

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN CLUJ-NAPOCA
THE DOMAIN: PLASTICAL AND DECORATIVE ARTS**

THE SUMMARY OF THE PHD THESIS

**SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:
Prof. Univ. Dr. Alexandru Alămoreanu**

**Candidate for the PhD degree:
Pop Zita Maria**

CLUJ-NAPOCA

2012

KEY WORDS

appropriation, kaleidoscope, contemporary, identity, extreme, tribe, folklore, ethnic, multicultural, traditional, globalization

As textile and clothes designer, I have noticed the frequent comebacks to ethnic motives, seen as a necessity regarding the inspirational sphere, but also as cultural reference that is present inside the fashion system. These returns to the ethnic motives are analyzed from the angle of the globalization and its effect on the contemporary attire. By this return to the ethnic motives and elements the importance of the archetypes of cultural and social order persist, developed across of an important historic duration, archetypes that kept their sense and essence up to this day. So, I found it natural and elementary to prove the importance of the ethnic symbol as symbol and archetype in the contemporary fashion.

The geographical area that particularly attracted me from this point of view is that of Europe, and especially Transylvania, this region in which the cultural interferences produced important mutations, the result being a spectacular one because of the richness of shapes and the folklore expressions. It is the case, for example, of the popular costume from the Negrești Oaș area, in which influences from the Hungarian, Ukrainian, German, Slovakian and even Norwegian costumes are found integrated, applied on the background of a Romanian one. The result is a costume situated at the junction between spectacular and originality.

The analysis of these forms of cultural expression sustains the conclusion according to which the re-use of these motives determines the constitution of some products of great effect in the contemporary fashion. The importance of the source of inspiration but also the presence of a clear reapplication and reinvention manner of these elements are obvious in this case. But until a garment is changed in a fashion product it passes over each phase of a process, sometimes difficult, of reaffirmation in the domain of international clothes design.

Although the contemporary designers work according to a vision, appealing to an extended scale of styles and using current technological methods, they return to the traditional techniques and the ethnic folklore motives cyclically, and they transform and readjust them, integrating them in the contemporary space in this way. From the point of view of the product design it is very important to

have in view certain elements intrinsic to the creation process, as the currents and the artistic values that are present in the popular traditions, customs, methods and design.

One of the starting points of this artistic research is the idea of the exploration of the border between the clothes design and the traditional art (the contemporary clothes found in symbiosis with the traditional clothes). The purpose of this work is to locate the current situation of the tendencies, aiming at the broader domain of research and the communication ideology of fashion, but also that of discovering its new “forms”.

In the research we find the globalization process, including the globalization of the identity, in a metamorphosis of the popular costume in costume, ethnic attire, or in fashion product, for it to consequently become fashion, symbol and art. The whole process is concentric, revolving round the concept of identity and trying to determine what identity meant in the past, what it means presently and how the contemporary man expresses his identity in various circumstances appealing to clothes.

GLOBALIZATION IN FASHION, HOW THE LOCAL ATTIRE BECOMES GLOBAL ELEMENT

In the first part of the research the fashion and the attire are described by association with the concepts of globalization and identity. It is noticed that, in the last years, a well defined branch that deals with the traditional costumes having the ethnic *look* at its basis developed, and it is never anchored in fixed ideas, but inspires itself alternatively from folklore elements, including ethnical ones. Each season is characterized by a new circumambient and a new interpretation more or less superficial inspired from art, from the history of fashion and from ethnic elements. The taking over of the various elements belonging to an ethnic group or more groups generates an eclectic image.

Probably as answer to this globalization that is forced through Internet, the regional and national identities are cherished as never before. This is obvious, especially, in Western Europe: people look for *sushi* from Japan, *batik prints* from Java, vampires from Transylvania, etc. We want these things precisely because of the cultural differences, but also because they weren't annihilated by the unstoppable advancement of the globalization.

We always look for a new lifestyle, the identity becoming one of the most convincing and litigious concepts in the human and social sciences.

