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The Celebration of Heritage in Soviet Fashion: the Case of the Perm Fashion House

Iuliia Papushina Roman Abramov

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Abstract

The USSR created the largest system of fashion design in the Socialist world, but regional Soviet fashion houses have not attracted much attention from social science. This paper examines the cases of two designers from the Perm Fashion House and their experiments with heritage in fashion design. These designers can be viewed as representatives of different approaches to the application of traditional costume heritage in Soviet fashion. The findings of the paper reveals Soviet state legitimized limited part of the Pre-Revolution Russian cultural heritage namely folk decorative motifs and applied arts disregarding other kinds of heritage as sources for designers' inspiration. In the Late Socialism period folk-inspired design was the top-down initiative promoted in design colleges, fashion magazines, but not available for mass production. The results also shows the designers creating collections for an inner market had more freedom than the ones designed for international trade events.

Keywords: Soviet Past; Fashion Industry; Heritage; Folk-Based Style; Late Socialism.

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Iuliia Papushina: National Research University Higher School of Economics, Perm (Russian Federation)
✉ yupapushina@hse.ru
She is a Candidate of Science in Sociology and an Associate Professor of National Research University Higher School of Economics (Perm). Her field of expertise is participation in arts, sociology of fashion, and mind mapping in education. She teaches Consumer Behavior and Business Research Methods. She was a producer of the photo exhibition titled "Defile in Soviet Way" represented the photos of fashion defiles 1964 – 1990 from State Archive of Perm Region and personal archives of Perm photographers, March – April, 2017. She has publications in cultural consumption, fashion in the context of cultural consumption and measurement of attitude to participation in arts.

Roman Abramov: National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow (Russian Federation)
✉ rabramov@hse.ru
He is a Candidate of Science in Sociology and Associate Professor in the Analysis of Social Institutions Department, National Research University Higher School of Economics. He is also a senior researcher at Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (FCTAS RAS). He specializes on the sociology of professions and social memory studies. He has publications about the transformation of the academic profession, postsoviet nostalgia and museum studies. He is visiting fellow CEU(Budapest), Helsinki University, Kennan Institute (Washington), EHESS (Paris).

Introduction

The history of Soviet fashion may be divided into three distinct periods. Firstly, from the early 1920s to the early 1930s, the key trend was the rise of Russian avant-garde design from V. Stepanova, L. Popova, and A. Exter alongside the folk-based designs of N. Lamanova and E. Pribyl'skay. Secondly, the early 1930s to the late 1950s witnessed a Stalinist turn to traditional gender standards of behavior and wartime restrictions.[1] Finally, from the late 1950s to the late 1980s, the values of old European Bildungsburger were adopted, which promoted fashion as a tool cultivating good taste and moderation.[2] Over the course of the third period, the USSR created the largest system of fashion design in the Socialist world: 38 clothes regional fashion houses operated in the USSR by 1984 where 2 802 designers worked.[3]

However, the rare sociological research,[4] many caricatures and newspapers satires witnessed the fall of Soviet light industry and retail to meet customers' expectations, although fashion as such became socially acceptable in the late Soviet society[5] and played the role of soft power in the contest between two systems.[6] The demand for fashionable clothes was so intensive that the phenomenon of under counter trade[7] has appeared.

Given the lack of fashionable and quality clothing in official Soviet retail the drive to cultivate taste and raise awareness of the latest fashions were seen to be necessary. Soviet fashion houses organized lectures and exhibitions on the latest fashions and good taste[8] in order to prepare Soviet people to deal with dressmaker, tailors shops, unofficial private dressmakers, and homemade clothes who compensate for this deficit.[9] Fashion houses also helped to satisfy demand by selling patterns for home dressmaking and serving as a source of inspiration for professional and private dressmakers.

Thus far, regional Soviet fashion houses have not attracted much attention from social science. Existing literature[10] focuses more on Soviet street fashion, examining unofficial practices in buying clothes and the "official fashion dress" found in the discourse of state media. This paper attempts to remedy this gap in the body of knowledge about Soviet fashion. The folklore based Soviet design is also poorly investigated unlike "petit bourgeois Soviet official dress" explored by Bartlett. The main focus of the paper is the role of folklore heritage in Soviet fashion design, which is explored by examining the specific case of the Perm Fashion House. As far as we know, the current paper is the first English-language paper devoted to Soviet fashion design in the provincial regions of the USSR. The case study relies on archive documents from the Perm Region State Archive and interviews of ex-designers of Perm Fashion House, Elena Oborina and Leonid Lemekhov, which were conducted in from May to November 2017.

1. Djurdja Bartlett, *Fashion East: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (USA: Cambridge MIT Press, 2010).
2. Jukka Gronow and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015).
3. Gronow and Zhuravlev, 96.
4. Anatolij Ovsyannikov, Iris Pettaj, Nataliya Rimashevskaya, *Tipologiya potrebitel'skogo povedeniya* (USSR: Nauka, 1989).
5. Liudmila Zhilina and Natalia Frolova, *Problema potrebleniay i vospitaniay lichnoste* (USSR: Mysl, 1969).
6. Jukka Gronow and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015); Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (USA: Cambridge MIT Press,2010).
7. Pavel Romanov and Elena Yarskaya-Smirnova, "Fartsa: Podpol'e sovetskogo obstchestva potrebleniay," Neprikosnovennyi zapas, vol.43(5) (2007), http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/43.
8. Jukka Gronow and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015).
9. Linor Goralik,"Antresole pamyanti: vospominaniay o costume 1990 goda." Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, vol. 84 (2007), http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2007/84/g023.html.
10. *Fashion, Consumption and Everyday Culture in the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1985* , ed. Eva Hausbacher (Germany: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2014); Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (USA: Cambridge MIT Press,2010); Olga Gurova, *Sovetskoe niznhee bel'e: Mezhdu ideologiei i povsednevnost'yu*,(Russia: Novoe Litareturnoe Obozrenie, 2008); Olga Vanshtain, "Modeliruya sovetskih zhenstchin: portnicha kak kul'turnyi geroy epohe socializma," Teoriay mody, vol. 1(3) (2007), https://stengazeta.net/?p=10003793, 2007.

