



by Barbara Gregory

It has been almost two years since I started the process of creating this vest.



© geneviève de la plante

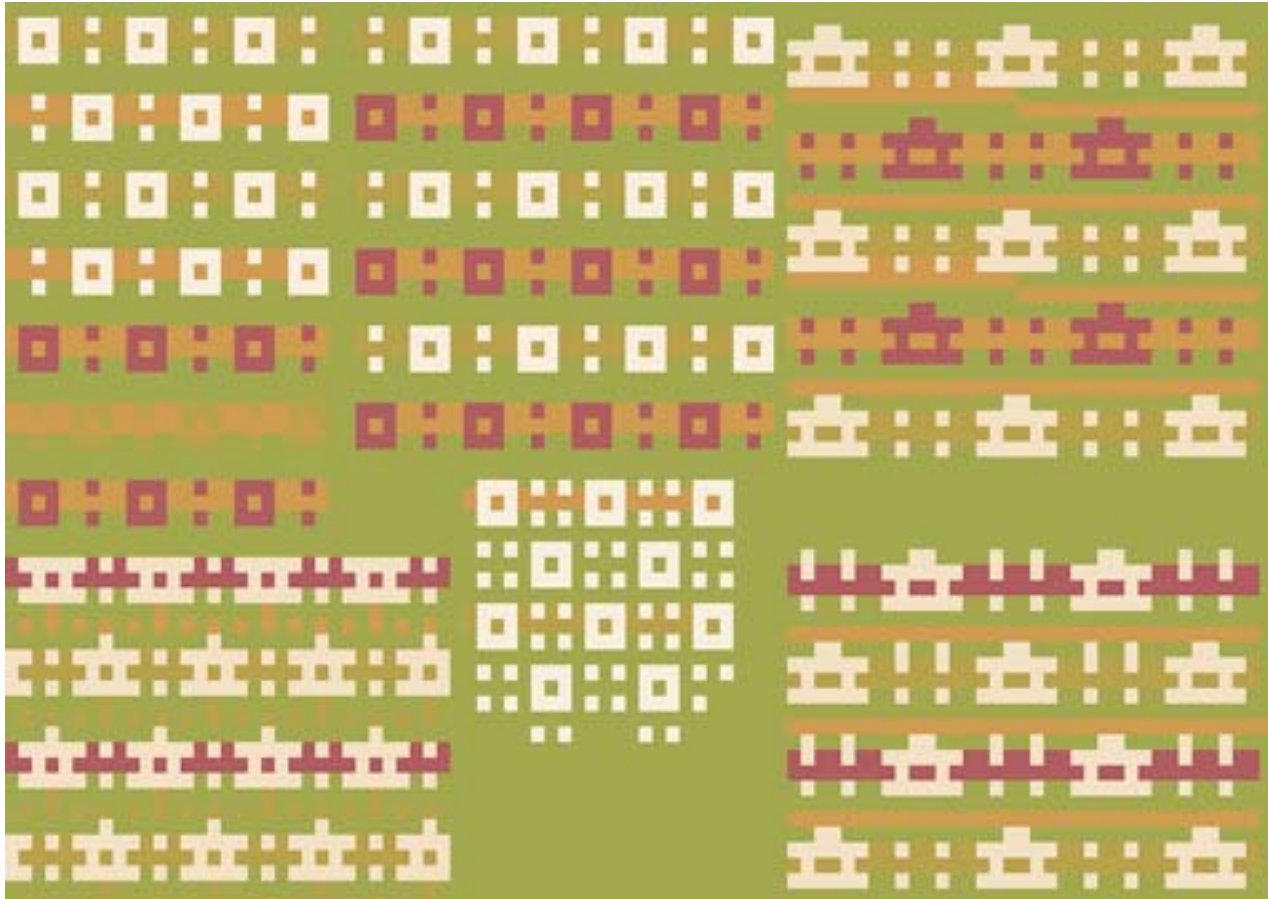
Looking back to remember the process as it happened, I recalled that in a folder of pictures saved for inspiration was this design from Toronto fashion label [Smythe](#). Notice how what would normally be the neckband has expanded to become a yoke.



