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Master of Science in Design for the Fashion System

Reviving cultural heritage through fashion creation  
Case study: women traditional costumes in southern Iran

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# abstract

"The garment is a ghost of all the multiple lives it may have had. Nothing is shiny and new; everything has a history..." (Knox,2011). The world is spinning rapidly that does not let people hold on for a moment, think about what they have done, and what is their responsibility toward their home, history, culture and society. Precious treasures were abandoned due to incompetency of the rulers and unawareness of the people. Unawareness about how important is culture and cultural heritage to- a country. The habitude of our clothing and clothes making is the reflection of our cultural and social background. Meanwhile fashion and the fashion industry as an absolutely powerful organ, which is influencing every community, economically, culturally and socially can be a positive tool for making a change, improving awareness about what is the real value of preserving cultural heritage, and how much we can help people developing their lives through it. Fast Fashion which is the second largest polluter in the world, if slow down gradually, by the help of designers, manufacturers and also the customers, can be a path through which we can help a young fashion community to flourish and result in new ethical jobs for artisans who deserves a better life, and also to the economy and culture of a country. Iran fashion industry which is quite a young industry is walking on the edge of fast fashion and traditional designs. This industry is absolutely potential for going toward an ethical and sustainable movement, as the customers nowadays are turning back to use garments rooted in their culture, yet stylish and modern. In the researches on Iranian fashion market and the customers and their needs, figured out there is a lack of Iranian brands and collections which are using designs with local roots, in an ethical and culturally sustainable way. In this path by communicating and visiting local artisans of some very isolated cities and villages in southern Iran, their abilities and skills are recorded as the material we can use to develop this young industry. During this visits several old traditional garments were found which they didn't use anymore, but the handmade traditional art they put in to them was fabulous. Therefore, as the method of accomplishing the concept of the collection for this project, upcycling of the vintage embroideries on those traditional garments was selected. In this way, the concept of reviving cultural heritage can be developed by means of fashion through a modern-traditional garment collection, which is telling the story behind the garments worn by real people in a corner of the world during a long history.

culture, heritage, history, background, traditional-modern, combination, ethical, cultural sustainability





# Abstract

Il mondo attuale avanza con celerità tale da non permettere alle persone di fermarsi un momento, riflettere riguardo alle proprie azioni o riguardo a quali possano essere le loro responsabilità riguardo alla propria casa, storia, cultura e società. Tesori preziosi sono andati perduti a causa dell'incompetenza di coloro che sono a comando e alla mancanza di consapevolezza della popolazione riguardo alla tradizione culturale del proprio paese. Il nostro modo di vestire riflette il nostro background culturale. Il settore moda ha una grande influenza su ogni comunità, dal punto di vista economico, culturale e sociale; per questo motivo può essere uno strumento positivo per mettere in moto il cambiamento, per aumentare la consapevolezza riguardo al valore della propria eredità culturale e quanto giovamento possono trarne ispirandosi ad esso nello sviluppo delle proprie vite. Se il settore della Fast Fashion, che costituisce la seconda industria più inquinante al mondo, rallenterà, con l'aiuto di designer, manifatture e consumatori, si potrà innescare un processo virtuoso; ne potranno giovare sia la comunità dei designer esordienti che gli artigiani, che potranno avere accesso a impieghi eticamente sostenibili. Il settore moda iraniano, sviluppatosi di recente, si muove al confine tra la fast fashion e la produzione di abiti tradizionali. Tale settore possiede il potenziale per un'evoluzione sostenibile e etica, a causa della tendenza dei consumatori a ricercare capi che al tempo stesso siano moderni ma radicati nella propria cultura. Da una ricerca riguardo al settore moda iraniano è emersa la carenza di brand iraniani le cui collezioni usino design legati alle tradizioni e origini locali, prodotti sostenibilmente e eticamente. La ricerca evidenzia quindi un divario tra le richieste dei consumatori e l'offerta di mercato. Se si vuole tracciare un percorso improntato sulla sostenibilità, la chiave consta nella costruzione di connessioni con gli artigiani locali, anche se provenienti da aree isolate e poco raggiungibili del paese. I designer emergenti non possono infatti sperare in uno sviluppo virtuoso e sostenibile del settore moda se non guardando alle abilità e alla sapienza artigianale del proprio paese. Numerosi abiti tradizionali stanno cadendo in disuso, nonostante la sapienza artigianale con i quali sono confezionati sia faccia portatrice della storia del proprio paese. Per questo motivo, l'upcycling di pezzi vintage su abiti tradizionali è stato metodo di lavoro che rispecchia al meglio il concept originale. In questo modo, l'idea di base di rinnovare l'eredità culturale può essere sviluppata attraverso lo sviluppo di una collezione di moda allo stesso tempo moderna e tradizionale, che racconti la storia dietro ad ogni abito, pensato per durare nel tempo e per essere indossato da persone autentiche.

eredità culturale, la storia, tradizionale, combinazione, etico, sostenibilità culturale



# CHAPTER 1 : FASHION FOR A POSITIVE CHANGE



# Introduction

fashion has the power to create a positive change, it depends on the people who run the fashion industry and people who use fashion products, how they are willing to have impacts on this huge industry. the concept of 'disposable fashion clothing that was so cheap that it could be purchased on a whim, and worn only once or twice before being discarded (Sarkar 2005) is quiet common everywhere in the world. This concept of over consumerism in many countries made local production less desirable, as a result local skill workers and artisans have lost their jobs and immigrate to other cities. This is despite the fact that in the heart of every culture and its people a lot of precious arts and skills are hidden, which could be the source of inspiration for many design works, but due to the mass production of fast fashion brands, these skills and the artisans who are master of the artistic skills are fading away. For instance, southern part of Iran, which is the source of inspiration for the following collection, is famous for the traditional embroideries and delicate needle works they have been using in their clothes for many years. The diversity of their skills are notably wide, from embroideries with metal threads to delicate straw weaving. the above mentioned arts and skills nowadays are very isolated because of the designer, manufacturer and customer choices. However, with a mindful system all these artisans and their skills can turn back to the market, if designers consider the new taste of customers, and customers buy with a more aware mind, and the process flows in an ethically and sustainably responsible system. Designers are among the persons who are responsible for not only preserving and reviving cultures belong to different ethnicities but who are supposed to create culture; the culture of awareness about diversity and the beauty within the diversity which lies in thousand years of living together but being different, peacefully.

The cycle which is made by the concept of fast fashion is spreading in many countries with economic problems. Industries such as fashion can have negative effects on environment, people life, culture, etc. but if people change their thoughts and choices little by little, and believe in the fact that every choices is counted, world can go toward a positive change.

# Sustainable fashion and cultural sustainability

Sustainability is a vast topic nowadays; it is more than just a trend or a buzzword. the term 'sustainability' should be viewed as humanity's target goal of human-eco-system equilibrium, while 'sustainable development' refers to the holistic ap-proach and temporal processes that lead us to the end point of sustainability (Shaker, R.R. (2015).it also refers to a socio-ecological process going through the ways which lead to an ideal situation about nature, ecosystem, animals and their rights, human beings and labor rights. Sustainability is fuzzy and wide concept and the discussion what to sustain continues, the resources or lifestyle. Further-more, how holistically the sustainability should be approached and understood is under discussion (e.g. Scherer 2003, 355). sustainability is not just about environ-ment, but going through sustainability is also a major social challenge which is spreading in most of the developed and developing countries, it is about ways of living, lifestyle and consumerism. The organizing principle for sustainability is sus-tainable develop-ment, which includes the four interconnected domains: ecolo-gy, economics, pol-itics and culture. (James, Paul; Magee, Liam; Scerri, Andy; Steger, Manfred B. (2015). sustainable development is subject to criticism, be-cause of the contradic-tory meaning of "Sustainable" use of limited and un-renewable natural resources. In 1980 the International Union for the Conservation of Nature published a world conservation strategy that included one of the first references to sustainable development as a global priority. so the term "sustaina-ble development" has been introduced for the first time. (Sachs, Jeffrey D. (2015).

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

The concept of 'needs', in particular, the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organiza-tion on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs." (Oxford University Press1987)

As mentioned before sustainability include many aspects, one of the important areas of sustainability and sustainable development is the discussion regarding culture within sustainable development. What shapes our identity is culture and any development which is sustainable can't be without cultural concerns. Culture is a driver of the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable develop-ment.

Cultural sustainability has become a growing priority within sustainable development agendas, and is now often depicted as a fourth pillar, equal to social, economic, and environmental concerns. Museums and libraries play a unique role within cultural sustainability by preserving their communities' heritage. However, sustainability policy and research within these sectors still tends to focus on the social, economic, and environmental pillars. (Loach, Kirsten; Rowley, Jennifer; Griffiths, Jillian (2017-03-04)). It is mainly related to preserving cultural beliefs and practices, heritage conservation and the culture itself.

preserving cultural heritage and promoting cultural diversity is possible through sustainable development in many countries. In some countries there are ethnicities disappearing or their cultural heritage is fading away in the process of industrialization, while people from rural areas immigrate to cities in order to find jobs. Yet incorporating culture in the sustainability debates seems to be a great scientific and political challenge. The scientific challenge is that both culture and sustainability are complex, contested, multidisciplinary and normative concepts. The policy challenge is that a broad understanding of culture requires cross-sectoral or even transdisciplinary policies, and innovative, at times even radical modes of implementation that involve reexamination of broad spectrum issues such as governance, democratic participation and social equity. (Dessein, J., Soini, K., Fairclough, G. and Horlings, L., 2015)

# Slow Fashion movement

Slow fashion as a part of slow movement is the alternative to fast fashion. its concept came from slow food concept, in which the main principles are good quality, production without harming the environment, fair prices for consumers and fair conditions and pay for producers and workers. It is about understanding the importance of our choices on our planet and the people.

Developing a garment with a cultural and emotional connection is also pertinent to the purpose behind slow fashion: consumers will keep an article of clothing longer than one season if they feel emotionally or culturally connected to the article of clothing. (Kuusk, Kristi; Tomico, Oscar; Langereis, Geert; Wensveen, Stephan 2012). Diversity is considered very important in this movement, it is because of the solutions which the designers and producers can find for the issues related to climate change, That's why biodiversity is very crucial. The designers and producers within this movement try to save ecological, social and cultural diversity.

A taxation is in early stages of development in order to deter fashion companies from purchasing or producing materials that are not made with recycled, organic, or re-purposed materials. Utilizing materials already made will reduce the industry's carbon footprint. (Choi, Tsan-Ming April 2013). slow fashion is a quality-based approach in which the designers, producers, retailers and consumers are more conscious about the impacts of the production on environment and workers. Slow fashion represents for sustainable, eco and green fashion in a united movement. It was first coined by Kate Fletcher, from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, when fashion was compared to the Slow Food experience. Carl Honoré, author of "In Praise of Slowness", says that the 'slow approach' intervenes as a revolutionary process in the contemporary world because it encourages taking time to ensure quality production, to give value to the product, and contemplate the connection with the environment. (Dickson, Cataldi and Grover, 2016). Slow fashion is maybe the most related approach to this thesis project as it includes all those aspects and emphasizes on using artisanal skills and traditional productions.

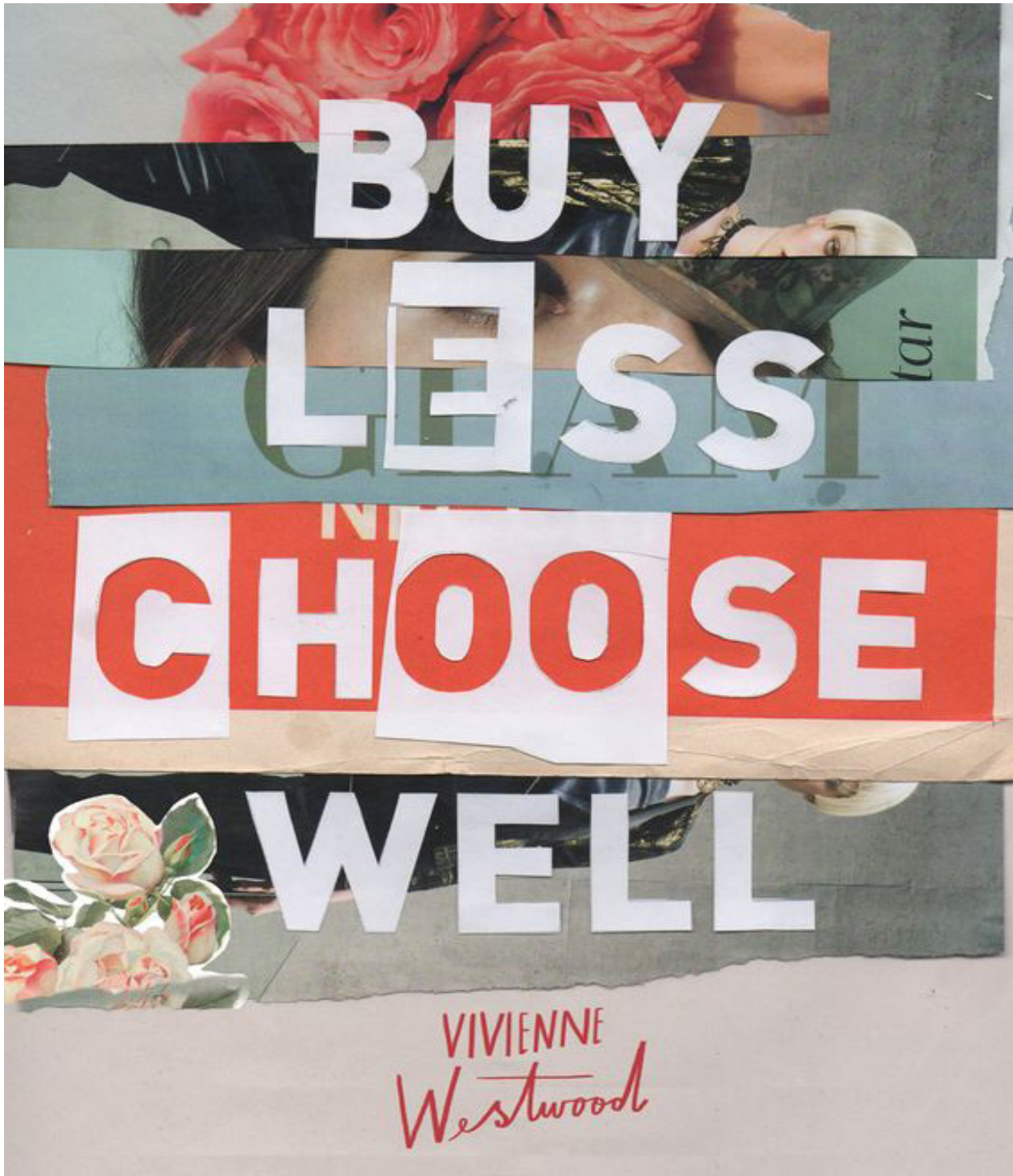
One of the most important fashion designers who is a part of slow fashion and also zero-waste movement is Alabama Chanin, she uses traditional embroidery and local labor and resources in her collection. These garments benefit from the handmade, original technique that develops each piece's sense of place and belonging. The owning of a locally produced, handmade piece is likely to instill a special meaning in the garment and emotional bonding with it (Fletcher & Grose, 2012).





