

Michael Miller Fabrics' Citron-Gray Nursery: Animal Appliqué Pillows

Editor: Liz Johnson

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Our pretty piped pillow tutorial offers free downloadable patterns for a friendly elephant and a graceful giraffe. If you are clever with paper and pen, you can draw additional shapes and expand your zoo. For easiest appliquéing, keep curves large and smooth and avoid tiny points. These animal appliqué pillows are just one of eight projects in our new nursery series sponsored by our good friends at Michael Miller Fabrics, and are created using their new *Color Story* concept. We love the Citron and Gray 'Huevos' fabric we chose for the pillow backs and the elephant appliqué. Repeating circles that are chubby and sweet, like little soap bubbles.

With a nod to Laura Elizabeth Richards, we have to share the poem that inspired these cute appliqué shapes. One that both Alicia and I have had firmly stuck in our heads for years: *"Once there was an elephant, who tried to use the telephant. No! No! I mean an elephone, who tired to use the telephone."* Click to read the [full Eletelephony poem](#). HA! Now it will be stuck in your head for years.

Unlike most fabric collections that are filled with coordinated prints in multiple colorways, **color** is what this story is all about. Michael Miller's Color Story concept combines hues that consistently work so well together, they create their own ambience, their own feeling... their own *story*. These fabric color pairings are also currently prominent in other areas of fashion, interior style and pop culture: Citron-Gray, Aqua-Red, Cocoa-Berry, It's a Boy thing, It's a Girl Thing, Lagoon, Orchid-Gray, Retro, Rouge et Noir, Sorbet and Urban Grit.

Like good friends who hang together over time, Michael Miller's eleven Color Story pals will evolve from one release to another. Their stories will update and build momentum as color trends evolve, but their compatibility will remain. You'll be able to add new fabrics within the same *Color Story*, knowing they'll fit in and work well together.

Welcome to the Citron-Gray Color Story and our custom baby boy nursery. It's a story with a very happy ending.

For more baby projects, take a look at our original [Shower Power Baby Gifts](#).

Sewing Tools You Need

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the [Janome DC4030 Pink Ribbon](#))
- [Zipper foot](#) or even better, a [Narrow Base Zipper foot](#)

Fabric and Other Supplies



NOTE: *Supplies shown below are for TWO coordinating pillows, because the giraffe and the elephant are friends and prefer not to be separated.*



- ½ yard of 44-45" wide solid fabric for the pillow fronts: we used [Blanca-White Cotton Sheeting by Michael Miller Fabrics](#)
- ½ yard of 44-45" wide print fabric for the back of ONE pillow AND the elephant applique we used [Gray Huevos from the Citron-Gray Color Story by Michael Miller Fabrics](#)
- ½ yard of 44-45" wide print fabric for the back of the SECOND pillow we used [Citron Huevos from the Citron-Gray Color](#)

Story by Michael Miller Fabrics

- 2 yards of 44-45" wide print fabric for the accent piping on both pillows. *we used Citron Tiny Gingham from the Citron-Gray Color Story by Michael Miller Fabrics*
- ½ yard or scrap (you need a piece at least 8½" x 11", 16" x 16" is better so you can best center the design) of 44-45" wide print fabric for the giraffe applique: *we used Citron Dot 'n' Square from the Citron-Gray Color Story by Michael Miller Fabrics*
- 4 yards ¼" diameter cotton cording
- ½ yard of lightweight fusible interfacing
- Two 16" x 16" pillow forms
- All purpose thread
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pen or pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Tape measure
- Straight pins

Where to Buy

Michael Miller Fabrics recommends the following online retailers as great places to shop for and buy the beautiful fabrics within the Citron-Gray *Color Story* as well as many other Michael Miller collections:

Hancock's of Paducah: 10% discount on Michael Miller Citron-Gray Color Story fabric. Use promo code: **Citrongrey**

Fat Quarter Shop

Quilt Home

Fabric Depot

CityCraft Online

Hawthorne Threads

Fabricworm

Getting Started

1. Click the Buy Pattern button below to get the pattern sheet(s) required for this tutorial. The pattern, which includes instructions, is \$1.99.

