

Ribbon Doublet

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Overview

I chose to create this Jerkin after viewing several Jerkins in Janet Arnolds book Janet Arnold, Patterns of Fashion: 1560-1620. Janet Arnold documents doublets and jerkins that have the appearance of being made from strips of fabric or trim. Most of these articles of clothing are indeed fabric that is cut in strips with the edges sewn to stop fraying and then re-sewn into a pattern for fabric. They are applied to a ground of either linen or velvet. In particular the doublet that I am emulating is the Jerkin from 1590-1600 Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt. While that jerkin was made from black satin strips and the ground was of silk, I chose to recreate a jerkin out of satin ribbon.

I chose the satin ribbon because it has a good texture to work with, and it doesn't kink or crease when I was working with it. Both sides are identical so if the ribbon flipped over during the process of making the doublet I didn't have to worry about a single strip looking out of place. The craft ribbons split and crease easily, so I decided not to choose that type of ribbon. The velvet ribbons are of 2 qualities; craft velvet and regular. Neither of them are suitable for the above reasons and because I need to iron the ribbon to the interface which can be tricky with the velvet ribbons.

The size of the ribbon was also a consideration. If the ribbon was too small then the pattern may get lost in a blur of colour. The Jerkin would also take me twice as long to make and twice as much ribbon with the smaller size. If it was wider than the ribbon may crease as I manipulated the pieces into the final shape of the Jerkin.

The colours are purely personal. My device is blue, black and white (the colour of a bruise) and I chose to make the jerkin in the blue and black of my heraldry.

I decided to make a jerkin instead of a doublet due to the amount of ribbon required for the sleeves. I decided this after I made the first sleeve. Also, when I put the ribbon sleeves together they were very stiff and awkward. So the Jerkin will have satin sleeves in black, perhaps with some beadwork on the sleeves.

Supplies

Ribbon - Black and blue satin ribbon [insert width of ribbon here]
- 20 yards for the doublet and 15 yards for the sleeves of each colour

Interfacing – 2 yards of black (or whatever colour you choose) iron interfacing.
You need to iron the ribbon to the interfacing so that it will stay in place.

Lining – using linen/cotton blend to line – 2 yards

Inter lining – using pillow ticking because I ran out of canvas and my local fabric store isn't carrying it anymore.

Pins – I use the pins with round balls on the end because they're easier on my fingers when I stick them into the cork board. I also have used push pins with great success.

Corkboard or other surface that will allow you to push pins into it. You need a firm surface for the building of the doublet, but be able to stick the pins into. Some people have used 2-3 layers of cardboard covered with canvas for the same effect.

Step by Step

1. Layout the pattern
 - i. Initially I lay out the pattern and trace the sew lines onto the fabric. I use interfacing for the ground of the work with the 'glue' side up. I will pin the ribbon to the 'glue' side and then iron it down so that it holds its shape. Try not to crumple or wrinkle this fabric as it can not be ironed until you're ready to attach the ribbon.

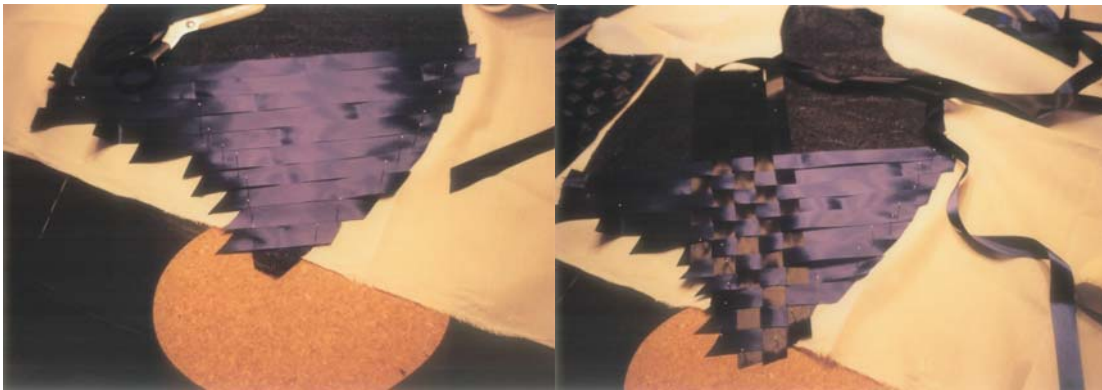


2. Layout the interfacing

- i. I lay the fabric down on the corkboard and pin it in place. I need to make sure the fabric is not wrinkled underneath the ribbons as I work. I also do not want to get wrinkles or puckers when I sew the pieces all together.
- ii. Make sure to lay the fabric out with the 'glue' side up.

