

Ethno-cultural Component in Modern Design

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Abstract

The article considers ethnic elements in design, in particular, by the example of a package as an element of a visual identity of modern graphic design. The authors carried out a search for the balance between the universal and the national graphic design, studied the phenomenon of an ethnic component in the search for new forms of expression and images in design. The authors took the products of Russian and foreign large corporations as an example. The authors analyzed the problem of the relations between the national component and a unique heritage by the example of traditional ornamental motifs in the creation of a conceptual image of the package. The socio-cultural approach to the study allows to reveal objective laws of changes in design due to social and cultural changes in society. The art approach and the analysis of design projects conducted within its framework contributed to the objective and thorough review of this component of modern culture. The semiotic approach contributed to the analysis of the symbolic design elements that accumulate and transmit the information using symbols and signs as reflected in the artistic solution. The ethno-cultural component is of particular importance in developing and searching for new solutions in the design which is based on the borrowing of traditional art forms and adaptation of these forms at the present time. The article can be viewed as one of the possible methodological approaches to further research in modern design.

Keywords: Ornament; Regional design; Traditions; Conceptual image; Package; Ethnic components in design

Introduction

An attitude to the ethnic component in design varies from keenness on ethnic visual components to their complete negation, depending on the worldview prevailing in society and in particular on the artistic environment. Apparently only a search for harmonious correlation of international and national components may allow to solve this problem. It is

necessary to keep a certain balance, since the idea and the image are established in the development of the project.

Purposes and objectives of the research

The purpose of our research is to summarize the studies conducted in graphic design using the ethno-cultural component, to form the most complete image of the national applied art in terms of introduction of new technologies in design, to learn opportunities and objective laws of the use of ethnic art technologies in modern design (Figure 1).

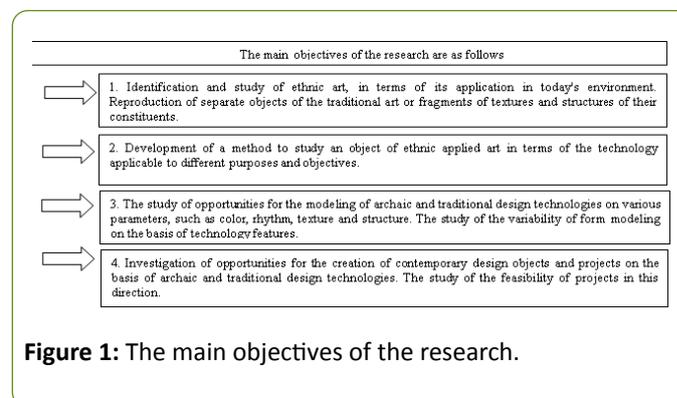


Figure 1: The main objectives of the research.

"In the process of creating an art work the work is based on imaginative solution, the embodiment of the concept and idea, composition combines all these stages. Composition is an isolated area of a creative concept that embodies the artistic idea and has completed imaginative nature", as Spirina M.V. noted in her article [1]. At the beginning of their professional activities, young designers, studying in the higher education institution, start searching for new ways of self-expression in art and design [2]. Khristoforova et al. stress that the creative professions area the intersection of science and art and require creative search and detailed analysis, using the achievements of modern science [3]. In our opinion, the best solution is to focus on ethno-cultural traditions of the region, so that borrowing and transformation of the "old" to the "new" in design can be possible. "You might use a design sprint to initiate a change in process or start the innovation of a product concept. This works well when you're exploring opportunities with the goal of coming up with original concepts that ultimately will be tested in the real world"... –

