



Barbara Gregory is a colorwork wizard. She has contributed a number of stunning patterns to Twist Collective, including [Ormolu](#) and [Mimico](#). This season, she brings us a stunning cardigan with a unique closure. In this post, she explains how buttons played an important role in the inspiration and design of this garment. Keep up with Barbara's work on her [website](#).



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For a long time I had had a notion that I would like to design a red patterned jacket. Although I vaguely imagined some sort of red colorwork and a front opening, I hadn't put any work into refining the idea further.

Then one day while looking through an old, dusty, button drawer in a shop I found these buttons. I carefully searched but there were only 5 of them. Of course I bought them.

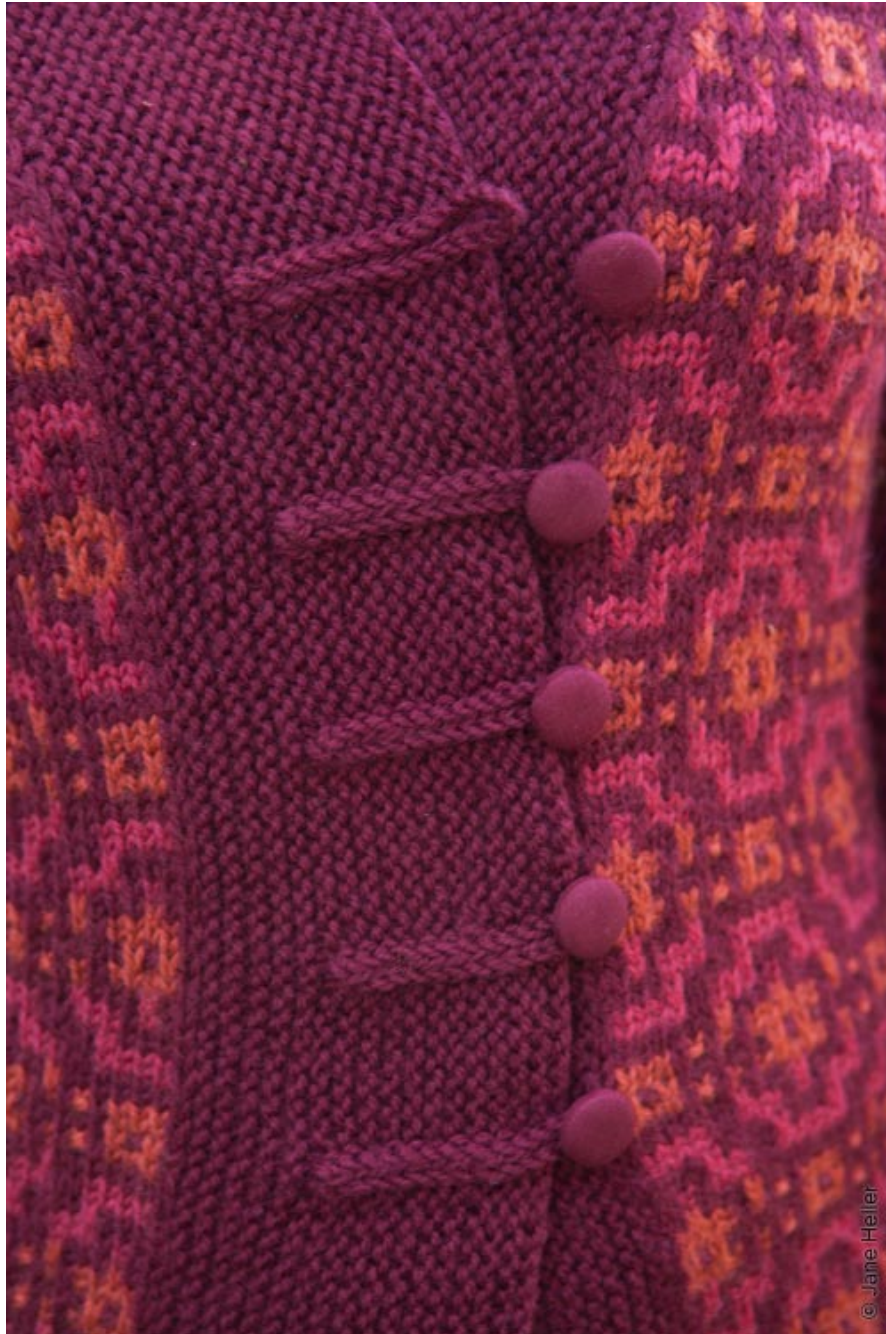


These buttons with their red lacquer-like shine seemed Asian to me—their shape made me think of chopsticks and as buttons they suggested the horizontal bar of a simple frog closing. Inspired to actually expend some effort on my idea, I sat down and worked out a mosaic pattern that I hoped would suggest brocade or other opulent fabric.

There followed a period of doodling and sketching to arrive at the garment details. I looked at images of traditional Chinese, Korean and Japanese garments and found some very interesting ways of closing a garment, but nothing that I could apply directly. What finally seemed to work was a kimono collar, centrally placed but wide enough that a fastening

along the outer edge would create an asymmetrical emphasis.

