

Underwater Headdress Step-by-Step

Allison Jones

9/6/2020

#1: I gathered/purchased the necessary supplies. I decided that a visor cap would make a stable base for an elaborate headpiece, and would have an easy working closure in the back to account for adjustments. I purchased the visor in a color that was suited to my color palette.



#2: I used acrylic paint and dabbed it all over the visor with a sea-sponge to create an organic stippling effect. I used a dark blue and a metallic teal to add some iridescent pops.



#3: I wanted my ostrich feathers to have a metallic pop when they moved. I brushed a thin coat of mod podge along the quill and rachis of the feather, allowed the glue to become tacky, and then delicately applied some silver leafing with a paint brush. Once the silver was on the glue, I used a small mop brush to push the silver firmly into the glue and brushed away the excess.



#4: I decided it would be easier to sew the feathers into place on a piece of buckram and then attach that piece to the visor. I quickly traced out the shape of my visor's bill and cut my buckram shape.

#5: I began placing my feathers along the buckram piece and sewing them into place. I started with the back feathers first and worked my way forward so that the feathers would be sandwiched between the buckram and the visor cap. I repeatedly placed my buckram shape on the visor between feathers to check placements.





#6: Once all the feathers had been sewn into place, I aligned my buckram piece to fit neatly into the visor's bill and used a whip stitch to secure it into place.

#7: The next step was beading. I individually stitched each bubble bead along the edge of the front of my headdress. I chose to individually stitch this line to ensure that my beads were stable and unlikely to break. For the two other rows of beads, I chose to thread them on slim, pliable wire and E6000 them onto the cap. I found this process quicker and more precise.

#8: While I let the E6000 dry, I worked on the headdress's underwater decorations.



#9: For the fish, I sculpted out of Foam-Mo. I did this step a couple of days in advance to allow for the foam to air dry. Once dry, I applied a layer of Flex Coat to strengthen my foam base as well as to add texture. I brushed the product on with a brush and then tapped it with my finger to create a raised scaled pattern. I let that dry and then painted it with acrylic paint. I used smaller brushes to add more intricate detail, and allowed it to dry.



#10: For the coral pieces, I used plastic leis. I tied them in knots and wrapped them around to create circular shapes. I then snipped my edges and applied a small dab of glue to prevent them from unraveling.



#11: I then used tape to map out where I wanted each additional feather, coral, and the fish to live. Once I decided on an arrangement, I used E6000 glue to affix it to the surface. I had to move slowly between objects because I had to hold the item into place for about a minute to give the glue time to set. Gravity was not my friend.

#12: I went back in and added some dangling beads along the edges. I created a center hanging starfish motif using beads and wire. I specifically used the wire so the shape would easily maintain a circle. I stitched this into place.

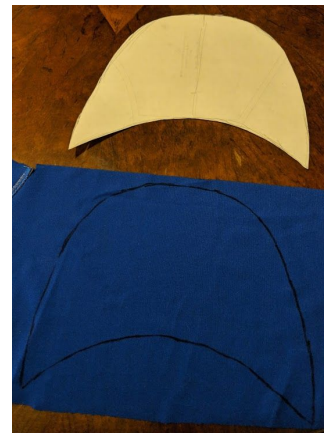




#13: I decided to create a gradient of dangling bead lengths to frame the face. I used a pencil and a ruler to map out equidistant locations on both sides, and hand stitched them into place. chose to use thread for this section, so that the beads would have flexible movement.



#14: I decided that the back buckram piece needed to be concealed. I found some scrap pieces of a blue stretch fabric and cut out my pattern. I lined this piece up, clipped it into place, and hand stitched it down.



Finished Design (On Headform):



Finished Design (Worn):

