AUSSEW Along

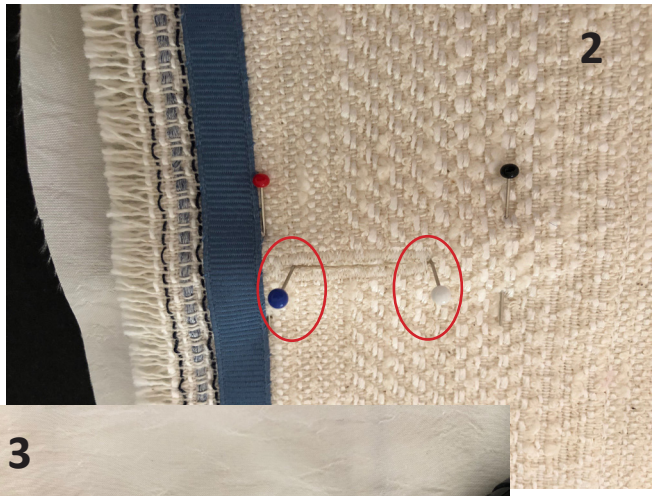
Couture Cardigan Jacket - Part 10

You are oh-so-close to completing your couture jacket. It's been a long journey and now is not the time to give up, especially since it looks a lot like a jacket by this time.

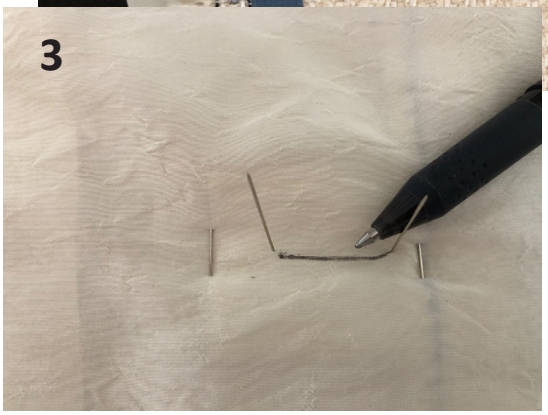
Faced windows for buttonholes

It's time to create 'windows' in the jacket lining, corresponding with the position of the butthonholes.

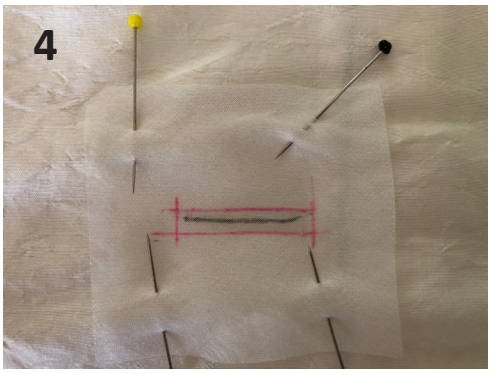
1. Smooth the front lining over the jacket front with the buttonholes and pin the lining in place.



2. Right side facing up, poke a pin straight through at each end of a buttonhole. **TIP:** Work on top of an ironing board, so the pin can sink into the padded surface.



3. Flip the jacket over so the lining is facing up. Draw a straight line between the two pins that mark the ends of the buttonhole.



4. Centre a square of **bias-cut** silk organza over the line you just drew. Then mark a rectangle around the line. The rectangle should be 1/4 inch (6 mm) wide and extended just a fraction (about 2 mm) at either end of the line.

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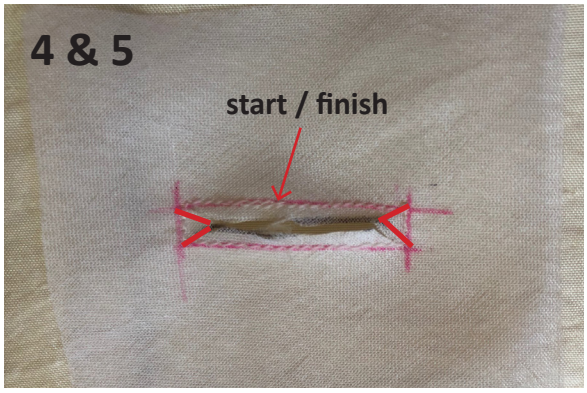
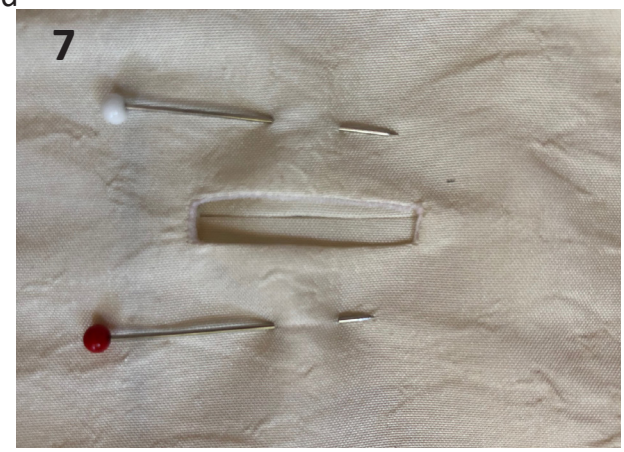
4. Set your stitch length to about 2 to 2.5. Stitch around the marked rectangle, starting and finishing on a long side.

