

# A CONTEXT-SENSITIVE APPROACH TO THE USE OF TRADITIONAL ORNAMENT IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGN PRACTICE

(with Reference to Western  
Siberian Ethnic Ornaments)

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## Introduction

In recent years, there has been a considerable growth of interest in traditional ethnic cultures and their changing implementation in design and architecture all over the world. Concerning the Arctic, such interest has appeared with the massive influx of newcomers, in line with the advancement of science and technology for ‘improving’ less-developed territories. Nostalgia for ‘pristine’ and ‘undeveloped’ land coupled with the search for an appropriate theory for the general betterment of the conditions of human existence in the extreme conditions of the Arctic regions led to a heightened interest in traditional cultures as models for successful (and environmentally friendly) adaptation and survival (Moran, 2007; Richerson & Boyd, 2005). This process is something currently observed across the entire North, Siberia and the Far East of Russia. Indeed, in contrast to the aggressive modernity – with the absorbing industrialization and appropriation of the Russian North – local indigenous communities have existed for many centuries in balance with the environment. Their authentic culture has evolved under the influence of natural and historical factors and original worldviews. These peoples do not take over the physical space but follow its order instead, and thus, do not conflict with the land while utilizing its resources and opportunities (Golovnev, 1995; Golovnev, Garin, & Kukanov, 2016).

In the current context of multiculturalism, growing interest in this culture has made it the subject-matter of numerous studies and, among other things, increasingly often, a source for artistic/designerly borrowings. Indeed, today, traditional ethnic ornament is widely employed by contemporary artists, designers, architects, and other professionals for its extensive range of motifs, expressiveness, and imagery. As Trilling notes, ‘inde-

pendent of representation, ornament seems to bring us close to the underlying, universal character of artistic form' (Trilling, 2003, p. 27). In turn, contemporary inclusive art and decorative practices enrich the continually changing 'fabric' of the ornamental art.

In this essay, while examining the unique aesthetic value and power of traditional ornaments of the Arctic natives, we try to challenge the assumption about ornament as a mere decoration. By placing this discussion into a historical context, we make an argument about ornament's cultural significance and its role in facilitating the very way of adaptation and survival of ethnic communities. Turning a critical eye onto contemporary examples of use, we thus propose a so-called 'context-sensitive' approach to how one should employ ornament in design and architectural practice. Here the term 'context-sensitive' aims to emphasize the focus on preserving and enriching not just historical but also scenic, aesthetic, ethical, community, and environmental resources. Overall, we aim to draw attention to the sensitive question of preserving and transforming traditions and pave the way for further exploration of alternative ways of representation of indigenous arts and crafts.

In the course of the essay, we briefly describe the theoretical framework and historical context and then present a case study into the use of traditional ornament of selected indigenous communities of Western Siberia, namely Khanty and Nenets. In the final part, we discuss the value of traditional ornament for the future of arctic design.

## Data and Methods

Our primary data on traditional ornament – the existing variety of patterns, shapes, colors, materials, and techniques – was obtained during archival work in museums and private collections in 2005-2007. We also draw on data from field observations of one of us conducted within 2006-2011 in the form of short trips to remote communities as well as long-term living in the urban environment of several Western Siberian cities and towns. The general research is based on a systemic approach that enables analyzing traditional ornaments as an integral element of the entire culture and revealing the internal connections between other cultural elements, e.g., language, food, rites, and rituals, etc. Other employed methods are as follows:

- Historical analysis of archival / museum materials (identification of the evolution of the phenomenon);
- Field ethnography (visual and mobile ethnography, participatory observation, unstructured interviews, etc.), i.e., real-life documentation of the phenomenon; and
- Artistic analysis (in line with the principles and concepts of art history). (Bakhtin, 1982)

The spatial boundaries of our research center on the middle and northern part of the Ural Federal District encompassing the middle and northern parts of Western Siberia.

