

SEPTEMBER 2023

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**Block of the
Month Club**



Explore Motherhood by O.V. Brantley

Guest Designer



Follow O.V. Online!

Website: ovspeaksquilts.com

Instagram: [@ovspeaksquilts](https://www.instagram.com/ovspeaksquilts)

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O.V. Brantley is a self-taught quilter who began quilting in 1999 as a way to reduce stress. After working her way through a book entitled *Teach Yourself to Quilt*, she realized she had found her passion. Since then she has made over 300 quilts which have been given to friends, family, co-workers, charitable causes, and sold to collectors. Her quilts are traditional with an ethnic flair. She describes them as being her interpretative auto-biography, or put another way – her view of the world through quilts. They capture her life experiences in an inspirational way.

O.V. is a founding member of the Brown Sugar Stitchers Quilt Guild and a past president. She is also one of the founders of the Atlanta Quilt Festival, Inc. It showcases African American quilts each August in Atlanta, and it is the largest African American quilt festival in the country.

O.V.'s quilts have won awards at various quilt shows and been featured in several quilt publications including the historical volume that documents Georgia quilts entitled *Georgia Quilts, Piecing Together a History*. She was honored to be commissioned by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to create a memory quilt for Oprah Winfrey, which was presented in 2019.

Along with having a quilt in the *Say Your Piece- Black Women: Mothers, Martyrs and Misunderstood* at the National Quilt Museum Oct. 21, 2022 – Feb. 21, 2023, O.V. shared her collection of 57 red and white quilts in a solo exhibit entitled *Long Time Coming: A Retrospective of O.V. Brantley's Red and White Quilts* at the Emma Darnell Aviation Museum and Conference Center in Atlanta from November 19, 2022 – January 13, 2023.

Explore Motherhood



Exploration/ Exploring/ Explore

It is important to me that my quilts tell a story or include a message. That is why my quilt should be “explored” in layers. When you look at my quilt, I hope that you begin to think of exploring another continent, another species, and the universal nature of motherhood. My daughter India and I travel quite a bit. Our last international trip before Covid was a safari in Kenya. You can see why exploring and motherhood was immediately on my mind for this block!

However, life is about choices, and motherhood is a choice. The birds that are flying in different directions symbolize that choice. One embraces the idea of motherhood. The other bird says, “I’m outta here!” Accept differences. As this is an appliqué landscape quilt, the placement of each piece does not need to be exactly like mine. Like nature, it is okay to be perfectly imperfect.



Materials

Background Fabric- choose if you want to piece your background, as shown in the sample, or if you'd prefer a single fabric. Either way the background will be larger than needed and trimmed down to size at the very end.

Single fabric background: 14.5" x 26.5"

Pieced background: (feel free to adjust size of layers as desired)

Dirt – 3.5" x 14.5"

Rocky Dirt – 3" x 14.5"

Grass – 6.5" x 14.5"

Sky – 8.75" x 14.5"

Stars – 6.5" x 14.5"

Appliqué Shapes - use up some scraps for these shapes.

Mother Giraffe - 10" square

Baby Giraffe - 8" square

Watering Hole - 4" x 8"

Birds - 4" square for each (2 total)

Trees:

