

APPLICATION OF UZBEK IKAT IN MODERN CLOTHING

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*named after K. Behzod***Abstract**

The article examines the features of using Uzbek ikat in modern fashion design. It explores its historical origins, artistic characteristics, and technological aspects of production. Particular attention is paid to the trends of the 21st century associated with the revival of interest in national textiles and ethnic motifs in fashion. Based on the analysis of the work of contemporary designers and fashion brands, the study reveals ways of integrating traditional Uzbek patterned weaving into the modern fashion industry. The role of ikat in shaping cultural identity and promoting the sustainable fashion movement is emphasized.

Keywords: ikat, Uzbek textiles, traditions, fashion, ethnic style, clothing design, craftsmanship, sustainable development.

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются особенности применения узбекского иката в современном дизайне одежды. Исследуется его историческое происхождение, художественные характеристики и технологические особенности производства. Особое внимание уделено тенденциям XXI века, связанным с возрождением интереса к национальному текстилю и этническим мотивам в моде. На основе анализа деятельности современных дизайнеров и модных брендов раскрываются пути интеграции традиционного узбекского узорного ткачества в современную

индустрию моды. Отмечается роль иката в формировании культурной идентичности и устойчивого модного движения.

Ключевые слова: икат, узбекский текстиль, традиции, мода, этнический стиль, дизайн одежды, ремесло, устойчивое развитие.

Annotatsiya

Maqolada zamonaviy kiyim dizaynida o'zbek ikatining qo'llanilish xususiyatlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Uning tarixiy kelib chiqishi, badiiy xususiyatlari va ishlab chiqarish texnologik jihatlari o'rganiladi. XXI asrda milliy to'qimachilik va etnik motivlarga bo'lgan qiziqishning qayta tiklanishi bilan bog'liq tendensiyalarga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Zamonaviy dizaynerlar va moda brendlari faoliyati tahlili asosida an'anaviy o'zbek naqshli to'qimachilik san'atini zamonaviy moda sanoatiga integratsiya qilish yo'llari yoritiladi. Ikatning madaniy identifikatsiyani shakllantirishdagi va barqaror moda harakatidagi o'rni qayd etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: ikat, o'zbek to'qimachiligi, an'analar, moda, etnik uslub, kiyim dizayni, hunarmandchilik, barqaror rivojlanish.

Introduction

Modern fashion is a multilayered cultural phenomenon that reflects both global and local processes. In the context of globalization, the trend toward preserving and reinterpreting national traditions has become increasingly relevant. This is manifested in the revival of interest in traditional crafts, hand weaving, and dyeing techniques. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon in Central Asia is Uzbek ikat — a unique hand-dyeing technique in which threads are dyed before weaving to create a distinctive blurred ornament.

In recent years, ikat has ceased to be solely an element of traditional costume. It has become a source of inspiration for designers worldwide — from Tashkent and Samarkand to Paris, Milan, and New York. The use of ikat in modern clothing allows the aesthetics of the past to merge with current fashion trends, forming an original artistic language.

The purpose of this article is to examine the features of using Uzbek ikat in contemporary fashion, to reveal its artistic potential, and to define its role in shaping cultural identity through clothing design.

The technique of ikat (from the Malay *mengikat* — “to tie, to bind”) has ancient roots and is found in many Asian countries — Indonesia, India, Japan, and Iran. However, it was in Uzbekistan, particularly in the Fergana Valley, Samarkand, and Bukhara, that ikat achieved special development and became part of the national artistic heritage.

According to historical sources, Uzbek ikat, known as *adras* or *khan-atlas*, was fully formed by the 18th–19th centuries. Its distinctive feature is the *abra* technique (from the Persian “cloud”) — dyeing threads before weaving to create soft color transitions, giving the characteristic “blurred” effect. This very effect became a hallmark of Uzbek decorative art.

In Uzbekistan, ikat has existed not only as a utilitarian material but also as a bearer of spiritual and cultural meanings. Its ornaments reflected philosophical ideas about the world, harmony, and balance. Colors had sacred significance: red symbolized life and the sun, blue — the sky and spirituality, green — nature and renewal. Thus, the fabric served as a kind of “textile language,” transmitting information about the cultural codes of the people.

The artistic expressiveness of ikat is determined by a combination of several factors: color palette, pattern structure, and dyeing technology. Uzbek ikat is distinguished by a rich palette built on contrast and harmony. Traditional dyes were of natural origin — indigo, madder, pomegranate, saffron, onion husks. Modern artisans, while preserving the spirit of tradition, actively experiment with synthetic pigments, achieving unusual gradients and light effects.

Today, designers often use “experimental” ikat fabrics, combining bright ornaments with pastel tones, which makes the fabric versatile for modern fashion.

The pattern is based on geometric, floral, and symbolic motifs: rhombuses, waves, “eyes,” stylized flowers, and pomegranate fruits. Many ornaments are considered protective symbols, representing fertility, harmony, and prosperity.