The indigenous peoples under study are the Khanty and Nenets – semi-nomadic and nomadic population groups respectively. Their subsistence economies (reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting) are specially adapted to the taiga and tundra ecosystems.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, like many ‘minority tribal peoples’ of Russia, they had to pass through several waves of dramatic changes in their economy, culture and living environment. The advent of the Soviet power in the 1920s accompanied by great promises and expectations for the northern peoples of the vast area of former Russian Empire turned out to be devastating for indigenous communities: sedentarization and collectivization policies, attacks on traditional beliefs and languages, encroachment of industry on ancestral lands, habitat depletion and pollution. Today, despite the efforts of the Soviet and post-Soviet state in suppressing traditional way of living, belief, and rituals, the Khanty and Nenets are widely acknowledged as strongholds of the ‘native traditional culture’ (Wiget & Balalaeva, 2011; Vagramenko, 2014). In the context of this research, it is important to note that both Khanty and Nenets are literate in Russian but usually prefer to use their native languages. In other words, their system of communication remained relatively unchanged, and this is particularly true about the visual language, i.e., traditional ornament.

## **A Context-Sensitive Approach: The Outline**

Widespread use of elements from old ethnic arts and crafts is meant to express ownership of local culture. In this process, traditional ornament becomes a convenient way to impart an authentic image to an object and emphasize its specificity and regional flair. From the historical point of view, ornament is a result of cultural and environmental limitations rather than a matter of a designer’s unhampered fancy (Hamlin, 2003, p. 8). In other words, the designers of any one place and time tend to work alike in certain respects, and those characteristics which are common to their work constitute the style of that time and region (Hamlin, 2003, p. 9). However, in the context of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society-in-formation, when the societal norms and values are yet to be established, the artistic means and outcomes represent this transitional character relying on distinctive ways, methods and systems of decorative design which have prevailed in particular locality at particular times.

For our discussion we employ a postcolonial theoretical framework that provides valuable insights into currently important topics of dominance, power, identity, and knowledge de- and re-construction in the context of contemporary globalization (Muller & Druin, 2012; Irani, Vertesi, Dourish, Philip, & Grinter, 2010; Naum, 2012; Pastran, 2014). In our case, the postcolonial framework helps to illuminate the process of cultural borrowing, transformation, and exchange unfolding over time in the life context of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

Let us look at the existing situation of cultural borrowing in the specific context of Arctic design and architecture. Applications of ornament in traditional northern cultures are extremely varied, including transport vehicles, household articles such as utensils, furniture, tools, hunting gear, and, of course, clothes – casual, festive, ritualistic.

Ornaments can be found on birch bark, fur and textile items adorned with applique, embroidery or mosaic, on bone and metal as inlay, etc. Each of these materials and each technique has its own technology and ornamental motifs, which are arranged within a system of objects at certain places and in a certain order in a strictly canonical manner ensuring that the sacred semantic component of the ornament is preserved.

Borrowing traditional motifs, contemporary culture expands the range of areas where ornament is applied, introducing new and transforming the customary ones. Migrating and materializing in new forms, ornament – while obtaining new ‘dialogical’ properties (Bakhtin, 1982) – changes its functions as well. It is also evident that ornament’s original symbolism – both sacred and communicative – becomes irrelevant in new conditions, and thus poses a major problem in cross-cultural communication.

The existing incongruence between traditional applications of ornament and how it is used in contemporary culture reveals the main practical challenge involved in the choice of ornament. Elin Haugdal (2017), in particular, investigated a similar problem with reference to contemporary architecture in Sapmi, where a complex relationship between tradition and innovation also constitute a sensitive topic. She draws a reader’s attention back to the history of art and architecture pointing out that the very meaning of ornament is not to merely embellish but to augment the appropriate functionality of the object/building. Using ornaments requires that the ‘architect takes into account a range of social, aesthetic, and ethical issues in a given historical and geographical situation’ (Haugdal, 2017, p. 238).

Indeed, in the sea of data, artists, designers, and architects face a significant problem to try and identify the material they need for expressing their intent and apply it most competently. In the course of her analysis, Haugdal refers to works of Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo arguing that in a postmodern situation ‘the architect’s job is to listen, to accept, and to negotiate rather than to create something new’ (Vattimo, 1995, p. 46). This professional challenge requires shifting the focus, opening up to unfamiliar material and exercising plasticity in its assimilation.

