Tree of Life Pillow

Designed by Eleanor Levie;
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What You'll Need:

<u>For Appliqué:</u>
> 5/8 yard of medium-weight fabric such as linen-blend fabric, for background (includes pillow back)
> 9" x 12" piece of felt, for tree
> ¼ yard (9" x 17") of paper-backed fusible web, such as Pellon Wonder-Under
> Scraps of 4 different fabrics (print, batik, solid, lame), for leaves

<u>For Finishing:</u>
> 20" square of batting
> 20" square of muslin, for backing
> Sewing and quilting threads to match and contrast
> 18" square pillow form

How-To's

1. **Preparation:** Pre-wash and dry fabric to pre-shrink, press smooth. Cut a 20" square from one end of fabric, for pillow front. Fold 20" square in half; crease. Fold again into quarters; crease. Mark center with a pin; unfold.
2. **Tree:** Trace actual-size pattern — a separate PDF file you can download here — for tree to paper backing of fusible web. Roughly cut out marked paper-backed web, and use a medium-hot iron and a press cloth to press fusible to one side of felt. Cut out tree along traced solid lines.

Insert a pin through the front to correspond to X mark on tree pattern. Peel off paper. Align this pin with pin that marks center of pillow front. Fold pillow front vertically in half and ensure that tree is centered along vertical crease; pin to secure. Using a press cloth, press to fuse tree in place.

3. **Leaves:** Choose 4 different fabrics. Cut out a 4" square, or 3" x 5" or 2" x 6" piece from each fabric. Press fusible web to wrong side of each.   Peel away paper backing, and then cut out 6 leaves from each fabric as follows: Use the print of a fabric to simulate the veins in a leaf. Cut out leaf pattern and trace around it, or use a coin and measure 2" through the center of it to mark a leaf shape, or simply eyeball the size and shape of a leaf. Leaves need not be identical.

Arrange leaves along branches of tree, either as desired or referring to dash lines on pattern. Pin leaves in place. When you are happy with the balance of fabrics and directionality of leaf points, press to secure. Work leaf by leaf, removing the pin, and using a press cloth.

4. **Machine-appliqué and quilt:** Pin pillow top to same size batting and muslin, for backing. Stitch around all shapes, and stitch striations that follow tree's contours, for bark. Also stitch along centers of leaves, for veins.
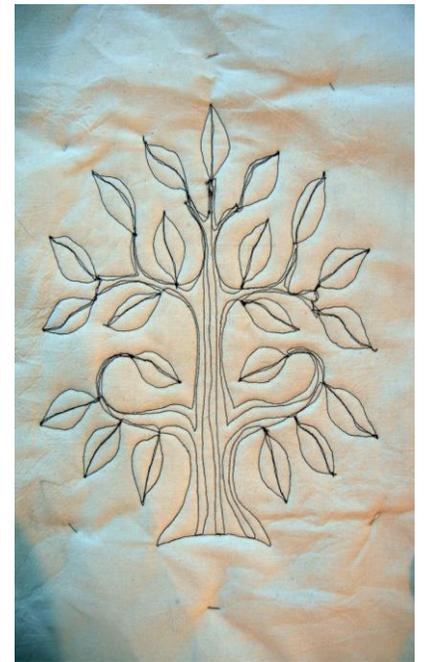
5. **Hand quilt:** Place pillow top on a flat surface. Refer to tree pattern and locate center of the felt by the X-mark. Place the point of a compass at this X-mark, and set compass for 6". Scribe a circle. Reset compass for 6 5/8", and scribe a larger, concentric circle. Hand-quilt along each of these circles. Trim pillow front to 19" square, with circles centered.

6. **Assembly:** For pillow back, cut a 19" square from remaining yardage. Place on pillow front with right sides facing. Stitch around, ½" from edges, leaving 5" in the center of the bottom edge

unstitched. Clip corners, and turn to right side. Insert pillow form, and turn open edges ½" to the inside. Slipstitch edges closed.

 Alternatively, cut 19" square from self fabric for backing, plus an additional 13" x 19" rectangle. Turn one edges of the square 3" to right side twice to form placket; topstitch along folds. Cut out a 4" leaf shape from scrap of the tree felt with fusible web on the back. Center vertically on placket; fuse. Stitch around edges, then stitch a buttonhole down the center of the leaf. Cut the buttonhole through all layers. Turn one 19" edge of the rectangle 1" to wrong side twice; topstitch to hem. Place backing pieces side by side, with right sides up and finished edges butting. Bring 3" placket with leaf to overlap 1" hem, so that outside dimensions equal 19". Pin at top and bottom. Place quilted pillow top on top, with right sides facing. Stitch all around, ½" from edges. Clip corners, turn to the right side. Stitch on a large button to correspond with buttonhole.

Insert pillow form and button the backing closed. ⳙ

For more quilting designs, see my books and workshops at EleanorLevie.com.