



## RESEARCH OF ORIENTAL INFLUENCES ON SLOVENIAN NATIONAL COSTUMES AND SUSTAINABLE PATTERN DESIGN

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### **Abstract:**

*The national costume is a part of the cultural heritage, which forms also identity of Slovenes. It was developed over long periods of time under different social situations. Pannonian type of costume is significantly different from the costumes on other cultural areas and is widened in Bela Krajina, Styria and Prekmurje. Because of geographical position the Pannonian type of costume linking us with other Slavic nations, resulting in a simple form of the garment pattern pieces design, textile material and colours, as well as the oriental ornamentation. Therefore, the main aim of this research was to examine the clothing heritage of Bela Krajina, which represented the starting point for creation of the woman's dress collection, containing characteristic constructional details of the costumes from Bela Krajina, as well as ornamental characteristics of the embroideries, decorative seams and laces. The research results are the basis for sustainable pattern design of the contemporary clothing and enable the transmission of cultural heritage to younger generation.*

### **Keywords:**

*National costume, Bela Krajina, cultural identity, clothing pattern design, sustainability.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Clothing culture is a part of the cultural heritage of the individual nation. The national costume is a part of the cultural heritage, which forms also Slovene identity. It was developed over long periods of time under different social situations. Aesthetic prosperity attained the Slovenian national costume in the late 18th century and early 19th century, when three main types of costumes were formed, and the Pannonian, Littoral and Alpine type of costumes, respectively [1,2,3], Figure 1.

Pannonian type of costume is significantly different from costumes on other cultural areas and is widened in Bela Krajina, Styria and Prekmurje. Because of geographical position the Pannonian type of costume linking us with other Slavic nations, resulting in a simple form of garment pattern pieces design, textile material and colours, as well as the oriental ornamentation.



(a) Panonian



(b) Littoral



(c) Alpine

*Figure 1: Slovenian national costumes*

### 1.1 National woman's costumes of Bela Krajina

People from Bela Krajina are the descendants of Slovenian mediaeval settlers and South Slavic refugees – *Uskoki*, which settled Bela Krajina and surrounding area in the 16th century before incursion of the Turkish Empire. With their culture a modern Bela Krajina was co-created in later centuries, which is also reflected in the clothing heritage of people from Bela Krajina [4].

National costume was made mostly of the white linen and cotton linen. Therefore, it belongs to a so-called ‘white costume’, which resembles to a costume of neighbouring nations. Clothing culture of people from Bela Krajina is the result of national costumes of Catholic and Orthodox people. Therefore, on the one hand reflects the characteristics of the Pannonian type of costume with richly folded skirt, blouse, sleeveless coats and woven belt from the white linen and cloth, 2(a). On the other hand, characteristics of the Dinaric type of costumes is wool apron, vest with rich metal ornamentation and woven belt decorated with metal medallions, as well as the folded skirt and blouse [5,6], Figure 2(b).



(a)



(b)

*Figure 2: National costumes from Bela Krajina*



The basic parts of the woman's national costume from Bela Krajina are:

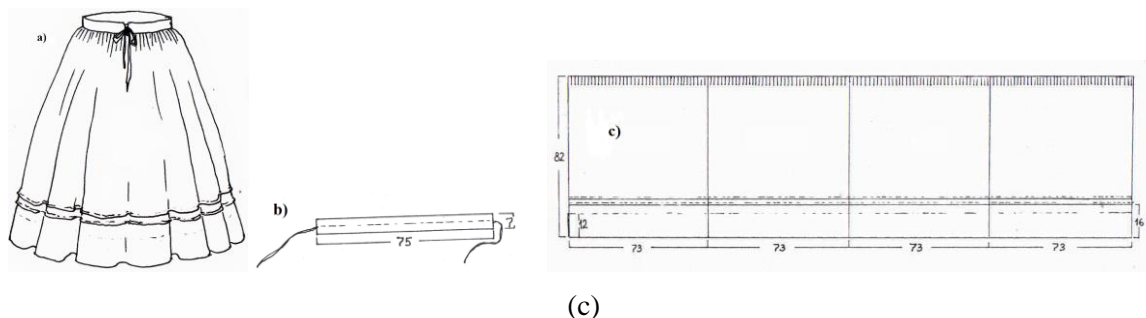
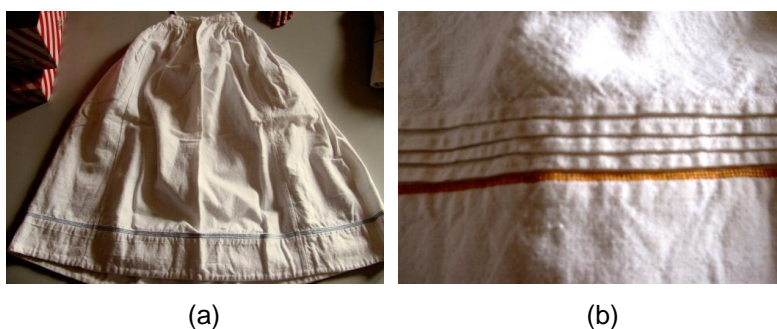
- (a) blouse,
- (b) skirt with belt and skirt with bodice,
- (c) apron,
- (d) sleeveless coat and
- (e) different styles of head-coverings and simple shoes.

