

Designer collection of sustainable luxury clothing in a national style

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Abstract - The paper presents the initial stage of the design process of a contemporary collection of sustainable luxury garments with elements of the Bulgarian national costume embedded in the design solution. The created collection combines contemporary fashion trends with traditional national elements, preserving their aesthetic and cultural value. The main source of inspiration is Bulgarian embroidery, which is integrated into the patterns through original and artistically designed decorative elements. The assortment line includes a variety of semi-fitted and fitted silhouettes that emphasize femininity and provide an elegant and sophisticated look. The design solutions aim to combine flowing lines with functionality and freedom of movement. Compositionally, the patterns are built by applying basic artistic means of expression: symmetry, asymmetry, rhythm, similarity, contrast. The colour range harmonises with the stylised embroidery, creating an overall composition with an emotional charge. The collection includes dresses of varying lengths, bustiers, skirts, shirt, trousers and jumpsuits, each garment bringing a sense of luxury and sophistication. The models in the collection are made of natural fabrics such as cotton, wool and silk, which guarantees durable characteristics and wearing comfort. Each model is decorated with machine - made ornaments inspired by traditional Bulgarian embroidery. The main goal of the proposed author's solution is the revival of traditional Bulgarian embroidery ornaments, adapting them in the context of contemporary fashion in the category of "luxury brand", affirming the Bulgarian cultural identity through an innovative design approach.

KEYWORDS: author's collection, clothing, national style, sustainable design, Bulgarian embroidery.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a world of fast fashion and mass production, the problem of environmental pollution and overconsumption of resources is becoming increasingly acute [Denkstat Bulgaria, Bulgarian Association of Circular Textiles, Environmental savings from implementing a circular economy in the textile sector in Bulgaria, https://bact.bg/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/BACT_report.pdf, last visited 23.06.2025.]. The fashion industry is challenged to find a balance between aesthetics, functionality and sustainability. In response to these environmental and social issues, more and more designers are turning their attention to the principles of sustainable fashion, seeking to reduce waste and create long-lasting, ethical and environmentally friendly garments [Sivova M., Hristov, T. (2024): The basic wardrobe as an implementation of the principles of sustainable fashion, *The scientific journal of BulCToMM*, vol. 19, issue 2, pp. 3-7, Bulgaria, ISSN 1312-8612.].

At the same time, interest in ethnic style in fashion is on the rise, becoming not only a trend but also a means of preserving cultural heritage. National costumes, including Bulgarian folk costumes, inspire contemporary designers with their authentic ornaments, colours and symbolism. New technologies and innovative design approaches allow the rethinking of traditional elements, integrating them into modern and functional garments.

This article looks at how traditional folk costume can be adapted to the modern luxury wardrobe by creating a sustainable design collection. The relationship between tradition and modernity is explored, as well as the ways in which sustainable fashion can preserve and promote cultural heritage, offering both stylish and environmentally responsible solutions.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In 2023, our team is working on research project No. 231XTD0001-16 on "Exploring the

possibilities of designing sustainable innovative national - style clothing models", where the persistent dependencies in the Bulgarian national costume (type and geometry of the Bulgarian embroidery ornaments, colour) were studied and the interrelationships between the different types of embroidery ornaments and their location in the authentic women's shirts were established. The accumulated database contributed to shaping our concept for the design of the future fashion collection of contemporary luxury clothing. [Peneva, T., Sivova, M., (2024): *Textile design based on Bulgarian embroidered ornament, The scientific journal of BulCToMM*, vol. 19, issue 2, pp. 70-74, Bulgaria, ISSN 1312-8612., Sivova, M., Peneva, T., Ganev, V. (2024): *Research on sustainable elements and interconnections in the Bulgarian national costume, The scientific journal of BulCToMM*, vol. 19, issue 2, pp. 65-69, Bulgaria, ISSN 1312-8612.]. It was decided not to mechanically transfer the authentic embroidery ornaments onto the models, but to preserve their spiritual meaning and purpose.

