

IMPRINT MAGIC: VELVET EMBOSSING FOR MAKERS & TEXTILE ARTISTS

Velvet is a luxury fabric with a long history.

- Pile weaves, woven from silk & linen, resembling velvet, were found in Egypt dating to around 2000 BCE
- Some believe silk velvet originated in China between 400 BCE and 23 CE, with piles most closely resembling our modern velvet.
- During the medieval and early modern periods, the most skilled velvet weavers were in Turkey, Greece & Cyprus.

VELVET TYPES

- Cut versus Uncut Velvet
 - Cut velvet features the pile loops being sheared thereby creating a soft, plush & shiny surface to the velvet
 - Fragmentary Silk Chintamani
 - Uncut leaves the pile loops providing a duller, more textured and rigid feel to the velvet
- Brocaded Velvets
 - Use of patterns and different threads to provide texture, relief & designs
 - Cisele & Brocaded Silk Velvet
 - Fragmentary Silk Chintamani
- Voided Velvets
 - Velvet areas are cut out to show the base warp/weft threads
 - Fragmentary Silk Chintamani
 - Alter Frontal
- Pile on Pile Velvets
 - Multiple pile heights used to create sculptural designs.
 - Used in many ecclesiastical textiles
 - Italian 16th Century (embossed as well)
 - Alter frontal
- Ciselé Velvets
 - Combination of cut & uncut piles that produce a dramatic tonal pattern
 - Cisele & Brocaded Silk Velvet

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Materials

1. Velvet

- a. Velvets with rayon/acetate retain the deepest, most dramatic impressions; rayon and silk work the best
- b. Avoid Velvets with too much stretch
- c. Avoid Crushed Velvet as it will not take the embossing as cleanly

2. Stamps & Embossing Plates

- a. You can use wood, metal, foam, 3D printed or other types of stamps
- b. Some recommend only using rubber stamps
 - i. Too many details and fine lines may not produce a clear imprint
- c. You want stamps with higher relief (deeper points between the bottom and top of carving) to get a better, more defined design

3. Iron

- a. Use a clean iron
- b. Test heat sets on a scrap

4. Ironing board or sturdy surface

- a. Need a level and sturdy surface as you will be pressing on the stamp

5. Protective cloth

- a. This protects the back of the velvet from the iron
- b. Use a thin piece of cotton or linen.
- c. Some use parchment paper but keep in mind that heat will transfer more rapidly via the paper

6. Spray bottle with distilled water

- a. Some say dampening the stamp and/or velvet help the process.
- b. Use distilled water to keep your velvet from picking up any chemicals/contaminants in the water or spotting the material

How To Emboss Velvet

1. Prepare the workspace

- a. Use a sturdy surface
- b. Make sure your iron is CLEAN!
- c. Set iron to medium heat to start out

2. Position the Embossing Plate/Stamp

- a. Place embossing plate or stamp on sturdy surface with design facing up
- b. Make sure it is clean and free of any debris
- c. Can lightly mist the stamp to help embossing (TEST FIRST)

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3. Position the Velvet

- a. Lay velvet over the embossing plate/stamp with the right side of the fabric down (velvet side down)
- b. Ensure fabric is smooth and wrinkle free
- c. Can lightly mist velvet before laying on stamp (TEST FIRST)

4. Cover w/ Protective Cloth

- a. Place a thin cotton/linen cloth over the backside of the velvet (side facing up towards you)
- b. Cloth will act as a barrier and help protect the material

5. Apply Heat

- a. With iron at a medium heat, press it firmly onto the protective cloth covering the stamping area.
- b. Apply EVEN pressure
 - i. Do not rock the iron as it will distort the edges of the embossing
- c. Apply pressure for 10 to 30 seconds depending on your test piece)

6. Check the Embossing

- a. Carefully lift the iron and remove the protective cloth
- b. Gently lift the velvet to check the embossing
- c. Can repeat the process w/ more pressure if design isn't as defined as desired

7. Allow Fabric to Cool

- a. Allow fabric to cool before handling it or using the material
- b. Helps set the design

Tips for Successful Velvet Embossing

- Test, test, test
- Avoid overheating/too high heat
 - Start with a lower heat and work up if needed
- Use protective cloth between the iron and the velvet
- When using water, start with a light hand and do not oversaturate the material
- If the holes in the iron show up, press for the first 10 seconds and then firmly glide the iron over the material; this should remove the marks
- If you hate it, wash the material to remove the design!

