



Humber Fashion Institute

Fabric Story: India- Fabrics and Embroideries

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India: Fabrics and Embroideries

Introduction

India is a country where every state has a unique culture and flavor and all these states reveal diverse influences, arts and crafts. The world of Fashion too has taken notice of India's rich heritage. The bright colors beautifully blended with exquisite Hand crafted embroidery and Weaving makes the designs unique and exotic. Indian designers have fabulous creations embellished with the opulent uniqueness of the Indian craftsmanship, embroidery and fabrics.

Indian Culture has been quite an Inspiration for various International designers and artists who have their own beautiful Interpretations of Indian culture. The best Designers of the world like Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel, John Galliano for Christian Dior, Marc Jacobs for Louis Vuitton, Alexander McQueen, Gianne Versace, Christian Louboutin, and Hermes have had special collections inspired by India.

As per BOF in 'Vogue: India has arrived' BY IMRAN AMED 21 SEPTEMBER, 2007

"For years, Western designers and global brands have used Indian craftsmanship, culture and history as an inspiration for fashion. From intricate embroidery this season on Marchesa's "Raj and in Charge" dresses for Spring/Summer 2008 to khaki's from Gap, Ralph Lauren and Abercrombie and Fitch that have outfitted generations of Americans, India's influence on global fashion goes all the way from the high-street to the high-end."

As quoted from Nslfashion's Blog post 'THE RISE OF INDIA'S INFLUENCE ON GLOBAL FASHION' June 11, 2011

"The Indian kurti for example, is positively reveling in its global fashion limelight. So much so that kurti tops are a prominent part of the repertoire of popular high street stores such as Forever 21, H&M, Charlotte Ruses or even Chloe. So it's no surprise that big fashion labels, like Prada, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Roberto Cavalli, Valentino, Diane Von Furstenberg and John Bartlett have all added kurtis and kurtas to their collections."

"Recently Cavalli T-shirts with Indian gods made international headlines, at the Milan Fashion Week last year. Giorgio Armani too put out jodhpuri (a ceremonial Indian design) trousers in his lines, and Roccobarocco paid tribute to Bollywood (the Hindi film industry in India) with prints of hand-painted posters on shirts. In the United Kingdom, young fashion sensations like Mathew Williamson too are becoming stars, riding high on zari (golden or silver threads) inspired by Jaipur (an erstwhile princely Indian state known for its extravagance). And in the United States hot new designer Zac Posen has recently drawn inspiration from India in his "tribalite" selection."

In the words of Elizabeth Lippman form The New York Times:

"A DECADE ago, the mention of India-inspired beauty products might have evoked the heady scents of patchouli oil and sandalwood soap — limited in appeal to former hippies and the most ardent of yogis."

"But today, India is captivating the mainstream cosmetics industry in a big way. From high-end brands creating makeup shades based on the country's bright colors to skin- and hair-care lines capitalizing on Ayurveda, an

ancient medicinal system using herbs and other natural ingredients, when it comes to beauty, inside and out, the industry is increasingly turning to the world's second-most-populous country.”

“Clarins, the Paris-based company, introduced a line of cosmetics this summer called Enchanted, which range in price from \$18 to \$40 and are inspired by Holi, the Hindu festival of colors. The collection includes lip glosses with the names Pink Jaipur and Nude Delhi, and four products for eyes: shadows in violet and a coppery brown, and an update of kajal, the intensely pigmented and creamy eyeliner that Indian women have worn for centuries.”

The Indian touch is omnipresent, be it culture, traditions, religious spirit, art and architecture. The Indian fashion industry is not as developed as the first world countries but it has definitely started making its mark on the global stage. There is a huge demand of Indian embroidered garments due to its intricate details and exotic appeal.



Figure 1 International Designers taking inspiration from India



The Fabric Story

The idea is to use tradition Indian hand woven fabrics and embroidery in a new way for a very different target market and type of clothes.

Fashion Theme

Hand Woven and Hand Embroidered Bridal and evening wear.

Wedding is one of the most important events in any one's life and brides usually don't look at money while spending on weddings as its one of the huge fantasy that they have. The gowns would be true master pieces which have an artistic feel to it with all the handcrafted work and intricate details.

Target Customer

As per www.weddingbells.ca there will be an estimated 165,297 weddings in Canada during 2013. Our target market would be aspiring brides who are looking for a bridal gown which is hand crafted and has a unique personal touch.

