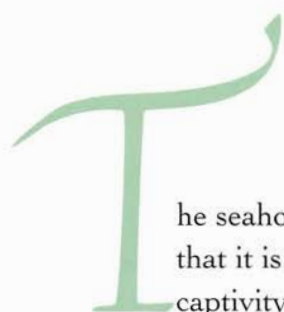


The stage is then covered tightly with some of the extra gold organza, and a twisted length is secured to the left-hand side. Finish by securing the stage to the background with craft glue.



# Seahorse



The seahorse is a fascinating creature, so unlike other marine dwellers that it is in a class of its own. Seahorses are difficult to keep in captivity as their seawater needs to be kept very fresh. This particular species has an interesting shape but is very bland in colour, so to add interest I have used the colours of the sea to shape it.

This design is an example of adding found objects to embroidery. This has no rules, and how the design is treated will be determined largely by the found objects that are used. Why not begin collecting small things that can be added to embroidery? They look good in the embroidery plus look interesting as a collection in jars. Pebbles, cones, lichen, leaves and twigs all look great as features in embroidery. The seahorse design is made up of shells and couched cord. You will really enjoy the ease of couching and the freedom of adding found objects.

Couching is a very under-utilised stitch which can be used to great effect. One has several options when choosing the sewing thread—to complement or contrast, to be seen or not to be seen. In this case I chose Golden Threads Cou 371 Blue Opal for the couching thread and Madeira Mermaid Blue 1107 for the sewing thread. This gives little stitches of brighter blue mingled in among the predominantly green-blue of the opal thread.

## Requirements

2 frames 12 ½ in (32 cm) square

organza to cover one frame

15 in (40 cm) blue organza for background

⅛ in (3 mm) white foam core for background and stage

Madeira silk 018: Mermaid Blue 1107, Seahorse Tan 2114

Au Ver à Soie perlée: Neptune Green 15

Golden Threads Cou 371: Blue Opal



Delica beads DBR 380  
shells  
craft glue  
sheet of wavy corrugated cardboard

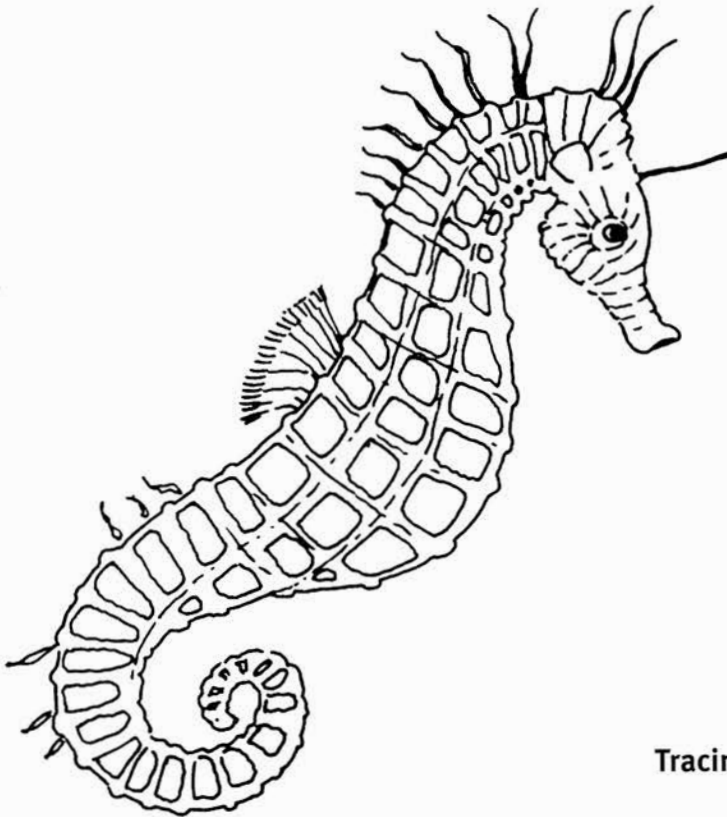
### Stitches

Couching, running stitch

### Transferring the design

Make 2 frames 12 ½ in (32 cm) square. Stretch organza onto one frame as detailed on page 21.

Transfer the line drawn design onto the framed organza. Centre the frame, organza side down, onto the pattern and trace with a soft black lead pencil or water erasable pen (see page 21).



Tracing outline

## Shells

Lightly glue the shells to the design with craft glue, and allow the glue to dry completely before you begin the embroidery. If you don't, the glue will ruin your needle.

**Note** Test the glue on the organza before you start to make sure it does not dissolve the organza.

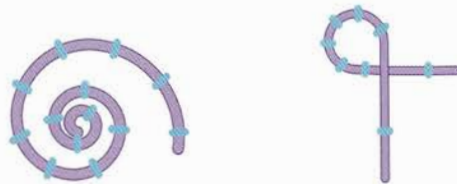
## Seahorse

The next step was to work a running stitch around the outline of the seahorse, and the skeleton-like segments that define the body, using Au Ver à Soie perlée Neptune Green 15.

The seashells must be incorporated into the embroidery in such a way that they become one with it. To this end, couch over them to make it appear that it is the thread which holds them to the organza, using Au Ver à Soie perlée Neptune Green 15.

To begin, thread a darning needle with the couching thread, Golden Threads Cou 371 Blue Opal (just the tip of the thread in the needle). Take the needle through the fabric so that the tip of the thread is just seen on the back. Fasten the couching thread down with the sewing thread, Madeira Mermaid Blue 1107.

Couch along a similar path to the green silk running stitches. Use less of the couching thread than of the green silk, wherever possible laying it alongside the silk.



For the eye, lay the couching thread around it in a coil. When it is necessary to change direction and a sharp corner is needed, loop the thread into a right angle. The couching stitches will need to be closer together going around tight corners.

Embellish the embroidery with a few beads around the eye and scattered between the shells.



To create the mane, use Madeira Seahorse Tan 2114, working long loops through the organza.

## Background

Make a standard foam core stage  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in (13 cm) square and glue a square of corrugated card the same size to the front. Mark, then cut a  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in (11.5 cm) square from the centre of the stage. Lay a piece of blue organza over the cut-out square. Reassemble the stage, turning the frame shape 90 degrees and fitting it around the organza-covered square, sandwiching the organza as if in an embroidery hoop. Trim the edges of the organza with pinking shears, about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch (1 cm) out from the edge of the stage, and mount the stage as usual. Refer to the photograph for guidance.

You may wish to add strips of blue organza about 1 in (2.5 cm) wide running down the left side and across the bottom of the design.

