



BAND 1. Giant Robot and Kaiju

Time Factor: 5 for size

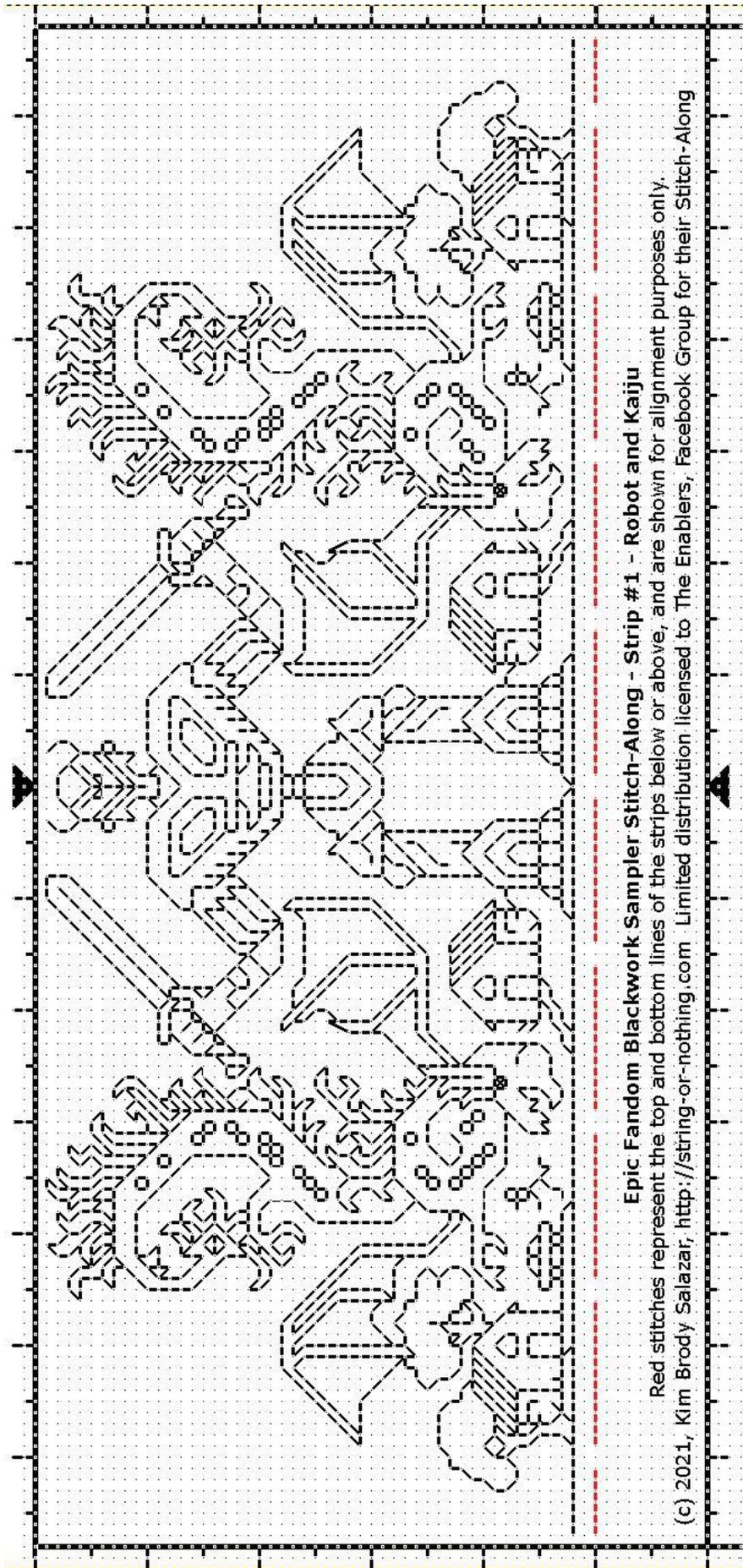
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For all the Voltron, Transformers, giant mech-suit anime, and Pacific Rim fans out there, our first strip. Destruction not included.

132 stitches wide x 47 stitches tall.
2 blank rows left between this and the following strip.

One full panel if worked as stand-alone (not intended to be a repeat).

For more detail on this project, working methods and materials, please refer to the General Information section that starts on Page 3.



