

## Using portrait art styles to create designs for women

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### Abstract:

Through the widespread spread of portraiture as an inspiration to many fashion houses and retail clothing companies, which is a great attraction for a large group of young people within our society, through their use of the faces of celebrities and public figures who may have ideas that contradict our principles and identity, and what follows On this from the gradual loss of our identity and our belonging to the African continent. So this research aims to revive the traditional African style in women's clothing in a contemporary style, using a mixture of traditional African design lines (Dashiki, Kaftan, Agbada) and portraiture art. The choice was made on an original copy of a painted portrait representing an African woman from the researcher's work that was shown at the exhibition - Africa in Egyptian Eyes - May 2017 , which was reproduced in 8 copies by the researcher, representing four styles of portraiture (abstract, flat portraiture, illustrated portraiture, fantasy portraiture) and so used in designing women's clothing ,the eight painted portrait has been applied to stain material through digital printing technology to produce the final 8 pieces of clothes, the statistical results determined the best designs that were produced ( 1,2, 4) they got the highest marks, as each of (2, 4) depended on the abstract style, while (1) was based on the flat portraiture style, and (8) achieved the lowest marks and was based on the imaginative style.

### Keywords:

Portrait Art, Flat Portrait, Illustrated Portrait, Fantasy Portrait.

Paper received 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Accepted 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Published 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2021

### Introduction:

Fashion is part of the cultural industries because it expresses the identity of countries through our personal and social relationships related to the way we live and see ourselves within society. In recent years, portraiture has made a strong comeback as an inspiration for clothing design, especially art print which is one of the most eye-catching trends, and it is often portraits of celebrities such as artists, soccer players, or public figures that are very popular with young people of both sexes are often printed or embroidered on T-shirts fig (1), and this causes some nasty side effects such as losing our identity and passing on a lot of distorted ideas and believing in them. The portrait is a very ancient art form dating back to at least ancient Egypt, where a painted or carved image was the only way to record a person's appearance before the advent of the camera, An effective and compelling portrait

is not just a visual representation of a person; rather, it also reveals something about the essence of a person; sometimes what the portrait reveals is quite evident - or it is artfully expressed through a specific expression or situation, an embedded object, or the artist's use of color(1), with time, the art of portraiture developed and used many traditional and advanced techniques, which made it an important source to attract the attention of designers, as it was used in the manufacture of clothes and fashion trends for long periods, Warhol is one of the most referred to artists in the fashion industry. In the 1990s, he painted portraits of celebrities in bright, glowing colors. One of his most famous paintings is Marilyn Monroe, which Gianni Versace used on his dress designs (2). In the spring and summer of 2018, Gucci presented old paintings with modern artistic ideas "Fantasy Fantasy" in cooperation with

the Spanish artist Ignacy Monreal (3). The most meaningful images were the drawn portrait of black children and families on the shirts, jackets, and dresses that Pyer Moss represented in his collection. The goal of the group was to imagine the experience of African Americans without treating racism, and as a result, were beautiful and poignant (4) The study is based on attempts to produce clothes using a mixture of traditional African design lines (Dashiki, Kaftan, Agbada) and portraiture art styles. The image used in the research is an original copy of one of the researcher's works, which was previously shown in the exhibition Africa in Egyptian Eyes. Portrait styles that focus on the research (Abstract, Flat, Photogram, fantasy Portrait). Design lines inspired by traditional African wear for Dashiki women, caftans, and Agbada

### Statement of the Problem:

The research problem can be summarized as follows:

- Is it possible to use portrait art styles in designing and producing women's clothes expressing African identity?
- What are the best portrait art styles that can be used in designing and producing women's clothes?
- To what extent can we get a design in which the lines of clothing design appropriate with the items of the African portrait?