Base Fabric and Novelty fabrics

Silks, satins, chiffons, organza are the kind off materials which are usually used for bridal gowns and evening gowns. The novelty fabrics would include various types of hand woven Indian silk and silk blends with intricate hand embroidery.

Most Indian fabrics and Embroideries has bright colors but this line would have more white, gold, silver and other pastel colors to fit the need of the bridal market, where as bright color can be used for the evening wear.

Price Range

As per www.Weddingstats.org:

“In 2013, the average cost of a wedding dress is between \$979-\$1,399. Expect to pay a bit more if your gown will include fancy beadwork, add-ons or intricate embroidery.”

Designer Gowns starts from \$2000 and can go up to \$12000 or more.

The price range for the Wedding gowns would be \$1000-\$4000 depending on the fabric and other details.

Retail Stores

The apparel would be fit to be sold in any mid to high end bridal or evening wear boutique

There are many different varieties of hand woven fabrics and embroideries in India. I have selected few of them which would be perfect for the fabric story and garment made for the line for the Canadian bridal and evening wear market.

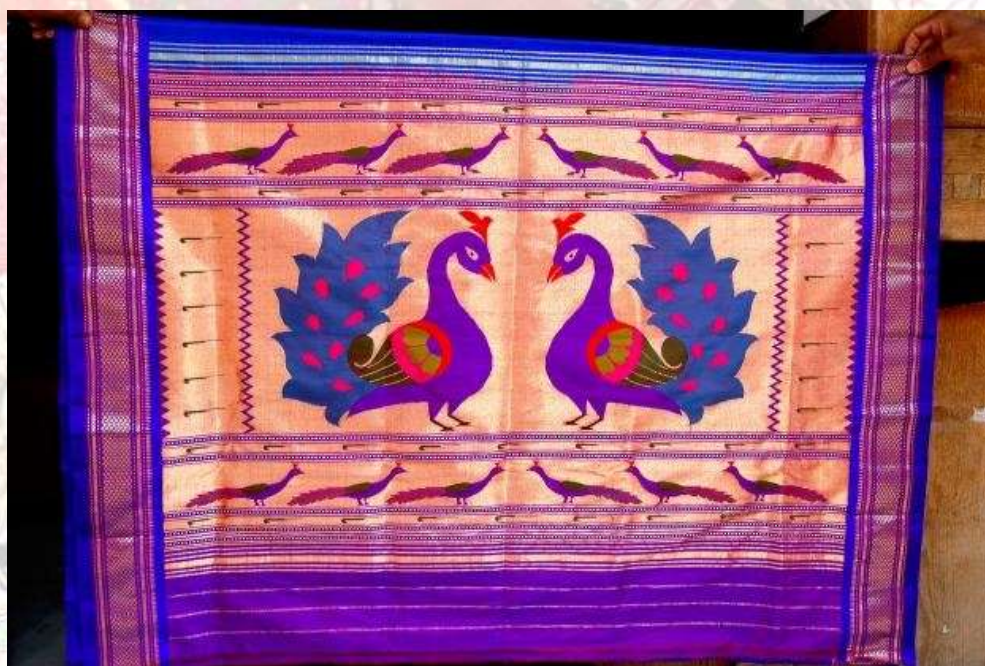
Indian fabrics

PAITHANI

Paithani is a variety of sari, named after the Paithan town in Aurangabad Maharashtra state where they are woven by hand. Made from very fine silk, it is considered as one of the richest saris in Maharashtra.

The fabric is made of silk and zari. It is a plain weave; with weft figuring designs done on principles of tapestry a lot of it has peacock and floral motifs. Paithani is characterized by borders of an oblique square design, and a pallu with a peacock design. The kaleidoscopic effect is achieved by using one color for weaving lengthwise and another for weaving widthwise.

Figure 2 Paithani Weaving





PATOLA

This fabric is a double ikat, usually made from silk. Patola-weaving is a closely guarded family tradition and a specialty of the state of Gujarat in India. There are few families left in Patan that weave these highly prized double ikat saris. It can take six months to one year to make one sari. Patola are very high prices due to the work it takes.