Epic Fandom Blackwork Sampler Stitch-Along - Strip #1 - Robot and Kaiju

Red stitches represent the top and bottom lines of the strips below or above, and are shown for alignment purposes only.

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Band 1 – Giant Robot and Kaiju – Inspiration:

Samples	Fabric used	Stitch	Thread consumption
	28 count even weave	Back stitch, 1 ply	Less than 1 yard of floss
	28 count even weave	Back stitch, 1 ply	About 2.5 yards of floss
	18 count Aida	Back stitch, 1 ply	Less than 1 yard of floss
	28 count even weave	Double running, 2 plies	Less than 1 yard of blue. Less than 1 yard of green, and less than 1/2 yard of red

Top to bottom: Renditions by Beta Testers Callie, Heather, and Danielle; plus Kim

Hints:

- Start in the center with the robot’s head, then work down its body to the baseline. Once Robot is established, move out left and right – house then Kaiju (starting with their inner facing wings), and the rest.
- The back frills on the Kaiju are savage, but can be tamed if you work their outermost edge, taking detours back to the body as they are encountered.
- No shame in skips or lots of knots on the back. There are many elements that are little “islands” (bits that don’t connect to the rest of the work) and tons others that work into dead ends if using back stitch. Spare yourself agony – if you are happy with the front, the piece is perfect.



GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION



Epic invades! To help you get ready, here are the basics.

Size:

The total stitched area for all 19 bands together is 134 x 449 stitches - but the pattern will be released band by band over a period of many weeks, so if you want to do some, or all, that's up to you! This is the max you will need. Make sure to leave space for framing!

Fabric and Thread requirements:

The options are limitless here and we cannot wait to see your creativity come to life! You can choose to work the entire SAL in one color, start to finish; pick one color per band, work each band in multiple colors to highlight interesting elements; or bravely use variegated thread. There are even bands that can be done with a voided background if you so choose. It's optional, and we'll explain this in more detail when we get to those areas. Just be warned that voiding eats thread, and you may want to pick a different, perhaps lighter color for the background fill than you use for the straight stitch outlines.

Since fabric size will change your total thread usage, here are very rough estimates for the amount of standard yardage 6-strand embroidery floss needed based on fabric counts. Please note that this assumes the use of just ONE color for the WHOLE 19-band project, in back stitch WITHOUT voiding. Use of double running stitch, or more (or fewer) plies will also change your consumption. Note that if you are planning on using a hard-to-get thread please plan on having leftovers by buying at the top end of the estimate. We do not want to see anyone run out and be unable to complete:

- 11 Count Aida (2 plies) – uses at least 21.5 skeins, suggested purchase 22-26
- 14 Count Aida (2 plies) – uses at least 17 skeins, suggested purchase 18-21
- 16 Count Aida (1 ply) – uses at least 14.75 skeins, suggested purchase 15-19
- 18 Count Aida (1 ply) – uses at least 13.25 skeins, suggested purchase 14-16
- 20 Count Aida (1 ply) – uses at least 12 skeins, suggested purchase 12-15
- 22 Count Hardanger (1 ply) – uses at least 10.75 skeins, suggested purchase 11-14
- 28 Count Evenweave (1 ply) – uses at least 8.75 skeins, suggested purchase 9-12
- 32 Count Evenweave (1 ply) – uses at least 7.75 skeins, suggested purchase 8-11

A caveat on the numbers above – we base them on our beta testers consumption but those figures varied widely. We HOPE they are accurate but cannot swear to to-the-inch veracity. People do stitch differently, bridging areas, using multiple colors or otherwise doing things that introduce variation. Please forgive us if we miss the mark and plan accordingly.

Schedule:

The first band of this beast, the Giant Robot and Kaiju strip, will be released on Tuesday, 3 August, some time in the morning EDT. The remaining 19 bands will follow over the ensuing months, ending well into 2022. Because some of the strips are wider or more complex than others, we will use a sliding scale release schedule. After we release one of the larger, more complex strips we will wait four weeks before releasing the next one. Narrower strips will have a two-week follow-on period. Note that wider and narrower strips alternate, in part to let people take a breather between big ones.