The republican and regional fashion houses were launched by the Ministry of Light Industry in the first half of the 1960s in those territories where garment production was important to the local economy. Fashion houses in republics and regions opened during the reforms of Khrushchev's Thaw period and were set up as for-profit and self-financing organizations. The main economic goal of the regional fashion houses was to provide new models for the mass garment industry while taking into account the capabilities and constraints of local garment factories.[11] This explains why most, near 80%, of the models designed in Soviet fashion houses used the adjective "industrial." The Soviet authorities viewed fashion primarily as a mean of improving the quality of customer goods[12] and cultivation of the population. The both tasks were ideologically important. The first one contributed into the competition between the two systems showing superiority of Socialism. The second one shaped ideologically correct attitudes in respect to Western extravagant and impractical fashion. The folk-inspired design was the way to suggest an alternative to the alien Western fashion.

Besides these industrial collections, the regional fashion houses regularly created collections that were described as "creative," which were intended for exhibitions, fashion shows, and professional seminars. Today this trend is called "runway fashion." "Creative" collections offered sophisticated fits and decoration, representing the latest fashion trends much more closely than the mass industrial lines. Creative collections sought to showcase the creative capacities of a concrete fashion house and, more generally, to cultivate the taste of ordinary people by introducing them to the latest fashion trends.

The peak of local fashion houses' operations occurred between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s, a period referred to as "Late Socialism" in the historic and anthropological literature.[13] This period started in August 1968, with the ground invasion of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia and ended with the introduction of the Perestroika reforms in 1985. Late Socialism is a complex period of Soviet history that defies straightforward and simplistic interpretations. Up to the late 1950s, ideological pressure produced an authoritative discourse.[14] The authoritative discourse was organized around the dogma that was not under question and marking loyalty to the state. All other kinds of discourses had to refer to the authoritative discourse. It was reproduced during official or officially sanctioned events and routines but differed significantly from discourses of private and working routine.[15]

The period of Late Socialism is difficult to separate from the so-called "Stagnation period" (zastoi). Stereotypically, the Stagnation period is associated with political repression and conservatism, although this is by no means the whole picture. The "Soviet system" involved not only strict principles, norms and rules and not only claimed ideological attitudes and values, but it also included many inner contradictions to these norms, rules, attitudes, and values.[16] This was also a period of relative freedom marked by steady improvements in the everyday living standards of the population.[17] Therefore, in order to build a multidimensional understanding of the Stagnation period, what is needed is the perspective of social history and detailed case studies of certain organizations from a variety of fields, such as education, arts, services and customer goods production.

In recent times the Stagnation period has suffered from a lack of attention due to the apparent social amnesia of social scientists and public memory historians. Nowadays more researchers and the wider audience

11. Jukka Gronow and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015); Gosudarstvenyi Arhiv PermskogoKraya, Fond 1097, Delo 846.

12. Gronow and Zhuravlev.

13. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2005).

14. Yurchak.

15. Yurchak.

16. Yurchak.

17. Neringa Klumbytė and Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, "Introduction: What Was Late Socialism"in *Soviet Society in the Era of Late Socialism, 1964–1985*, ed. by Neringa Klumbytė, (USA: Lexington Books, 2015): 1–15.

of post-communist countries have sought to explore the late Soviet period[18] and the role of Soviet fashion. Reconstructing the history of the Perm Fashion House, we found there was significant public interest in how fashion was produced in late Soviet Perm. The exhibition "Defile in the Soviet Way," which consisted of photos from fashion shows held at the Perm Fashion House, even received coverage in regional media.

The Perm Fashion House case shows how amnesia about Soviet history works. Due to the rapid demise of the Soviet system, the accompanying radical economic reforms and the general rejection of Russia's Soviet heritage, many Soviet organizations were suddenly disbanded. Along with industrial enterprises and collective farms, cultural institutions like cinemas and houses of culture were deprived of their old functions and became market places or offices for newly born businesses. All of the Soviet fashion houses folded sooner or later, its employees quit, their archives and collections were lost and new purposes were found for their buildings. Soviet fashion houses also lost their clients: sewing enterprises were closed, ordinary customers struggled with the difficulties brought by the conditions of social and economic changes and preferred cheap Chinese clothes and second hand goods. The emerging Post-Soviet entrepreneurial elite rapidly revealed a preference for brand clothes made abroad. Therefore, Soviet regional fashion houses, together with their achievements and artifacts, fell into oblivion. The Perm Fashion House had been working until 2002, but eventually lost its building in the city center, its industrial clients, and failed to build a sufficient circle of private clients. Nowadays, the only reminder of the Perm Fashion House is the name of the bus stop located near its old premises.

