

A Pillow with a Little Love

by Carrie Bloomston

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Materials

Finished size 20" x 20"

- 21" square piece of background linen, quilting cotton, or home dec fabric for pillow front
- Washable marker or tailor's chalk
- 1 skein of colorful silk sari ribbon (I buy this from Leilani Arts.)
- Washable school glue stick
- Thread in complementary colors
- 2 fat quarters of complementary fabrics (linen, quilting cotton or home dec weight fabric)
- Spray starch (I used Best Press from Mary Ellen Products.)
- 20" feather pillow insert

Optional

- Assorted scraps for piecing background

As an artist, I am always seeking artful and quick ways to achieve my artistic vision. One of my favorite mediums for quick and vibrant expression is the recycled silk sari ribbon from Leilani Arts. Leilani Arts employs a women's collective in India to scoop up the scraps leftover during sari production from the factory floors and up-cycles them into stunningly gorgeous ribbons. I use these beautiful ribbons almost as an extension of my hand, to write in cursive, or sew with to create fun and artful gifts, and so much more. And the best part is you get to be as free and vibrant as the ribbon ... It is crinkled, organic, and curled. Don't try to control it, just work with it!

INSTRUCTIONS

Seam allowances are ½" for constructing the pillow cover. Pieced seams are ¼".

Prepare the pillow front

1. Place the 21" square piece of background fabric on the work surface.

Note: If you wish, piece a background square with assorted large and small scraps, as I did with my pillow.

2. Using the tailor's chalk or washable marker, write the word "love" or a word of your choosing in cursive onto the pillow front. Leave space in the bottom-right quadrant of the pillow for the big flower.

Tip: Practice writing the word on paper first until you like what you see.

Attach sari silk to front

1. Apply the glue stick on the word and start attaching the silk sari ribbon to the pillow front. Work slowly. You will need to massage the silk into the glue to create a bond as you work. Only use enough glue for one letter at a time. Let your fingers press the glue as it dries. The glue is only supposed to hold everything in place until you get to the sewing machine so it doesn't need to be perfect.

Tip: Choose varying colors of silk sari ribbon as you go. You can cut it and start with a new color anywhere along the

design. Let the sari ribbon twist and turn as it will. Don't try to make it all flat and neat.

2. Once you are finished gluing, take the pillow front to the sewing machine and sew on the silk ribbon using a wide yet loose zigzag stitch.

Tip: *This is really fun! Let the silk do what it wants, even if it bunches up a bit.*

Create the flower

1. Draw a rough circle in the bottom right quadrant of the pillow front square, about 6"–9" depending on the look you want. Start gluing the silk sari ribbon in a spiral beginning in the middle of the circle, using the same technique above. Take your time. Change colors as often as you want by cutting and simply gluing a new piece over it.

Tip: *Remember not to be too perfect. Let the silk do what it wants. It will look looser and more spontaneous that way.*

2. After the circle is complete, cut little rounded triangular leaves from the fabric scraps or silk ribbon and tuck them on both sides of the flower. Tuck the edges of the leaves under the glued out edges of the circle shape by peeling it back slightly and re-gluing it.
3. Take the pillow front to the machine and, starting in the center of the flower and using a wide, loose zigzag stitch, sew around and around to create the beautiful organic flower shape. Sew over the leaves.

Make the envelope back


1. Cut each fat quarter 13½" x 21".
2. Along the 21" edge, fold the edge under ½" and press. Fold under again ½" and press once more. Edge stitch along the fold. Press. Repeat

these steps for other the other rectangle. This finished the edges of the envelope pillow opening.

Assemble the pillow

1. Place the finished pillow front on the table, right side facing up.
2. Place 1 rectangle on top, right side facing down, aligning long side and the top and bottom raw edges. The finished edge will be in the middle of the pillow. Repeat with the other rectangle, lining up raw edges and overlapping at center back.

Note: *You can decide if you want the opening to be vertical or horizontal. I like both, so I choose based on the project.*

3. Pin around the outside edges. Stitch around all 4 edges of the pillow cover, backstitching at the beginning and end, and pivoting at the corners. Press. Clip the corners, being careful not to cut into the stitches. This will create neat corners—less bulky.
4. Turn the pillow cover right side out and insert the feather pillow form through the envelope opening. 

such-designs.com

Resources

[Silk sari ribbon](#)

leilaniarts.net