Color Recommendations:

I'm afraid you are largely on your own here. I am not going to issue a dogmatic proclamation of what colors go where. Possible approaches include:

- All bands done the same color, no voiding on any strips.
- All bands done in the same color, those with voiding with backgrounds worked in a second, lighter color (If you do work the voiding I recommend it being in a second color because there is straight stitch detail that would be lost if the background were done in the same color as the foreground stitching.)
- Each strip worked in a different color, but only one color used per strip (with or without voiding in a second color).
 - Limited color set (colors repeat), or
 - 19 different colors (plus optional voiding)
- Each strip worked in multiple colors, picking out the various design elements. For example, working the giant robot in the first one in a different color than the dead dragon-monsters. Again, limited color set, or wild abandon in choice on a strip-by-strip basis.
- Using variegated threads on some or all of the strips (this would require using back stitch rather than double running, to best present color gradations).

Go where your inner nerdy heart leads you, and make this your own.

How much thread you will use will depend on what size and stitch count ground you are using, whether you are working the piece in double-running (the most economical), or back stitch. Other factors include the number of colors and their placement, and whether or not you are opting to work one or more of the strips voided. Working that background eats a lot of thread.

Whatever you decide, I suggest you use easily available mass-market threads for most of this project. As lovely as custom-dyed variegated threads are you may not like their effects in the larger, more complex strips, and you might run the risk of not being able to get more of the same dye lot over the course of this adventure if you need additional materials to finish.

Beta Testers' Thread Consumption Estimates:

Here is the list of all bands, with their widths and heights and some notes on thread consumption for each, courtesy of our intrepid beta stitchers, who plunged in and kept notes as they went along. We don't have complete thread use info, but maybe this little bit will be helpful. Note that the counts below DO NOT include the two unstitched rows between each band that I recommend, and that are factored into the whole-project height count of 449 units. Unless otherwise stated, consumption below is for one ply of standard 6 ply embroidery floss, worked in back stitch. This list is subject to update as more data rolls in.

- **Band 1 - Kaiju and Giant Robots** – 134 x 47 units
18 count Aida – less than 1 yard
28 count evenweave – about 2.5 yards
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – less than 1 yard of green, less than 1 yard of blue, less than 0.5 yards of red
- **Band 2 – Tulips and Raspberries** – 134 x 13 units
18 count Aida – Less than 1 yard
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 0.75 yards each of red and light red
- **Band 3 – Pirates** (voided option) – 134 x 20 units
18 count Aida outlines only – about 3 yards (includes lots of frogging)
28 count evenweave – outlines, about 2 yards; voiding about 3.5 yards
28 count evenweave outlines in double running, 2 plies, less than 0.5 yards each of blue and green, less than 0.25 yards of yellow, remnants of red. Voiding not yet completed.
- **Band 4 – Palm Cluster** – 134 x 7 units
28 count evenweave - less than 1 yard
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 1 yard of light green, remnants of red
- **Band 5 – Game Room** – 134 x 28 units
18 count Aida – about 3 yards
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 1 yard of blue, 0.5 yard of red, and 0.25 each of light green and light blue
- **Band 6 – Grape Balloons** – 134 x 16 units
18 count Aida – about 3 yards
28 count evenweave – about 2 yards
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 1.5 yards of light blue and 0.5 yards of light red, plus remnants of red.
- **Band 7 – So Sue Me!** (voided option) – 134 x 30 units
28 count evenweave – outlines, about 3 yards. Voiding in cross stitch 5.25 yards
28 count evenweave, outlines in double running, 2 plies – 1.5 yards of blue, 1 yard of green, and 0.25 yards of red. Voiding not stitched yet.
- **Band 8 – Snakes. And They're Plain** – 134 x 16 units
28 count evenweave – about 2 yards
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 1.5 yards each of light red and light green, plus about 0.75 yards each of light blue and yellow
- **Band 9 – Invasion!** – 134 x 18 units
28 count evenweave – about 2 yards
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 1 yard each of red and green, .75 yards of blue, plus remnants of yellow.

