

# Surface Embroidery Koi Fish Pond

Instructions written and model stitched by Dianne Stauber



This project was inspired by a beautiful, imaginative piece I saw on Reddit, stitched by Grace Pool. You can find her on Reddit as [u/M1ch00l](#) or on Instagram as [gracemichool](#). It took a while before I found the courage to try this on my own, but when I did I had a BLAST!!! I hope you will too.

The piece is created by stitching on three separate embroidery hoops with different layers of tulle. You'll stitch the pond rocks in one hoop, the koi fish in another, and the lily pads on the third. When you stack each hoop on top of the other, you'll have the darkest layer on the bottom with the pond rocks, the fish suspended in "water" in the middle, and the lily pads on the top.

As you create your own koi pond, I encourage you to put your own spin on it. Add more pond rocks than my example...or make your fish bigger or smaller. Stitch some lotus flowers on the water layer. This is your creation...have fun with it! I can't wait to see what you come up with. Please post pictures in the EGA Stitch-A-Long Facebook group when you're done!

Let's get started!

## Supply List

- 3 4" embroidery hoops
- 6 6" squares of colored tulle (blue or green recommended)
- DMC or Fancy floss in your choice of colors. The colors I used are below:
  - Pond rocks (DMC 3799)
  - Koi fish (Classic Colorworks Embers, DMC Blanc and 310)
  - Lily pads (DMC 3345 and 702)
  - Trim to stitch together hoops (if desired)
- Embroidery or tapestry needle
- Milliner's needle
- Printed copies of rocks, fish, and lily pads from these instructions (if desired)
- Tissue paper to trace designs on (if desired)
- Washi or low tack tape to secure tissue paper to ground fabric (if desired)

## Instructions

### Loading the hoops

Being careful not to stretch the tulle so the holes are out of shape, load each hoop as follows:

- One hoop with 3 layers of tulle
- One hoop with 2 layers of tulle
- One hoop with 1 layer of tulle

Be sure the screws on your hoops are all facing the same way. You want the tulle to be smooth on the surface, but it won't be possible for it to be super taut without distorting it. Tighten the hoop carefully.

- The hoop with the 3 layers of tulle is darkest and will be the bottom of your pond. You'll stitch the pond rocks on this hoop.
- The hoop with the 2 layers is the water layer, or middle of your pond, where you'll stitch the koi fish.
- The hoop with the single layer of tulle is the water's surface or top layer, on which you'll stitch your lily pads.



## Tracing the designs

Because we're stitching on tulle, tracing the design onto the fabric with a micron or frixion pen won't be visible enough. If you're feeling brave and creative (which I love!) then go ahead and "free hand" your way through stitching each hoop.

If you'd prefer to have an outline to stitch over as a guide, you can print the included patterns for the rocks, fish, and lily pads and trace them onto tissue paper. Designs are provided in a variety of shapes, so just choose the ones you like. Feel free to enlarge them if you want. You can stitch as many as you'd like...it's your pond!

Use washi or low tack tape to hold the tissue in place while you stitch an outline around the shape in split stitch. Be sure to stitch your outline in the same color floss you plan to fill in the object with. Very carefully tear away the tissue when you're done.



## Stitching

Tulle isn't the type of ground fabric that will hold a knot well, so the loop start is recommended here. You can find a number of videos on YouTube if you've never used it before.

All the stitching, except for the split stitch outlines if you choose to do them, is worked in long and short stitch. Be mindful of the fact that you're stitching on ground fabric that's completely see-thru, so you can't hide anything back there. When I was near the end of my thread, I stopped stitching when I had enough floss to tie a small knot on the back and then snipped off the tails.

Keep in mind that you'll stack the hoops on top of each other with the screws all facing the same direction, so be sure to periodically check the placement of your lily pads so they're not directly over your fish...or so large that they block the view of your fish.

## **Assembly**

Once you're done stitching all three hoops, it's time to assemble!

- Using a very sharp pair of scissors (I used my embroidery scissors with the curved blade), trim the excess tulle off the back of the hoop.
- Stack your hoops on top of each other with the pond rocks layer at the bottom, the koi fish in the middle, and the lily pads on top. Make sure all the screws on the embroidery hoops are in line.

## **Glue Method**

- While you can choose to glue your hoops together, I did not do that. If you do, be sure to use glue that dries clear and use it sparingly to avoid drips.
- If using glue, protect your work surface and set a few books on top of the hoops to be sure they're snug.

## **Stitch Method**

- To stitch the hoops together, load your milliners needle with the desired color. Anchor your thread by tying it in a knot around the hardware on the bottom hoop.
- Bring your needle up above the top hoop and insert the needle down into the top layer so it's flush against the interior side of the hoop. Let the needle continue straight down and pull through the bottom.
- Bring your needle back up the side of the hoop and back down through the top layer, repeating this process as you literally stitch the hoops together.
- Be sure to hold the hoops together tightly as you work.

## **Final embellishments? Why not!**

If you choose, you can decorate the outside of the hoops with a little flair to give it more of a pond look. Try gluing aquarium gravel to the outside of the hoops. Or maybe artificial moss. You can even glue a complimentary fabric to the outside.

I left the back of my bottom hoop bare, but you might choose to finish it so it looks a bit more polished. I keep mine in a cloche on our coffee table where I can enjoy looking at it every day. What will you do to make your pond uniquely yours? We can't wait to see!

Remember to share pictures of your finished ponds in the EGA Stitch-A-Long Facebook page!