I remember making a sketch of the vest I wanted to design — I didn't have this image in front of me, but there is no doubt that it had lodged in my subconscious mind. I borrowed the neckline construction which gave me a fresh, modern shape to fill with my own patterns.

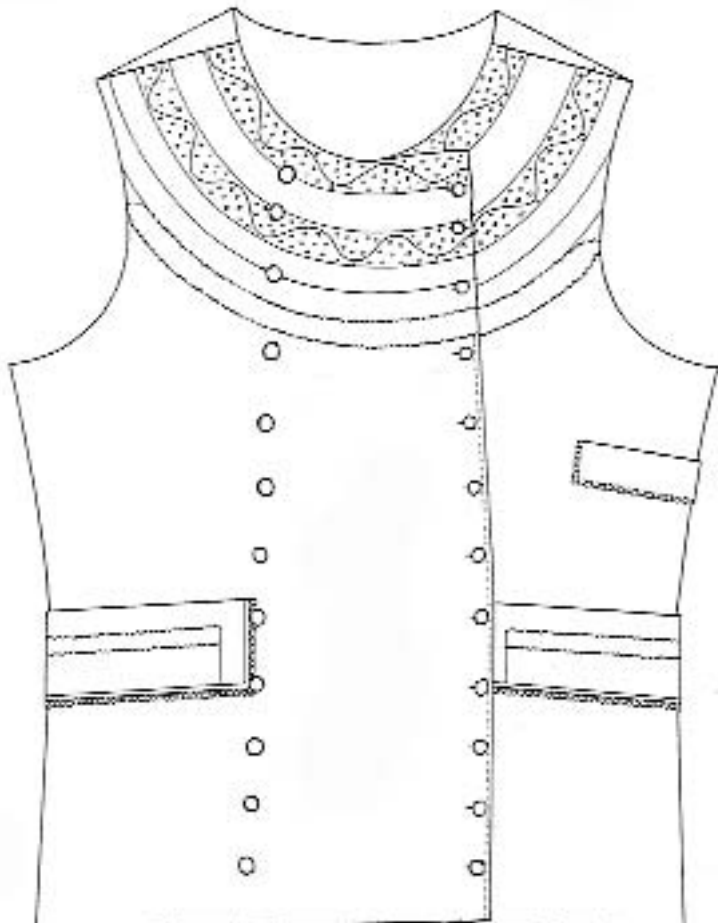
Having chosen five colors that I wanted to use in this garment, I began experimenting to find a

pattern that suited the values and contrasts of my colors. This image shows some of the variations that were tried and rejected before I settled on the final version. The colors shown here were the original colorway. I also knitted the vest in an alternate colorway to give knitters a sense of how they might change the colors, and the second colorway eventually became the featured one.



For the yoke I wanted another pattern to contrast and harmonize with the body pattern. There was a plaid-like edging I had devised and swatched for another design only to find that it didn't suit that project. When I remembered and fished out that old swatch, my design came together with an almost audible click.

Now, almost two years later, I have a footnote to add to my memories of this design process. A comment that I had left on a knitter's blog won me a prize, and the prize was an Amazon gift certificate. I remembered a book I had borrowed from the library a couple of years ago, and decided it would be the one I would buy. When [Dress In Detail From Around the World](#) arrived the other day it was all very familiar but I hadn't seen it for a while, so it was with real surprise that I saw and remembered this: a French fisherman's waistcoat from around 1820.



Ignore the buttons and the pockets. Doesn't that patterned yoke construction look a little bit familiar? No doubt I had this lodged in my subconscious mind as well. Inspiration, sketching, trial and error, swatching — this is how it all came together.