### Research objectives:

Reviving the African dressing heritage in a contemporary manner in an attempt to preserve our African identity by combining

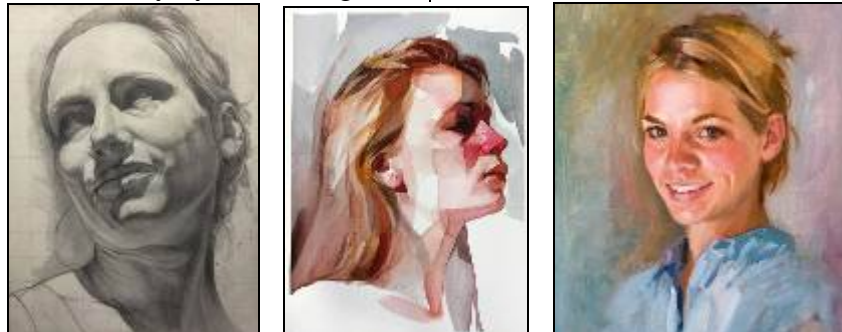


Fig (1): examples of different types of Painting Techniques- panicle.

2- **Portraits can be artistic styles:** There are different types of painting styles, where the artist highlights his ideas with a mixture of modernity and artistic techniques with different styles of painting

recognized African design lines and portraits of African women to produce clothes that keep pace with contemporary fashion trends.

### Research methodology:

The research follows an analytical descriptive method employing a questionnaire for evaluating art portrait styles.

### Theoretical Framework:

#### Portrait art:

Pictures are artistic representations of people. They can be created in any media, such as traditional oil paintings, photography, sculpture, and even mixed media. Photos can show the whole figure or parts of it, and they can also portray more than one person in a group photo (5).

Usually, the artist aims to show the appearance as well as other interesting elements added to the artwork to provide visual clues that express some of the personal aspects of the surrounding environment of the portrait owner. (1) it may be a message that the artist or the person commissioning the work would like to convey. (6)

#### Styles of Portrait Painting:

The way that the artist handles the medium will tell us a lot about the intention behind the work. that each style having a different effect on the overall tone of the piece.

1- **Portraits can be realistic:** Where the artist seeks to simulate reality by making the three-dimensional figure appear as if it is sculpted, actually existing in space uses a variety of techniques as a panicle, watercolor, oil, pastel...etc. fig (1).

such as Fauvist, abstract, Cubist, pop art, impressionism... etc. each showing a different effect and meaning (7) and strange color can be used to great effect in portrait painting. to convey emotion. as

Picasso's portraits painted during his Blue

Period (1) fig (2).



Fig (2): Matisse (Fauvist style), Solly Smook (abstract style), Picasso( Blue Period).

3- **The portrait's features can be flat:** The artist relies on a lot of the outlines and two dimensions of the flat surface, away from

gradations colors and the use of shadow and light. (5) fig (3)

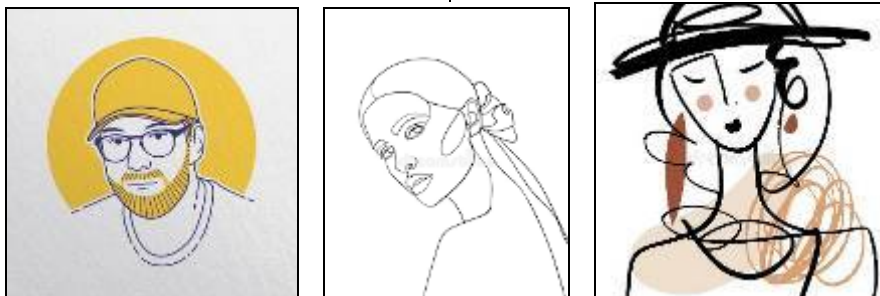


Fig (3): examples of flat portraits.

4- **Portraits can be illustrated:** Layout-style faces that include all the basic details explaining its purpose, size, color, personality, and impact it has many styles,

it may be a decorative or realistic style, or it may belong to one of the art school. fig (4)



Fig (4): examples of illustrated portraits.

5- **Fantasy portrait:** Face painting is associated with fictional art, as it depicts supernatural subjects or mythological

creations, and is closely related to fictional works, and is used mainly to illustrate stories and novels. Fig (5). (8)

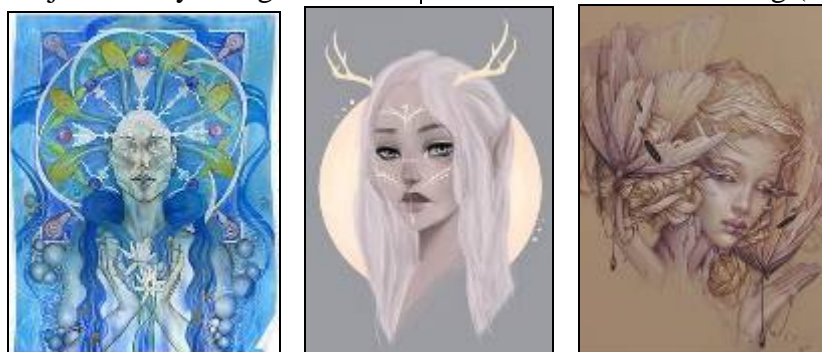


Fig (5): examples of fantasy portraits.



