

Foam Wig Step-by-Step

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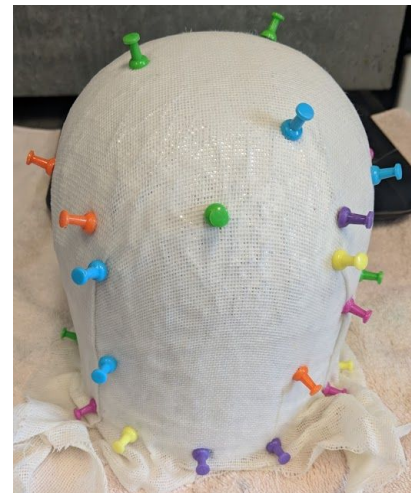
10/28/2020

#1: First step was to make a buckram base. So I covered my head block with aluminum foil, making sure to keep it as flat as possible to maintain the shape of the head. I also marked the Center Front and Center Back for future uses.



#2: I cut 2 pieces of buckram to a size that I knew would fit around the head block and placed it in luke-warm water for about 10 minutes to allow the glue to become sticky.

#3: I draped the first layer of buckram on the head form and pulled and maneuvered it until it was flat. I incorporated some darts to further allow it to flatten completely. I pinned this layer down and tied some elastic around the base to keep it fully in place.



#4: Once the first layer was completed I began repeating the steps for my second layer. I made sure to drape the second piece of buckram in a different direction to create a sturdier base.

#5: I placed the wet buckram into a drying cabinet (set to air only, no heat) and let it dry completely overnight. See the photo to the right for a completely hardened/dry base.





#7: I used an exacto blade to clean up the edges of the form.

#8: I attempted to take the base off of the headform without shaping, however all my attempts were unsuccessful. The buckram was very much stuck in place. I even tried sticking bent wire up between the layers to break the glue barrier.



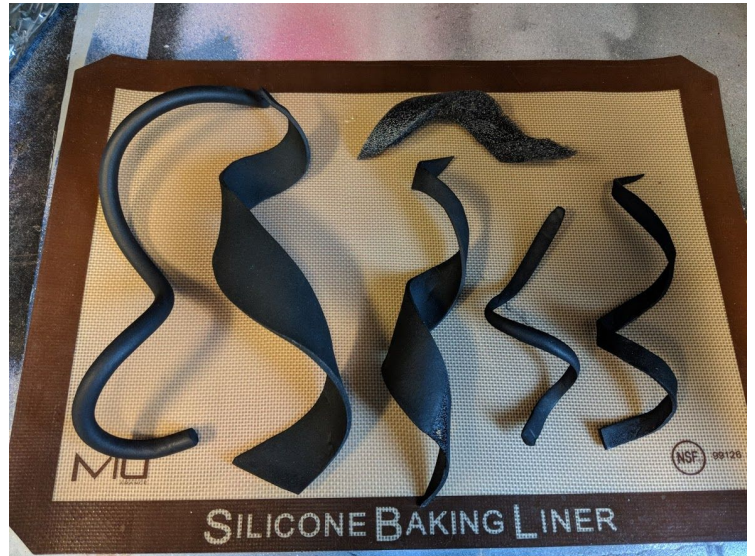
#9: I began working on the shaping of a widow's peak, and I found once I cut this section off of the front that the buckram slid right off of the head block.



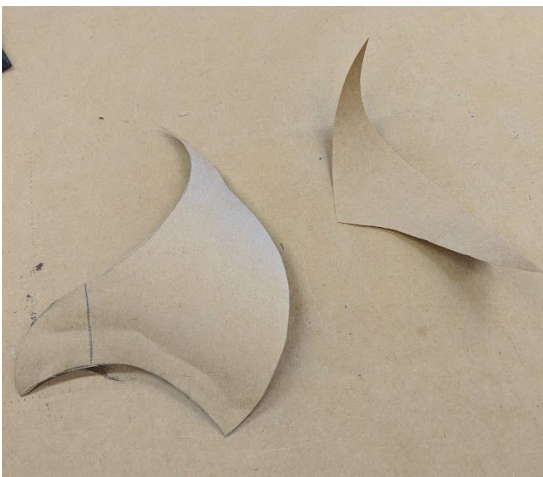
#10: I then alternated between placing the base on my head and marking new cut lines to allow it to fully fit onto the head. I had to cut the widows peak deeper, and remove sections for the ears and the neck.