Thus, to facilitate fusion of cultures – and eventually to create a ‘new synthetic culture’ (Garin, Kravchuk, Kukanov, Gostyaeva, & Konkova, 2017; Usenyuk-Kravchuk, Garin, Gostyaeva, Konkova, & Mingaleva, 2018) – design professionals have to examine various values and intra-cultural distinctions thoroughly as well as to clearly define what, why and how to borrow from the natives. This requirement applies, in particular, to ornament, its location, proportions, and composition. Traditional ornament could be adapted to and assimilated by contemporary culture taking advantage of relevant state-of-the-art technologies and materials meeting the environmental standards.

While the answers to what and why-questions depend on the particular environment and circumstances, the instrumental outcome of how-question seems to be appropriate for all requirements. We propose an inclusive, context-sensitive approach to the values of a traditional culture that implies ornamental art studies to be conducted in a comprehensive manner within the framework of the general picture of traditional northern culture while differentiating its specific regional varieties. A comprehensive

synthesis of interdisciplinary knowledge about ornament, from stylistic features to sacred semantic contents, could provide an information thesaurus and enable the development of an adequate approach to the use of ornament.

The design process should begin with a detailed analysis of traditional ornament's geographical features in relation to a number of aspects. Such analysis highlights a wide range of possibilities for competent use of ornament – from direct borrowing to the production of generalized synthetic ideas.

Before moving to the case study, we provide some theoretical considerations for the use of the proposed context-sensitive approach. Through the historical review of the emergence and evolution of the northern ornamental patterns, techniques, and materials, we discovered the mechanisms of spatial and temporal transmission of ornamental traditions that, in turn, ensured sustainable reproduction of the canons. This transmission was, in fact, a relatively slow process, through which the names and semantics of ornaments were consistently preserved. An artistic and stylistic comparison of the ornamental motifs pertaining to various ethnic groups in Western Siberia shows that, while undergoing transformations and syntheses, and splitting and re-merging, they still followed a general pattern of evolution within the framework of a single unique style.

While performing an aesthetic function, ethnic ornament presents a materialized cultural feature determined by the available natural materials, domestic economy, and physical filling of the culture. Thus, climate – natural resources – basic cosmology – main ethnic occupations – material – technique – form-making – narrative – semantics (contents): these are the interrelated, mutually subordinated aspects of culture (both material and spiritual). Therefore, even a superficial study of visible differences between ornamental traditions suggests a need for differentiating how the principles of application of ornament were elaborated and articulated, identifying through the prism of outward formal features the entire scope of ornament's inner contents.

If considered as a product of a multifaceted indigenous culture in which myth is 'the inner formula of culture, an invisible center upholding, first of all, the taboo sacred values' (Ivashchenko, 2004, p. 426, our translation), ornament, being fundamentally ambiguous, refers one to a legend, becoming an associational element. It reflects the entire system of ethnic mythopoetic images which maintains the orientation to the past of the community and the ethnos in general. Like a folklore epithet, an ornamental motif personifies some deity in the hierarchy of supranatural beings in traditional culture, performing a religious function being endowed with sacred protective meaning. When interpreting it, however, it is essential to take into account the existence of a complex pantheon of cult images at the level of each people, ethnic group, phratry, clan, or family appearing in the mythology and customs of a certain locality.

It is thus logical to construct the semantic field of an ornament through related myths and legends since ornament is inseparable from folklore – they form a single world of folk poetry. Moreover, the symbolism and associations of an ornament are further specified by a whole set of circumstances, such as its location on the object, size, combinations, colors, etc.

The cultural experience of each locality defines intuitively an approach to the interpretation of meaningful symbols, which dictates the third, communicative (semantic) function of ornament. The careful deliberation and design of the ornamental motifs implied communication by means of contemplation and enabled one to describe events and vernacular knowledge and express empathy with certain emotions. Finally, a review of color preferences in each ethnic group, also determined by a number of unique factors and associated with a wide range of narratives, reveals a number of traditional techniques (choice and distribution of colors, duality, contrast) presenting a synthesis of practicality, decorativeness, and sacrality. Thus, for instance, the contrast was used to impart the effect of sacrality to ornament: 'it is even difficult to look at the blue-red depiction of one of the gods – the celestial horseman Urt, it dazzles the eyes ... because, according to their ideas, one can look at the sun but cannot look at Urt' (Kulemzin, 1992, p. 25, our translation). Thus, the sacred semantic aspect of ornament imbues it with contents, spiritualizes it and reflects the worldviews of traditional culture, serving as its visual documentation.