5. Cut through the middle of the rectangle, snipping diagonally into each corner. Take care not to cut through any stitches.

6. Turn the organza square through the window to the other side of the lining and press to form the faced opening. Repeat this process for all buttonholes.





7. Position each faced window over the faux bound buttonhole on the wrong side of the jacket. Slip stitch in place all around the window.

Finish neck and front edges

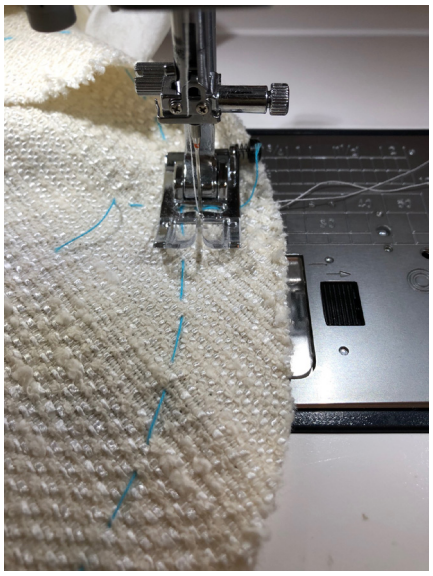
1. Fold the lining under around the neck and front edges. Pin in place and then baste.

2. Use tiny fell stitches to permanently attach the lining to the jacket.

Shape sleeve cap

1. Run two rows of ease stitching just inside the thread-tracing on the sleeve cap, and between the two circles marked on the pattern.

2. Pin the sleeve into the armscye, matching the notches for front and back. Adjust the ease stitching in the sleeve cap as needed. **NOTE:** The contours of the sleeve follow the contours of the arm, so there is a right and left sleeve. Take care to insert the sleeves into the correct armscye.



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A shoulder stand is a pressing tool designed specifically for sleeve caps but can be used for curved seams as well. Once you have one, you will wonder how you ever survived without it. The wider end of a tailor's ham will also work for sleeve caps but it can be a bit awkward to keep upright as you work.

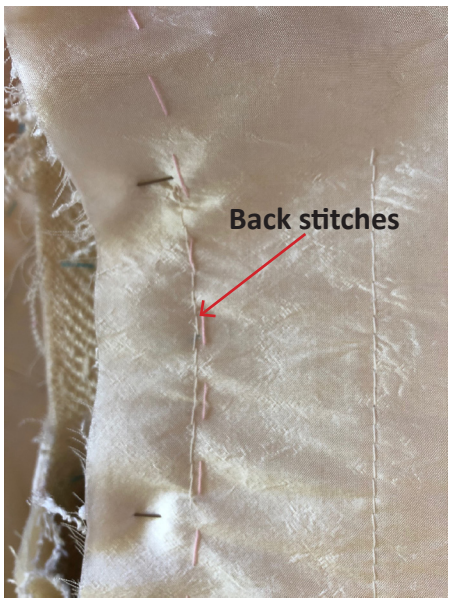
3. Remove the sleeve from the armscye and place the cap over a shoulder stand or tailor's ham.

4. Keeping the lining out of the way, press along the ease stitches with the tip of the iron. Apply plenty of steam to reduce the fullness and shape the sleeve cap. Do not let the point of the iron extend over the seamline more than 1 inch (2.5 cm) into the sleeve cap.

Set the sleeve

1. Prepare the jacket for the sleeve by basting the lining to the fabric at the armscye; use thread that matches the lining. Baste exactly on top of the thread-tracing which marks the armscye seamline. You can then remove the tread-tracing if you wish, but do not remove the notch marks.

2. Make a row of back stitches just inside the seamline on the **back** armscye. Start about 2 inches (5 cm) below the shoulder seam and stitch for about 3 inches (7.5 cm). This stitching tightens the armscye slightly, creating a bit of fullness to form a pocket in the shoulder blade area.



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3. With right sides together, pin the sleeve into the armscye, matching thread-traced seamlines and all notches. The centre seam of the sleeve should match the shoulder seam of the jacket. Baste in place.

4. Sew the sleeve in permanently with back stitches, using a double strand of thread. Pull the stitches taught but not too tight. The advantage of sewing by hand is that the seam has a bit more elasticity and is very comfortable to wear. Also, it is really easy to sew! Anytime you sew by hand, you have much more control as you don't need to worry about the layers of fabric moving through the machine at different rates.

5. Trim the seam allowance at the top of the sleeve, between the notches, to about 1/2 inch (1.3 cm). The seam allowance at the bottom is trimmed to about 1/4 inch (6 mm). At the top of the sleeve, the seam is folded into the cap. At the bottom it will stand up.

6. Press the seam flat to meld the stitches but do not allow the iron to press into the sleeve cap.

Finish the sleeve lining

1. Fold under the seam allowance of the sleeve lining and pin it to the armscye along the seamline, matching notches

At the underarm, the lining will go up and over the armscye seam so the sleeve will drape better (as in illustration).

Don't be alarmed if you find you are turning under less than the 1" seam allowance of the lining.

2. Baste the lining in place, easing in excess fullness as you go. Try on the jacket to make sure the sleeves hang correctly and the lining is not pulling anywhere.

3. Use fell stitches to sew the lining permanently. Don't worry if the lining seam has a few tucks or does not ease smoothly. That's a sign of a true couture garment!

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