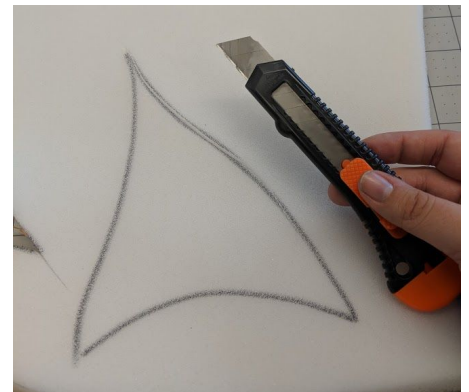
#11: I began playing with different types of foam to achieve the hair-like quality. I played with foam tubes, noodles, Craft Foam, and an open cell foam. I messed around with curling the foam around a dowel and using a heat gun. I found that some of the curls held, but it was very difficult to get a loose curl similar to the style I wanted without melting the foam.



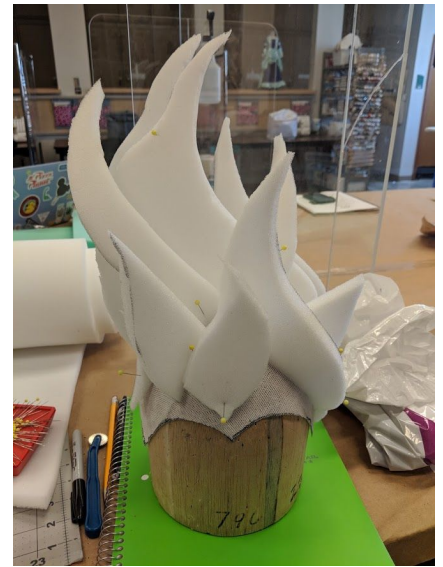
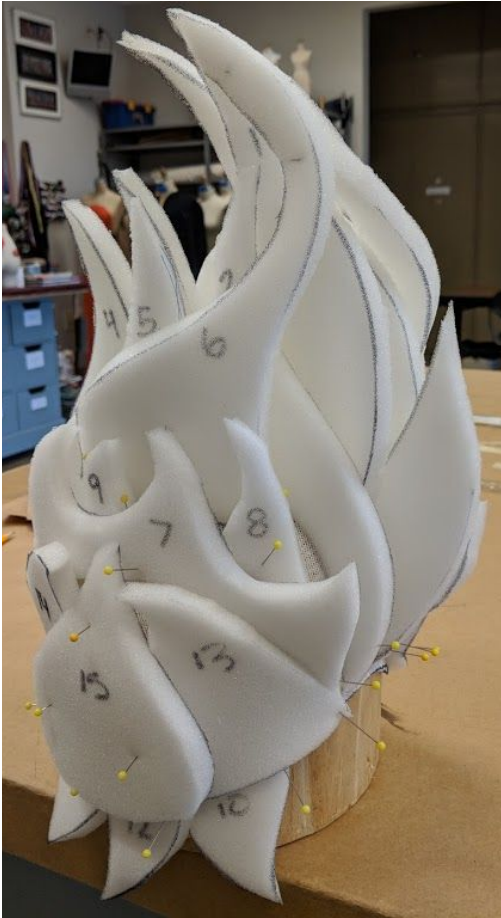
#12: Next I sketched a paper pattern for the shape I wanted my wave to be. I cut a large swoop and a small swoop. I did ultimately move a bit away from this pattern to allow for an organic shaping.



#13: I began cutting my shapes out of an 1" open cell foam, with an exacto blade.



#14: I was cutting my pieces as needed to ensure I was filling gaps. I began pinning the pieces on to the buckram base and sculpting the shape.



#15: I then numbered the pieces to ensure that after coating them in Sculpt or Coat I would be able to realign them in the correct order.



#16: I removed all the pieces and began the tedious process of Sculpt or Coating them. I did the front, back, and sides. I left the bottom clean so the barge would affix the foam to the headform when I was ready.