### **Portrait in fashion design:**

In the nineties, Gianni Versace used his Marilyn print on his dress designs

Portrait art emerged as an art trend in Spring 2014 with extremely vibrant prints with a range of bold brushstrokes to soft and delicate paint colors in pastel hues as the Prada's portrait collection Where coats adorn coats, dresses, and skirts and mixed with different fabrics with colorful sequins to highlight the designs (9) fig (6). The researcher believes that the designer relied on all his designs that the overall design area is filled with the drawn face to be in the middle substantially.



Fig (6): Prada's portrait collection in spring 2014.

Faces appeared in abstract prints and pop art style on sporty skinny suits and long narrow dresses as in the Versace collection spring 2018 fig (7). The researcher believes that the designer has adopted in all his designs the repetition of different faces of various sizes to fill the overall design area and distribute it on both sides of the body.



Fig (7): Versace collection spring 2018.

Some designers took a simplistic approach with line drawings as Stella McCartney's 2014 pre-Fall Collection fig (8). (10)



Fig (8): Stella McCartney's 2014 Pre Fall Collection.

### **African Clothing:**

In Africa, there are many varied styles of dress and cloth that, the type of cloth plays an integral role in reflecting the status of individuals or groups within that community, the traditional clothes were greatly influenced by foreign cultures through colonialism and the advancement of means of communication and transmission between continents, which led to the replacement of the traditional dress with the popular Western dress. However, different tribes across the continent still use their national uniforms for ceremonies and special occasions. (11)

A distinctive feature of traditional African dress is its use of festive colors, intricate patterns, and figurative symbols to communicate meaning, Although the names of the clothes vary according to each region and tribe, the clothes meet in the simplicity of the design lines and are very similar in the structural form of the clothing with slight differences in the width and lengths of the dresses, sleeves and the distributed way of motifs on them.

- **Agbada/ Ankara:** is one of the names for a flowing wide-sleeved robe often embroidered and a hole in the center for the head to slide through worn by men in much of West Africa, and to a lesser extent in North Africa, these day agbada comes in shorter lengths and widths (12) fig (9).
- **The caftan:** is very popular among women and men and is spread widely in Central and West Africa, where it is called Boubou for men, and Mobbous for women is a large, loose-fitting robe fig (10).
- **Dashiki and Madiba shirts:** is a loose-

fitting pull-over shirt, long or short-sleeved with an ornate embroidered V-



Fig (9): example of Agbada.

shaped collar that comes in many lengths, colors, and forms fig (11). (11)



Fig (10): example of Caftan.



Fig (11): example of Dashiki.

### **Design approach:**

In this study, the researcher created and produced 8 designs for women inspired by a painting that the researcher drew for African woman portraiture, where the researcher presented 8 new versions of the painting through some of portrait art styles ( abstract, flat portrait, illustrated portrait and fantasy portrait) depends on the following procedural steps:

- 1- Analyzing the image into a set of elements, the structure, and shape - lines - colors - decorative units - lighting ...
- 2- Identify the distinctive and important parts of the artwork such as the facial features, the portrait silhouette, the clothes, their accessories, motifs in the clothing and background
- 3- A simplified image is created that contains important and prominent elements influencing the portrait artwork.
- 4- This image is then used to create a group of experiments and paintings, each of which represents some of the prominent parts that have the greatest impact on visual attention.
- 5- Return to use some details to enhance the similarity with the original painting and impose some aesthetic qualities based on the different artistic styles of the portraiture.
- 6- Employing them in creating women's clothes suitable for the evening period-inspired by traditional African clothes for women as Dashiki, kaftan, and Agbada, the researcher used satin material and executed the designs with digital printing technology as a feature of African clothing.