- **Band 10 – Portal to Nowhere** – 134 x 17 units
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about 1.5 yards of light red, about .25 yards of light green.
- **Band 11 – Where No Stitcher Has Gone Before** – 134 x 26 units
28 count evenweave – no data for outlines, about 4 yards for voiding in long arm cross stitch
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies for outline, 1 ply for open crosshatch voiding – about 1.25 yards of dark blue, .25 yards each of yellow and red. 2 yards of light green.
- **Band 12 – Dragon’s Hoard** – 134 x 8 units
18 count Aida – less than 1 yard of metallic thread, plus 1 yard of standard floss total (various colors together)
28 count evenweave in double running, plus cross stitch in between the “gems” and their borders, 2 plies for all - .75 yards of yellow, .5 yards of dark red, dark green, and light blue, plus 1 yard of light yellow for the cross stitching.
- **Band 13 – Where’s My Flying Car?** – 134 x 15 units
28 count evenweave – Less than 1 yard
28 count evenweave in double running, 2 plies – about .75 yards of light blue, less than .25 yards of dark blue, dark red, dark green. Remnants of yellow and light red.
- **Band 14 – Pretzel Twist** – 134 x 8 units
28 count evenweave – Less than 1 yard
- **Band 15 – May the Floss Be With You** (customizing option) – 134 x 17 units
[no data due to large amount of customization]
- **Band 16 – Mercy** – 134 x 5 units
28 count evenweave – Less than 1 yard
- **Band 17 – Jurassic Jumble** – 134 x 22 units
[no data]
- **Band 18 – Mutual Support** – 134 x 30 units
[no data]
- **Band 19 – Whovian Nightmare** – 134 x 68 units
28 count evenweave – about 4.5 yards

In order to spark your creativity, when we share the individual charts for each band we will also share detail shots of the various beta-tester versions. As I wrote before, I am really looking forward to seeing what folk do with these designs.

Other Materials:

Optional Seed Beads. Band 5- Game Room includes a few dot-type details on the depicted dice. Those can be worked as French knots, or tiny scattered stitches. Beads or very tiny sequins might also be used (you will only need 14). One beta tester used seed beads for the eyes of the snakes in Band 8. Again – this is yet another way you can make the piece your own, and is totally up to you.

Optional Beeswax: I highly recommend having a small lump or two of REAL beeswax (not standard candles or candlewax and not beeswax candles - these often have other ingredients in them), not the “beeswax” sold in honeycomb sheets for rolled candles, and not lip balm with beeswax in it.

I run my threads lightly over it before stitching. Our stitches in this style are very short so the thread’s sheen doesn’t show up very much, and the wax won’t interfere with it. It does make the thread easier to maneuver through the needle’s eye, lets it slide more smoothly through the ground cloth, reduces surface fuzzies and crocking (dye migration onto fingers and cloth), helps defeat differential feed (when you are using two or more plies, and they seem to be eaten at different rates as you work), and enables sharper corners and cleaner lines. I usually keep two small two lumps going at any one time – one for lighter colors and one for darker colors to avoid any possible contamination of the lighter ones by fibers or dye left behind in the wax by the darker ones. One one-ounce bar is more than enough for years of work, even broken into two to use for light/darker threads.

Stitching Set-Up: I also recommend you have a comfy chair, a frame or hoop depending on which is more comfortable and practical for you, a strong light source, sharp scissors and a pair of tweezers (in case you have to pick out mistakes), and a good sense of humor if that does happen. Not a one of us is perfect – the nasty secret is that we all make mistakes. Sometimes we rip back, but sometimes we decide to live with them. There is no race to perfection here, just a shared journey presented to entertain and delight.

On Stitching:

On Charting, Alignment, and Gridding or Basting Guidelines

My charts include an indicated vertical center line (the black triangles), and hash marks all the way around to help you count. Hash marks are 5 stitches apart, with the ones marking 10s being larger. Please note that all but two of these designs mirror or have a repeat point on that center line. (The two that don't are explained in detail). I did not include horizontal center lines for each strip. Although the actual repeat-count of those strips that do repeat all differ, as stitched on this piece, all bands will be worked to the same width from the center point, and will truncate at our project's maximum width, regardless of the point in the repeat where that cut-off falls.

Working an alignment grid is entirely up to you. I know some people swear by them. I work without, but I would baste a single vertical center line. That line corresponds with the point marked by a black triangle on all of the project charts. I usually use some light color regular sewing cotton for this – something that won't mark the fabric or mar the weave. As I work, I snip and tease out bits of my basting line, so that I am never stitching over it. That way I minimize the chance of catching it as I work my design, or having a difficult time removing it after the stitching done.

