BEYOND BORDERS: INDIAN FOLK ART IN CONTEMPORARY DIASPORIC FASHION

Gurpreet Kaur*

Abstract: In diasporic settings, young designers of Indian origin are reimagining folk art by integrating traditional motifs and textile patterns into Western clothing. This fusion serves as both a homage to their heritage and an expression of contemporary identity. This paper explores how folk art forms such as Phulkari, Kantha, and Banarasi embroidery motifs, traditionally used in Indian attire, are now appearing on blazers, dresses, and streetwear, creating a visual dialogue between the past and present. Through case studies and visual analysis, the study examines the inspirations behind this trend, including nostalgia, cultural continuity, and identity negotiation. While some view these adaptations as a dilution of authenticity, others see them as a necessary evolution that keeps folk traditions alive in a globalized world. This paper situates these designs within the broader discourse of transnational aesthetics, exploring how diasporic designers use fashion to bridge the gap between homeland and adopted cultures. The paper highlights fashion as a cultural medium, demonstrating how Indian folk art is being reshaped in contemporary diasporic fashion to maintain relevance while honoring tradition.

Introduction

Fashion has long served as a medium for cultural storytelling, where fabric, color, and design act as markers of identity and heritage. In the context of the Indian diaspora, young designers are increasingly turning to folk art traditions—such as Phulkari, Kantha, Madhubani, and Kalamkari—to create contemporary apparel that reflects both their cultural roots and their global experiences. This hybrid aesthetic represents a dynamic engagement with heritage, as traditional motifs find new life in modern silhouettes such as blazers, dresses, and streetwear. This paper explores how diasporic designers use folk art in fashion to navigate nostalgia, cultural continuity, and identity negotiation. Stuart Hall, in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, puts it: "It is by our use of things, and what we say, think, and feel about them - how we represent them - that we give them meaning." In part, we give objects, people, and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation that *we* bring to them. In part, we give things meaning by how we use them or integrate them into our everyday practices. (Hall, 1997, p. 3) While some critics argue that adapting folk traditions to contemporary Western clothing risks diluting their authenticity, others contend that such evolution is essential for cultural survival in a globalized world. By examining case studies of diasporic designers and their reinterpretations of Indian folk traditions, this paper highlights fashion's role as a bridge between homeland and adopted cultures.

I. Theoretical Framework: Diaspora, Fashion, and Cultural Identity

Diasporic identity is shaped by both a connection to the homeland and the realities of life in a new cultural setting. Avtar Brah gives an account of what could be a "home" for diaspora: Where is home? On the one hand, "home" is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical

* GURPREET KAUR, Research Scholar, Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India, Email: gk244253@gmail.com.

territory that is seen as the place of "origin." On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. It's sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, somber grey skies in the middle of the day… all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations. In other words, the varying experience of the pains and pleasures, the terrors and contentments, or the highs and humdrum of everyday lived culture…. (Brah, 1996, p. 188) In this way, indulging in clothing elements or folk art of the homeland while being/living far away from it could also be interpreted as an act of visiting home. As Stuart Hall asserts, cultural identity is a matter of "'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (Hall, p. 225), pointing to the fluid, evolving nature of identity, particularly for diasporic subjects who navigate multiple cultural influences simultaneously. Fashion, as an outward expression of self, becomes a crucial site for negotiating this fluid identity. Arjun Appadurai's idea of *scapes*, i.e., ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33), suggests the fluid nature of these phenomena in the time of globalization. Considering this, fashion is not uninfluenced by globalization and transnationalism. Transnational aesthetics, which refer to the blending of cultural elements across geographic and cultural boundaries, offer a useful lens for understanding how folk art is adapted in diasporic fashion. Indian folk art, traditionally confined to specific regional clothing, carries deep historical and symbolic significance. However, in the hands of diasporic designers, these motifs undergo a transformation—no longer bound to their original forms but instead incorporated into contemporary garments that reflect the hybrid identities of their creators and consumers.

II. Nostalgia, Cultural Continuity, and Identity Negotiation

The use of folk art in diasporic fashion is often driven by nostalgia—a longing for the homeland and its traditions. Fashion provides a tangible way for second- and third-generation Indians to reconnect with their roots while simultaneously asserting their multicultural identities. This dual allegiance is reflected in the hybridity of their designs, where traditional Indian motifs coexist with Western cuts and styles (Bhachu, 2004, p. 78). However, this adaptation also raises concerns about cultural dilution. Some critics argue that removing folk art from its traditional context—where it was embedded in ritualistic and social practices—risks reducing it to mere aesthetic appeal. Yet others argue that such reinvention is necessary for cultural preservation. As Hall suggests, culture is not static; rather, it evolves as it interacts with different historical and social forces. Diasporic designers, by integrating Indian folk traditions into global fashion, ensure these traditions remain alive in new and meaningful ways.

