

## The Background of Ornamental Design Practice: Theory and Practice Based Research on Ornamental Traditions

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**Abstract :** This research looks at the principles and purposes ornamental design has served in the field of textile design. Ornamental designs are characterized by richness of details, abundance of elements, vegetative motifs and organic forms that flow harmoniously in complex compositions. Research on ornamental design is significant, because ornaments have been overlooked and considered as less meaningful and aesthetically pleasing than minimalistic, modern designs. This is despite the fact that in many parts of the world ornaments have been an important part of the cultural identification and expression for centuries. Ornament has been claimed to be superficial and merely used as a decorative way to hide the faults of designs. Such generalization is an incorrect interpretation of the real purposes of ornament. Many ornamental patterns tell stories, present mythological scenes or convey symbolistic meanings. Historically, ornamental decorations have been representing ideas and characteristics such as abundance, wealth, power and personal magnificence. The production of fine ornaments required refined skill, eye for intricate detail and perseverance while compiling complex elements into harmonious compositions. For this reason, ornaments have played an important role in the advancement of craftsmanship. Even though it has been claimed that people in the western design world have lost the relationship to ornament, the relation to it has merely changed from the practice of a craftsman to conceptualisation of a designer. With the help of new technological tools the production of ornaments has become faster and more efficient, demanding less manual labour. Designers who commit to this style of organic forms and vegetative motifs embrace and respect nature by representing its organically growing forms and by following its principles. The complexity of the designs is used as a way to evoke a sense of extraordinary beauty and stimulate intellect by freeing the mind from the predetermined interpretations. Through the study of these purposes it can be demonstrated that complex and richer design styles are as valuable a part of the world of design as more modern design approaches. The study highlights the meaning of ornaments by presenting visual examples and literature research findings. The practice based part of the project is the visual analysis of historical and cultural ornamental traditions such as Indian Chikan embroidery, Persian carpets, Art Nouveau and Rococo according to the rubric created for the purpose. The next step is the creation of ornamental designs based on the key elements in different styles. Theoretical and practical parts are woven together in this study that respects respect the long traditions of ornaments and highlight the importance of these design approaches to the field, in contrast to the more commonly preferred styles.

**Keywords :** cultural design traditions, ornamental design, organic forms from nature, textile design

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