

# QURAQ AS A VISUAL NARRATIVE OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF KAZAKHSTANI ETHNOFUTURISM

**Meruyert Zhanguzhinova**

Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts  
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)

**Abstract.** The relevance of this study lies in the need to develop new strategies in fashion design that combine ecological responsibility, cultural identity, traditional values, ergonomics, and innovative approaches. *Purpose* and research *objectives*: The *aim* is to demonstrate the potential of the quraq technique as a tool of sustainable design capable of uniting ecological responsibility with the preservation of cultural identity within the framework of Kazakhstani ethnofuturism. *Methodology*: The research employs an interdisciplinary approach encompassing art education, cultural studies, costume design, ethnography, and ergonomics. *Methods*: Theoretical review, art-historical analysis, methodological-pedagogical analysis, technological study, comparative analysis, and case study. *Results*: The findings can be applied to modernizing courses in costume, design, decorative and applied arts, and scenography, as well as to the creation of interdisciplinary projects aimed at preserving cultural heritage and developing Kazakhstan's creative industries. *Discussion*: The study emphasizes cultural continuity as a key resource for sustainable development, ecological sustainability as a principle of contemporary design, and the interdisciplinary potential of traditional techniques in educational and artistic practices. Their significance for innovative and ecologically oriented creative industries is highlighted. *Theoretical significance*: The research substantiates the conceptual integration of the traditional textile technique quraq into the ethnofuturist concept of Slow and Circular Fashion, expanding scientific understanding of interdisciplinary approaches to cultural heritage preservation and ecologically oriented art education. *Practical significance*: The study develops methodological recommendations for integrating quraq into contemporary art education, fostering sustainable design practices, strengthening students' ethnocultural identity, and embedding ecological principles into curricula. *Scientific novelty*: The research justifies integrating the traditional Kazakh textile technique quraq into the concept of ethnofuturist sustainable design and art education, enabling a rethinking

of cultural heritage through ecological responsibility, creative industries, and interdisciplinary pedagogical strategies.

**Keywords:** Sustainable design, Slow and Circular Fashion, Ethnofuturism, Cultural Sustainability, eco-oriented design, patchwork, quraq.

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## Introduction

This article explores Kazakhstani sustainable design, particularly Slow and Circular Fashion, through the lens of ethnofuturism, integrating the quraq technique as a means of reinterpreting cultural heritage within contemporary creative industries. The research problem lies in the lack of methodological approaches in sustainable design capable of rethinking and modernizing the pedagogical and artistic context. A pressing challenge for cultural continuity in Kazakhstani ethnofuturism is the overproduction of goods, which increases the carbon footprint and erodes cultural traditions, threatening sustainable development. Research aim: To identify the potential of the traditional patchwork technique, quraq, as a tool of sustainable design within Kazakhstani ethnofuturism, promoting ecological responsibility and preserving cultural identity.

### *Research tasks:*

Analyze theoretical foundations of Slow and Circular Fashion in Kazakhstani and international sustainable practices, focusing on cultural sustainability and eco-oriented design.

Investigate ethnofuturism as a methodological framework for integrating eco-oriented art education.

Identify the potential of quraq as a tool of cultural sustainability, preserving and transforming national craft traditions within creative industries.

Develop recommendations for incorporating sustainable textile practices (e.g., quraq) into educational programs and creative projects to foster ecological thinking and cultural continuity.

Kazakhstan possesses a rich heritage of decorative and applied arts, including unique textile practices such as quraq, which can be reinterpreted in the context of sustainable fashion and ethnofuturism.

In the era of rapid technological development and globalization, integrating traditional craft techniques into contemporary design becomes crucial for achieving sustainability and cultural continuity.

Special attention is given to Slow and Circular Fashion as key aspects of sustainable design, reflecting principles of conscious consumption, material reuse, and waste minimization.

Within Kazakhstani ethnofuturism, these approaches merge with traditional

crafts and modern technologies, forming a unique aesthetic and educational paradigm that supports cultural identity and eco-oriented thinking.

The study conceptualizes Kazakh patchwork quraq as a cultural mediator, linking Slow and Circular Fashion with Kazakhstani ethnofuturism, and shaping a sustainable model of identity preservation through eco-oriented design.

## Methods

*Research methods:* theoretical review (systematization of concepts and sources), art-historical analysis (aesthetics and symbolism of quraq), pedagogical methodology (integration into educational practices). technological analysis (production processes and upcycling), comparative analysis (local and global practices), case study (in-depth analysis of specific projects and brands),

*Approaches:* interdisciplinary (pedagogy, cultural studies, costume design, ethnography, ergonomics), ethnocultural (preservation and transformation of national traditions), eco-oriented (sustainable design, slow fashion, circular fashion).

*Qualitative Characteristics:* the primary material is the traditional Kazakh textile technique quraq, examined as a cultural and visual narrative. Samples of Kazakh decorative arts (patchwork, embroidery, quilting) and contemporary design practices integrating ethnocultural motifs are included. Publications by Kazakhstani and international scholars on Slow Fashion, Circular Fashion, ethnofuturism, and sustainable design were analyzed.

*Quantitative Characteristics:* over 40 scholarly sources analyzed (monographs, articles, methodological materials); 12 Kazakhstani case studies (brands, educational practices, author projects) and 15 international examples of sustainable fashion; comparison of at least 5

methodological frameworks (Slow Fashion, Circular Fashion, Cradle to Cradle, Design for Sustainability, ethnofuturism).