Our team researched and analyzed 10 collections of contemporary Bulgarian brands and fashion designers who applied elements of the Bulgarian national costume in the design of their clothes. [Hristov, T., Sivova, M., (2024): *Interpretation of the Bulgarian National Costume in the Collections of Native Designers and Fashion Brands, Proceedings of the Technical University of Sofia*, vol. 74, issue 3, Bulgaria, ISSN: 2738-8549, 2738-8530/DOI: 10.47978/TUS.2024.74.03.016.]. According to this analysis, the national style clothing models offered on the Bulgarian market are characterized by the following features:

- Interpreting traditional folk costume through the use of stylized elements in the design solution;
- Comfort and practicality in wearing;
- Preference for natural fabrics providing comfort and physiological comfort;
- Silhouettes with clean lines - straight or trapezoidal silhouette, accentuated waist and moderate volume;
- Incorporate details of national dress, such as characteristic cuts and shapes;
- Decorative accents, including embroidery, knitted motifs, appliqués, cords and embroidery ornaments.

The study showed the successful integration between authentic folk costume and modern requirements for aesthetics, functionality and comfort through carefully selected design solutions that combine tradition and modernity.

On the basis of the analysis, the artistic means of expression were determined (silhouette - construction solutions, color range, author's stylized embroidery ornaments, accessories as close to the authentic ones as possible), which can be used to interpret the national style in contemporary products. The accumulated database was used to identify the Bulgarian cultural code and identify trends in designing high fashion garments in the national Bulgarian style.

When creating a contemporary collection of luxury national - style clothing, it is advisable to use the following approaches:

- *Use of silhouette - design solutions inspired by the traditional forms of Bulgarian folk costume.* Elements such as loose or fitted cuts, typical of the costume, to be transformed into modern constructions in line with current fashion trends. This will allow the creation of garments that preserve the spirit of tradition, yet respond to the dynamic lifestyle of modern man;
- *Using the traditional colour scheme in combination with modern shades.* Saturated red, black, white, blue and green tones, characteristic of folk costumes, are combined with current fashion colours, which will contribute to the unique look of the garments. In this way, the traditional symbolism of the colours will be preserved, but will acquire a new, more contemporary interpretation;
- *Decorating the articles with authentic or stylized embroidery ornaments.* The scales, as an expression of Bulgarian folk creativity, will find a new life in modern clothing through hand or machine made. The use of original stylized motifs that preserve the spirit of traditional embroidery but adapt them to contemporary style and customer preferences is recommended;

- *Adding authentic or tradition - inspired accessories to emphasize the connection to folk clothing.* Belts, stoles, bags, jewellery and other decorative elements borrowed from Bulgarian costume will complement the look and give the outfit an even more pronounced national identity.

By skillfully combining these approaches, unique garments can be created that breathe new life into the traditional Bulgarian costume. In this way, tradition will remain alive and Bulgarian national identity will find its natural expression in the fashion of the future.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the implementation of activities under the research project in support of PhD student No. 242PD0001-16, funded by the Internal Research Competition of the Technical University of Sofia for 2024, has designed an original collection of contemporary innovative garments with sustainable design in the luxury brand category, bearing the name "Tradition and Elegance". The collection is the result of the creative and scientific work of the team, which rediscovers in a unique way the authentic Bulgarian ornaments and embroideries, giving them new life in the context of contemporary fashion.

Figure 1 reflects the creative quest of the designer and the source of inspiration for the creation of the collection.



Figure 1: Atmosphere - map of the collection.
/Moodboard/

The assortment of the collection includes women's clothing in the category of luxury brand in national style according to the promising fashion trends for 2025. Figure 2. shows the creative sketches of the models from the collection.

