

The Tall Slouchy Hat
a 16th C Style





Lady Kystan - 1580

Definition:

This is a high crowned round pleated hat. This type of hat can be seen in a variety of portraits from Poland, Germany, Sweden, Spain, England, and the Low Countries. Pleated cover fabric typifies this hat over a stiff foundation creating a "bubble" appearance. (Note: After restorations, the painting of Lady Kystran's hat was seen to be much lower at the tip and looks like the hat out of Janet Arnold's *Pattern of Fashions* according to the curator of costumes at the Tate Museum where this painting is housed.)

Origins and spread of the style:

This style is seen in England, Brussels and German portraits beginning in the late 1550-1630.

Janet Arnold in her book *Patterns of Fashions*, offer some insights into the materials and construction of this type of hat.

27. c.1575-1600 Silk Hat Germanisches National museum Nürnberg. T1220.

Hat in brown corded silk lined with lightweight brown silk. Both layers are cut to the shape.. The pieces are daubed with wax along the cut edges to prevent fraying.

The brim is made of two layers of corded silk, without any stiffening. Brown silk thread is used for sewing. There are three joins on the top side of the brim. The crown is pleated up, lining and corded silk worked as one layer, and stitched to the edge of the top side of the brim. The underside of the brim is hemmed down over the lining with brown silk thread.

The hatband conceals the join of brim and crown and all the stitches, but it is just possible to see traces of wax on the raw edges of the brim. A fragment of wax was tested by Miss Erika Weiland in the textile conservation workshop.

The hat is mounted on a wire frame to keep its shape. This appears to be of nineteenth century origin, made of iron at the bottom, possibly eighteenth century clavichord wire at the top. Presumably this is a replacement for an earlier foundation, either of wire, which may have rusted away, or cardboard, which may have been worm-eaten. Perhaps this was an early attempt at making a high crowned hat with soft pleats. Other hats of this period have bases of stiffened felt, or layers of paper and card soaked in glue, with the silk arranged in firm pleats on top.

Four circles of brown silk gathering threads are put into the hat and pulled up, making 43 pronounced folds or pleats. The silk may have been dampened slightly to keep its shape. (Arnold, p 94)

Upon closer inspection of this hat, I was surprised to discover that there is an error in Arnold's description. Arnold suggests that the wire frame was the foundation of this hat. However, once the metal frame – which is simply stuck into the hat stock, and lining are removed, it is clear that the foundation of this hat is made of a rounded felt tip of the same size and height as many round tipped pleated hats.

The tip is bright orange and contains some sizing, as it is very stiff, while still thin. The felt is no more than 1/8" thick. Dr Zatter-Siddle, curator of textiles and the German National museum, could not say what sizing may have been used without destructive testing but speculated that since

there are no obvious bug holes, it was likely to be starch. The top of the silk lining currently skims along the top of the round tip.

What this hat had that is slightly different is the slouchiest of the external fabric itself. Arnold speculates that the hat may have originally had a wire frame or other materials. But one can find pictorial evidence that the “balloon” hat was worn in England, Poland, and Germany. The GNM also has 3 separate extant hats made in this manner. Thus, it seems likely that the felt tip inside the hat is in fact the appropriate foundation. According to Dr. Zutter-Siddel curator of textiles at the GNM, the inside felt had not been dated but the threads holding the brim seem to be original, and consistent with the rest of the thread used on the hat.

Arnold also suggested that this may have been an early attempt at a pleated tall hat, but the pictorial evidence indicates that the “balloon” style was worn contemporaneously with the round tipped pleated hat and flat tipped pleated hat. The wood carving on the right shows several types of hats worn contemporaneously including, tall pleated hats, short pleated hats, roundtipped pleated hats, and felt hats.

If one used a firm silk, it will stand quite nicely when pleated, with a minimum of support. The orange felt tip inside this particular hat would have provided sufficient support while still being lightweight and wearable.

