light and a dark each time. A light will contrast with a medium dark, just as a medium light will contrast with a dark. Spread the values around the quilt to add interest. The fabrics can be ironed in advance or ironed as you need them.
- ❖ Always check the size of each block on the master plan before you start.
- ❖ Always be aware of the straight grain of your fabric.
- ❖ All seam allowances are  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Check that your sewing machine sews an accurate  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam!
- ❖ Always sew a small tight stitch with a periodic back stitch if working by hand.
- ❖ Always press both seams in the same direction, letting the iron do the work. Iron WS first to settle the stitches and establish the seams and then the RS to remove any tucks. Never pull the edges as this causes stretching or mis-shaping.
- ❖ Be aware of the need for accuracy when piecing. Get into the habit of 'measuring twice and cutting once' to save time in the long run.
- ❖ String piece the shapes through the machine using the machine foot as a guide.
- ❖ When assembling the blocks, sew the individual patches in rows first and then sew the rows together.
- ❖ Finally, it is worth cutting the long strips for the vertical sashing first and putting them to one side until needed. You will need two at  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 99\frac{1}{2}$ " and two at  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 99\frac{1}{2}$ ". If you want to change measurements of the quilt, be aware that you will need continuous strips and only cut parallel to the selvage rather than at right angles to it.

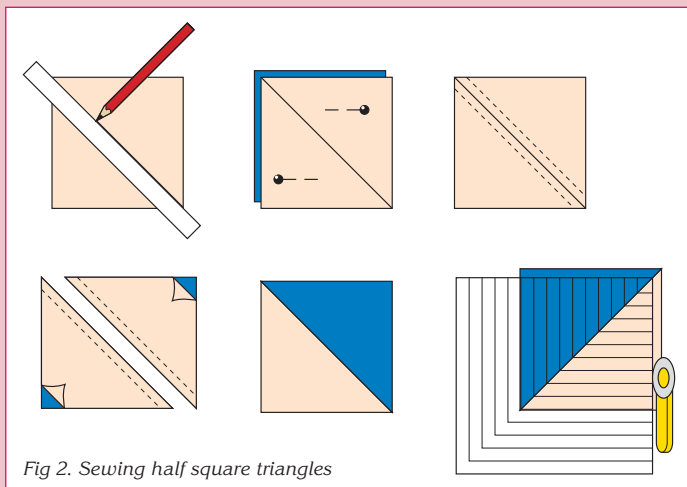


Fig 2. Sewing half square triangles

**3** Place a light square RS together on a dark square and sew two parallel lines  $\frac{1}{4}$ " either side of the drawn line.

**4** Iron the patches and then cut along the diagonal to give two half square triangles when opened. Iron again, pressing fabrics from light to dark.

**5** Check the size of each patch before joining to form the block.

**2** Sew as for half square triangles, points 1-4.

**3** Mark another diagonal line onto the WS of the half square triangles, in the opposite direction to the seam.

**4** Place each one RS together with another half square triangle, so that the light triangles lie on the dark and vice versa. The ridges of the seams will butt up together to give a good fit. Pin to secure.

