

Woman’s Coat

UNDERTAKING THE MAKING
LACMA Costume and Textiles Pattern Project

Woman’s Coat (Dolman)
England, c. 1885
Wool twill
Purchased with funds provided by Suzanne A. Saperstein and Michael and Ellen Michelson, with additional funding from the Costume Council, the Edgerton Foundation, Gail and Gerald Oppenheimer, Maureen H. Shapiro, Grace Tsao, and Lenore and Richard Wayne
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The dolman, characterized by long cape-like sleeves sewn into side-back seams, was a popular style for women’s day and formal outerwear during the 1880s. This overcoat illustrates a masculine influence in feminine garb, a common feature perpetuated by growing interests in mobility and physical activity for women. The wool twill textile woven into a windowpane design was similar to fabrics used in contemporary men’s suits; the linear patterning matches at vertical seams in this hand-sewn and machine-stitched example, which required a highly skilled

cutter and tailor. Despite the masculine aesthetic, the dolman adhered to the favorable bustle silhouette of fashionable women. Wide, layered box pleats at the center back below the waist accommodate the volume of the upper-back skirt. The stepped cutouts in the center-back pleats reduced bulk within the seams, a technique that maintains a smooth transition from the fitted back to the full bustle.

NOTES:

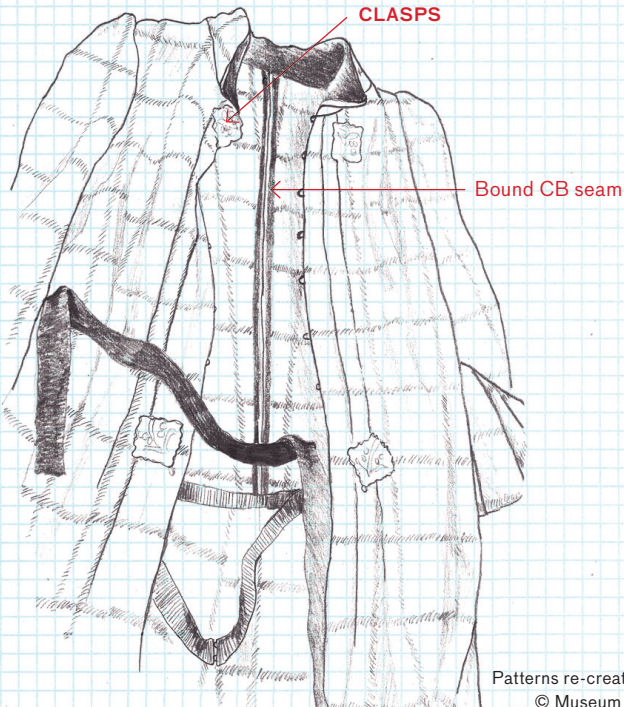
