

MATERIALS:

- » 8" embroidery hoop
- » Wool strips or yarn
- » Burlap or linen backing
- » Popsicle stick
- » Paper backing
- » Starfish template
- » Traditional rug hook
- » Aleene's Original Tacky Glue
- » Sharp scissors
- » Black Sharpie marker
- » Pencil

Starfish in a Hoop

REGENERATIVE SUMMER FUN!

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GWEN DIXON

With its ability to regenerate body parts, the starfish symbolizes strength and resilience. It is one of my favorite symbols. If you have ever undergone your own form of regeneration—and most of us have—you know the kind of fortitude that it takes.

Starfish come in an amazing array of colors. I love the purple and blue starfish that can be seen underwater on the wood pilings at the ferry terminals in Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia. Follow along as I hook this beautiful creature inside an embroidery hoop for a quick summer project.

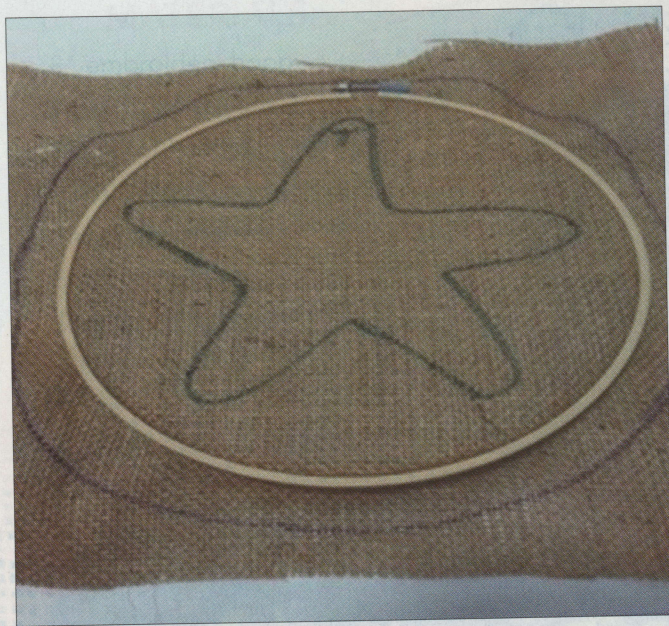
Preparation & Stitching

1. Cut a piece of burlap or linen big enough for the size of hoop you are using to make your starfish, allowing plenty of room around the hoop. Finish the edges by machine stitching around them using a zigzag or running stitch.
2. Position your hoop in the center of your backing and then draw a circle about $\frac{1}{2}$ " around it. This is easily done by leaning a black Sharpie marker against the hoop at an angle that leaves about $\frac{1}{2}$ " of room while you trace.
3. Draw another circle 1" around the first circle. If your hoop is wide or particularly large, you may need to make your outer circle larger. You have now drawn two concentric circles on your burlap.
4. Stitch around the two circles, on or just outside the lines, using a running stitch.
7. Use a black Sharpie to trace the provided starfish template in the center of the circles.

Starfish in Hoop with some of the key materials.

*The completed Starfish
in Hoop project.*

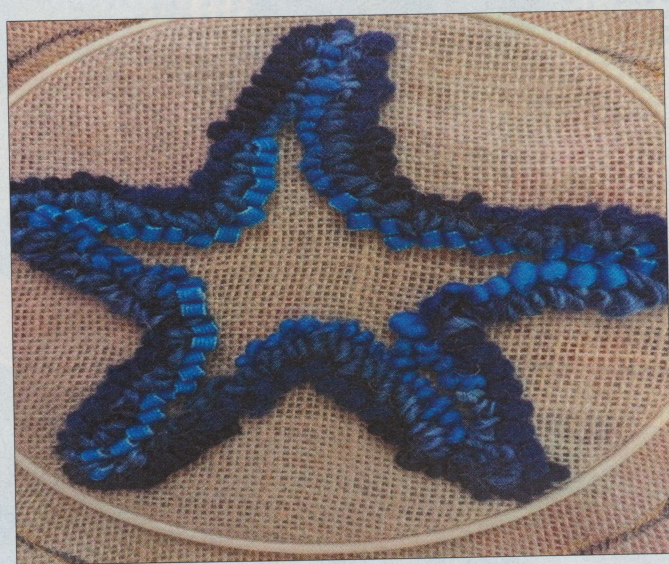




The backing is ready to be hooked.