(buy pattern button)

IMPORTANT: *Our patterns are sized to print on standard 8½" x 11" paper. You must print the PDF file(s) at 100%. DO NOT SCALE to fit the page. There is a guide rule on each sheet so you can confirm your final printout is to scale.*

2. Cut out the templates along the solid lines.
3. From the fabric for the pillow fronts (*white cotton sheeting in our sample*), cut TWO 16" x 16" squares.
4. From the fabric for the first pillow back and the elephant applique (*Gray Huevos in our sample*), cut the following:
ONE 16" x 16" square
ONE 12" wide x 16" high rectangle (the Overlap Panel)
ONE 14" wide x 16" high rectangle (the Underlap Panel)
5. From the fabric for second pillow back (*Citron Huevos in our sample*), cut the following:
ONE 12" wide x 16" high rectangle (the Overlap Panel)
ONE 14" wide x 16" high rectangle (the Underlap Panel)
6. From the fabric for the giraffe applique (*Citron Dot 'n' Square in our sample*), cut ONE 16" x 16" square.
7. From the lightweight fusible interfacing, cut TWO 16" x 16" squares.
8. Cut TWO 72" lengths from the cording.

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

Animal appliqué

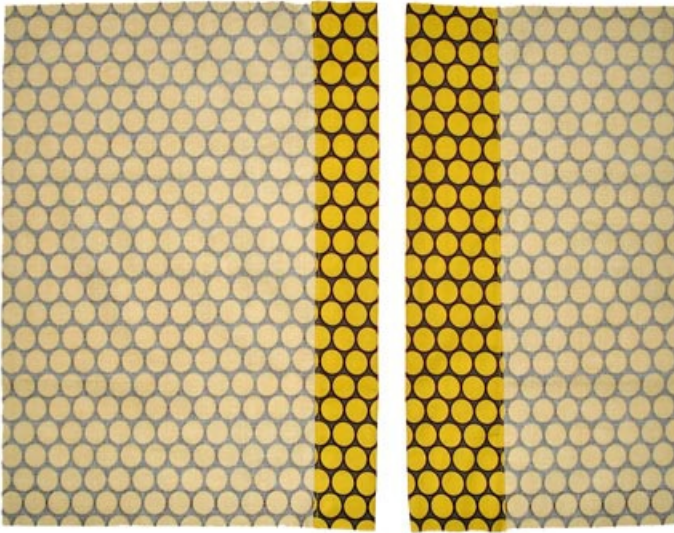
1. Following the manufacturer's directions, fuse a 16" x 16" interfacing square to the WRONG side of the 16" x 16" elephant appliqué fabric (*Gray Huevos in our sample*) and the WRONG side of the 16" x 16" giraffe appliqué fabric (*Citron Dot 'n' Square in our sample*).
2. Flip both interfaced squares to their right sides.
3. Pin the elephant template to one fabric square (*we used Grey Huevos*); pin the giraffe template to the other fabric square (*we used Citron Dot 'n' Square*). Cut out the two animal shapes.



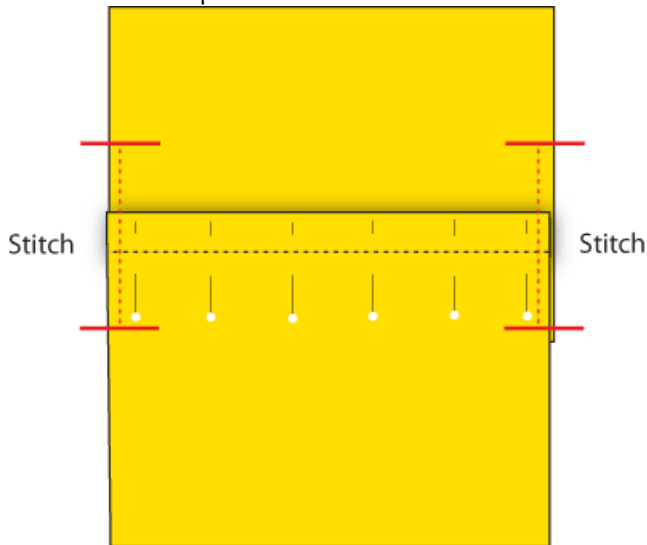
4. Center each of the animal cutouts in the center of each pillow front square (*white cotton sheeting in our sample*).
5. Appliqué the animal shapes in place using a short length zigzag stitch (sometimes called a "satin stitch") all around the outer edge of the animal.
6. Be sure the center of the zigzag stitch is directly over the cut edge of the animal cutout, and also be sure the zigzag stitch length is very short - almost like a buttonhole.
7. If you are new to appliqué, check out our [Chubby Heart Coasters](#) project, which has some excellent appliqué step-by-step photos.