Figure 1- artisan embroidery - Alabama Chanin

She is also known for her “eco-chic” designs. “At Alabama Chanin, we preserve traditions of community, design, producing, and living arts by examining work and life through the acts of storytelling, photography, education, and making.” it shows how important is to preserve traditional skills and arts in communities, and how fashion designers can act effectively toward this value and make changes step by step in fashion industry and in the world.



# Ethical Fashion

“It’s really a luxury to own jewelry and gemstones. If you’re in a position to do so, you’re fortunate. Given that, I think it’s important to pay attention to what you’re wearing and where it came from.” —Mila Kunis, Gemfields Ambassador

The fashion industry today is one of the hugest industries in the world where lots of people are working and millions of people are spending their money in it. but fashion is not just about making money and exploiting workers in any condition just for profits, it can be a mean to help people in many countries, it can be an important way toward social and environmental sustainability. Findings show that in 2005, £29 million was spent on ethically sourced clothing, subsequently increasing to £52 million in 2006 (Ethical Consumerism Report, cited in Beard 2008). But still it’s not available on high street for the customers and ethical fashion remains less than 1% of overall fashion market. while on food market there are ethical alternatives for products, in the fashion market there are not much to find.

Ethical fashion refers to design, sourcing and manufacturing of fashion products with a socially and environmentally conscious approach. According to the May 2007 *Vogue*, sustainable and ethical fashion appears not to be just a short-term trend, but a long-term approach that could last for other seasons. Celebrities, models, and designers such as Stella McCartney and Bono have also publicly endorsed and released ethical fashion lines.

Over the last few years, increasing awareness and concerns in the ethical industry have been experienced. After a particular attention has been paid to the food industry, this understanding started to be expanded to the fashion industry. Indeed, the study of ethical apparel industry is gaining more and more stature on the literature as its impacts on environment are steadily increasing. To understand this industry, a special focus on the attitude and behavior of ethical fashion consumers is also given. However, a problem is raised: even if people are much more concerned about ethical fashion than it used to be, an attitude behavior gap is noticed as people do not transform this consciousness into purchase. (Favier,2013)

Environmental ethics can be applied in other fields (Light and Rolston III 2003) e.g. in design and fashion. Values and ethics are fundamental grounds for sustainable design. Environmental pioneer Viktor Papanek (1995, 70) argues that “ethics are the philosophical basis for making choices about morals and values”. He further continues that “to think dispassionately about what we design and why, and what the eventual consequences of our design intervention may be, is the basis of ethical thinking” (ibid.). Therefore, ethical thinking takes account the moral implications of our actions (Clegg 2011). Accordingly, it is worthwhile to investigate the value base in sustainable fashion and further to consider the consequences of our design and industrial manufacturing processes have in the context of sustainable development.

## Ethical fashion initiatives

“As a creative industry, fashion should be about vision and not greed. We all need to manage our handprint and our footprint. In other words, we need to act in a responsible & sustainable manner towards people and the environment.”

In 2009 United Nations international world trade center started a program to help developing an ethical and sustainable fashion industry. The aim of this project is to make sustainable future for artisans in developing countries in addition to improve ethics in the fashion industry. “The Ethical Fashion Initiative connects artisans from the developing world to the international value chain of fashion.” The Ethical Fashion Initiative was founded by Simone Cipriani in 2009 and is a flagship program of the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the United Nations and World Trade Organization. There are fashion brands associated with this program such as Vivienne Westwood and Stella McCartney. “For the Vivienne Westwood Autumn-Winter 2016/17 collection, 1639 bag units were created in 10 styles by Kenyan artisans from Artisan. Fashion, an enterprise fostering a positive social impact through income generation and market access. 33 artisans were involved with the order, assisting with supervision, preparation and use of traditional textile techniques.” [ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative Impact Assessment]

Mr Cipriani quoted Oscar Wilde who said that ‘nowadays we know the price of everything and the value of nothing’. Mr Cipriani said: ‘That is not the case for artisans and their communities, designers and consumers involved in the Ethical Fashion Initiative.’ Ghana, Mali and Burkina Faso the opportunity to manufacture hand-woven fabrics and artisans in Haiti and Kenya the opportunity to create fashion accessories for businesses around the world.



Figure 3 :  
Haiti has skilled beaders that can create very intricate beadwork. Their beading skill comes from their tradition of creating beaded voodoo flags © Chloe Mukai



Figure 4:  
Stella McCartney Houndstooth Pouch made in Africa by Kenyan artisans part of the Ethical Fashion Initiative network. © Tahir Carl Karmali & ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative

# Up-cycled Fashion

In today's "trendy throw-away fashion" gradually customers are being aware of the devastating effects of fast fashion. So they are looking for an alternative innovative solution to reduce these effects and go toward a more sustainable life cycle for their clothes. Upcycling is a growing trend and as it uses the existing pieces so it uses few resources. Upcycling keeps some vintage pieces out of the waste stream. In upcycling process, the aim is to make the existing clothes or items better and more useful than the original one. So it can be done pre-consumer waste, such as fabric leftover, or post-consumer waste such as unwanted products which are in the end of their life cycle.

Upcycling has a lot of benefits, one of them is to stop adding material to the world which is already overwhelmed with the leftovers of every industry and after that is full of unwanted pieces. Upcycling reduces clothing and textile waste by reusing deadstock or gently used fabric to create new garments and products. Making a single cotton T-shirt requires over 700 gallons of water, whereas using a pre-existing T-shirt to make something new requires nearly no water. In addition, upcycling can divert some of the 85% of textile waste that ends up in landfills. Upcycling can be less expensive since used or pre-existing materials are typically a fraction of the cost of newly-made materials and textiles. Upcycling requires creativity to envision the potential of existing materials to create something new and beautiful and the result is unique. (Diane Small- [eluxemagazine.com/fashion/fashion-brands-that-upcycle/](http://eluxemagazine.com/fashion/fashion-brands-that-upcycle/)). Since in upcycling process the unwanted or vintage pieces can be used, can be also a challenge to use and save cultural heritage in an innovative way. In post-consumer process of upcycling there is an absolutely useful solution for applying vintage pieces from some old but beautiful garments. For instance, someone found an old embroidered piece of garment in a family wardrobe which is not wearable anymore due to the condition, but it's precious for the family because of the art applied to it and in addition because of the memories, so it can't be trashed. These items are the ones a designer can make a unique and new piece out of them.

There are fashion brands doing upcycled fashion today and some of them are doing great, such as Reformation, repurposes vintage clothing, rescues deadstock fabric from fashion houses that over-ordered and also simply uses eco-friendly fabrics to create sexy, sophisticated styles – they even make wedding dresses. The brand has recently launched an app that lets you know just how much water and energy you'll be saving by buying their goods. Another example is Bottletop Fashion, The ethical fashion brand is based in the UK, Africa and Brazil, where it helps to create a sustainable livelihood for the highly skilled craftsmen as well as supporting young people through their foundation, which is focused on educational projects.

Upcycled fashion is what is used in this project along with other sustainable methods in order to design a creative collection using vintage pieces of old traditional clothes, for a modern use.



Figure 5 : Karishma Shahani's final-year collection at the London College of Fashion - many of them are made from recycled and reused material

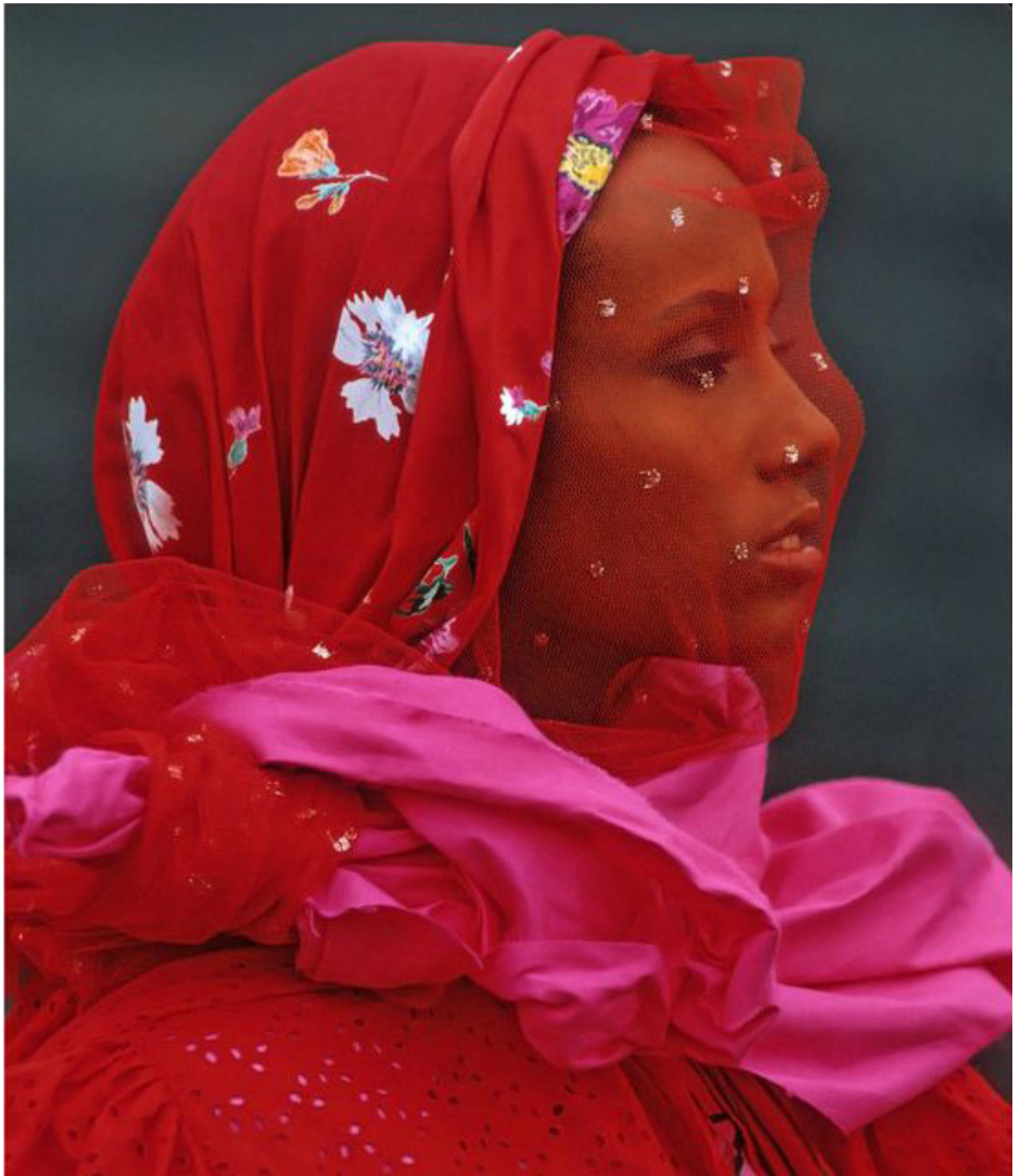
## Role of Fashion industry in Sustainable development

If you consider that the fashion industry is one of the largest employers in the world, especially of women, with some estimates that women make up roughly 80% of the supply chain, it makes sense that fashion and apparel are involved in not only sustainability discussion- but development- where the sector is a powerful driver of job creation. (Karen Newman and Cara Smyth, 2017). In many of the developing countries there are numerous people with good skills which could be used in the fashion industry. Due to many problems including un-employment and economic problems they have to work in other industries and put their skills apart because there aren't enough jobs in fashion industry in those countries. This is despite that if governments put some efforts in developing sustainable and ethical jobs related to fashion industry, there are a high number of skilled workers in small towns and villages who are disappointed with economic problems and poverty.





## CHAPTER 2 : CULTURE



# Cultural influences on the fashion world

Fashion and culture have always been bonded together inseparably since the inception of what we call today the fashion industry. The contrast between textiles, colors, embroidery, beading and every other elements which came into fashion from different cultures now is considered as habitual parts of fashion world. However, any of them once entered this arena as an innovation in using new elements in apparel or accessories. As it is mentioned by Kristin Knox in the book *Culture to catwalk* "There is hardly a fashion designer out there who has not, at some point in his or her career, claimed 'culture X' or 'civilization Y' as in-spiration for at least one of their catwalk collections."

Culture refers to a shared knowledge between large groups of people; it is a symbolic communication, which is also considered to be the traditions of those people transmitted from a generation to the next. «The core of a culture is formed by values. They are broad tendencies for preferences of certain state of affairs to others (good-evil, right-wrong, natural-unnatural). Values can only be inferred from the way people act under different circumstances. Symbols, heroes, and rituals are the tangible or visual aspects of the practices of a culture. The true cultural meaning of the practices is intangible; this is revealed only when the practices are interpreted by the insiders». By globalization of the world the general culture of many countries may change and people tend to moderate their traditions and beliefs in many cases. protecting cultural heritages is not just to pre-serve the items in the museums but also the life culture of people who has a long history of civilization in different parts of the world, and these valuable legacies do not only belong to the country of origin but also they are world heritage. Hence, one of the solutions to protect and revive the cultures of different ethnicities in the world is to use them in the world of art and design. Fashion as a vast and impressive industry which is always seeking new and unique ideas can be a very positive zone for presenting and reviving issues re-garding cultural diversities in the world.

## African influences

One of the continents which have evident influence on fashion catwalks, trends and prints is Africa. Their sartorial traditions, motifs, prints, embroidery patterns and color pallets are as vast as the continent is. While in Africa local fashion industry is an emerging industry, there are many famous fashion designers who were inspired by the rich cultural elements and colors of different parts in Africa since mid-twentieth century. In Ralph Lauren collection for spring 1997, we can see obvious influences of Maasai tribe in Kenya; the color palette, bold prints and beadworks. However there are also fashion designers from Africa who presented collections to the world inspired by their cultural heritage, such as Patricia Mbela, Kofi Ansah and Duro Olowu. Kanga which is the east Africa's signature garment has been used in several collections in various ways by famous designers. It is a colorful garment made by printed cotton in bright colors for women and in some occasions by men. For examples in autumn winter 2007/2008 by Balenciaga by the use of printed dresses inspired by Kanga and also Marc by Marc Jacobs in spring summer 2010 with colorful printed dresses.

African influence on fashion goes beyond the dyed and printed textiles and clothes, fashion accessories and jewelry design have been influenced by indigenous African jewelries such as big wooden bangles, layers of beads and colorful and bold earrings. Using of beads and wooden decoration on the garments and combining jewelry with the outfits in some catwalks is taken from African rich style of traditional clothing culture.

In addition to the pure influence of African traditional costumes and sartorial traditions on the world of fashion, in some parts Africans encountering Europeans colonialism in 20th century made new and unique combinations which remained in fashion world; for example in Congo the early roots of sapeur can be found when some Congolese had spent some time in France and returned to Congo." An adherent of La Sape is known as a sapeur. The movement embodies the elegance in style and manners of colonial predecessor dandies."