The findings of the paper reveals Soviet state legitimized limited part of the Pre-Revolution Russian cultural heritage namely folk decorative motifs and applied arts disregarding other kinds of heritage as sources for designers' inspiration. In the Late Socialism period folk-inspired design was the top-down initiative promoted in design colleges, fashion magazines, but not available for mass production. The results also shows the designers creating collections for an inner market had more freedom than the ones designed for international trade events.

The paper's structure consists of four parts. In the literature review we examine Soviet folk-inspired design in its social and historical context. The main body goes next consisting of a brief presentation of Perm city, Perm Fashion House and the analysis of folk-inspired collections created there. Finally, in Conclusion we discuss folk-inspired design in the wide social and political context.

Cultural heritage in soviet fashion from first revolutionary years to late socialism period

During the first period of Soviet fashion history avant-garde designers, L. Popova, V. Stepanova, A. Exter did not link their creative search with any pre-existing tradition.[19] Interest in decorative folk design and applied arts existed before the Revolution 1917, but it was only in its aftermath that design based on folk decorative motifs and applied arts became ideologically desirable and credible. Folk principles were preferred in Soviet design for a number of reasons. Folk design was seen to develop a space for creativity in Post-Revolutionary conditions of strict material and technological limitations. Such designs also had an ideological appeal in as far as they belonged to an 'exploited class' and could celebrate the national and cultural differences of peoples of the USSR. Employing folk designs also had the advantage of being less sensitive to fashion fads and could insulate Soviet fashion from pernicious Western influences.[20]

One of the central figures in this period was Nadezhda Lamanova, the first Russian couturier and a supplier to the Imperial Court. After the Revolution, she found a shelter in the Workshop of Modern Costume governed by the Central Administration for Scientific Institutions (Glavnauka) (Strizhenova, 1972).

18. Olena Nikolayenko, "Contextual effects on historical memory: Soviet nostalgia among post-Soviet adolescents," Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 41 (2008): 243–259.

19. Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (USA: Cambridge MIT Press,2010).

20. Bartlett, Gronow Jukka and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015).

Lamanova's role in establishing trends in Soviet fashion was multiple. She acted as a couturier designing sophisticated dresses in the scarce post-revolutionary years and represented the infant Soviet State in international events such as the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts.[21] She was also an industrial designer assisting in the application of folk costumes to mass-produced designs.[22] Furthermore, she was a designer of theatre costumes and a mentor for future designers.

Lamanova's approach in applying folk principles in Soviet fashion challenged both the avant-garde, then the most famous phenomenon in Russian art, and the exotic style of Diaghilev's Seasons created by Leon Bakst.[23] Lamanova designed trendy straight silhouette dresses of poor quality materials, which were decorated with embroidery, some of which were rather sophisticated. The straight silhouettes were not only trendy as such but also similar to the Russian folk costumes and very suitable to traditional Russian embroidery.[24] Therefore, in her time N. Lamanova and her colleague E. Prebyl'sky a produced folk-inspired designs that were also fashionable and trendy. The advantage of this design was appreciated by the Gran Prix of International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1925.[25] This fact became ideologically important in the legitimation of folk principles as a source of Soviet fashion.

Lamanova's and Prebyl'skya's approach to the application of Russian folk crafts became the officially approved a way to design and decorate folk-inspired apparel.[26] In other words, if we use the terminology of Yurchak, folk-based design came to play a central role in the authoritarian discourse of Soviet fashion. According to Djurdja Bartlett, official Soviet dress was a form of petit bourgeois clothing that imitated Western fashion.[27] Based on our evidence, we would argue that folk-inspired designed dress can be understood as the second important kind of Soviet official dress alongside with petit bourgeois clothing.

Unlike the petit bourgeois dress the folklore inspired design as the authoritative discourse highlighted distinctive character of Soviet fashion connecting it with practicality and aesthetic of working clothes. It also referred to the national character that made it essential for representing the brand of the USSR during international fashion and trade events.

As the openness of the country increased and the generations of Soviet fashion shifted, attitudes to folk-based designs changed. Irina Andreeva, a former ODMO expert, sharply criticized the mature phase of official Soviet folk-based design on three lines. Firstly, there was the tendency to search for unchangeable proportions and silhouettes in fashion traditions, despite the fact that fashion is a perpetually changeable phenomenon. Secondly, she highlighted reductionism in boiling down all the diverse folk costumes of the USSR into Russian forms used in weddings, festivals, ceremonies, and peasant life.Finally, Andreeva criticized its unsuitability for mass production.[28]

One leading designer of ODMO, Alexander Igmand, also remembers the practice of folk-inspired design without any particular fondness:

> The level (of design – Iu. P.) was absolutely different. In terms of ideas and creative capacities, the Fashion Houses collections in Riga, Tallin, Leningrad and Minsk stood well above the 'Middle Asian' Fashion Houses, which mainly worked based on folk motifs.[29]

21. Bartlett.

22. Anna Blank and Zinaida Fomina, *Russkay narodnay odezhda i sovremennoe plat'e* (USSR: Legkoi i Pestchevoy Promyshlennosti, 1982).

23. Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (USA: Cambridge MIT Press, 2010).

24. Iren Andreeva, *Chastnay zhizn' pri socialisme. Otchet sovetskogo obyvatelay* (Russia: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2009).

25. Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (USA: Cambridge MIT Press, 2010); Tatiana Strizhenova, *Iz istoree sovetskogo costuma* (USSR: Sovetskii Hudozhnik, 1972).

26. Bartlett 2011; Jukka Gronow and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015).

27. Bartlett.

28. Iren Andreeva, *Chastnayzhizn' prisocialisme. Otchet sovetskogo obyvatelay* (Russia: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2009).

29. Anastasia Yushkova, *Alexandr Igmand: "Yaodeval Brezhneva..."* (Russia: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008) 52.

Therefore, a phenomenon that started as part of an experiment in designing fashionable dresses of poor material and application of folk crafts, eventually evolved into a kind "anti-fashion." As it happen with authoritative discourse it loses its initial meanings and exists for its own sake.

The rise of openness provoked another factor influencing Soviet fashion design. As the battle lines in the living standards contest between socialism and capitalism came into focus, fashion emerged as one of the vital dimensions of this competition.[30] Soviet fashion was divided into two realities. The first reality was international. This can be seen in using fashion as an instrument of cultural diplomacy during international exhibitions and trade fairs. Soviet officials had clear priorities in supporting fashion: collections for international fashion events enjoyed a better supply of fabrics and accessories compared those chosen for mass production. Folk-inspired designs were an obligatory part of each collection for international fashion or trade events.

The second reality was domestic. The main goal of the regional fashion houses was to design new models for regional sewing enterprises that could improve the quality of Soviet-produced consumer goods. Nearly 80% of models belonged to what was termed the "industrial collection." Industrial collection models had to meet the requirements of cost-effectiveness and be suitable for mass production by a certain factory in several sizes. The sewing enterprises bought the needed industrial models and technical documentation, paying for it with their revenues. The Soviet industrial collection designers struggled with a deficit of fabrics, thread, and accessories, as well as the worn out and outdated equipment of the Soviet garment industry. As a result, the design made for mass production was simplified and old fashioned. Collections for international events or runway collections for All-Union designers' meetings were the only way for Soviet designers to create fashionable clothes and to show their creative capacities.[31]

The folk-inspired design for home and abroad: freedom and censorship

Perm Region was a large industrial area in the Urals, a part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (the RSFSR). The capital of the Perm Region was designated as a "closed" city due to sensitive military enterprises located there. There were several levels of sensitivity for cities and towns where Research and Development Centers and military-industrial enterprises were located.[32] The levels varied from completely closed settlements that were not available for visiting even for Soviet citizens without special permission, to cities to which foreign citizens were prohibited from visiting. Typically, later cities involved high concentrations of skilled and qualified workers, including engineering professionals and qualified blue-collar workers. These cities often enjoyed better supplies and attracted humanitarians who found thankful audiences among highly educated technicians. Perm was such a semi-closed city with developed industrial, educational and cultural infrastructure. The city's population achieved reached one million in 1979.

The Perm Fashion Houses were launched in 1961 for designing new models for garment industry of Perm Region.[33] In the 1970, 217 employees worked for Perm Fashion House, including management, designers, constructors, sewers, and technicians.[34] Folk motifs in fashion design were widely promoted in fashion magazines and used in the creative collections of Soviet fashion houses. The Perm Fashion Houses were no exception in this regard. This paper examines the cases of two designers from the Perm Fashion House and their experiments with heritage in fashion design. These designers can be viewed as representatives of

30. Jukka Gronow and Sergey Zhuravlev, *Fashion meets Socialism. Fashion industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War* (Finland: Finish Literature Society SKS, 2015).

31. Gronow and Zhuravlev.

32. Kate Brown, *Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2015).

33. Gosudarstvenyi Arhiv Permskogo Kraya, Fond 1097, Delo 846.

34. Gosudarstvenyi Arhiv Permskogo Kraya, Fond 1510, Delo 157.

different approaches to the application of traditional costume heritage in Soviet fashion. The central focus of this paper is on the following"runway collections" and sets of sketches:

- A collection based on Komi-Permian folk costume and applied art, 1969 by Elena Oborina;[35]
- A collection inspired by wooden sculptures featuring the images of the Savior, Our Lady, and saints of Russian orthodox church created by local professional and amateur craftsmen in the 17th and 18th centuries, 1970 by Elena Oborina;[36]
- A collection designed for the International Trade Faire 1982 in Leipzig where the Perm Fashion House represented Soviet fashion from the Perm fashion designers collective under the general supervision of Leonid Lemekhov. As this collection existed in two forms, the initial one and the one after correction of ODMO, we will discuss both in sequence;
- A set of the sketches entitled "Rural New" from the Perm fashion designers under the general supervision of Leonid Lemekhov. The sketches for this collection were subsequently published in the book "*Russkay narodnay odezhda i sovremennoe plat'e*" by Anna Blank and Zinaida Fomina in 1982.

