

Reinterpretation of Hanbok

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Modernization of traditional crafts happens when the past is reimagined in terms of what the present wants. Jameson (1991) explains that a reproduction may transcend the borders of techniques, genre, styles, and media through *pastiche*, a notable postmodern concept, and beyond imitation and parody, an object can be recreated. In light of this, a *hanbok*, which is a traditional Korean costume piece, has also been reimagined for the present day.

Pastiche has hardly appeared in the modern history of Korean costume. The introduction of Westernized dresses disconnected the Korean public from the national associations of the *hanbok*, except for a few expensive pieces made for special occasions (Han, 1996). In the 1990s, the *Kaeryang hanbok* reformed Korean clothing with its affordable prices and enhanced comfort, but this did not last long because of strong nationalist ideologies (Ruhlen, 2003). Therefore, there remained a disconnect from Korean costumes of the past as Koreans modernized and popularized their clothing. Recently, *neo hanbok* has emerged as a new phenomenon in which traditional dress is produced with young people in mind. These costumes are now considered a type of play culture; *hanbok* enthusiasts design these pieces using modern elements such as using nontraditional materials (Jung, 2015). This new trend allows traditional forms to be constantly transformed and connected to the present. The purpose of this is to create an aesthetic clothing design that reinterprets *hanbok* in new, relevant ways.



Figure 1 A watercolor-painted motif of birds and flowers, inspired by *hwajo-do*, a style of Korean folk painting

This design is intended to reinterpret *hanbok* using both Eastern and Western styles in the digitally printed fabric, patternmaking techniques, and silhouette. Silk charmeuse material has been widely used in Korean clothing, mixed with modern techniques (Yun, 2016). To create a custom digitally printed silk charmeuse fabric, the designer watercolor-painted a motif of birds and flowers (Figure 1), inspired by *hwajo-do*, a style of Korean folk painting that depicts plants and birds. After scanning the images, the designer modified and patterned the motif using Adobe Photoshop, and after a series of sample testing, the final printed fabrics were generated and

steamed. Although the ideas for this piece are taken from Korean painting styles, the tone-on-tone navy blue color print on a solid ground can be associated with Western concept of French toile fabric. A coordinating navy blue silk organza was selected to compliment the custom digital print.

Draping, the process of creating patterns to produce a three-dimensional garment, can be considered a Western-oriented technique. This technique helps generate fitted or “draped” garments that relate directly to the human body shape in contrast to the traditional *hanbok* style, where the garments are flat two-dimensional shapes until a body fills them. Straight and curved lines of traditional *hanbok* clothes formed by the flat patterns feel comfortable and roomy to wearers (Koh & Chea, 1999). The designer intentionally combined these draping and flat patterns stylesto create the shape of the *jeogori* jacket, bodice, and skirts.

A woman’s *hanbok* during the late Joseon Dynasty was designed with a *Ha-hoo-sang-bak* silhouette in mind, which features an upper part that is small and a bottom section that is exaggerated. The length of the *jeogori*, which is the upper garment of a woman’s *hanbok*, had become shorter compared to those that would be found during the middle of the *Joseon* Dynasty (Hong, Shin, & Lee, 2011) and in paintings of that era. The traditional *jeogori* jacket consists of three parts: a front panel connected to sleeves, a central and back panel, and a collar and cuffs. This modern design features a special pattern on the front and sleeves, inspired by the traditional *jeogori* shapes, which are then draped. That panel does not have any darts or armhole lines; however, the folding lines of the sleeves and their slightly opened bottom section create a distinctive outfit. In contrast to the jackets, the bodice is of typical corset style, which is tailored to a women’s body. The upper parts and bottom side consist of navy blue silk organza. The corset pattern was draped. Inner construction includes lined and padded cups and internal boning structure.

Traditionally, most women rolled up their voluminous skirts and fixed them using a belt; this was called a *Geo-dle* skirt. Women in the lowest class signified to their status by extremely pulling up the skirts, resulting in exposing their undergarments (Hong et al., 2011, p. 345). This design was inspired by the *Geo-dle* silhouette. This modern interpretation of a *hanbok* skirt consists of draped and side panels. The draped panel is intended to embody the *Geo-dle* skirt, which was how women of that era wore them. To fill it out, the printed panel is draped over an inside structure sewn with boning and underlining. The side panel comprises another layer beneath and organza fabric. The structured organza represents the exposure of undergarments. The layered appearance of organza fabrics and the exposed seams are designed to represent a traditional Korean look.

This design contributes to design knowledge by using the *pastiche* concept to create a modern version of the *hanbok*. The outcome is an aesthetic clothing design that reinterprets *hanbok* in new, relevant ways. This design allows the Korean *hanbok* wearer to simultaneously embrace both Eastern and Western styles in both fabric and silhouette.

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