

Feature



Raiment of Faith Pierre Pettinger

A unique stained glass cloak highlights the diverse symbols of many faiths

Many years ago, shortly after my wife Sandy and I purchased our first house, we bought a piece of art. (I don't remember at which convention.) It was called the *Tree of Faith*. It showed a large tree, with symbols of various religious faiths nestled in its branches.

It intrigued me. I am a devout Catholic, and I believe that all faiths reflect the truth. I conceived the concept of a *Cloak of Faith* displaying the symbols of many faiths. The concept languished, though, because I didn't have a coat pattern I really liked.

When Costume-Con 32 announced their Single Pattern options, the Simplicity 2513 men's Werewolf, Sherlock and Vampire Costume, sparked my interest. The shapes in the cloak seemed to perfectly fit my needs. I could see in my mind's eye stained glass windows in the walls of a cathedral.



I discarded the head piece and chest pieces and used only the coat and the cloak. I wanted to do major embellishment on the cloak, but the coat also needed to be beautiful and complement the cloak. Since the whole costume is grounded in religion, stained glass windows became the base concept for both pieces.

The Coat

The coat pattern is a very generic pattern intended for quick Halloween type costume work. I added proper interfacing, inseam pockets and a lining. I also added shoulder pads and sleeve headers.

Many years ago, we made a costume based on Russian lacquer-



Finished cloak. Photo: [Christine Mak](#).



Layers of woven fabric and gold tissue lame (top two) under blue/fuchsia organza (bottom two) create a luminous effect for the window panes.

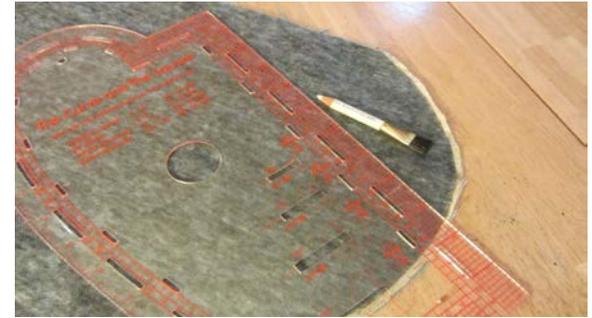
work. Sandy and I developed a technique to achieve the luminous and “deep” look of the lacquer. I adapted this technique for the coat.

I chose a sturdy woven fabric for the coat base. (top left) I layered gold tissue lame over the woven fabric, hand basting the pieces on. (second left) Over that, I layered two layers of iridescent blue/fuchsia organza. (third and bottom left) At this point I inserted the in-seam pockets and then sewed the side seams. I left the shoulder seams unsewn.

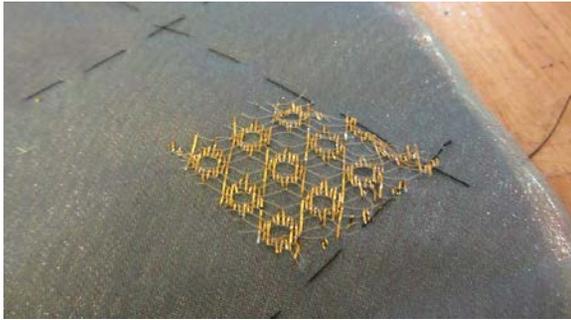
While the entire surface of the coat has the depth of color needed for the stained glass effect, untouched it would not suggest stained glass. I needed to add the “leading” necessary to make the coat look like a stained glass window, even though there would be not be any images in the coat.

I decided on a diamond shape to achieve the effect. I made some calculations to determine the size of the diamonds. I paid particular attention to the double breasted portion of the coat so that there would be only whole diamonds visible when the coat was closed.

With tape measure and ruler I drew light guidelines over the entire coat. (top and second right) I then carefully thread-basted guidelines across the coat in a dark thread. (third and bottom right) It was sometimes necessary to make slight adjustments to the original lines to get a pleasing look. I did baste through all layers of the garment to aid the application of the “leading.”



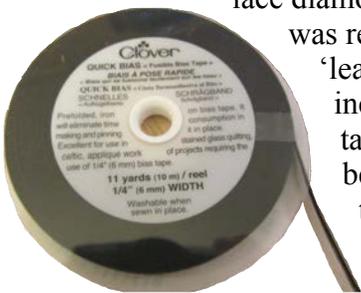
Draw guidelines for diamond-shaped pattern (top and second), then thread-baste along guidelines using dark thread. (third and bottom)



Gold lace diamond at top point of traced diamonds.