The blouse extends over the waistline and it has the characteristic wide sleeves. Usually it was made from the homemade linen. Folding is characteristic for sleeves in shoulder area, as well as in the neckline on the front and back part of the blouse. Shoulders are often decorated with black and blue embroidery. An example of blouse and its pattern pieces are presented on Figure 3 [1,2, 5-7].



*Figure 3: The blouse with embroidery on shoulder and pattern pieces*

The skirt was largely folded in the waistline. It was made from the homemade linen and sewn from four parts of the fabric, Figure 4(c). The belt has a ribbon for tying the skirt in the waistline. Well known is the skirt with double edge, Figure 4(a) and the skirt with three or four pleats near the bottom edge, Figure 4(b), as well as yellow or blue handmade decorative seam [1,2,3,5-8].



*Figure 4: The skirt with belt and pattern pieces*





The skirt with bodice women wore under the blouse, whilst for other national costumes was significant to be worn over the blouse. It was made from the homemade linen. Folding in waist, decorative seams at the bottom edge and tying in the waistline are main characteristics for skirt with bodice [1,2,3,5-8], Figure 5.



Figure 5: The skirt with bodice and pattern pieces

The apron was worn usually in combination with the blouse, skirt with belt or bodice and it was shorter than skirt (above pleats in the skirt). It was made from the homemade linen and cotton linen. In the waistline it was largely folded. The apron was tied in the waistline with the ribbon of the width form 0.5 to 3 cm. The handmade blue decorative seam or lace at the bottom edges are significant for many types of aprons [1,2,3,5-8], Figure 6.

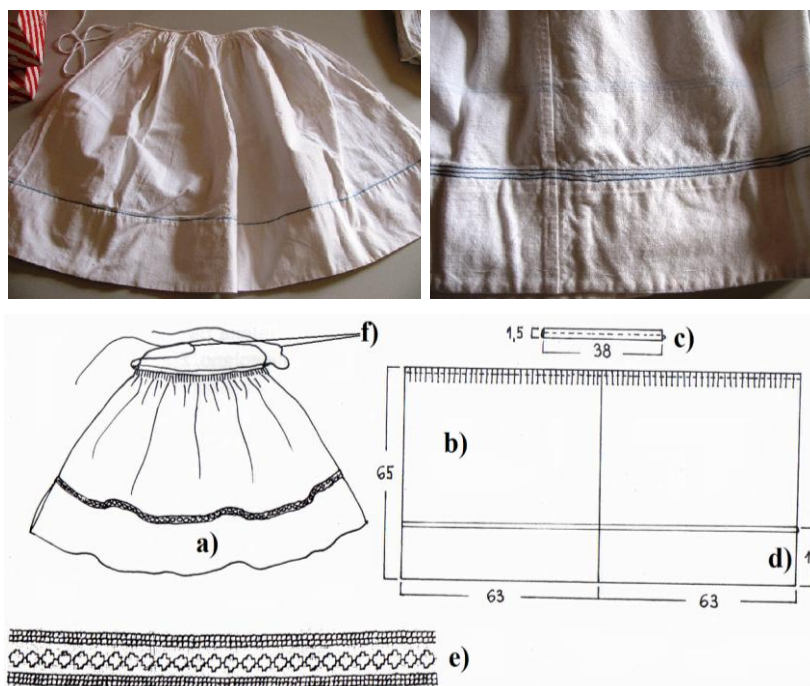


Figure 6: The apron with decorative seam and pattern pieces



The sleeveless coat is winter upper garment, made up of the sheep's fur facing inside. It was tailored tight, whilst on the back pattern piece was expanded from the waistline-down. A typical for sleeveless coat is rounded neckline, fastening with hooks on the front middle and embroidery in black and red colour around the neckline and armhole [1,2,3,5-8], Figure 7.