Outlines

For the most part these are outline-type designs that can be worked mostly in double-running stitch. Back stitch can also be used and is perfectly satisfactory. Some people find it easier to keep their place when using back stitch, and don't mind the increased thread consumption.

Chain stitch can also be used (one chain stitch per illustrated line segment – a line that continues for three units would be three chain stitches). I do warn that diagonals being longer units than the up/down stitches present as visibly longer in chain, and the line itself is heavier than the other methods. If you chose to work in chain stitch, I recommend using only one ply. The choice is yours.

Please note that I include NO "knights' move" stitches (1x2 chart units), and NO half or partial stitches. Every unit is intended to be one full stitch, and these designs are entirely composed of straight lines, right angles, and 45-degree angles. Nothing else.

Every strip includes some stitches marked in red at the top or bottom edge (mostly on both). These are orientation/alignment aids – and represent the stitches of the band above or below the current one. They are just there to help you keep your place, and are NOT intended to be stitched as part of the current band being worked.

Voiding

Several of the strips are presented with the option to stitch their backgrounds in voided style (aka "reserva") – similar in effect to modern Assisi-type work. Those bands have the background areas of their right-hand sides shaded. I have left the left-hand sides of those strips plain as an aid to navigation, but at all instances I do suggest that if voiding is chosen the entire panel be done that way, not just the right-hand half.

To work the voided areas you can use the same method used in modern Assisi – plain old simple cross stitch; or you can work the grounds in any of the methods common in pre-1700s voided pieces. One of the simplest of those is long-armed cross stitch (LACS). Personally, I prefer LACS – the coverage is better, and if the stitcher works alternate rows back and forth, the ground takes on a very appealing, almost plaited appearance.

Any voided areas can be worked in the same color as the foreground outlining, or in another color. I would suggest a second, lighter color because most of the voided panels are complex, and details would be lost if they were done entirely in monochrome.

Please note that voiding need not be worked solid in LACS or plain old cross stitch. It can also be done as a grid of four stitches (think making a box instead of a cross stitch, and covering the ground with what looks like a grid of empty

boxes), step-wise (zig zag stair stitches), diagonal or horizontal lines, or a grid worked on the diagonal – lozenge shaped diamonds made of four stitches like the empty grid box, but predicated on diagonals instead of squares. More on various voiding treatments can be found here: <https://string-or-nothing.com/2020/01/06/voided-grounds/>

Finally, note that if you do choose to work some of the panels with voiding, although I have not used any partial stitches in the patterns themselves, partials are unavoidable if you are working a solid background right up to the established lines of stitching. Diagonals in the design are especially tricky. The historical way to deal with this is either to fudge as best as possible, working partial stitches to eke out the fills where they meet problematic parts of the outline, or to ignore them all together, either stopping the voiding at the last complete background stitch, OR leaving a one-unit halo around ALL established stitching (stitching until there is one blank unit outside the outline, and leaving that unit unworked). Any of these three approaches will work, but I do caution that they look best if they are applied consistently within the same strip. Pick a method that makes you happy and stick with it. At least until the current strip is complete.

Band 15

One band is set up with two customizable areas in it intended to allow you to include your initials and a date, or one or two short mottoes or dedications, or a couple of small motifs – as-supplied, or your own original creations. Or any combo of the above. That band is presented with a page that's a print-me worksheet complete with alphabets and available-space templates, to allow you to doodle away and personalize your piece.

Copyright and Fair Use

I am sharing this set of charts gratis, through The Enablers Facebook group as part of their Stitch-Along program; and (with a short time delay) on my website. I will be delighted to see these designs pop up all over the craft-i-verse, either alone, in combo with others from this collection, or as part of other works. Please feel free to play with them, adding your own touches, borders, or other embellishments; or use them on non-Stitch-Along projects.

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Copious Thanks

Finally, my most sincere thanks to the team that made this possible:

- Fearless Leaders: Roz MFer, Kristin Selleck
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- Beta Testers: Callie Farr, Danielle Morgan, Heather Glasgow, and Robert Himmelsbach