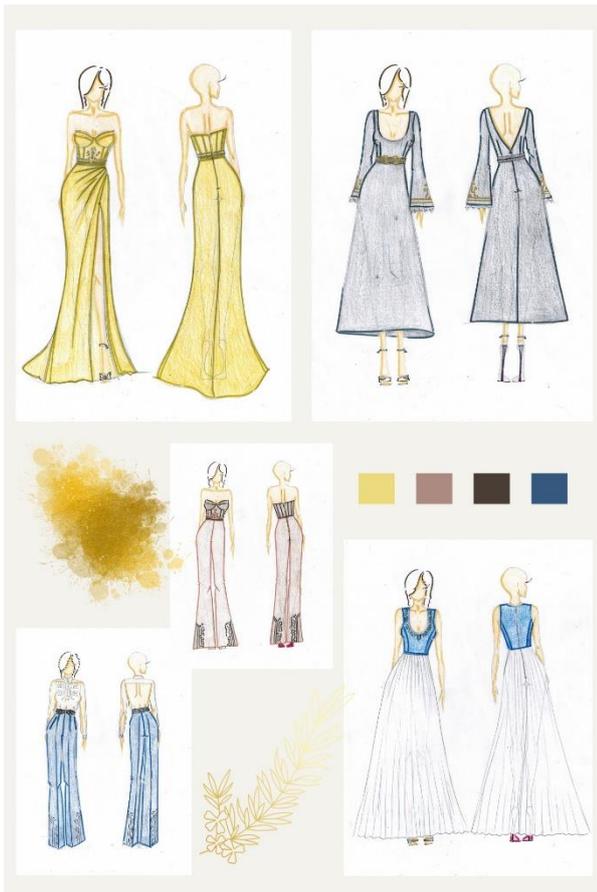


Figure 2: Creative sketches of the models from the collection.

The aim of the collection is focused on the rediscovery of sustainable Bulgarian embroidery and embroidery ornaments and their skillful incorporation into the design of luxury class products.

The models are built in semi - fitted and fitted silhouettes that emphasize femininity and create an elegant and sophisticated look. The design solutions emphasize shapes that follow the smooth lines of the female body, yet provide freedom and comfort of movement.

The collection consists of:

- three dresses of different lengths, with a horizontal cut at the waistline and a fitted bodice;
- an ensemble of a sheer shirt and trousers;
- jumpsuit with accentuated waist and corsage type bustier.

Each garment is designed to be functional and comfortable, while bringing a sense of luxury and sophistication. The colour palette - white, golden palm, cappuccino, dark brown, black and dark

blue - harmonises with the stylised embroidery, creating an overall composition with an emotional charge. Fabrics are mostly natural fibers: wool, cotton and silk, as well as blended fabrics with sustainable characteristics. Contrasting colours and textures are used to highlight important details.

Compositionally, the patterns are built by applying basic artistic means of expression: symmetry, asymmetry, rhythm, similarity, contrast. Symmetrical compositions create a sense of balance and harmony, while asymmetrical solutions add dynamism and contemporary aesthetics to the clothes.

Each model is decorated with machine - made ornaments inspired by traditional Bulgarian embroidery (Figure 3).

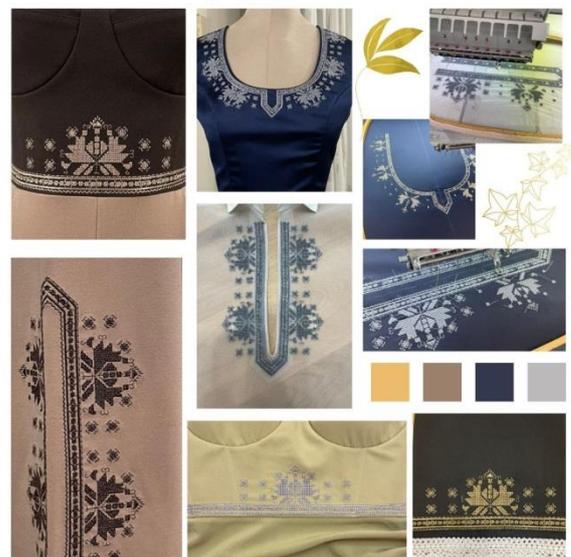


Figure 3: Machine - made weave ornaments.

The ornaments are positioned to accentuate certain parts of the garment: the collar, neckline and cuffs of the shirt, the shape of the neckline, the waistline, the hems of the trousers. The incorporation of the stitching is done in a way that creates harmony between the contemporary and the traditional. The ornaments are arranged rhythmically, creating fluid movement and visual interest. The repetition of motifs adds completeness to the composition. The stitching carries a symbolic meaning that has been preserved and interpreted in a modern way. Each model thus becomes a carrier of cultural heritage, combining authenticity with innovation.