**5** Sew two parallel lines  $\frac{1}{4}$ " either side of the drawn line. Iron, cut and press again as above.

**Quarter Square triangles speed method**

**1** Cut the number of squares required for the block.

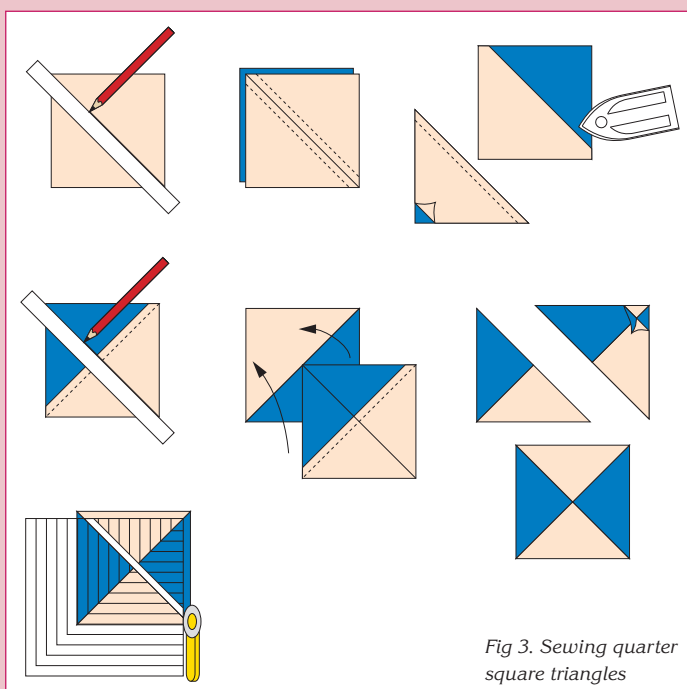


Fig 3. Sewing quarter square triangles

**6** Check the size of each patch before joining to form the block.

**Block 2 Evening Star**

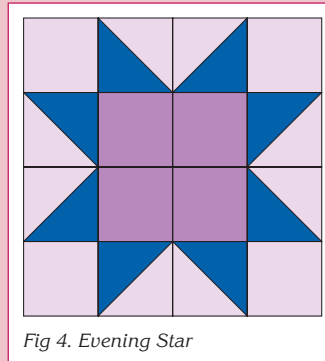


Fig 4. Evening Star

**1** Cut four  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " squares in both light and medium fabrics. Cut four  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " squares in both light and dark fabrics.

**2** Sew the four  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " square using the half square triangle method.

**3** Assemble the block as shown in Fig 4.

**4** Appliqué the cat from Fig 14 onto the block.

**Block 3 Monkey Wrench**

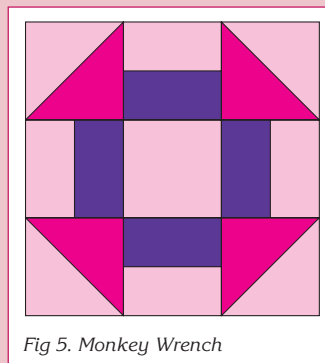


Fig 5. Monkey Wrench

**1** Cut one light square at  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ", four strips  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ " in both light and dark fabric and two  $5$ " squares in both light and dark fabric.

**2** Sew the two  $5$ " squares using the half square triangle method above to produce four squares.

**3** Sew each light and dark strip together.

**4** Assemble the block as shown in Fig 5.

**5** Appliqué the cat and mouse onto the block.

**Block 4 Flying Geese**

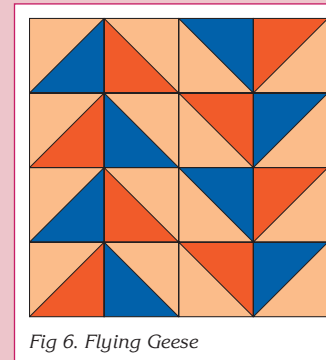


Fig 6. Flying Geese

**1** Cut eight  $4$ " squares in a light and two dark fabrics.

**2** Sew as above for half square triangles and assemble the block as shown in Fig 6.

**3** Appliqué the cat and ball onto the block.

**Block 5 Friendship Star**

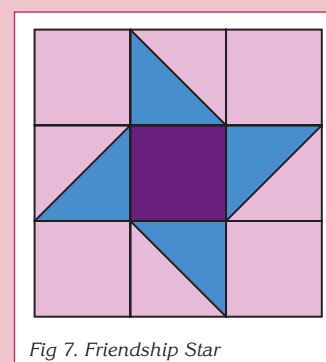


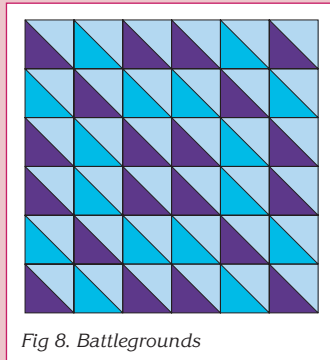
Fig 7. Friendship Star

**1** Cut one  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " square in dark fabric and four in light. Cut two  $3$ " squares in both medium and light fabrics.

**2** Sew the  $3$ " squares as above for half square triangles to produce four squares.

3 Assemble the block as shown in Fig 7.

**Block 6  
Battlegrounds**

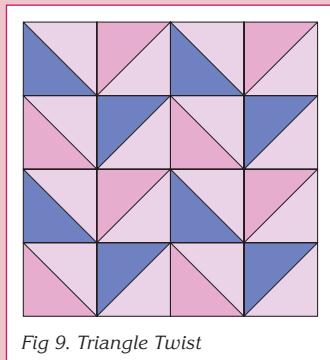


1 Cut eighteen 3" squares in both light and medium / dark fabrics. This block is excellent for using up all your small squares of scrap fabrics.