II. Fashion as a Transnational Cultural Medium

The emergence of folk art in diasporic fashion aligns with the broader discourse of transnational aesthetics, where cultural elements transcend national borders and acquire new meanings. This process is facilitated by globalization, which has enabled designers to access both traditional artisans in India and international fashion markets. The digital age further amplifies this exchange, with social media allowing designers to showcase their work to global audiences. Moreover, fashion serves as a powerful medium for political and cultural expression. By incorporating folk art into Western attire, diasporic designers challenge Eurocentric fashion narratives and assert the legitimacy of non-Western artistic traditions. This not only broadens the scope of contemporary fashion but also fosters cross-cultural appreciation and dialogue.

III. Indian Folk Art in Diasporic Fashion: A Case Study

The paper analyses four labels: first, Rootsgear Clothing Co., founded by Tanmit Singh and Sunmit Singh, an American streetwear label that draws inspiration from South Asian culture. Secondly, Neha Kapil, a Los Angeles-based Indian-American fashion designer, founded the label *Agni*. Third, Natasha Sumant, founder of label *Gundistudios*, is an Art Director and Interdisciplinary Designer based in Brooklyn. Her designs are always infused with a touch of her cultural heritage. Fourth, Satyam Abhishek Advani, a Mumbai-born, London-based fashion designer, founder of label *Advani London*, which seeks to fill a distinct gap in the luxury market by blending Eastern and Western cultures.



Example 1

The ensemble in example 1 (by Natasha Sumant) presents a compelling fusion of Indian folk elements with contemporary Western fashion, resulting in a look that is both striking and symbolic. The black dress, sleek and modern in silhouette, is adorned with golden trims reminiscent of the red-and-gold fabric commonly used in Indian temples. This fabric is often associated with divinity and sacred rituals, draped around idols and religious artifacts to signify spiritual energy. By integrating these trims into a Western-style ensemble, the outfit bridges the gap between the sacred and the contemporary, bringing a traditional motif into a new and unconventional context. The most dramatic element of the image is the severed-head prop, which appears inspired by depictions of Rakshasas, the demonic beings in Hindu mythology known for their fierce expressions and formidable power. In Hindu iconography, figures such as the Goddess Kali and certain warrior deities are often depicted holding the severed heads of demons, symbolizing the triumph of divine justice over evil. Here, the head, with its exaggerated features and bold colors, serves as both a visual and cultural reference, evoking a mythological intensity that contrasts with the dress's refined elegance.

The model's stance, with one hand on her hip and the other gripping the severed head, exudes strength and defiance, further reinforcing the image's connection to powerful feminine figures in Hindu mythology. Her dark, smoky makeup and intense gaze enhance a supernatural, otherworldly feel, making her presence almost reminiscent of a contemporary warrior goddess. Overall, the image successfully intertwines Indian folk traditions with modern fashion sensibilities. The juxtaposition of a sleek, Western-style outfit with deeply rooted Indian cultural elements—both sacred and mythological—creates a visual narrative that is both provocative and reverential, reinterpreting traditional motifs in a bold and avant-garde manner.



Example 2

The ensemble in example 2, which the designer (Neha Kapil) has named "Devi Lehenga Skirt," is another instance where the outfit features a bold print of the Devi goddess, an iconic figure in Indian mythology, set against a modern strapless blouse and a flowing lehenga skirt. Traditionally, images of Hindu deities are found in religious paintings, temple murals, or embroidered on sarees and shawls. However, in this design, the sacred imagery is reimagined in a fresh, wearable format, bringing together heritage and modernity. This transformation reflects a growing trend among Indian-origin designers, especially in diasporic settings, who are exploring their cultural roots while also making their designs accessible to a global audience.

The fusion of folk traditions with contemporary fashion is not just an aesthetic choice but a deliberate act of cultural representation. The presence of the Devi figure on the fabric challenges conventional notions of where religious or folk motifs belong. It brings spirituality, empowerment, and artistic expression into everyday fashion, allowing wearers to carry a piece of their heritage in a way that feels both modern and personal. The lehenga, which is traditionally associated with grand celebrations and weddings, is given a fresh, youthful update with a strapless top, sheer red draping, and ankle boots, blending the essence of Indian craftsmanship with Western sensibilities. The choice of a bold Devi print, rather than abstract patterns or florals, also speaks to the designer's intent to make a strong cultural statement.