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Advanced Techniques

- Create custom embossing plates
 - 3D printer, foam, wood, etc.
- Try multi-layering Designs
- Combine embossing with dying, painting, embroidery, etc.
- Consider trying materials like a lace with raised details!

Care of Embossed Velvet

- Gentle Cleaning
 - Either gently hand wash, spot clean or fabric cleaner to keep embossing from ‘fading’
- Do not use direct heat
 - Try to not repress the embossed velvet even with a velvet board as it may distort or press out designs
 - Try a light steam and keep iron above fabric
- Storage
 - Long term folding can cause the embossing to flatten
- Other comments
 - If you are embossing for a piece of clothing that will be used a lot or plan on sitting long periods of time, the embossing will eventually flatten and ‘fade’

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REFERENCES

<https://refashioningrenaissance.eu/early-modern-embossed-textiles/>

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Arts de l'habillement : [recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts libéraux et les arts mécaniques, avec leur explication, (Paris, 1751-1780), Plate II.

<https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-digital-exhibition/index.php/velvet/item/173-a-brief-history-of-velvet#:~:text=The%20creation%20of%20a%20series,Serjeant%201973:14>

<https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/renaissance-velvet-textiles>

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/445263>

<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/110794/altar-frontal>

<https://handwovenmagazine.com/history-of-velvet/>

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FRAGMENT, 17th CENTURY, SILK, COOPER HEWITT MUSEUM,: 1902-1-462-a,b



DOUBLET & BREECHES, 1630-1640; SATIN, LINEN & BUCKRAM: V&A: 348&A-1905





ITALIAN (Probably Venice) - 16th Century SILK VELVET (46.156.133)

Velvet with the pattern delineated solely by the contrast between two heights of the dense silk velvet pile was particularly popular in the sixteenth century. This pattern of lobed palmettes, sometimes incorporating crowns, was made into robes or sashes worn by the senators of the Venetian Republic. It was also used to make ecclesiastical vestments. The crimson shade is associated with the Venetian senators, but the Museum also has an example woven in deep blue silk.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/renaissance-velvet-textiles>



Sample of early Cisele & Brocaded silk velvet (early 16th century Europe); TRC 2011-0363

<https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-digital-exhibition/index.php/velvet/item/173-a-brief-history-of-velvet#:~:text=The%20creation%20of%20a%20series,Serjeant%201973:14>