2 Sew as above for half square triangles and assemble the block as shown in Fig 8.

3 Appliqué the cat and mouse from Fig 14 onto the block.

**Block 7  
Triangle Twist**

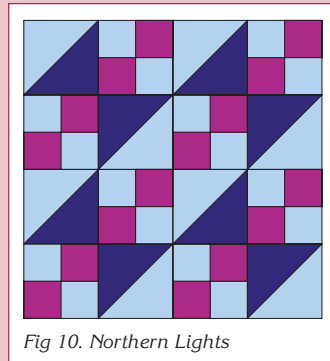


1 Cut four 4" squares in both light and dark fabrics and eight in medium to dark fabrics.

2 Sew as above for half square triangles and assemble the block as shown in Fig 9.

3 Appliqué the cat from Fig 14 onto the block.

**Block 8  
Northern Lights**



1 Cut sixteen 2" squares in both light and medium fabric and four 4" squares in both light and dark fabric.

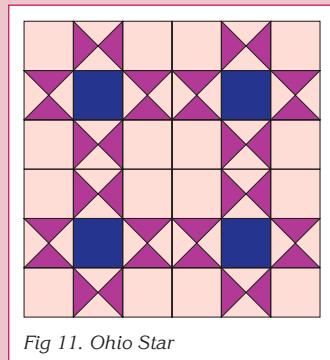
2 Sew half square triangles as above for the 4" squares.

3 Join the 2" squares together to make 8 four patch blocks.

4 Assemble the block as shown in Fig 10.

5 Appliqué the cat and mouse onto the block.

**Block 9  
Ohio Star**



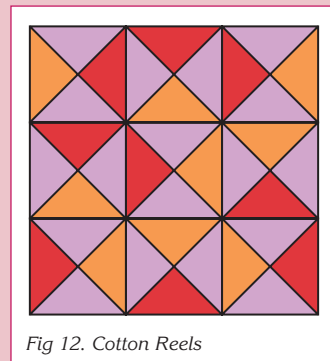
1 Cut sixteen 2 1/2" squares in light fabric and four in dark fabric. Cut eight 3 1/2" squares in both light and medium fabric. This makes four 6 1/2" blocks.

2 Sew quarter square triangles as above.

3 Assemble the four blocks as shown in Fig 11.

4 Appliqué the cat from Fig 14 onto the block.

**Block 10  
Cotton Reels**



1 Cut nine 3 1/2" squares in one light and two dark fabrics.

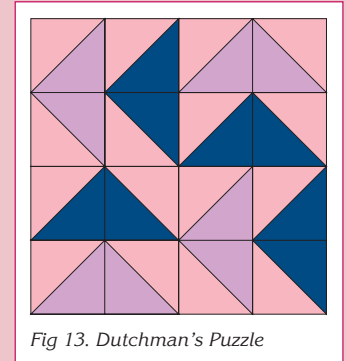
2 Sew quarter square triangles as above.

3 Assemble the block as shown in Fig 12.

**Block 13  
Dutchman's Puzzle**

Eagle-eyed readers will spot that I sewed this block using a traditional method (one large triangle and two small). However, for speed, use the half square triangle method. If you want each of the dark windmill 'blades' to be the same fabric, use a non-directional print and carefully layout the sewn

squares, before assembling the block.



1 Cut four 4" squares in medium and dark fabrics and eight in light fabric.

2 Sew as above for half square triangles and assemble the block as shown in Fig 13.

3 Appliqué the cat from Fig 14 onto the block.

**Put all of these blocks on one side. Next month, there will be instructions for more blocks, including the curved seam designs.**

**As explained in the introduction, instructions are not given for five classic blocks. You can sew these blocks now or next month.**

**Sizes of half and quarter square triangle blocks in this issue**

2	Evening Star	12 1/2" block
3	Monkey Wrench	12 1/2" block
4	Flying Geese	12 1/2" block
5	Friendship Star	6 1/2" block
6	Battlegrounds	12 1/2" block
7	Triangle Twist	12 1/2" block
8	Northern Lights	12 1/2" block
9	Ohio Star	6 1/2" block
10	Cotton Reels	6 1/2" block
13	Dutchman's Puzzle	12 1/2" block