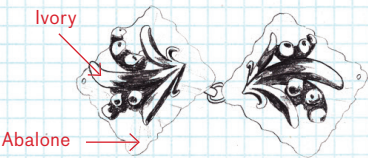
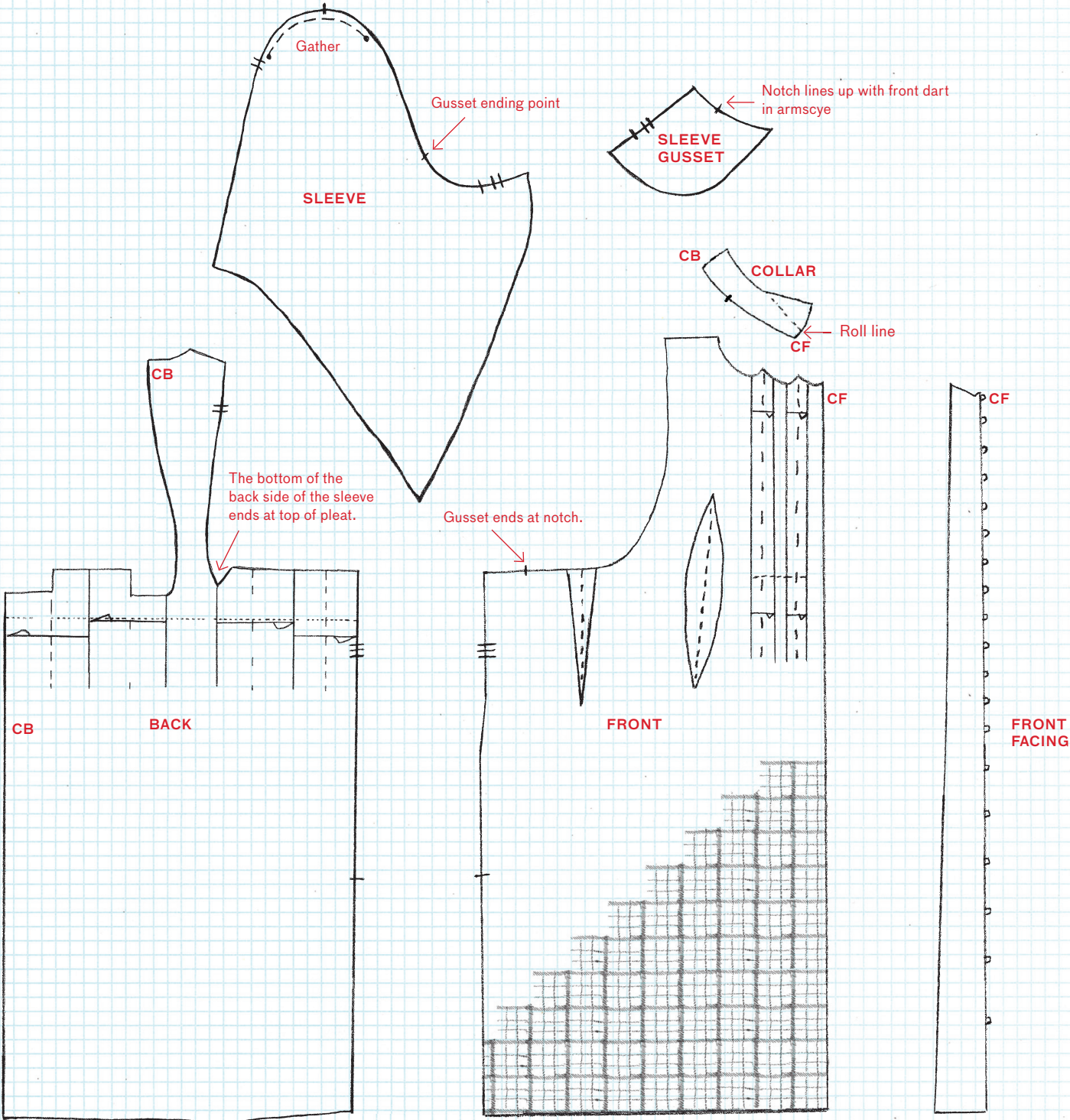
1. Fabric grain follows vertical lines of the graph paper.
2. Pattern pieces are drawn without seam allowance.
3. Nineteen sets of concealed hook and eyes close the center front. The spacing of the closures vary: the top eleven hook and eyes are spaced 2 inches apart; the spaces between the remaining hook and eyes gradually widen from 2 ½ inches to 3 ¾ inches at the bottom. Two sets of diamond-shaped decorative abalone and

ivory hook and eyes, measuring 1¼ inches long and wide, are located at the collar and waistline.

4. Dolman sleeves are set into side-front seams and side-back seams with an underarm gusset.
5. A 2¼-inch-wide and 72-inch-long interior stay tape of brown silk grosgrain ribbon is sewn to the top of the pleats at the center back and side back. The stay tape clasps at the center-front waist with two pairs of hook and eyes.
6. A center-front facing of brown silk twill is two inches wide at the collar line and graduates in width to four inches at the hem.
7. The winged collar and sleeves are lined with brown silk twill. The dolman’s front and back are unlined; center-back seams are bound with ¾-inch-wide strips of brown silk twill and all other seam edges are pinked.



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- Key:
- = 1:1 inch
 - CF = Center Front
 - CB = Center Back
 - - - - - • = Gather between points