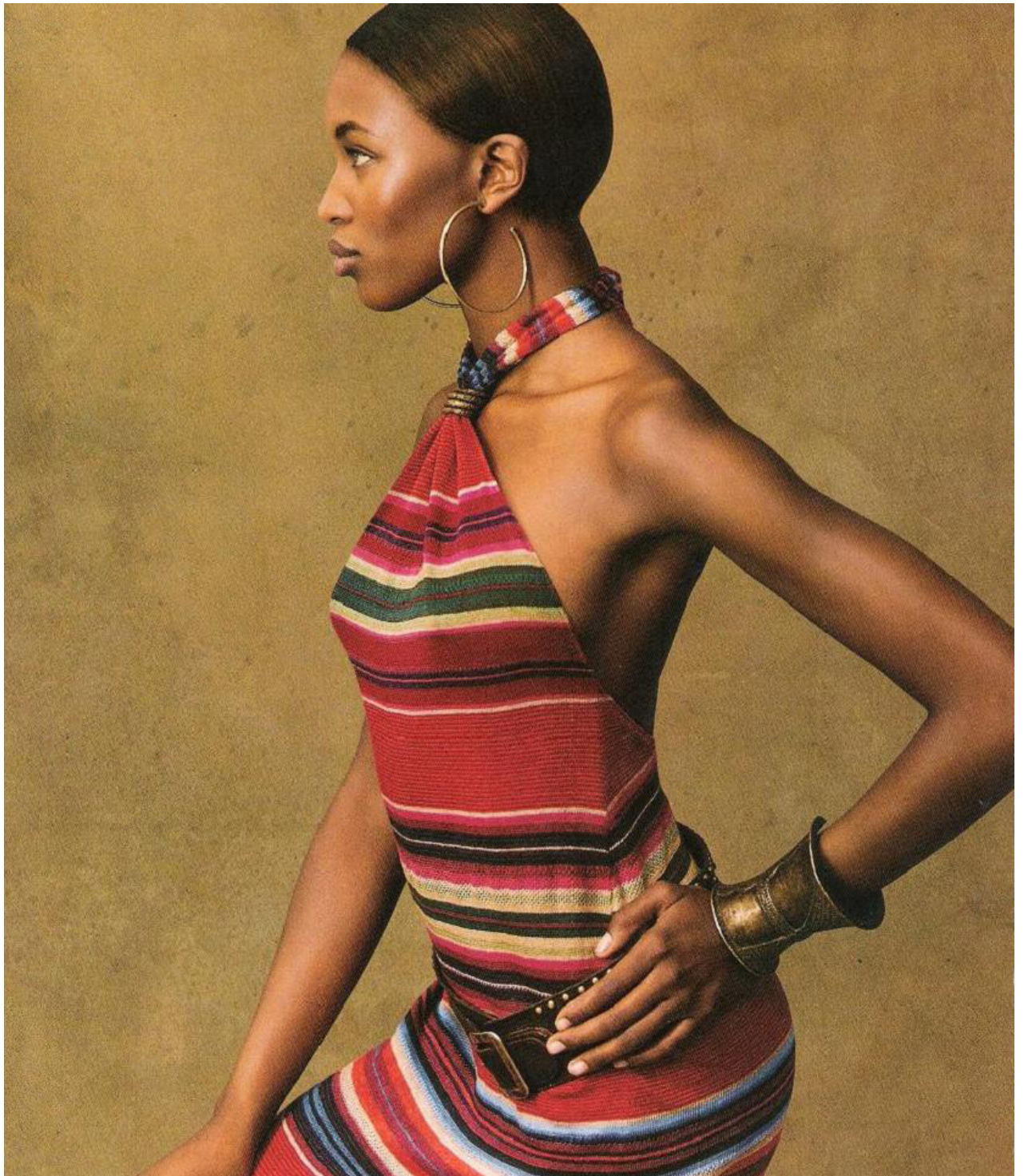




Figure 8 : Balenciaga autumn winter 2007/2008



Figure 9: Marc by Marc Jacobs spring summer 2010

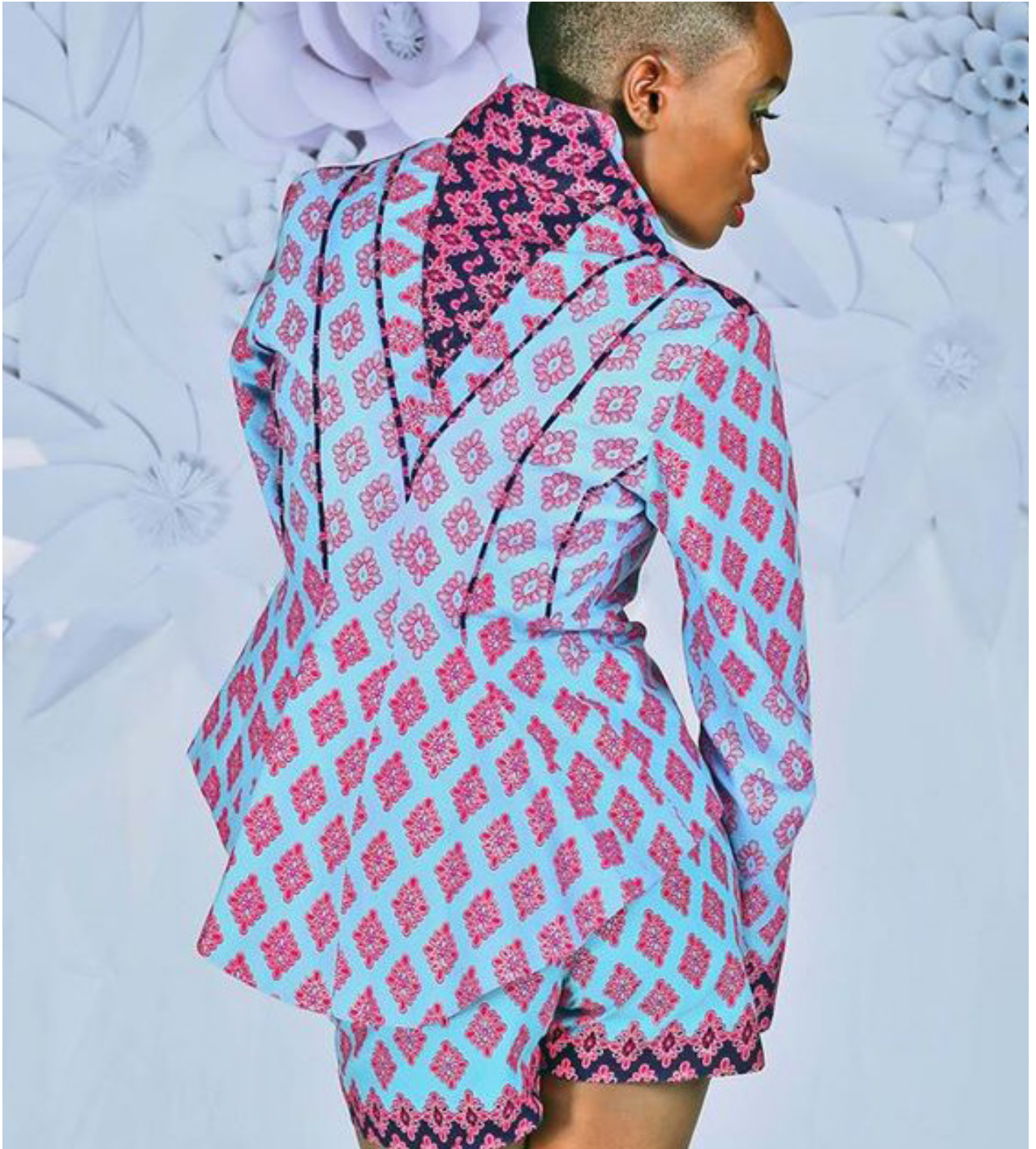


Figure 10: Kenyan designer Patricia Mbela

# Latin America influences

In the other hand in The Americas there is a rich and long history of textile and fabric, from different civilizations such as Aztec and Maya. "From the dashing charros and breathtaking sweeping desert landscapes to the former decadence of Mayan and Aztec civilization, Mexico enchanted European artists and fashion designers alike since the Spanish first began to conquer it in 1519." [Culture to catwalk] For instant in 1939 Elsa Schiaparelli design a dress known as La Robe de Madame Rivera, inspired by Frida Kahlo, the famous Mexican artist.

In addition to famous fashion designers from Europe , there are designers from the Americas presenting powerful catwalks inspired by their traditions and legacies. Armando Mafut from Mexico and Hernan Zajar from Colombia are among them.

Latin American inspirations can be found not only on the runways but also in styling and editorials in different fashion magazines. The beautiful and colorful nature of the Americas is always an enchanting source of creation for fashion photographers and creative directors.

There are a number of fashion trends obviously gained from south American culture. unexpected mixing of different prints when it breaks the rules in the fashion world, ruffles which gives a dramatic look to any outfit and also uneven cuts are touches of Latin America on the trends we see in different seasons of fashion runways. If any culture takes joy in having hemlines that are quite not even, it's South America. It is probably the influences of the costumes that the dancers wore during their traditional festivities, that makes the uneven hemlines so popular. Uneven hemlines make the body look more voluptuous and play up the mystery of how the legs look. Colors and more colors. There is no doubt that fashion influences of South American influences are definitely colorful. The uses of colors are bold and unconventional, making a statement that is never forgettable. The passionate nature of their people influences the uses of colors in their clothing and the way they combine them. (Michelle Rivas, 2017) Floral embroidery is one of several distinctive traits in native Hispanic clothing, often appearing on the necklines of huipiles that are worn daily and for special occasions alike. Inspired by fiestas and dancing, ruffles (volantes) are an instant party hit in Hispanic culture. Traditional folk dances throughout Latin America take use of long, billowing skirts with vibrant ruffle hemlines. Other traditional dance styles, such as rumba and salsa, use the ruffle design to show off dancers' moves and twists on the dancefloor. (GS Love, 2017)

Opposite page: Figure 11 - Vogue Brazil August 2014- Model: Crista Cober - Photography: J.R Duran









## Eastern influences

Fashion industry is considered to be an industry from the west, means European countries and USA, there were noticeable influences from the opposite part of the world, the east, in different periods. "of all the world's cultures, none have romanticized the western artistic and sartorial imaginations quite like those of the Far East. From the flowing Kimonos of Japan, to the high-collared cheongsams of China and the voluminous saris of India, the reach of East Asia's sartorial influence is as vast and diverse as the region itself" [Culture to catwalk]

From Paul Poiret eastern inspired designs to Vivienne Tam's designs with the signature East-meets-West, there are quite a lot of remarkable evidences showing eastern and oriental effects on the world of fashion. the influences from eastern Asia on fashion world is more about silhouette, shape and cut. The designs have both simplicity and complexity at the same time. One of the well-known examples is the famous Japanese fashion designer Rei Kawakubo from *comme des Grcons.*" Kawakubo's empire combines an industrially inspired socialist work ethic with a nearly fanatical desire to purvey clothing as an ever-changing product of its socio-cultural environment, citing both Neorealism and Futurism in runway collections and advertising." (Da Cruz, 2000)

Since the east is a vast region, so are the garments and traditions from that part of the world. Not only there are different cultures originated in each country, but also in one country there are different clothes and sartorial traditions according to the part. For instant China has a complex relationship with fashion, depending on the era and also the region, but there are well-known fashion designers such as Karl Lagerfeld and Louise Vuitton who were inspired by Chinese cultures in their runways.

When you think of Japanese fashion, you think of the kimono. Kimonos come in many different styles, each worn for a different occasion. Frequently, they are made in cotton or silk and featured in multi-colored block prints, embroidered or in woven floral patterns. From Paul Poiret to Eileen Fisher, the classic kimono silhouette, with wrapped obi sash, has appeared in numerous designer collections over the years, in one form or other. Japan's rich heritage became inspiration for western designers, such as Marni, Armani and Zuhair Murad. Two of the most widely recognized Japanese patterns are cherry blossoms and butterfly prints. Traditionally, Japanese fabrics also use dyeing techniques and wood block printing to create repetitive patterns. (Shilpa Ahuja, 2017)



# Middle Eastern influences

Talking about cultural influences on the fashion outputs, there is a region in the world which has important effects on this industry in the recent years, Middle East. It consists of a lot of different cultures, but religion has a huge impact on the fashion culture and traditions of Middle East. From the Islamic garments of women from Arabic countries to Jewish traditions in Israel, the influences on the recent catwalks are noticeable. This is where east meets Europe, so the combination of many cultures and elements is evident. The rich sartorial traditions, splendid decorations on costumes, golden touch of the orient and historical heritage of the world first civilizations in addition to the unique architectural elements are gathered together in this part. Many European designers are producing collection inspired by some countries of the region, such as Givenchy, Dolce and Gabbana and John Galliano. The Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana launched its first abaya collection for the Arab world. As Stefano Gabbana said to The National: «I'm really fascinated with the Middle East and we've just completed a prêt-à-porter collection of abayas and sheylas »

In addition to the European fashion houses, there are very wellknown fashion designers in the world who are from the Middle East. The region is home to designers such as Hussein Chalayan, Zuhair Murad, Elie Saab, Reem Acra and Alber Elbaz. The culture of this region is famous to be mysterious and full of secrets and stories. people used to have many strange believes before, as in the other part of the world with old historic background, for example «In India, both men and women, whatever their religion, mark the different stages of their lives through countless ceremonies during which their finery is invested with powerful symbolism. Items are jewelry are talismans of fertility as well as marks of prosperity, thus transmitting a message even as they wordlessly announce the status of the wearer.»

The style of the Middle East has a significant influence on the styles seen on Western catwalks and in the shops. “Boho style” is strongly influenced by traditional Middle Eastern dress. Bold and intricate patterns create distinctive and interesting styles that can be worn by both young and older people. It is also a style that is very flexible; for example, a colorful shirt can be combined with jeans for a casual look. As the style of clothing was developed in the Middle East, it is also ideal for hot summers, with long, flowing dresses that help to keep you cool.

Many designers who design clothes for men and women in their 30s have adopted Middle Eastern dress styles as the loose-fitting clothes are both stylish and comfortable to wear. Both the patterns and bright colors can be worn by just about anyone.



Figure 16: ELIE SAAB Haute Couture Autumn Winter 2017 - 18

# How fashion can help in preserving cultural heritage

“Cultural heritage is a reflection of human history, civilization and the coexistence of multiple peoples and their ways of life. Its protection is a shared responsibility of the international community, in the interest of future generations.”

-Paolo Gentiloni

Looking to the fashion world as media to communicate meaning, it can be the ambassador of culture and diversity for sure. We look at the runways each year and discover about several new and unique ideas, so many of them are coming from a variety of regions with different cultural backgrounds. Fashion industry beyond being a money making industry, is a significant influencer community. It can be a channel for showing the diversity of the world civilizations, as this is the nature of art and design to find unique and new ideas every moment, thus this is a huge pool of inspiration indeed. In the history of fashion there are important examples of fashion presenting and reviving an ethnic culture on the catwalk, for instance African inspiration on several runways in 20th century make African tribal art and crafts known in the fashion world. There are thousands of traditional fabrics, methods, styles and artisans in different parts

of the world who may not have the possibility to express their skills and arts in a global market, on the other hand there are fashion designers who are exploring and seeking newness and uniqueness in inspirational ideas. The possible combinations of different ideas, techniques and cultural stories are definitely numerous, the more a designer goes deeper in a culture and analyze it, the more unique elements he/she will find to make a new story and even new trend. So there are obviously benefits for fashion designers to find their inspirations in cultural contexts, but there are more important and

crucial roles that a huge industry like fashion is in charge of. It can be the voice of different people from another cultural background and maybe have fewer possibilities to be heard and seen, so their stories, their cultural heritage is fading little by little and is replacing by the major streams of the capitalist world.