Warp and weft silk threads are tied separately with cotton thread on the portions already marked out in conformity with the proposed design in the fabric. This tied portion is meant to remain unexposed to the color while dyeing. Untied portion which has absorbed one color may be tied while dyeing in another color. Tying, untying, retying and dyeing in different shades are the main features of this process. After completion of dyeing work of warps & wefts, the threads of the warp of different repeats of a pattern are put together in a sequence on the loom, so that the design becomes visible. The threads of wefts are wound on to bobbins and kept in the bamboo shuttle for weaving process.

The Patola is woven on a primitive hand operated harness loom made out of rosewood and bamboo strips. The loom lies at a slant, with the left side being lower than the right side. The bamboo shuttle is made to move to and fro through warp shades. Each weft thread is thoroughly examined and matched with each part of the warp design pattern while weaving.

The high end luxury brand Gucci too has its special collection made of Patola fabrics WHICH can be seen in the last picture on next page.

Figure 3 Patola Weaving and Patola Silk Threads



Figure 4 Patola



KANJIVARAM

Kanchipuram sari (also known as a Kanjivaram sari) is a type of sari traditionally made by weavers from Kanchipuram located in Tamil Nadu, India. These are woven naturally. The Kanchipuram sari is distinguished by its wide contrast borders. A single Kanchipuram sari can cost anywhere between INR2500 (US\$38) to INR100000 (US\$1,500) or more depending upon the intricacy of work, colors, pattern, material used like zari, gold thread etc.

To weave a Kanchipuram sari three shuttles are used. While the weaver works on the right side, his aide works on the left side shuttle. The border color and design are usually quite different from the body. If the pallu (the hanging end of the sari) has to be woven in a different shade, it is first separately woven and then delicately joined to the Sari. Geometric patterns, Sun, moon, peacocks, paisley, leaves and many such motifs are woven into this fabric. Kanchipuram saris are woven with heavy silk and gold threads.

This fabric would look very elegant for the evening wear gowns due to the luster and shine it has. It could also be used to create an exclusive bridal gown by using gold or silver thread in the weaving.

Figure 5 Kanjivaram Sari



Figure 6 Kanjivaram Silk



Indian Embroideries

ZARDOZI/AARI WORK

The word Zardozi is derived by combining two words Zar and Dozi which in Persian language means gold and embroidery respectively. Zardozi or Aari work is an ancient form of embroidery which initially was only done with real metal threads of gold and silver with in between application of pearls and precious stones. Although now-a-days it is usually done with colored metal threads. Gold & silver usage came into existence in embroidery, during the Mogul Era in India through the Mughal rulers. It is also known as metal embroidery.

Technique:

Zardozi work is an extension of Zari embroidery which is done with crochet hook. The embroidery done gives the appearance of chain stitch. The things required for doing Zardozi are beads, dabka, coiled wires, sequins, etc. As Zardozi is done with coiled metal wires studded with stones, beads, etc. is heavy in weight therefore is done on fabrics that are thick and heavy like silk, velvet, stain, crepe, brocade etc. Thus the choice of fabrics is also royal and expensive. The design to be done is first traced on the fabric, and then it is spread on the wooden frame. Further the embroidery is done by picking up single thread in the needle and sewing it into the cloth.

Clothes with Zardozi are an integral part for weddings and other festivals and celebrations in India as it depicts royalty. Apart from wearable garments, Zardozi is also done on bags and purses cushion covers, table cloths, wall hangings, etc.

Figure 7 Zardozi Embroidery



Figure 8 Zardozi Varieties





PASHMINA AND KASHIDA WORK

This embroidery and fabric is the specialty of the Kashmir region of India. The word "pashmina" comes from a Persian word 'pashm' which means "wool. Pashmina is made of fine cashmere wool and the intricate woolen embroidery. The less expensive rayon blend, varieties are also available.

From American icons like Hillary Clinton, to Indian celebrities and designers, everyone seems to be in complete awe of this colorful multicolored embroidery from Kashmir. Hand-embroidered with multi-colored silk threads on woven silks and wools, this embroidery has adorned Kashmiri women for centuries.