In diasporic communities, young designers of Indian origin are reclaiming their heritage through clothing by merging traditional motifs with contemporary silhouettes. This act is more than just fashion; it is a form of storytelling and an expression of identity. Many second-generation Indian designers find themselves navigating between two worlds—their ancestral culture and the modern, globalized landscape they inhabit. By incorporating folk art, mythology, and traditional textiles into Western-style clothing, they create a space where both influences can coexist harmoniously. The result is a fashion movement that does not dilute its cultural significance but instead amplifies it in a new context. The rise of fusion fashion reflects a broader trend in which younger generations seek to redefine tradition on their own terms. Unlike the past, where traditional Indian garments were often reserved for weddings or festivals, today's designers are making them more adaptable for everyday wear. Elements such as deity prints, Madhubani or Pattachitra artwork, block prints, and even textile techniques like Kalamkari and Ajrakh are now being used on Western-style cuts such as crop tops, trench coats, and midi skirts. This shift allows individuals to embrace their heritage in ways that align with their personal style, rather than feeling restricted by conventional norms of ethnic dress. Furthermore, the use of folk and mythological imagery in modern clothing serves as a powerful form of cultural preservation. With globalization leading to homogenized fashion trends, the reinterpretation of Indian folk art on contemporary garments ensures that these traditions remain relevant. At the same time, it sparks conversations around cultural owner-

ship, authenticity, and the evolving meaning of tradition in a diasporic context. While some might view the use of religious iconography in fashion as controversial, others see it as an act of reverence and celebration. For designers and wearers alike, such garments are more than just outfits—they are statements of identity, history, and pride.

The "Devi Lehenga Skirt" encapsulates the dynamic interplay between past and present, tradition and innovation. It is not just a piece of clothing but a symbol of how fashion can serve as a bridge between cultures, allowing individuals to embrace their heritage while redefining it in a contemporary way. In a world where fashion is increasingly becoming a tool for self-expression, designs like this one highlight how deeply personal and political clothing can be. Through such creations, Indian-origin designers are not only keeping folk traditions alive but also ensuring that they evolve and remain meaningful for future generations.



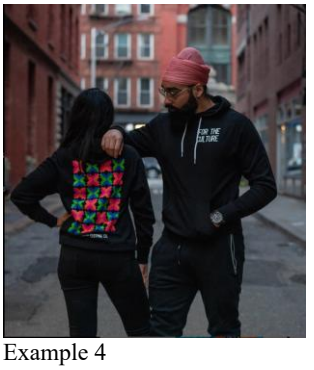
Example 3

The design in example 3, which is by Natasha Sumant, is a modern reinterpretation of the saree, blending traditional Indian drapery with contemporary minimalism. The ensemble features a white, structured yet fluid drape cascading over a fitted, textured dress with raw, unfinished hems, paired with sleek, black boots. The look exudes a futuristic aesthetic while maintaining a strong connection to the saree's essence, a garment that has symbolized grace, identity, and heritage in Indian culture for centuries. The adaptation of the saree into this modern form aligns with the growing trend of fusing traditional Indian elements with Western fashion, creating a hybrid style that speaks to diasporic identity, cultural evolution, and fashion as a medium of storytelling. Like the "Devi Lehenga Skirt," which incorporated mythological imagery into contemporary silhouettes, this saree-inspired ensemble reimagines a quintessentially Indian garment through an avant-garde lens. The saree, historically associated with draped elegance, is here deconstructed and reconstructed to challenge conventional ideas of how Indian textiles should be worn. By integrating elements such as a high neck, a fitted structure, and a neutral monochromatic palette, the design transforms the saree from strictly cultural or festive attire into something that aligns with contemporary global fashion trends. The drape, while maintaining its connection to the traditional saree, flows effortlessly, free of the constraints of pleating or tucking, suggesting a freer, more experimental approach to wearing heritage. In diasporic settings, designers of Indian origin are increasingly engaging in this kind of cultural reinvention, merging their inherited traditions with their lived realities in the global fashion landscape. The saree, while deeply rooted in Indian culture, is being adapted into silhouettes that align with modern sensibilities, making it more accessible and versatile for younger generations. This outfit exemplifies that transformation, taking the essence of the saree and stripping it down to its fundamental elements—fluidity, drape, and movement—while reinterpreting it through a Westernized, minimalist aesthetic. The choice of fabric and styling, including the long braided hair and structured accessories, further reinforces this dialogue between tradition and futurism.