Elena Oborina (born in 1940) and Leonid Lemekhov (born in 1949) were both given a professional education from the best art colleges of the Soviet Union. They designed the most important runway collections in the House's history. Elena Oborina graduated from the Moscow Textile Institute, which was at the time one of the USSR's most prestigious design college. A native of Perm, the designer was born in a family of respectful painters. Both of her parents practiced realistic painting. Elena studied arts at a Sverdlovsk art secondary school before she applying for the Textile Institute. In making this choice she was attracted by the decorative painting style practiced at the Textile Institute and rejected the practice of "painting a stool during a whole week" she had encountered at the Sverdlovsk school.[37] Leonid Lemekhov graduated from the Vera Muckhina College of Fine Arts and Industrial Design in Leningrad.[38] He started his art education as a kid, graduating from the High School of Academy of Fine Arts. Lemekhov was nearly thirty years old when he was appointed chief designer of the Perm Fashion House in 1984.[39]

Interview analysis revealed two factors shaping the collections. The first factor is the designer's attitudes to folklore and personal interpretation of folk principles in contemporary costume. For both designers, folk principles in modern costume were part of their aesthetic program. The history of costume design was an obligatory subject in Soviet design education and provided necessary experience to young designers and influenced their tastes.[40]

Despite the official focus on promoting South Russian costumes as a base for folk-inspired design,[41] in their collections both designers focused on the Urals as a territory with particular cultural heritage and image. Although Leonid Lemkhov was a stranger to the Urals in the early 1980s, he nonetheless took up the Urals theme. This emphasis contrasted with the stance of the ODMO, which interpreted cultural heritage in terms of luxury and exotic styles for international fashion and trade events.[42]

35. *Vkus. Starina. Moda*

36. *Vkus. Starina. Moda*

37. Elena Oborina, "Unpublished interview for the research project"The fashion that works №18-01-0027," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:36:00, May, September, 2017.

38. Nowadays the college is called "The Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design."

39. Leonid Lemekhov, "Unpublished interview for the research project"The fashion that works №18-01-0027," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:50:00, August, October, 2017.

40. Emma Myshlayeva, "Tvorchestvo molodyh," Zhurnal mod,(Autumn 1980): 32–33; Irina Alpatova, "Hudozhnik Alexei Veselov," Zhurnal mod, (Leto 1981): 30–34.

41. Anna Blank and Zinaida Fomina, *Russkay narodnay odezhda i sovremennoe plat'e* (USSR: Legkoi i Pistchevoy Promyshlennosti, 1982).

42. Alla See Tschipakina, *Moda v SSSR. Sovetskii Kuznetckii, 14* (Russia: Slovo/Slovo, 2009).

Elena Oborina was strongly associated with local cultural heritage through her Perm origin and her experience of visiting local museums.[43] Her runway collections reflected the Komi-Permian tradition of costume decoration, from the Perm 'animal' style, to local wooden sculpture, which inspired Perm Television to film a documentary.[44] The film's voice-over narration and music emphasized the folk roots of the collections. Nowadays this rare documentary is one of the few sources of information about the Perm Fashion House available online.

In Lemekhov's designs, folk motifs are very modest. The designer created the "Ural" look based on the deep colors of nature, employing strict and simple forms and silhouettes. The Kaleidoscope models (see Pic.1) brought the festive mood of fair or ritual costumes with bright colors combined with a dark base. The idea of the collection was to express a unique "Ural" perspective on each category of clothes, showing "how people in the Ural understand an evening dress"[45] (see Pic. 1, 2).

The second factor pushing the designers to use principles of folklore costumes was censorship that abandoned any item or work of art that appeared "Western." This was exacerbated by the lack of fashion magazines and postgraduate training that could have provided inspiration and ideas for new collections. Nadezhda Lamanova used the folk-inspired design to avoid a head-on clash with Soviet ideology, but designers in the early 1980s had to find modern interpretation of this path. The "Rural New" collection,[46] supervised by Leonid Lemekhov, interpreted and played with the urban fashion from the first decades of the twentieth century. In designing working clothes, Lemekhov followed the strong traditions of Soviet fashion that Lamanova started, namely that function and practicability should be considered as the important aspect of design alongside "comfort and fineness."[47] As the officially promoted South-Russian folk costume became increasingly archaic, Lemekhov turned to an alternative interpretation of folk costumes. It is possible that Tatyana Strizhenova's reflections on Russian urban fashion[48] from the early twentieth century influenced Lemekhov's interpretation. She considered the urban fashion of that period as a traditional costume mixed with both a particular national style and elements of European dress.[49] As a Soviet fashion theorist, Strizhenova viewed urban dress as the street fashion of working people of different social groups. She also noted the process whereby city costumes leaked into the villages, replacing patriarchal dressing norms.[50]

Therefore, Perm designers had enough creative freedom to interpret folk-inspired design in their own ways, allowing differentiation from the officially approved versions without openly rebelling against it. The designers had access to media channels, which allowed them to communicate their vision to the wider public.

Folklore for inner consumption: the runway collections of the Perm Fashion House by Elena Oborina

Elena Oborina, the first fashion designer with a professional education, started working at the Perm Fashion House in 1968. Up to that time, the Perm Fashion House had been in existence for seven years and had focused designing for the garment industry. However, over time, local fashion houses were asked to

43. Elena Oborina, "Unpublished interview for the research project 'The fashion that works №18-01-0027'," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:36:00, May, September, 2017.

44. *Vkus. Starina. Moda.*

45. Leonid Lemekhov, "Unpublished interview for the research project 'The fashion that works №18-01-0027'," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:50:00, August, October, 2017.

46. Anna Blank and Zinaida Fomina, *Russkay narodnay odezhda i sovremennoeplat'e* (USSR: Legkoi i Pistchevoy Promyshlennosti, 1982).