Another important role of fashion in preserving and reviving cultural heritages is to help local artisans with a better living and working situation. Indigenous people in different parts of the world used to learn artisanal skills such as weaving, fabric dyeing, sartorial traditions, etc. since their childhood from their elders, then become breadwinner for their families by working with this skills in different ways. therefore It can be a vital help from the fashion industry to give secure job opportunities to the artisans of different regions, because they are people who have skills and know traditions very well, so preserving them and their profession have a win-win result.



Fashion can be a motivating engine for these local artisans to use their skills in a professional way ,to develop these skills and of course should result in good wages. A lot of traditional skills in villages or among nomads are fading just because they cannot earn enough money for their lives, so they abandon their artisanal skills, leave their homes and go to do another job in a big city. That is another reason why so many traditional skills are dying and we cannot find an alive skilled artisan know them anymore.

Today fortunately the fashion world is changing gradually toward a more sustainable manner with supporting local artisans and using their skills in the industry. Famous designers are supporting the handmade textiles and artisanal productions, for instance Vivienne Westwood is using African textiles hand-woven in Africa by local artisans in her collections in recent years and that's an amazing movement.

The Fashion system of a country has important impacts of how the culture is shown within the country and also in the international level. What people wear in the streets and how they appear in different occasions in the country and in international events is a channel to present the culture of the country as well as other communicational paths. In some countries mostly in Europe and North America the fashion stream is an official and clear flow which is supported by organizations and also governments. In some other countries due to some limitations the fashion system is an independent spontaneous movement which may not be supported by any organization and government but it's a very effective procedure to revive and present the culture. That's why fashion system is definitely important when it is the voice of a community or performing as a medium to transfer meaning and messages.



## CHAPTER 3 : PERSIAN ART AND FASHION



# Persian art and culture in a brief

In the world history one of the richest art and cultural heritages belongs to Persian or Iranian art, including a very wide range of art fields such as architecture, painting, weaving, pottery, tile art, calligraphy, metalworking and sculpture.

Since this region has been the host of one of the oldest civilizations of the world, its existence during the age of Neolithic art, possibly from the 5th millennium is borne out by the excavated sites at Tepe Hissar, Tepe Sialk (pre-Ubaid culture) and, a little later, at Tepe Giyan (Ubaid culture). There are noticeable, historic and artistic heritage which is preserved in Iran or in the most important museums in the world. From the early pottery in Susa or Shush dated to c 5000 BC to the small figures of worshippers and gods in Elam with the shared characteristics due to being neighbor with Mesopotamian arts and also the bronze sculptures in Luristan dated back about 1000 and 650 BC to the greatest empire of the time Achaemenids (c.330-550 BCE) "The establishment of the largest empire in antiquity, one of the most benevolent of any in world history, if any empire is good, is associated with the Persians. Its founder, Cyrus the Great, changed the map of the world and brought the Afro-Asiatic world together for the first time in history. Cyrus the great's own testament, the Cyrus cylinder, is special among the different ethnic and religious communities under his firm rule. That is why he is remembered so fondly in the Old Testament as the anointed one by no less than god himself, and why Xenophon chose him as the subject of the first biography in Greek." Touraj Daryaei (2011). The Achaemenid art has been mostly manifested in the reliefs, Persian columns and sculptures of Persepolis. For instant the famous «Frieze of Archers» (now in the Louvre Museum in Paris) created out of enameled brick.

Sassanid era (650-226 CE) is the second outstanding period of Persian art; the Sassanian Dynasty restored the Persian power and culture. Sassanid artists designed highly decorative stone mosaics, and a range of gold and silver dishes, typically decorated with animals and hunting scenes. The biggest collection of these eating and cooking vessels is displayed at the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. As well as mosaic art and metalwork, frescoes and illuminated manuscripts were two other art forms which thrived during this period.

In addition, crafts like carpet-making and silk-weaving were also strongly encouraged. Persian carpets and silks were exported as far as Byzantium (present-day Istanbul) to the west and Turkestan to the east. The most striking relics of Sassanian art are rock sculptures carved out of steep limestone cliffs which depict the victories of the Sassanid leaders.

In ancient Persia Mythology is a crucial part of culture and history. The main characters of Persian mythology are from the moral and ethical perceptions of the Zoroastrian religion (the old Iranian religion), in which the world was perceived as a battle between Ahriman (evil) and Ahura Mazda (the creator and sole God of Zoroastrianism). Ahura Mazda first appeared in the Achaemenid period. Mithra is also the name of a Zoroastrian angelic Divinity of Covenant and Oath. In addition to being the Divinity of Contracts, Mithra is also a judicial figure, an all-seeing Protector of Truth. Another important figure is Anahita (also Anaheed), the goddess of «the Waters» (Aban). An iconic shrine cult of Aredvi Sura Anahita was - together with other shrine cults- «introduced apparently in the 4th century BCE and lasted until suppressed [in the wake of] an iconoclastic movement by the Sasanian dynasty» Boyce (1975).The geographical situation of the ancient Persia made it as a cultural crossroad from east to west as it has been mentioned in different texts before, such as in the UNESCO courier October 1971, titled “Iran, cultural crossroads for 2,500 years”. Well before the coming of Islam, Iran had a strong tradition of incorporating foreign cultures into its own. Persian emperors have often taken proprietary pride in cataloguing the diversity of their subject peoples; the remains of Persepolis (ca. 500 B.C.) contain not only written lists of subject nations and their tributes but also images in which distinctive clothes, hair, and beards identify all the subject peoples. Alice Taylor (1995)

## After Islam

Iranian arts after Islam altered to a combination of ancient Persian heritage and Islamic arts which can be seen noticeably in the architectural impacts of Islamic era of Iranian arts. In 10th century the abundance of towers and mausoleums with Arabic manuscripts are remnant examples of architecture that existed during the Seljuk period of medieval Persia. Stronach and Young (2017), later in The Timurid dynasty (1507-1370) is the golden era for fabulous miniature painting and illustrations, The Baysonghor Shahnameh (book of the kings) is an illustrated and gilded manuscript of the Shahnameh, the national epic of Greater Iran by Ferdowsi, the

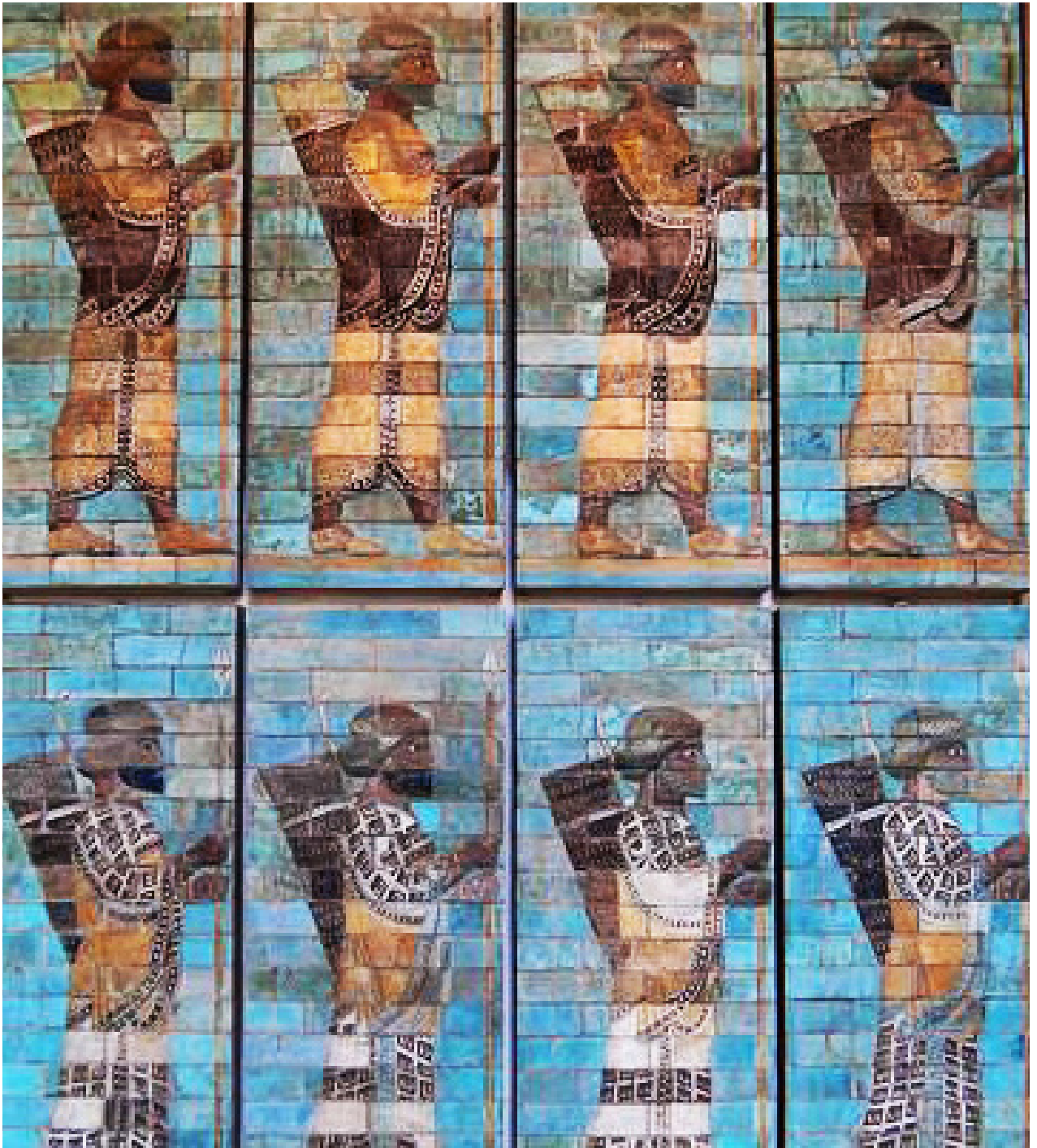


Figure 18 -

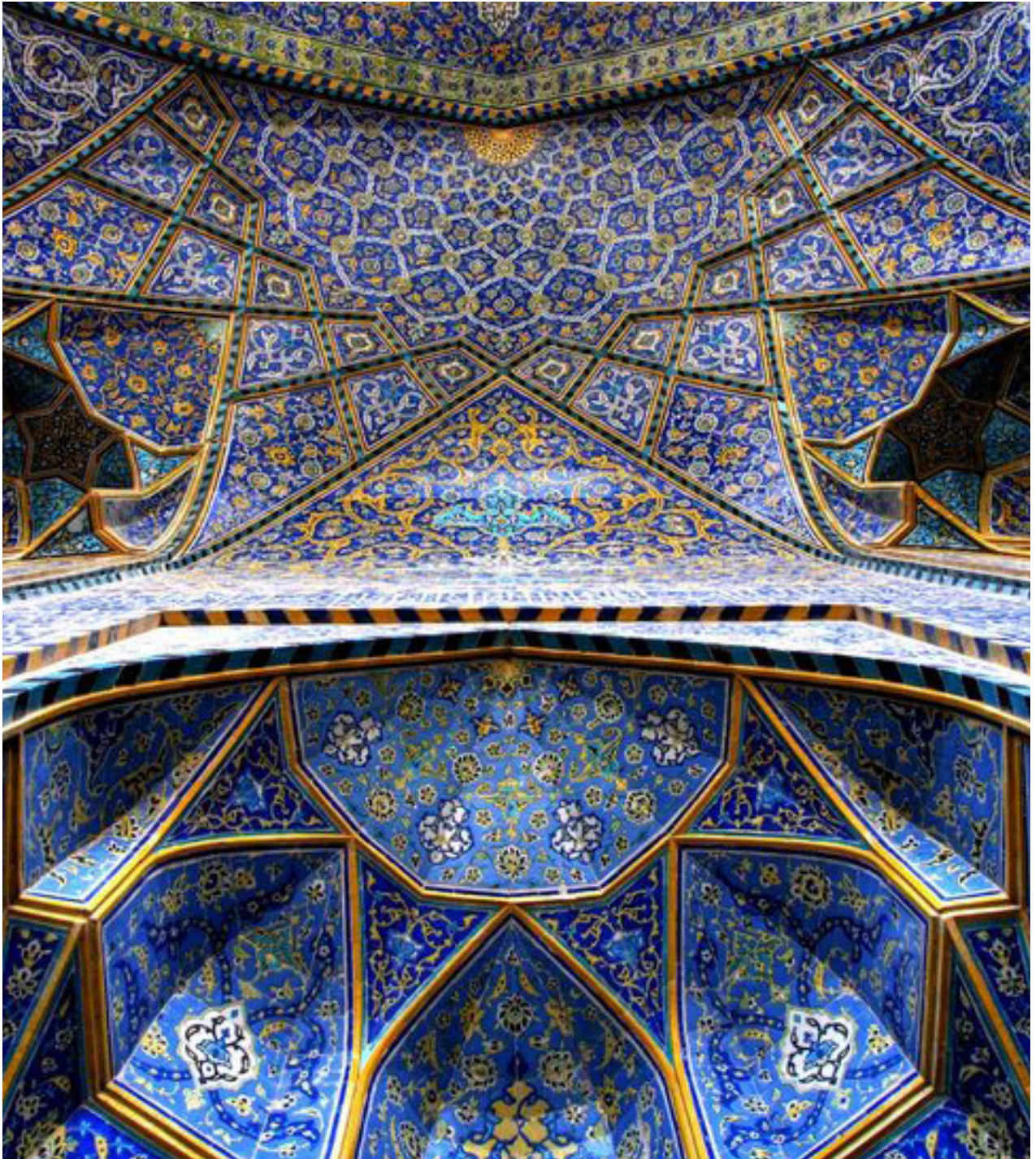


Figure 19 -



famous Iranian poet. The Safavid era is known as the «Golden Age» of Persian art because of some of the most unique and lavish artworks are from the Safavid arts. The Safavid Empire (1722-1501) was one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Iran as they ruled one of the greatest Persian empires, with artistic accomplishments, since the Muslim conquest of Persia. Helen Chapin Metz (1989)

Safavid Empire which was founded in Ardabil, changed the capital several times, therefore in different cities from north to the center of the empire they built great architectural structures such as famous mosques and shrines in Ardabil, Shiraz and Isfahan. Their third capital Isfahan was built around the famous historic square Naqsh-e

Jahan, which on one side stands the Shah's mosque, on the other Ali-Qapu palace, and the mosque of Sheikh Lutfallah and Bazaar.

During the Safavid dynasty clothing was highly fashionable and bold, consisting of opulent garments for men and women with remarkable motifs, unconventional color combinations, and exquisite textures created by the substantial use of gold and silver wrapped threads. Hedayat (2015). In addition to all of the artistic achievements of Safavid era, textiles are known to be the epitome of the Iranian trade industry; which by the sixteenth century, were well developed and successful within its production and sale of woven silk textiles, rugs, and exports of raw silk. Silk was cultivated in the farms of the Caspian region and made up a large portion of the country's economic revenue Hedayat (2012). as it eventually became Iran's most flourishing product of export. Integration between different cultures was made easier and the invaluable textile allowed for artistic exchange that surpassed political and religious barriers as Iran was linked with the West through silk routes across the Indian ocean and the Atlantic. From 1587 to 1629, the Iranian economy was centralized as a monopoly was developed over the silk trade that controlled production in the Caspian regions. Zardozi and Termeh are two types of embroidery that were utilised on Persian clothing during the Safavid era and were seen on garments in Iran, the Middle East, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Zardozi is a form of metal embroidery that was used to decorate garments worn by royals in India and adorn walls. It uses gold and silver threads interlocked with pearls and precious stones to elude a feeling of magnificence on a piece of clothing.

