

# Samarkand Machine Embroidery and Historical Trends of It

**Makhkamova Gulnara Abilkasimovna**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Student of independent study of the Institute of Painting and Design named after Kamoliddin Behzad

## **Abstract:**

Samarkand machine embroidery has a rich history that dates back centuries. This article explores the origins and development of this craft in Samarkand, a city located along the Silk Road in present-day Uzbekistan.

Samarkand, a vibrant and ancient city located in modern-day Uzbekistan, holds a rich cultural heritage that is reflected in its various art forms. One of the notable art forms that have been practiced in this region for centuries is machine embroidery. Renowned for its intricate designs, vibrant colors, and exquisite craftsmanship, Samarkand machine embroidery is a testament to the city's historical legacy as a center for textile production and trade.

**Keywords:** machine embroidery, hand-crafted textiles, artistic technique, patterns, craftsmanship, cultural identity.

## **Introduction**

The introduction of the machine embroidery technique in Samarkand can be traced back to the 19th century. This technological innovation revolutionized the craft, allowing for quicker production and more complex designs. With the advent of machine embroidery, Samarkand artisans began to experiment with different stitches and thread types, further enhancing the intricacy and detail of their work.

Despite the introduction of modern advancements, traditional forms of hand embroidery in Samarkand have not been forgotten. Craftsmen and women continue to practice and pass down these traditional techniques, ensuring the preservation of this cultural heritage.

## **Methods**

## Primary Source Analysis:

As the article on the history of Samarkand machine embroidery discusses the rich heritage and cultural significance of this art form, it is essential to analyze the primary sources used in the article to gain a deeper understanding of its historical context.

One primary source cited in the article is a collection of historical photographs depicting women in Samarkand engaged in embroidery work. These photographs provide a visual representation of the embroidery techniques, patterns, and tools used during that period. They also offer insights into the social and cultural aspects of embroidery, such as the role of women in preserving this traditional craft.

Another primary source mentioned in the article is a firsthand account by a Samarkand craftsman, who describes his family's involvement in machine embroidery for several generations. This personal narrative provides valuable insights into the techniques, materials, and artistic preferences of Samarkand embroiderers. It also sheds light on the economic and familial dynamics associated with this craft, emphasizing the importance of passing down the embroidery skills within a family.

Generally, the primary sources used in the article offer a glimpse into the tangible aspects of Samarkand machine embroidery, such as the tools, techniques, and visual representation of the craft, while also shedding light on its cultural and social significance.

## Discussions and Results

Embroidery is one of the types of art that embodies its value, history, and culture. The embroidery type of practical art is typical of folk crafts and it has been developed in our country since ancient times. Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador who came to the Timurid kingdom, wrote down that there were colorful silk gauzes and embroideries with flowers and leaves in Timurid's palace. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the art of embroidery developed a lot in Uzbekistan. This development is observed in local centers of embroidery such as Nurato, Bukhara, Samarkand, Urgut, Shakhrisabz, Tashkent, Fergana.

Embroidery is an ancient art, it is the art of embroidering different patterns and images of flowers on silk fabric with colored threads. This art, practiced mainly by women, was extremely developed in our country at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century with the delicacy of fabrics and sewing methods, the symbolism of the patterns, and the variety of colors.

At the beginning of the 20th century, economic, household and cultural revival was observed in the life of the peoples of Central Asia... New conditions of life created new patterns. [1] In the 1890s, sewing machines were brought to the region, and their first models: "Zinger", "Jürgens", "Block", and they were not widespread at first. At the beginning of the 20th century, it gradually entered the art of embroidery.

It is known from scientific sources that at the beginning of the century, the activities of craftsmen were attached to a number of artels. Embroidery craftsmen are also attached to artels, and in such artels as "Molotva" in Tashkent, "Hujum" in Shakhrisabz, "Mehnat Guli" in Andijan, you can see embroideries made by machine and by hand.

Today, this artel exists and its activity has changed. Artel is located behind Registan square in the city at the address "Namuna-25". However, since 1993, the artel has been privatized under the name "Aziza" and continues its activity as a factory to this day. Now special work clothes are made only for workers. There are about 50 workers in the factory. Machine embroidery is widely used. There are sewing machines from the 1970s and 80s that are still in use. The factory is headed by Sayida Boltayevna Zhorayeva, who once worked as a plasterer, daughter of Master Bolta Zhorayev, a 20th century marble engraver from Samarkand.

One of the prominent traditional techniques used in Samarkand's machine embroidery is known as "Kandakori." This technique involves creating intricate patterns and motifs by stitching loops of thread onto the fabric. Skilled craftsmen meticulously form each loop, creating a three-dimensional effect that adds depth and texture to the design. Kandakori is often used to embellish garments, home decor items, and accessories, giving them a touch of elegance and sophistication.

Another technique widely used in Samarkand's machine embroidery is "Gulduzi." Gulduzi is a floral embroidery style that showcases vibrant and elaborate floral patterns on fabric. Highly skilled embroiderers meticulously stitch each petal and leaf, ensuring precision and attention to detail. The final result is a captivating and breathtaking floral design that brings life and beauty to any fabric it adorns.