For each model of the collection, presented through an artistic sketch, an artistic - technical

description has been drawn up, which forms the basis of the construction-technological documentation necessary for the production in material of the products. In drawing up a technical description of the appearance, the following scheme was followed:

- type and purpose of the product, type and colour range of the material;
- shape, silhouette, cut of the article, type of fastening;
- construction characteristic for the front; for the back; for the sleeves; for the collar;
- type of finishing operations.

Technical description of Model 1 (Figure 4.):



Figure 4: Artistic sketch of Model 1.

Evening long dress in classic style, in a fitted silhouette, for every season, designed for elegant ladies of different age groups. Made of a combination of dark blue satin cotton (97% cotton; 3% elastane) and white soiled chiffon (100% polyester). The dress is sleeveless, with a horizontal cut along the waistline, which divides it into two parts - corsage and skirt.

The corsage has vertical embossed seams obtained by transforming the shoulder curve into

the sleeve curve. The neckline is deeply cut, oval shape, with machine embroidered stylized embroidery in silver color.

The back has a middle seam and vertical embossed seams.

The skirt is made of soiled white chiffon, lined with viscose white lining.

Fastening is with a concealed zip in the middle back seam.

The waist area is decorated with paffti of gaitan in silver lamé.

Technical description of Model 2 (Figure 5.):



Figure 5: Artistic sketch of Model 2.

Women's luxury jumpsuit in classic style, fitted silhouette, floor-length, designed for active young ladies. Made of woven fine wool fabric in dark brown (100% wool) and knitted fabric in cappuccino color (65% viscose, 30% polyamide, 5% elastane). A balance is achieved between a structured top and free - falling trousers, creating a harmonious and sophisticated silhouette.

The garment has a horizontal cut along the waistline, which divides it into two parts - corsage and trousers.

The corset is a tight - fitting corset type, with deeply cut two - piece cups in the front, with a

middle seam in the back, and fitted bands in the vertical relief seams. In the front of the corset, centrally, is embroidered stylized embroidery in cappuccino color.

The trousers are straight, flared towards the hem, creating an elongated silhouette. Decorative elements in the form of embroidered stitching in dark brown add emphasis and visual dynamism along the length line in the side seam.

Fastening is with a concealed zip in the middle back seam.

Technical description of Model 3 (Figure 6.):



Figure 6: Artistic sketch of Model 3.

Women's elegant ensemble consisting of a long - sleeved shirt and wide trousers in a classic style, designed for energetic and confident ladies, suitable for formal events, fashion shows and special occasions.

The shirt has a straight silhouette, the construction is a "men's shirt" type, made of white organza (100% silk) and white cotton (97% cotton, 3% elastane) for the collar, collar and cuffs, with the length to the hip line. The front, inspired by traditional Bulgarian ornaments, is made of fine machine embroidery in silver. The back has a shoulder board. The sleeve is single

seamed, long, with open slit and cuff. The cuff fastening is a small grey selvedge button.

The trousers are long, flared to the hem, made of dark blue satin cotton fabric (97% cotton, 3% elastane). In the front are made vertical pockets with two fillets. The edge of the trousers is fixed by nervures.

The waist is trimmed with embossed ripstop elastic in black, accented with gaitan pafy in the same color.

Decorative elements in the form of embroidered embroidery in silver are positioned vertically in the side seams at the hem..

Technical description of Model 4 (Figure 7.):



Figure 7: Artistic sketch of Model 4.

Ladies elegant dress with ethnic elements in classic style, in semi-fitted silhouette with slightly flared bottom, mid-calf length, long sleeves, designed for elegant ladies. Made of black cotton sateen fabric (97% cotton, 3% elastane). The horizontal cut along the waistline divides it into two parts - corsage and skirt.

The front of the corsage has chest and waist constrictions and sexily cut deep cleavage shape.

The back has a mid seam, waist constrictions and a deep V-neckline.

The sleeve is long, single – seamed, conical in shape. A wide white cotton lace is sewn along the hem. The sleeve above is decorated with embroidery of stylized embroidery in gold.

The waist is accentuated with a black ripstop elastic waist belt and gaitan pafty in the gold color.

Fastening is with a concealed zip in the middle back seam.

Technical description of Model 5 (Figure 8.):



Figure 8: Artistic sketch of Model 5.

Ladies elegant long dress with a trail in the back, in a fancy style, in a fitted silhouette. Suitable for formal and strictly formal events, gala dinners. Made of woven fabric in color golden palm (100% viscose). The horizontal cut along the waistline divides it into two parts - a corset and a skirt.