In modern interpretations, ikat retains its traditional symbolism but acquires new forms — enlarged scale of the pattern, asymmetry, and a combination of motifs from different regions. This gives the textile dynamism and contemporary appeal.

Creating ikat requires precision and artistic intuition. Each thread undergoes several dyeing stages, and artisans pre-calculate the placement of colors. The *abra* technique ensures soft, “watercolor-like” transitions of shades that cannot be fully replicated by mechanical means. Therefore, handwoven ikat retains special value in the age of digital mass production.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the global fashion industry saw a growing interest in cultural roots, handcrafts, and local production. In response to mass consumption and the fast pace of trend changes, designers increasingly turn to authentic techniques.

Since the early 2000s, traditional weaving centers such as Margilan, Kokand, and Samarkand have been actively revived in Uzbekistan. With the support of cultural foundations and UNESCO, the ikat technique has been included in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Workshops uniting artisans and designers have been established. For example, *Yodgorlik Silk Factory* in Margilan produces fabrics using ancient methods, maintaining the principles of manual labor and natural dyeing. Such initiatives not only preserve the craft but also contribute to the sustainable economy of the region.

Uzbekistan and Central Asia

Uzbek designers actively use ikat as a foundation for creating a modern national style. The works of Gulnoza Kholmatova, Lola Saidova, Jamilya Khasanova, and Dilyara Khodjaeva demonstrate an organic combination of tradition and modernity. Their collections are characterized by light silhouettes, refined color palettes, and respect for cultural codes.

Brands such as *Bukhara Silk Road* and *Atlas by Lola Saidova* create collections where *khan-atlas* is used not only for women's dresses but also for men's suits, coats, and accessories. This approach forms a new perception of the national costume — as fashionable, elegant, and international.

Global Fashion

Uzbek ikat has inspired designers around the world. The fashion house *Etro* has made ikat a central element of its boho-chic collections; *Hermès* produces silk scarves featuring patterns reminiscent of Uzbek motifs; *Oscar de la Renta* used *adras* fabric in evening gowns.

Thus, ikat has become a universal decorative language understood by designers of various cultures. It preserves national features while adapting to modern fashion forms.



Fig. 1 — Models by Dier and Zara¹

With the development of technology, designers have learned to reproduce the ikat effect using digital printing. This allows the motifs to be used on an industrial scale while preserving the visual aesthetics of tradition. However, the value of original hand weaving remains high — it embodies the soul of craftsmanship.

¹ <https://toping.uz/storage/articles/40/zwV4vYPuoGo3fbpU4qT3eA9Um7IIHneL.webp>

Modern designers integrate ikat patterns into textiles made from synthetic and blended fibers. Fabrics with viscose, nylon, and polyester are now used, making ikat suitable for sportswear, business, and street fashion.

In addition, the “smart textiles” direction is actively developing. Researchers from Tashkent and Samarkand are experimenting with applying traditional ikat patterns to fabrics with water-repellent or photochromic properties.

Ikat acts as a cultural mediator between the past and the present. For Uzbek designers, it becomes a tool of national pride and identity. For global brands — a symbol of exoticism and respect for Eastern culture.

The use of ikat in clothing is not limited to decoration. It is a way to preserve generational continuity and transmit cultural memory through fabric. The modern person wearing an ikat-patterned garment becomes a participant in this cultural lineage.

Traditional craftsmanship aligns with the main principles of sustainable fashion:

- use of natural fibers (silk, cotton);
- minimization of waste;
- hand dyeing without toxic chemicals;
- support of local communities.

Ikat contributes to preserving artisan professions and creating sustainable jobs in local regions. It is an example of how tradition can coexist harmoniously with modern values of ecology and social responsibility.

The application of Uzbek ikat in the future has great potential. Several directions can be identified:

- **Fusion style:** combining ikat with innovative materials (mesh, leather, 3D printing);
- **Accessories and interiors:** expanding the use of patterns in footwear, bags, and interior design;
- **Digital fashion:** creating virtual collections with ikat prints for metaverses;

- **Education:** incorporating the study of ikat techniques into art and design university programs;

- **Intercultural collaborations:** cooperation between Uzbek artisans and European or Asian fashion houses.

Conclusion

The use of Uzbek ikat in modern clothing is not merely a decorative device but an important cultural process that unites tradition and innovation. Ikat has become a distinctive symbol of Uzbek identity reflected in global fashion.

It shapes the perception of Uzbekistan's culture as a living and evolving phenomenon, where the past is not lost but inspires the creation of the future. Thanks to designers, artisans, and cultural institutions, ikat continues its development, proving that true fashion is born from respect for culture and craftsmanship.

Thus, Uzbek ikat occupies an honorable place in the global cultural space, remaining an example of harmony between aesthetics, tradition, and modernity.

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