*Software and Tools:* NVivo, Atlas.ti for coding cultural and ecological categories. Mendeley, Zotero for bibliographic analysis (APA and GOST formats).

## Discussion

In this section, the scientific novelty of the research is revealed through the studies of Kazakhstani scholars, emphasizing the significance of national textiles and ethnic motifs as a foundation for forming a unique visual language that can integrate into global trends through the lens of ethnofuturism. Comparative analysis reveals the potential of quraq as a universal tool of cultural sustainability, bridging local traditions and global ecological strategies.

Within ethnofuturism, patchwork can be interpreted as a visual narrative that connects past and future, opening up perspectives for cultural sustainability and educational integration.

*The literature review.*

*The article reviewed the ethnofuturism works of the authors:*

Meruyert Zhanguzhinova, analyzing ethnofuturism as an educational concept integrating tradition and innovation in art and design teaching. Mikhail Zhirov and Irina Shvedova — exploring ethnofuturism through sociocode theory, emphasizing transmission of ethnic values via art. Estonian authors (Lyhmus, Kauksi, Heinaapuu, Kivisildnik) — presenting ethnofuturism as an alternative to globalization and a means of preserving cultural identity.

*Internationally, key contributions include:* Kate Fletcher — Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys, foundational for ecological design and consumer behavior transformation. Christina Dean, Hannah Lane, Sofia Törnberg — Zero Waste Wardrobe, practical approaches to conscious

consumption and clothing recycling. Ralph Fücks — Green Revolution, addressing ecological economy and sustainable business, including fashion.

*Kazakhstani eco-design practices:* Beksultan Urazbekov (Pieper brand) — using recycled plastic, organic cotton, hemp; interdisciplinary team integrating design, craft, and art. Aigerim Akenova (Aiken brand) — blending nomadic cultural motifs with sustainable style. Alima Murzabekova (Alima) and Aigul Beisenova (Bru) — creating collections emphasizing quality, durability, and local identity, aligned with slow fashion.

*Patchwork quraq studies:* Zhanerke Shaigozova & Aman Ibragimov — analyzing quraq as a symbolic language encoding ethnocultural information (Central Asian Journal of Art Studies, 2023). Aiman Sugirbekova — methodological materials for school education, highlighting quraq’s symbolic role in family and kinship ties.

## Results

The results of the study substantiate the significance of the patchwork technique quraq for sustainable design, enabling the conceptual integration of ecological responsibility with the preservation of the cultural identity of Kazakh art, while simultaneously modernizing art education.

### *Research Hypothesis:*

If the traditional technique quraq is integrated into the concepts of Slow and Circular Fashion and ethnofuturism, it will allow for the simultaneous preservation of cultural identity, the development of eco-oriented thinking, the modernization of art education, and the creation of a sustainable model for the development of Kazakhstan’s creative industries.

The study revealed that slow fashion promotes the values of durability, conscious consumption, and respect for craftsmanship. Amid the global rethinking of consumer practices, the notion of slow

fashion has become increasingly relevant. Unlike fast fashion, which is oriented toward mass production and speed, slow fashion affirms the values of longevity, conscious consumption, and respect for the artisan’s labor. This movement unites ecological, cultural, and ethical dimensions, offering an alternative to the industrial approach to fashion.

As Kate Fletcher (2010) notes, slow fashion is not merely the slowing down of the production cycle, but rather “a shift in consciousness, where quality, locality, and connection to cultural context become priorities.” In this context, manual labor, craft techniques, and local materials acquire the status of cultural capital.

Textile identity plays a particularly important role in slow fashion, as it is closely tied to traditional techniques such as patchwork, quilting, and embroidery. These practices not only preserve cultural heritage but also establish sustainable production models that respect both the artisan and the material (Clark, 2008).

Thus, slow fashion is not simply an aesthetic, but an ethical stance in which fashion becomes a medium of dialogue between past and future, between individual choice and collective responsibility.

Circular fashion calls for reuse, upcycling, and fabric recycling. In the context of ecological crisis and textile waste overproduction, the concept of circular fashion offers a systemic rethinking of the fashion industry. At its core lie principles of reuse, upcycling, and recycling, aimed at extending the life cycle of clothing and minimizing environmental impact.

### *Circular Fashion, Sustainable Fashion, and Cultural Sustainability.*

According to Anna Brismar, circular fashion is a model in which “clothing is produced with consideration for future reuse, recycling, and the return of materials into the production cycle” (Brismar). This approach requires not only technological solutions but also changes in consumer

behavior, where the value of a garment is defined not by its novelty but by its potential for transformation.

Upcycling, as one of the key practices of circular fashion, enables the creation of unique products from already used materials, preserving the cultural and aesthetic significance of textiles. This is particularly relevant for local craft traditions, where recycling becomes a form of sustainable design and cultural expression (Fletcher).

It should be emphasized that circular fashion is not merely an ecological strategy, but a new philosophy of fashion, in which waste is transformed into a resource and creativity becomes a tool for a sustainable future.

Sustainable fashion is focused on reducing waste and lowering its carbon footprint. In the context of the climate crisis and oversaturation of the textile market, sustainable fashion is not simply a trend but a necessity. Its key principles — waste reduction, carbon footprint minimization, and ethical production — aim to transform the entire clothing creation chain, from material selection to disposal.

As Sandy Black notes, sustainable fashion implies “rethinking the design, production, and consumption of clothing with consideration for ecological and social consequences” (Black 13). This includes using organic and recycled fabrics, reducing water consumption, avoiding toxic dyes, and implementing closed-loop production cycles.