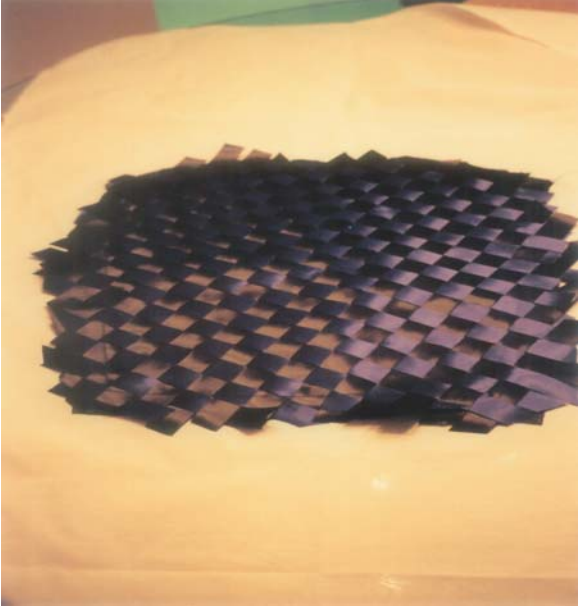
3. The ribbon pattern

- i. Determine the angle and the pattern you want your ribbon to make. I did a simple basket weave but you could play with the layout and come up with different designs. Whatever pattern you choose, make sure when you lay the ribbon down and pin it in place there are no gaps between the strips. You also need to make sure they don't overlap each other as they won't lift properly for the second colour.
- ii. I always put half on the strips for the first colour down and then do the second colour.



4. Ironing the ribbon

- i. Once all the ribbons are in place and pinned securely, iron them to the fabric. Be careful not to set the iron too high, as I have learned the satin will melt to the iron.



5. Sewing the ribbon for security

- i. After I had ironed the ribbon to the interfacing I put a running stitch all the way around the piece that I was about to cut out. That would ensure that all the ribbon would stay in place just in case the ribbon had not adhered to the interfacing. The stitches could be removed later, after the jerkin had been constructed.



6. Assembling the doublet

- i. I attached the back to the two front pieces. *(After the doublet had been constructed, I decided I needed to add a collar and tabs. These were cut from the one ribbon sleeve I created, but did not use in the actual construction of the jerkin.)*

7. Lining and Interlining

- i. Once the jerkin was constructed, I added the lining. The lining for this jerkin is made of linen cotton blend. The buttoned edge is the only place where the jerkin and the lining are machine stitched; the rest of the lining is sewn in by hand. Furthermore, to give me the nice clean edge I like on the collar and button edge, I tack it in by hand. That way the lining doesn't shift and become visible when I'm wearing it.

8. Tabs and collar

- i. After the doublet was constructed I decided to add tabs and a collar to the piece. There are 7 tabs in a trapezoid shape and the two end pieces are a variant of this. I played with several pattern pieces before I was happy with this one.
- ii. The tabs are cut out and have the lining machine sewn to them.
- iii. Clip the extra fabric leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch selvedge and clip the corners to the seam. Turn inside out.
- iv. I machine sew the tabs to the waistline, attaching only the satin parts together. The lining for the jerkin will be hand stitched with the seams ironed up into the jerkin.
- v. The collar is constructed the same way, with the seam selvedge in the collar instead of the body of the jerkin.



9. Buttons

- i. The buttons are hand sewn from embroidery cotton onto wooden beads. Here you see black and blue buttons but in the finished product there will be only black buttons. I found them too close together for the frog closures on the other side.



10. Finish off

- i. Once the entire jerkin is put together then I check and make sure the ribbon has not come away from the interfacing due to my handling of it. If it has then I lightly iron the ribbon to re-attach it to the interfacing.

11. Things to be careful of.

- i. When putting the jerkin together be careful with the pins. The pins tend to snag the ribbon and pull it, leaving fine hair like threads on the fabric. The threads need to be cut, not pulled; pulling can lead to a run in the ribbon.
- ii. When I put the tabs on, they didn't all go the same way, so I needed to unstitch them and place them correctly. I also have to watch that they are all the same in length and width or the waistline.

Reference:



Miniature by Nicholas Hilliard,
c1585-1590. Victoria and Albert
Museum, London.

This doublet is made of interlaced
strips of embroidered silk, imitating
strapwork.

