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Retrofit: Turning Today's Clothes into Period Costumes



Rococo Shepherdess

Create low-sew Rococo-inspired overdress, hip padding, and stomacher from everyday clothing.

Click [here](#) for the full video tutorial or visit www.daytonartinstitute.org/retrofit



Gilles Demarteau The Elder (French, 1745 – 1776), *Grand Pastorale, No. 601*, 1770s, crayon manner engraving with roulette work in colors on paper. Museum purchase. 1981.24.1



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Materials Needed

- skirt/dress with full skirt, calf-length
- short-sleeve fitted dress, knee-length
- one each: 12"x12" quilted and cotton fabric
- shawl or white fabric for shawl accessory
- two: knee-high socks
- grosgrain ribbon/wide shoelaces
- two: colors of ¼" ribbon
- gathered lace, approx. two yards
- piece of cardboard 12"x12"
- fiberfill
- scissors, fabric and heavy
- hand-sewing needle
- thread
- safety pins
- **optional:** sewing machine (or hand-sew)



Instructions

1. Take the over-dress (short-sleeved dress). Fold the end of the lace over and pin to inside of sleeve, starting at seam under the arm. Continue pinning and tuck the end under the folded edge.



2. Start sewing at underseam and sew around sleeve using a thread that matches the fabric. Trim thread tails when finished.

Helpful Hint: remove pins before sewing over. Line up your sleeve fabric edge with the inside edge of your presser foot.



3. Measure an equal distance across the front of the dress waist from side seams, as well as an equal distance about two-thirds down skirt. We are going to make two snips for ribbon on the front and two snips on the back skirt. Use scissors carefully.



4. Thread the ribbon through the hole you have snipped. Gather the fabric up from the hem, tie a knot with the ribbon and pull it tight.



5. Repeat on opposite side and back. Set overdress aside.



6. To make hip padding, overlap the toe section of the socks and pin. Sew across the toes and then stuff the socks with fiberfill through the opening until semi-firm.



7. Pin a piece of grosgrain ribbon or shoelace a sock's opening and sew opening shut. Trim ribbon/shoelace long enough to tie around waist at level of hipbones. Set aside hip padding.



8. To make stomacher, trim a piece of cardboard in a wedge shape slightly smaller than the length of the dress' neckline to its waistline.



9. Use the cardboard as pattern for drawing the stitching line on the quilted fabric. Add 1" all around tracing line and cut out. Then use cut-out quilted fabric as pattern piece to trace on backing fabric and cut out on traced line.



- 10.** Pin and snip ribbon onto your stomacher in diagonal lines. Keep the ribbon strips parallel and spaced about 1" - 1.5" apart.



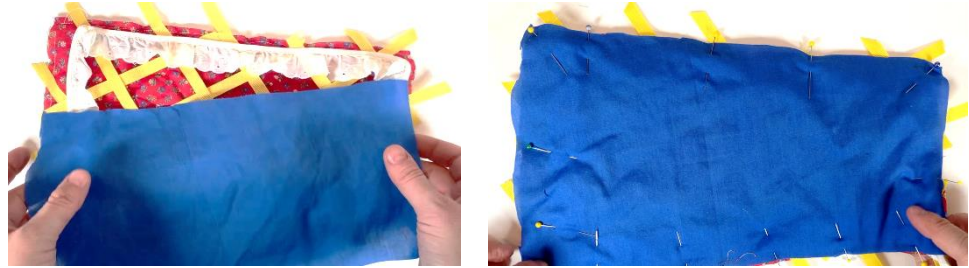
- 11.** Weave ribbons by crossing over and under. Alternate over / under pattern for consecutive strips. Then, sew a stitch around edge of fabric to secure ribbon and keep it from shifting.



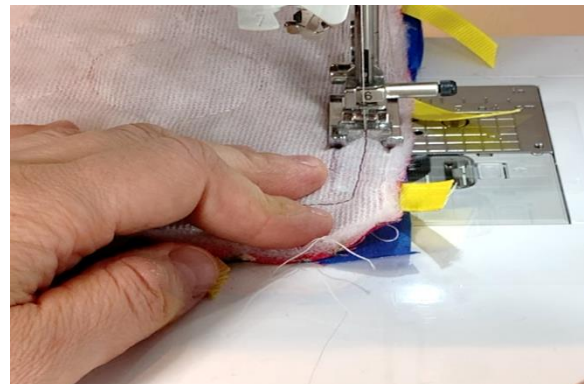
- 12.** Pin lace's edge to the seam you just sewed. The outer, or nicer, sides of the fabric and lace should be facing one another. Then sew lace to fabric by sewing inside the seam edge of the lace.



- 13.** Pin backing fabric to quilted fabric.



- 14.** Flip over and sew following seamline from lace around sides and narrower bottom edge of stomacher. Leave top open so you can insert your cardboard shape inside of it.



- 15.** Trim excess fabric, leaving top edge approximately 1" long. Turn inside out.



- 16.** Insert cardboard through top opening in stomacher. Fold fabric front and back in over cardboard and pin. Then, hand-sew opening shut.



17. Use ribbon to make a bow and pin to center top of stomacher. Hand-sew into place. Stomacher is complete!



INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEARING: put costume items on in the following order:

1. Tie hip padding around hipbone area.
2. Next, layer longer, full dress/skirt on top of hipbone padding. Fabric will drape over hip padding giving us the silhouette we want.



3. Put on short-sleeved overdress with ribbon drape.
4. Use a shawl as an accessory (we cut a baby blanket in half to make a triangle). Tuck the shawl into the front neckline or cross over chest.



5. Use safety pins to attach your stomacher to the dress at top and bottom edges. This ensures easy removal for later laundering.



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Fantastic work! We hope you enjoyed the Retrofit series.



Resources

[Hand-sewing basics](#)

[Watch the full Retrofit tutorial](#)

[Explore fashion through the ages](#)

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