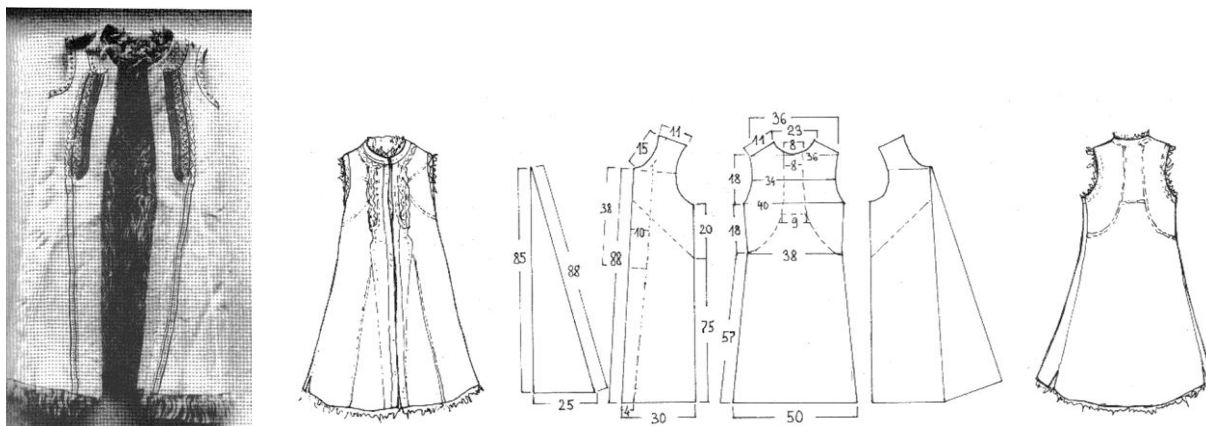


Figure 7: The sleeveless coat and pattern pieces

## 1.2 Oriental influences on clothing

For costume of the Orthodox female population was also characteristic a two-piece suit, and linen blouse and skirt with belt or bodice, respectively. In addition, the costume is composed of vest, wool apron, decorative belts and rich decoration of the head-covering and necklet [4], Figure 8.



Figure 8: An examples of oriental influences on national costume from Bela Krajina





The national costume of both populations in Bela Krajina results in similarity and simplicity of garment patterns, while for Orthodox population is mainly characteristic richer decoration of costumes. In Figure 9 we could see an example of the blouse with red and blue embroidery in breast part [4], pattern pieces for skirt with pleats and lace [6], woollen apron woven in red, yellow, green and blue colour with fringes from goat's hair and vest [4].

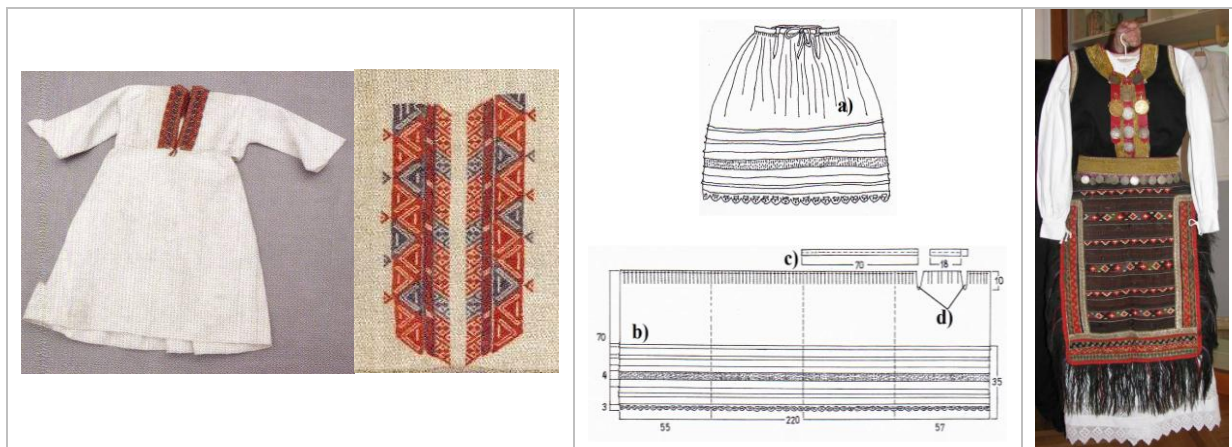


Figure 8: Oriental national costume from Bela Krajina

### 1.3 Embroidery

Embroidery is a traditional handicraft technique refined over the years. In embroideries from Bela Krajina prevailing geometric and naturalistic motifs. The geometric motifs are composed of lines, dots and geometric shapes, and are one of the older designs. Naturalistic motifs are derived from plant and animal world, and manifested in the form of leaves, flowers, birds etc.