Strict 'canonicity' and regional differentiation as the safeguards of continuity and preservation that have helped the culture survive over centuries should be upheld in modern times as well. A context-sensitive approach implying a profound understanding of the values would enable the potential of ethnic ornament to be unfolded and to be introduced into contemporary design practice.

This approach includes a detailed analysis of regional ethnic features of ornament and implies a specific algorithm of study, a step-by-step process of narrowing down the information field to identify the essential traits of the ornamental motif that convey the conceptual intent. The mythological factor as the primary, central element of traditional northern culture accounts for the emergence of the hierarchy of supernatural beings for various purposes and on various levels (individual, family, tribe, etc.). This complex but cohesive system of beliefs served as a framework for self-definition in the world. The analysis should thus begin with a delineation of the region to be studied since each social community had its own patron and each locality, therefore, had one prevailing and most characteristic ornament. It is thus essential:

1 – to differentiate the study and select ornament by territory while allowing for the cultural characteristics of certain ethnic groups identified in accordance with the following algorithm:

- a) Ethnos (Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Komi-Zyryans, Dolgans, Selkups)  
– identification of common cultural traditions;
- b) Ethnic group;
- c) Phratrial or tribal group;
- d) Territorial or local communities;
- e) Family or individual (e.g., Khanty → Northern Khanty → Kazym Khanty → phratry → tribe).

2 – interpretation of the ornament's meanings via the mythopoetic aspect of the culture. The next step provides for the identification of ornament applications, objectives, and uses of the object ornamented, sensitive choice of the location and proportions of the motif allowing for the ornamental traditions of the local material culture: types of

ornament and its location, and other canons. That is, it involves:

3 –determining the intended sphere of application as a material realization of the ornamental traditions

4 –identifying the outward signs of northern ornament:

a) the layout:

- symmetry (vertical/horizontal arrangement);
- background-to-pattern equality;
- duality;
- rhythm;
- diffuseness (syncretism).

b) coloristic specifics:

- the sacred semantic rationale for the choice and distribution of colors;
- the duality of colors.

c) interrelationships: material – technique – form.

Thus, a systematized knowledge of northern ornament allowing for its external and internal characteristics should enable us to lay aside what is inadmissible and recommend appropriate techniques for its application in design, architecture and applied decorative art.

Below we present the case study drawn from the fieldwork of one of us as well as from the art history and the history of ‘internal colonization’ (in the form of industrial development) of the Russian North. It is an illustration of a cultural clash: designers/architects from the capital area versus culturally different craftspeople from taiga and tundra. We examine the outcomes of this engaging mismatch embodied in different designs through the lens of the proposed context-sensitive approach.

#### *CASE STUDY: APPLICATION OF THE ORNAMENT ‘HARE’S EARS’ / ‘BEAUTIFUL REINDEER HORNS’*

Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the case, it should be noted that there are categories in the traditional culture which – despite all contemporary changes and transformations – keep upholding the orientation towards the people’s past with their semantic system. These include images of religious content, including some ornaments: it is believed that the sacred patterns contain a certain power, a certain charge of energy that can sacredly ‘clean’ the object on which it is applied, and further keep it in this state (Moldanova, 1999, p. 146). Such ornaments include patterns associated with a bear, black grouse, wood grouse, ‘happy nests’ of sacred animals, as well as a horseman sitting on a horse.

For example, the group of ornaments associated with a bear (Figure 1) is still marked with a seal of sacredness. The cult of the bear used to be the basis of the Ob Ugrian ideological system: it was assigned a special role, i.e., the role of the first ancestor. As a researcher of the traditional ornament A. Syazi points out, not every woman would dare to use bear-related ornaments on her products. Only a craftswoman who was confident in her skills and abilities to fulfill the requirements associated with this category of ornaments would take such a risk. Moreover, throughout her life, a craftswoman should make neither more nor less than seven objects with such ornaments (Syazi, 1995).



Figure 1. Examples of ornaments with a bear. Left: A Bear; top right: Bear's ears; top left: Bear's track. Source: Syazi, 1995.