Hooking

1. Secure your backing inside the two circles of the hoop with the pattern centered.
2. Hook just inside the outline of the starfish with a dark color or a combination of darker colors. Continue hooking inward, using values of the outside color or other dark colors.



Hook from the outside in, beginning with dark colors.

3. Continue working your way around the inside of the starfish, using two to three colors and bringing in

medium-value colors. Use a few different textures to add interest to your starfish.



Add in medium-value colors as you approach the center.

4. As you hook, leave a few empty spaces. Do not hook every hole or opening.
5. Use a contrasting color or a new texture to add interest to your starfish. To space the contrasting colors, you may cross over some wool that is already in place. This is not usually recommended in traditional rug hooking, especially for pieces that will go on the floor. This starfish will not experience this wear.
6. Continue filling in the shape with a variety of colors. If you want the center of your starfish to protrude slightly—as the centers of starfish often do—add a bulkier wool to the center area.



Contrasting colors and bulkier wool make the center of the starfish “pop.”

Finishing

1. Once you are finished hooking, remove the hoop. Trim the excess burlap from around the outermost circle, cutting either just outside the second circle or between the two stitched circles, depending on how much burlap you want to have left for gluing. Make sure that at least one of the stitched circles is left intact. I cut between the two circles because I have hooked in a hoop many times. If you have not finished a hooked rug in a hoop before, you may want to leave more burlap for gluing.
2. Place your starfish back in the hoop and center it. Tighten the hoop.



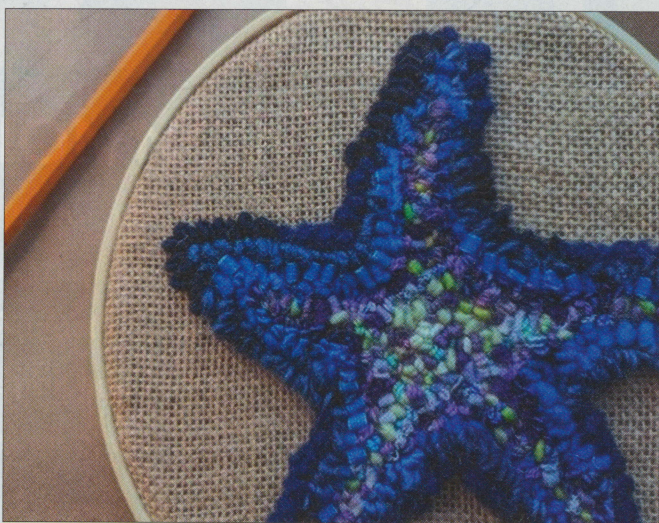
Leave enough backing to secure the piece to the hoop with glue.

3. Use your wooden Popsicle stick and Aleene's Original Tacky Glue to attach the burlap to the wood. Place the glue on the stick and then spread the glue along the inside rim of the wooden hoop. Hold the burlap down as you make your way around the hoop. Pause after each small section and hold down the burlap. It will stick to the wood with gentle pressure.



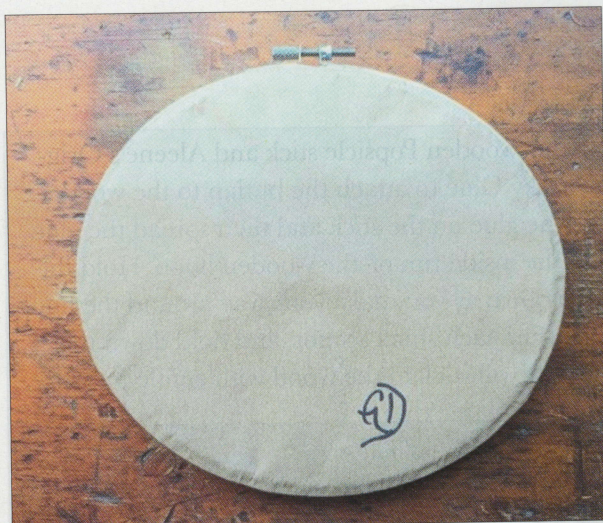
The backing partially glued down.

4. Place your finished starfish hoop on a piece of paper and trace around the hoop.



Trace around the hoop on a piece of paper.