The brim has no stiffening of it's own and allows the hat to be very flexible. There is not wiring around the brim or crown. The silk of the brim is still quite stiff. It may have some sizing in it, but as it has not drawn bugs, it seems unlikely.

Many silks of the 16th C were much more tightly woven than silks today. The silk used in this hat is still stiff and stands

well on its own. The waxes on the edges were of bees wax. A common wax in this era. The surprising thing according the Dr Zutter-Siddle is that the wax was very clean.

Additionally, where one can see behind the hatband to the lining of the silk, one can see additional pleating of the lining located between the external silk and internal lining. This may also have assisted the hat in looking fluffy.

The head plate of this hat is very round, with no wiring or other restrictions, the wearer's head could be any shape from an “old world round” to a “long oval” without any issues. The only change would be in the apparent brim shape. On a round-headed person, the brim would be flat while on a long oval person, the brim would develop a slight swoop along the side. That may account for some of the apparent brim differences one sees in artwork of this period.

Below is pictured a second slouchy pleated hat located and the German National Museum. According to Dr Zutter –Siddle, the inside support of this hat is also a felt round tip and

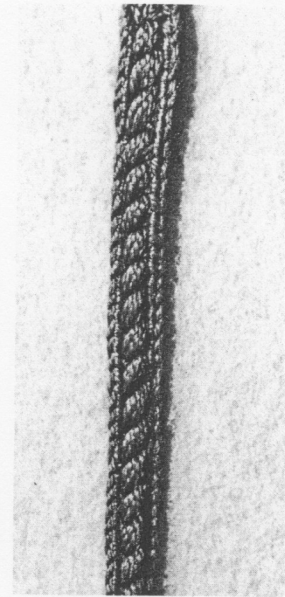


Isabella and Albert arriving in Brussels

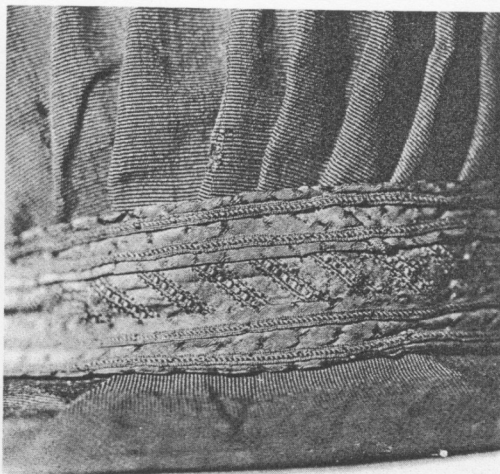
constructed in the same manner as the hat covered by Janet Arnold in *Patters of Fashion*. The hat band is made of a tablet woven trim. "Waffen und Kiftumkunde" 1985



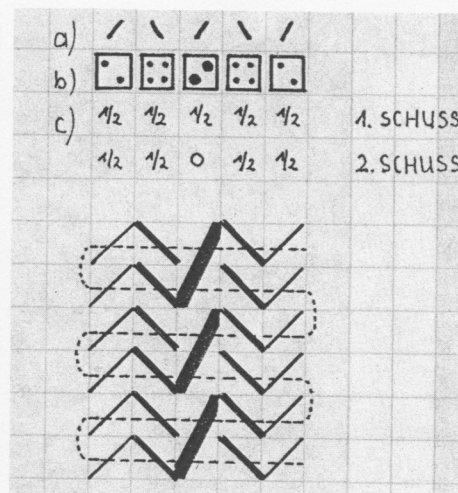
14. Herrenhut (Kat.-Nr. 4)



16. Nachbildung der Borte
(Kat.-Nr. 4)



15. Kat.-Nr. 4



17. Diagramm zu Kat.-Nr. 4

bindige, punktförmig gehackte seidene Schrägstreifen (10 mm br.) gesetzt. Jeder dieser Streifen ist mit zwei parallel laufenden brettchengewebten Borten besetzt. Die Borte wurde mit fünf zueinander geordneten 4-Lochbrettchen gewebt. Die Mittellinie ist durch die Verwendung von zwei

mehrfachen Kettfäden, die über zwei Schüsse flotten, hervorgehoben, eingegrenzt durch eine „Schnur“ aus den vier Fäden eines Brettchens. In die beiden äußeren Brettchen sind jeweils zwei Kettfäden eingezogen. Der Bindungsrapport umfaßt zwei Schüsse.