wrote Richard Banfield [4]. If we look back into history, "during its appearance in the second half of the 19th century, design was mainly based on the foundation laid by applied and decorative arts. The change of the production principles, the need for mass production have led to the universalization of design principles, separating it from the beginnings of handicraft production, where an individual approach to the creation of products used to be applied" [5]. Since the period of functionalism, the desire to extend some unified form out of the cultural and regional context has been one of the design trends; for instance, the corporate style of the Coca-Cola Company is distributed all around the world and can be distinguished by a pronounced, recognizable and subjective nature. Many well-known designers agree on the impact of the period of industrialization on design as a whole, but nevertheless the ethno-cultural component is still rather influential [6-8]. A Western man is a bit cut off from the sources of his culture and nature where previous generations lived. "But in many other cultures, and increasingly so in modern Western culture, intuition is regaining its status of being practical in a different way. It is the nature of intuition to spark and guide creativity, and it is an essential ingredient for anything new in the "real world" to happen at all", said Maggie Macnab [9]. The unity of nature, the environment, form and content are the main components in design in terms of the ethno-cultural component. Houses of residents from different countries and continents are distinguished by similar items, such unification of the living environment leads to the opposite phenomenon, namely the identification of the national component. If we take America as an example, where the development of architecture occurred in the 20th century, then we can talk about a new modernist development, due to the fact that the history of the country and the people were newly established. This also influenced the design as a whole. The arsenal of a designer includes the knowledge, creative experience and constant search for the new, but it often occurs that this "new" is already embedded in the consciousness of the artist, as the society and culture affect the perception and style in one way or another. In his design book Timothy Samara wrote: "The designer uses imagery, symbols, type, color, and materials - whether printed or on-screen - to represent the ideas that must be conveyed; and to organize them into a unified experience that is intended to evoke a particular response" [10]. Another interesting fact is that in addition to the design of large corporations we may consider such concept as regional design. Its integral part is the development of the product design, based on a regional, often ethnic component. This phenomenon is particularly clearly expressed in the design of a package, since a package represents a product to the buyer. A designer sets a task to create a product complete in its decorations and containing the content that reflects its purpose and functionality. It is also necessary to consider the work with fonts and text. The font on the package plays a major role helping the consumer to choose a product. "As text gets bigger, the space between letters expands, and some designers use tracking to diminish overall spacing in large-scale text," wrote Lupton Ellen in her work. In her book Lupton Ellen examines the issues of font compositions and their influence in particular spheres of design [11]. Holistic perception of a font

composition, an ornament, or a graphic picture on any background provides a complete picture created by the designer. For a more in-depth consideration of this phenomenon, let us turn to the research methodology.

Methodology

The methodology of this study is conditioned by the specifics of the described phenomenon; the following scientific approaches have been used:

The socio-cultural approach allows to identify objective laws of design changes due to social and cultural changes in society.

The art approach and the analysis of design projects conducted within its framework contributed to the objective and thorough review of this component of modern culture.

The semiotic approach contributed to the analysis of the symbolic design elements that accumulate and transmit the information to the modern society using symbols and signs as reflected in the form, color, ornamental solution, etc.

Discussion and Results

In graphic design a package is a unique image of the product that contains the main idea of the brand and basic consumer benefits. It is also a significant element of the corporate identity in the chain of the product delivery from the manufacturer to the consumer.

Development of the package design is one of the main objectives and directions of work of a graphic designer. The product package is a kind of finished product made upon certain compositional rules. "The main point to be emphasized is the balance of the components in the composition, subordination of the dominant and additional objects which balance the overall composite system", – said Spirina M.V. in her article [12].

Let us consider this question by creating a package as one of the types of work of a graphic designer. A package (or a packaging form) is a specific covering where the goods or products are placed.

A packaging designer is a professional who develops packages of various forms, properties, sizes and styles. Services provided by a packaging designer include design of labels, boxes, bags, bottles, wrappers, testers and other packaging forms with all the characteristics of the product (convenience in transportation, informational content, brand awareness, etc.).

There are several types of the product packaging:

- Primary packaging which is an immediate container of the product (e.g., a bottle of perfume in which it is poured);
- Secondary packaging of an appropriate style for the promotion of goods on the market, performing an additional protective function (e.g., perfume can be placed in cardboard boxes);

- Transport packaging (container), which is a special container that allows to carry out loading and unloading, storage and transportation of the product.

The main functions of packaging are as follows:

- A protective function which implies protection of goods from possible mechanical damage, preservation of consumer properties of the product; giving the product an attractive fresh appearance and its protection against unauthorized access; providing opportunities for the creation of rational cargo units for loading and unloading, as well as convenience in storage and transportation;

- An advertising and informational function which includes provision of consumers with the appropriate advertising information; promotion of the product on the market; reporting the information to the target audience; separation and identification of the product out of the total advertising flow.