Many embroidery designs reminds on oriental fabrics and carpets because of eight-pointed star's design, zigzag lines, rhomb, squares etc., Figure 9. Common motifs are also egg-shaped that reminds on Easter's eggs from Bela Krajina [8], Figure 9. In the embroidery prevailing blue colour, which also occurs in combination with orange or red colour [4], Figure 9.



Figure 9: Embroidery and motive designs from Bela Krajina



Today we can see national costumes with their rich design elements only in folklore, ethnographic museums and in private collections. They are not present in everyday life. Bringing this rich cultural heritage closer to modern lifestyle and to younger generation is possible by using the elements of ethno cultural heritage as an inspiration for contemporary fashion.

## 2 EXPERIMENTAL

The main aim of this research was to examine in detail the clothing heritage of Bela Krajina, which represented the starting point for designing woman's dress collection, containing characteristic constructional details of the costumes from Bela Krajina, as well as ornamental characteristics of the embroideries and lace.

Women's collection basis on modern cuts and wearable forms, where we took into account the characteristic simplicity of costume designs and details of garments' pattern pieces, as well as embroidery and lace [9]. The collection consists of five garments inspired by national costumes from Bela Krajina, and blouse, dress without and with strapless, dress with bodice and apron, respectively, Figure 10.



*Figure 10: Women's collection inspired by national costumes from Bela Krajina*

The following are technical drawings of the women's collection, Figure 11. The conceptual solution of the women's collection basis on the most important elements of the national costumes from Bela Krajina, and simple garments' pattern pieces, folding, pleats, embroidery and lace, as well as decoration with fringes and metal medallions, respectively. In the collection patterns designs, which were printed on garments' pattern pieces, remind on motives and colours of embroideries of national costumes from Bela Krajina.