Trunks - 9" square

Leafy tops - 9" square

OTHER

1/2 yard Fusible of your choice

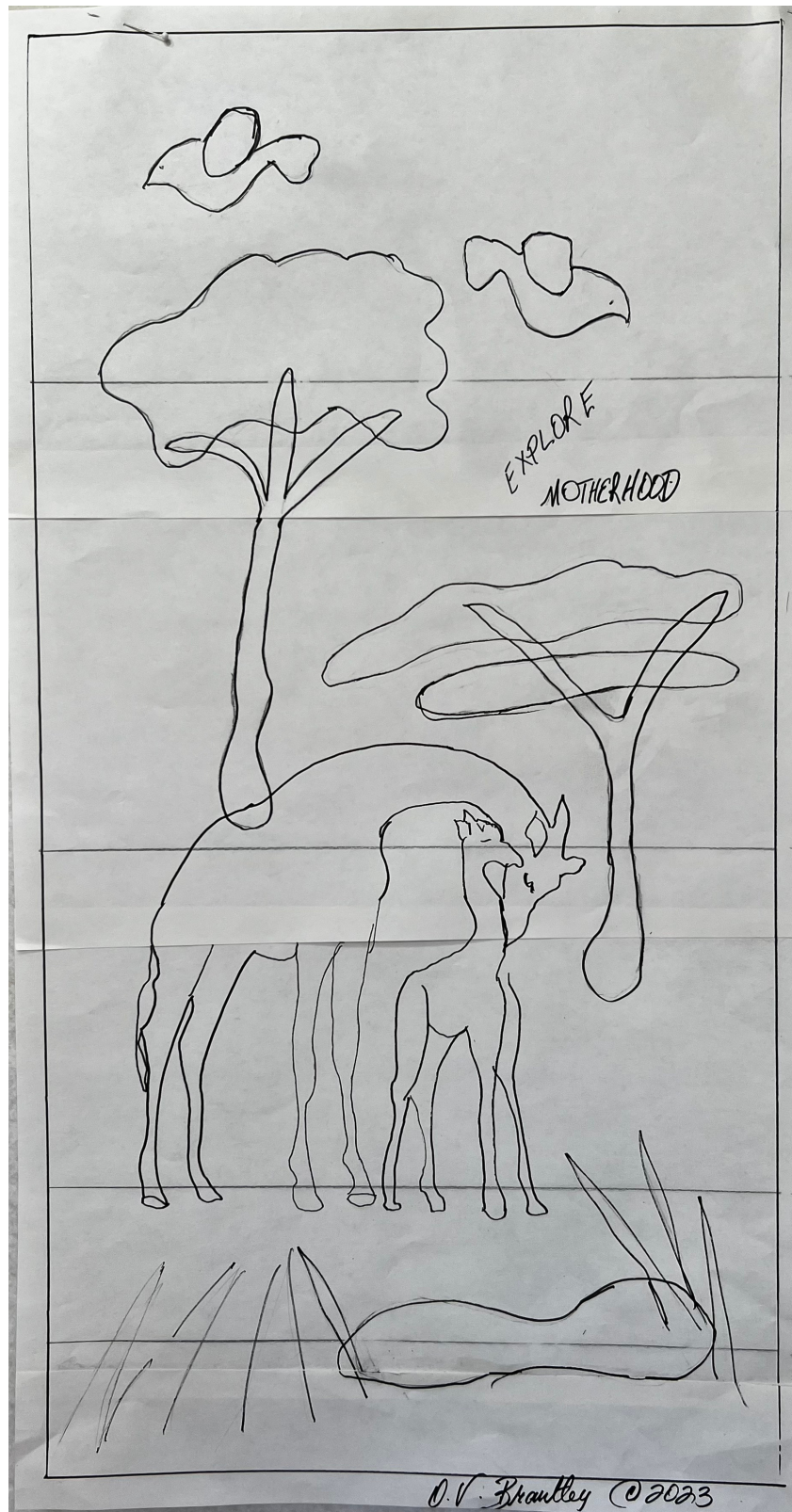
Embellishments as desired- buttons, beads, embroidery thread