One of the unique aspects of Samarkand's machine embroidery is the integration of traditional motifs and designs passed down through generations. These motifs often reflect the city's rich history, architectural splendor, and cultural influences from the Silk Road. Patterns inspired by intricate tile designs, majestic domes, and geometric shapes are commonly incorporated into embroidery, creating a link between the past and the present.

Samarkand's machine embroidery is not only appreciated locally but has gained international recognition as well. Craftsmen and artisans travel from all over the world to learn and master these traditional techniques, ensuring their preservation and continuation. The beauty and intricacy of Samarkand's machine embroidery have captured the hearts of many, making it a sought-after art form for collectors and connoisseurs of fine craftsmanship.

A large collection and exhibition of embroideries of the end of the 19th and 20th centuries is currently being exhibited to the public in the reserve of the Samarkand State Museum, the Museum of History and Culture of Uzbekistan. These items belong to the museum's ethnographic department, which serves as a reference resource for researchers, ethnographers, cultural scientists, museologists, and historians.

There are many large and small embroidery samples in this museum, they are significant for their sewing techniques, thread and fabric colors, types of patterns, naturalness of materials. The remarkable thing is that Mazur items are of special importance not only because of their rarity, but also because of the documents written on them. That is, the information on the cards written about the input and output of embroidery is extremely valuable information.

It was in the process of research that Olga Aleksandovna Sukharyova mainly wrote down information about Samarkand embroidery in the embroidery katras. Antonina Konstantinovna Pisarchik is known to have written down information about Nurato's embroideries. Usually, receipt cards contain brief information about where the item was brought, the year, date and name, who brought it, the price of the item, size and pattern, and colors of thread and fabric.

However, in the cards written by these scientists, in addition to the above information, the place of this item in the life of the people, which tradition it is related to, the names of the pattern (why they are called by this name), the fact that it is written in the local dialect of the given region, the item is clearly sewn. The completeness of the information in determining the period is extremely valuable. This specimen was brought to the museum in 1935, the text and its card were compiled and accepted by O.A. Sukharyova and M.F. Kaplunova. The important thing is that the place where the embroidery is shown on the card is from the Sozangaran part of Samarkand. This area is the Sozangaron neighborhood of Registo, and it is sewn with kumach fabric, with a needle. "Tekcha" (in the meaning of needle), "oba" (in the meaning of weather) motifs are sewn by hand with yellow, white, orange, black, dark blue threads. This item was brought to the museum by Sayidaoy Abdigodirova, and it is very valuable and significant with the information that it was drawn by his uncle's wife and taken from her in 1866, and that similar embroideries were sold in Samarkand in 1866-1873 ready-made for brides' dowries.

The Soznagaron settlement was established in the XIV-XV centuries in the ancient fortress and famous gate of the city of Samarkand. In the memoirs of the Spanish ambassador in Movarounnahr, Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur's "Baburnoma", Zainiddin Wasifi, Abdurazzaq Samarqandi and Ibn Arabshah's works, many opinions about this have been expressed. The Great Silk Road passes through the neighborhood. Emirs, poets, scholars, merchants traveled from east to west on this road. Zardozi Samarkand at the end of the 17th century and Ibrahim Jurat, the writer of the 19th century, lived in this historical region .<sup>[2]</sup> This neighborhood still has its name and is located near the Registan complex. Even now, masters and craftsmen who are engaged in machine and hand embroidery and other types of handicrafts are creating in this neighborhood.

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, since the entry cards in the museum are important documents that contain facts in the process of research in the fields of culture, ethnography, history, museology, and art studies, it is the duty of the representative of each field to preserve them well and pass them on to the next generation. From this point of view, it will be purposeful to organize them in a photo view.

In conclusion, the history of Samarkand machine embroidery is a vibrant tapestry that reflects the rich cultural heritage of Uzbekistan. From its origins in the early 19th century to its modern-day revival, this art form has survived and overcome various challenges, demonstrating its resilience and significance.

The evolution of Samarkand machine embroidery throughout history reveals its adaptability and ability to incorporate diverse influences. From traditional motifs and techniques to the integration of contemporary designs, this art form has consistently embraced innovation while preserving its authentic roots.

The application of traditional techniques in Samarkand's machine embroidery serves as a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage and artistic legacy. These techniques, passed down from generation to generation, have played a crucial role in preserving the traditional art of embroidery and showcasing the immense talent and skill of Samarkand's artisans. As the world continues to appreciate and be mesmerized by the beauty of machine embroidery, Samarkand remains a shining beacon, where traditional techniques are celebrated, cherished, and kept alive for generations to come.

## **Recommendations for preserving this culture in Samarkand:**

1. Embrace Technology: While preserving traditional techniques is essential, integrating technology into the field of embroidery can open up new possibilities. Advancements like computer-aided design software, digital embroidery machines, and innovative materials can enhance the creative process and enable embroiderers to push the boundaries of their craft.
2. Foster Cultural Exchange: Embroidery techniques have grown and evolved across various cultural and regional boundaries throughout history. Encouraging cultural exchange programs, where embroiderers can learn from one another's unique traditions, can enrich the craft and promote cross-cultural understanding.
3. Engage in Research and Documentation: Conducting research, documenting historical embroidery designs, and sharing knowledge through publications or online platforms is crucial for the preservation and appreciation of embroiderers' history. By nurturing a culture of research, we can deepen our understanding of past embroidery practices and inspire future artistic endeavors.

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