



SciFi Costuming on a Budget

BY KATHE GUST

Thrift store science fiction costuming can work if you are open about the character you are willing to attempt. If you are planning to replicate something exactly, this may not be the method for you. If you are willing to be the Ambassador from Planet X, a starship mechanic, a denizen of a hive of scum and villainy, or a classic 1930's serial character, you may be pleased at how well this can work. Just remember clothes are clothes – there are no men's or women's departments in the store.



Ambassador/Ambassadress from Planet X – You need one really great signature piece. Preferably a vest or robe and the rest can be as plain as you like, or as gaudy. If a robe has sleeves and you don't like them - take them off and finish the edge with bias tape or a fancy trim. A great hat, hair-do, sash or other accessory just adds to the splendor. Draft a bodyguard and consort to add to your consequence.

Starship mechanic – Look for a jumpsuit of some kind, or try to find a vest to wear over plain tan, khaki or black shirt and pants. Add some patches or ribbons to make the vest look more like a uniform. Patches can be made of heavy felt. Use fabric making pens to draw on your logos and the name of your company or affiliation then tack on with a few stitches. Accessorize with boots and tool belt. Smear a bit of grease on your forehead or cheekbone.



Denizens of sci-fi hive – These unfortunates seem to wear earth tone colors quite a bit. They also wear bits and pieces of decommissioned military garments. They may be neat and tidy, but the clothes needn't really match with each other. For some reason Star Wars types like wrap garments, but others do not seem to be fussy about closures. Everyone likes overcoats, dusters and hooded robes, but you only NEED those if you are the alpha character. A few belts worn in unusual ways and hung with mysterious pouches is never amiss. Want to be over the top? Wrap your boot tops and lower pant legs in strips of cloth to resemble puttees.

Classic sci-fi – Costuming in the days of the old serials was not very fancy. For either a guy or gal, grab a long sleeved round neck shirt in your favorite sci-fi color. Use felt to cut out a big logo you can tack onto the front with a few stitches: comets, planets and stars are good. Add pants and boots. To fancy things up you can make a collar and belt from vinyl and add a water pistol "ray gun". For a classic 1930's heroine think goddess dresses.

Continued, page 3

In this issue: SciFi Costuming on a Budget 1 • Book Review, *Seventeenth Century Women's Dress Patterns: Book Two* 2 • Upcoming Events 3 • President's Column 4

Finery is the newsletter of the Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild, an educational group dedicated to all aspects of costume and textile arts, and is published bi-monthly. The next deadline for submissions is 9/15/13. For details about submitting articles, please see our website at www.gbacg.org, or contact the editor, Gailynne Bouret, at newsletter@gbacg.org.

Book Review

Seventeenth Century Women's Dress Patterns

Jenny Tiramani, Susan North, Editors

BY SAHRYE COHEN

Book two of *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, edited by Susan North and Jenny Tiramani, continues the same meticulous documentation and fantastically detailed x-rays and photographs as book one. This volume contains an open gown, jackets, busks, linen bands and eighteen pages detailing the construction of a pair of 1660-1680s watered silk stays. In addition to being the most anticipated item in the book, stays are also the focus of the introduction to book two.

A short essay discusses the inventory of a late 17th century English staymaker who had a large number of pre-made pairs of bodies in his shop, indicating that many pairs of stays were somewhat ready made. In addition to the unstitched bodies he also has a varying selection of finished



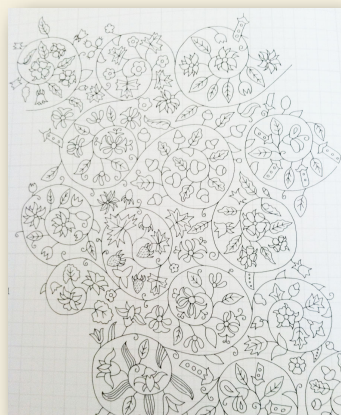
bodies and stomachers for both girls and women amounting to over 200 in the final inventory. A second introductory essay in book two discusses the progression of stays throughout the 17th century by comparing three extant pairs. The cut and method of fastening changes throughout the century as the fashionable shape goes from a straighter silhouette to one that is more curvaceous, particularly around the bust. This most recent curvaceous pair of stays is the pink watered silk garment detailed in the patterns.

North and Tiramani have arranged the patterns so that books one and two are complementary and not duplicative. In particular, book one does not contain a stays pattern and focuses more on waistcoats and head and body linens. This makes it an excellent resource for costumers making a first foray into the 17th century using their late 16th century or

Continued, page 3



(Above) Embroidered linen jacket. British, 1590-1630. V&A 919-1873.
(Right) Detail of embroidery repeat.



GBACG Costumers Bazaar

Aug. 23, 2013, 1:00-5:00 pm
Albany Veterans Memorial Hall

Do you have things in your closets or on your bookshelves that might need to find a new home? Are you looking for fabulous fabrics, trims or patterns? Maybe you're interested in some great new or used costume items?

