Hi Molly and Lena –

Feel free to use whichever one(s) are useful, and f you need longer or shorter descriptions. I’ve included the image that inspired each one (well, except for the 1805 silk gown and toque), in case those are useful. And thanks for putting this together! You are all doing so much work.

Hope Greenberg – Fashion Show for Teel House Weekend: Descriptions

1) greenberg-1800-vanda-day: Inspired by a dress at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the front closure shows a common alternative to the “bib” apron dress. Instead of ta bodice that overlaps in front and is then covered by a bib that is attached to the skirt, this variation simply closes in the front. The skirt is still tied on like an apron but is not connected to the front closing bodice. You might think that it would start to fall down, but a couple simple straight pins hold in place even for a brisk walk and some dance practice.

2) greenberg-1805-kyoto: This silk gown with a decorative applique around the hem is based on a French gown held at the collection at the Kyoto Costume Museum. The original has a longer train, but this one’s demi-train is easier to dance in! It is worn here with a slightly later turban-like toque based on a similar toque worn by Dolley Madison in one of her many portraits.

3) greenberg-1812-mccord-gold: The McCord Museum in Montreal owns the yellow silk gown upon which this is based. The inset lace and embroidery show the distinctive bodice decoration that was all the rage in 1812. Discerning eyes will recognize the similarity to a gown from Cassandra’s Closet, so you too can be the perfect 1812 lady of fashion.

4) greenberg-1814-napoleon: The amazing exhibit “Napoleon and the Empire of Fashion” contained the burgundy silk gown that inspired this gown. It is worn here at Apsley House, Wellington’s London home. While it is unclear if the gowns will ever be exhibited again, the book of the same name has all the pictures.

5) greenberg-1814-walking: In August 1814, Ackermann’s Repository of the Arts, included the fashion plate for a Walking Dress of “lilac sarsnet petticoat, full flounce round the bottom, confined by plaits or tufts of riband of corresponding color, and headed with a border of the same; high plain body of white jaconet muslin; braces tied behind.” In September 1814, always on top of fashion trends, Jane Austen wrote to her sister “I am amused by the present style of female dress;—the colored petticoats with braces over the white Spencer…”

6) Greenberg-1815-20-genesee-morning-pelisse: We usually think a pelisse as an outdoor coat, but the pelisse design was also used by ladies for their morning wear. However, morning gowns were not only made for lounging around the home for breakfast. Since “morning” simply meant “before dinner” it would have been completely appropriate to pop on a bonnet and gather up a shawl to go pay morning calls in this gown. This specific cotton pelisse that inspired this one is in the Susan Greene Costume Collection at the Genesee Country Village and Museum.

7) greenberg-1821-pelisse-copper: Though they started as a simple garment, pelisses evolved into more elaborate affairs by the 1820s. This example, made of light tissue taffeta silk is fairly simple, decorated with bows down the front and a puffed oversleeve.

8) greenberg-1821-spencer: This silk spencer, worn over a white muslin gown, is perhaps the iconic image of Regency fashion. After 1821 the decoration on the bodice, the oversleeve, and decorated collar, would become even more elaborate as the decade advanced.