Pillow Trapunto
by Barbara E. Lies

Finished Dimensions: 14” x 18”
Skill Level: Challenging

GARDEN PARTY, 14” x 18”
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Trapunto adds irresistible dimension and interest to any quilt but the many steps required can make it daunting for those looking forward to actually finishing a quilt. Appliquéd light-colored motifs on dark grounds makes for dramatic quilts but preventing show-through of the seam allowance can be just as challenging as trapunto. It can also be difficult to quilt around the trapunto without creating distracting ripples in the surface of the trapunto. Pillow trapunto is a fun and easy way to address these challenges simultaneously. Follow along to learn the technique while you make this goofy little Garden Party wall quilt.

Getting started

Enlarge the appliqué placement diagram 200% (page 37). You will also be using it to make the appliqué piece patterns. Don’t forget to reverse the patterns for fused appliqué when you do so. Full-size appliqué piece patterns are available as a download (see On the Web, page 14).

There are 3 different colors of pattern pieces:
• The blue-outlined motifs are lined with stabilizer and pillow-trapunto quilted with fusible fleece.
• The black-outlined motifs are lined only with stabilizer.
• The green-outlined motifs are fused.

To make the iron-on stabilizer templates, trace the blue and black patterns onto the dull (non-fusible) side of the firm, iron-on stabilizer using a fine-point permanent marker. Group the same colored patterns together on the stabilizer. Include the letters and numbers. Notice that you will need more than one template of some pieces.

Preparing and fusing the templates

The black-outlined motifs (BH1, BH2, BH4, L1, L2, and L3) are only lined with stabilizer and not pillow-trapunto quilted. First cut out the templates along the inner edge of the drawn line, removing the outline as you cut. Editor’s note: If you are using the web patterns, do not cut off the dashed lines. These indicate underlapped edges so cut just outside these lines. Position these stabilizer templates on the wrong side of your appliqué fabrics. Fuse following the manufacturer’s instructions. Cut around the stabilizer template leaving a turn-under allowance of about ¼".

The blue outlined pieces (C1-C8, B1-B5, S1-S2, T1-T4, BH3 and BH5) are pillow-trapunto quilted. To prepare these pieces, place the fusible fleece glue-side up on a thick terry towel. Place the traced stabilizer...
templates fusible-side down on top of the fleece (photo 1). Following the manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the layers pressing gently and protecting your iron with a press cloth. *Tip: If you like the look of a more Rubenesque trapunto, fuse a second layer of the fleece under the first.* I used two layers in the *Garden Party* quilt. Cut out on the line of the stabilizer template.

Set the bird body piece (B5) aside. Fuse the rest of the stabilizer templates to the wrong side of your appliqué fabrics. Cut out around the template leaving a larger seam allowance to cover the fleece, about ½”. Clip the concave curves on these pieces. To do this, hold the motif stabilizer-side up. With the cutting edge of your scissors lift the seam allowance to the top edge of the thickness of the fleece and clip just to the point where the seam allowance touches the stabilizer template (photo 2). This assures coverage of the depth of the fleece.

### Preparing the turned appliqué

Practice the gluing technique by beginning with the black-outlined motifs. Working on your gluing surface, rub glue along the edge of the stabilizer and fabric seam allowance. Don’t glue or turn the edges that will underlie adjacent pieces (indicated by dashed lines on the web patterns).

Turn the edge neatly over the stabilizer using the tweezers and awl or seam ripper. To do this, begin at one end of an outer curve with the seam allowance to the left. Grab the lower edge of the seam allowance with the tweezers and gently pull it over the stabilizer template. Hold this in place with the awl (photo 3).

Grab another section of seam allowance no more than ¼” away from the first bite, and pull it over the stabilizer template moving the awl to the new position. Continue around the curve, gently pulling and holding the seam allowance in place to form tiny upright pleats as you go. *Tip: Don’t move the motif as you glue; instead, turn the gluing surface leaving the motif in place until all edges are glued.* With the awl, tease out any folds that form. Use the back end of the tweezers to smooth the edge of the curve so that you have a beautiful perfect curve (photo 4).

On pieces with points, continue to fold the seam allowance over, extending the line of the curve past the stabilizer and making the fold a bit deeper in the extension. Glue the seam allowance of the next edge, including the extended folded seam allowance, and pull it over the motif. The turned seam allowance should not appear on the right side of the motif. If it does, tease it back under the motif with the tweezers. The very slight extra bulk will be hidden under the piece. Prepare all of the black-lined motifs in this manner.

For the blue-lined trapunto pieces, rub glue along the edge of the fleece and the fabric seam allowance then turn the seam al-
lowances over the stabilizer and fleece as you did for the previous pieces.

Preparing the bird body

For the bird body, piece B5, rough cut the appliqué fabric approximately 8” x 5” and set aside. Trace the green-outlined motifs (B6, B7, B8, B11 and B12) onto the paper side of the fusible web. Fuse to fabric scraps for the eyes, beak, and foot. Cut out. Tape the bird placement guide to a light box or window. Position the bird fabric right-side up over the guide. Position the eyes and beak on the bird appliqué (set the fused foot aside). Carefully remove from the light box and fuse. Layer the bird fabric over tear-away stabilizer. Thread your machine with fine thread to match the appliqué. Stitch around the eyes and beak with a narrow zigzag. Remove the stabilizer. Back at the light box, layer the bird fleece template then the bird fabric over the placement guide, aligning the eyes and beak to the guide (photo 5). Glue-tack the fabric to the template. Trim and clip the bird appliqué. Turn and glue the seam allowances. Stitch the beads in place for the eyes. Trace 5 tulip circles (T5) onto the paper side of fusible web. Fuse to the appliqué fabric, cut out, and set aside.

Assembling the appliqué

Assemble the pieces for each motif, gluing them together at the underlaps:

- For the birdhouse, glue the scallops under the roof edge first, and then assemble the rest of the birdhouse.
- For the flowers, assemble and glue the ‘C’ pieces for the coneflower, ‘T’ pieces for the tulip, and an S1 and S2 for each of the 3 small Sweet Peas.
- For the bird, assemble all pieces except for the foot.

The glue will hold all in place temporarily until you appliqué the pieces to the background; if you prefer, blindstitch the inner edges of the individual motifs by hand or by machine.

From the stem fabric, cut 4 bias strips ¾” x 4”. Fold lengthwise, wrong sides together, and stitch a very narrow zigzag ¼” from the fold. Fold the seam allowance to one side and press. Trim the seam allowances close to the stitching.

Spray starch your background fabric until it is as stiff as a piece of paper. With a water-soluble marker, draw a 14” x 18” rectangle on the background. Now it’s time to party! Position the motifs following the diagram, or make your own arrangement. Be careful to cover the raw edges of the stems with another appliqué piece. Add more flowers or another bird. Glue all in place. Fuse and zigzag the bird’s foot and the tulip circles after placing the other motifs. Following manufacturer’s directions, wash out the water-soluble marker lines. Square up the quilt top to 14½” x 18½”.

Quilting & finishing

Layer the top, batting, and backing. Thread your machine with monofilament on top and fine thread in the bobbin. Machine appliqué the motifs through all of the layers. After completing the appliqué, I finished the background quilting with free-motion grasses, leaves, flowers, and clouds.

Sew the binding strips together to make 74” of continuous binding. Finish the edges of your quilt with single-fold binding, add a hanging sleeve and your party is ready to start!

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Appliqué placement
Enlarge diagram 200%.
Reverse the pattern pieces for fused appliqué.
Patterns are reversed for fusible appliqué.
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Garden Party
by Barbara E. Lies ©2014
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