Sharp scissors

Tweezers

Painters Tape

Layout Guide



Preparation

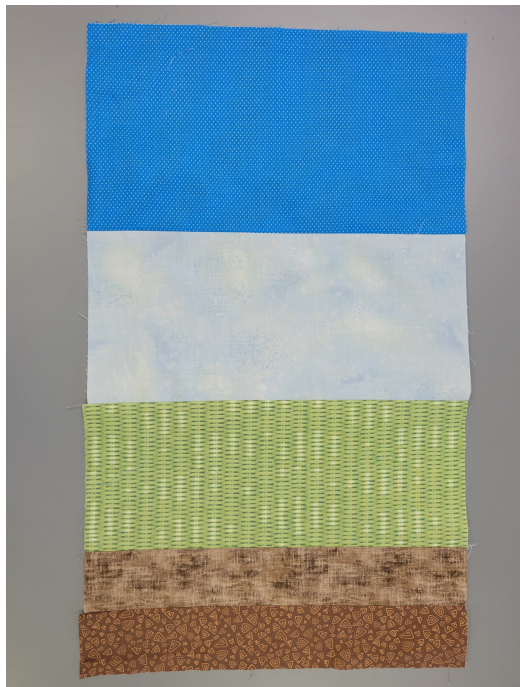


Photo 1

Decide what you want your background to look like. You can use a solid background, a pieced neutral background, or a landscape background as I did.

1. Choose your fabrics carefully. You can go realistic, or you can go whimsical as I did. I have never seen a pink giraffe. You could also collage them. It's up to you. If you're doing a landscape background, choose fabric that looks like sky, grass, dirt, etc.



Photo 2

2. Once you've decided on your fabrics, cut and piece your background (Photo 1). Since appliqué can sometimes shrink your background, make sure it is approximately 14.5" X 26.5". You will trim it after the top is finished.

3. Since the background is cut larger than the final size, you may find it useful to use tape or similar to mark the 12" x 24" finished size for reference (Photo 2).

Preparation



Photo 3



Photo 4

4. Decide which appliqué method you want to use. I used the fused appliqué method using Steam-A-Seam 2. Follow the directions on the package for use.

I like fusible because you can move the pieces around until you iron them. This allows you to play around with the layout.

5. Print out the templates and trace them onto the paper side of your fusible. You may need to reverse the pieces to get the mirror image if you care which way your giraffes are facing (Photos 3 & 4).

If you are using needle turn appliqué, leave an extra 1/4" when cutting for turning under.

6. Cut out the traced shapes about 1/4" away from the drawn line.

7. Fuse the cut shapes onto the wrong side of your fabric and let them cool completely.

Directions



Photo 5



Photo 6

8. Cut out all of the fabric shapes directly along the drawn line (Photo 5).

9. Peel the fusible paper off the backs of all of your shapes.

10. Starting with the two giraffes and tree trunks, place all of the shapes onto your background using the Layout Guide for reference (Photo 6).

Be sure to keep your shapes inside the taped edges that mark the finished size of the block, this will keep them from being caught in a seam allowance or trimmed off.

11. Placement of the appliqué pieces do not have to be exact! Play around with the arrangement until you are happy with it. All the pieces are simple shapes that you can re-size if you like. You can free hand cut the tall grass shapes.

Directions

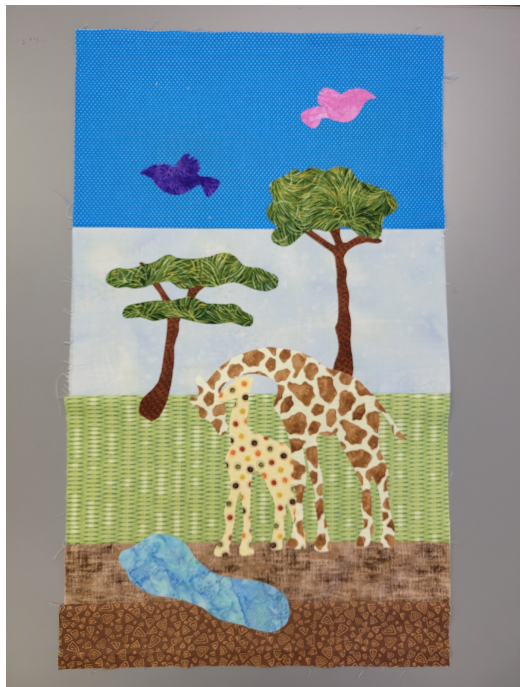


Photo 7

12. Once you are happy with the layout, remove the tape, and carefully fuse the shapes onto the background (Photo 7).

13. After fusing my pieces, I used a blanket stitch and matching thread on each piece. Stitch down your pieces as desired.