Later in 17th and 18th century during the Zand era, a special school of painting was shaped. The art of this era is remarkable and, despite the short length of the dynasty, a distinct Zand art had the time to emerge. Many Qajar artistic traits were copied from the Zand examples. The late Persian Empire lasted from 1781 to 1925, was Qajar dynasty, which had a boom in artistic expression due to the relations



with Europe. Their painting style has the roots in Safavid era but the most noticeable style can be found in the unique style of the portrait paintings. As the Shangri La Center for Islamic Arts and Culture notes, «Later Iranian art of the Afsharid (96–1736), Zand (94–1750) and Qajar (1924–1779) periods is distinguished by the depiction of life-size figures, whether in stone relief, tilework or painting on canvas. In the latter category, Qajar rulers like Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1834–1797) perpetuated a widespread interest in large-scale portraiture (even sending portraits to political rivals) ». One of the most contradictory issues in painting of Qajar era was the depiction of women. In such a strongly Islamic society the view of women are depicted in much art as wearing very little. In Addition the above mentioned arts, Calligraphy have been always a Persian art form, developed over the art history of Iran by different art masters.

## Iranian traditional costumes in the history

Traditional Iranian clothing can be seen in Persian miniature paintings, both vivid and muted colors are used in traditional clothing. Iranian traditional clothes can be classified in two different ways, according to the history or according to the ethnicities. Through the history the costumes have been changed during different occasions, in ancient Persia and later in Islamic period. Iran is a vast country containing many different ethnicities and languages so the traditional dress tends to vary by region, territory and sometimes even individual village. By in large, the majority of the ethnicities pertaining to the regions of Iran, dictate the traditional costumes. These include dress styles for Turkmens, Mazandarani, Bakhtiari, Baluchi, Lurs, Gilaki, Kurds, Hormozgani, Qashqai, and many others. Traditionally marked in women’s clothes, it’s easy to identify which region or tribe the person belongs to base on the colorful fabrics, embroidered patterns, decorative jewelry. in the following research uncover the traditional dress of some regions’ diverse people in a brief.

### Turkmen

Earthy tones dominate the traditional dress of Turkmen men and women. Wearing long dresses with open robes, women often conceal part of their face with a cloth hanging just below the nose. Wool hats, worn to protect against cold weather, are the prominent feature of men’s garments.



left: Figure 21 - Old Persian Nasta'liq by famous Persian Artists -By artist Mirza Golam Isfihani - right:Figure 22 Painting from Qajar era

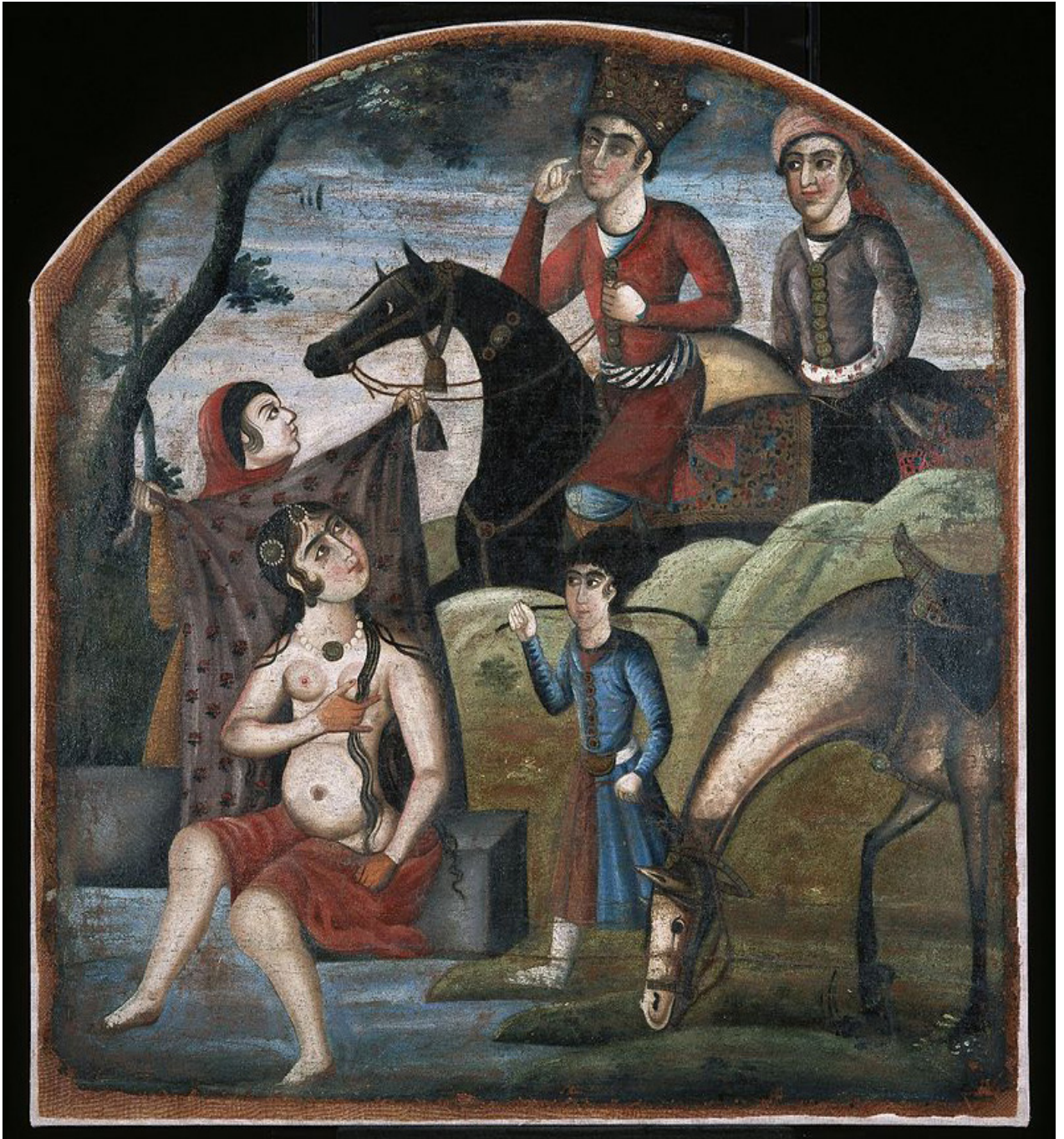


Figure 23 - Painting from Qajar era

## Mazandarani

With pants worn underneath, the traditional skirts of the northern Mazandaran region are known to be much shorter and puffier than in other regions. Cotton shirts and hunting trousers with the socks and/or boots worn just below the knee are typical for men.

## Bakhtiari

The clothes of the Bakhtiari nomadic tribe are rather versatile, accounting for the extreme weather conditions they may encounter during migration. Men wear tunics, wide trousers fastened at the ankle, and wool skullcaps. Colorful, layered skirts paired with matching vests are common for women. Their long scarves are embellished with hand-stitched designs or ornaments.

## Lurs

In contrast to Lur men, who favor neutral colors in their baggy clothes, women lean towards bright, feminine colors, with the trademark stripes hemmed on the pant cuffs. A vest reveals the sleeves of the long dress worn over the pants. After wrapping the headscarf around the head, neck, and shoulders, a long piece is left hanging down the back.

## Gilakis

Worn with long shirts and matching vests, floor-sweeping skirts with colorful horizontal stripes at the bottom are the discerning feature of the traditional Gilak wardrobe in the northern Gilan province. Men are distinguished by the wide cotton belt around the waist.

## Kurds

Kurds have varying styles, as reflected by their residence in different regions. Both men and women tend to wear baggy clothes shaped at the waist by a wide belt. Men wear matching jackets, and women decorate their headscarves with dangling coins and jewels.

## Qashqais

Of Turkic origin, the Qashqai are another nomadic tribe. Women are distinguished by their voluminous, multi-layered, colorful skirts and long headscarves pinned under the chin, which allow loose pieces of hair to frame their face. Men's round hats are made of sheep hair, which is unique to this tribe.

The two following ethnicities are the one more related to this thesis, these are the ethnicities living mostly in southern provinces of Iran close to Persian Gulf.

### Baluchis

In the southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province along with pants and colorful embroidered knee-length dresses, women adorn themselves with gold bracelets, necklaces, and brooches, and a second, longer shawl often covers their head and shoulders. Long pants, loose-fitting shirts, and a turban are customary for men.

### Hormozganis

The women in the southern port town of Bandar Abbas and the island of Qeshm are notable for their brightly colored, floral chadors and niqâb, which come in two types. The first gives the impression of thick eyebrows and a mustache from afar, a ruse used in the past to fool potential invaders into mistaking women for men. The other is a rectangular embroidered covering revealing only the eyes. Many women choose not to wear the niqâb today, but it is part of a centuries-old tradition that helped protect the face from the wind, sand, and scorching sun in these areas.

In the next chapters the costumes from these two regions will be discussed in details as the source of inspiration for the collection.



Figure 24 - women wearing different traditional costumes from various ethnicities in Iran







Figure 26  
traditional Baluchi  
dress with needle-  
works from Sistan  
and Baluchestan  
province , Iran.

Figure 25  
opposite page:  
traditional outfit  
from Hormozgan  
province, Qeshm  
island.

# Modern art in Iran

The modern art movement in Iran had its genesis in the late 1940s and early '50s. Politically, these were the years that saw the abdication of Reza Shah and increased contact with the West. Artistically, this was the period after the death of painter Kamal al-Mulk (1940–1852) and thus symbolically the end of a rigid adherence to academic painting. The culmination of these events allowed for a questioning of authority and resulted in the creation of a group of artists dedicated to creating a uniquely Iranian, modern idiom. Ekhtiar, Sardar (2004) in 1977, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art opened, boasting an important collection of both Western and Iranian artists.

In the 1960s Iran had a particular cultural context. With the establishment of OPEC and the resulting oil exports leading to an economic boom, Iran needed to present a culture-friendly vision of itself to the world. Various cultural organizations were established financially relying on this economic boom with the goal of presenting a cultural view of Iran with references to its history. Ali Bakhtiari (2016).

Those were the growing years of Iranian modern arts. After the Islamic revolution due to the new situation of the society and the new limitations the modern Iranian artists started to show their protests in their works. Subjects such as reacting to the new dress code which was under Islamic laws and the new limitations for women was the main issues presented in their artworks. Shirin Neshat is an Iranian visual artist now lives in New York, Her artwork centers on the contrasts between Islam and the West, femininity and masculinity, public life and private life, antiquity and modernity, and bridging the spaces between these subjects.

Another art which is famous since those years is the combination of Persian calligraphy and painting, since then lots of visual artists discovered their own unique method of producing artworks such as graphic arts and posters. Another example of modern art works is Reza Abedini which is an Iranian graphic designer and a visiting assistant Professor of graphic design and visual culture at the American University of Beirut. His works keep a modern theme as he blends traditional Islamic patterns, calligraphy and culture. He combines simple illustrations with poetic typography and elegant layouts, exploring the beauty of the Persian language.

But the modern arts of Iran is not just limited to graphic design and posters, a very significant field on which modern artists showed their arts was sculptures and installation arts. Parviz Tanavoli is one of the most famous contemporary Iranian artists. He is a sculptor, painter, scholar and art collector. Tanavoli work has been auctioned around the world leading to overall sales of over 6.7\$ million, making him the most expensive living Iranian artist. Tanavoli is known for his heeches, three



Figure 27 - Illustration by Farshid Mesghali for «The Little Black Fish» 1968

dimensional representations of the Persian word for «nothing», heech. Composed of three Persian characters in the style of Nastaliq. Iranian modern art has been inspired by many events during the recent history of the country. The generation of artists, writers and poets found sort of freedom to express their will for change in 60's and 70's they started to insert political issues and protests into their works. The graphic designs and illustrations in books, especially in children's publication. "The Little Black Fish" is one of the books with a noticeable story and Other than noticeable story; the original illustrations of the book by Farshid Mesghali in 1974 got Hans Christian Andersen Award for children books. After Islamic revolution, 8 years of war between Iran and Iraq, started in September 1980 when Iraq invaded Iran. The war with huge number of dead people left the country with a big sorrow and a lot of children without parents. This situation became the indirect subject for many stories and artistic production. Artists tried to create hope in their arts in different ways.

Later in the recent years due to the new age of information and technology, and by emerging of internet Iran like other countries joined the global village and the arts and design became with a more international tastes. Many artists and designers graduated from the best universities in the world and also Art universities in Iran began to rebuild the art of the country in a pioneer way comparing to the mainstream of the society.

Figure 28 - Shirin Neshat Unveiling (from the Women of Allah series)





Figure 29 - Art work by Reza Abedini



Figure 30 - sculpture by Parviz Tanavoli

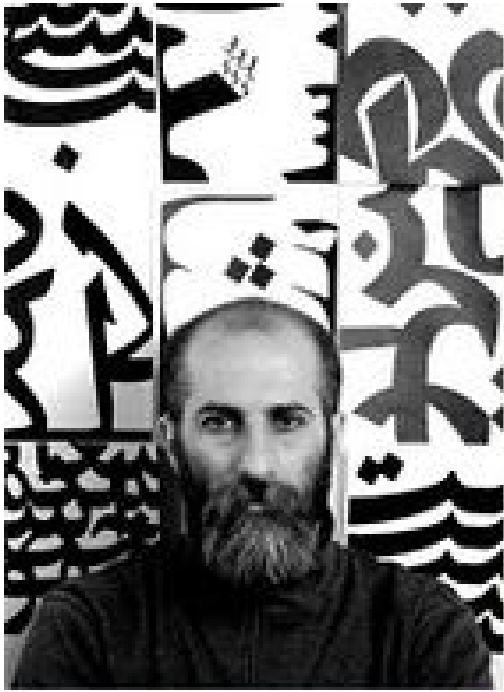


Figure 31 - Poster design by Reza Abedini

# Persian inspirations and the fashion world

For a land with thousands of years of civilization it is explicit to be the host of many early cultural developments of the whole world, although today it may not be mentioned in media or books where the roots of many objects are. Just to refer briefly to the history of garments in ancient Iran, The Aryans (6th-century BC) costumes since the very beginning of Aryans' entry of the Iranian plateau, consist of two main styles: 1. cloak the early form of which had a simple design. This cloak had slit at the middle which was fastened to the body using a belt. 2. Close-fitting trousers referred to as "Anaxyrides" by the Greeks. In the Greek sources, these trousers were described leathern and colored. These trousers were worn with above-knee tunics and high-boot. Then the Median costumes consisted of following pieces: shirt (tunic), trousers and overcoat. One of their head wears was hood, which was a common hat later worn by Persians and Achaemenians. This hat was named by the Europeans "Phrygian" and, some two thousand years later was known as "Freedom Red Hat" during the French revolution. Afterward the Achaemenian costume can be seen in their relics, chiefly concerning the costume of men, but in some limited number of these relics, the costume of women is seen on engraved seals, carpets, Pazyryk tissue, and some stone cuttings. In all these relics a minor difference exists between the costume of men and women. According to Will Durant, the Achamenian Empire was one of the best managed governments of all historian eras. Through creating a peaceful atmosphere and encouraging understanding among various nations, Achamenians caused the development of science, culture and civilization. As the result of such a peaceful atmosphere, the Perses, feeling safe and secure, adorned their appearances and attached great importance to the comeliness of their costume. For this reason the quality and color of materials fully attracted their attention.