47. Blank and Fomina, 22.

48. Tatiana Strizhenova, *Iz istoree sovetskogo costuma* (USSR: Sovetskii hudozhnik, 1972).

49. Strizhenova.

50. Strizhenova.

develop runway collections, a task previously only done by the fashion houses of the capital. This shift was due to the sense that, in order to raise the level of taste and rise of quality of local fashion houses, designers needed more creative autonomy and to be set creative tasks. In 1968, the Perm Fashion House management became aware of the necessity of runway collections, and it launched an experimental group of three designers led by Elena Oborina. She enjoyed the full trust of the head and deputy designers. The result was evidently so important for the Perm Fashion Houses that the experimental group received permission to work at home due to the lack of working space in the building.[51]

As a new graduate, Oborina was fond of the history of costume, which was taught extensively at the Textile Institute. Her previous knowledge about Komi-Permain costume traditions and the Perm animal style was vital to the Perm Fashion House's first runway collection. Although the designer claimed she was full of ideas, Komi-Permain heritage was her first choice for runway collection, because she saw the local folk traditions as native and deserved to be celebrated. Another reason was lack of other resources for inspiration: poor and uniform design of mass produced clothes, absence of interesting images in street style and fashion magazines.[52] While this claim is true for Perm in the late 1960s, as a student of Textile Institute Elena Oborina was able to visit Western fashion house shows during the International Fashion Festival in Moscow. Therefore, as a designer, Elena Oborina was not isolated from the trends of Western fashion.

Elena Oborina saw her task as "to make more than just a copy of the (Komi-Permain – Iu. P.) costume, but develop a contemporary fashion with the flavor (of folklore costume – Iu.P.)."[53] The designer alternated folk-fit and folk-inspired decoration. The collection was made in red, white, orange, beige, and brown colors. All colors were warm and similar to the colors used in the decoration of traditional Komi-Permian costumes. The fit accentuated the mannequins' figures and suited young, slim and tall women. In keeping with the fashion trends of the year, the skirts in the collection were short.The designer applied traditional Komi-Permian patterns for the decoration of accessories. This included leaver belts, semiprecious stones, and metallic adornments. One of the central images of the collection was that of the hunter. This, the traditional occupation of Komi-Permian men, inspired a design based on a traditional shooting-coat, hunting belt, and mittens. It required using leather, fur, and accessories made of them. Oborina and her colleagues had to play the role of craftswomen creating metallic adornments built from the bottom of a tin can and leather accessories for the decoration of the majority of the models. The provincial designers followed in Lamanova's footsteps by creating accessories despite the poor materials on hand. This situation illustrates the serious deficit of necessary items and poor supply in the Perm Fashion House.

The search for proper accessories resulted in a new creative collaboration between the designers and local craftsmen, something that was a first in the history of the Perm Fashion. In the USSR, knitted garments and accessories were designed in knitting fashion houses. For the Komi Permian Collection, the experimental group collaborated with designers from the "New"knitting workshop. Other collaborators were craftsmen working with semiprecious stones. They created a special set of adornments for the collection based on the designers' descriptions. When, however, the designers were faced with the restrictions of mass production, collaboration with local producers became impossible. The attempt to have orders custom-made valenki failed: "when we asked (a mass producer in Perm – Iu.P.) to produce a few pairs of valenki, they could not help us, because their equipment was too old and rough."[54]

The Oborina's second runway collection was inspired by wooden religious sculpture preserved and exhibited in the Perm State Art Gallery. The sculptures, which were created between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, wear Gothic style clothes in accord with Oborina's interest in medieval dress. Her final project in the Textile Institute was entitled "Distant Years" and included strong references to medieval cos-

51. Elena Oborina, "Unpublished interview for the research project 'The fashion that works №18-01-0027'," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:36:00, May, September, 2017.

52. Oborina.

53. Oborina.

54. Elena Oborina, "Unpublished interview for the research project 'The fashion that works №18-01-0027'," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:36:00, May, September, 2017.

tumes. The designer applied another approach to the interpretation of heritage in her second collection. If the first collection referred to its folk roots through decoration and accessories, then the second collection put silhouettes in the leading role. Inspired by the floor-length clothes on sculptures of holy men and women, Elena Oborina designed maximum length clothing and emphasized waistline dresses, wraps, round yokes with hoods, fichus and wide sleeves with high cuffs. Unlike the previous collection, decorative elements played a modest role in the form of limited decorative buckles. The fit and hoods harked to the Middle Ages and created the whole image of the collection. Both collections were successfully represented during All-Union Meetings of Designers. They proved to be a success and made the Perm Fashion House visible among other fashion houses of the RSFSR.[55]

Folklore for export: the Perm Fashion House in Leipzig in 1982

As we have noted above, Soviet folk-inspired designs were often used to represent the Soviet Union during international fashion and trade events. An excellent example of this can be seen in Leipzig in 1982. When Leonid Lemekhov was asked to prepare a collection for the Leipzig International Trade Fair, he was delighted. As the chief designer of a regional fashion house, Lemekhov saw his task not only in the presentation of the USSR but also in showcasing the Urals: "That is why we had a double load: firstly, the sixtieth Anniversary of the USSR, and secondly, to show we have something else except bears walking alongside streets."[56] Lemekhov's first sketches were inspired by the Urals as the territory between Asia and Europe with its own particular image (Fig. 1, 2). He interpreted folklore in a modern way using modern fabrics and silhouettes.