Figure 9 Pashmina and Kashida Work



PHULKARIS AND BHAGHS

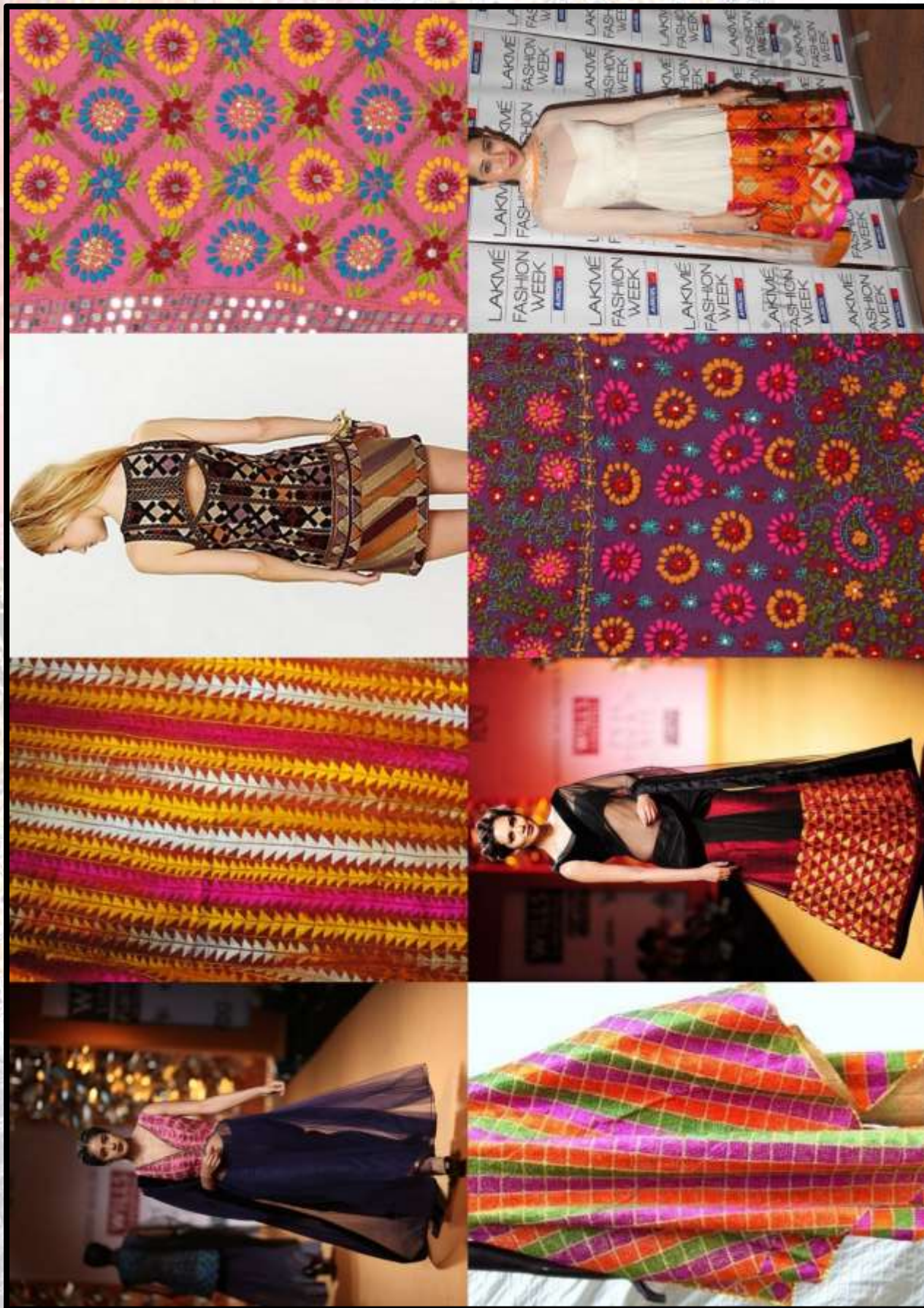
Phulkaris and Baghs is a specialty of the Punjab region on India and are worn by women all over the region during marriages, festivals and other joyous occasions. They were embroidered by the women for their own use and use of other family members and were not for sale in the market. Thus, it was purely a domestic art which not only satisfied their inner urge for creation but brought color into day to day life. Custom had grown to give Phulkaris and Baghs to brides at the time of marriages.

The internationally renowned designer Alexander McQueen too has used this embroidery in one of his collections as seen in the right side picture given below.