Fashion is indissolubly implied in constructions and reconstructions of identity, by the way in which it represents ourselves and the contradictions from our daily life. The physical persons announce who they are and who they hope to become through their way of clothing, their personal interpretations of it or their resistance to fashion or, more than that, they express even what they don't want to be or become.

The way of clothing is a metaphor for identity, a complex metaphor that includes physical characteristics such as: the tattooed skin, the body shape, if it is athletic or not, the hair texture, the make-up, as well as the clothes and the care techniques.

They are predisposed to fluctuating movements that impose the self understanding, the self understanding in relation with others and in the broader context of changes of fashion because these last ones are extremely sensitive to changes. The style in the visual aspect articulates multiple and superposed identities as sex, race, ethnicity, social class, age, national identity and personal, aesthetic, even political interests, sometimes different from one's own identity, because the change is a characteristic that is inherent to the human way.

Because the identities intersect and superpose each other, their representation is rarely simple. From a perspective of the cultural studies, the identities not only have their history, but they also have projections into the future: they come from somewhere, they are complex and contradictory and they allow us to express who we could become rather than who we are. Expressing who we are and where we come from can be a challenge, the style seems to offer a way to articulate a declaration that is difficult to express in words, that is on its way of development and that intersects identities.

Art and fashion are in a strong connection. They both reflect the human thinking from the sociological point of view. They both protest and constantly change, they simultaneously travel through various styles and they open in history to the great masses with whom they communicate signs, colors, symbols and artistic languages almost at the same time. The essay presented in *The*

fashion encyclopedia outlines an eloquent parallel between fashion and art, depicting the way in which the two domains open in the shape of concepts in large spaces, arriving up to the conscience of the common man and finding their place in his simple life.

The concept of fashion has its origin at the middle of the XIXth century, a period that corresponds to a fundamental change on the market of contemporary art works. It was not accidental because the fashion institution, understood as clothes that adhere to certain production, representation and consumption ways, was connected with the emergence of some similar structure regarding the creation and the diffusion of the works of art.

The creator, the artist, the designer is the man that filters the profound ideas, the identity and projects them in one way or the other. The insufficiency, the escape, the boredom, the melancholy are the factors that lead man towards creation. The creator is an obsessed; he cannot be in another way. On the contrary, the non-creator and each man in his life can alternately be creator and non-creator, an active or passive man.

Another aspect included in this work is the relation of the handicraft art with the phenomenon of the contemporary art. The fashion of the present is a dynamic environment, characterized by rapid changes, but, paradoxically, always oriented towards the past by the returning to the roots of the human existence and to the traditional factor. The pieces of *haute couture* do not essentially differ from those that are specific to the handicraft art. They are realized with traditional manual techniques, requiring many hours of work and so the traditions are brought back to life and integrated in the present times.

GLOBALIZATION IN THE ATTIRE, HOW A LOCAL ATTIRE BECOMES A GLOBAL ELEMENT

The secular existence of certain socio-economical and cultural area conjunctures gradually created in Transylvania ethnographical zones with a distinct personality whose identity marks were pointed out by the peculiar aspect of the local popular costume. Despite the basic unitary structure,

the zone costumes belonging to the same ethnicity used to contain peculiar traits that made them different in the measure in which they could become an identity support for communities that cultivated their distinct personality.

In the case of some different ethnicities that coexisted for centuries in a certain territory, the tendency to define themselves by differentiation was more powerful and it manifested by underlying the specific elements from the structure of the costume, to which a special identity force was attributed. Evolving in a given time, yet keeping the basic structures, the traditional popular costume survived in Transylvania until the age of the rapid industrialization (1960-1965).

Recently, the globalization idea makes place also in the space of the village, leaving on it a print of commercial and artificial. Each people has certain specific traits (territory, language, occupation, traditions and customs) by which it constitutes its identity in the context of the big families of peoples of the world. Together with the traits mentioned above, the popular costume is also a basic element of the individualization, of the personalization of those that make up a nation, a people, taking part at the enrichment of the national and universal material base.