Embellishing the Block

14. Embellishments can add a little personality to your quilt. I added the words “Explore Motherhood” because I love adding words to my quilts. I used letter tiles, but you could also embroider the words.

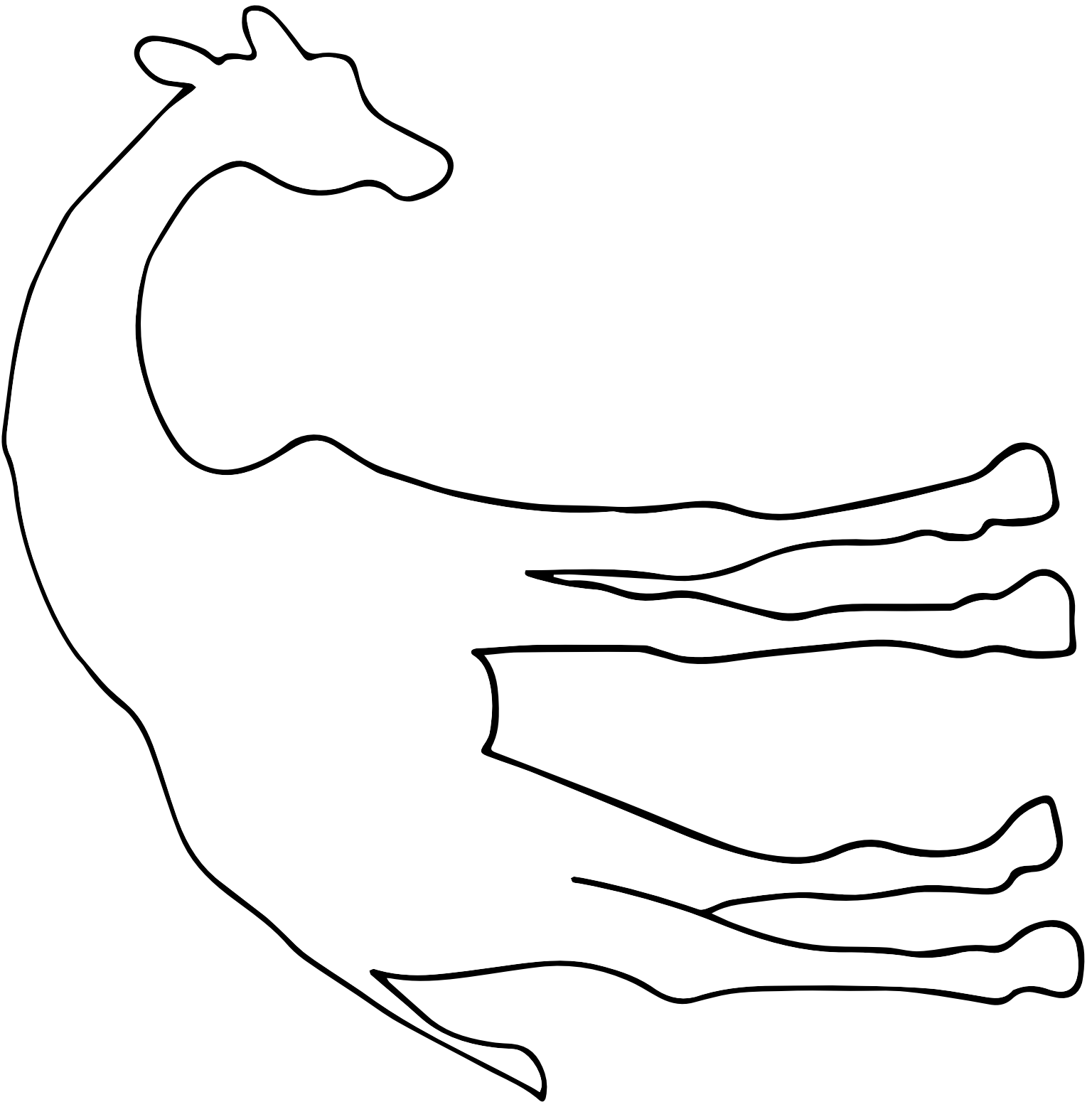
I also gave the birds a black crystal eye. You could also add butterfly buttons in the sky, fish buttons in the watering hole, etc.