For descriptive purposes let us consider the example of creation of the main design idea of the package of the ice-cream "Waitrose Sundae", developed by the studio Nelson Associates:

Reflection of the taste of the ice-cream has become the main idea in the creation of the package for this product. This has been achieved thanks to the volume elements depicted on the package, namely: lemon syrups, chocolate and toffee sweets. Their dynamic and realistic depiction allowed to reflect the taste of ice cream, and to attract the attention of consumers to the product. It should be noted that the advantages of design of the ice-cream package include "cleanliness" and "simplicity", which have been reached by the predominance of white color and a simple package form. It is not accidental that white color refers to the "cold" color grade (mixing white color with blue allows for pure white to match the color of the product). This emphasizes the thermal condition of the product and is an advantage in a situation to attract sales in the hot season.

The use of the regional identity is one of the advantages. For example, we can talk about a series of packages of perfume products developed by the French company "Fragonard" with the use of traditional Provence ornaments – a region where the company was founded, thus emphasizing the regional nature of products. In this case, the ornament is used in the form of the quotation, i.e. elements of traditional compositions are included in the package design without fundamental changes. In the Russian product market we can reveal the same trend, for example, the dairy company "Russian milk" uses the motifs of Russian lace ornaments, which are associated with the traditional production of goods, quality, national basis (Figure 2).



Figure 2 : Companies' packages design: "Fragonard" and "Russian milk".

Another example is the, where the ethnic design element does not emphasize the regional aspect, and the quality of products can be seen in the "Fragonard" perfume series with a spicy aroma, which are decorated with Indian ornamental motifs, so the design visually emphasizes the content, in this case - the oriental "Indian" aroma.

In design the package is considered primarily as a visual advertising element. Therefore, its creation may be considered as an important element of the implementation of the marketing function. The major objectives of its formation are as follows:

- Product display in certain circumstances, or in the process of its use;
- Product demonstration at work, showing its capabilities and the results of its application;
- Drawing attention to one or more characteristics of the product;
- Focusing on product benefits, such as convenience, pleasant feelings, self-satisfaction, society approval;
- Creation of a problematic situation to be avoided, the situation prevailing prior to the use of the product;
- Demonstration of the resolution of the problem that occurred due to the situation before the use of the product;
- Representation of product users, learning the type of people using the product, their way of life, formation of the idea of a generalized user image;
- Creation of the brand image, empowering the brand with subjective values and unique features;
- Creation of the image of the manufacturer, store or service organizer, creation of the company image.

The implementation of the above discussed purposes allows the creation of effective packaging, which ensures the growth of the product sales, its advertising. The effective packaging is a means of marketing implementation. In turn, the

effectiveness of packaging design is ensured by a number of advantages:

- The package attracts the attention of potential buyers (facilitates the choice, allows to get acquainted with the main characteristics of the product);
- The package emphasizes the prestige of the trade mark (ease of use or consumption of the product, attractive appearance);
- The package provides identification (recognition) of the product of the corresponding trade mark, company (awareness of basic company elements: color, logo, shape, etc.);
- The package allows to account for "consumer complaints" (the subconscious and conscious desire of the consumer) of a buyer (the minimization of packaging sizes, features of the product consumption and use (for example, for drinks – spill-proof bottle, straw included, etc.).

Graphic design allows to transform patterns of ethnic ornamentation, it is especially noticeable in the design of corporate identity elements, such as a brand name. For example, the use of ethnic symbols is noted in the book "The logo and corporate identity" written by the designer David Airy, where the logo of the Cardiological Hospital in New Mexico should reflect the regional particularities. For this purpose, the designer used the sign "Zia", a symbol of the Indians of this region. In the development of the hospital brand name the ethnic ornament "Zia" was combined with a hand and heart, it symbolizes the life-saving assistance to people. The ethno-cultural traditional forms in design are reflected not only in the literal citation of ornamental art objects, but also in the transformation of the visual material, all this creates new forms, but retains a visual link with the prototype.

Simplicity and brand awareness play an important role in design. The selection of a sign base and knowledge of its semantics are very important in modern design. Thus, let us give an example from the book of D. Airy: the project originator Bob Star needed a brand name that would advantageously emphasize his surname, i.e. he asked to include the image of the star. But as noted the designer involved in the project development, "a five-pointed star would be associated with national flags, communism, pagan rituals" [13]. As a result, an eight-pointed star was chosen, directed upwards through the elongated lower beam. The dynamics of its form represented the onward movement that corresponded to the customer's preferences.