Although the first sketches were highly appreciated by the representative of ODMO, Gennadiy Zeinalov, nothing from these sketches was used for the collection presented in Leipzig. As the year 1982 was marked by the sixtieth anniversary of the formation of the USSR, "they needed (to represent – Iu. P.) more friendship of peoples (of the USSR – Iu.P.)," but the image also had to be dynamic, youthful, not that of "a sixty-year old with a walking stick."[57] In order to celebrate the sixtieth year of the USSR, the Perm Fashion houses designers created a set of models devoted to the national costume each of Soviet republic: "the most important thing is to do it based on national costumes."[58] As the collection was aimed at an international trade events, the chief-designer could travel around the country looking for suitable and quality fabric designs.

The designers had to do extensive research in the field of national costumes of each Soviet republic:

> I told them to dig, Uzbek (costume – Iu.P.), to dig, to look through. I love Uzbekistan.... I had to modernize and stylize all the items. It could not be pure...I did not have pure Uzbek staff, I had staff that looked Uzbek. I could find similar printing...By the way, I worked with an ethnography expedition, inCentral Asia...It was an archeological-ethnographical Kharezmsk expedition.[59]

The number of folk models was equal to the number of the republics in the USSR, fifteen of forty-seven items. The chief-designer called them "image-building," highlighting the impracticality of these models. As can be seen from the Fig.3, the models from the first sketches were much more practical than the final version of the collection.

55. Elena Oborina, "Unpublished interview for the research project 'The fashion that works №18-01-0027'," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:36:00, May, September, 2017.

56. Leonid Lemekhov, "Unpublished interview for the research project 'The fashion that works №18-01-0027'," interview by I. Papushina, audio, 02:50:00, August, October, 2017.

57. Lemekhov.

58. Lemekhov.

59. Lemekhov.

Figure 1 – The sketch "Kaleidoscope," the first form for Leipzig Trade Fair 1982 by Leonid Lemekhov

Figure 2 – The sketch "Ural," the first form for Leipzig Trade Fair 1982 by Leonid Lemekhov

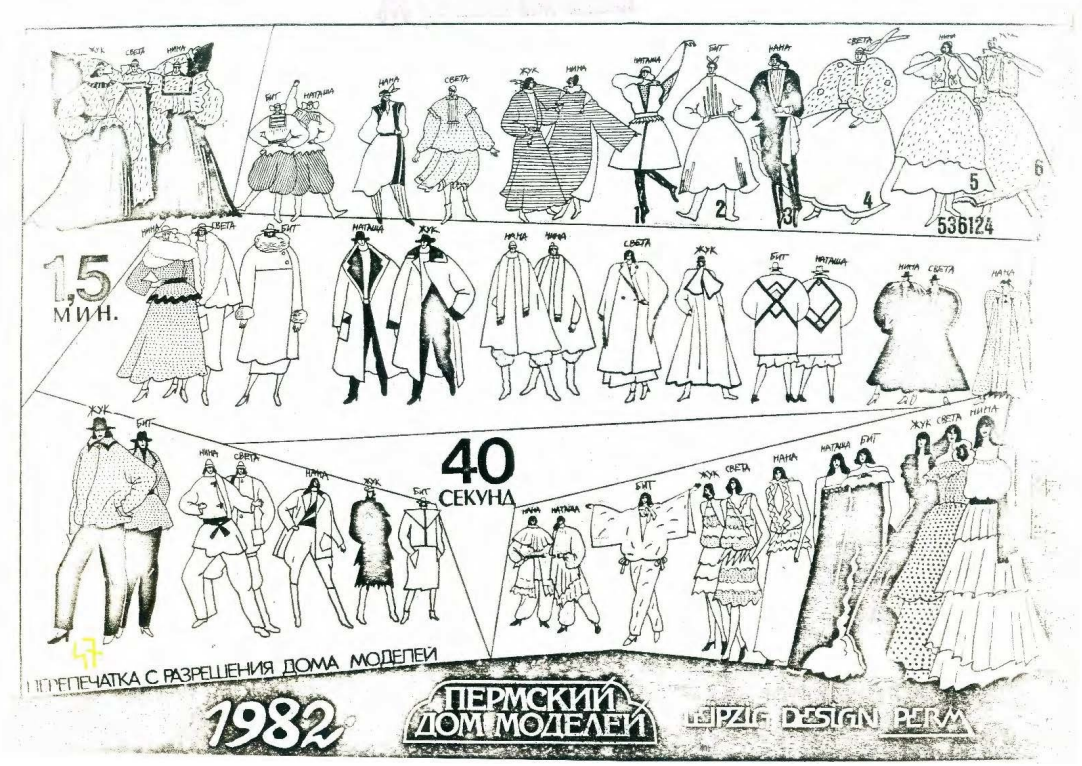

Figure 3 – The final sketch for Leipzig Trade Fair 1982 by Leonid Lemekhov

Surprisingly, even now, Leonid Lemekhov does not criticize this policy of ODMO. His attitude is explained by his strong self-identification with the Soviet social and political order: "I've said, All right, it will be done. Generally, I was quite a patriotic person."[60] Being the chief-designer Lemekhov does not see the Leipzig collection as his collection. He highlights that it is the product of collective work of all Perm Fashion House designers. This position is characteristic of Soviet fashion. The citation of leading male clothes designer in ODMO Alexander Igmand on "Red Dior," Slava Zaitsev, offers some elaboration of this claim:

