Ciri from the Witcher (TV series, Season 1)

Lydia Barnes

TOC

Background & Research 2
Cloak 3
Undershirt 8
Underpants 10
Doublet 12
Pants 16
Gloves 18
Shoes 19
Hair 20

Background & Research

This costume is from season one of the Netfix Witcher series. Ciri wears this costume the entire season, which means I have a lot of reference photos. However the costume gets increasingly weathered each episode. **I have chosen to make her outfit as seen in episode one before it gets weathered, has both gloves, and her hair is nicely done in a braid.**

Relevant notes from the costume designer Tim Aslan

*"...**the outfit she wore during the entire season was supposed to be practical and useful** because there were many escape scenes and running scenes. Therefore, we used **wide pants skirts** for Ciri in skirt appearance and our aim was to not be restricted in the action scenes. "*

*"I tried to **pump up the color as much as possible**, especially as once-through breakdown and with **use of filters which darkened and desaturated the color – about 40%** is lost in some scenes."*

*"Despite Ciri having one costume to carry her throughout the season, Ciri's runaway look has **12 repeats**, according to Tim Aslam, which are at **various stages of distress** during her journey."*

[source]

Cloak

Ciri's cloak is easily the most striking piece of the ensemble, and is what inspired me to do this version of the character.

Color and fabric type - I am convinced the cloak from the pilot and the weathered cloaks from later episodes may have been slightly different fabrics/weaves (the pilot/promo being silkier, then more matte/rough moving forward). The color is also darker/less saturated than real life.

Promo

Show

Exhibit

Patterning - I bought a cut of vintage wool coating from a re-use shop that I felt was a good compromise for the color (leaning towards a vibrant, saturated blue). However I only had 2 ¾ yards. My first mockup indicated I would need at least 4 yards, but I really wanted to make this fabric work. So I made a mockup of muslin out of 2 ¾ just to see if it was possible. I ended up making it work by doing careful piecing and adding extra seams to the sleeves.

Hood mockup →

For example, I was able to achieve the correct length of the coat by adding a cotton “shim” to be hidden under the decorative shoulder pieces, which lowered the coat overall. I also had to use cotton for the facing instead of the wool since I didn’t have enough.

← Added a small wool shim that shows at the base of the hood

I also did not have quite as much fabric as I wanted for the poofy sleeves, so I tacked on horsehair canvas to the base of the sleeve to help it maintain its shape.

For her sleeve cuffs, I learned how to make dorset buttons by hand, using knitting stitch markers and embroidery thread.

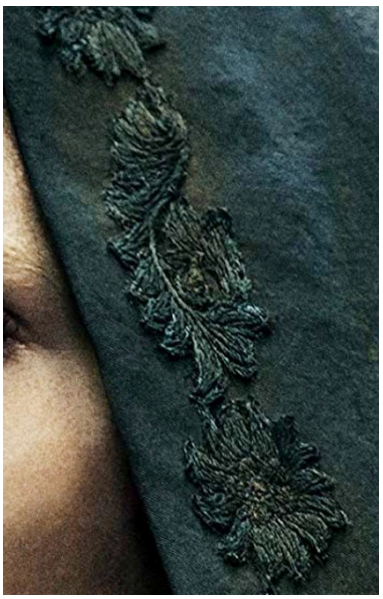
Reference of button

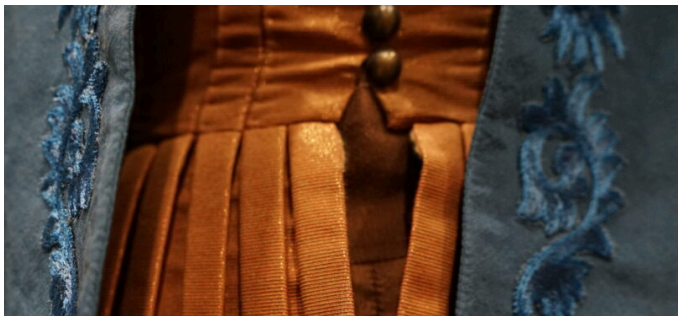
Making the buttons

Final result

Embroidery

According to the costume exhibit notes, the floral trim is soutache embroidery. It was difficult finding a closeup, but also various sources seemed to be wildly different colors and techniques! For example look at how different all of these reference images are (screenshots and exhibits).