Hem and assemble the back panels

1. On each Overlap Panel, fold and press one 16" edge $\frac{1}{2}$ ", then fold and press an additional 3". Edgestitch in place along the inside folded edge to create a $3\frac{1}{2}$ " clean finished hem.
NOTE: If you are new to hemming, check out our technique tutorial [How To Make A Simple Hem](#).
2. On each Underlap Panel, fold and press one 16" edge $\frac{1}{2}$ ", then fold and press an additional 2". Edgestitch in place along the inside folded edge to create a $2\frac{1}{2}$ " clean finished hem.

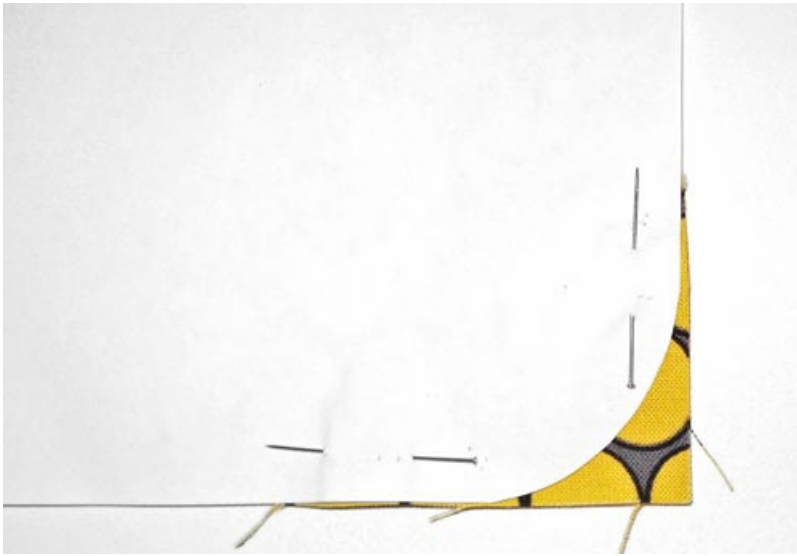


3. Take both pieces and overlap the hems to yield the correct finished height (16" in our sample). The opening should be centered along the back of the pillow. Pin the hems together at the top and bottom edges.
4. Working as close to the edges as possible, stitch the sides of hems together to secure and create one piece. It's easier to work with one piece to stitch front to back.



Round all the corners

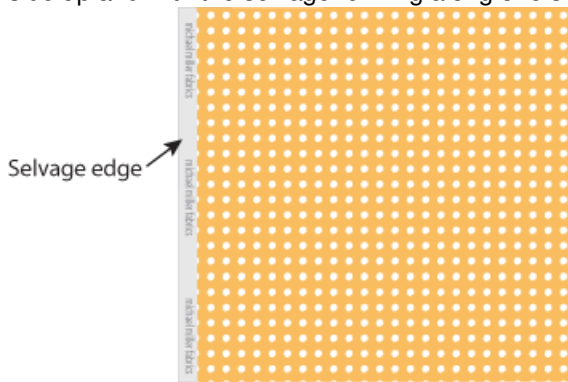
1. On each of the raw edge corners of the Overlap Panels, the Underlap Panels, and the four raw edge corners of the two front animal appliqué panels, cut the corners into a curve.



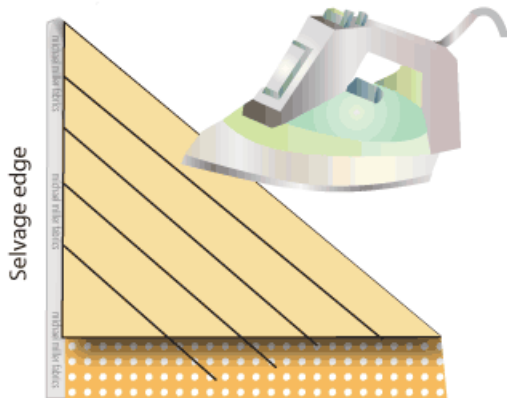
2. Our curve is a quarter of a circle that fits into a $1\frac{1}{4}$ " square. You can draw this onto a piece of paper and pin it to each corner, or you can trace around an object that has a similarly-sized curve (a small drinking glass, for example).