In 250 B.C., after 70 years of total decay of the Achamenian reign, the ground was prepared for the establishment of an Iranian government relating itself to the Achamenians, the Parthian Empire. An important point observed in the relics is the effect of architectural symbols on the costume consisting of small ornamental figures affected by the Greek architecture. Later in Sassanid era the main elements of their costume were the same tunic and trousers worn by the Medes and Parthians with only one difference: the Sassanids wore more ornamented costumes. Trousers, being the main and most important elements, and undoubtedly, the most beautiful part of the Sassanid costume, have better cutting and design compared to Parthian era. The creasing (wrinkling) method is the same but we see that the Sassanid trousers especially on the sides, the wrinkles have been ornamented by



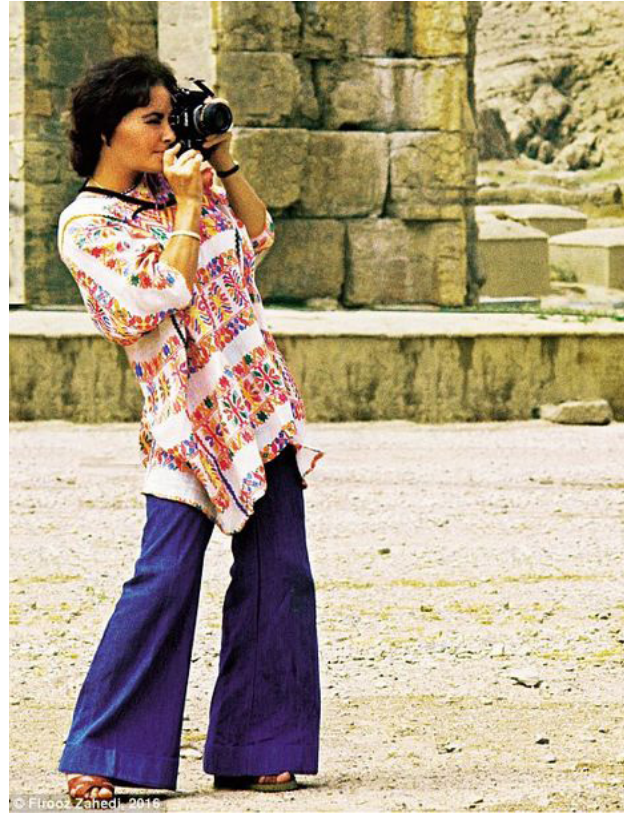
fluctuating straps making the trousers a unique element. Iranian costume after newly-muslim Arabs attacked and overthrew Sassanids did not witness fundamental development. The women garments in early Islamic epoch was the continuation of the sassanid era. Approximately, no changes were made in the main elements of costumes over many periods. The main parts consisted of: tunics closed or open in front and with circled collar and tight sleeves, long garments or outer wear, trousers, belt and scarf.

The safavid era from the cultural stand point is considered a turning point. The manifestation of the safavid culture, of which costume is one, change since the beginning of their rule, for in addition to social traditions and religious duties, economic and commercial relations with European nations starts in this period. As a result many tourists came to Iran and wrote their itineraries throughout the Safavid reign. A study of those itineraries and also the numerous evidence belonging to the epoch and even to the Ottoman sources clarifies the costume characteristics of the Iranian costumes over this period: 1. Tunic worn by men and opened at both sides. 2. Shirts with collars open in front from the right side with button on shoulders. 3. Doublets worn over shirts. 4. long garments worn over doublets. 5. Loose sleeveless cloak open in front made of cotton or wool. 6. Long piece of cloth (Shawl) worn by men as a belt around the waist. In 18th century Iran under Qajariyah rule, had French tourists and traders made regular trips to Iran establishing direct relationship between western culture and Iran. During the reign of Naseraddin shah, the Iranian costumes drastically changed as a result of increased interrelationships between Iran and European nations. The changes are more observable in men's trousers and hats, and in women's skirts. Mehrasa Gheibi (2008)

In 1960's and 1970's the relationship between fashion world and Iran was growing noticeably, public figures such as the queen of Iran, Farah Pahlavi, started to use the traditional clothes of different ethnicities of the country in a very elegant way in important occasions. International artists and actors found Iran an interesting place for unique photo shootings because of very wide range of natural and historic sites. In 1969 Vogue magazine took an interesting photo shooting in traditional places of Iran with beautiful models wearing colorful garments with the background of turquoise mosques or Iranian gardens. In 1976, Elizabeth Taylor took her first and only trip to Iran, with photographer Firooz Zahedi. He made exotic and colorful photos of Taylor in different places in historical cities of Iran; in some of the photos she is wearing traditional costumes of the cities. The diversity within Iran is something which has been always a significant source of inspiration for Iranian and also international artists. There is a contrast between historic touch and vivid, colorful spirit of ethnical wear.



Figure 32 - models for Vogue 1969



Top: Figure 33- Elizabeth Taylor in Persepolis  
bottom: Figure 34- models for Vogue 1969

During the 1970s women were granted rights such as equality in marriage and divorce. Fashion, hair, and makeup reflected the modern woman of the world. All this was to come to an end at the start of the 1980s with the Islamic Cultural Revolution. Women's rights collapsed, and strict dress laws were reintroduced. (Ian Harvey, 2017) after the Islamic revolution due to the political evolution since 1979 in Iran, speaking about Iranian art and fashion has been faded away gradually in the western world, maybe because of the limitation of the dress code and religious proscriptions, or because of the western media perspective of Iran which is not true in a lot of issues. This is while in the world of art and design there have been always remarkable inspirations from Persian art or history. For instant one of the motifs which is very common in the fashion world is "Paisley", brands such as Etro are using it as their signature in their collections. "Paisley" has its roots in Sassanian-era Iran (651-224 AD). Originally designed to represent a tall and straight cypress tree, which is a very beloved tree by Persian people and a symbol of persistence.

A complicating factor in Persia's cultural history is that many Persian innovations — in fashion and beyond — are often mistakenly attributed to India. It's an understandable mix-up: during the reign of the Mughals (1526-1857), Persian culture was adopted by the Indian elites. When the British colonized India in the mid-19th century, they not only encountered lucrative trade possibilities and resource-rich land, but they also saw new clothes. Although they were introduced to the West through India, garments such as pyjamas (pay-jameh, literal translation: "leg clothing"), cummerbunds, khakis, pashminas (pashmineh, meaning "woolen"), and shawls, as well as seersucker (shir o shekar, or "milk and sugar"), are all products of Persian culture. And, while they haven't quite entered the mainstream (yet), turbans (from the Persian dolband) also harbor an Iranian connection within their folds. (Joobin Bekhrad, 2017)

another example of applying inspiration from Persian arts is Hermès Autumn/Winter 2012 Ready-To-Wear Collection. Hermes used Tabriz carpet motifs which is a luxurious type of Persian carpet from city of Tabriz in Iran. The Tata Naka AW14 fashion collection is full of striking prints, appliqué and conceptual shapes that are brought to life through the world of interior design. The models seemingly blended in with the wallpaper, paintings and carpet as each design is created with influence from paintings of Matisse, Persian rugs, Aubusson carpets, hand-painted wall papers, ceramic tiles and porcelain china.



Figure 35 - Farah Diba  
- Shahbanoo of Iran  
wearing a dress with  
traditional needle-  
works from south of  
Iran

**H.H.M. EMPRESS FARAH PAHLAVI, SHAHBANOU OF IRAN**



Figure 36 - Hermès Autumn/Winter 2012 Ready-To-Wear Collection



Figure 37 - Tata Naka AW14 fashion collection

# Modern Iranian Fashion

The Islamic dress code in Iran limits what people, especially women, are free to wear, and for many years, the designs emerging from Iran were uncreative and drab, with people turning to Western brands for stylish alternatives. Today, however, the tide is turning. The Culture Trip examines the fashion designers who are making a name for themselves in Iran and throughout the rest of the world.

In the recent years Iranian fashion designers or more general Iranian women have made step by step a movement toward modern fashion to break the rules and limitations. Nowadays there are lots of fashion designers, stylists and bloggers in Iran who made altogether this change in the modern style of the both men and women in big cities of the country. Their collections are mainly a combination of the traditions and global trends of the fashion world; they try to make beauty out the obligation and limits. There are websites such as "TheTehranTimes" which is one the most interesting fashion and culture blogs about Iran, which tries to capture the best and most creative styles around the city and show the real style of the people in Iran. The Tehran Times has continuously sought to frame Iran's thriving street fashion, lifestyle and pop culture from Tehran's bleeding edge. "We look for Iranians all over the world to tell their artistic stories and capture the spirit of a new generation on the rise. Fashion is first and foremost a statement of cultural and personal expression. Our mission is to showcase the elegance and grace of the way the people of Iran express themselves, by depicting one of the oft-ignored aspects of Iranian life: fashion and art." they said.

Modern Iranian style is bold with traditional roots in the appearance and modern and sometimes radical in styling. The combination of western fashion with the colorful and floral style of the country results in a vivid look, the look of the modern women in Iran. In recent years due to the connection which social media has made through all the world Iranian street style and modern fashion has been seen in the western world and now people know more how women look like in the streets of Iran, especially in Tehran in which people are more trendy and paying a lot of attention to their appearance. The fact which is very bold in Iranian style specially in what women wear is that you will find for sure a touch of traditional arts and motifs in their look, or you find the look very colorful and bold. recently Iranian women are using Fashion in protest to wearing hijabs by force, Allowing the wind to blow through their hair and trying to get back their freedom.





Figure 38,  
39, 40  
Iranian  
models in  
Editorial for  
The Tehran  
Times





Figure 41  
Iranian models  
in Editorial for  
The Tehran  
Times

# Traditional design for a modern community

Traditional art and crafts from different ethnicities may be considered either not trendy or in many cases too colorful or too much in general comparing to what global customers are looking for in the stores. Therefore, as much as it is important to follow the rules of slow fashion, it is also important to pay attention to the customer tastes for running a fashion business which survives. The aim of all the before mentioned movements are trying to pursue people to join and to be careful about their choices, knowing that every little choice has an effect on environment, communities and people.

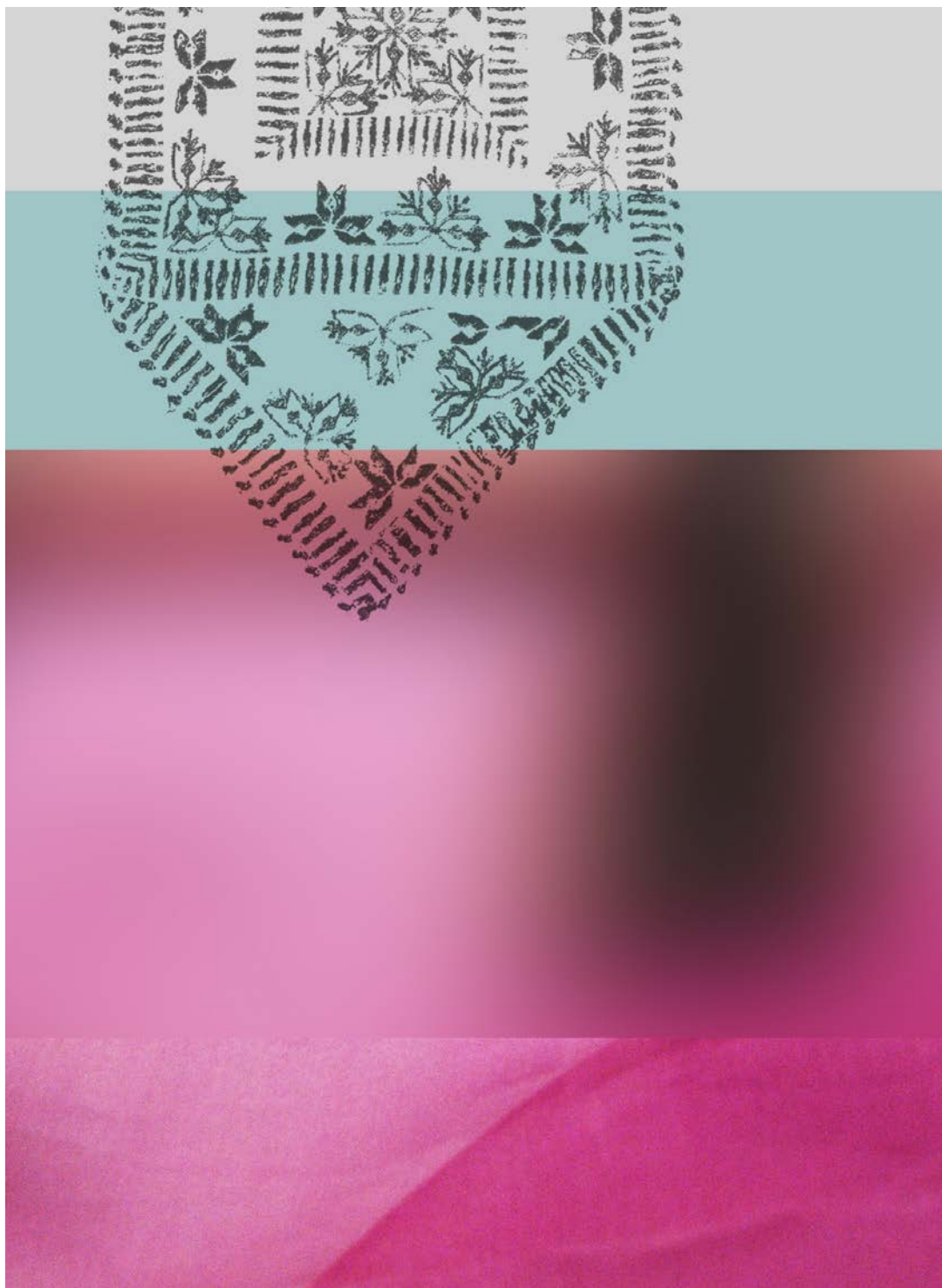
Global artisanship can be completely re-contextualized and re-valued through the partnership of tradition and sophisticated design. The partnering of design and craft can honor and value the tradition and history of the craft, the context, and the people, while simultaneously re-contextualizing it, and re-valuing the artisanal work through cutting edge, sophisticated design. (Brown S.) Nowadays there is a movement in Iran among the designers in fashion and all the other design fields, the reflection of traditional arts can be seen clearly among the modern creations, in the other hand, the Iranian customers show that they prefer this artistic combination of colorful traditional art and minimal and modern design. In fashion sector which is quite a young sector in the country there is huge demand for this style of garments. Before, designers used to apply traditional design into their collection in an old way, with too much color, pattern on pattern and not in a trendy style. But in the recent years the market has been changed, due to the demand for garments in an international level of design and quality, new brands emerged. Many designers who studied abroad in cities such as London, Milano, Paris and New York, came back to their home country in order to make a positive change. These new brands are gradually improving the fashion sector and going toward the above-mention movement. The designers mostly use precious handmade fabrics which are famous for elegance and delicacy in combination with other plain textiles depending on the season. As Iranian women should wear "mantua", a kind of coat which is worn on other clothes, therefore the focus of the fashion houses is more on creating mantua collection which suits the modern style of girls who mostly wear jeans and cool scarfs.