Figure 10 Bagh Embroidery and McQueen's Phulkari Design



Figure 11 Phulkari and Bagh Embroidery



CHIKANKARI

Chikan is a traditional embroidery style from Lucknow, India. Literally translated, the word means embroidery. The name Chikan has been derived from the Persian word Chakin or Chikeen meaning elegant patterns. It is believed to have been introduced by Nur Jehan, Mughal emperor Jahangir's wife, it is one of Lucknow's most famous textile decoration styles. Lucknow has grown into an international market for its renowned Chikankari work.

It's a very intricate needlework done on various types of fabrics like cotton, linen nylon, georgette, chiffon and synthetic fabrics. Apart from wearable garments it is also done on various other things like curtains, bed sheets, table cloths, pillow covers and cushion covers. In earlier times it was only done on white colored cloths but even now the thread used for the embroidery is generally white. Various motifs are embroidered through it like floral motifs which include flowers like rose, lotus, jasmine, creepers, etc.

There are many types of stitches used to make beautiful chikankari embroidery like chain stitch, buttonhole stitch, French knots and running stitch. The most beautiful is the motif having design created in the form of net or jhali all over the garment by generating thread tension. Shadow work is also done by Chikan embroidery which is done on the opposite side of the garment.

There are three types of chikankari stitches;

- 1) Jali work: It is done in the form of net design spread all over the fabric.
- 2) Flat stitches: the flat stitches are delicate and very fine stitch. It gives the look as if the embroidery is itself the texture of the garment.
- 3) Embossed stitches: This stitch provides beaded type of look to the garment.

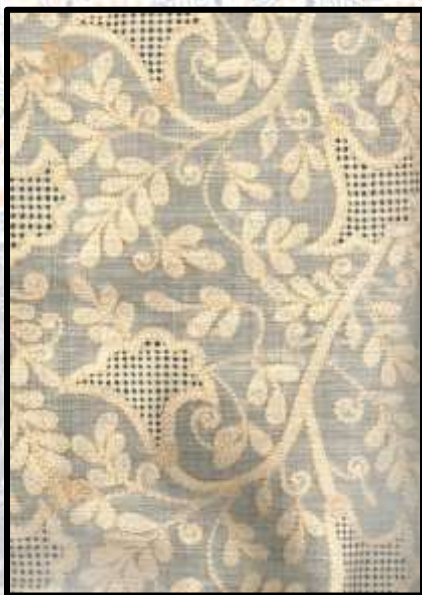


Figure 12 Chikankari Varieties



MIRROR WORK

Mirror embroidery is the specialty of Gujarat, India. This work also originated in Persia during 13th century. Mirror work is never done alone; it is generally in combination with other types of stitches or embroideries.

Many different types of stitches like cross stitch, buttonhole stitch and satin stitch are used in its combination. This art is often done by the aid of machine embroidery, but in some places it is still done through hand work which is more time consuming and a costly affair in comparison to the former technique but the results is beautiful. The mirrors used are of different shapes and sizes like round shape, diamond shape, square shape, etc. However round shape is the most common shape of mirrors used in this form of embroidery.

Mirror work is done on different fabrics and types of garments. Apart from ethnic garments it is crafted even on indo western clothes. It is also used for patters on cushion covers, purses, bed sheets, curtains, wearable garments, wall hangings, decorative items, laces, etc.



Figure 13 Mirror Work Designs



KANTHA

Kantha is the traditional form of embroidery of West Bengal. Running style stitch is used to create various patterns and details for this embroidery. It is also known as Dorukha. This word means making worn out garments into beautiful garments. Therefore it is also known as recycling art. In earlier times the worn out silk or muslin clothes were used to be put in piles and stitched together. It is believed that its date of origin lies during the era of Lord Buddha. They used to drape themselves with rags of clothes that were stitched together.

The embroidery designs usually have images of human beings, animals, flowers, geometric designs and mythological figures. Generally the worker selects the figure of embroidery to which they relate to. There are different types of kantha done- Sujani kantha, Durjani kantha, Lep kantha, Archilata kantha, Rupal kantha and Oaar kantha.

Different types of patterns like jaal, folk life designs, dhan chori, etc are done in kantha embroidery. The rural women of West Bengal usually do it on cotton saris with thread taken from the borders of the sari and done all over.



Figure 14 Kantha Designs



Figure 15 Bridal Wears Designs Inspiration for the Theme



Figure 16 Evening gown Design Inspiration for the Theme



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