If the answer to any of the above is "yes", you **MUST** join us at the GBACG Bazaar on Saturday August 24th!

Come rent a space and sell your gently used or new items. Or come and shop for your next great set of gloves, or a hat, or a whole outfit.

For more information, see event webpage at <http://gbacg.org/current/costumers-bazaar.html>, or contact Deborah Borlase, president@gbacg.org

SciFi Costuming, continued



There are plenty of other ideas as well. Princess Leia seems to have quite a lot of white outfits in her closet and I'm betting we haven't seen all of them yet. Just wear one of her signature hair-dos and you are good to go. The gals on Firefly run the gamut from greasy to glam. Choose your character and go with a compatible look and accessories. Can't find anything but khaki pants and a tank top or a skimpy frock – consider Battlestar Galactica.

17th C Women's Patterns, continued

early 18th century stays as a base. A waistcoat, linen band and coif patterned from book one worn with a petticoat will work for many different 17th century impressions.

The first three garments in book two, a velvet gown, and two different linen jackets, are nice garments to include in a larger 17th century wardrobe. Developments in costume research, like using x-rays for internal construction details, provide additional information for the velvet gown, which is reminiscent of loose gowns that were described in *Patterns of Fashion*. The loose linen jackets that are extensively patterned, may be worn in combination with a waistcoat, or alone. These jackets would be an easy choice for costumers who want to make a Cavalier or Pirate outfit. For costuming, the stays pattern from book two will be useful for those who want the perfect mid to late 17th century silhouette and also for developing the inner structure of the fully boned gowns of the

second half of the century. The sumptuous satin gowns seen, for instance, on the mistresses of King Charles II, likely had a fully boned lining. Other items in book two are embroidered accessories, such as a stomacher, purse, knife cover and a pincushion that compliment the main garments found in both book one and two. Book two also contains three interesting shoe patterns; chopines, an embroidered slipper and a kid shoe, all presented with patterns and detailed photographs.

Book two of *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns* is an excellent companion volume to book one. It is a fantastic addition to the costume library of those looking for the exact 17th silhouette, and those who want a complete and accurate 17th century wardrobe.

Upcoming Events



**1860s
hairpiece
wardrobe
workshop**
Sept. 14, 2013

Bridget Bradley-Scaife reveals the secrets of turning your tresses into just the right 1860's look. You'll be making hairpiece components that can then be mixed and matched to create various hairstyles appropriate for Mid-Victorian impressions. Location: Hancock's Fabrics, San Jose. Questions? Email workshops@gbacg.org.

Starverse Picnic

Sept. 29, 2013

The dramatic view from Oakland's Middle Harbor Shoreline Park provides an inspiring backdrop for Starverse denizens from all walks of life. The massive, otherworldly cranes at the Port of Oakland (which inspired George Lucas' AT-AT walkers in *The Empire Strikes Back*) will set the mood beautifully. Costume: Star Wars, Firefly, Fantasy, SciFi or Steampunk.

Sister Organization Events

Discount ticket information: <http://www.gbacg.org/about-gbacg/member-benefits.html>

CGW Costume College

Aug. 1-5, 2013: <http://www.costumecollege.net/>

Continued, page 4



President's Column

BY DEBORAH BORLASE

Calling all Vendors! If you are a current GBACG member and wish to participate as a vendor in the GBACG Costumers Bazaar, WE WANT YOU! This event is a benefit for our membership, so vendors must be current members as of June 1. Check our website for

details on how to sign up.

Don't want to sell, you just want to buy? Yay! We will have lots of wonderful treasures awaiting your pleasure! Costumes are absolutely not required for this event, and is offered as a benefit to our members, so if you're a member, you get in for free! Entry fee is just \$5 for non-members, or sign up at the door at \$20 individual (plus \$3 per add'l household member) for free entry.

Please tell your friends & family to come and help us spread the word!

Events continued

PEERS: A Pre-Raphaelite Picnic Dance

Aug. 3, 2013: <http://www.peers.org/picnic.html>

ADSC: How to Gatsby

Aug. 8, 2013: http://www.artdecosociety.org/gatsby/m_overview.htm

PEERS: The Empress of India Ball

Sept. 7, 2013: <http://www.peers.org/empress.html>

ADSC: Gatsby Summer Afternoon

Sept. 8, 2013: <http://www.artdecosociety.org/gatsby.htm>

BAERS: A Fall Ball

Sept. 21, 2013: <http://www.baers.org/index.html#baerscal>

Interested in joining the GBACG or renewing your membership? Want to purchase tickets to events or workshops? You can do all of this on the GBACG website:

- Join/renew your membership: <http://www.gbacg.org/about-gbacg/join-gbacg.html>
- Purchase event tickets: <http://www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html> - see individual event webpages to order online (via PayPal), or to print out a form that you can mail in with a check.
- Purchase workshop tickets: <http://www.gbacg.org/gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html> - see individual workshop webpages to order online (via PayPal), or to print out a form that you can mail in with a check.
- Post or view pictures on Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/gbacg/>
- Follow GBACG on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/gbacg>