The corset is close-fitting to the body, with deeply cut two - piece cups in the front, with a middle seam in the back, and fitted bands in the vertical relief seams. In the front of the corset is embroidered stylized embroidery in the color of old gold.

Asymmetrically in the front left part of the skirt is made a deep slit, and in the side seam are designed a few slanted slits.

Fastening is with a concealed zip in the middle back seam.

The presented author's collection is realized in material (Figure 9). Structurally, the shape of the models is solved by:

- horizontal constructional cut along the waistline, which divides the product into two parts - corsage and skirt / trousers;
- with or without mid back seam on dresses;
- waist constrictions in the corsage;
- transformed into a vertical embossed shoulder seam;
- slightly or severely shortened, with a natural shoulder line slope;
- cut to shape neckline;
- conical and/or parallel extension at the skirt;
- zip fastening in the middle back seam;
- removing the side seam of the trousers and joining the front and back;
- attached single seam sleeve type "bell" or with cuff;
- horizontal shoulder board and collar with separately cut seat.

The collection demonstrates the successful symbiosis between modern luxury clothing and the Bulgarian national costume, the combination of traditional motifs and modern elegance. Each model has a unique character, emphasizing femininity, grace and the connection to Bulgarian cultural heritage.

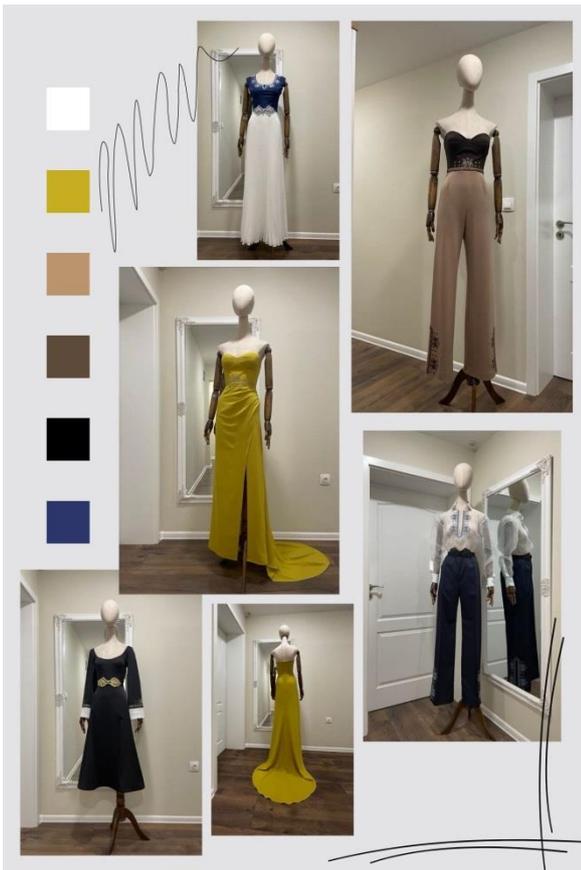


Figure 9: Realised design collection in material.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The increase in waste from the fashion industry is a direct consequence of the mass production of low - quality garments and accessories, as well as their increasingly short life cycle.

This trend is reinforced by the fast fashion model, which creates a sense of need for frequent wardrobe replacement through the accelerated launch of new collections. Leading fashion chains impose short-lived trends, which encourages consumers to buy more, but at the expense of quality. In an effort to keep profits high, most manufacturers use cheap materials and compromise manufacturing techniques, resulting in garments with limited durability.

In contrast to this practice, the production of high quality garments inspired by national clothing offers a sustainable alternative with lasting value. Traditional Bulgarian embroidery techniques are not only an expression of cultural identity, but also a guarantee of high durability and unique design. By investing in clothing created with attention to detail and craftsmanship, consumers not only extend the life of their garments, but also support sustainable fashion.

By relying on the production of garments with traditional motifs, natural fabrics and precision craftsmanship, we can combine aesthetics, sustainability and cultural heritage in contemporary fashion. This not only reduces the negative impact on the environment, but also promotes the value of authentic, long - lasting garments as a counterbalance to fast fashion.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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