In our fieldwork, we encountered different variations (and violations) of traditional ornaments including those from sacred groups, but the most widespread and, at the same time, most neglected in terms of meaning and composition were ornaments and patterns of 'everyday use.' Being simple and laconic and therefore readily recognizable and associational, they are closer to contemporary culture (contemporary signs) and are easier to perceive.

Thus, in this essay, we present a simple and, perhaps, one of the most popular patterns, i.e., the Ugric ornament *Sovar Pal*, i.e., 'Hare's Ears' (Figure 2). It is also called *Mekad Ty Nyamd*, i.e., 'Beautiful Reindeer Horns' by the Nenets people who borrowed it from the Khanty.

The algorithm of analysis progresses from the general to the specific, from establishing the regional boundaries of the ornament, its applications, composition, interactions with the context and color gamut to the choice of the ornamental motif, its location, scale and size, and definition of the traditional meaning.



Figure 2. The ornament 'Hare's Ears' / 'Beautiful Reindeer Horns.' Source: R. Minnakhmetova, 2007.



*Sovar Pal* is one of the oldest and most significant and widespread patterns among the Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, and Komi-Zyryans, invariably filled with an ethnos-specific meaning.

*'The patroness wearing a hare fur hat, our mother,  
The patroness wearing a summer-hare fur hat who gave birth to us...'* -

says a Khanty prayer addressed to the goddess of Kaltasch, one of the main deities in the pantheon, the patroness of women and childbirth. She-hare is one of its zoomorphic guises.

Such personification of a deity is characteristic of any totemic society, serving as a means of self-definition in a specific ethnic group. It determines an object's context of signs, generates folklore epithets, and contains a reference to a myth or legend. In each locality, people could interpret cult images in their own way; for instance, the Khanty inhabiting the river Kazym basin believe that the goddess Kaltasch has an image of a swan (area-specific).

It is important to note that the sign character of ornament also determines (and specifies) its location on an object. The vision of an object as a whole provides a clear idea about its owner and its origin and use because each detail has a meaning: clothing, footwear, headwear, adornments, various accessories determine the distinctive appearance of the traditional costume. This appearance, in turn, allows its owner to feel ownership of the ethnos, social and religious group, tribe, the sphere of occupation, etc., and thus to represent the belonging to the specific community (Bogordaeva, 2006, p. 45).

Such strict canonicity was perceived positively, stimulating continuity and preservation of culture: '...prohibition imposed by the goddess meant that our status was high and was close to the status of this general Ugrian spirit' (Moldanov & Moldanova, 2000, p. 9, our translation). Historically, the ornament *Sovar Pal* / 'Hare's Ears' has been a popular pattern on female clothes (fur coat, headgear). People liked to decorate children's items with it, but more frequently it was used on footwear. It can also be found on birch bark items and beaded articles, i.e., objects made by women.

This motif – as one of the oldest patterns – is a basis for numerous other more complex ornaments. It contains a simple structural element ('background'), which, participating in the construction of the ornament on its own or becoming more complex, imparts active movement to it. This is a characteristic feature of Ugrian ornament: 'ordered pulsating movement is emphasized by the contrast of the dark and light, and being organized in a strict rhythm of a ribbon ornament it appears to be an expression of one of the main laws of nature – harmony of motion and rest, interrelationship of phenomena.' (Ulyashev, 1999, p. 124, our translation).

This important fundamental quality of the ornament is often ignored in modern use. When placed in a context of new rhythms and scales, the ornament loses its traditional unhurried pace and gets fragmented and 're-arranged.' In this way, it adapts to the new system of signs and opens up a vast field for contemporary applications. In this case, however, ornament loses its essential meaning.

The basic element of the *Sovar Pal* / 'Hare's Ears' ornament is currently used in the design of advertisements, logos, emblems, souvenirs, urban environments, illumination, and in many other areas. In such a context, any fragment of any traditional ornament would only indicate that the object belongs to a particular region, losing its original sacred semantic meaning.

However, even if transferred as a whole, the ornament is likely to be misused. Incongruence between the objectives of using ornament in traditional and contemporary cultures and new (alien) applications highlight the essential complexity of ornament selection. A sensitive and deliberate approach is needed.