An SCA Interpretation



Original Hat as seen in JA's Pattern of Fashion:



My version of the Slouchy Pleated hat

The following table compares some of the differences between how the Slouchy Pleated hat found in Janet Arnold's Patterns of Fashion was constructed in period and how I construct my hat. The only change I made was to use silk taffeta as the cover fabric as I was unable to find the appropriate silk twill. The twill used in the original was about a 6.5 oz silk. The heaviest twill I was able to find was a 2.5 oz., which was not stiff enough to recreate this hat.

	Period materials/Techniques	My Variations
Cover Fabric	Silk twill	Silk taffeta
Thread	silk	same
Foundation materials	Formed felt	same.
Backing	Linen	same
Lining of hat	Silk	same
Interior of hat	Silk satin	same
Finishing touches	Woven hat band	Jeweled hat band and trained feathers similar to the ones seen in the Kystan portrait

Tools and Materials

1. Fabric: 1 yard of 36-inch silk taffeta
2. Thread: Silk thread.
3. Millinery needles #14 #16
5. Millinery wire #8 or #9
5. Chalk or tracing paper
7. Manila paper for pattern
8. wool felt
9. Hat block

Making a Slouchy Pleated Hat:

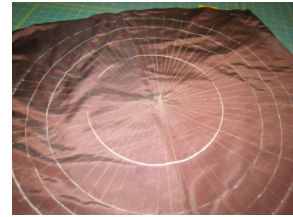
The felt tip:

When forming felt, one simply needs to heat the felt with a little soapy water, agitate by hand and then squish excess water from felt. While the felt is still very warm, place over the hat block and form. I added some glue sizing to the felt while the felt was still warm and wet so that the glue sizing would absorb fully into the felt. See appendix A for complete instructions on making a rounded felt tip.



The Slouchy Pleats

I began by cutting a circle of silk taffeta and a circle of silk satin such that they covered the stock with 2 inches left over. With the circles on top of one another, I marked them with chalk for the pleats and guidelines for the stitching lines. I then ran a running stitch through both fabrics. Since the original hat had 31 pleats, I did the same by marking 1-inch increments around the fabric edge and drew a line that intersected in the center of the fabric; this kept the pleats regular and allows for a specific number of pleats.



Slouching hat threads

The Brim:

The brim of the original is made of 2 layers of silk twill. I did mine with 2 layers of silk taffeta sewn as the original on the inside then turned out. There was no evidence of wiring or stiffening materials used in the original hat so I didn't use any either. The brim seems flimsy, but when worn, it allows for an interesting brim shape.

Putting it together:

Once the brim and stock were completed, they were ready to be attached to one another. I proceeded to:

- cut the center oval in the brim leaving 1/2 inch seam allowance
- grade the seam allowance and cut down to the seam allowance.
- fold the tabs up which will hold the stock to the brim.
- place the stock on the brim and sew it together using a stab stitch.

This hat was a little different as there was a significant amount of droopiness to the brim and the tip as there was no stiffening other than the felt tip and no wiring. This does however allow for sizing of the hat so it would fit a variety of head sizes which may have been the goal of the hatter or it just may have been another interesting style.

Adding a Lining

I lined the hat using a silk satin and sewed in darts to take up the extra fabric as it was cut as a single circle of fabric. The original hat used this process as well.

Sweatband

The original hat had an insit sweatband made of ribbed silk; I used a modern pertersham to recreate the ribbed silk.

The Hatband

The original hat had a hat band made of tablet woven silk. I used a modern gimp to recreate the trim.

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