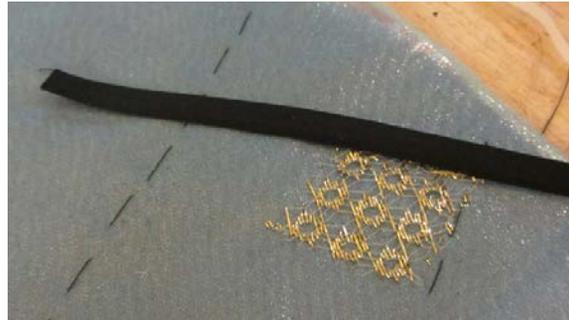
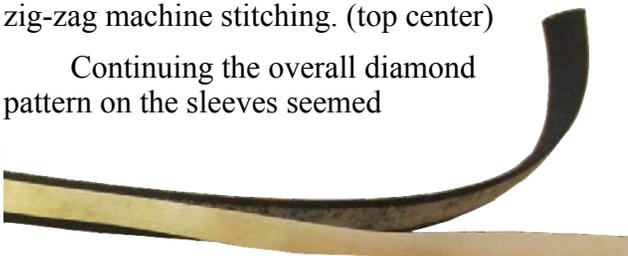
Just the multi-layered fabric and “leading” would be just a bit boring. I needed one more element to make the coat pop. At the top point of each traced diamond I added a small diamond of gold lace, using the Golden Mean to determine its size. (above)

With my traced guidelines and gold lace diamonds in place I was ready to add the “leading.” I used ¼ inch iron on bias tape (left and below) placed over the tread-tracing to form the “leading.” The bias tape was



carefully pinned, making adjustments as necessary, and ironed down. After the bias tape was ironed down it was secured with zig-zag machine stitching. (top center)

Continuing the overall diamond pattern on the sleeves seemed



Bias tape ironed on and secured with zig-zag stitches.

overwhelming to me, so I decided to just do a diamond motif at the hem.

The Cloak

The two tiered cloak is the centerpiece of this outfit. The choice of fabric was critical to the look. I wanted something ornate, suggesting the complexity of religion. I was lucky that we had a beautiful blue/silver brocade in our stash that worked perfectly. I also adjusted the pattern a bit, lengthening the cloak and eliminating the included collar for a simple band collar.

Again, stained glass was the look I wanted. But it had to be different than the coat. I didn’t want the all-over look I had taken with the coat.

I chose to use individual windows, shaped in the pointed arch found in many churches. I used two sizes of

arches: the smaller for the outer cape and the larger for the larger cape. I started with individual pieces of firm cotton fabric. Like the coat, I layered gold tissue lame onto the cotton. Then I layered a blue organza over the lame. This organza was a lighter blue than the one I used on the coat, and it had a slight floral pattern to lend a bit more interest.



Finished coat with luminous, lacquer diamond pattern using the techniques described in this article. Photo: [Christine Mak](#).



Printing reversed design onto transparency.

Now we get to the heart of the effect I wanted to produce. As I mentioned above, the entire concept was to feature symbols of religious faith. The challenge was how to render them. My original concept was to do them in digitized embroidery. On reflection I decided embroidery would be too heavy for the effect I wanted to achieve.

The solution I came up with was printable transparencies. First I placed the images into the pointed arch, using an art program. Then I took the various symbols



Reversed design printed onto transparency.

and reversed them. I printed the backward symbols onto the transparencies, and spray coated the printed side with a fixative. (left above and below)

I laid each symbol onto the prepared fabric. Using a sewing machine I basted the symbols onto the fabric along the lines of the pointed arch. I added a second line of basting $\frac{1}{4}$ " outside the line of the arch. (center and right below) I then trimmed off the excess plastic off about $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the stitching, leaving the excess fabric in place.

I tried a number of arrangements of the windows on the cape. When I found one I liked, I pinned the windows in place using the excess fabric. I then stitched the windows on close to the interior basting line using a slightly longer stitch. Once the windows were in place I trimmed off the excess fabric.



The window's edges needed to be finished, so I used two rows of trim. The outer trim was gold to continue the rich effect. The inner layer was navy blue to produce shading and depth to the windows.

Once the windows were on, I lined the two capes, basted them together and applied the band collar. A gold cloak clasp finished the piece.

Pierre Pettinger has been costuming since 1982. He and his wife, Sandy, have judged masquerades at all levels, and were masquerade directors at ConJose, the 2002 Worldcon, as well as at several other conventions. Pierre has served several terms as ICG President and is currently Archivist and Parliamentarian. With Sandy, he was honored with the ICG's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000.



Overlaying transparency on floral organza fabric.



Basting along pointed arch and $\frac{1}{4}$ " outside of line.