

# Floating taffeta bands

Crisp edging adds body to silk tulle

**S**ilk tulle is extremely soft and sheer and it provides a different sewing experience from working with a woven fabric. Silk taffeta has a crisp hand, comes in a variety of weights, is tightly woven and, therefore, doesn't drape much on grain. The 1929 dress shown here and on the back cover combines two fabrics with conflicting characteristics in an outstanding design that is 90 years old and still exquisite today.

The taffeta bands serve as an exposed hem facing and a parallel decorative band for the dress's multiple tulle layers. Although both fabrics have some body straight off the bolt, they soften with wear and hand washing. I'll show you how to apply this delicate finish without marking, distorting, or otherwise damaging the wispy silk tulle. You can use the trim in a variety of sizes and ways. Layer it as in the inspiration dress, try mixing different colors, or make a stunning, modern bridal veil.

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*Judith Neukam, a Threads contributing editor, enjoys sewing with silk.*

continued >>>

*Control and contour the edges of silk tulle with applied bias strips of taffeta.*





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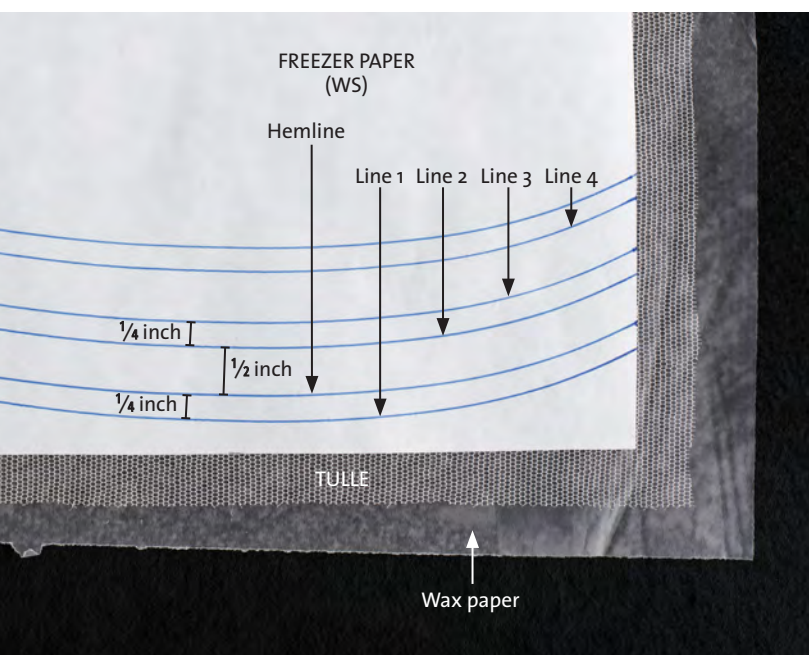
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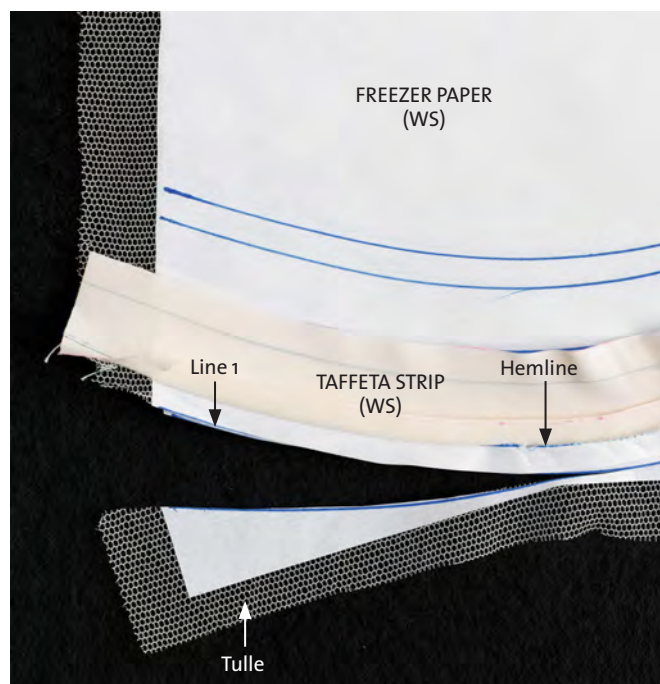
**1 Create support for the tulle.** To stabilize the trim and avoid having to mark it directly, fuse it to freezer paper. First, mark the paper's dull side, as shown, with a Sharpie marker. The marker shows through to the paper's shiny side and won't bleed onto the fabric. These lines represent alignment and attachment lines for the taffeta strips. Then fuse the paper's shiny side to the tulle. To protect the pressing surface, lay down wax paper, place the tulle over it, and the freezer paper, shiny (right) side down, on top.



**2 Prepare the taffeta strips.** Cut bias strips 1 inch wide. With a FriXion pen, whose marks can be removed by pressing, draw lines 1/4 inch from the strips' long edges.



**3 Attach the hem facing strip.** Align a strip edge along Line 1 on the freezer paper's dull (wrong) side. Sew along the marked hemline, and curve the taffeta strip as you go. Trim the paper and tulle along Line 1, and finger-press the taffeta's seam allowance up. Tear away the paper in the seam allowance.



