Bye, bye baby cushion

Janai Velez – the recipient of the beautiful quilt – made a cushion to go with her special gift. It not only coordinates perfectly, it sings with the same gentle style.

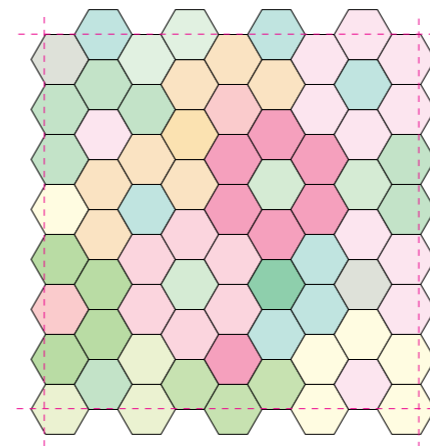Janai Velez – Website: www.janaivelez.com. Instructions by Megan Fisher

Materials
- Assorted scraps of print fabrics left over after finishing the quilt
- 30cm (⅜yd) green print fabric (border and cushion back)
- 72 pre-cut paper hexagons with sides ¾in long or stiff paper to make your own
- Threads and sewing supplies as for the quilt
- Water-soluble fabric glue (optional)
- 35cm (14in) cushion insert

Finished size: About 30cm (12in) square

Note: *The cushion is made using English paper piecing. It would be feasible to use the same construction technique as for Bye, Bye Baby, but Janai found English paper piecing easier because these hexagons are smaller.*

Cushion Layout Diagram

Cutting

1 If you're not using pre-cut papers, trace the hexagon shape from the Pattern Sheet on to template plastic and cut it out accurately. Use it to trace 72 shapes on to stiff paper or light cardstock.

2 Cut 72 hexagons from your assortment of fabric scraps. To do this, lay a paper hexagon on the fabric and cut it out ¼in by eye outside the edges of the paper. Janai created rosettes in her cushion front by cutting six hexagons from the same fabric for the 'petals' and one hexagon from a contrasting fabric for the flower centre. Janai also fussy cut some of the petals so that all six used in a rosette showcased the same printed motif on them. To do this, lay the template on a motif and trace some of the printed lines onto it. Before moving the template, cut this first shape out of fabric ¼in outside its edges. Position the template on another motif, exactly matching the lines you've traced in the centre of the template with the printed lines on the fabric. Cut it out as before. Continue in this manner to trace six hexagons on the fabric, each with exactly the same motif in their centre. Use an eraser to remove the pencil lines. You can now use the template to fussy cut another fabric if you wish.

Assembly

3 Centre a paper hexagon on the wrong side of each fabric one. Run a thin smear of water-soluble fabric glue around the outer edge of the paper template, then fold the edges of the fabric over onto it, one by one. If you prefer not to use glue, fold the edges of the fabric over on to the paper and use needle and thread to tack them together at the corners without going through the paper.

4 Lay out the prepared hexagons in nine columns of eight hexagons each, referring to the Cushion Layout Diagram. Once you have an array of colours and prints that you like, join the hexagons. To do this, match two adjacent hexagons, right sides together and edges aligned. Whip stitch them together along one edge, just stitching through the fold of the fabrics without penetrating the papers. Without cutting the thread, position the next hexagon, right sides together with one from your first pair and whip stitch it in place in the same manner. Continue to join hexagons – you could work in rows or, if you prefer, stitch rosettes together. Then whip stitch adjacent rows or rosettes to each other along their adjoining edges, folding the hexagons to enable you to match their edges.

5 Once all the hexagons have been joined together, carefully remove the papers from behind them. Unfold the turned-under edges of the shapes around the outer edge of the panel and press them flat.

6 Trim the outer edges of the panel so that they are straight, all four edges are the same length and all four corners are 90 degrees. Suggested trimming lines are shown as broken lines on the diagram.

7 From the green print fabric, cut:
• One strip, 9in across the width of the fabric. Crosscut it to yield two rectangles, 12 x 9in (cushion back). From the remainder of this strip, cut:
• Four rectangles, 14 x 2in.

8 Measure your hexagon panel horizontally through the centre. Trim two of the 14 x 2in rectangles to this length. Sew them to the top and bottom edges of the panel. Press seams outwards. Measure your hexagon panel vertically through the centre. Trim the remaining two 14 x 2in rectangles to this length. Sew them to the left and right edges of the panel, and press as before.

Finishing

9 Press under a ¼in double-fold hem on one long edge of each cushion-back rectangle. Machine stitch ⅛in from the edges to secure them.

10 Place the cushion front, right side up, on a table. With right sides together, lay one cushion back rectangle on top of the cushion front with the raw edges level, two corners matching and the hemmed edge towards the centre. Pin well. Pin the other cushion-back rectangle to the other end of the cushion front with the edges and corners aligned – the hemmed edges should overlap in the middle, as shown in Diagram 2.

11 Stitch all the way around the cushion with a ¼in seam allowance. Trim the corners carefully and turn the cover right side out. Press it well before putting the cushion insert inside through the back opening.
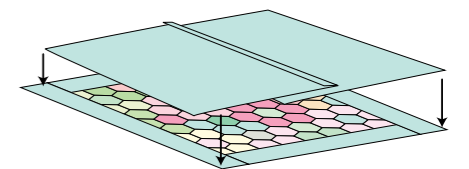
Diagram 2