The popular costume from Negrești Oaș is an example of costume of great artistic value, being unique in Romania because of the cut of coat and its spectacular adornments, its analysis and research being based on a parallel between that way in which it manifested itself in the past compared to the current popular costume, that is to say the way in which global elements appear in the costume of the contemporary village.

Let's meditate on the notion of costume, on the relatively recent „drama” of the changing of the costume and we'll see that, in the Antiquity, the costume was an essential element of the ethnic. How else could one explain the fact that the clothes element that distinguishes one community from another is more lasting than some elements of faith, of language even. The costume also governs the inner life of the group, of the family, and then of the self that successively receives the investment of some privileges through symbolic clothing elements.

„The adornments accompanied man's life almost since the beginning of his existence and they constituted themselves amongst his first artistic manifestations”, a truth also underlined by Georgeta Stoica when she said: „the adornments and the jewellerys of the body appeared and were

worn before clothes.” The head adornments or those meant to cover it are part of the popular costume for special occasions in many cultures.

These „head adornments” include complex senses, including the religious symbolism, the political power, the social status or the rank and the fashion conscience. Made up of various materials, with paintings and shapes, the head attires can also be used for purely practical purposes, as protecting the head against the natural elements, carrying objects such as weapons, water caskets or crafts and they are often associated with ceremonies especially passing rituals.

The extreme fashion or the extreme dress is unique in any culture. The definition of what represents an extreme way can be suited, but the extreme in fashion, such as beauty depends on the eye of the beholder. Very different visions and ideas regarding what is excessive, bizarre or at the limit of acceptability were formed especially between Western Europe and the non-western spaces.

No matter how outrageous or extreme a clothing item or an accessory is, it doesn't function in void but it is stabilized through other fashion zones. The dress from the Negrești Oaș area also represents an extreme clothing item by overmeasure. We can notice a modification from a lower volume to a bigger one, situated in the vicinity of the extreme dress by examining the dress from this area.

EFFECT, PERENNIALITY IN FASHION THROUGH ETHNIC ELEMENTS

The theory of fashion pointed out the distinction between the modern, changing fashion that derives from the urban occidental centres and the ethnic one, stable clothing, oriented towards tradition and that belongs to the outskirts zone. This distinction was not always precise, but still, it had a profound influence on the way in which society understand fashion.

Many accounts of ethnic fashion have the tendency to exaggerately point out the original recovery of the exotic theme, the drawings realized by creators from the Occident, as well as the exaggeration of non-western fixity in clothes. In this sense, the impact of the ethnic styles in the western fashion was put aside. Historically, the luxury was associated with the foreign background. So, until now, it is impossible to find the starting point of the ethnic style in the Occident, because

sumptuous goods arrived by means of the commercial routes from Persia, Egypt and Central Asia, and later from India, China, Columbia, Mexic and from other parts of the world since the oldest times.

For many designers from the Occident, the non-western aesthetics furnished a fertile subject that allowed them to develop their creativity through ethnic elements. This capacity to break conventions is associated more with a way of seeing than with the loyal adherence to any special ethnic style. The eclecticism, a general aspect of the ethnic fashion is expressed, for example, by Dries Van Noten, but he approaches the ethnic element from the angle of exoticism.

The ethnic style is an important element but sort of neglected in the fashion studies. Only now, at the beginning of the XXIst century, more belaboured studies on this theme start to appear as effect of the globalization. Meanwhile, fashion continues the adaptation to the multicultural estate, both in the Occident and at transnational level.

The success of the Japanese was mostly due to the redrawing of the feminine silhouette. They renewed the patterns of taste in fashion, but also the way in which is was looked at. The aesthetics, the taste and the manner of work with the materials and patterns were revolutionized and they also handed over a perfect match with the promotion of the postmodernism idea, through a decosntructive attitude and the exploration of the borders of the good taste.

The search for ethnic authenticity and identity in fashion, more precisely the concept of global fashion based on local traditions gains more and more ground: „It is well known that fashion is an ample and social phenomenon that is inevitable for modern life.”