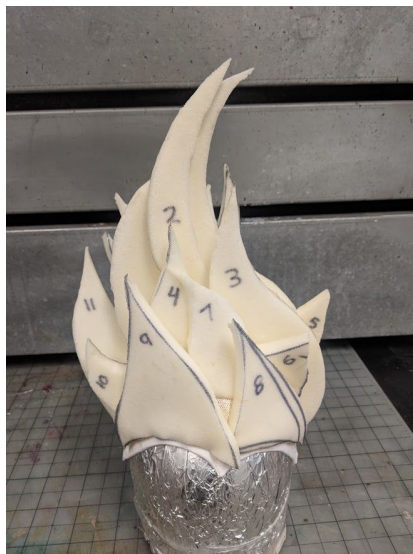
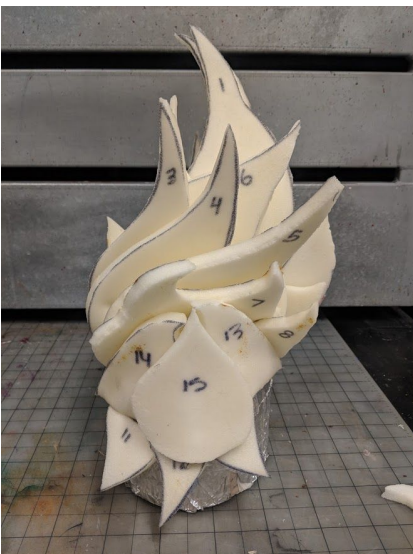
#17: I let the pieces dry in a drying cabinet with air-only to speed the drying time.



#18: While the Sculpt or Coat dried, I went back to my buckram base to do some clean finishings. I whip stitched millinery wire along the edge to keep a crisp curve, I covered the edge/wire with some white bias tape, this stopped the rough buckram edges from getting caught on my hair. Lastly, I cut a keyhole shape out of the back and stitched in some elastic to create a tighter base.



#19: Next it was time to barge! I applied a light coating of barge to all my pieces and on the buckram covering (I had to rewrap the wooden headform with foil to avoid getting barge on it). I wore a respirator for safety, and I did all barging in a spray booth with air ventilators.



#20: After allowing the pieces to dry for 45 minutes, I carefully pushed edges together and let the barge sit overnight to set completely.

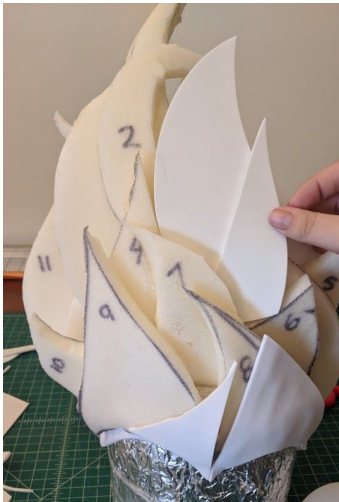


#21: I played with making some tentacles. I used hot glue and craft foam and a little bit of wire for shaping. I also played with achieving texture on the foam with smaller pieces of foam. I ultimately did not use either of these methods in the design, but I tested nonetheless.

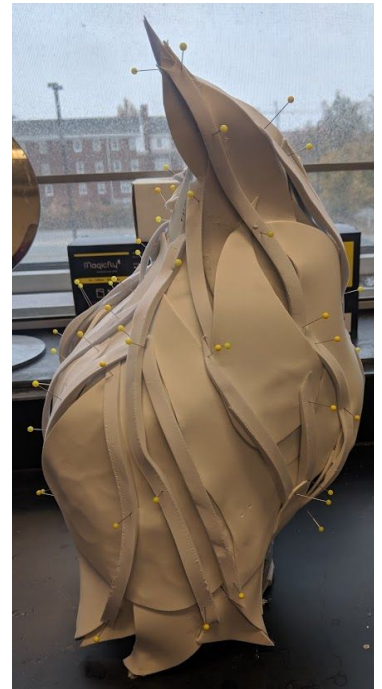
#22: I was unhappy with how my shwoop foam pieces were sitting after being hardened with Sculpt or Coat, they were standing straight and had lost all curve. So I used hot glue to reshape the pieces.