Use your imagination!

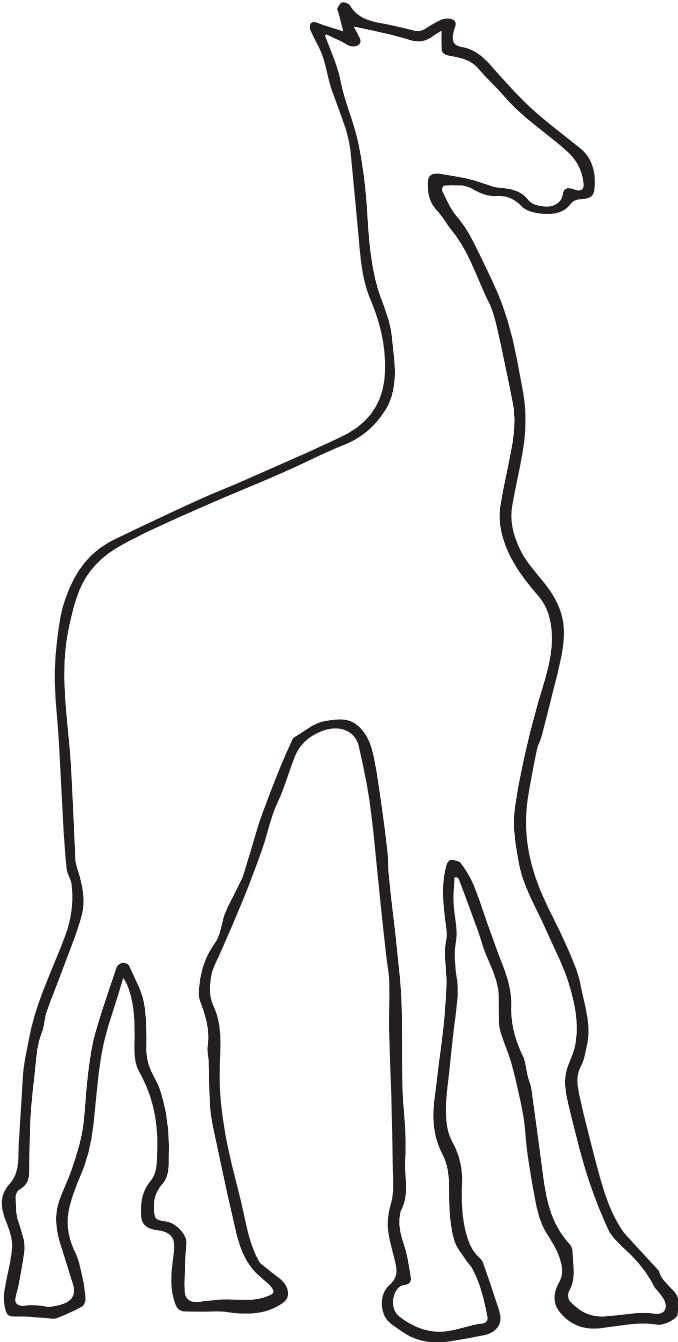
15. Once you're satisfied with the block, trim it carefully to 12.5" x 24.5" in size.