Reducing the carbon footprint in the fashion industry extends beyond materials to include logistics, energy, and consumer behavior. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the transition to a circular fashion model could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by billions of tons annually (Ellen MacArthur Foundation).

Thus, sustainable fashion is not merely an alternative to fast fashion but an integrative approach that unites design, technology, and ethics for a sustainable

future.

Cultural sustainability aims to preserve and adapt traditional clothing. In the era of globalization and digitalization, fashion has become not only a means of self-expression but also a platform for safeguarding cultural heritage. The concept of cultural sustainability in fashion implies careful preservation, adaptation, and reinterpretation of traditional textile practices within contemporary design.

As Else Skjold observes, cultural sustainability is “a way of maintaining local knowledge and craft traditions by integrating them into contemporary forms and contexts” (Skjold 45). This is particularly important for Kazakhstan, a region with a rich textile heritage, where elements of national costume, ornaments, and sewing techniques can be reinterpreted through the lens of sustainable design.

The adaptation of traditions does not entail mechanical reproduction. On the contrary, it requires a creative dialogue between the past and the present, in which designers act as mediators between cultural memory and contemporary aesthetic demands (Fletcher 112). Such an approach contributes not only to the preservation of identity but also to the development of local communities engaged in production.

These findings have practical value: cultural sustainability in Kazakhstani fashion represents an ethical and aesthetic strategy aimed at strengthening cultural distinctiveness through innovation, respect for heritage, and sustainable production.

#### *Quraq as a Cultural Code of Sustainability.*

Quraq — the traditional Kazakh art of patchwork — is a multidimensional concept of sustainable design that connects historical heritage with contemporary fashion philosophies. In this context, quraq functions as a Kazakh cultural code and a visual metaphor of sustainability.

Quraq is not merely a decorative technique but a multilayered cultural code that reflects the Kazakh people’s philosophy

of sustainability, historical memory, and artistic identity. Within the discursive field of contemporary art in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, quraq becomes a mediator between past and present, between loss and revival. The etymology of “қырақ”—rooted in the word “қыры”, meaning both destruction and creation—captures the quality of life and renders patchwork a visual metaphor of transition, balance, and renewal (Oktyabrskaya and Suraganova, 2010).

It is important to note that Irina Oktyabrskaya and Zamira Suraganova (2010) demonstrate that the phenomena of quraq and zhyrtys in traditional Kazakh culture embody ritual-symbolic functions, including the preservation of memory, intergenerational continuity, and sacred protection. Their study emphasizes the role of material culture as a carrier of spiritual values. Similarly, Irina Oktyabrskaya and Zamira Suraganova (2012) extend this perspective by conceptualizing patchwork as part of the “material world” of Kazakh culture. They position patchwork sewing as a living tradition that remains relevant in contemporary society, concluding that the practice functions as a mediator between the past and the present.

In this context, Nikolay Terletskiy (2007), who analyzes the role of fabric scraps (latta-band) at Central Asian mazars, highlighting their sacral and ritual significance. He interprets fabric as an element of ritual communication, where scraps serve as signs of memory, supplication, and protection.

On the one hand, Gulnara Zununova (2020) investigates the nonverbal semiotics of Tashkent Uzbeks, demonstrating that woven products fulfill protective functions, acting as amulets and markers of identity. Her research underscores the semiotic dimension of textiles within everyday cultural practices.

Unlike the previous findings, Elmira Gyul (2019) interprets patchwork as a “miracle of recycling” and a union with

sustainability. The study emphasizes the ecological and aesthetic potential of the technique, bridging traditional craft with contemporary sustainable design.

Thus, quraq is not simply a craft but a philosophy capable of encoding ethnocultural information and transmitting it across generations. This confirms that patchwork and fabric-related practices in Central Asia constitute a multifunctional cultural code that integrates ritual, symbolic, and utilitarian dimensions. Textile traditions act as nonverbal communicative systems, transmitting values of memory, identity, and protection across generations. The semiotic and sacral functions of fabric scraps reveal their role as mediators between humans and the sacred, embedding textiles in ritual communication. Contemporary interpretations of patchwork highlight its potential for sustainability, transforming traditional craft into a resource for ecological design and cultural innovation.

The continuity of patchwork practices illustrates the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, positioning textile culture as both heritage and a driver of future-oriented design.

Its visual language, filled with symbols and meanings, serves not only aesthetic but also ritual, educational, and identity-forming purposes. In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the art of quraq acquires new significance — as a means of restoring lost memory, as a cultural talisman, and as a platform for dialogue between tradition and innovation. Cultural sustainability begins with recognizing its deep codes — and quraq is undoubtedly one of them.

In recent years, the traditional Kazakh art of patchwork (quraq) has undergone active reinterpretation across sustainable design, ethnofuturism, pedagogical practices, and visual art. From a simple decorative craft, quraq has evolved into a medium of cultural memory, a visual language, and a pedagogical tool.

Contemporary research increasingly views it as a multilayered text that encodes gendered, ethnic, ecological, and philosophical meanings.

In Kazakh design, the patchwork technique quraq represents a multidimensional category that serves as both a cultural code and a concept of sustainable design. Within semiotic and textual approaches, quraq is interpreted as a visual text, in which each fabric fragment functions as a sign that reflects relationships among the artist, the audience, and the ethnocultural context.