Such reimaginings of folk and traditional attire serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, they preserve cultural memory, ensuring that traditional garments like the saree remain rele-

vant and adaptable rather than relics of the past. On the other hand, they allow for self-expression within a modern, globalized world, offering individuals—especially those in the diaspora—a way to connect with their roots while embracing contemporary fashion. The contrast between the softness of the drape and the edginess of the boots, raw hems, and unconventional styling speaks to this intersection of past and present, tradition and rebellion.

Just as the "Devi Lehenga Skirt" brought mythological imagery into modern fashion, this saree-inspired ensemble pushes the boundaries of cultural clothing by questioning rigid dress codes and gendered expectations associated with Indian attire. It reflects a growing movement in which traditional garments are no longer confined to specific occasions or rigid styling rules but are fluid, open to reinterpretation, and adaptable to various identities. By deconstructing and reimagining the saree, this look challenges the notion that heritage must remain static, proving instead that culture is a living, evolving entity—one that can be worn, reshaped, and redefined in ways that are both deeply personal and globally relevant. Ultimately, this outfit stands as a testament to fashion's power as a medium for cultural dialogue. It demonstrates how Indian-origin designers are breaking away from the confines of tradition while still honoring the essence of their heritage. By integrating traditional silhouettes into contemporary fashion, they are not only keeping these styles alive but also making them dynamic and ever-evolving, allowing new generations to engage with their roots in ways that feel authentic and meaningful to them.



Example 4

The creation in example 4 (by *Rootsgear Clothing Co.*) showcases the fusion of Indian folk elements with contemporary Western streetwear, creating a seamless blend of cultural heritage and modern fashion. The hoodie, a quintessential piece of Western casualwear, serves as the canvas for the vibrant Phulkari-inspired embroidery on the back. Phulkari, a traditional embroidery technique from Punjab, is known for its bold geometric patterns and bright, contrasting colors, typically stitched onto dupattas. Here, the intricate cross-stitch motifs reimagine this folk art in a fresh, urban context, transforming a traditionally handcrafted textile into a striking graphic design suited for street fashion. The juxtaposition of the Phulkari pattern against the minimalist black hoodie highlights a modern reinterpretation of heritage, making it more accessible to younger generations while preserving its visual essence. The text "For the Culture" on the front further reinforces this intention, celebrating identity and tradition in contemporary fashion. Additionally, the styling choices—the man's turban and the casual yet confident stance of both individuals—add layers of cultural expression, grounding the modern outfit in its South Asian roots. Set against an urban backdrop, the image captures the idea of diasporic identity, where cultural heritage and contemporary global influences coexist effortlessly. The traditional embroidery technique, once reserved for ceremonial attire, now finds a place in everyday street fashion, proving that folk art is not static but continuously evolving.

This fusion allows for a deeper connection between the past and the present, transforming heritage into something wearable, relevant, and boldly expressive.



Example 5

This dress in example 5 (by Natasha Sumant), featuring Kantha embroidery from West Bengal, is yet another way traditional Indian folk art is being integrated into contemporary fashion. The simple, structured silhouette of the dress is adorned with delicate Kantha stitching, a traditional technique found on sarees, dupattas, and quilts. By applying this embroidery technique to a modern Western dress, the designer bridges the gap between heritage and contemporary aesthetics. Kantha embroidery is deeply rooted in Bengali tradition, originally used by rural women to stitch layers of old fabric into quilts or lightweight wraps. Over time, it evolved into a celebrated form of folk embroidery, with its characteristic running stitch creating intricate patterns of flowers, animals, and abstract motifs. In this dress, the embroidery takes on a free-flowing, almost abstract form, maintaining the handmade essence of Kantha while adapting it to a minimalist, modern design. The raw, unfinished edges of the sleeves and hem further emphasize the garment's organic, handcrafted nature, reinforcing its ties to folk artistry. Much like the Devi Lehenga Skirt, which incorporated mythological imagery into contemporary wear, this dress repurposes an ancient craft into an everyday silhouette, making folk art accessible to a global audience. Similarly, just as the saree-inspired drape challenged the conventions of Indian attire, this dress repositions Kantha embroidery beyond its traditional textile applications. The pairing of this delicate, hand-stitched fabric with edgy black boots creates a juxtaposition between tradition and rebellion, reinforcing the idea that heritage need not be static—it can be fluid, experimental, and deeply personal.