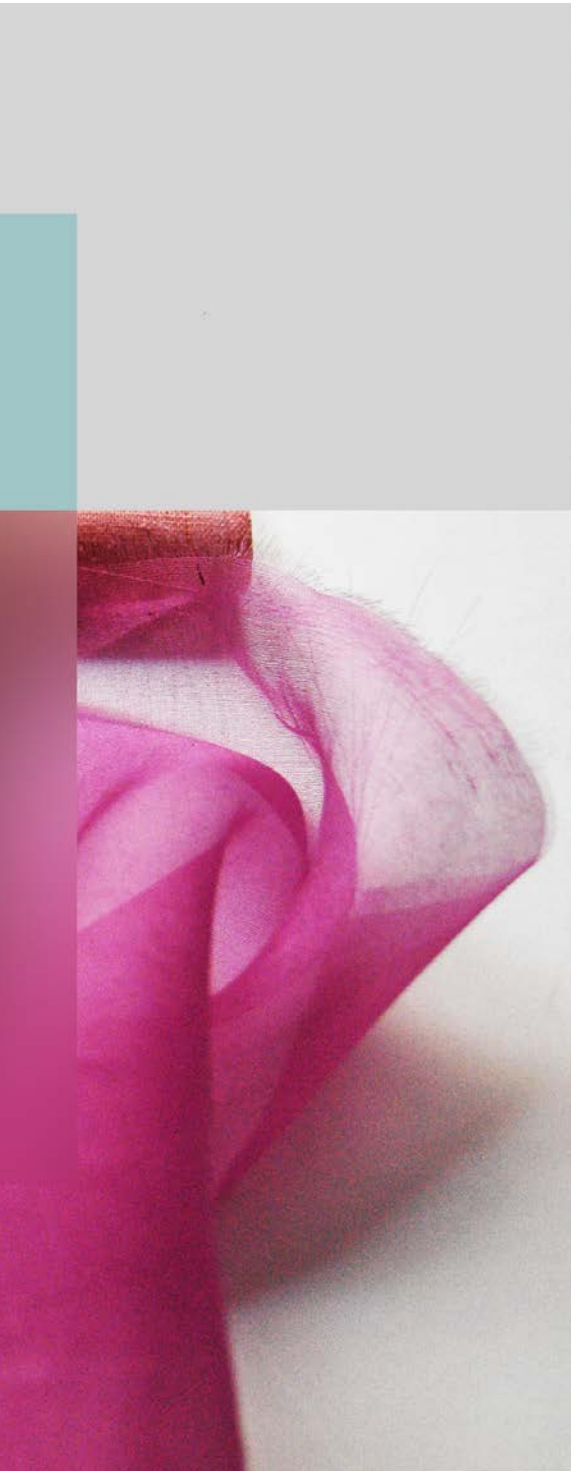


## CHAPTER 4 : THE COLLECTION

Mood







# The story



# The origin

Southern Iran is very ethnically diverse, including Lurs , Persians, Qashqais, Larestanis, Baloch, Arabs, Armenians, Afro-Iranians and Jews. the region is the homeland of the Persian people. Most people in southern Iran are ethnically Persian. what is mostly focused on, in this collection is traditional clothing of Hormozgan province and Sistan-Baluchestan province. The Baloch people of Iran live in southern and central parts of Sistan and Baluchestan province, one of the most remote and isolated areas of Iran, especially from the majority of the people. The combined Sistan and Baluchestan province today accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In the epigraphs of Bistoon and Persepolis, Sistan is mentioned as one of the eastern territories of Darius the Great. While the peoples of Hormozgan province are known for being extremely ethnically and racially mixed. Most are a mix of Arab, Persian, Balooch, Bakhtiari, and Indian. historically Hormozgan is known to have been settled during the Achaemenid era when Nearchus passed through the region, recorded history of the main port of Hormozgan (Bandar e Hormoz) begins with Ardashir I of Persia of the Sassanid empire.

The climate of this part is from hot dry desert to hot coastal dry as it is close to the sea. Habitants of these regions on the earth had their solution for survival as they are still living in their cities. In the extremely hot and humid regions people used to make their houses with special material which comes from the plants and trees of their lands. They took advantage of the properties of the material they had to make their life easier and survive in hot deserts. one of the most common materials they used are straws from different plants mostly from palms. They used this material in the construction of their houses as it helps air circulation and also the moisture absorbency make it stay cold. They are skilled in straw weaving. in Sistan and Baluchistan they make type of residence called Kapar, the main instruction is palms and the roof is usually made by straw .as the native people of those regions said: "living in Kapar helps us to cope with the extreme hot weathers and continue our life activities during the hot seasons".

In the coastal areas women usually wear colorful garments with a lot of handmade embroideries and needlework which they say it an alternative to plants and flowers missing in this dry area. They wear golden or other metallic colors sandals and use big scarfs and shawls made with special delicate fabrics, usually with floral and colorful patterns, they wrap in their special way around their faces.



The two colored provinces are focused in this collection Hormozgan and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces along the Persian gulf

The southern part of Iran is famous for splendid costumes and visual culture. Generally when the nature in a region is without flowers and trees, in other words without colors, people of that region should make the flowers in another way. Where the eyes just see desert, it needs to find colors and motifs somewhere else.

In Sistan-Balouchestan needlework is traditionally considered essential to the education of Baluchi girls. It takes a long time to finish one Baluchi dress as the late legendary needlework artist, Mahtab Nowruzi told in an interview with Honaronline that tailoring each dress takes six or seven months if one works nonstop, but because women mostly work on them in between their housework, it usually takes longer. Embroidery is worked in strictly compartmentalized repeat geometric and angular designs; stylistic differences in the patterns and colors reflect different geographical areas within the province. The motifs may be stylized versions of flowers and plant forms. The costumes are slightly different from city to city, There are approximately fifty to seventy motifs in Baluch embroidery (čakan-e balūčī), each with its own name, though the names may differ slightly in different regions and simpler versions are identified by the names of the localities where they are made. In Persia this type of embroidery is practiced only by Baluch women and is still very much alive among the settled populations in Persian Baluchistan, especially in the villages of the central region and in the Āhorrān mountains. Within the last thirty years innovative techniques and about 390 new colors have been introduced. The most striking feature of the women's costume is the hand embroidery covering the front of the dress and the cuffs of the sleeves and trousers. These embroidered pieces are prepared separately and later sewn onto the dresses. The piece for the front of the bodice (zī) is square and extends across the entire front from shoulders to waist. Another rectangular piece (koptān) extends from the waist to the hem of the dress and comes to a point at the top; the sides of this piece are left unstitched for approximately 30 cm, so that it can function as a large pocket. Two trapezoidal pieces 25 cm wide and 45 cm long are stitched onto the sleeves as cuffs, and two similar but slightly smaller pieces decorate the trouser hems. (Mehremonir Jahanbani, 2011) the colors are bright and contrasting, in some garments they even put an extremely colorful needlework on a floral fabric.

The province of Hormozagan is in the far south, along the Persian Gulf. It consists of a part of the mainland and several islands off of the coast. In Hormozgan province women wear a type of mask which is different from a city to another. It comes in different colors, materials and decorations. They call it Batouleh or Borke in their languages. there is different type of delicate embroidery on it with golden threads which makes it very splendid.



Baluchi traditional dress with traditional embroideries from sistan and baluchestan province



Bandari pants - originated from Hormozgan province in southern Iran



In Hormozgan women's clothing consists of four basic parts: head covering, dress, trousers, and shoes. The normal head covering is a rectangular black scarf of thin silk (maknā) wrapped round the head and fastened on top with a metal pin (čollā-ba), which formerly was sometimes of gold. The basic garment is a dress in colored cotton, either draped around the hips (gavan) or cut full. Older women wear over it a loose shift (jūma/jāma) of thin material, with a collar (yaqa-ye jūma, garībūn/garībān) embroidered with gold thread. Under these garments women wear full trousers (šalvār) tapered at the ankles. The cuffs are embroidered (badle/badla) in designs that vary from region to region. When they leave their villages women don floral-cotton čādors, wrapped loosely around the body and covering the head except for the face. The black čādor is worn only during funeral ceremonies. The traditional face covering (batoūleh) is still worn in some parts of this region, but its popularity is declining. No serious information about the place of origin of this garment or the period when it was introduced in Hormozgān is available. The variants of the batoūleh are named for the places or ethnic groups with which they are identified: moqāmi, homeyrāni, arabī, qatari, sekāni, and so on.

people from hormozgan province are called Hormozgani or Bandari, "Bandar" means coast in Persian. their traditional costume is also called Bandari and the type of handmade embroidery or machine embroidery is a must know skill among local people, especially women. they wear wedge sandals with Bandari pants in different colors with a lot of embroidery mostly with golden or silver threads and beads.

In general clothing of southern regions of Iran is long and covers all the body. in addition to their culture, it is a protection from the strong sunshine of that area. Both men and women wear a full-covering outfit. Men mostly wear white and women wear bright colors with a lot of golden and colorful decoration as it is mentioned before.

## Target market

According to the researches on different markets, in Europe and middle east, I found a potential market for traditional-modern design in womenswear sector of my country. In addition, because of a deeper knowledge on Iranian clothing culture and knowing that there is a lack for professional fashion brands in Iran, comparing to European market which is saturated by fashion brands, the target market is decided to be the Iranian womenswear market. there is a high demand in middle-class and upper middle class women in big cities for fashion brands which are presenting collections inspired by Iranian traditional arts but designed in a modern style according to the international trends. Among young women there is a movement as mentioned before, to select unique garments which has a touch of traditional artworks, such as embroideries or special textiles for their wardrobes instead of just following the western fashion. Therefore, the target group of this collection is Iranian women 25 to 40 in big cities of the country with an average income according to the income range of Iran. The choice of age is due to the demand observed in this range, as women of these ages are the customers following fashion very closely in Iran society, they are the people who are seeking new and unique looks rooted in their colorful culture but not a very different look from modern countries.

## Vintage pieces

In the south of Iran, the garments are too splendid as mentioned before, they spend a lot of time for each piece of their clothes for the needle work and also a lot of money for every single garment. When a dress is at the end of its life cycle, people throw it away, or keep it for a long time in their wardrobe and then throw it away. But the pieces which are decorated with needle work and delicate embroidery (mostly handmade) are still in a good condition, but the other parts of the garments are ragged. In this project we are talking about not taking our heritage for granted, so preserving the art and time they put in this traditional pieces and creating a new and unique piece of garment using each of them is worthwhile.

In order to find vintage embroidered pieces and patches, I should have searched and found them among local people in the villages and small cities of that region, however finding them and communicating with them is a difficult experience, since this region is isolated and the culture is different and closed.

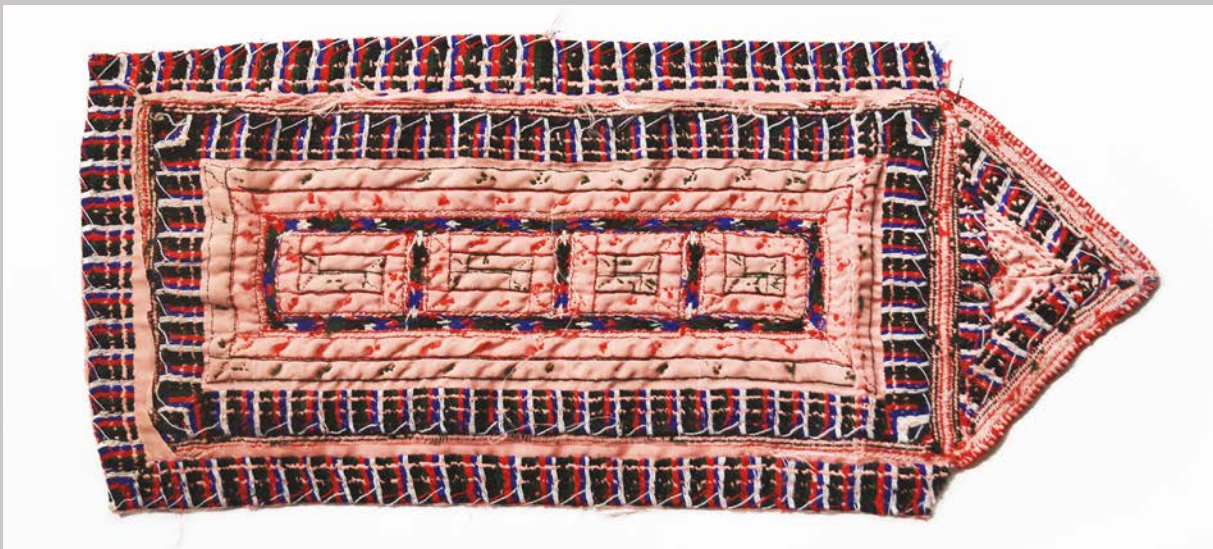
The selection of vintage pieces is according to their diversity in motifs and shapes, and the suitability to be attached to the garments. The pieces are from both Hormozgan and Sistan-Baluchestan, each from a different part of an old garment belong to the local people from villages.



Piece number one: this is a handmade embroidered part called "pocket" of the Baluchi dress, which is used in the clutch bag design. It belonged to a Baluchi woman from Sarbaz city in Sistan-Baluchestan.



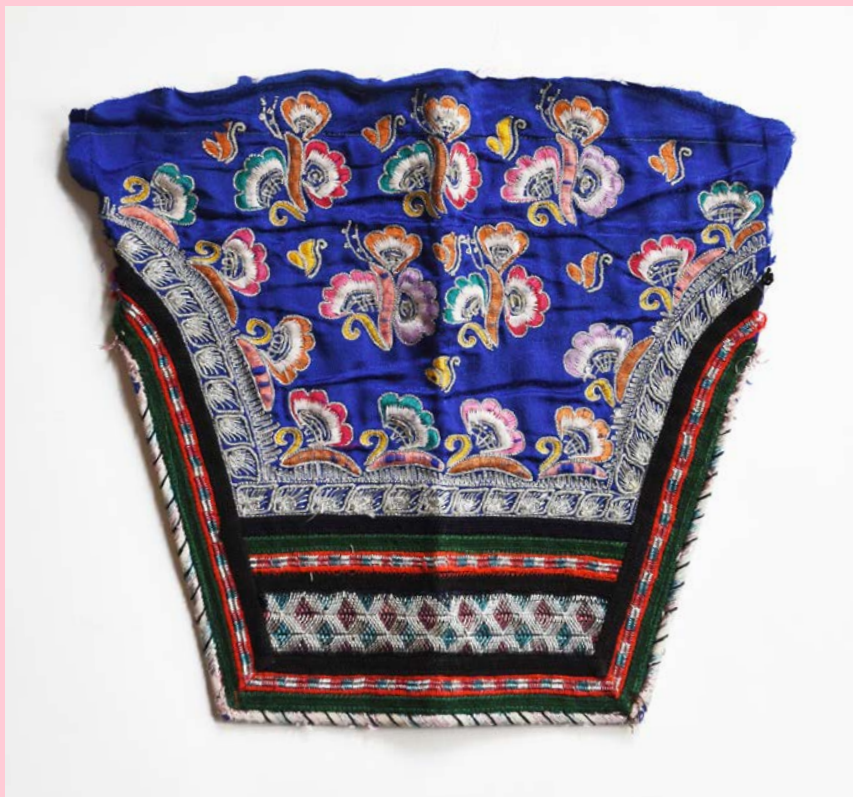
Piece number two: it is part of a Baluchi dress, this piece was embroidered part for the front of the dress.