I decided to lean on the description of it being soutache embroidery, and was also inspired by the cording on some of the other costumes. I experimented with several options and ended up making my own cording out of a thin satin, and then used my machine with the feed dogs lowered to manually stitch over the cording to tulle. To keep the tulle stable, I sandwiched it between sticky wash away stabilizer that I also printed the design on (vectors made by me) so I could be consistent. After washing and cutting the extra tulle away, I hand stitched it onto the wool.

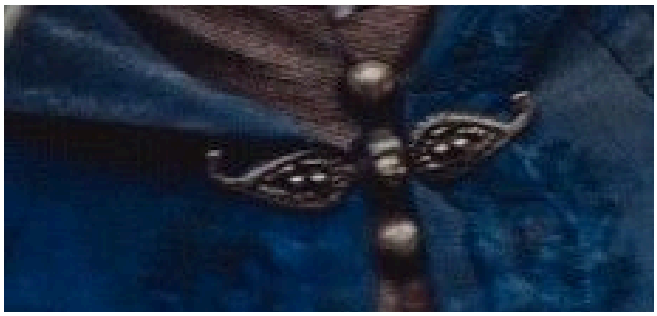
Tests

Strips sewn with a special foot

Cording turned inside out

Designs on tulle/stabilizer

I made the broach closure out of craft foam and puff paint. I then glued the pieces onto an existing broach piece that I hand sewed onto the cloak.



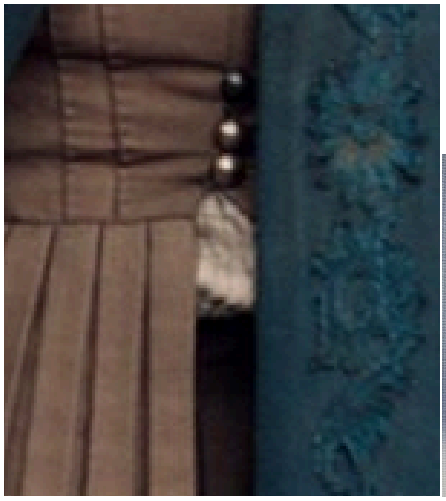
Reference ↑

↑ WIP craft foam and puff paint

← Final broach

(Note: I am probably going to add a full lining to help hide the stitch lines from the facing)

Undershirt



(References)

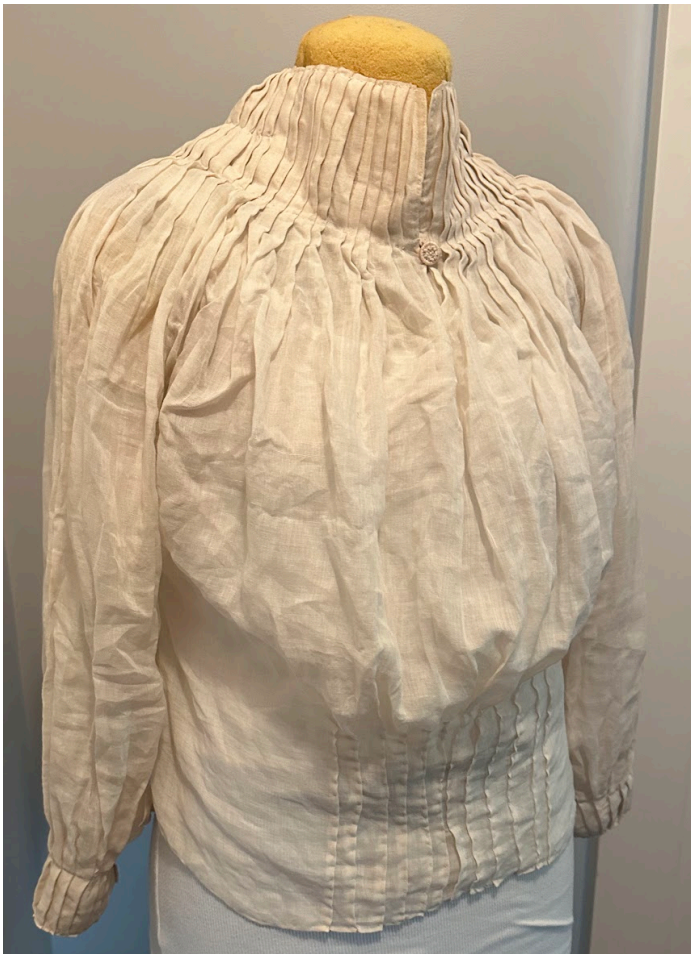
We only get very small peeks as to what underclothes Ciri wears with this outfit. She is wearing an undershirt with very thin pleats at the neckline, waist, and sleeves. In order to do the pleats without adding too much bulk, I used a very fine tissue weight linen. I also tea-dyed it to give it the worn-in, oatmeal colored look.

