

Tradition Is the ID card of a Nation



When one talks about discovering the identity of one's nation, one has to talk about the nation's cultural heritage, in particular, about what its traditions are expressing and showcasing. Tradition is a "bank of values" with its styles and authentic motifs, which are an inspiration for the creativity of the world fashion of today. In the dialogue between the past and the present tradition is intertwined with the industry and the art of modern design.

The early Macedonian fashion dates from the 19th century. Before that, we

can talk only about instantly recognisable traditional garments with a distinct style typical of each region. It is noteworthy that the characteristics and features of each folk ensemble managed to preserve their authenticity even through their transformation into urban clothing during the period of intensive rural to urban migration in the early 19th century.

The increasing Europeanization of clothing coincided with several other societal transformations, such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the development of post-Ottoman consciousness. Nevertheless, the process of accepting European influences and



the transition to a European wardrobe happened very slowly and in stages. Photographs of city families which date from the last decades of the 19th century show that new elements were introduced gradually into conservative wardrobes. Conservative style survived well into the first decades of the 20th century, so that a total acceptance of world fashion trends came only after World War II.

However, the fondness for the old values has always remained an eternal source of new inspiration in fashion. Not only has the wealth of the Macedonian folk costume heritage found its place in the ethnological museum, but also in today's fashion. Today's designers inspired by the outstanding collections of traditional costumes and handicrafts incorporate their elements and motifs into both women's and men's wardrobe. Today's fashion draws creatively on our heritage in such a way that the final product does not smell like naphthalene moth repellent or remind of a deserted village or of past dark ages translated into new-age eccentricities.

With the few exceptions of the rare attempts in the past periods (in particular during the

hippie era that made ethno style popular), a true interest in the potential of our own cultural heritage in fashion emerges with the first Macedonian professionally trained fashion personalities. Their creations vividly show the wealth and the potential of our "bank of values".

The beauty of this type of creative dialogue is particularly noticeable and globally celebrated in the work of internationally recognized Macedonian talent: Marjan Pejovski, Lidija Georgieva, Risto Binbiloski and Rosica Mrshic.

MARJAN PEJOVSKI is Macedonia's most famous designer and one of the most talented designers in the world. The eccentric Bjork and her famous "swan" dress which she wore at the 2001 Oscars, earned him a place on the global fashion scene.

He has drawn inspiration for his famously eccentric designs from various sources, but in recent seasons his interest has been rooted in the familiar world cultures. Naturally, his own Macedonian culture could not be left out.

RISTO BINBILOSKI is one of our most successful





designers with an international career. His experience includes collaboration with the fashion houses of Kenzo, Louis Vuitton as well as Marc Jacobs.

Born in Ohrid, Binbiloski lived in Paris for the first twenty years of his professional career. He is behind the 2016 fall/winter crochet pieces collection of the fashion brand Maison Margiela led by the controversial John Galliano. It is precisely his specific application of his native tradition in his creative language that makes him outspoken, recognizable and successful on the global fashion scene.



LIDIJA GEORGIEVA

After graduating from Duperre school of fashion she has been working in Paris for renowned fashion houses Balmain and Rochas as well as her own fashion brand "LG" for 20 years. She successfully launched her fashion story grounded in the inspiring traditional crochet works. Using such traditional works and reading them in a contemporary way, she creates modern and desirable fashion.

ROSICA MRSHIC

With her rare talent, she rapidly became a reputable designer favoured even outside her native country. Her exclusive graduation collection inspired by Macedonian traditions was a fascinating harbinger of later success.





As the interaction between the old and the new is ever more present on catwalks, folk traditions continue to be a relevant source of inspiration and innovation for the interdisciplinary fashion design. The artist and fashion designer Jana Maneva Chuposka, Dean of the European University, focused on the potential of using Macedonian traditions in contemporary fashion in her doctoral research that she presented during "Fashion Weekend Skopje". Her research project is an inspiration and challenge for

the industry and her students.

It remains to be seen how Macedonian folk heritage will influence the new generations of designers, whether it will win the battle against oblivion and preserve its role in the protection of the identity of this nation.

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