Piece number three: it is called "pocket" of the Baluchi dress, in the designed garment in this collection it is placed inversed, with its backside to the front. So what is seen here is the back, which looks more modern according to design of the collection.



Piece number four: it is an embroidered part at the bottom of the skirt, from a Baluchi dress belong to a woman from one of the villages of the province.



Piece number five: it is a part of a Bandari pant, from Qeshm island in Hormozgan province. This is the embroidered part for the bottom of the pant belonged to a woman from Haftrangoo Village in Qeshm Island.



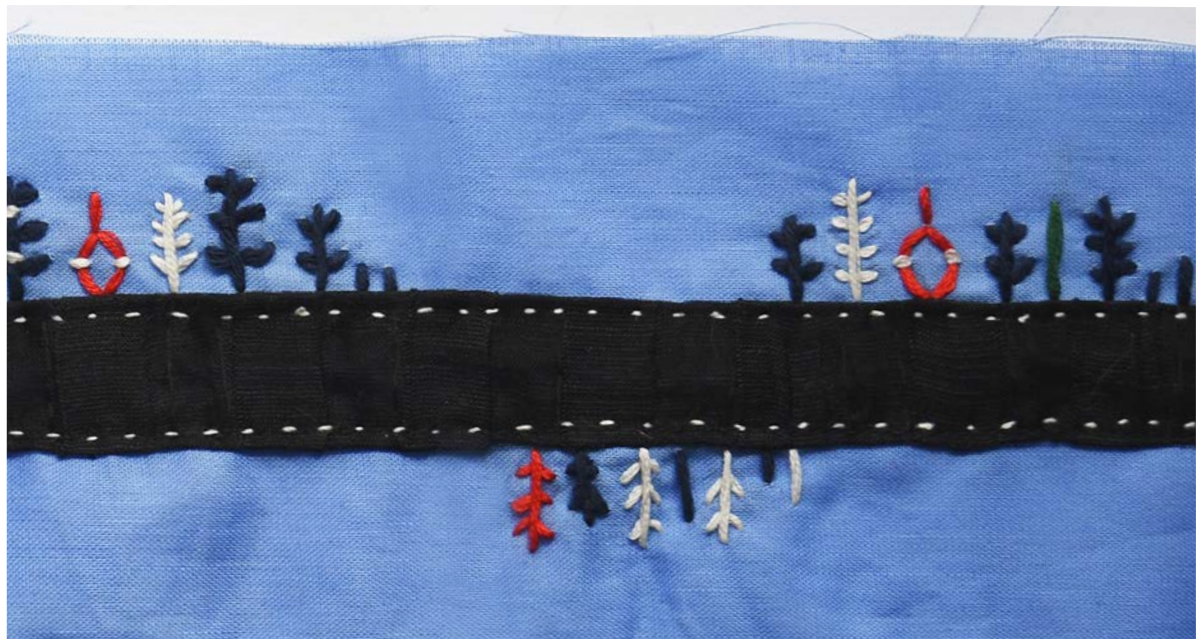
## Restoration of vintage pieces

The upcycled vintage pieces are 15-20 years old, therefore they are damaged and threadbare in some parts. In addition, they are cut from the main dress, so in some parts they are not completed and need some changes. For this purpose, a type of restoration applied in order to complete some parts to be placed in the new designed garments. The style of repair is inspired by the Italian style of restoration of historic sites. I tried to find closest fabrics concerning the color and texture of the original piece and imitate the motifs and embroidery in more free and modern way just to complete the shape of it to fit in to the clothes.











## Fabrics and the process

The main two fabrics selected for the collection are linen and organdy. Linen, as in the origin of this collection's inspiration has a dry and hot nature, so the best choice is organic fibers such as linen and cotton with a good respiration. Organdy, for the transparent but natural look it gives to the garment, communicating the idea of covering and protecting by making a frame for the embroidery pieces. The cuts are inspired by the simple and soft curves in the deserts, the combination of matt linen and transparent organdy is resembling sand and the wind of desert.

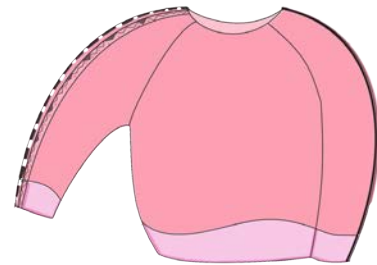




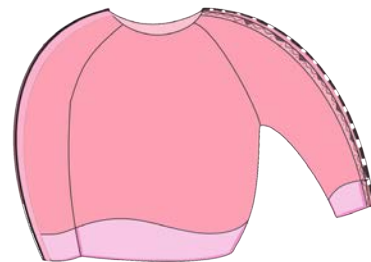




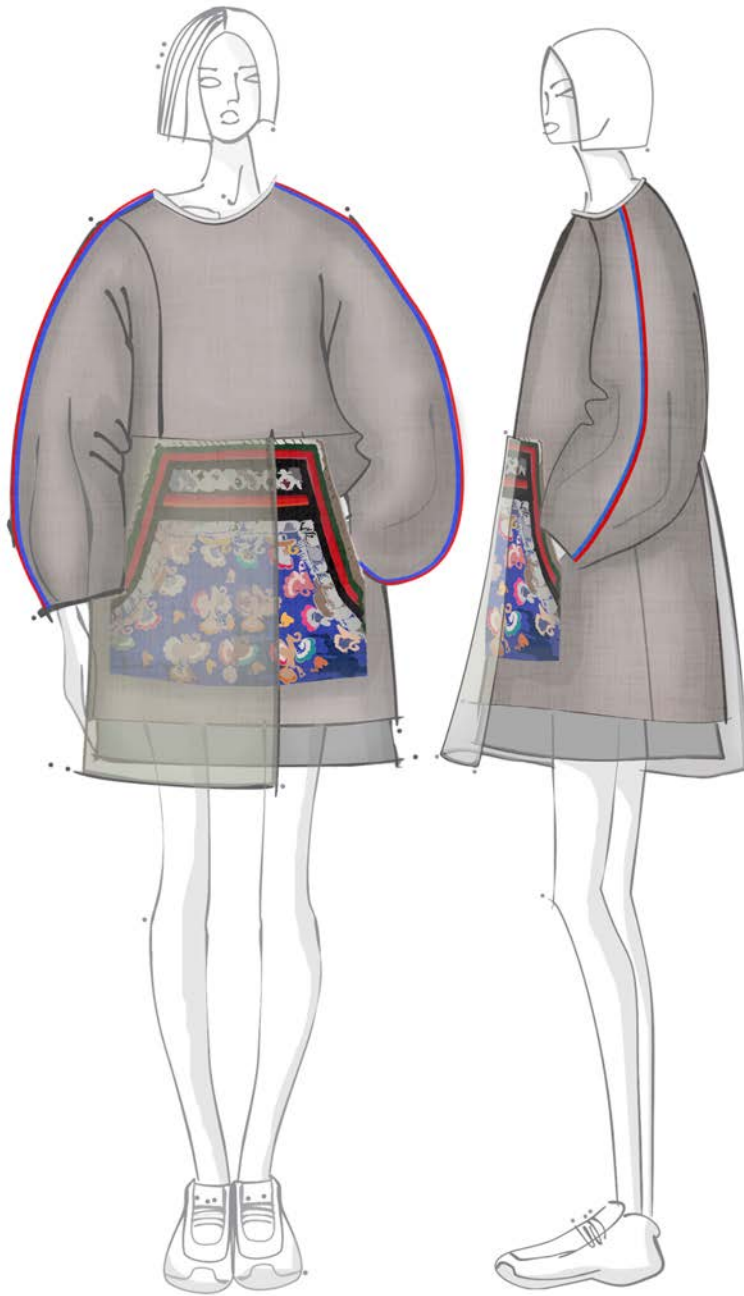
Fabrics:  
Pink Linen, Magenta  
organdy



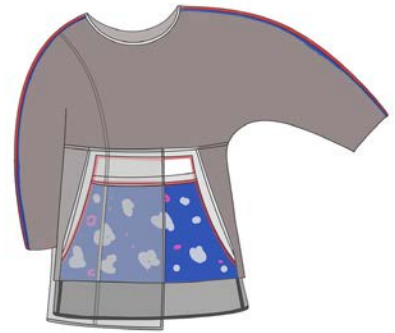
Front



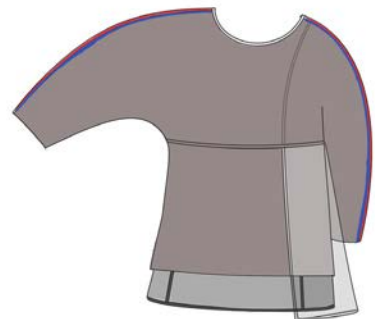
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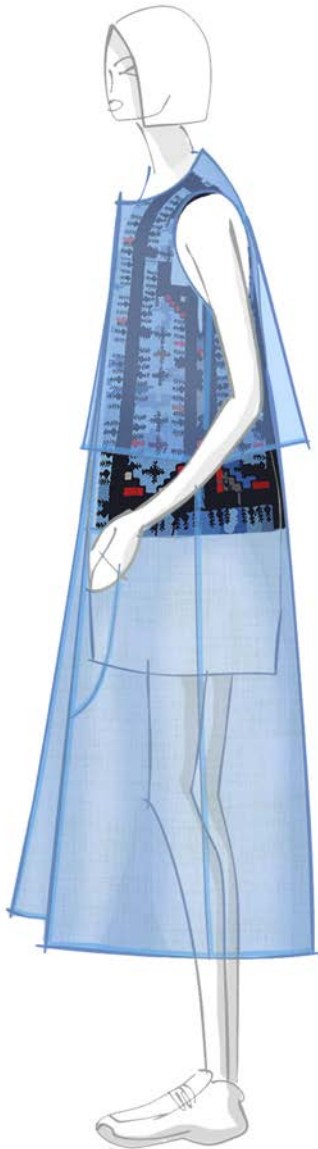
Fabrics:  
grey organdy, black  
organdy warm grey  
linen



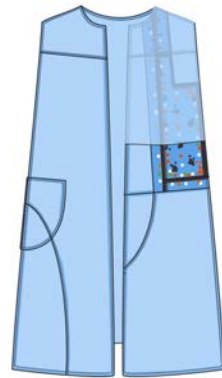
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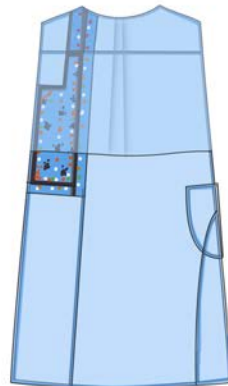
Back



Fabrics:  
Heaven blue organdy,  
Heaven blue linen



Front

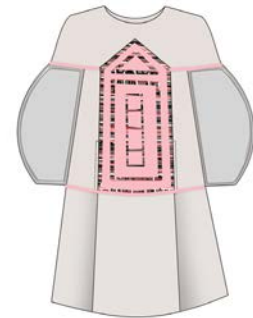


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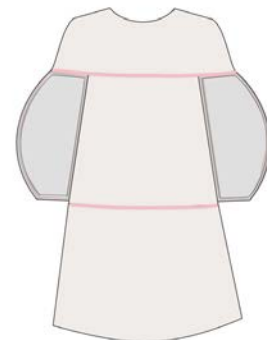




Fabrics:  
Heaven blue organ-  
dy fabric, hand wo-  
ven - Heaven blue  
linen

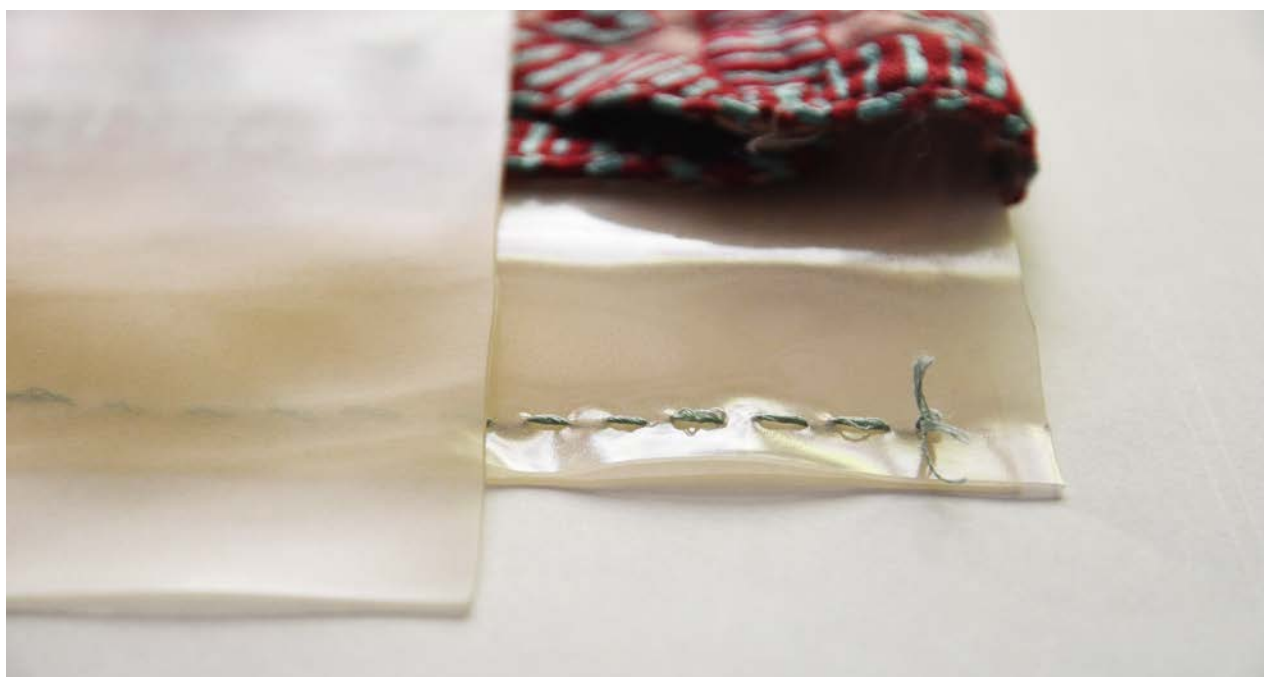


Front



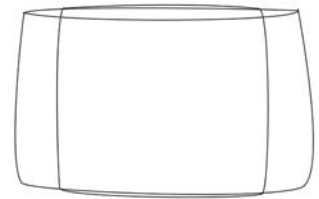
Back

# Clutch Bag





Clutch bag  
material: PVC + vintage  
piece





THE COLLECTION































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