

Silk-n-Metal Beaded Dolphin



**by Stephanie K. Murphy, 2022
Created for EGA Stitch-a-Long Facebook group**

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The Silk 'n Metal Beaded Dolphin covers the very basics of silk & metalwork, with added bead embroidery. This summer project is quick and easy to replicate. Customize it as you like.

Materials List:

Dolphin sketch (last page of instructions, can be shrunk or enlarged as desired)

Fabrics

- Blue water ground (sample was stitched on 28-count Crystal Dwarf Cashel Linen (it has opalescent streaks in it)), 8"x8" or 7"x7" [Read Step 1]
- Cotton fabric (not seen; provides stabilizing support to ground fabric for application of the metalwork), 7"x7"
- Peltex 71F One-sided fusible Extra-Firm Stabilizer (or Skirtex), 6"x6" (doesn't have to be fusible, this is what I had on hand). You could use a Firm or Medium Stabilizer if you have it on hand. See comments in section on bead embroidery.

Threads

- Kreinik 001J Japan Silver #7
- Gloriana Silk Floss #002, Silver Fox (or use a DMC light grey #415, or any grey on hand, since you don't see the thread)
- DMC #310, Black Floss and Kreinik Blending Filament Black
 - OR
 - Kreinik #8 Braid Black
 - OR
 - Madeira Glamour Size 8 Black (#2470)
- Sewing Thread for basting layers together

Beads

- Bugle (Seed) Beads, 6mm, Matte Grey [Joanne's Fabrics 1604-0016]
- Short Bugle (Seed) Beads, 2mm, Matte Grey [Joanne's Fabrics 1604-0073]
- Seed Beads, 2mm, Matte Grey [Joanne's Fabrics 0615-8497]

Needles

- #10 quilting, crewel, or beading needle (sharp),
- #24 tapestry or chenille needle for bury Kreinik Japanese Silver #7

Other

- Straight pins: 4 (I use the ones with a glass or plastic heads)
- 4" Hoop

Materials for Finishing:

- 6"x6" Mat Board or 6"x6" Stretched Canvas (for oil or acrylic painting)
- A little easel to display the dolphin

Step 1

Determine end use of item so you know what size to cut. I cut my Blue Fabric to 8" x 8" and the Cotton background fabric to 8" x 8". I did this to be able to wrap the blue fabric around the 6"x6" canvas-covered frame. If you are simply covering mat board, you can cut the fabric to 7"x7"

Step 2:

Baste Blue Fabric to Cotton background Fabric using long basting stitches with sewing thread and sharp needle. I start from the center and work my way out to the edges.

Step 3:

Using a light box (or other favorite transfer method), trace the dolphin shape onto the layered blue fabric. Use a hard pencil; **be sure you can see the mark (dolphin)** on the fabric! You will cover the mark with the silver thread. Center and place the layered blue fabric into a 4" hoop so it's drum tight! You should be able to bounce a coin off the hoop.

Step 4: [Hint: Remember you can turn your piece in whatever direction you need to for ease of stitching.]

Cut 2 pieces of Japanese #7 Silver (14" each) and lay them over the dolphin starting at the point of the top fin and moving to the right. COVER THE DRAWN LINE. (See Diagram #1) To get that point at the top of the fin, you will want to plunge each silver thread separately to stagger the point as diagrammed. DO NOT PULL THE ENTIRE SILVER THREAD THRU THE FABRIC. This will cause damage to the thread and the coils will slip showing the core. If you did this by accident, throw that piece of silver thread away and get a fresh thread. There is plenty on the spool! Plunge one inch (or less) of **each** of the 2 pieces of silver into the fabric to the back using the #24 chenille or tapestry needle. On the back, hold the tails down to the fabric (on the back and out of the way) with a straight pin.

Thread up #10 sharp needle with 1 strand of the 12 strands of the silk floss (or 1 strand of the 6 strands of DMC cotton floss). Stitch a pin stitch in the center of the dolphin or do an away knot in the center of the dolphin. Come up from the back close to the 2 silver threads very close to the tip of the fin, cross the 2 silver threads, and then dive down into the fabric again, couching the silver threads down to the fabric, keeping the silver threads side by side.