A key study in this field is the article by Zhanerke Shaigozova and Aman Ibragimov, “Quraq in Contemporary Art of Central Asia: Symbolic Language and Artistic Text”, which proposes a semiotic model for interpreting patchwork as an artistic narrative (Shaigozova and Ibragimov). The authors draw on ethnographic sources, museum collections (the Russian Ethnographic Museum and the International Quilt Museum), and analyses of contemporary artistic practices in the region. Their approach synthesizes pragmatics, cultural semiotics, and visual anthropology, revealing quraq as a form of “slow storytelling”—sustainable, creative, and symbolically rich.

#### *Visual Documentation and Ethnofuturist Reinterpretations of Quraq.*

Visual documentation preserved in ethnographic and archival sources of the 19th–20th centuries—such as the works of Mikhail Dudin, Grigory Potanin, Nikholy Polyakov, Vassily Vereshchagin, Gustav Radde, and Karl Krafft—records the sacred and domestic presence of quraq in Kazakh dwellings and women’s craft. Photographs and engravings depict yurt interiors adorned with patchwork items, sewing scenes, and coverings with patterns such as Segizzhapayraq (“Eight Leaves”), Shakhmat (“Chessboard”), and others, confirming the historical continuity of textile practice and its connection to the sacred (Russian ..., 2).

As a result of the analytical review of the role of quraq in rituals, ceremonies, and clothing, it was revealed that “quraq” and “zhyrtys” were employed as symbolic objects in rites associated with life-cycle transitions (birth, marriage, death), as noted by Irina Oktyabrskaya and Zamira Suraganova (2010, 2012). Thus, fabric scraps served as distinctive “tokens of happiness,” gifted and left at sacred sites as protective amulets.

In studies of ritual semiotics, Nikholy Terletsky (2007) emphasizes that fabric pieces placed on mazars in Central Asia had an apotropaic function: they connected individuals with the sacred space and acted as mediators between the world of the living and the spirits. It is important to note that quraq in clothing, particularly in children’s garments, according to Oktyabrskaya and Suraganova, carried a protective meaning. Scraps of diverse fabrics symbolized the multiplicity of blessings and also served as a means of “dissolving” the child’s individuality, thereby shielding them from malevolent spirits.

Furthermore, the patchwork garments of dervishes, as discussed by Gulzhan Shataeva (2023), Zhanerke Zhaigozova, and Aman Ibragimov (2023), were worn as a sign of renunciation of material wealth and as a symbol of the spiritual path. Patchwork thus expressed the idea of humility, the rejection of a coherent “self,” and openness to the world. This fact points to the symbolic and philosophical meanings of “happiness and protection.” For instance, Gulnara Zununova (2020) highlights the protective function of woven textiles among the Uzbeks of Tashkent, a function that resonates with the Kazakh tradition of quraq.

In the context of sustainable development, it is crucial to emphasize both ecological and cultural dimensions. Elmira Gyul (2019) and Ralf Fücks (2015) associate patchwork sewing with the idea of the “secondary life of things,” which in the contemporary context acquires significance

as sustainable design and ecological philosophy. Zhanerke Shaigozova and Aman Ibragimov (2023) demonstrate that quraq in contemporary Central Asian art has become a symbolic language bridging tradition and innovation.

Thus, it can be argued that quraq functioned as a ritual sign. Fabric scraps were used in ceremonies as symbols of happiness, protection, and connection with the sacred realm. Children's patchwork clothing had an apotropaic meaning, protecting the child from evil spirits and "dissolving" their individuality. Patchwork in dervish garments symbolized renunciation of material wealth, humility, and the spiritual path. The philosophy of patchwork embodied in quraq expresses the idea of multiplicity, the union of different worlds and cultural layers, making it a universal symbol of harmony and protection. Today, quraq is perceived not only as a tradition but also as a form of sustainable design and artistic text that integrates ecology, culture, and spirituality.

Figures 1 and 2 below illustrate ethnographic and archival sources of the 19th century by Mikhail Dudin and Vassily Vereshchagin, presenting examples of decoration—yurt interiors of Kazakh nomadic dwellings and garments of Turkestan Sufi dervishes—created using the quraq technique.

*Ethnocultural and Educational Potential of Quraq.*



Figure 1. M. Dudin. Women and Children. Kazakhs. Kazakhstan, Semipalatinsk Region, 1899



Figure 2. V. Vereshchagin (1842-1904) Two Dervishes.

The findings indicate that the ethnocultural and educational potential of the quraq technique is emphasized in the studies of Aiman Izbasarovna Sugirbekova and Gulmira Tuluevna Sadykhanova, where patchwork is considered an interdisciplinary tool fostering the development of motor skills, spatial thinking, and the understanding of national symbols. Their teaching materials highlight the semantics of traditional patterns—Segizzhapyraq ("Eight Leaves"), Akqu ("Swan"), Tyrnaqatar ("Row of Nails")—as carriers of historical memory and cultural continuity (Sugirbekova and Sadykhanova). The authors stress the importance of integrating quraq into school and university curricula, where it cultivates eco-oriented and culturally conscious thinking, linking artistic creativity with ethnopädagogy and the principles of sustainable education.

Contemporary Central Asian artists reinterpret quraq as an artistic text and a form of visual narrative, embodying themes of memory, identity, and the transformation of tradition. In the project "*Tilsyz Til*" ("Speechless Language"),

Zhanerke Shaigozova employs quraq as a visual language of ethnic memory, creating panels that reflect kinship structures, sacred geometry, and feminine symbolism. In the installation *False Hope*, Gulnur Mukazhanova demonstrates how the formalization of tradition can lead to the loss of its spiritual essence. Works by Duzhan Magzumov and Meirzhan Nurgozhin interpret quraq as a metaphor of the cosmos, domestic comfort, and childhood memory, merging textile aesthetics with the philosophy of everyday life (Murzabekova 2017).