Fragmentary Silk Velvet with Repeating Tiger-stripe and 'Chintamani' Design

2nd half of 15th Century; Turkey Bursa

Silk, metal wrapped threads; cut & voided velvet (catma); brocaded

Object Number: 08.109.23

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/445263>

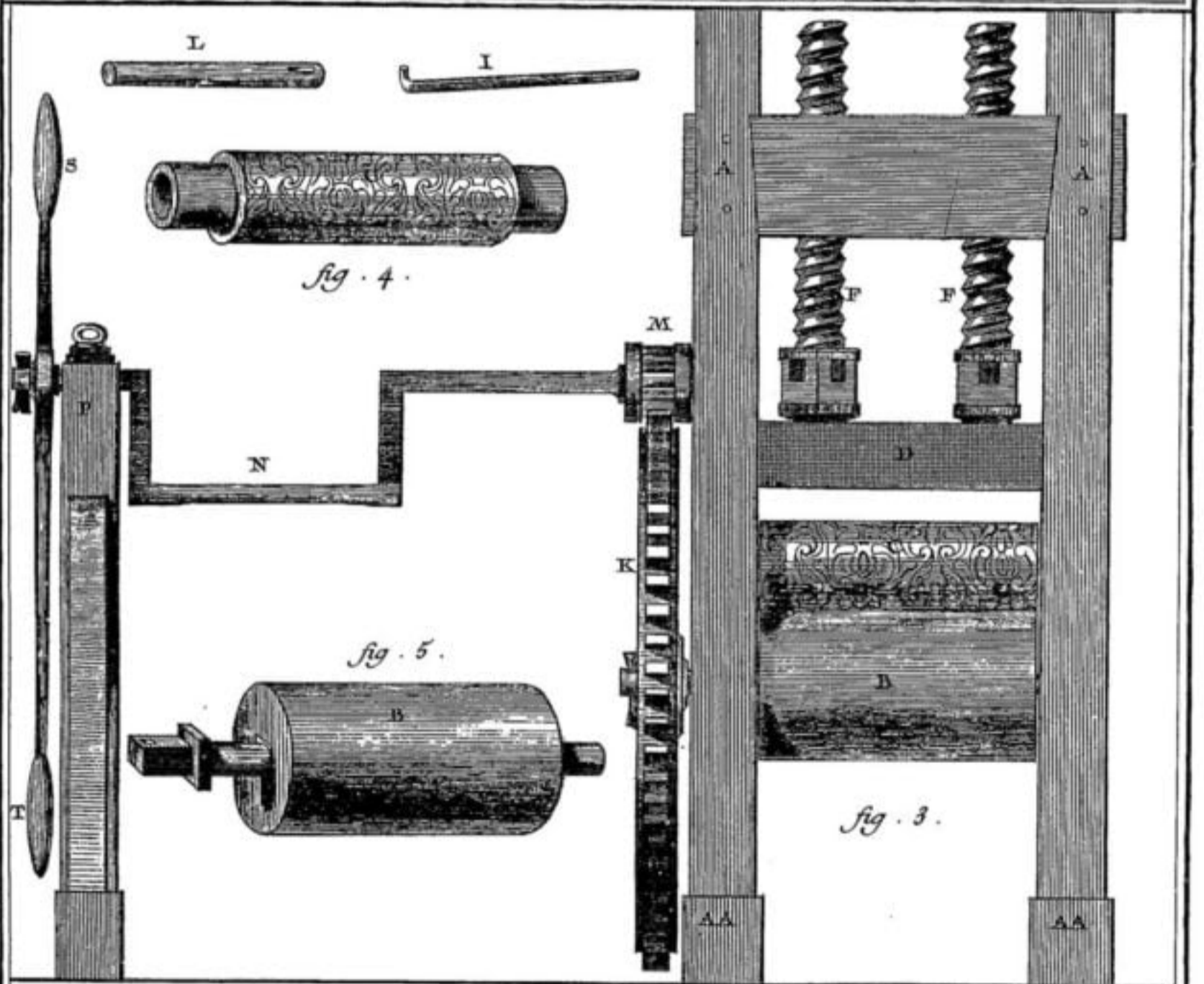
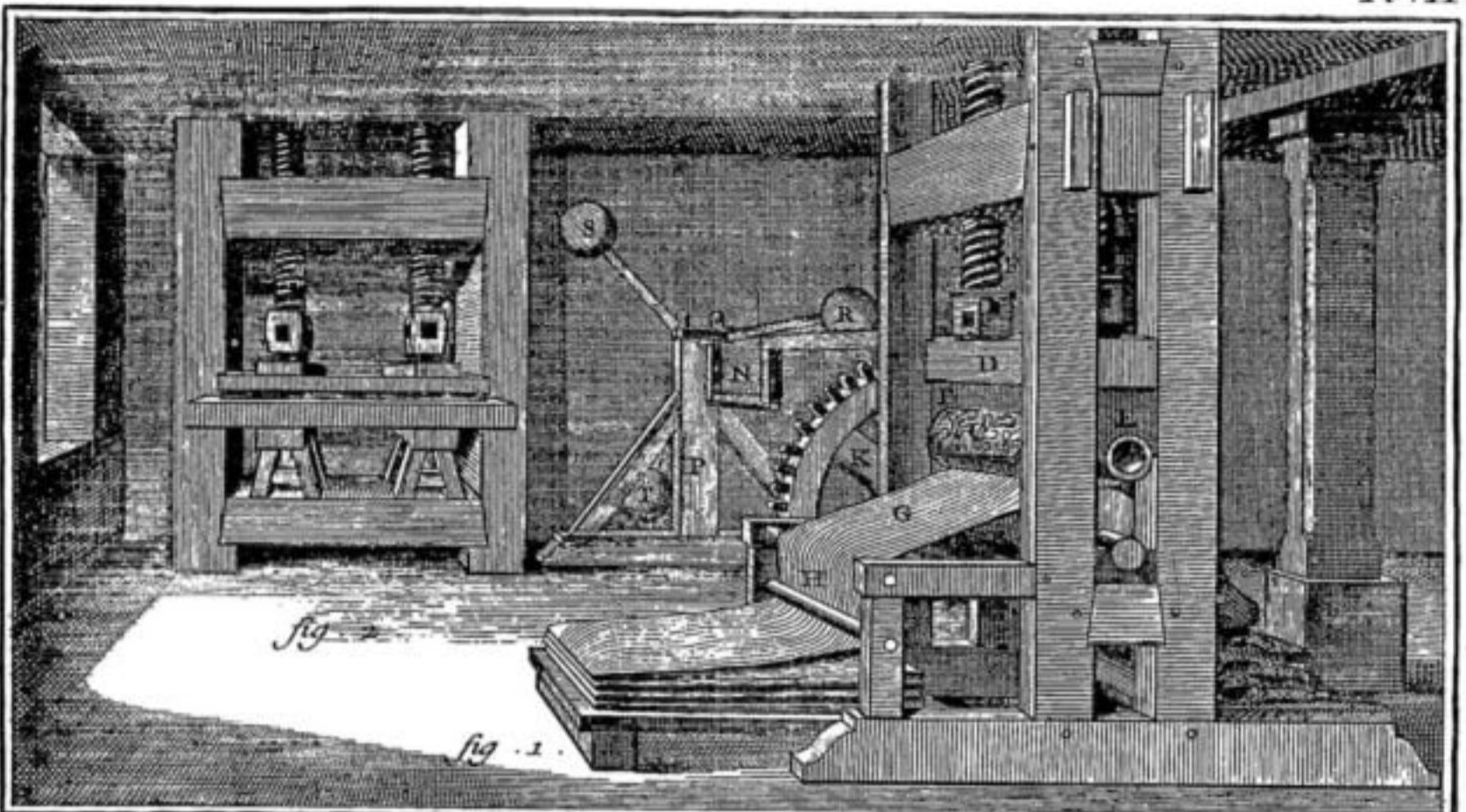


ALTER FRONTAL—1480-1550 (Spain or Italy)

Silk, warp-float faced 3:1 'Z' twill weave with supplementary discontinuous facing brocading wefts forming areas of weft loops (known as bouclé) tied by secondary binding warps in weft-float faced 3:1 twill interlacing and supplementary pile warps forming cut, pile on pile, voided velvet

1944.403

<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/110794/altar-frontal>



Goussier del

Bernard Peccit

Découpeur et Gausseur.

'Decouper et Gausseur' in Denis Diderot & Jean le Rond d'Alembert, L'Encyclopedie [38], Arts de l'habillement: [recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts liberaux et les arts mechaniques, avec leur explication (Paris 1751-1790) PLATE II.