Thus, by way of continuing our excursion into the use of the *Sovar Pal* / 'Hare's Ears' ornament in contemporary contexts, let us consider objects on which it is used without any modification. A good example is the interior of the hall in the House of Peoples Friendship (Khanty-Mansiysk) (Figure 3).

This ornament is used in the wall decoration, encircling the entire perimeter of the hall under the ceiling. It is made in the technique of ceramic mosaics in three colors (yellow, beige, black). Such decoration (besides the ornament under consideration it includes several other fragments) is likely to be dictated by a desire to emphasize the regional specifics and occupants' nature of the business. However, the reasons for choosing this ornamental motif in the demonstrated examples are not clear, and the inclusion of a third color and the unusual textures raise questions.

The next example comes from Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District: its coat-of-arms includes the Nenets ornament *Mekad Ty Nyamd* / 'Beautiful Reindeer Horns,' which is identical in form to the Khanty's *Sovar Pal* / 'Hare's Ears' analyzed above from the perspective of their culture. The Nenets borrowed this ornament and gave it a new semantic meaning and, accordingly, a new name. For this ethnos, reindeer is the

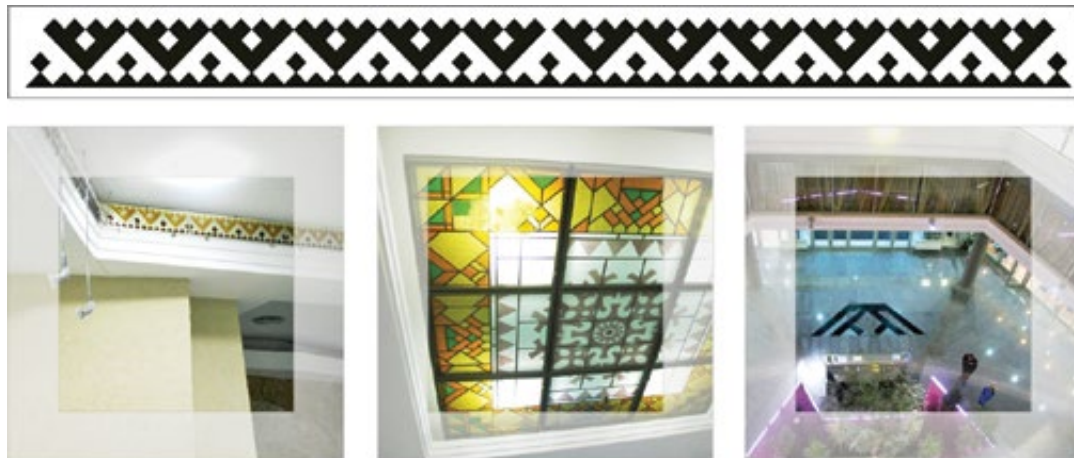


Figure 3. The ornament in the interior. The House of Peoples Friendship, Khanty-Mansiysk. Source: R. Minnakhmetova, 2006.



Figure 4. The coat-of-arms of Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District. Source: Cian Akril, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=22979063>.

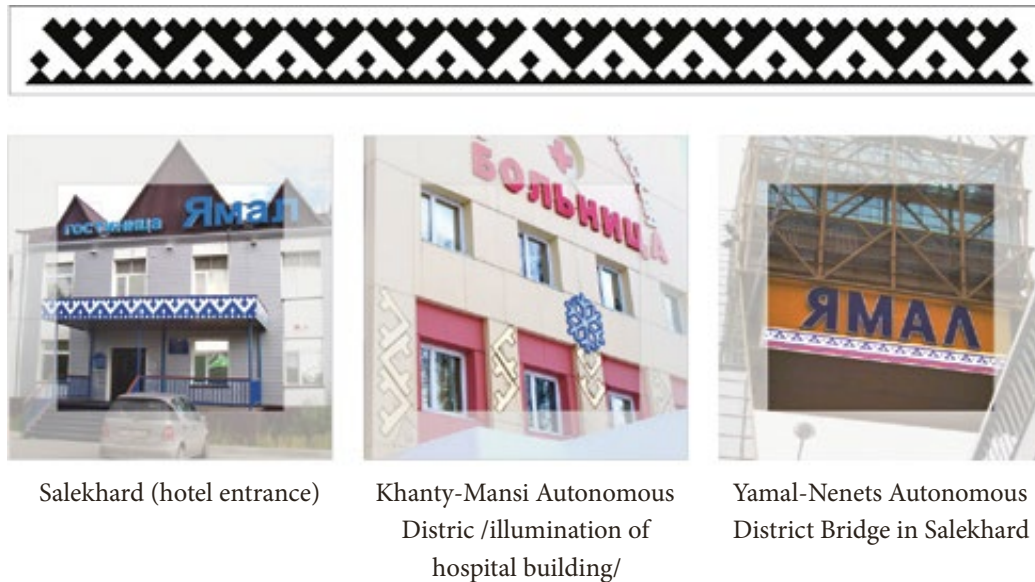
mainstay of their life, and so their traditional culture has been based on reindeer herding, and domestic reindeer has been the most venerated animal for all Nenets.