Since there are no shots of the full undershirt, I had to make something up and work backwards from the bits I could see. I started out with an oversized raglan style shirt base, and with some math, worked out how to do the pleats so the neckline would lay correctly.

Hand sewn rolled hem

Handmade pleats
(fabric folded over then pleated)

Tea dyeing with black tea



Final undershirt (I ran it through the washer multiple times for a realistic worn look, which is why it doesn’t look super crisp in these pics)

Handmade dorset buttons

Hand sewn pleats on back neckline

Sleeve gusset for movement

Underpants

Similar to the undershirt, we only have small hints as to what she wears underneath her main pants. It looks like similar length pants with a roughly 3 inch hem.

References →

I decided to make a similar set of pants as the main pants out of the tea-dyed linen. It also closes on the side instead of the front or back. I added dorset buttons to tie it in with the undershirt.

← Hand sewn invisible hem

Side opening with dorset buttons

Final under pants

Doublet

Ciri has a doublet with a walnut brown torso and patterned, pleated sleeves. Finding the fabric for the bodice was very difficult. I could tell from closeups that there is a ribbed texture, so I generally looked for ribbed silk faille. But it's more complicated because there is a strange shine to the fabric that refracts in the light in an interesting way that reminds me of organza. After ordering many samples and searching everywhere, I hit the jackpot with a silk faille that has metallic threads woven in, which creates the same light refraction. I think it is pretty darn close to the real thing.

↑ Notice how the collar is not stiff, and also how the seams line up on the offset shoulder

← (left) Observe the shine on the bodice
← (right) This exhibit photo shows the ribbed texture

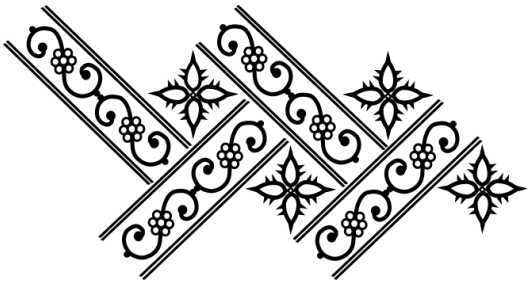
I patterned the torso by draping a simple form on my dress form and drawing the seam lines, then transferring to a mockup. I made the peplum pleats very crisp by hemming a single layer of the silk to keep it as thin as possible, and by using steam with a tailor's clapper. The button loops are a single cord sewn onto twill tape, then embedded into the front facing. I also snuck in some light boning into the seams to help the fabric stay smooth. The inside is lined with cotton twill and seams hidden with bias tape.

The sleeve fabric is the part I probably spent the most time on for the whole costume. I did many tests and tried out different techniques. I really thought I was going to do heat-set fusible ink, cut with my cricut. I did many samples and it seemed to work, however when I tried to do the large pieces I couldn't get it to stay lined up and not shift or bleed.

I didn’t want to use regular Cricut iron-on because it's shiny and fake looking. Eventually I realized I could use flocked iron on, which adds a really nice raised texture and is easier to apply. I needed about 6 total square feet of fabric (silk taffeta) to complete the sleeves. It took me many hours to weed everything (not to mention about 3 ft I wasted on the fusible ink cutouts).