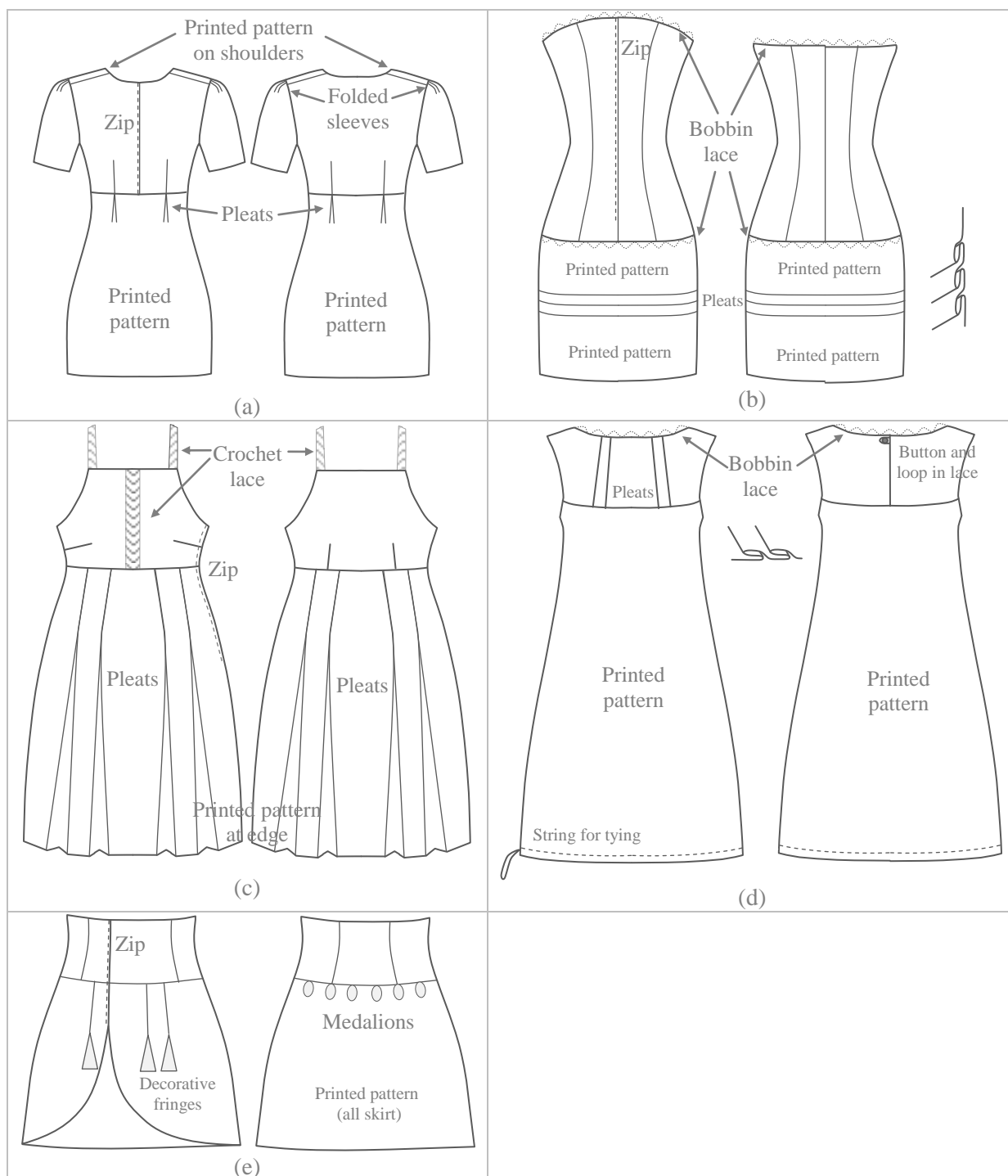


Figure 11: Technical drawings of the Woman's collection





### 3 RESULTS WITH DISCUSSION

The result of this research is the collection of women's garments that represents the interpretation of woman's national costumes from Bela Krajina. Through contemporary garment pattern pieces' design, the old fashion dressing was reformed into contemporary and wearable garments. Simultaneously, the simple shapes of the national costumes from Bela Krajina were preserved by garments construction through the simple forms of garments' patterns pieces. The feeling of simplicity also gives used materials, such as linen, cotton and silk. Tenderness and uniqueness of the clothing heritage from Bela Krajina reflects handmade printed pattern designs of the embroidery, bobbin and crochet lace in black and white colors, metal decoration and fringes, whose inspiration we got from oriental influences on clothing culture from Bela Krajina.

An inspiration for Model 1 was a blouse, Figure 12. It is made from cotton and linen, and reminds on tunic of the Orthodox women. Buttoning of the blouse with buttons was exchange with zip, while the sleeves are still folded in shoulder part, but in smaller amount. With printed pattern design on the shoulder parts, the characteristic embroidery was replaced, while the lower part of the blouse is decorated with printed pattern designs, obtained from different impressions of embroideries from Bela Krajina.

The contemporary interpretation of the Model 2 was derived from the skirt with belt, Figure 12. Namely, the bottom part of the dress illustrates the skirt with three pleats. A dress was made from linen and silk fabrics, and decorated with bobbin lace and metal medallions, which are significant for skirts and aprons in national costumes from Bela Krajina. The handmade printed pattern designs at the bottom part of the dress reflect embroideries from cultural heritage.

The Model 3 was made from linen and silk fabrics, Figure 12. It represents the contemporary skirt with bodice derived on the basis of impressions during reading the literature, and observing the figures and exhibition in National ethnologic museum in Metlika, Bela Krajina. It consists of characteristic details, such as pleats on the bottom edge, crochet lace in white colour and printed pattern design, which is significant for embroidery of national costumes.

Interpretation of the skirt with bodice and some details of the blouse from the national costume are incorporated in Model 4, Figure 12. A dress was made from cotton fabric. The upper part of the dress illustrates the bodice, which includes pleats, characteristics for the blouse on breast part. At the back part of bodice is buttoning with button and loop, prepared from the crochet lace. A dress is enriched with black bobbin lace in the neckline and printed pattern designs at the bottom part. Characteristic folding and tying with ribbon in the waist were transferred to the dress length.

As an inspiration for creation of the fifth model serves apron, Figure 12. Complete garment includes details of different aprons, such as used linen fabric, printed pattern designs in the entire garment, metal medallions and fringes, which reminds on a colourful Dinaric type of apron.

