

## Book Review



### **The Art of Manipulating Fabric**

by Colette Wolff

Chilton Book Company 1996

ISBN 0 8019 8496 3

If you are interested in wearable art, or making your machine embroidery look truly three dimensional, then you will be interested in this book. This work is not just a book it is more of an encyclopaedia or reference book for manipulating fabric. It is a book you will come back to for knowledge and stimulation time and time again.

What does this book cover? There are thirteen chapters: gathering; shirring; ruffles; flounces; godets; pleating; smocking; tucking; cording; quilting; stuffing; darts and a final chapter on mixed manipulation. If we look at the chapter on tucking we will find that eleven aspects of tucking are covered. One of these aspects is called *standard tucks*. There are seven categories of *standard tucks* and another four under the heading of variations. These include: designer tucks, cross tucking, random tucking and mock tucking which all sound interesting to me. At the risk of boring you with all this detail, I am trying to impress upon you what a comprehensive body of work is in this book.

How is the material presented? If you look at the heading of *standard tucks* you will find each of the seven categories listed is clearly defined and supported by a diagram so it is easy to understand exactly what the author means by 'double and centred tucks'. There is a section on procedures which explains exactly how to achieve a specific technique. The author has very carefully used numbered paragraphs, headings, dot points, a, b, c etc. to ensure that the reader can easily follow all the instructions. Accompanying the written instructions are excellent and relevant diagrams and photos of the finished samples or items.

When I first looked at this book I turned my nose up because it wasn't in colour. However the work in the black and white photos looks so amazing that it overcame my initial reluctance. Oohing and aahing over the work in the photos, I thought that, knowing my ability, the work would be beyond me. However, if you are a beginner, the book very carefully starts with the basics and leads you gently to the more dramatic looking techniques.

I am sure this book will be a great companion for anyone who is looking for ways to expand their boundaries.

- Barbara Kelly