



CREATING MODERN CLOTHING DESIGNS FROM UZBEK NATIONAL FABRICS

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Abstract

This article discusses the creation of modern clothing designs using traditional Uzbek fabrics that have been produced for centuries across the territory of Uzbekistan. The study highlights the aesthetic, cultural, and technological value of national textiles such as *atlas*, *adras*, *bekasam*, and *shoyi*, and their reinterpretation in contemporary fashion design. It also explores how traditional weaving patterns, natural dyeing methods, and regional ornamentation are being revived through innovative approaches to garment construction, sustainability, and identity expression. The integration of heritage textiles into modern silhouettes not only preserves national traditions but also enhances the global recognition of Uzbek craftsmanship in the fashion industry.

Keywords: Uzbek national fabrics, atlas, adras, textile design, fashion, cultural heritage, sustainable design, modern clothing.

Introduction

When creating a costume collection, a designer can draw inspiration from a wide range of creative sources — natural phenomena, elements of the surrounding environment, world events, music, painting, literature, as well as historical, folk, and classical costumes. At certain stages of their career, every designer turns to these sources, finding renewed inspiration in history and national traditions.

One of the main objectives of modern designers today is to create elegant and distinctive clothing for Uzbek women that harmoniously combines traditional national fabrics with contemporary styles, while preserving the spirit of national culture and customs. These designs must reflect both modern fashion demands



and the aesthetic and practical needs of women, expressing cultural identity through innovation.

Before exploring modern design applications, it is essential to understand the history of Uzbek silk and national fabrics, which represent centuries of craftsmanship and creativity. Their evolution, symbolism, and artistry continue to inspire today's designers in shaping new, modern forms of national dress.

Materials and Methods

Since ancient times, the peoples of Central Asia have been known for their mastery in weaving silk fabrics, though by the 17th century this craft had disappeared in many regions. It continued to flourish only in the Fergana Valley—especially in Margilan—and in Bukhara, which became the principal centers of silk weaving [1, p. 151].

Because silk textiles were traditionally worn only by the aristocracy, the main production centers of silk fabrics were located in the capitals of the Uzbek khanates. Cotton fabrics, on the other hand, were produced in many local craft centers [1, p. 152].

Among the cotton textiles, nimshoyi (semi-silk) fabrics were also woven. The fabric that achieved the highest artistic and technical level of ornamentation was the bekasam, a densely woven striped textile made with a silk warp and a thick, brightly colored cotton weft [1, p. 125].

In the Fergana Valley, the cool color palette of textiles was achieved by combining violet with vivid shades of green and white. Occasionally, narrow raspberry-colored stripes or a fifth hue were added for accent. In Margilan, these fabrics were classified by the number of colors used in their pattern—*uch qashoq* (three-colored), *besht qashoq* (five-colored), or *bayroq* (“flag-patterned”). Raspberry and pink colors were traditionally used only in fabrics intended for women's and children's garments, while the use of red in men's clothing was strictly prohibited [1, p. 156].

In Bukhara, the main tone of fabrics was usually pink, with broad bands of white, violet, and green. In Samarkand and Urgut, craftsmen produced wide gray stripes using special weaving techniques, which created a light, variegated pattern known as *zanjira* (“chain motif”).



Later, *bekasam* fabrics continued to be woven according to ancient traditions, while new variations emerged that differed in color and pattern combinations. Fergana artisans were particularly skilled at producing modest yet elegant color palettes—combinations of purple, black, and white stripes of equal width. Such textiles were called *chervon-shoyi*, named after their value: one piece of fabric sufficient for a robe or vest cost exactly one *chervon* (a gold coin) [1, p. 157].

The term “abr” (from Persian *ābr*, meaning “cloud”) appears in 17th-century literary sources as a designation for a particular decorative pattern. According to one legend, *abr* designs were inspired by the reflection of moving clouds on the surface of water; another version suggests they imitated oil stains floating on a pond. These early motifs resembled the spring rainbow, known in embroidery as *abri-bahor* (“spring cloud”).

The abr-banding technique—used for dyeing warp threads—is among the most intricate in textile art. Warp threads, 200–300 meters long, are divided on a special frame into small bundles called *libit*. Depending on the density and width of the fabric, each bundle contained 40–60 threads. Pairs of these bundles were wound onto transverse beams of the frame, with the spacing between beams determining the pattern’s *rapport* (repeat unit).

On this surface, the abrband master—without using stencils or sketches—applied the design directly using a thin wooden stick dipped in soot dissolved in water. The vertical and crosswise lines outlined half of the pattern. The precision of the drawing, combined with the complex wrapping and resist-dyeing process, produced the unique “cloud-like” blurred motifs characteristic of Uzbek ikat weaving [1, pp. 158–159].

Results and Discussion

Among the main weaving groups of Uzbek national fabrics are the satin-type textiles made from pure silk. These include *atlas* (“four-pedal”), *khon atlas* (“eight-” and “twelve-pedal”), and *nimshoyi* (“yakroya”). The greater the number of pedals used in the weaving process, the more refined and luxurious the abr (ikat) fabric becomes.

According to historical accounts, the *khon atlas* (“royal satin”) was created in 1856 by order of Kokand Khan Khudoyar Khan, and it was named in his honor.



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Initially, this precious fabric was reserved exclusively for the clothing of the khan's family. The homeland of *khon atlas* is Margilan, located in the Fergana Valley [1, p. 160].