Diagram #1: Direction of Laying Silk Metal

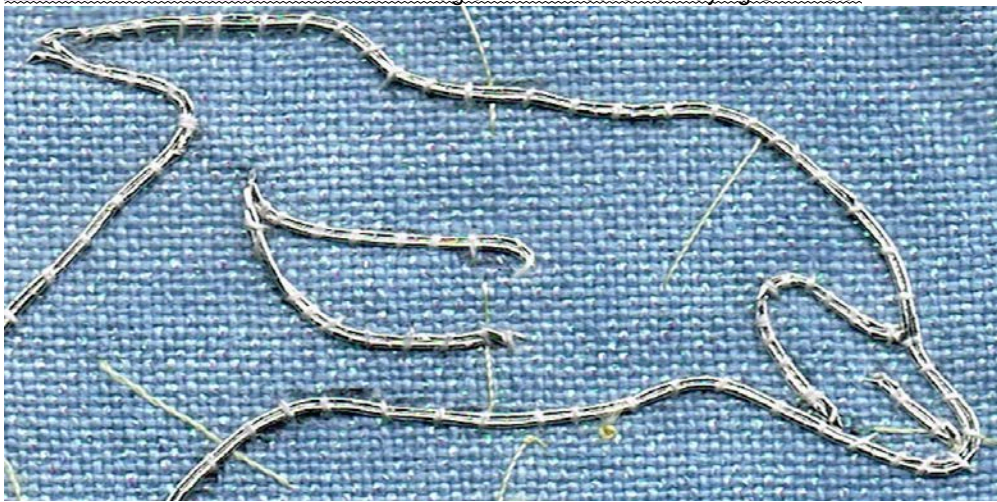


Diagram #2: Sample of Laid Silk & Metal

Step 5:

Look at the silver threads. Do you see the little coil lines on the silver? Keep moving right following the diagram arrows, placing a silk couching stitch every 2 lines on the silver #7 threads. Continue couching carefully and slowly down the Jap #7 silver threads every 2 coils. There is no speed award with metalwork. Take it slow and easy and try to get your couching stitch straight across the Jap #7 threads AND getting the spaces even. When you get to the snout, carefully round the silver metal. Continue couching until the bottom LEFT of the dolphin's tail is reached. Then plunge in the silver threads to the back using the #24 needle and finish the last 2 silk thread couching stitches. Turn the piece over and use your remaining silk/cotton floss, whip stitch the silver threads on the back to the back couching stitches. Do not pierce the fabric, only catch the couching stitches on the back. As this time, you can do the same to the initially plunged silver threads just to clean up the back and get rid of the pin holding the silver threads on the back of the piece.

Step 6:

With 2 fresh pieces of silver #7 (each about 5 inches long), again plunge less than an inch of each one into the tail matching closely to where you stopped the first threads. Then keep couching until you reach the tip of the top fin again. You will need to plunge each silver thread separately to make a point at the top of the fin. Continue couching until you reach the fin top. Finish off the ends of your silver threads on the back of the piece. If you do this "cleaning up" as you go, it will not feel overwhelming at the end. In some, more complicated, metalwork pieces you may not be able to use this technique, but this is a straightforward, easy design.

Step 7:

Now do the side fin, the face mask, and his smile that same way with 2 silver #7 threads couched with 1 strand of silk or floss. I used a longer silver thread for the face mask and smile and did NOT cut in between those two elements. I simply plunged into the fabric for the end of the face mask and then came up at the beginning of the smile with the same Jap #7 thread. I tugged CAREFULLY so there was no slack Jap #7 thread on the back of the fabric. (See picture of the back of my piece to see where the Japanese #7 silver is shown on the back.)

Step 8:

Turn embroidery over and slip stitch each of the plunged silver thread ends to the existing stitches on the back of the embroidery. Do this for each of the plunged silver ends and trim to neaten the back.