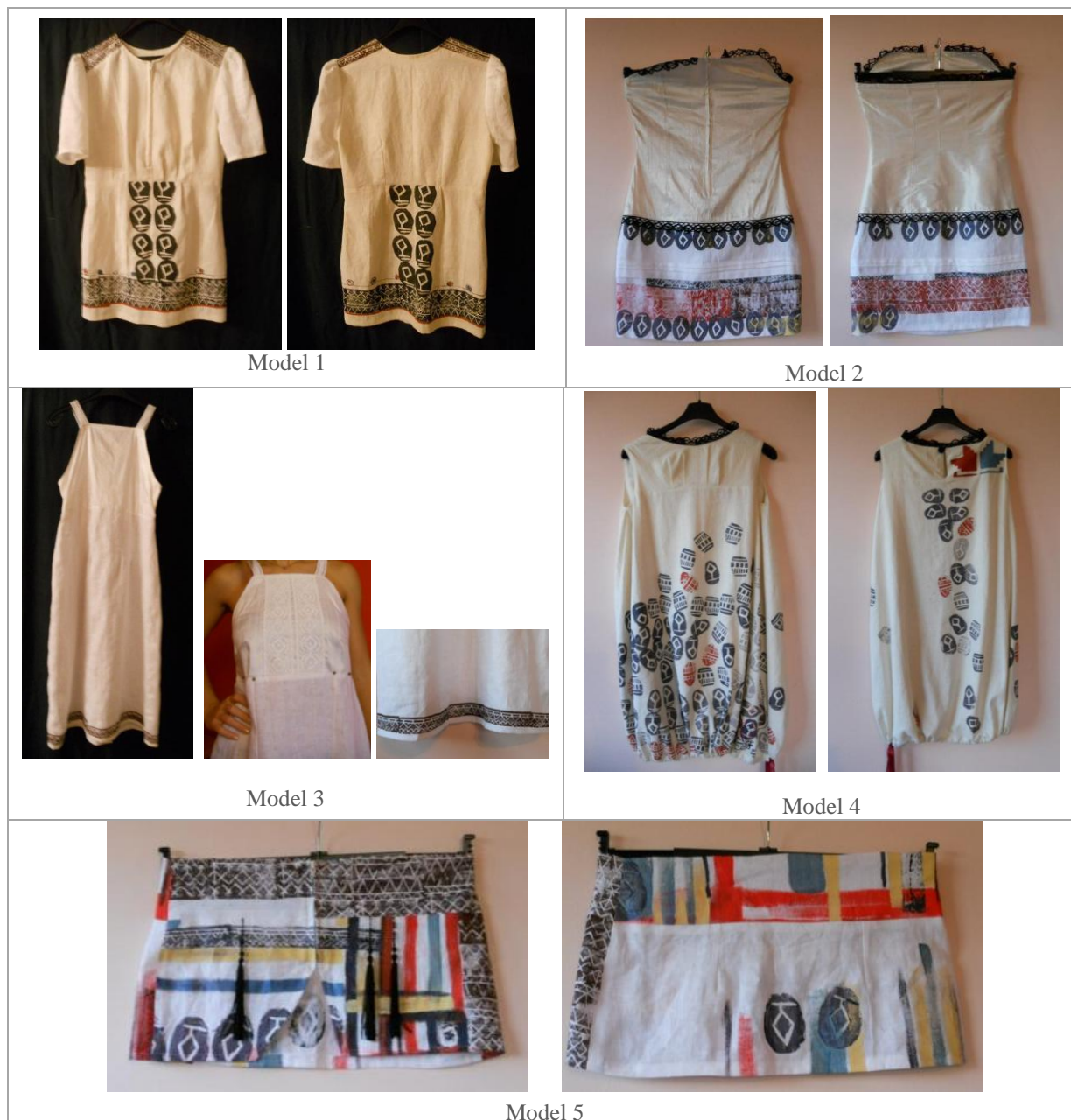


Figure 12: *Women's collection inspired by clothing heritage of Bela Krajina*

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

National costume of both, Catholic and Orthodox populations in Bela Krajina, results in similarity and simplicity of garment patterns, while for the Dinaric type of costume is mainly characteristic richer decoration of costumes. It is also characteristic a two-piece suit, and linen blouse and skirt with belt or bodice, respectively. In addition, the costume is composed of vest, wool apron, decorative belts and rich decorations of the head-covering and necklet.



On the basis of detailed examination of the clothing heritage from Bela Krajina by reading the literature, and observing the figures in literature and exhibition in the National ethnological museum in Metlika, Bela Krajina, the collection of women's garments were designed. It contains characteristic constructional details of garments pattern pieces impressed by national costumes from Bela Krajina, as well as ornamental characteristics of embroideries, bobbin and crochet laces, and fringes, with a touch of the oriental influences. The research results are the basis for sustainable pattern design of the contemporary clothing and enable the transmission of cultural heritage to younger generation.

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