



Conventional but Contemporary

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Female Large (size 12-14) Bust 39", Waist 31", Hip 41"

Historical clothing is the manifestation of identity in the Hijaz region of West Saudi Arabia. Many tribes have lived within this region, each with its own rich history. The Al Otaibi tribe is one of the most well-known Hijazi tribes that represents the heritage of Saudi culture. One's material appearance acts as a means to convey the historical, geographical, locale, age, and social-related identities that frame the self. The impact of Western revolutionizing supplanted the value of historical garment appreciation and substituted the identity of a Saudi female to a modern woman lacking her rich ethnic heritage. The purpose of making this ensemble was to reinterpret design details from traditional costumes of Western Saudi Arabia and apply them to contemporary apparel designs. It was necessary to develop options to incorporate a unique traditional embroidery technique into new garment designs in order to add historic and ethnic value. This is important because it is a way of enhancing a sophisticated contemporary look while also incorporating the ancient and traditional art form of hand embroidery. Currently, garments that incorporate details reflecting traditional Saudi heritage are lacking in modern, unique and feminine clothing designs. This research is part of a larger study that will look at ways to develop new apparel designs for Saudi Arabian women that bridge the gap between outdated historic styles and modern, fashion-forward approaches to dressing.

Clothing, according to Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992), is a non-verbal communication cue, which has traditionally been used as the personal adornment language. The traditional identity of women in Saudi Arabia was distinguished through the cultural statements they used to define their dress codes. For each social event, tradition required women across different cultures to wear embellished garments that were differentiated by the types or colors of the threads, as well as the fabric used (Foster and Johnson, 2003). Besides, the extent of embroidery was a major contribution to the identity of women in Saudi Arabia, as it is argued that embroidery was reflective of social values, personal style and the gender identity. The western part of Saudi Arabia is recognized for the unique tradition that is embedded in its cultural and social identity (Long, 2005). Even more, the influence of the cultural identity of the western region of Saudi Arabia is denoted in the increasing bridal garment adoptions by the rest of Saudi Arabia. However, a limited amount of research has been directed toward the tradition of these bridal costumes, largely due to the fact that many of these costumes are made by people who have acquired the talents from earlier generations, a trend that is used by the few families with the talent to ensure that the tradition maintains continuity. This type of traditional Hijazi dress is embellished with heavy embroidery in particular locations: around the neck, side panels, the top of sleeves as well as the edge of the sleeves, and at the hemline. The color that is used most for embellishing the side panels and hemline of the ethnic dress is red, followed by yellow, and hints of blue and green. This brief overview is intended to provide a glimpse of some of the unique characteristics of traditional Saudi Arabian dress for women. And while many of

these characteristics are presently incorporated into current clothing designs, the outcomes are often outdated and unfashionable. While the cultural aspects of clothing design continue to be important, Saudi Arabian women also want clothing options that are stylish, unique and feminine. The addition of traditional embroidery into new garment designs is the first step.

Conventional but Contemporary, as this garment is called, combines a traditional embroidery technique that was inspired by the ethnic wedding dress of Hijazi women in a contemporary silhouette. This ensemble contained a kimono blouse made of silk organza and flared pants. Flat pattern methods focused on body movement. The top piece of this ensemble is made of a silk organza which illustrates the crisp side of the Hijazi dress. The use of silk organza in the kimono reflects femininity and charm. The pants were made of wool and contain two front box pleats that hit the upper thigh. The back of the pants consists of two panels that are simply attached together. The pants are widely flared, creating a nice movement. Most importantly, the primary design element of this look is traditional ethnic embroidery, and is strategically placed to add interest and embellishment. The belt consists of different panels that were attached together. The front and back center panels were hand embroidered. Two following panels were manipulated, and the rest were made of plain, solid fabrics. The shape of the belt was mainly focused on style lines intended to follow the contours of the female body.

In conclusion, Conventional but Contemporary was designed for contemporary women who appreciate and respect historical and cultural values and expect these elements to be a part of their current clothing choices. It specifically translates the historical Saudi identity in a new way and reinforces the value of the ancient, traditional clothing of western Saudi Arabia by presenting it in an elegant manner that accentuates the contours of a woman's body. Exploratory research in apparel design is critical to help designers meet the needs of emerging markets, and in this case, the changing needs of Saudi Arabian women. The next step is to explore new ways to translate other traditional methods of weaving and quilting into contemporary Saudi Arabian designs in addition to the embroidery. It will be a priority to interview women from Saudi Arabia to gain feedback about the garments, which will in turn inform future apparel design prototypes.

References

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Front View



Back View