For diasporic designers and wearers, clothing like this serves as a form of cultural connection and reinvention. By integrating Indian embroidery techniques into Western-style garments, young designers ensure that these crafts remain relevant, preventing them from being confined to museum exhibits or special occasions. Instead, they become part of everyday wear, allowing individuals to carry their heritage effortlessly while adapting it to their contemporary lifestyle. This reflects a broader trend where younger generations, especially those in the diaspora, are not only reclaiming but also reshaping their cultural narratives. The use of Kantha on a dress also highlights the shift from mass-produced, machine-made fashion to a greater appreciation for slow, handcrafted techniques. In an era where sustainability is becoming a crucial aspect of fashion, reviving folk techniques like Kantha aligns with the growing movement toward ethical, artisanal production. Each stitch carries the artisan's handprint, making the garment more than just a piece of clothing—it becomes a form of storytelling, a link to centuries-old traditions passed down through generations. Much like the previous designs, this dress symbolizes a fusion of the past and present, blending folk traditions with con-

temporary silhouettes to create something uniquely positioned between cultures. Whether for those in India or in the diaspora, such clothing offers a means to celebrate heritage without being confined by it. The Kantha dress stands as a testament to how Indian folk crafts are finding new life in modern fashion, ensuring that they continue to evolve while retaining their deep cultural significance.

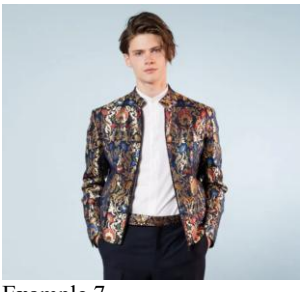

Example 6

As written in the anchorage of the picture (example 6), Satyam claims that this sari bomber is "for those who see beyond borders…" and in this design, "English tailoring is enriched with sub-continental design cues that pay homage to India's rich culture and history of craft." The sari bomber jacket, as conceptualized by Satyam, is a testament to the dynamic interplay between tradition and contemporary fashion, seamlessly integrating Indian folk elements into a global sartorial landscape. The bomber jacket, an emblem of Western casual wear with roots in military apparel, is transformed by paisley brocade, a textile with deep cultural and historical significance in Indian craftsmanship. By merging these elements, the design transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, creating a garment that is both deeply rooted in Indian heritage and reflective of modern, cosmopolitan aesthetics. At the heart of this jacket lies the paisley motif, an ancient design originating in 11th-century Kashmir and later becoming a hallmark of Indian textiles. Known as boteh or buta in Persian, the motif evolved over centuries, appearing in Kashmiri shawls, Kanchipuram sarees, Banarasi brocades, and Baluchari weaves from West Bengal. The paisley pattern, often associated with fertility, growth, and spirituality, has been used across generations to adorn textiles, household decor, and even tribal art forms. In Gujarat, local communities have long incorporated paisley-like patterns into their homes as symbols of prosperity, imprinting crude forms of the design onto walls as a prayer for future generations. The presence of this motif on the sari bomber jacket reflects the deep cultural resonance of Indian folk traditions, reinterpreted for a new audience.

This bomber jacket is more than a fusion of textiles; it is an embodiment of transnational identity and cultural hybridity. Designed to "see beyond borders," the piece speaks to those who exist between multiple worlds—individuals who navigate both heritage and modernity, tradition and innovation. The act of placing a richly woven Indian fabric on a quintessentially Western silhouette creates a dialogue between past and present, preserving traditional Indian craftsmanship and ensuring its continued evolution. The sari bomber jacket is not merely an aesthetic reinterpretation of folk motifs; it is a wearable narrative of migration, adaptation, and reinvention. Handcrafted in London, the jacket exemplifies how heritage textiles are being reimagined in contemporary global fashion contexts. The integration of subcontinental design cues with English tailoring highlights an intercultural fusion that is becoming increasingly prominent in the fashion industry. Rather than relegating paisley brocade to ceremonial or historical settings, the design brings it into everyday fashion, allowing it to be experienced

in a new, relevant, and wearable form. The sari bomber's adaptability across diverse cultural spaces reflects a broader movement toward fashion as a medium for storytelling, in which garments are not just worn but also serve as expressions of identity and lineage.