The origins of design culture are clearly related to the nature and geographical location, and have a direct relation to design. In turn, each area of each ethno-cultural layer is inherent in its own real archetype, its own special culture that has been developed over the centuries. The geographical location and the growth of different kinds of materials and fruits present the basis for creativity. The products created by man present a direct extension of his relations with nature and the ethnic group. According to the research scientist Hilary

Richardson: "Geographical and historical factors are combined to set the conditions that promoted this development" [14]. According to the scientist, geographical and historical factors have become direct prerequisites for the development of the ethnic component in culture, fine arts and, in consequence, in design. They have created the conditions that have contributed to this development.

Each location has certain properties, its color-grade, coloring, living conditions that reflect and develop the living environment.

For national traditions in design its natural conformity is comparable with a special sense of self-identity of the people and a certain degree of freedom. For example, many countries could confidently walk the path of technological progress, including in the development of nature, become more "courageous" in science, art and design, get a profit from this, but at the same time, we must remember that they would have to sacrifice their national values and lose their uniqueness.

Design is, in fact, a commercial thing; however, it is some kind of connection of a new way of provision of the visual material in art and an artist's observations of nature and the environment in which he/she exists. If we consider our inner feelings, the sense of animation of the material world has its origins in ancient times, and a modern artist-designer preserves and conveys this feeling. Thus, all the new in technology and design is created on the basis of nature, ethnicity and culture, by a man who lived in a different cultural environment which way of life was formed over the centuries. This is the way the essence of modern design develops, namely the relations between the ethno-cultural component, natural forms (including the science of ergonomics) and the new modern ideas in connection with technologies and materials.

In case if design retains the features of humanization through the functionality, aesthetics, nature, in such case it assumes the role of a generator of new orientations and values in the society where it is "assimilated".

All this reflects high-level culture, traditions, the way of life of the people, its mentality. In order to more closely examine this question we should refer directly to the applied arts. The ornament is some kind of chronicle of cultural history. The ornament can tell us about the geographical location of the ethnic group, its world view, immediate activities. Currently, there is a clear link between the ornament, information technologies and the art in general, where the ornament has become part of the culture, having determined in some way the opportunities for development of traditional crafts at the moment. Decorative art is a memory of folk traditions, national color, connection with the way and mode of life, as well as with culture in general.

National traditions in ornaments and the decorative art became the basis for the identification of the people in the period of global standardization and internationalization of culture, formation of technical and aesthetic trends. All this generates consumptive values and influences the development

of art and design industry. We consider it necessary to study the issues of integration of traditional forms of art into modern design.

Cultural traditions present a historical memory, which is an important condition not only for the existence and development of culture, but also for the formation of the creative qualities of the new cultural layer. Approval of positive results of previous activities on the fertile basis is the common law of the development, which operates in the spheres of art and culture that are of particular importance.

The aspects of influence in traditions of the national art in modern design mean not only the preservation but also the development of culture.

A kind of "duplication" of the well-known, created works in one form or another means distribution, but not the creation of culture. It is also necessary since a wide range of people participate in this process. This is the way culture functions in society. Creation of culture necessarily involves the inclusion of the new into the process of historical development of cultural and creative human activities, that is, consequently, a source of innovation.

For example, in design some traditional elements may exist losing or maintaining their authenticity in one way or another.

If we consider the national component in art, this component presents natural and logical manifestation of features of historical roots of a nation, with the origins of the people's life.

The experience of world-class designers and architects in such countries as Russia, Italy, Spain, France, Japan, etc., who could not only accumulate the traditional art into modern trends, but also solved the problem of bringing the new in applied and decorative arts, tried to preserve them as a landmark in modern culture, in accordance with the social and technological development.

The analysis of the development of design and applied and decorative arts in recent decades has revealed the features of the traditional and national identity in the works of artists and designers. However, if we consider the features of the design development in Russia, a contradiction which manifests in the Europeanization of the country and consolidation of the development of the national modern design school should be noted.

The main feature of this discrepancy is that the problem of national identity in design is closely connected with the problem of traditions and innovation in modern culture. In this case, the traditions are not opposed to innovation, they naturally grow out of it. In this regard, the researchers need to identify the optimal conditions for the development of art and modern design in connection with the national, traditional culture, which can give us not only an aesthetic and rational attitude to the material side of culture, but also identify the ways for the development of modern art.