Parallels with international artists working in patchwork reveal the transnational character of textile narratives: Faith Ringgold's story quilts inspire Kazakhstani authors to create visual chronicles, while Yinka Shonibare's conceptual practices establish models of visual identity codes that resonate with Kazakh quraq (Shaigozova & Ibragimov).

In the context of sustainable design, quraq embodies the principles of circular fashion and zero-waste production, grounded in conscious consumption and respect for material resources. Ethnographic collections, such as those of the Russian Ethnographic Museum and the International Quilt Museum, document the traditional use of fabric remnants, demonstrating the ecological rationality of Kazakh craft (Russian Ethnographic Museum; International Quilt Museum).

Contemporary curatorial initiatives emphasize the spiritual and ecological potential of quraq, revealing it as a form of sustainable artistic thinking. In the project *Alaman*, artist Nurgul Abaykhan employs quraq as an instrument of collective identity, uniting participants through collaborative sewing and visual practices aimed at restoring social ties and cultural continuity (Shaigozova & Ibragimov).

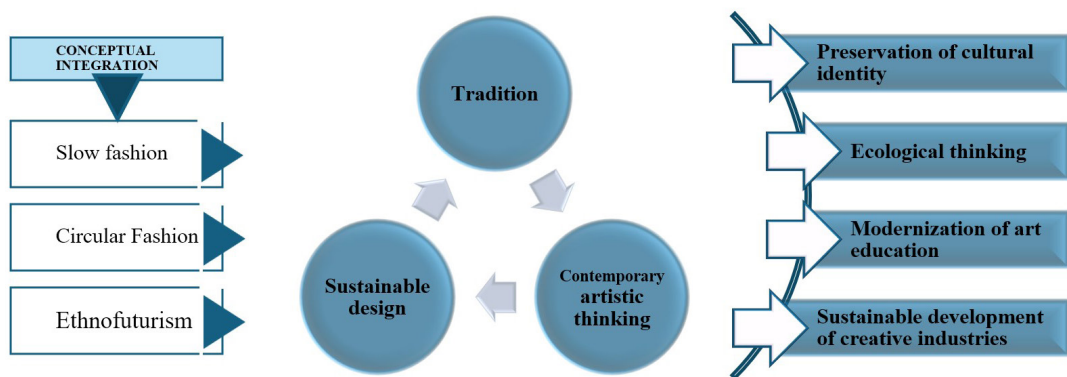
Below is Infographic cheme-1 presenting the results of the study of a visual narrative of sustainable design in the context of Kazakhstani ethno-futurism (on the example of Quraq).

Thus, quraq is integrated into the global discourse of sustainable design, preserving local specificity while reinforcing the significance of craft as a form of ecological and social action.

## Basic provisions

Based on the conducted review of sources, the main thesis of the study was formulated as follows:

*The traditional Kazakh patchwork technique quraq integrates the concepts of Slow and Circular Fashion and ethno-futurism, which preserve cultural traditions while fostering contemporary artistic thinking and sustainable design, thereby contributing to:*



Scheme 1. The visual narrative of sustainable design in the context of Kazakhstani ethnofuturism (on the example of Quraq).

- *the preservation of cultural identity;*
- *the development of environmentally oriented thinking;*
- *the modernization of art and design education; and*
- *the creation of a sustainable model for the development of Kazakhstan’s creative industries.*

The thesis presented above allows for the identification of the research propositions that reflect scientific novelty and address the research problem. The integration of the traditional Kazakh textile technique *quraq* into the concept of ethno-futuristic sustainable design provides impetus for the development of principles governing the process of creating patchwork compositions based on *quraq*. Within the framework of art education, this approach fosters the formation of competencies that are relevant to contemporary pedagogical and artistic contexts.

In the frameworks of contemporary scholarly discussions, the creation of *quraq* is not merely a patchwork technique but a deeply rooted cultural practice reflecting a philosophy of unity, continuity, and visual order—the “visual grammar” of Kazakh culture. Its fundamental principle is modularity, that is, the construction of a composition from repeating geometric elements (modules), each carrying symbolic meaning. These modules—triangles, diamonds, and squares—are combined according to specific rules, forming an ornamental structure that can expand infinitely while maintaining its integrity.

The following table (Table 1) presents the principles of the process of creating a patchwork composition in *quraq*, symbolizing the “visual grammar” of Kazakh culture:

*Pedagogical Potential of Quraq*

The study has shown that *quraq* is not merely a decorative element but a visual language in which modularity functions as a grammatical structure, ensuring semantic and aesthetic coherence. From this it follows that modularity and ornament are not simply decorative features but a complex system of visual communication—a kind of “grammar” of culture. Repeated motifs, rhythms, and symmetries in ornaments form a structural language through which society expresses its values, myths, and identity. It is important to note that modularity allows for the creation of variable compositions while preserving cultural integrity and recognizability. In both traditional and contemporary artistic practices of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, ornament becomes a mediator between past and present, between the individual and the collective, transforming into a tool of visual thinking and cultural memory.