Cut and join the bias strips for the piping

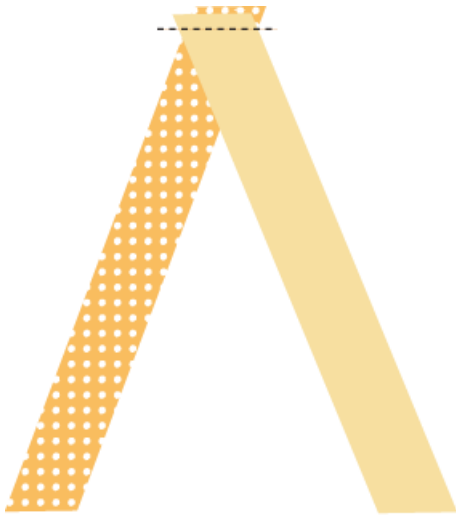
1. On your cutting surface, lay out flat the fabric you've chosen for the piping (*Citron Tiny Gingham* in our sample), right side up and with the selvage running along one side.



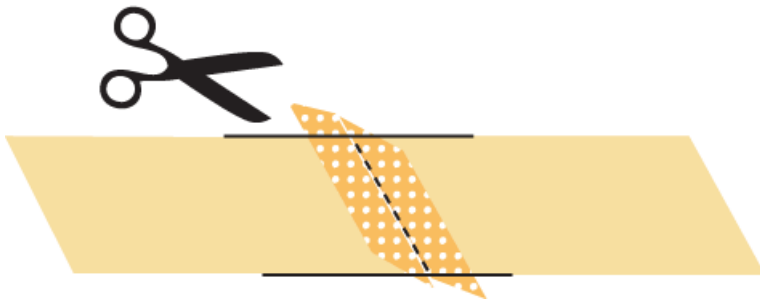
2. The selvage is the woven edge of your fabric where it was originally attached to the loom. The fabric's pattern does not continue onto the selvage, but there is likely to be some information printed there that identifies the manufacturer or designer.
3. Fold the fabric back diagonally so a straight edge is parallel to the selvage.
4. Press the fold and use this crease as a guide to mark your parallel lines.
5. Use a straight edge to make parallel lines $1\frac{1}{2}$ " apart.



6. Cut along these lines with good, sharp shears or a rotary cutter and straight edge.
7. You need 72" of piping to go around each pillow. You will likely need to join strips to make one that is the required 72" long. To do this, take two of your strips and place them right sides together at right angles to each other.
8. Stitch straight across with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance.



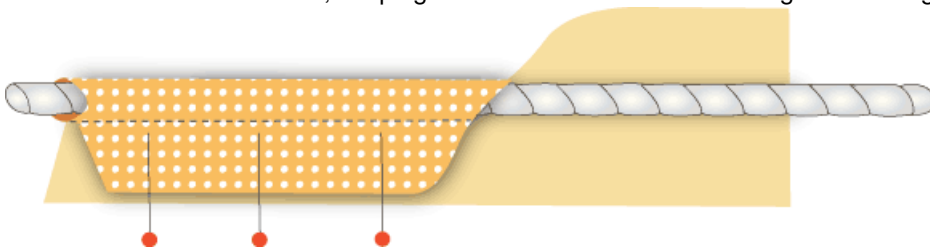
9. Lay flat, press the seam open and trim off the overlapping edges.



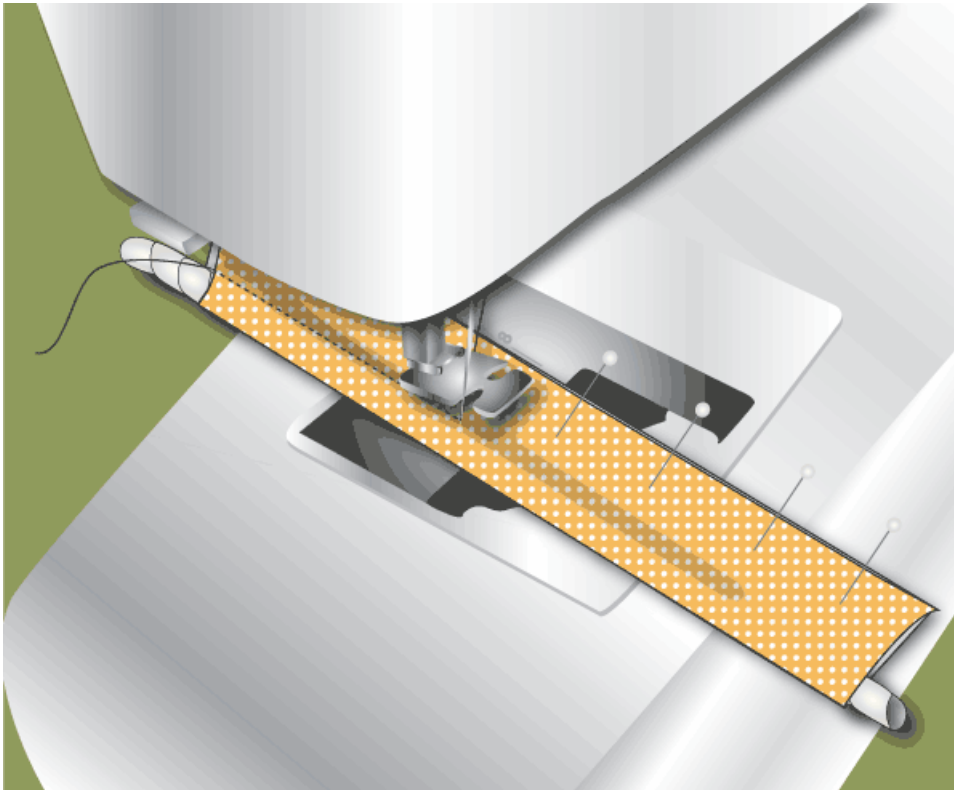
10. Add strips in this manner as necessary until you have one long fabric strip that is at least 72" length. If you are using new fabric cuts, you should only have to stitch together two pieces.
11. Repeat as needed to yield two strips, each 72" long x 1½" wide.

