

theme 3
identity

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author(s)



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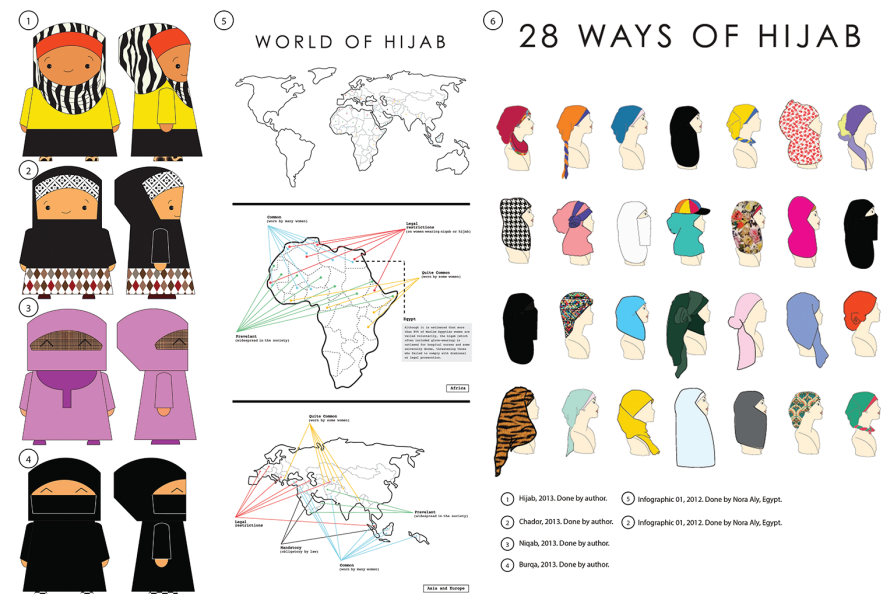
abstract

This research has a theoretical-practical character, with real application and usability. One of the objectives is to understand social and cultural questions related to the veil worn by muslim women, pertinent to the development of a line of hijabs for a young Islamic community, specifically established in the countryside of São Paulo. The proposal was granted with the support by CNPq. The intention is to investigate aspects of the relations between religiousness and the usage of the hijab, demonstrating the multiple possibilities of relationship of the Muslim woman as one of the elements for the Design of a line of hijabs in the field of Fashion.

keywords

Design of Islamic Fashion, gender, religiousness, culture and technology.

The Hijab And The Muslim Woman: a relation between freedom, fashion, and religion



The hijab is a veil worn by Muslim women. According to the sociologist Fatema Mernissi, its origin is in the Arabic verb *hajaba*, which has etymological similarities with the verb “to hide”.

Mernissi points out dimensions of understanding the usage of the hijab: visual, spatial, ethical and moral. This way, the hijab hides, marks the difference, protects, and affirms the religious identity of the Muslim woman.

According to the Quran, the usage of the veil is a religious duty. However, in the contemporary world, women have the right to choose what kind of veil they will wear.

According to the anthropologist Franci Rosy Campos, in *Olhares Femininos sobre o Islã*, the usage of the veil means, beyond commitment to religiousness, a symbol of status, and may be thought of as a symbolic frontier that separates what can be and cannot be seen.

The philosophy behind the veil is to keep away unfamiliar looks, with humbleness and discretion. The Islam values the intellect, so to cover one's self is a way of highlighting the face, valuing the mental activities, the prayers, and the reflections. To the young Muslim women, on the contrary of what is believed in the occidental culture about “feminine freedom”, the belief is that it's not necessary to show parts of the body in an excessive or affirmative way. In Brazil, Muslim women wear the hijab as a way of affirming their identity in the host culture, as well as keeping their traditions.

The research *Ritual, etnicidade e identidade religiosa*, by Paulo Gabriel Pinto, presents differences among Brazilian Islamic communities, as well as similarities regarding principles of maintenance of the Islamic traditions in a mostly catholic country with contrastingly different habits.

Lila Abu-Lughd points out many aspects to be thought about Islamic outfits. Besides identity questions, there is also family and social belonging, and femininity. This research doesn't intend to cover all this complexity and scope of themes. Therefore, here is a succinct description of the standard veils regarding Islamic attires.

The burqa is one of the most traditional outfits. It covers the woman's body from head to toe. It is commonly worn in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and also in western countries.

The niqab is a piece that covers the woman's body except for the eyes, and is generally worn in the Arab Peninsula, Egypt, and Morocco.

The chador is the attire that covers the woman's body down to the knees, but leaves the face uncovered, and is traditionally worn in Iran.

The hijab covers only part of the head, leaving some hair out. In Iran, as well as in Pakistan, most of the young women wear it like that, due to its looking more jovial and free.

The hijab is structured from a rectangular piece of fabric, which measures may vary, depending on the intended effect. There is also the square-shaped hijab, and the Amira, with its trapeze shape.

The fabrics more commonly used in the hijab are silk, viscose, and pashmina, among others. The choice depends on the region, season, and event.

Many fashion designers create collections that respect the Islam. Among lots of Islamic fashion shows, one is outstanding: The Jakarta Fashion Week, where new trends are presented. Ria Miranda manufactures more delicate pieces; Itang Yunasz creates more traditional ones, while Dian Pelandi and Hannie Hananto make pieces for the younger customers. Some of these designers have directly contributed to this research, through interviews and with iconographic material.

In the local scene, Falastin Zarruk designs collections of hijabs and sell them on the internet, via her blog. She also produces videos showing how to wear the hijab in different ways. Hanan Mustafa writes about several themes in her blog, and sells her products on her page on Facebook. These interviewees have shown interest in cooperating with the research. Thus, uniting and analyzing these references, the research is in the practical step, that is, projecting, designing, and developing the line of hijabs to be

applied to a local feminine Muslim youth community.

At this step, which requires conceptualization, understanding the usage of the hijab, in a straight relation with freedom, fashion, and religion, is fundamental.

A possibility of reflecting upon a concrete object, the hijab, is put on stage. The option of limiting the social group is in order to understand who these women are, as well as their subjectivities, sceneries, and spaces.

A contribution to widening reflections about Design is expected, considering diverse discourses about the elements unveiled in the research.

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