

Printed Chintz Round Gown



Unknown maker, possibly American

Block-printed plain weave cotton that may have been made in England

Date of garment: first made in the late 1770s-1780s and altered ca. 1794-1798

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Accession # 2018.4.1

2018 purchase from Cora Ginsburg LLC (Sharon, USA)

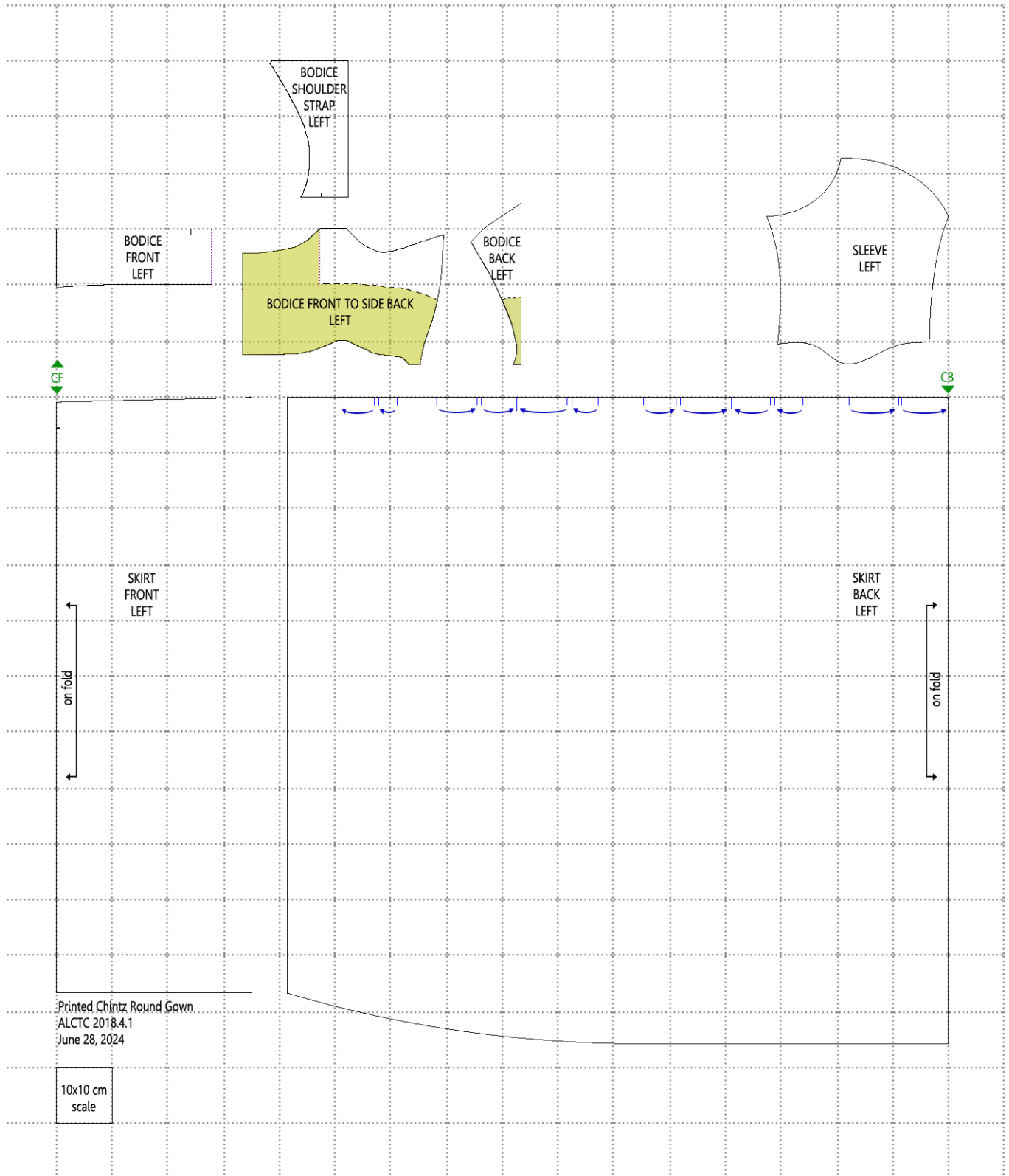


Figure 1
Pattern Diagram 2018.4.1



Figure 2
2018.4.1: Front View
Paper hair by Emily Graca, undergraduate student, and Anne Bissonnette.
Mount and photograph by ©Anne Bissonnette.



Figure 3
2018.4.1: Side View
Paper hair by Emily Graca, undergraduate student, and Anne Bissonnette.
Mount and photograph by ©Anne Bissonnette.



