

EMBROIDERY – THE PRICELESS ETHNOCULTURAL HERITAGE OF UZBEK APPLIED ART

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Abstract. *This article examines the historical development, regional schools, technical and artistic characteristics of embroidery within Uzbek applied art. Based on archaeological findings, miniatures, and written sources, the study traces the evolution of embroidery from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, exploring the distinctive styles, types of stitches, and ornamental compositions of the Samarkand, Bukhara, and Nurota schools.*

Furthermore, the research analyzes the creative role of women in embroidery, its spiritual and educational significance, and its contemporary relevance as a national brand and a resource for tourism. The article interprets embroidery as a complex ethnocultural system that unites the material and spiritual culture of the Uzbek people and highlights its role in scientific research, conservation, and museology.

Keywords: *embroidery art, Uzbek applied art, ethnocultural heritage, regional schools, ornamental composition, Timurid art, traditional craftsmanship, museum exhibition.*

Introduction

Embroidery is one of the oldest and most enduring traditions of Uzbek applied art, encapsulating both the material and spiritual layers of national culture. It serves not only as a form of decorative art but also as a manifestation of historical memory, aesthetic thought, and symbolic worldview. The study of embroidery intersects with archaeology, ethnography, art history, museology, and cultural studies.

Historical Development

Archaeological and ethnographic evidence indicates that embroidery developed in Central Asia as early as the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. Ancient decorated fabric fragments found in the Samarkand and Bukhara regions contain intricate ornamental motifs, confirming the antiquity of embroidery traditions.

The activity along the Silk Road promoted intercultural exchange, introducing new dyeing techniques, design patterns, and compositional principles to the region. Consequently, Uzbek embroidery reflects a synthesis of Persian and Turkic cultural elements.

Miniatures from the 14th–15th centuries demonstrate the high level of artistic development in embroidery. Notably, Rui González de Clavijo documented examples of embroidery in the court of Amir Temur, while the famous painter Kamoliddin Behzod depicted an embroidered tent in the miniature “Timur on the Throne” from the manuscript *Zafarnama*. These sources provide valuable insights into the history of embroidery.

Technical and Artistic Characteristics

Embroidery techniques primarily involve threads, needles, hooked needles, and frames.

Common types of stitches include qandahayol, chinnixayol, xomdozi, yorma, iroqi, popur, ilmoq, and baxliya, demonstrating technical diversity. Ornamentation and composition reflect artistic sophistication.

Patterns are composed of plant motifs, geometric forms, and symbolic designs. Colors carry symbolic meaning: red signifies life and energy, green symbolizes nature and renewal, and white represents purity.

Regional Schools

Uzbek embroidery exhibits distinct regional schools:

- **Bukhara school:** distinguished by golden threads, intricate floral patterns, and dense compositions.

- **Samarkand school:** features large-scale, balanced designs with central compositional focus.

- **Nurota school:** simpler in appearance but rich in symbolic meaning; “bosma” and “yorma” techniques are widely used, with dense and rhythmic stitch placement.

These regional distinctions allow embroidery to be analyzed as an ethnographic identifier.

Socio-Cultural and Educational Significance

Historically, embroidery was closely linked to women’s creative activity. It played a key role in cultivating aesthetic taste, patience, and diligence in girls. During the preparation of traditional ceremonial items (sep), embroidery served not only practical purposes but also educational and spiritual functions.

Contemporary Interpretation and Museology

Today, embroidery is developing as a national brand and an inspiration for modern design.

Exhibiting embroidery in museums allows these works to be appreciated not only as aesthetic objects but also as carriers of historical and cultural information. Scientific research, conservation, and restoration practices ensure the preservation of this art form for future generations.

Conclusion

Embroidery is a complex ethnocultural system that unites the material and spiritual culture of the Uzbek people. It embodies historical memory, aesthetic thought, and social traditions.

Systematic scholarly research, classification, and preservation in museum collections are essential for safeguarding this national heritage.

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