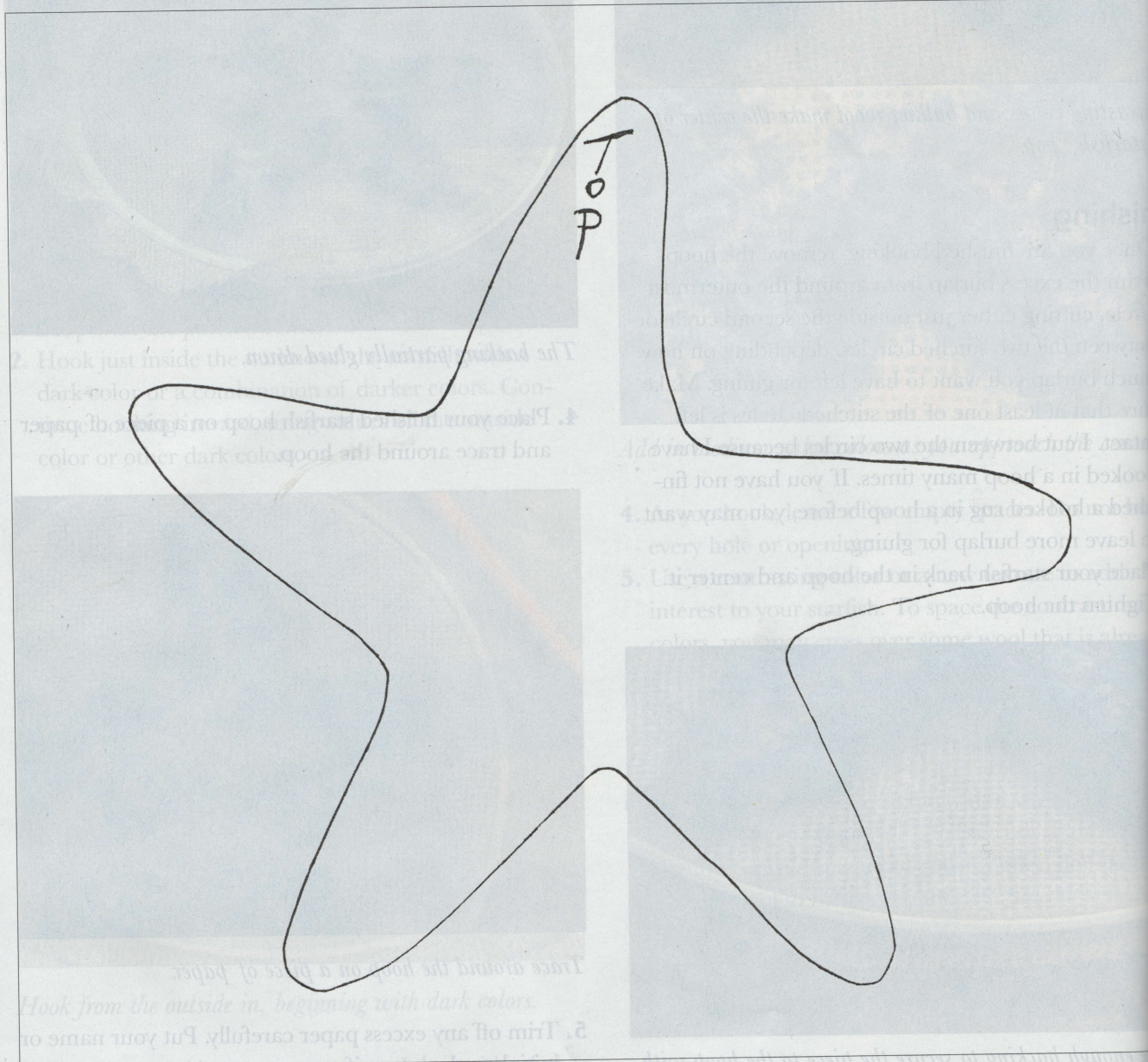
5. Trim off any excess paper carefully. Put your name or initial on the paper if you want to.
6. Glue the circle of paper to the back of the hoop.



The finished back.

7. Once the glue is dry, you can place your starfish on a mantle or shelf or hang it on the wall with a pin or thin nail.

Gwen Dixon is a fiber artist, writer, and certified adult educator from New Brunswick, Canada. You can find her on Facebook, at gwendixonwoolarts.com, or at gwendixonwoolarts@gmail.com.



Starfish in Hoop. Designed by Gwen Dixon. Enlarge to fit your hoop of choice. For personal use only.