Above: Sew along the hemline, trim the paper and tulle along Line 1, and finger-press the taffeta seam allowance up. Below: Then tear away the paper below the hemline.



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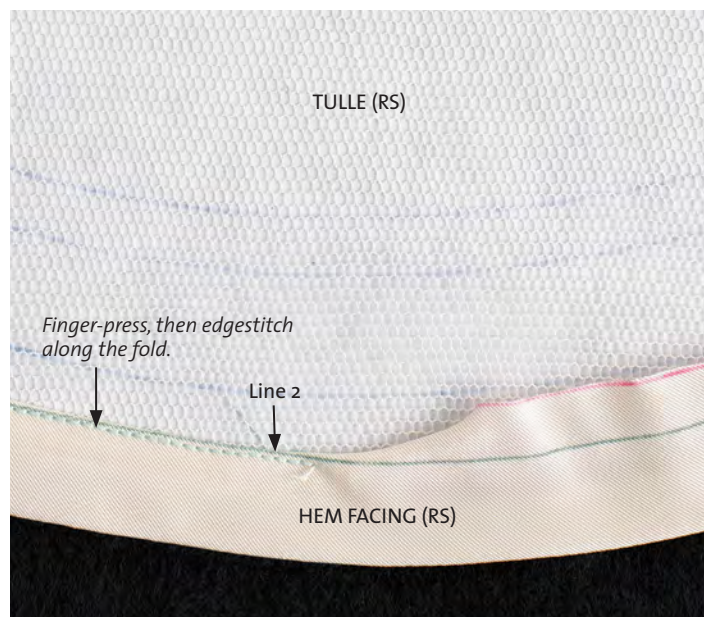
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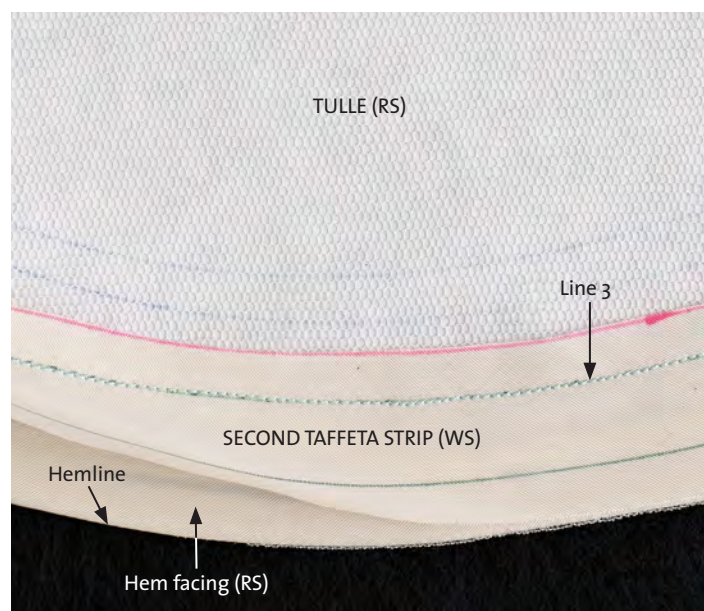
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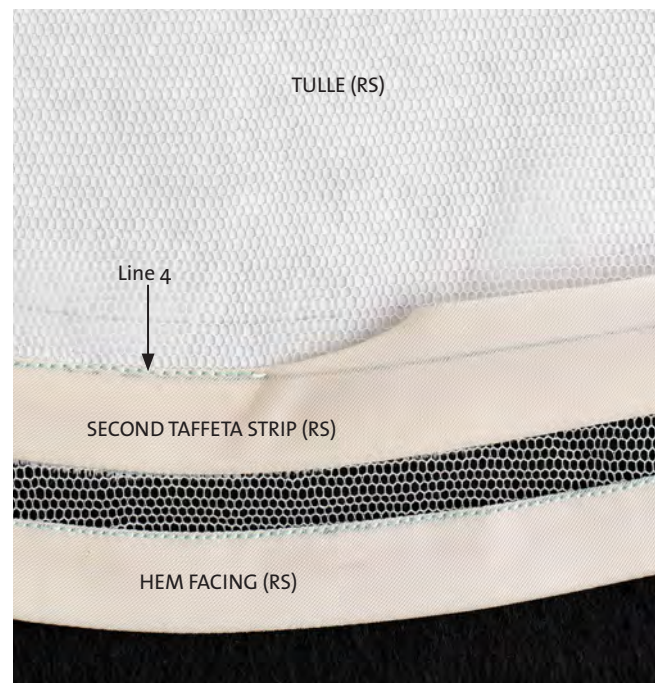
**4 Complete the hem facing.** Fold the strip to the tulle's right side (attached to the freezer paper's shiny side), and finger-press. Then finger-press its upper edge under along Line 2, to the facing's finished width. Don't use an iron, as this erases the FriXion marks. Edgestitch along the upper fold, with a stitch length of 1.6 mm.



**5 Attach the upper strip.** Lay the second bias taffeta strip on the tulle, with its bottom edge along the hemline. Its upper seamline should align with Line 3 on the freezer paper. Sew along this line.



**6 Complete the second strip.** Finger-press it up, then finger-press its upper edge under along Line 4. Edgestitch as in step 4.



**7 Remove the paper.** Tear the freezer paper from the work's wrong side. Lightly press the piece to erase the FriXion pen marks and flatten the bands.