Analysis of existing principles highlights that the traditional technique of *quraq* possesses significant pedagogical potential, particularly in the context of primary and art education. The process of creating patchwork compositions requires precision, coordination of movements, and attention to detail, which directly contribute to the development of fine motor skills in learners. Working with fabric—cutting geometric

Table 1.

Principles of Creating a Patchwork Composition in Quraq	
<i>Semantic Meaning of Color and Form</i>	Each shade and shape may symbolize natural elements, kinship ties, or protective talismans.
<i>Technological Precision</i>	Symmetry, accuracy of seams, and adherence to the rhythm of the pattern are essential.
<i>Cultural Continuity</i>	Motifs are transmitted across generations, preserving ethnic identity.
<i>Flexibility of Composition</i>	Modularity allows adaptation of the pattern to different formats—from wall panels to stage costumes.

shapes and joining them symmetrically—trains the fingers, improves visuomotor coordination, and supports sensory development.

On the other hand, the modular structure of quraq—analogue to visual puzzles—stimulates logical thinking. Students learn to analyze form, color, rhythm, and spatial relationships between elements, constructing compositions according to given or intuitive rules. This develops skills of planning, sequencing actions, and visual modeling. Thus, the pedagogical aspects of the quraq technique foster the development of fine motor skills, logical thinking, and imagination.

From a pedagogical perspective, the inclusion of quraq in the educational process as both an artistic and cultural tool cultivates a wide range of competencies relevant to the contemporary pedagogical and artistic context:

#### *Educational and Symbolic Dimensions of Quraq*

The presented data allow us to conclude that the quraq technique is not only an aesthetic practice but also a powerful educational resource capable of developing cognitive and motor skills through creativity and cultural heritage.

The visual and symbolic grammar of quraq is constructed based on geometric

symbolism, where each form—triangle, square, rhombus, or circle—serves as a carrier of mythological, philosophical, and genealogical meanings. In traditional Kazakh patchwork, geometry is not merely a decorative element but functions as a text in which representations of the cosmos, femininity, the cyclicity of time, and kinship structures are encoded.

As Zhanerke Shaigozova and Aman Ibragimov note, “quraq should be read as a visual text, where each fabric fragment is a sign reflecting the relationships between the artist, the audience, and the ethnocultural context” (Shaigozova and Ibragimov 25).

Figures 3, 4, and 5 below present examples of quraq puzzle arrangements assembled into a unified textile composition.

It should be noted that contemporary Kazakhstani designers demonstrate the potential for integrating the quraq technique into the fashion context, emphasizing its role as a visual code of cultural memory and sustainable design. Analysis shows that the brand Samidel, led by Dinara Abdullina, represents a significant contribution to the reinterpretation of craft practice, transforming traditional quraq-körpe motifs into prints for everyday clothing, thereby

Table 2.

#### **Development of Student Competencies for the Contemporary Pedagogical and Artistic Context**

<b>Cultural Identity and Visual Literacy</b>	Through awareness of the symbolism of traditional ornaments (Segizzhapyraq, Akqu, Tyrnaqatar), students develop an understanding of national heritage, mythological codes, and the philosophy of form, contributing to the formation of sustainable cultural identity.
<b>Interdisciplinary Thinking</b>	Work with quraq integrates knowledge from art, mathematics (geometry, symmetry), ethnography, and design, fostering systemic and imaginative thinking as well as the interpretation of visual texts.
<b>Inclusivity and Collective Creativity</b>	Patchwork sewing allows participation by individuals of different skill levels, ages, and physical abilities, creating a space for equal involvement, dialogue, and collaborative creation.
<b>Integration of Traditional Art into Education</b>	Quraq becomes an effective means of introducing the ethnocultural component into school and university curricula, particularly within STEAM education, where craft serves as a bridge between science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.
<b>Ecological and Sustainable Thinking</b>	The use of fabric remnants, zero-waste principles, and upcycling fosters in students a conscious attitude toward resources, aesthetics, and consumption, linking creativity with ecological responsibility.



Figures 3, 4, 5. Contemporary Kazakhstani Designers and the Fashion Context of Quraq

confirming the relevance of national color in the fashion industry.

A review of existing approaches highlights the collections of Dilbar, by Dilbar Ashymbayeva, which reveal the interconnection between decorativeness and symbolism, demonstrating the relevance of patchwork as a means of artistic expression and cultural representation.

In turn, ARUNAZ Atelier, founded by Nazym Karypkova, establishes a foundation

for further research into textile structures, showing how layering can reflect female identity and ethnic self-awareness.

A special place is occupied by the brand Quraq Korpe, created by Zhanar Shuraeva, whose work substantiates the relevance of transferring quraq from utilitarian domestic use into the sphere of fashion and accessories. This development is of interest for international collaborations and strengthens the significance of the technique as a form of visual narrative (Kazakh..., 1).

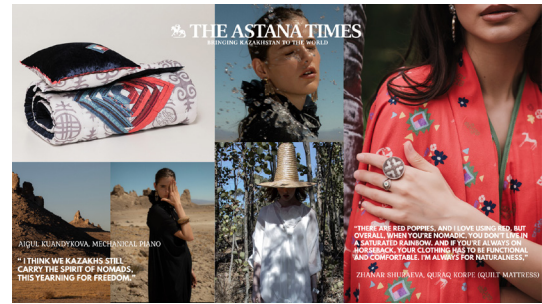


Figure 6. Contemporary clothing in the quraq technique by Kazakhstani designers.