For evaluation of artistic portrait styles and using them to produce designs for women, the researcher made a questionnaire composed of (5) items as follows:

- 1- The design expresses traditional African clothes.
- 2- Success in producing innovative designs from new version portrait.
- 3- The success of the used artistic method to emphasize the aesthetic elements and values of the original drawing portrait.
- 4- The design keeps up with fashion trends.
- 5- Achieving a balance between the distribution of the elements of the new version portrait and the structural form of the design.

Each item was assessed on 5- degrees (5= strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree). The experimental works were evaluated by ten professors and assistant professors in the field of fashion design. The following is an overview of four artistic portrait styles applied on two samples of fashion design.

### **The master painting:**

The researcher drew a painting that is a portrait of an African woman half a body, where the face appears from the side and the rest of the body from the front, realistic style predominates in painting pictures, as for the background has a decorative pattern the features of the woman and her gaze appear relaxed, calm and reassuring, in which the mother's tenderness mixed with strength, stability, and confidence, which reflects the position of women in Africa, as she is the female, mother and the working lady who is considered the mainstay of the family. The African head wrap and garments full of ornaments are prominent features of this

painting, in addition to the distinctive jewelry of earrings and neck bracelets.

The researcher used the contrast between light and shadows to focus on the important areas in the painting, and the contrast between the strong colors in the texture and background and between the color of the skin in pencil gradations to emphasize the age and heritage of the brown continent, all of these features contribute more to making women the main focal point in the painting. Fig (12)



Fig (12): The master painting is from the researcher's work that was shown at the exhibition - Africa in Egyptian Eyes - May 2017.

### **Painting (1):**

The researcher used in this painting:

#### **Elements:**

Portrait of women only, the motifs in the background and clothes were deleted, few motifs in the headdress were used to draw attention to the face of the woman, whose features were calm like the original painting.

#### **Style:**

I tended to the method of partial abstraction by emphasizing the outline of the portrait through sharp geometric black lines that contrast with the pastel earthy colors (White, brick, and beige), which gave the effect of strength and fortitude against any difficulties just like the land of Africa.

### **Design (1):**

**The structural form of the design:**

A rectangular piece of cloth with a wide horizontal neckline and deep armhole almost to the waist inspired from kaftan.

**Details of the design:**

Arrange the portraiture in reverse symmetry, resulting in interstitial motifs, then duplicated along the hem of the design.



Design (1)



**Painting (2):**

The researcher used in this painting:

**Elements:**

Portrait of women only. The decorations in the background and clothes and headdresses were deleted.

**Style:**

I tended to the method of partial abstraction by the abbreviation of many details of decoration and emphasize the outline of the portrait through white lines that contrast with

the hot colors that dominated the painting as an expression of the sun's reflection on her brown skin.

**Design (2):****The structural form of the design:**

A rectangular piece of cloth with a wide horizontal neckline and deep armhole almost to the waist inspired from kaftan.

**Details of the design:**

Arrange the portraiture in the center of the design with a background gradient.



Design (2)

**Painting (3):**

The researcher used in this painting:

**Elements:**

Portrait of women, few decorations in the background, clothes, and accessories Emphasize the details of both the earring and the necklace in dark brown color.

**Style:**

I turned to the flat portraiture method by emphasizing the lines expressing the outer line of the elements, the internal details of them and expressing the places of shadow and light,

the contrast between white and brown to emphasize the details in a style that suggests simplicity, clarity, and beauty at the same time.

**Design (3):****The structural form of the design:**

A rectangular piece of cloth with a wide horizontal neckline and deep armhole almost to the waist inspired from kaftan.

**Details of the design:**

The portraits are arranged in reverse symmetry on either side of the design.



Design (3)

**Painting (4):**

The researcher used in this painting:

Elements:

Portrait of women only, the decorations in the background and clothes and headdress were deleted.

Style:

I turned to the flat geometric portraiture method by emphasizing the external lines of the elements through sharp geometric black lines, canceling all the internal details of the facial features and motifs in the whole painting, and expressing the background with

intersecting straight lines, to give the appearance of stability, strength, and clarity.

