

Madame DesForges

Elizabeth Enoch, University of North Texas, USA

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This gown successfully captures the mood of excess and elegance which marked the Parisian Impressionist period by which it was inspired. Its plunging back neckline, gracious silhouette, soft feathers, and form fitting curves accentuate the power of feminine allure. Rich bits of silk charmeuse form a flattering housing for the female form, much as did the color palette and bold brush strokes of Impressionist artists.

Created through modified paper foundation piecing techniques used by quilters, this gown began as photographs of the proposed fabrics. These were cropped into small shapes and manipulated in

Photoshop to perfect the piecing layout. Transferral to computer aided pattern design software allowed overlay of the piecing layout on the garment pattern pieces. Varying sections of joined strips (strip sets) were strategically offset and sewn to the paper foundation to create the undulating effect. A layer of sheer silk placed between paper foundation and strip sets provides support and beautiful seam finishes for this deliciously lightweight gown which floats about the wearer as she parades by. One can imagine Emile Zolav may have chosen to dress Madame DesForges (*The Ladies' Paradise, 1883*), in a gown like this as she sought to to exert her power over Octave Mouret's desires.