By this time I realized that my long tapered buttons would not work for this design—instead of using these buttons to suggest frog closings it would be better to have real frog closings. I experimented on a swatch and found that even with my limited crochet skills I could crochet frog style button loops right onto the surface of a garter stitch band.



From little pencil sketches I progressed to an illustration that I hoped would make my

design submission irresistible to Twist Collective. I enjoy this part of the process for its own sake but also find it valuable for getting a sense of how all the details of an idea will come together. As I drew my sweater it was clear that there was enough going on with the three-color pattern and the contrast of solid bands; no need for attention-getting buttons. I drew in plain, color-matched buttons.



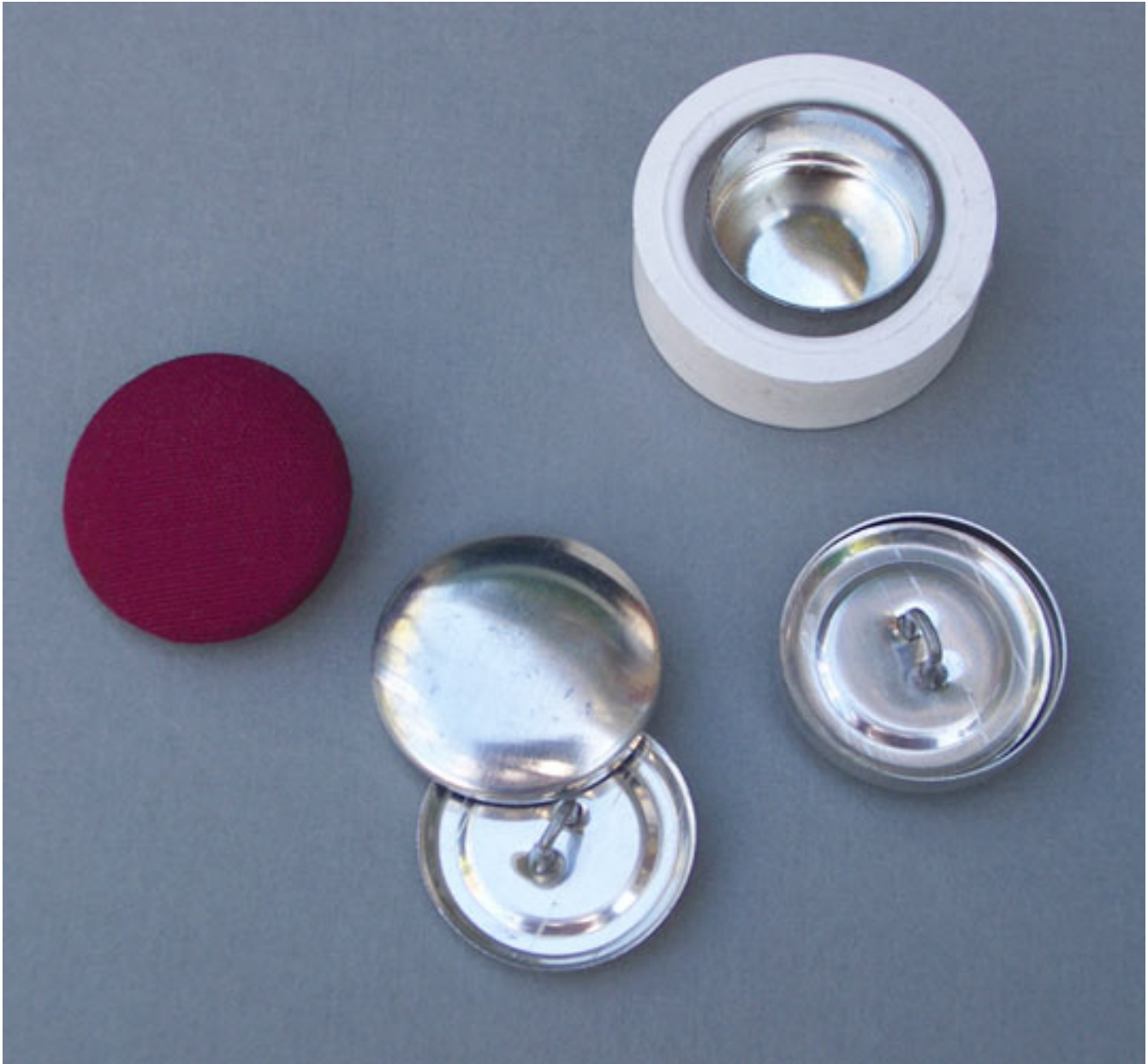
When it came time to knit the sample, obtaining suitable buttons became a priority. Finding nothing in my first several attempts I made a trip to the other side of the city, where I

bought 2 sets of buttons—a sure sign that neither one was quite right. One was the right color but a little too shiny, and lacking the shank construction that I preferred. The second was a plain, matte, fabric-covered button, otherwise perfect but too bright to match the main color used for the band and frogs.



Luckily this set of buttons gave me the idea of covering buttons using the little kits sold at sewing stores, which I happened to have on hand. With no time for another shopping expedition, I searched through my box of broadcloth remnants and found a scrap of seam

binding that was a good color match. Crisis averted!



As for those long slender buttons, I think they've earned their keep. Perhaps I'll use them in some future project—there is still room in my life for more red sweaters.