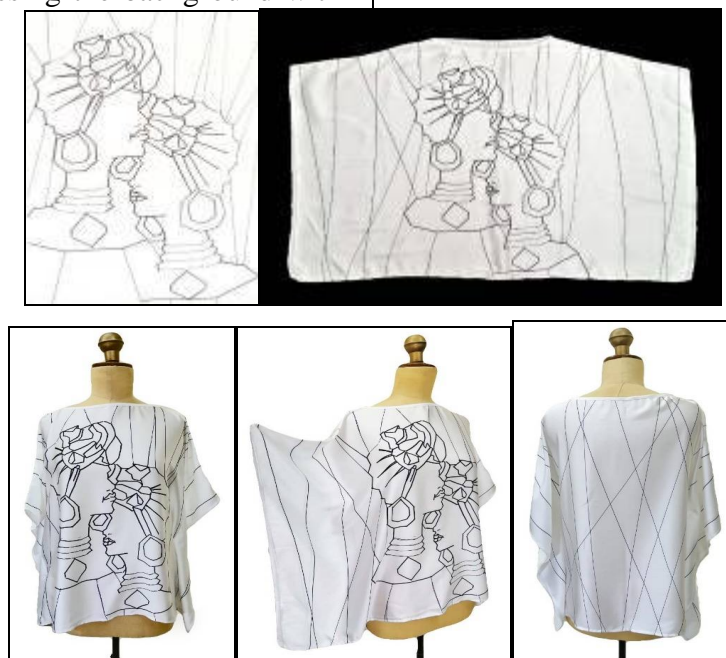
**Design (4):**

The structural form of the design:

A rectangular piece of cloth with a wide horizontal neckline and deep armhole almost to the waist inspired from kaftan.

Details of the design:

two of the women's portraits are arranged to give a complex unit in which the face, body parts, and background were overlapped together to complement each other.



Design (4)



**Painting (5):**

The researcher used in this painting:

**Elements:**

Portrait of women, few motifs in clothes and accessories, emphasize the details of motifs in the background.

**Style:**

I adopted the illustrated portraiture style by emphasizing the external lines of the elements, all the internal details of facial

features, and motifs using quick lines that express shadow and light.

**Design (5):****The structural form of the design:**

Loose float tunic with an asymmetrical hem, round neck, and bell sleeve 3/4 inspired from Dashiki.

**Details of the design:**

Arrange the portraiture at the center of the design, using a plain background in the back.



Design (5)

**Painting (6):**

The researcher used in this painting:

**Elements:**

Portrait of women only, the motifs in the background, headdress, and clothes were deleted to draw attention to the face of the woman, emphasize the details of both the earring and the necklace by colors.

**Style:**

I tended to the method of illustrated portraiture style by emphasizing the outline of the portrait through black lines that contrast with the bright colors in the jewelry (black

gold, red, and orange), which highlighted the beauty of the jewelry and its reflection on the appearance African woman.

**Design (6):****The structural form of the design:**

Loose float tunic with an asymmetrical hem, round neck, and bell sleeve 3/4 inspired from Dashiki.

**Details of the design:**

The portraits are arranged in reverse symmetry on either side of the design, the motifs of the necklace repeat along the edge of the design and at the end of the sleeves.



Design (6)

**Painting (7):**

The researcher used in this painting:

**Elements:**

Portraits of women emphasize details of the motifs in the background, and clothes while adding few motifs in the headdress and jewelry, that added attention to the face versus the motifs in the background and the clothes.

**Style:**

I tended to the method of illustrated portraiture style by emphasizing the outline of the portrait, internal details of facial features,

and motifs using black lines that express shadow and light.

**Design (7):**

**The structural form of the design:**

Loose float tunic with an asymmetrical hem, round neck, and bell sleeve 3/4 inspired from Dashiki.

**Details of the design:**

Arrange the portraiture at the center of the design, the motifs extend a gradient to the sleeves.



Design (7)

**Painting (8):**

The researcher used in this painting:

**Elements:**

Portrait of women only, the motifs in the background, headdress, and clothes were deleted, varying sizes of motifs cover the painting and overlap with the elements of the painting.

**Style:**

I turned to the fictional style of portraiture by adding ornaments of bright colors of different sizes to cover some parts of the painting, which creates a bright and joyful atmosphere

that highlights the beauty of an African woman as her features, clothes, jewelry, and costume accessories.