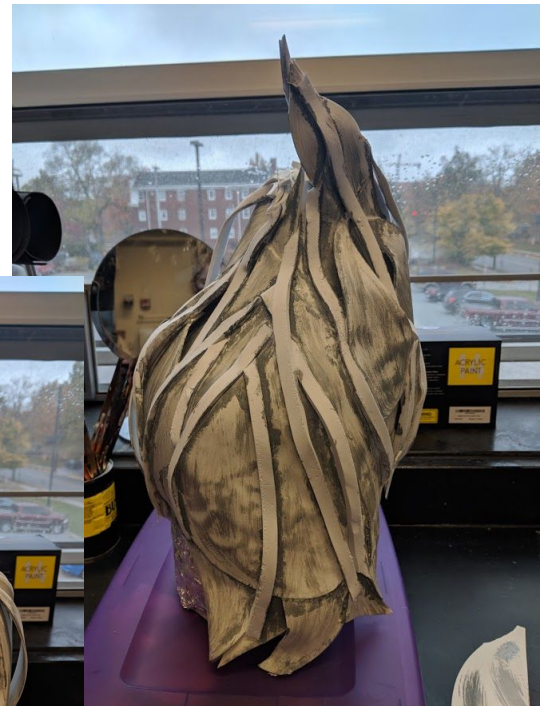
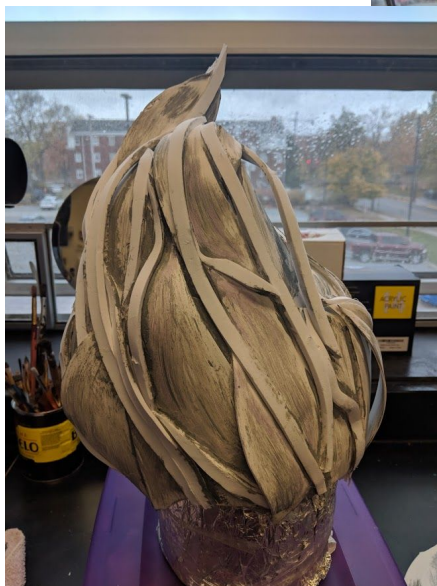
#23: I was noticing that my sides were looking messy because of the multitude of layers of foam, so I started playing with covering the foam pieces with more craft foam to create a more unified shape. The process of pinning, shaping, and hot gluing was very tedious and low-key painful.



#24: Upon talking with some co-workers, we all agreed that it needed a little more detail/hair texture. I cut 1" craft foam into small and flat strips and applied it like hair along some of the messier seams.



#25: The next step was painting. I tested mixing different silvers and greys on some scraps of craft foam. I knew I wanted to go with a dry brush texture to create organic lines to allude to hair.



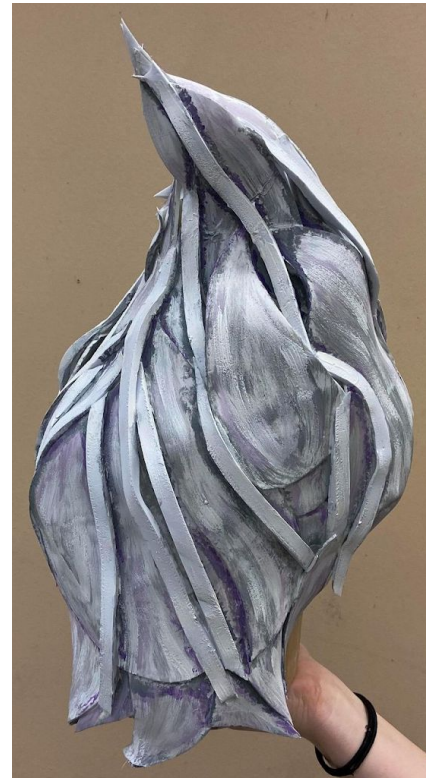
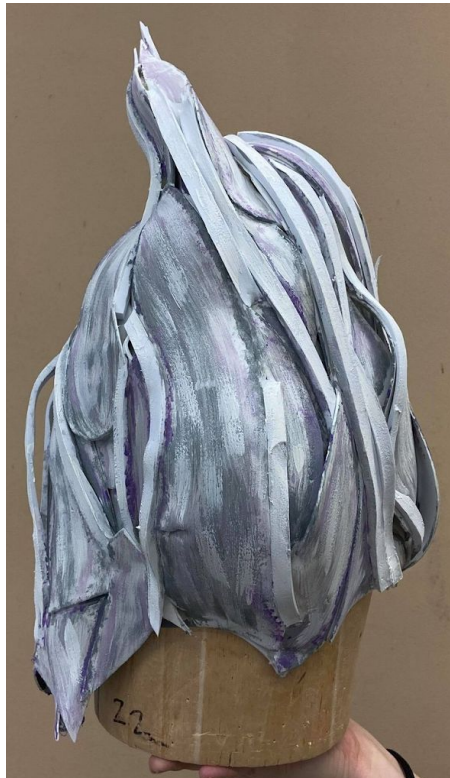


#26: Many layers of paint! I used dark greys in the edges to create depth. I used white on the strip additions to make them pop as highlights. I also went in with some lavender to create a more dimensional look.



#27: I tried it on and realized that there were some under sections that weren't fully painted, so I covered those sections up and she was done! This was also when I decided to add some darker purple to my shadows to create a cool mid-tone.

Final Wig (On Head Block):



Final Wig (Worn)