> There was only one unpleasant moment in our relationship and that was when he highlighted that this was his personal collection even though there was a creative group working on it. In fact, it is the way it is done in all over the world, although our situation was a bit different.[61]

The intervention of ideology into the creative process raised the question of how the chief-designer would organize the fashion show. The whole idea of showing the Ural-inspired collection from outer garments to evening dresses was destroyed. Normally during a fashion show cool dress was demonstrated after outer garments.In the Perm case the approved set of folk-inspired models had to be demonstrated in the beginning of the fashion show because of the ideological reasons. As a result, the fashion show of Perm Fashion House consisted of two parts, folklore and modern. The folklore part was a showcase of folk-inspired design. It was accompanied by the slow walk of mannequins wearing monumental multi-layered costumes to the music of "Pictures at the Exhibition" by Mussorgsky in the special arrangements of the band "Emerson, Lake, and Palmer." Leonid Lemekhov describes the choice of the music as his "sin" because as a young man he was a member of a band playing Soviet rock and roll. The modern part was organized according to the rules of Soviet fashion show: from outer clothes through to cool and evening dresses.

Therefore, creating collections for an international trade event the designer had much less freedom com-

60. Lemekhov.

61. Anastasia Yushkova, *AlexandrIgmand: "Ya odeval Brezhneva..."* (Russia: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008): 43.

pared with the creation of the collection for the internal market. The role of authoritative discourse was minor for the internal market collections. The designers did not limited themselves by South-Russian costume referring to the costumes of different peoples of the USSR.

Conclusion

This paper has considered the role of cultural heritage in Soviet fashion design with reference to the case of the Perm Fashion House. From all Pre-Revolutionary Russian heritage only folk decorative and applied art was approved by the state ideology for Soviet fashion design. This began its official history from the late 1920s onwards.Thus, by the late 1920s and early 1930s, folklore was officially established as a rich source of the Soviet fashion design. The application of folklore in design was obligatory and controlled by artistic committees of fashion houses. As the ideologically correct language, folk-based design became part of the authoritative discourse of Soviet fashion, and folk-inspired costume won the status of official Soviet costume as well as petit-bourgeois dress.

State policy toward tradition, heritage, and folklore varied from decade to decade. During the Second World War, Stalinism returned to traditionalism and the aesthetics of empire. This was noticeable in army uniforms and military insignias. After the war, the conservative turn in the domestic policies continued. It resulted in the campaign against"rootless cosmopolitism." This included the persecution of artists, scientist, and fashionistas due to their real or imagined sympathy for Western culture and fashion. The Thaw period allowed the co-existence of both pro-Western lifestyle and Russophile stances. Some part of the intelligentsia and party bureaucrats converted to a Russophile ideological agenda, which was reflected in the "Village Prose" literary movement. This led to the launch of a new travel route based on Russian history and an increased demand for applied art in interior decorating.[62] Folksy clothes, interior decorations, and ideas became a "bottom-up" fashion movement among certain social groups in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Unlike this bottom-up folksy fashion, official folk-inspired designs were a "top-down" initiative aimed at competing with the popularity of Western fashion and offer a non-Western model to represent the USSR during international fashion and trade events. In constructing its international image, the Soviet authorities had a clear idea what kind of folk-inspired design the state needed. Generally, folk-based designs presented an exotic image of USSR and Soviet fashion to international fashion and trade events. Armed with their predetermined image of "correct" folk-inspired designs, official representatives could interfere in the creative process and force the designers to conform to more habitual styles. The state controlled traditionalism in fashion design differed significantly from the rise of traditionalism in other fields of Soviet everyday culture. The folklore design as the top-down initiative prevented deeper integration and more complex interplay between modern and traditional costume.

The above analysis of Perm Fashion House case has shown the designers had enough freedom to rethink folk heritage for the domestic market, whereas international presentations were strictly controlled. Officials used their power to shape the image of Soviet fashion according to the needs of ideology. Therefore, the power of the authoritative discourse varied depending on the goals of the collection. However, this paper has considered only those cases where designers looked to innovate but stopped short of rebellion.

Controversy to stereotypes about domination of decline and indifference in Soviet Epoch of Stagnation the Perm Fashion House case reveals how Soviet designers rethought cultural heritage, created new meanings and approached the tasks creatively. The designers considered folk costume in the context of the history of costume. They approached local cultural heritage by developing a trademark that helped the organization to position itself. The folk-inspired design was the way of dealing with ideological limitations on Western-style designs on the one hand, and the strict resource limitations, on the other. Nevertheless, taking a positive attitude towards folk costume as a part of a designer's personal aesthetic program was necessary. It

62. Anna Razuvalova, *Pisatele-«dereventschiki»: literatura i konservnaya ideologiya 1970-h godov* (Russia: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2015).

allowed a reinterpretation of folk costume in wider and more sophisticated ways than the official agenda encouraged.

The folk-inspired design existed mainly in the field of runway fashion. Runway models were not produced on a mass scale because poorly equipped sewing factories could not produce them. In the deficit economy obtaining fabrics, furniture and decorations of the needed quality for folk-inspired models was a serious challenge. The proper accessories were also not produced on a massive scale. This meant that the folk-inspired design was not available for mass production and for leaking in mass and street fashion.The case of the Perm Fashion House shows that the folk-inspired design free from the authoritative discourse could contribute to the shaping of a territory's image and integrate local cultural brands.

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