Insert the cording

1. Place one 72" bias strip right side down on a large flat surface.
2. Lay one 72" length of cord in the center.
3. Fold the fabric over the cord, keeping the cord centered and matching the raw edges of the fabric.



4. Pin to hold in place.
5. Carefully move to your sewing machine and adjust the piping so the raw edges line up on your seam allowance marking, and cord pokes out to the left of your foot.
6. Using the Zipper foot or Narrow Base Zipper foot, stitch slowly staying close to the cord and keeping your seam allowance as consistent as possible. Remember to remove any pins as you go so you don't sew over them.



7. Cut one end of the cording close to the raw edge, so it has a sharp, flat end.

Stitch the piping to each pillow back

1. Pin the piping around all four sides on the RIGHT side of each back panel (the envelope back overlaps you edgestitched together above). The 72" length should be enough to go all the way around and to leave an approximate 1" - 2" tail free at the end.
2. Start at the middle of the bottom edge, and pin around all four edges until you return to the start.
3. Clip the seam allowance to make the fabric lay flat. Go up to the line of stitching, but not through it. Clip as you go, making as many as you need to create a smooth curve. This is called "easing" - the little cuts give the otherwise rigid line the flexibility to curve.



4. Start stitching about ¼" - ½" from the raw end of the piping (to facilitate the clean finish outlined below). In other words, make sure you have a tail free at the start.
5. Using your Zipper foot or Narrow Base Zipper foot, stitch along the ½" seam allowance, removing the pins as you go. Remember, you are stitching around a curve, so you'll need to gently ease the fabric as you go. This means it might ripple slightly. That's okay

Finishing the piping ends

1. Continue sewing your piping in place until you are back to where you started. Using that "tail" you accounted for at the beginning, cut off any excess piping so you have about an 1" to work with.
2. With a seam ripper, peel back the fabric to expose the cording underneath.



3. Trim the end of cording tail so it exactly meets the end of the sewn-down cording. Fold under the end of the loose fabric to create a clean edge, adjusting and wrapping this folded end under and around the loose piping tail so it overlaps the sewn down raw edge by about ½".



4. Stitch in place, matching your seam line.



5. If you are new to piping, we have a great tutorial you can review [How to Make and Attach Your Own Piping](#)

Finishing the pillows

1. Place your pillow back piece and your pillow front piece right sides together, matching the raw edges all around.
2. Using your Zipper foot or Narrow Base Zipper foot, stitch a ½" seam around all four edges of the pillow, staying as close to the piping as your foot will allow.

3. You can also back-tack around each corner to reinforce.



4. Using the envelope opening on the back, turn the pillow covers right side out. Push out the corners from the inside to make nice, rounded corners on the outside. Use your finger or a blunt-edge tool, like a large knitting needle or chopstick.
5. Insert the pillow form through the envelope closure and fluff out the corners of the pillow covering evenly.

Contributors

Project Concept: Alicia Thommas

Sample Creation and Instructional Outline: Gregory Dickson

Tags:

- [citron-gray](#)

Pillows & Cushions

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[Michael Miller Fabrics' Citron-Gray Nursery: Patchwork Baby Quilt with Monogram](#)

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