Diagram #3 Picture of **BACK of Dolphin with metalwork finished.**

Step 9:

Take the embroidery out of the hoop, flatten out, and baste to the Peltex 6"x6" square centering the Peltex behind the design. Baste the fabric to the Peltex using a sharp needle. Now take OUT the basting threads holding the fabric to the cotton fabric just to be sure you get all that basting thread out of the way.



Diagram #4 Picture of Layered Blue Fabric on Peltex backing with metalwork complete

Step 10:

Get out the matte grey long bugle beads and lay them in a pill bottle top or beading mat so they don't get lost. Pour about 20 – 30 beads to get started. Thread up with DMC # 415 grey or continue using the Gloriana gray silk. The bugle beads are going to lay slanting from the nose of the dolphin along the back going to the top of the tail, all angled slightly, as show in the picture below:

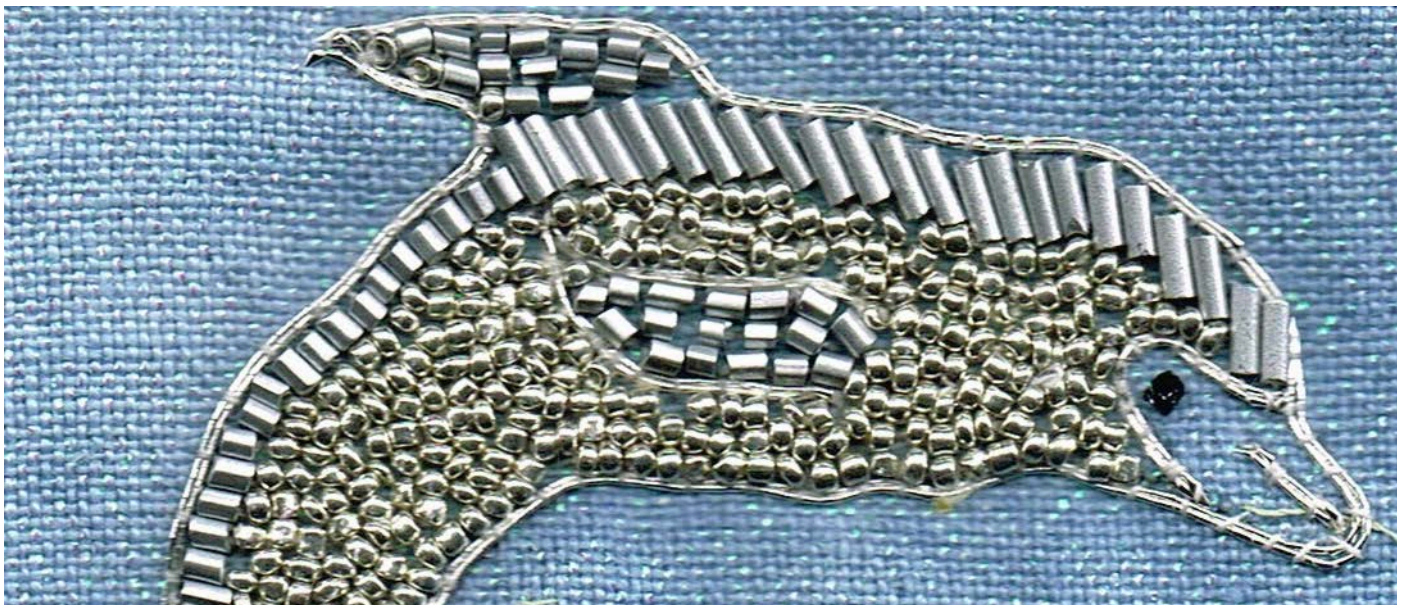


Diagram #5 Slant and Placement of Long and Short Bugle Beads along the top of the Dolphin spine, plus placement of beads on fins.

Now pour out some of the matte grey short bugle beads onto the mat (or pill bottle lid). You can start a fresh thread for this. Thread up with DMC # 415 grey or continue using the Gloriana gray silk. The short bugle beads

are going to lay perpendicular to the spin of the dolphin and then I used them to fill in the fins and part of the tail. Look at the pictures above and below.