The research conducted confirms that the quraq technique represents a significant contribution to the development of sustainable design, demonstrating its potential for integrating ethnocultural continuity, ecological thinking, and visual semiotics into contemporary cultural discourse. The results show that quraq functions as a universal language, revealing the interconnection between tradition and innovation, and forming a foundation for further studies in ethnofuturist practices.

Based on the findings, a promising direction lies in the digital reinterpretation of ornaments, the use of AR/VR technologies, and 3D printing, which opens new horizons for transmitting cultural codes and preserving visual heritage. Such practices foster intergenerational dialogue, strengthen identity and social interaction, and hold considerable interest for international collaborations and global initiatives in the field of sustainable fashion.

## Conclusion.

Thus, quraq emerges not only as a traditional craft practice but also as a significant medium of cultural sustainability, representing a universal language that integrates ethnocultural continuity, ecological thinking, visual semiotics, and educational potential. The results of the analysis confirm that the inclusion of quraq in the discourse of sustainable design demonstrates the potential of zero-waste approaches and upcycling, forming a foundation for further research as well as for local and global strategies of environmentally responsible production. The study has led to the formulation of the following key propositions:

The traditional Kazakh patchwork technique Quraq, as a cultural code, is not merely a decorative craft but a multilayered cultural text that embodies the philosophy of sustainability, memory, and identity. The ritual functions of “quraq” and “zhyrtys” were employed in life-cycle ceremonies (birth, marriage, death) as symbols of happiness, protection, and connection with the sacred realm. Children’s patchwork clothing carried an apotropaic meaning: it protected the child from evil spirits and “dissolved” individuality. Within the philosophy of dervishes, patchwork garments symbolized renunciation of material wealth, humility, and the spiritual path.

By uniting tradition and innovation, and by shaping a model of cultural sustainability and eco-oriented thinking, ethnofuturism and sustainable design integrate quraq into the concepts of Slow and Circular Fashion.

From an ecological perspective, patchwork is interpreted as the “second life of things,” corresponding to the philosophy of sustainable design and waste minimization.

In terms of educational potential, quraq is regarded as a methodological tool within

artistic and pedagogical contexts, fostering the development of spatial thinking, motor skills, and students’ ethnocultural identity.

In contemporary interpretations of Central Asian art, quraq becomes a visual language of memory and identity, as well as a symbol of dialogue between tradition and innovation.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that Quraq represents a universal symbol of harmony, protection, and cultural continuity. Its philosophy conveys ideas of multiplicity, the union of different worlds and cultural layers. Today, quraq is perceived not only as a tradition but also as a form of sustainable design and artistic text, integrating ecology, culture, and spirituality. The integration of quraq into educational programs and Kazakhstan’s creative industries contributes to the preservation of cultural identity and the development of sustainable thinking. The inclusion of quraq in the global discourse of sustainable design reinforces the significance of craft as a form of ecological and social action.

Summarizing the above, the following directions are recommended for consideration in educational and cultural processes:

1. Digital reinterpretation of ornaments (digital pattern design, AR/VR, 3D printing) as a promising means of preserving and transmitting cultural codes within the ethnofuturist paradigm.

2. Integration of quraq into STEAM education to foster cognitive and creative skills.

3. Application of patchwork techniques in social projects, contributing to intergenerational dialogue and strengthening cultural identity.

Looking ahead, these conclusions open new horizons for international collaborations, museum initiatives, and Kazakhstan’s participation in global platforms of sustainable fashion and cultural exchange.

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## Жангужинова Меруерт

Темірбек Жүргенов атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер академиясы (Алматы, Қазақстан)

### ҚҰРАҚ – ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ЭТНОФУТУРИЗМ АЯСЫНДАҒЫ ТҰРАҚТЫ ДИЗАЙННЫҢ КӨРНЕКІ НАРРАТИВІ РЕТІНДЕ

**Аңдатпа.** Бұл зерттеудің өзектілігі экологиялық жауапкершілікті, мәдени бірегейлікті, дәстүрлі құндылықтарды, эргономиканы және инновациялық тәсілдерді үйлестіретін киім дизайны саласында жаңа стратегияларды қалыптастыру қажеттілігімен айқындалады. Зерттеудің мақсаты және оның міндеттермен байланысы: «құрақ» техникасының қазақстандық этнофутуризм аясында экологиялық жауапкершілікті мәдени сәйкестікті сақтаумен ұштастыра алатын тұрақты дизайн құралы ретіндегі әлеуетін дәлелдеу. Зерттеу әдіснамасы өнерді оқыту, мәдениеттану, костюм дизайны, этнография және эргономика салаларындағы пәнаралық тәсілге негізделген. Зерттеу әдістері: шолу-теориялық, өнертанулық, әдістемелік-педагогикалық талдау, технологиялық, салыстырмалы, кейс-стади. Алынған нәтижелер костюм, дизайн, сәндік-қолданбалы өнер, сценография курстарын жаңғыртуда, сондай-ақ, мәдени мұраны сақтауға және Қазақстанның креативті индустрияларын дамытуға бағытталған пәнаралық жобалар жасауда қолданылуы мүмкін. Зерттеу талқылауы мәдени сабақтастықты тұрақты дамудың негізгі ресурсы ретінде, экологиялық тұрақтылықты қазіргі дизайнның қағидаты ретінде, дәстүрлі техникалардың білім беру және көркемдік тәжірибелердегі пәнаралық әлеуетін, сондай-ақ олардың инновациялық және экологиялық бағытталған креативті индустриялар үшін маңызын мойындауға негізделген. Зерттеудің теориялық маңызы дәстүрлі «құрақ» тоқыма техникасын этнофутуристік «Slow and Circular Fashion» концепциясына енгізуді негіздеуде жатыр, бұл мәдени мұраны сақтауға және экологиялық бағытталған көркемдік білімге пәнаралық тәсілдер туралы ғылыми түсінікті кеңейтеді. Зерттеудің практикалық маңызы дәстүрлі «құрақ» өнерін қазіргі көркемдік білімге енгізу бойынша әдістемелік ұсынымдар әзірлеуде көрінеді, бұл тұрақты дизайнерлік тәжірибелерді қалыптастыруға, студенттердің этномәдени сәйкестігін дамытуға және оқу бағдарламаларына экологиялық қағидаттарды енгізуге ықпал етеді. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы дәстүрлі қазақ «құрақ» тоқыма техникасын этнофутуристік тұрақты дизайн және көркемдік білім концепциясына енгізуді негіздеуде жатыр, бұл мәдени мұраны экологиялық жауапкершілік, креативті индустриялар және пәнаралық педагогикалық стратегиялар тұрғысынан қайта пайымдауға мүмкіндік береді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Тұрақты дизайн, Slow and Circular Fashion, Ethnofuturism, Cultural Sustainability, экологиялық бағытталған дизайн, patchwork.

