These designs relate to Cher Thomas’s work
Andrew Higgins, curatorial assistant for ethnology, Arizona State Museum

The Akimel O’odham weave a coiled technique with cattail as the foundation and willow and devils claw as the coils. The designs often are believed to have a connection to water and sometimes they even look like waves. The designs were common on the red on buff pottery of the Hohokam culture. Hohokam are the ancestors of the O’odham. They lived in the Sonoran Desert region from AD 300-AD 1400.

It’s great to see how these designs have not disappeared and have gone from being used on pottery to basketry to clothing today.

The baskets in the photographs are Akimel O’odham dating from 1900-1920 and the pottery is Akimel and Tohono O’odham dating from 1910-1930, from the collection of the Arizona State Museum.

Photos of Arizona State Museum objects by Jannelle Weakley, Arizona State Museum/University of Arizona

Photos of Cher Thomas collection, courtesy of the designer:

Ties, photos by Amy Davila
Skirt and Crop Top, photos by Roshan Spottsville
Silver Dress, photos by Larry Price
Sundress and Mini Skirt, photos by Steve Yap