The totality of the material and spiritual values created by mankind across the centuries and considered as being traditional represent an important vehicle to transmit history, reflected in the exhibition style of the attire, in the way in which one wears it, depicting the social hierarchy of the wearer, his age, situation, job and his role in society.

Handicraft, art and fashion make up a patented triangle through the creation of clothes that is specific to the last century. In this research I have proved the originality, the richness of the Transylvanian motives and popular symbols, proving that this space offered one of the richest

folklore legacy from the Romanian and South-Eastern Europe space, getting through a creative speculation in the contemporary fashion.

The ethnic style offers an extremely rich and diverse field of study that can produce major evolutions in the theory of fashion of the future.

My creations want to point out the relevance of the concept of identity in diversity, in the middle of a society found in continuous geographical shifting and technological expansion, man's necessity to re-find his identity, as general aspect reintegrated in the tendency of the European contemporary fashion. The global era reunites more ethnicities, so I questioned the effect that these have on other, the way in which they develop at the same time and the inherent interferences.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	6
1 GLOBALIZATION IN FASHION, HOW THE LOCAL ATTIRE BECOMES GLOBAL ELEMENT.....	10
SHORT INCURSION IN THE CONCEPT OF FASHION.....	10
1.1 THE GLOBALIZATION IN FASHION.....	12
1.2 FASHION AND IDENTITY.....	15
1.2.1 The need to belong to the group.....	19
1.2.2 The differentiation through clothes.....	20
1.3 ART AND FASHION.....	22
1.3.1 Elements of visual language of fashion.....	29

1.4 COMMUNICATION AND FASHION.....	30
1.4.1 Communication and creation.....	37
1.5 THE CLOTHING CODE.....	43
1.5.1 The social code of clothes.....	45
1.5.2 Clothes, costume.....	48
1.6 CATEGORIES IN FASHION.....	49
1.6.1 Haute couture.....	52
1.6.2 Pret-a-porter.....	57
1.7 THE NEW VISION IN FASHION.....	59

2. THE POPULAR ATTIRE IN THE PAST AND IN THE PRESENT, THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE POPULAR ATTIRE IN IDENTITY.....	64
2.1 EUROPEAN TRIBES WEAR FOLK.....	64
2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE POPULAR COSTUME.....	68
2.2.1 The bar code as spacial, zone symbol.....	69
2.3 THE NEGREȘTI OAAȘ AREA YESTERDAY AND TODAY.....	69
2.3.1 Women’s costume.....	75
2.3.2 Men’s costume.....	78
2.4 SYMBOLS OF THE POPULAR ATTIRE.....	79
2.4.1 The symbols of reversal and intimacy.....	82
2.4.2 Rituals in the attire.....	83
2.4.3 Head adornments (symbol connected to the passing rituals), time symbol.....	85
2.5 THE EXTREME DRESS.....	86

3. THE ETHNIC STYLE IN FASHION.....	89
3.1.1 Ethnic look.....	92
3.2 The effects of fashion.....	95
3.3 Fashion and consumption.....	97
3.3.1 The attractiveness of the fashion product.....	98
3.4 THE ACCELERATION OF FASHION.....	99
3.4.1 INTERNET AND FASHION.....	100
3.5 FASHION AS MULTICULTURAL PLATFORM.....	101
3.5.1 Methods of design and new materials.....	103

3.5.2 Craft and design.....	105
3.6 THE SENSE OF THE CONTEMPORARY FASHION.....	106
4. ETHNIC MOTIVES IN CONTEMPORARY VISION, APPLICATIONS IN PERSONAL CREATIONS.....	111
CONCLUSIONS.....	128
IMAGES FROM PERSONAL COLLECTIONS.....	133
INDEX.....	158
THE LIST OF IMAGES.....	160
THE SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORATE THESIS.....	162
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	170
ANNEXES.....	175
LE RESUMÉ DE LA THÈSE DE DOCTORAT.....	175
THE SUMMARY OF THE PHD THESIS	186