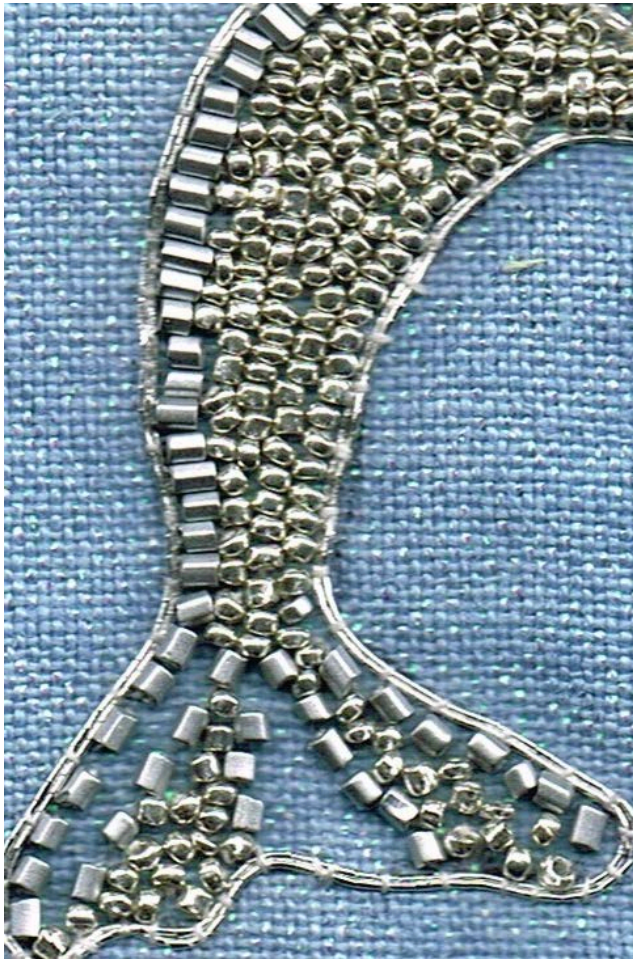


Diagram #6 Slant and Placement of Short Bugle Beads and Seed beads along the bottom of the Dolphin spine, plus placement of beads on tail.

Step 11:

Get out the matte grey seed beads and follow the same process (pill bottle top or beading mat). You will need more of these, so pour out about 50 of these. Your needle may not fit thru all these seed beads as they are not consistently produced. Throw away the ones your needle can't get thru (or use them for something else). You are going to randomly put the matte seed beads below the bugle beads filling in the dolphin's body. Because of the angle of our dolphin, there is little to no white on our dolphin. His body will be an overall gray.



Diagram #7 Placement and mix of beads on tail.

Step 12:

BEFORE YOU FORGET, take some black floss with some Kreinik, or #8 Kreinik braid and add an eye for the dolphin within the face mask. The eye is very small. I put in a 2-wrap French Knot for his eye. But you could also do a very small cross-stitch and top it with an upright cross-stitch (i.e., a Smyrna cross) or you can use a tiny chain stitch to make a circular eye.



Diagram #8, Close up of Dolphin face mask/nose

Step 13:

Now fill in the rest of your dolphin the way you'd like. See pictures above for the bead placement that I chose.

Step 14:

Once the dolphin is completed, you can add a horizon line and some waves. Because I did the stitching on Peltex, I did not add any embroidery stitches. My fingers were unhappy with all the beads I was putting in.

Stitch/bead away until you feel happy with your dolphin and his watery playground.

Step 15:

Once completed, place your stitched piece onto a piece of 6" x 6" matboard (I laced the back holding the fabric taut) and put it into a 6" x 6" frame OR stretch your fabric over a 6" x 6" stretched canvas and cover the sides, securing the edges on the back of the canvas frame. Voila! Display your piece on the easel!



Diagram #9. Completed Project

FINALLY

Hope you enjoyed creating your dolphin. Stitch your favorite sea creature by finding a picture you like or a coloring book picture you like and tracing the design onto your fabric. The supply is endless!

PATTERN FOR DOLPHIN ON NEXT PAGE TO SIZE