The vital nature and the importance of the national component in art and design as an original and essentially

unique phenomenon characterizing many historical and social processes, give grounds for confirmation of the importance of this issue and further examination of the topic.

Knowledge of archetypal models, albeit transformed in the creative work of a designer, is necessary for the project activities. According to Khomyakova I.V.: "Symbols of ethnic consciousness, ethical views, forms of the objective world of ethnic culture, having the opportunity to integrate into modern culture through design, can ensure access to the social historical capital and preserve ethnic and cultural traditions" [15].

Centuries-old cultural traditions clearly differentiated human physiological needs and spiritual needs. This has not lost its relevance today. Therefore, we consider it natural that the study of national traditions and art can give us a new round of scientific information, which will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the further development of contemporary design and art in general.

Conclusion

We consider the present research as an endless information stream for the study and application in modern society, since the use of ethnic culture opportunities is the foundation for the formation of the unique original state which can demonstrate historical achievements and the symbiosis of this base and new time.

An adapted version of the centuries-old folk and national traditions in art is a strong basis not only in the development of art and art education, but also a direct basis for the implementation of ideas in the project work of a modern designer.

Historical and cultural heritage of each nation contains ideas and experience, which saturate the life of generations, fill out and identify the cultural environment.

Thus, in addition to the prevalence of international qualities in graphic design, aiming at its association with a distinctive cultural heritage, with the use of traditional ornamental motifs should be noted. The ethnic ornament in modern graphic design is a relevant and important subject of the study. It should be noted that in some countries the cultural tradition and design are closely related, for example, in Japan, Sweden and Italy. The main feature of design in these countries is the awareness of their cultural identity, and at the same time understanding the need to be included in the general cultural development. Emphasizing national identity as one of the principles of design has become a priority area in the implementation of design programs. In this context Ireland should also be noted as in this country the "Celtic" ornament has become a sort of a trademark, a symbol of national identity. Khomyakova I.V. noted: "As design seeks ways for territorial correlation, interrelation with cultural traditions, culture "does not want" to preserve traditional values only in museum forms and canonical reconstructions" [16].

Certainly, nowadays the cultural exchanges between nations have become much more intensive, and the elements of some

cultures, including ornamental elements, actively penetrate into the other cultures, and in this situation a designer's ability to learn, isolate, correctly interpret ethnic elements of visual culture is becoming more significant. Design in the practice should take into account the processes of convergence and integration of multiple ethnic cultures into one culture. The artistic language of the ethnic ornament is a stable component of the tradition, since the ornament is the most succinct, visually vibrant traditional knowledge systems and symbols filled with images. A structural-descriptive aspect is a focus of the design on traditional values. The art formula of the ethnic art based on traditional forms contains the fundamental archetypes of traditional culture, including such concept as an archetype, symbol, sign, metaphor, association, etc. In practice, the design aims at reviving the semiotic values of the form.

"Nowadays in many design schools much attention is paid to the study of the history of culture, natural environment, spiritual experience and traditions of the material culture of the countries, the culture of which had not been the focus of international design interests until recently" [16]. For example, every nation, no matter on what stage of culture it would be, is inherent in a strong desire to create beautiful forms. Deborah O'Brien, a designer and teacher from Ireland, wrote: "All over Europe, people were looking back into the medieval past for a sense of national identity" [17]. Paradoxically, looking back into past is often associated with the search for new forms of art, the rethinking of the artistic traditions of the past. For example, German expressionist artists and critics of the early twentieth century had a rather interesting point of view on this problem – they wrote about the complicated Gothic forms. "For German expressionist artists and critics at the beginning of the twentieth century, the later tortured forms of Gothic seemed to prefigure their own modern angst", wrote Camille M [18].