**Дәйексөз үшін:** Меруерт Жангужинова «Құрақ - қазақстандық этнофутуризм аясындағы тұрақты дизайнның көрнекі нарративі ретінде», *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies*, т.11, №1, 2026, 210–227 бб., DOI: 10.47940/cajas.v11i1.1158

**Алғыс:** Автор «Central Asian Journal of Art Studies» журналының редакторларына мақаланы баспаға дайындауға көмектескені үшін және анонимді рецензенттерге зерттеуге назар аударып, қызығушылық танытқаны үшін алғысын білдіреді.

Автор қолжазбаның соңғы нұсқасын оқып, мақұлдады және мүдделер қайшылығы жоқ екендігін мәлімдейді.

## Жангужинова Меруерт

Казахская национальная академия искусств имени Темирбека Жургенова (Алматы, Казахстан)

### ҚҰРАҚ КАК ВИЗУАЛЬНЫЙ НАРРАТИВ УСТОЙЧИВОГО ДИЗАЙНА В КОНТЕКСТЕ КАЗАХСТАНСКОГО ЭТНОФУТУРИЗМА

**Аннотация.** Актуальность настоящего исследования обусловлена необходимостью формирования новых стратегий в сфере дизайна одежды, сочетающих экологическую ответственность, культурную идентичность, традиционные ценности, эргономичность и инновационные подходы. *Цель* и ее связь с *задачами* исследования: доказать потенциал техники «құрақ» как инструмента устойчивого дизайна, способного объединить экологическую ответственность и сохранение культурной идентичности в рамках казахстанского этнофутуризма. *Методология* исследования базируется на междисциплинарном подходе в областях: преподавания искусства, культурологии, дизайна костюма, этнографии, эргономики. *Методы* исследования: обзорно-теоретический, искусствоведческий, методико-педагогического анализа, технологический, компаративный, кейс-стади. Полученные *результаты* могут быть использованы при модернизации курсов по костюму, дизайну, декоративно – прикладному искусству, сценографии, а также при создании междисциплинарных проектов, направленных на сохранение культурного наследия и развитие креативных индустрий Казахстана. *Дискуссия* исследования основана на признании культурной преемственности как ключевого ресурса для устойчивого развития, экологической устойчивости как принципа современного дизайна, междисциплинарного потенциала традиционных техник в образовательных и художественных практиках, а также их значимости для инновационных и экологически ориентированных креативных индустрий. *Теоретическая значимость* исследования заключается в обосновании интеграции традиционной текстильной техники «құрақ» в этнофутуристическую концепцию «Slow and Circular Fashion», что расширяет научное представление о междисциплинарных подходах к сохранению культурного наследия и экологически ориентированному художественному образованию. *Практическая значимость* исследования заключается в разработке методических рекомендаций по интеграции традиционного искусства «құрақ» в современное художественное образование, что способствует формированию устойчивых дизайнерских практик, развитию этнокультурной идентичности студентов и внедрению принципов экологичности в учебные программы. Научная новизна исследования заключается в обосновании интеграции традиционной казахской текстильной техники «құрақ» в концепцию этнофутуристического устойчивого дизайна и художественного образования, что позволяет переосмыслить культурное наследие через призму экологической ответственности, креативных индустрий и междисциплинарных педагогических стратегий.

**Ключевые слова:** Устойчивый дизайн, Slow and Circular Fashion, Ethnofuturism, Cultural Sustainability, экологически ориентированный дизайн, пэчворк.

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**Автор туралы мәлімет:**

**Жангужинова Меруерт Еркінқызы** – педагогика ғылымдарының докторы (Phd), профессор, Сценография кафедрасының меңгерушісі, Темірбек Жүргенов атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер академиясы (Алматы, Қазақстан)

**Сведения об авторе:**

**Жангужинова Меруерт Еркеновна** – доктор педагогических наук (Phd), профессор, заведующий кафедры Сценография Казахской национальной академии искусств имени Темирбека Жургенова (Алматы, Казахстан)

**Information about the author:**

**Zhanguzhinova Meruyert Yerovna** – PhD, professor, head of Scenography chair, Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9124-4099

E-mail: aumira@mail.ru,  
meruyert.zhan@gmail.com