Mockup ↑

Vector I created for cutting ↓



Test pieces

Weeding

Final result

See how the undershirt sits

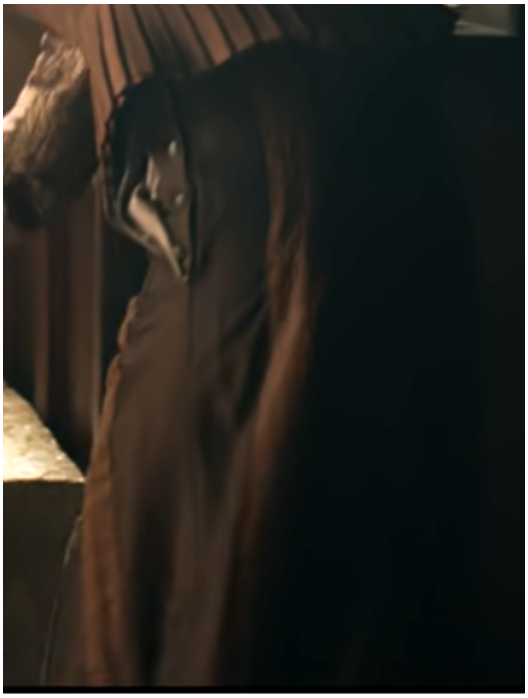
Shoulder seams line up

Hand stitched top stitching on all seams

Pants

Ciri looks like she is wearing a skirt at first, but it is actually a pair of wide-legged pants that open on the sides.

↑ Concept art



I found a perfect silk wool blend that has the right drape and shine. For the contrasting fabric, I used a canvas-like cotton with a large texture. It was very difficult to get it to stay flat and smooth as I top-stitched it onto the fabric. I used fusible hem tape to help it stay on as I topstitched it down with my machine.

Final pants

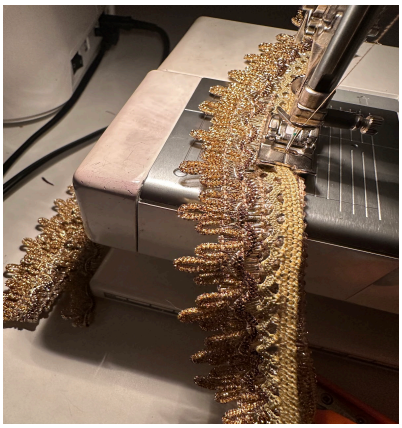
Gloves

Ciri wears suede gloves that have gussets and gold trim.

References

I made the gloves myself out of suede using a basic gusseted glove pattern.

I had to create the trim myself by combining 3 different gold trims.



← Finished gloves

Shoes

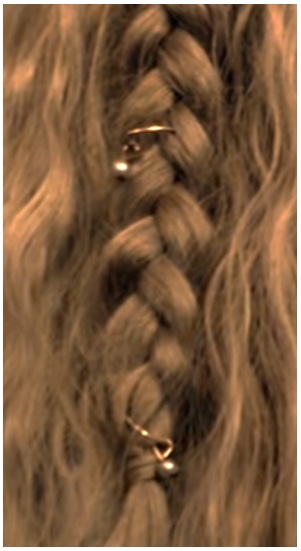
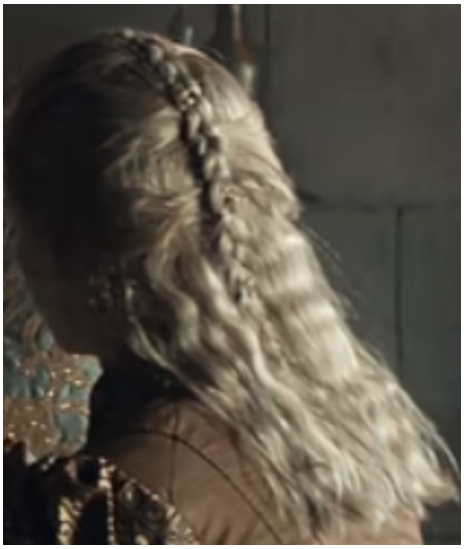
In the first few episodes, Ciri wears simple suede slip-on shoes.

I made her shoes from scratch by eyeballing and draping some fabric over an existing shoe in my size. The outer fabric and lining is faux suede with a layer of thick cotton inside for stiffness, and the sole is veg tan leather that I cut, stained, and finished with black edge kote.

Finished Shoes →

Hair

Ciri has pale blonde wavy hair. In the first episode, she has a braid going down the back with some light jewelry in it.

I made the rings with standard jewelry wire and pearls. I trimmed a lacefront wig that was a bit too long, and added the braid and jewelry.

↑ Finished hair