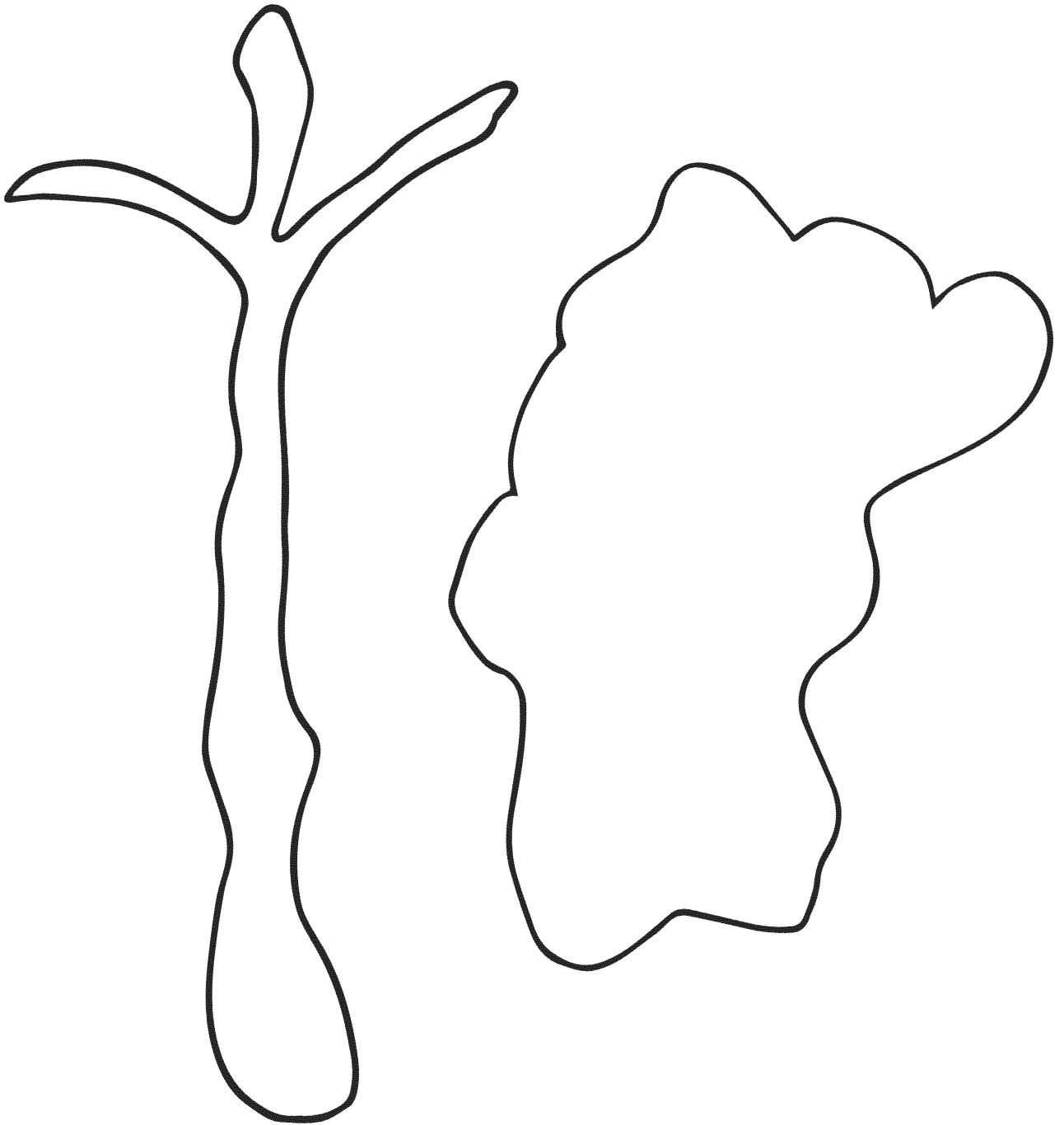
Mother Giraffe



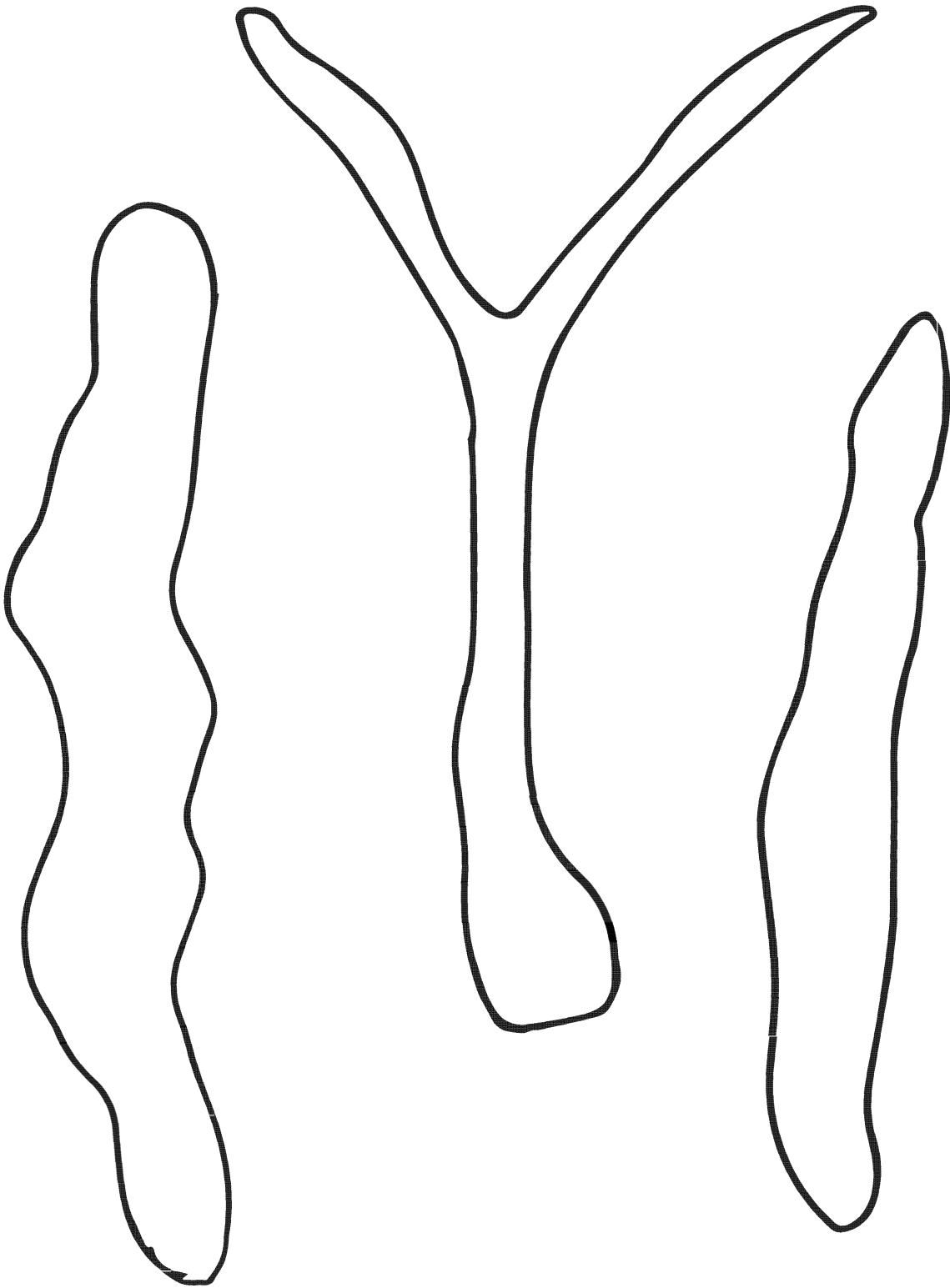
Baby Giraffe



Tree #1



Tree #2



Birds & Watering Hole

