



PORTRAIT IN BROCADE

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"Portrait in Brocade" is a study in spatial relations; portraits of Elizabethan women in court attire inspired the dress. The piece is constructed of 100% cotton burgundy damask with an all over pattern of pseudo-foliation. The dress has contrasting details of black acetate satin and a full length front lace up closure. The armholes are open to the waistline and the entire back is open from the shoulders to the waist. Notable features of this dress are the double trains, the large collar, and the sleeves and panniers which form the dress' dramatic silhouette. The collar only slightly hints of the ruffs of the 16th century; the panniers are a bit more overt. This piece was patterned using draping techniques; it was realized in a size 8. The panniers and sleeves were architectural challenges. Each pannier and sleeve has five layers of buckram as a super-structure under the damask. If the layers were all the same shape and size, the panniers and sleeves would stick straight out and clash with the motion of the gown. To alleviate this aesthetic problem, only the top layers were left full size; the four underneath were cut sequentially smaller. Additionally, "fingers" were cut in the four supporting layers, allowing the panniers and sleeves to drape, yet keep their form.