



Perfect Patola: A Memoir

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Perfect Patola is a reincarnation designed to create a statement of artisan textiles from the designer's collection of sarees in an aesthetically pleasing gown that highlights cultural roots, artisan appreciation, personal meaning, and sustainable thinking. Textiles is a beautiful and laborious art form created through a multi-stage process of marking, binding, dyeing, weaving, and subtle manipulation of yarns. However, with the advent of modern printing machines that have the capability of printed imitations, the appreciation of this textile comes only by understanding the hard work of hands that touches the materials and spatial and mathematical thinking to create the . The art forms sustain lives of the artisan families and maintain material culture diversity. Further, this gown is designed thoughtfully to minimize waste and preserve the integrity of the delicate fabric, thereby utilizing all of the saree material that constitutes the main body of the semi-fitted bodice and full skirt, with accents and a scarf from remnants of other sarees.

Perfect Patola is a slang term used to describe an attractive woman in Punjabi, an Indic language of the state of Punjab. Patola is a term used for double textiles from the state of Gujarat, India. This collared and full sleeved gown is made from 25 years old silk sarees. The fabric used is from three states in India: Andhra Pradesh (AP), Gujarat, and Orissa. This textile art has the diversity of motifs and techniques in different regions. It celebrates unity in diversity and embodies beauty. The underlining of bodice and sleeve as well as the lining for the gown is made from Global Organic Textile Standards certified cotton cambric remnants from a previous project.

This timeless piece is designed with a simple and classic design that will not overpower the beauty and significance of the material. The armhole princess bodice with a collar and set in sleeves is created by draping. The three-tiered skirt is draped and gathered. The gown uses an invisible center back zipper for closure supported with a hook and eye at neckline. The front and back panel and the collar are from AP, the side bodice panels, the sleeve, and the skirt are from Gujarat, and the blue applique on the sleeves is an from Orissa which is hand applied using half back stitch in red. The scarf's main body is from AP, and the blue ends are from Orissa.

Living in a foreign country for past many years has redefined the designer's wardrobe. She owns several sarees that have an emotional meaning as they were part of her wedding trousseau. Each saree that she chose to include in her trousseau has a connection with the fine textile art and craft of India. In all these years the designer was unable to wear these sarees within her context. It evoked heartache. Out of a resilient desire to wear them, she took a very hard decision to cut and reincarnate them. Cutting a saree felt almost like an art iniquity, but the outcome has brought joy and content. This gown is part of a collection created to utilize the materials to create

something that is as beautiful as the fabric itself, relevant and wearable in today's personal context of the designer. The unique wearable art of this gown lies in its expression of combining textile craft of three regions of India in a cohesive manner, visual communication of cultural heritage and belongingness, cultural and artisan pride, representation of longevity of marriage and companionship, and unique identity construction. This eveningwear formal gown is a modern day tribute to artisans and material culture.

References

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Applique on sleeve with saddle stitch