Furthermore, the brocade fabric itself speaks to India's legacy of textile craftsmanship. The intricate weaving techniques involved in brocade production, often requiring skilled artisans and traditional handlooms, underscore the artisanal labor that underpins Indian folk textiles. By incorporating this fabric into a modern garment, the sari bomber also becomes a statement on sustainable and ethical fashion, celebrating the value of handcrafted, slow-made textiles in an era dominated by fast fashion. This jacket stands as a powerful intersection of history, identity, and contemporary fashion. It transforms a historically significant textile into a modern expression of selfhood, allowing wearers to engage with Indian heritage in a way that feels authentic and adaptable. The sari bomber jacket is not just clothing—it is an evolving tapestry of cultural exchange, carrying forward centuries of folk artistry while shaping the future of transnational, boundary-crossing fashion.



Example 7

Another creation by Advani London, example 7, showcases the fusion of Indian folk textiles with Western fashion, continuing the themes of cultural reinvention and diasporic identity explored in the previous designs. The bomber jacket, a quintessential symbol of Western casual wear, is reimagined using the opulent Banarasi brocade, a fabric deeply rooted in Indian textile traditions. The result is a garment that visually and symbolically represents the duality of the migrant experience—balancing the cultural heritage of the past with the modern globalized identity of the present. Much like the saree-inspired drape or the Kantha-embroidered dress, this bomber jacket deconstructs traditional Indian elements and integrates them into a contemporary, everyday wardrobe. The "floral jaal" motif adorning Banarasi fabric is historically associated with luxury, craftsmanship, and artistic heritage. Banarasi weaving, originating in Varanasi, has been celebrated for centuries and is often reserved for grand occasions such as weddings or religious ceremonies. By incorporating this traditionally opulent fabric into the casual silhouette of a bomber jacket, the designer subverts conventional expectations about where and how Indian textiles should be worn. Just as the Devi Lehenga Skirt reimagined mythological iconography in a modern setting, this design challenges the idea that Banarasi brocade must remain confined to ceremonial attire. Instead, it is given a new life in a contemporary, gender-fluid, and streetwear-inspired context.

This kind of hybrid fashion reflects the broader movement among diasporic designers to reclaim their heritage while adapting it to modern lifestyles. The bomber jacket, a garment originally associated with military and streetwear aesthetics, gains an entirely new meaning when crafted from Banarasi fabric. It embodies the tension and harmony between two cultural worlds—the structured, functional practicality of the West and the intricate, symbolic richness of Indian textiles. Much like the Kantha dress, which transformed a rural embroidery tradition into a modern Western silhouette, this piece highlights how traditional craftsmanship can evolve beyond its original setting while still retaining its deep-rooted cultural essence. Additionally, this fusion represents the broader shift in fashion, in which handcrafted, folk textile traditions are gaining global visibility. With growing conversations around sustainability and

ethical fashion, traditional Indian textiles, such as Banarasi brocade, Kantha embroidery, and Kalamkari prints, are finding their way into global wardrobes in unexpected ways. By bringing Banarasi weaving into Western fashion through a bomber jacket, the design not only preserves artisanal techniques but also ensures their relevance for younger generations in the diaspora who may not engage with these fabrics in their traditional forms.

The juxtaposition of structure and fluidity, seen in the bomber jacket's sharp tailoring against the softness of woven silk, echoes the interplay observed in the saree-inspired drape, where traditional Indian clothing is reconstructed within a modern framework. Similarly, just as the Kantha dress and Devi Lehenga Skirt infused folk motifs into contemporary wear, this bomber jacket democratizes Banarasi brocade, making it accessible beyond elite or ceremonial settings. It challenges the binaries of East and West, tradition and modernity, high fashion and casual wear. Ultimately, this design stands as a powerful symbol of how fashion is a dynamic space for cultural negotiation. It allows individuals, especially those in the diaspora, to engage with their heritage without being confined by rigid definitions of ethnic dressing. These designs are not just garments; they are a statement—one that embraces fluidity, hybridity, and the ever-evolving identity of global Indian fashion.

Conclusion

The integration of Indian folk art into contemporary diasporic fashion is a testament to the fluid nature of cultural identity. As young designers reimagine traditional motifs in Western clothing, they create a visual dialogue that bridges tradition and modernity, homeland and hostland. While debates over authenticity and cultural appropriation persist, these adaptations highlight the evolving nature of folk traditions in a globalized world. By situating diasporic fashion within the broader discourse of transnational aesthetics, this paper underscores fashion's role as a cultural medium. Rather than viewing these adaptations as a loss of authenticity, they should be seen as an evolution that ensures the survival and relevance of Indian folk traditions. As diasporic designers continue to navigate their complex identities through fashion, they contribute to a broader redefinition of heritage in the 21st century.

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