"The ornament and design are closely interrelated not only by the general principles of compositional construction, but also by the possibility of using ornamental compositions in design", writes Ivanova E.Y. in her article [19]. The "ornament" is an artistic decoration, pattern, built on the rhythmic alternation of geometrical or figurative elements; in translation from the Latin the word "ornament" means decoration. The ornament in architecture occurred immediately, as soon as the architecture appeared. Ornamental motifs can be found even in the column caps of the ancient Egyptian temples. Among the Assyrian ornaments except embossed patterns, we can find vegetative motifs, lotus flower, pine cones, rosaces, etc. In ancient Greece the ornaments originated from Egyptian and Assyrian traditions, but the Greeks could modify them and create their ornamental style on their basis, in which the decorative motifs were strictly subordinated to the architectural and tectonic designation of separate structural elements. By the end of the 19th century a growing desire for reforms occurred in art. The "modern" style is a vivid expression of the views of that time, where the use of old traditions was combined with new forms composed of decorative lines. The choice of the type of ornament, its form, motifs and interpretation is conditioned by

historical, local, national or stylistic conditions. The ornament nature is a group of elements in a certain style. There are ribbon or carpet ornaments with a clear alternation of similar forms, with a geometrically constructed pattern, and "heraldic" ornaments with a symmetrical pattern construction. Compositionally organized repetitive elements of the ornaments may consist of geometric shapes, vegetative patterns, images of birds, animals, people and fantastic images. We are interested in simple geometric ornaments without relative motivation.

One more level should be noted – the level when objects appear in the very field of design, namely, in art design, a source of creativity for which are the images and forms of folk art. The concept "ethno-design" can sometimes be found. This movement has not yet been assessed; it is most often interpreted as the creation of contemporary design objects in the spirit of folk applied arts and handicrafts, which can be characterized by a tendency to excessive ornamentalism. From another point of view, these objects are not contrary to the spirit of design, as they do not contradict the basic ideas of design penetrating into all cultural processes.

Design is probably a niche, where the ethnic ornament actively expresses its art qualities. Khomyakova I.V. assumes: "The artificial environment, mechanical rhythm of life, loss of root connections with the past increase the level of discomfort and affect the integrity of the human being. Attempts to revive the lost variety of environmental surroundings ruined by the world of the "international" design, are intertwined with the actualization of the process of reviving the most bright examples of traditional culture that have become symbols of the culture in certain periods of its development" [16].

The results of the study include the following conclusions

1. The study of ethnic art, in terms of its application in today's environment, is an important aspect in the formation and strengthening of traditional forms in culture and art through the design, since a product of the designer is distributed directly "into the hands" of the consumer. Representation of separate items of traditional art or their fragments, textures or structures of their components should become one of the areas in the work of the designer, in terms of strengthening the ethno-cultural component in modern design.

2. The possibilities of modeling of archaic and traditional design technologies on various parameters, such as color, rhythm, texture and structure, and the use of variability of form modeling on the basis of features of technologies with the use of new materials are important components in the product development by modern designers.

3. Studies in the field of graphic design using the ethno-cultural component form the most complete picture of national applied arts in terms of the introduction of new technologies in design. The targeted review of opportunities and objective laws of the use of ethnic art technologies in modern design provides a new stage in the development of

design, the strengthening of traditions and manifestation of traditional forms, enshrined in the new technologies and materials.

Thus, it can be concluded that the principle of changing values and cultural norms is implemented only when along with the technical progress any traditional society accepts the principles of economic growth, the development of modern design, etc.; then certainly some values and norms of the cultural society are changed. This proposition is based on the study of social factors that influence the attitude of the society to the historical traditions in different periods (merging and enrichment of cultures, cultural exchanges, some changes in the social status of the ethnic group and the state as a whole). The principle of informative continuity of cultural and historical experience, namely, traditions and innovation are inherently correlated concepts. This correlation provides an informative continuity of the cultural and historical experience, the preservation and development of culture in general. An appeal of contemporaries to the traditions of the past is innovative in nature, as it is rather selective and opens up unexploited opportunities in the tradition. Thus, a system of relations of the essence and design properties is formed that regulates the development of the concepts in the framework of a certain activity. The chain looks like this: a craftsman – an artist of applied and decorative arts – a designer. On the basis of this system a qualitatively new phenomenon is implemented – the interpenetration of applied and decorative arts, fine arts, architecture and design. The innovation principle serves as a symbol of fruitfulness and traditionalism, and it is innovation that can prove the vitality and fruitfulness of a tradition. The problem of national identity is directly connected with the problem of traditions and the introduction of the new; they must be regarded in unity, as complementary phenomena. National originality in art means natural and logical manifestation by a certain nation of its historical features deeply rooted in the life of the people. A tradition is the basis for innovation. The desire to preserve the traditional component in new design works will allow to preserve the ethnic identity of modern cultural transformations.

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