

Research on the penetration and application of folk art symbols in product design

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Abstract: Folk art symbols can embody the cultural spirit of traditional Chinese culture, and today, with the great abundance of material life, they are widely welcomed and concerned by people. In addition, with the continuous rise of folk art culture and people's pursuit of traditional culture, more and more products have begun to incorporate folk art culture, which is also mainly reflected in the design aspects of folk art symbols. At the same time, people's pursuit of personalized product design has also promoted the application and development of folk art symbols in product design. For enterprises, incorporating folk art symbols can make products and services more competitive in the market, gain higher market share, and then get higher economic benefits. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the concept of folk art symbols, and examines and considers the ways in which folk art symbols can be penetrated and applied in product design. Based on this, this paper also discusses the principles of folk art symbols in the process of product design, so that it can be a reference for other researchers.

1. Introduction

At present, science and technology are in a stage of rapid development, and enterprises in various industries are constantly expanding their scale and adopting industrialized production mode. Although the mass production method can obtain the highest benefit in the shortest time, for those who pursue personalized consumer groups, such homogeneous products are not favored by them. Moreover, if only rely on technical innovation, then many small enterprises will have difficulty to occupy more market share, and even face the risk of bankruptcy and closure as the problem of homogenization of products and services becomes more serious. Therefore, if enterprises want to obtain long-term development, they should avoid homogenization of products and services and put more money and energy into developing differentiated and personalized products, which is also the most important operation strategy for enterprises nowadays.

In this paper, through the interpretation of folk art symbols, we explore the connotation of folk art symbols, study the sense of cultural belonging and cultural heritage behind them, and discuss the meaning of symbols and symbol design methods in product design in the context of the current cultural needs of our nationals, hoping to give product designers and business managers some reference and inspiration.

2. Theoretical foundations

2.1 Folk Art

Folk art, in essence, is a variety of traditional and local artworks made by the grassroots people, which can be handicrafts, decorations, daily necessities, and so on. Moreover, these people are not formally trained in art, but rather are the result of local customs^[1]. Each country has the potential to produce a typical folk art, which reflects the customs of a country. Moreover, the application of folk art to the sphere of life can inspire not only a love for traditional art but also a strong patriotic spirit in the nation. Figure 1 shows the ten traditional Chinese folk arts.

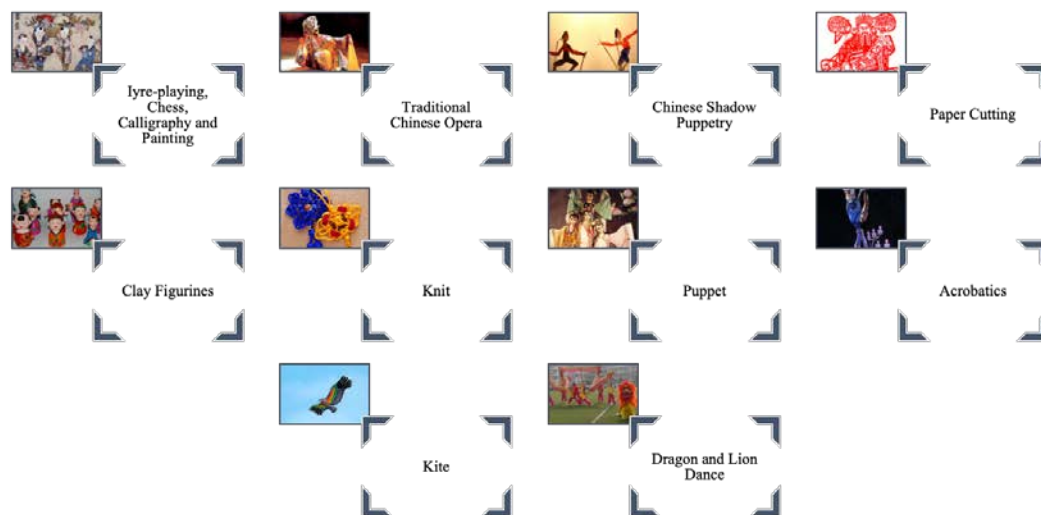


Figure 1 Top ten traditional Chinese folk arts

Unlike palace art and humanistic art, folk art has its own uniqueness, which is the reason why it survives to this day. There are two concepts of folk art, broad and narrow. In a broad sense, folk art is the artistic works created by laborers to meet their own living and aesthetic needs; therefore, folk music, folk dance and folk opera, folk crafts, etc. are all specific expressions of folk art ^[2].