Color has always played a decisive role in Uzbek artistic textiles. Each region of Uzbekistan possesses its own traditional palette and color combinations. Archival sources indicate that in Fergana textiles, red hues were used sparingly, with dominant saffron-yellow tones; in Khujand, red prevailed; while in Kokand, blue shades were predominant. The density and color of a fabric often revealed the place of its production, and each color corresponded to a specific age group or social category.

In Bukhara, fabrics featured deep red, yellow, and pink hues, whereas Fergana textiles typically contained seven colors—yellow, dark red, green, blue, pink, violet, and black. The blending of one color into another and the interplay between background and motif created a striking sense of harmony and depth. The chromatic perfection of abr textiles was so refined that the ornamentation itself became almost secondary, giving way to the fluid transitions of color. Light tones would merge into dark ones, and warm shades would seamlessly shift into cool ones, producing a dynamic and elegant visual rhythm [1, p. 161].

Today, Uzbek fashion designers actively incorporate traditional fabrics—*khon atlas*, *shoyi* (silk), *bekasam*, and *adras*—into their creative work. They frequently combine these materials with modern decorative elements, accessories, and jewelry to create garments that reflect both national identity and contemporary fashion aesthetics. These designers are breathing new life into traditional attire, blending national and modern fabrics to present innovative clothing collections that resonate with today's trends while preserving cultural authenticity.

A key aspect of fashion composition lies in logic, proportionality, and harmony between forms and parts. Designers must carefully balance every artistic and expressive component within their creations. Particularly in women's fashion, demand is growing for luxurious garments made from *atlas* fabrics, enriched with sparkling stones, pearls, mesh overlays, and chiffon layers.

All of this reflects a powerful movement toward reviving national traditions and identity through clothing. The modern interest in elegance, refinement, and

beauty has led people to once again embrace their cultural heritage, expressing it proudly in everyday and festive attire.

Each fabric type, with its specific color density and design structure, serves as a regional identifier. The ornamental patterns, color arrangements, and proportions distinguish one textile from another and determine the compositional name of the fabric itself.



Figure 1. Modern clothes.

The method of patterning modern gazlams has gradually changed: conditional shapes are depicted in the pattern. The figures got bigger. Image clarity is lost. The written composition was created. But the laws of traditional decorative art have been preserved (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. National fabric pattern.

Clothing serves as an expression of beauty — it enhances a person’s appearance and reflects their natural charm. This is especially true when the garment itself is so visually appealing that it captivates the observer at first sight.

To create such striking designs, modern fabrics inspired by ancient Uzbek textiles can be used. The following examples illustrate how traditional materials such as *adras* and *atlas* can be transformed into elegant contemporary garments:

1. Dress made of *Adras* fabric (Figure 3). This outfit is sewn from traditional *adras* fabric. The overcoat (*chapan*) is cut in the shape of a half-sun and joined at the shoulder line. Decorative edging (*jiyak*) and narrow ribbon trims are stitched around the borders. The dress itself is cut straight, with a fitted corset to emphasize the waistline, combining traditional aesthetics with a modern silhouette.

2. Dress made of *Atlas* fabric (Figure 4). This dress is made from brightly colored *atlas* silk. The upper and lower parts are cut separately to ensure perfect fit and proportion. The bodice includes a 12 cm dart for shaping, while the waist area features a 10 cm band for structure and balance. The skirt portion is cut slightly wider than the basic measurements to create graceful movement.

Decorative edging is applied along the waist, sleeves, and hem, and the sleeves themselves are cut as one piece with the front and back panels for a smooth silhouette. The front and back of the garment are hand-embroidered, adding a



distinctive national character. These colorful embroideries can also be produced using modern computerized embroidery machines, allowing traditional patterns to be recreated with precision and speed.

This type of dress, with its vibrant colors and graceful ornaments, beautifully highlights the elegance and charm of Uzbek girls and young women. It represents a perfect fusion of traditional craftsmanship and modern fashion design, celebrating both national heritage and contemporary style.



3-расм. Адрас матосидан либос



**4-расм. Атлас матодан
ТИКИЛГАН ЛИБОС.**

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Uzbek national fabrics—including *atlas*, *adras*, *bekasam*, and *shoyi*—provide a robust foundation for creating elegant, contemporary garment models without compromising cultural authenticity. Documenting the historical evolution of these textiles (weave structures, dyeing methods, regional palettes, and ornamental logic) is not merely background; it directly informs pattern-cutting choices, silhouette selection, color harmony, and finishing techniques in modern collections.



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Design experiments show that heritage textiles adapt effectively to current fashion languages when paired with thoughtful construction (e.g., structured bodices, proportionate skirts, integrated trims), and when embellished through hand or machine embroidery that respects traditional motifs. Such integrations enhance wearability and market appeal while preserving intangible cultural heritage.

Beyond aesthetics, the use of national fabrics strengthens cultural identity, supports local artisanship and creative economies, and aligns with sustainability goals by valorizing durable, natural-fiber textiles and time-honored craft processes. Educators and designers should therefore:

1. Incorporate textile-history modules and studio-based heritage-to-modern design assignments;
2. Develop industry–craftsperson partnerships in margilan, bukhara, samarkand, and fergana;
3. Promote quality standards (colorfastness, fabric density, finishing) to position Uzbek textiles competitively in global markets.

Future work may include user-centered fit studies for contemporary lifestyles, lifecycle assessments of silk–cotton blends, and digital archives of patterns and palettes to scale responsible innovation. In sum, knowing the history of these fabrics and applying it intelligently in design enables the creation of distinctive, modern garments that are beautiful, commercially viable, and culturally meaningful.

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