**Design (8):****The structural form of the design:**

Loose float tunic with an asymmetrical hem, round neck, and bell sleeve 3/4 inspired from Dashiki.

**Details of the design:**

The portraits are arranged in the half drop on the center of the design, the motifs extend a gradient to the sleeves.



Design (8)

**Results:**

Table (1) the average results of the questionnaire for evaluating designs.

	<b>D1</b>	<b>D2</b>	<b>D3</b>	<b>D4</b>	<b>D5</b>	<b>D6</b>	<b>D7</b>	<b>D8</b>
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.90	4.90	4.50	4.90	4.24	4.36	4.52	3.97
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.88	4.95	4.52	4.93	4.26	4.39	4.48	4.00
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.85	4.96	4.48	5.00	4.26	4.38	4.49	4.03
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.91	4.91	4.51	4.90	4.22	4.42	4.50	4.03
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.86	5.00	4.46	4.92	4.26	4.40	4.48	3.95
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.85	4.94	4.49	4.90	4.20	4.39	4.46	4.05
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.92	5.00	4.50	4.92	4.25	4.37	4.50	4.00
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.90	4.94	4.48	4.94	4.20	4.42	4.52	3.95
<b>Ref 1</b>	4.86	5.00	4.47	4.95	4.24	4.38	4.51	4.04



<b>Ref 1</b>	4.92	5.00	4.50	4.91	4.26	4.35	4.47	4.00
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>4.00</b>
	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04

It is evident from table (1) that design no. 2 came first with an average of 4.96, followed by the design no. 4 with an average of 4.93, then the first design came in the third position with an average of 4.89, the design no.7 and the design no.3 came in the fourth position with an average 4.49, the design no 6 came in the fifth position with an average 4.39, the designs no. 5 came in the sixth position with an average of 4.24, finally the design no. 8 came in the last position with an average of 4.00.

### Discussion:

To get an idea about designs that best indication the researcher reviews the next:

**Design 2:** It keeps pace with fashion trends at the same time it expresses the African identity, and the aesthetic value was achieved by centering the image in the center with the hue in the background, through the expanded structural shape of the design, and in contrast to the golden color of her brown skin. It highlights its features and gives it a luster that resembles the luster of the rich gold of Africa, and thus the expansion of the design and the centrality of the portraiture within it, in addition to the colors mentioned in it, led to the mastery of expressing the African identity.

**Design 4:** The tyranny of the African features in the face of the woman in the original version of the portrait made the mere use of her silhouettes sufficient to express her African identity, so The simplicity of the idea and application behind the success of the design, With all these geometric lines that filled the background of the design, it was unable to blur the lines that bear the distinctive features of the African face.

**Design 1:** Although the portrait was not centered in the middle of the design, it did master the expression of African identity through the stylized repetition of the unit that was simplified., there is a balance between the straight horizontal line expressing the repeating unit in this design at the bottom and the white space at the top of the tunic.

**Design 7, 3:** Although they differed in the style and in the way the elements of the

painting were distributed, both of them emphasized the appearance of femininity through curved lines, but the presence of the portrait near the sleeves led to the disappearance of the facial features.

**Design 6:** jewelry motifs strips concentrated on both sides of the design to pay attention to waistline with curved lines which gave a soft and pretty look, however, the distribution of the portrait on both sides led to an increase in the area of the upper part against the lower part of the design which lost the desired balance.

**Design 5:** The design lacks proportions between image size and design size by crowding the details of facial features, lines of headdress, and jewelry, causing any distinct design lines to be lost

**Design 8:** The motifs distributed in such a way may lead to the loss of their African symbol and aesthetic value. The loss of the features of the portrait with a lot of distraction leads to the blurring of any design lines.

### Conclusion:

- 1- The highest scores were achieved through simplification and abbreviation by using the color or distinct lines of the African portrait elements which were achieved in abstract art portrait then flat portrait.
- 2- The importance of the clarity of the silhouette of the African face and considering it a distinctive feature of African portraiture expressing African identity and enriches the aesthetic values.
- 3- The presence of portraiture in the design center helps to achieve the aesthetic values of portraiture in designing clothes in more than one artistic style.

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