



УДК 7.012: 687.016

MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF EASTERN SYMBOLS IN WOMEN'S FASHION: THE CASE OF UMA WANG 2019 SPRING/SUMMER COLLECTION

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In recent years, global fashion has increasingly focused on cultural elements, with the application of Eastern symbols in contemporary clothing gaining prominence. This study examines Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection as a case study, exploring the subtle expression and modernised presentation of Eastern symbols within contemporary women's fashion. By analysing fabrics, colour palettes, tailoring techniques and textural treatments, it demonstrates how designers convey Eastern cultural connotations. Findings reveal that implicit Eastern symbols enhance visual aesthetics and wearability, offering practical insights for Eastern-inspired women's fashion design.

Key words: Eastern Symbols; Contemporary Women's Wear; Uma Wang; Symbolic Modernisation; Cultural Heritage.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Eastern-inspired women's fashion has garnered increasing attention within the global fashion discourse, with designs that not only embody cultural heritage but also integrate contemporary aesthetics [1]. Research indicates that through innovative reinterpretations of traditional symbols, contemporary designers can achieve a fusion of cultural expression and visual appeal within modern garments [2]. As a leading figure among contemporary Chinese designers, Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection offers a prime example of modernising implicit Eastern symbols, providing valuable insights for exploring the application of cultural motifs in contemporary women's fashion.

PURPOSE

This study aims to analyse the representation of Eastern symbols and modern design techniques within Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection, exploring how it conveys cultural connotations without relying on overt traditional symbols. It seeks to provide reference and inspiration for contemporary Eastern-inspired women's fashion design practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This collection exudes a subtle Eastern sensibility through its handling of fabric textures and colour relationships. The palette favours soft, muted tones reminiscent of traces stained by time, creating an atmosphere of tranquillity that retains an underlying tension. The drape of the fabrics and their layered



construction establish a rhythmic interplay, with lines gently unfolding in response to movement, conveying a fluid yet resilient quality. Take, for instance, a white dress from Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection (Fig. 1). The layering of fabric is not achieved through accumulation but through an almost imperceptible progression – subtle shifts in light and shadow emerge under illumination, like moonlight filtering through thin clouds, lightness imbued with a hazy density. This Eastern poetic sensibility reaches the viewer not through direct symbolism, but through the inherent mood of the material itself.

Structurally and in terms of tailoring, the designs favour an irregular composition to modernise the Eastern concept of line. Asymmetrical panels, localised patchwork treatments, and layered relationships between varying lengths collectively shape a silhouette that is both restrained and dynamic. Take the patchwork ensemble illustrated in Fig. 2: structurally, it does not deliberately emphasise bodily curves, yet through offset cuts, each movement of the wearer generates unexpected shifts in line – precisely echoing the spatial logic of Eastern attire where 'form follows movement'. The designer does not replicate tradition, but within the rhythm of the cut, reactivates cultural memory in a different manner.

The treatment of patterns and textures represents another noteworthy dimension within this collection. Rather than directly employing traditional motifs, the designer favours evoking atmospheric cultural associations through subtle variations in material surfaces. Hidden patterns within fabrics, controlled localised luminosity, and the juxtaposition of contrasting textures collectively form a perceptible yet unspoken Eastern aesthetic on both visual and tactile levels. Consider the floral-patterned dress in Fig. 3: the motif remains unreadable, concealed within the fabric's weave, emerging and fading with shifting light and bodily movement. This abstract expression allows the wearer to maintain an intimate yet distanced relationship with cultural memory in everyday life.



Fig. 1. A white dress from Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection [4]



Fig. 2. A patchwork ensemble from Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection [4]



Fig. 3. A floral-patterned dress from Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection [4]

Overall, Uma Wang's design approach for this collection avoids simplistic extraction or reproduction of Eastern elements. Instead, it establishes a subtle yet coherent cultural expression across multiple dimensions – fabric, colour, structure, and texture. It preserves the spiritual core of Eastern aesthetics while responding to



contemporary women's aspirations for wearability through a highly modernised design language [3]. This approach may offer a viable trajectory for contemporary explorations in Eastern-inspired women's fashion – not by replicating the past, but by allowing culture to breathe within design.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of Uma Wang's Spring/Summer 2019 collection reveals how the application of subtle Eastern symbols in contemporary women's fashion achieves a fusion of cultural significance and modern aesthetics. Through fabric selection, colour palette, structural design, and textural treatments, the designer presents the essence of Eastern aesthetics in a subtle yet innovative manner, offering significant insights for contemporary Eastern-inspired women's fashion design. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that employing subtle symbols enhances the wearer's cultural awareness and aesthetic experience, providing valuable reference points for future design endeavours.

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ЧЕНЬ Юесюань

СУЧАСНІ ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ СХІДНИХ СИМВОЛІВ У ЖІНОЧІЙ МОДІ: НА ПРИКЛАДІ ВЕСНЯНО-ЛІТНЬОЇ КОЛЕКЦІЇ УМИ ВАНГ 2019

В останні роки світова мода все активніше зосереджується на культурних елементах, а застосування східних символів у сучасному одязі набуває все більшої ваги. Це дослідження розглядає колекцію Уми Ванг весна/літо 2019 як приклад тонкого вираження та модернізованого представлення східних символів у сучасній жіночій моді. Аналізуючи тканини, кольорові палітри, техніки пошиття та текстурні обробки, демонструється, як дизайнери передають східні культурні конотації. Результати дослідження показують, що неявні східні символи покращують візуальну естетику та зручність носіння, пропонуючи практичні поради щодо дизайну жіночого одягу, натхненного східним стилем.

Ключові слова: східні символи; сучасний жіночий одяг; Ума Ванг; символічна модернізація; культурна спадщина.