**Traditional Designs**

1	One patch	12 1/2" block
18	Clamshell	12 1/2" block
19	Log cabin	6 1/2" block
20	Square in a Square	6 1/2" block
21	Crazy	12 1/2" block

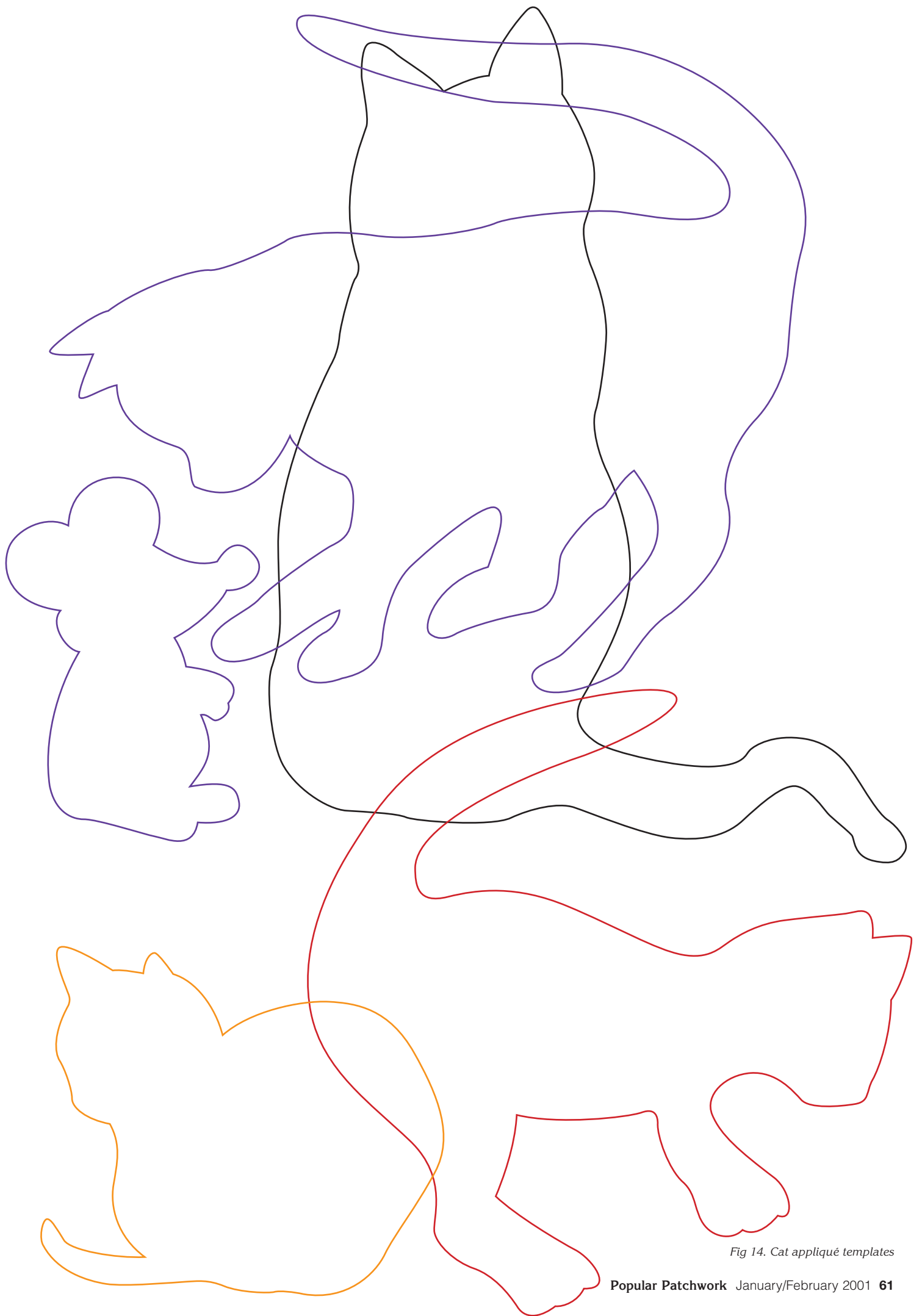


Fig 14. Cat appliqué templates