This ethnic specificity is reflected in the coat-of-arms of this national district with the ornament *Mekad Ty Nyamd* / 'Beautiful Reindeer Horns' (Figure 4).

Now it can be found in other areas as well, being daringly employed in architecture, urban environments, and advertising (Figure 5).

In these examples, we observed the sharp contrast between so-called tradition and modernity. In the grip of the eclecticism and liberal interpretation of foreign cultural values, i.e., critical features of modern times, every element of the ornament loses its unique and relevant role.

Similar examples from many other northern cities confirm the tendentious character of the observed phenomenon. Attempts to interpret the ornament in the context of contemporary ideas are often essentially erroneous, calling for accuracy and care. A multifaceted archaic culture is not always readily accessible for the modern mind. Moreover, the material (and thus spiritual) culture of the contemporary northern ethnicities has undergone major changes and decomposition – many of the meanings and notions have been lost to the result that in interpreting many of the ornaments craftsmen and researchers often disagree.



Salekhard (hotel entrance)

Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District /illumination of hospital building/

Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District Bridge in Salekhard

Figure 5. Examples of the ornament in the exterior. Source: R. Minnakhmetova, 2007–2011.

## Conclusion

Through analyzing ornamented objects resulted from modern design/architectural practice, we have raised a number of issues related to intercultural encounters between non-indigenous designers and local/indigenous systems of communication and identity in the context of a modern northern city. We revealed that ornamental borrowings often appeared to be arbitrary and chaotic following some formalistic attributes, the aim is to ensure that the object looks like pertaining to the local ethnicity. The result is the loss of the ornament's sacral semantic aspect, which, from a broader perspective, can be seen as a tacit violation of cultural norms and values. Moreover, the eye often captures many incongruities in the composition so that the rhythm, diagonals, and proportions fail to fit with the existing context and the purpose of using the ornament loses its meaning, and it becomes an alien element. Thus, we conclude, there is a clear need to adjust (articulate) the moral and ethical principles underlying the design activities with regard to traditional heritage and existing locally established ways and rules of visual communication.

When we speak of a context-sensitive approach to traditional ornament, instead of a superficial adaptation of established decorative motifs to new – multicultural and multi-ethnic – reality, we call for shifting to a different worldview appropriate to the present context. This means that designers/architects should start with critical analysis to de-construct the colonial history embedded into local practices of decoration, as well as to re-construct mutually beneficial relationships between the indigenous and non-indigenous population of the region.

While the ecology of culture implies tolerance to alien experiences as well as recording and study of disappearing elements, it is essential to pay attention to the natural evolution of traditions rather than to their conservation. In this respect, design seems to have the greatest potential. In the cultural context, connection with traditions in combination with powerful creativity is what distinguishes locally appropriate and locally responsible design and makes it unique.

To conclude, the issue of careful and sensitive integration of traditional ornaments into existing modernity is not just about developing culturally appropriate artifacts, architecture, advertising, etc. Instead, it is about discovering hidden qualities of traditional objects and practices that may be developed and lead to future use as well as about exploring and employing indigenous technological knowledge behind these objects and practices. Finally, to support our opening statement about ornament's cultural significance and its role in facilitating the very way of adaptation and survival of ethnic communities, we suggest the re-appropriation of the local heritage conducted by creative practitioners – the heritage that may provide new clues and directions to the vision of human-nature relationship in real-time mode.

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