Figure 4
2018.4.1: Back View
Paper hair by Emily Graca, undergraduate student, and Anne Bissonnette.
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Figure 5
2018.4.1: Front View Detail 1
Paper hair by Emily Graca, undergraduate student, and Anne Bissonnette.
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Figure 6
2018.4.1: Front View Detail 2
Photograph by ©Anne Bissonnette.



Figure 7
2018.4.1: Bodice Front to Side Back Panel View
Photograph by ©Anne Bissonnette.



Figure 8
2018.4.1: Back View Detail
Photograph by ©Anne Bissonnette.



Figure 9
2018.4.1: Detail View of Selvedge
Photograph by ©Anne Bissonnette.

Observations

This ca. 1794-1798 printed cotton chintz “round” gown (i.e. without the gown opening at the front skirt) has a square neckline, below-the-elbow length fitted sleeves, a very full skirt with a small train, and two drawstring centre-front closures: one along the neckline and another along the elevated waistline.

Under the short “bodice front” piece is a longer chintz-covered and fitted base bodice with a deeper neckline and a longer centre-front section that would get pinned at the centre front (CF) (Figures 5-6). The base bodice’s hidden front actually extends to the side and gets sewn to the “bodice back” piece. This longer base bodice is partially hidden (see green portions of the “bodice front to side back” and “bodice back left” pieces in Figure 1). The two-piece base bodice is lined in coarse, plain-woven linen fabrics (Figures 6-7). The short “bodice front” piece is assembled to the “skirt front” piece, which is sewn to the “skirt back” piece, and this three-piece component is then stitched over the base bodice to

generate the gown's elevated waistline (by 11 cm at centre front and 15 cm at centre back above the hem of the base bodice). The "bodice back" pattern piece is pieced at its apex (not represented in the diagram) (Figure 8).

The circumference of the front and back skirt pieces totals 310.2 cm and shows evidence of a previous hemline (14 cm above the current hemline). The rectangular front skirt (70 cm wide for both left and right) is much narrower than the back one (240.2 cm wide for both left and right). The latter is extremely wide and the diagram does not show the amount of piecing required to obtain the full width at the back (three 68.5 cm wide selvedge-to-selvedge chintz vertical panels and one 32.5 cm wide vertical panel). The visible selvedges of some skirt panels show two blue threads, which may serve to identify it as British goods (Figure 9). The upper section of the "skirt front left" piece (35 cm) is slightly gathered to be assembled in the lower portion of the "bodice front left" piece (31 cm). The "skirt back left" pattern piece has three double box pleats. A dark brown stain at the left waist level is covered with a patch of chintz (Figure 8), as is a small section on the left hem.

The below-the-elbow sleeve is fitted and covered with the "bodice shoulder strap" pattern piece. The latter is pieced (not represented in the diagram). It is applied over the sleeve and likely done when the wearer is being fitted as it is superimposed over the upper section of the "bodice front to side back" and "bodice back" pieces. This could explain why the upper segment of the "bodice shoulder strap" pieces that contour the shoulders and meet at centre back (CB) does not have the same dimension as the diagonal upper segment of the "bodice back" piece. The sleeve shows evidence of wear, with a small area of darning at the left elbow.

Of importance:

- The presence of the longer base bodice covered in chintz suggests that this gown was remodeled from an earlier style that reached the natural waistline.
- The hem circumference points to a voluminous skirt that could accommodate voluminous petticoats.
- This pattern was created early on in our pattern-taking project, therefore it was not done using the streamlined method referenced previously. As such, this pattern and the accompanying construction notes lack some details.
- The chintz fabric has a selvedge-to-selvedge width of 69.3 cm.

Pattern Notes:

- All descriptions use proper left and right, unless otherwise specified.
- All patterns are placed on the grid, which corresponds to the grain line.
- Seam allowances are not included.
- The neckline drawstring is enclosed around both the "bodice front" and "bodice shoulder strap" pieces.
- The "skirt front" piece has a slit (4.5 cm long) at the upper CF (see notch on pattern piece). Its elevated waistline is gathered and sewn to the lower segment of the "bodice front" piece. This seam holds a narrow, enclosed drawstring.
- The "skirt back" piece has three double box pleats placed from side front to the centre back.
- The lining of the base bodice uses the same pattern pieces ("bodice front to side back," "bodice back," "bodice shoulder strap," and "sleeve").

To download a PDF version of this information, [click here](#).

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This garment has also been part of the exhibition [Dress & Escapism Series — Part 1: Dress Artifacts & Curatorial Practices](#) (2020).

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