In a narrow sense, folk art is characterized as folk plastic art, which consists of two main forms of expression: folk art and arts and crafts. Moreover, these folk artworks are made mainly of local natural materials, through the traditional handcraft of the people. Folk artwork has local characteristics and national style. Many folk artworks are also closely integrated with local folklore activities and are closely related to life. With the precipitation and development of thousands of years of traditional Chinese culture, various folk artworks present a rich and colorful connotation of traditional Chinese culture, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Ten traditional Chinese cultural symbols

2.2 Product Design

Product design is a series of technical work from the development of a new product design mission statement to the design of product samples. Its work is to develop a product design task book and the implementation of the project requirements in the design task book (including product performance, structure, specifications, type, material, internal and external quality, life, reliability, conditions of use, technical and economic indicators should be achieved, etc.).

Product design should do: (1) the design of the product should be advanced, high quality, to meet the needs of users. (2) To enable both the manufacturer and the user of the product to achieve better economic benefits. (3) From the practical point of view, pay full attention to the resource conditions and production and living standards, and make the most suitable design. (4) Pay attention to improve the level of serialization, generalization and standardization of products. The main types

are: new product design; foreign samples of physical mapping imitation; foreign drawings design; old product improvement design.

3. Traditional Colors and Modern Applications in Chinese Folk Art

3.1 Traditional Colors

Chinese traditional folk culture is not only reflected in the customs and habits of the Chinese people, but also in traditional folk artworks. The colors in folk traditional artwork, especially Chinese red, carry a strong traditional Chinese flavor and are also the most representative symbols of the special Chinese traditional culture. At the same time, in traditional Chinese culture, the doctrine of the five elements has always influenced the thinking of the Chinese people. Gold, wood, water, fire and earth, these five elements have always been regarded as the basis for change in natural phenomena. At the same time these five elements are embodied in traditional Chinese artworks, which are green, yellow, red, white and black (Figure 3), which also reflects the national spirit of the Chinese nation ^[3]. The use of these colors can visually and strongly express the unique emotions of the Chinese nation, and can make other countries more aware of Chinese culture.



Figure 3 Chinese traditional five colors

3.2 Modern Applications

The production of traditional Chinese folk artwork is mainly hand-made, subdivided into pinching, grinding, embroidery, painting, etc., and is rarely done by machines. Therefore, traditional Chinese folk handicrafts are derived from the ideas and perceptions of the maker from the conception stage to the production stage, which makes such handicrafts impossible to make in bulk and different and difficult to imitate, which comprehensively improves the artistic value. In addition, from the perspective of material selection, traditional folk crafts are mostly made from local materials, such as clay, silk, bamboo, wood, and silk thread, which makes traditional folk art more earthy and environmentally friendly. However, compared to traditional folk artworks, modern artworks are mostly mass-produced with the help of machines, and the makers have more choices in both the production process and the material selection process, which makes contemporary artworks more functional, but this also aggravates the degree of homogenization ^[4].

4. The penetration and application of folk art symbols in product design

In product design, the application and integration of folk art symbols can make product design more diversified and can meet the needs of more consumer groups. At the same time, the application of folk art symbols makes the product more able to convey the designer's emotions and thus reflect uniqueness in the homogenized consumer market.

4.1 Design elements of folk art symbols

4.1.1 Design symbols in folk art

A symbol, by its very nature, is an abstract form of an objective object, in other words, a symbol

through which one can visually express thoughts and more conveniently convey inner feelings. Symbols have dual characteristics, namely, energy and reference.

In the process of representation of a symbol, there is a perceptible side and an imperceptible side. The former is called the expression of the symbol, and is thus called the referent. The latter is known as the meaning of the symbol, which is often referred to as the referent. These two functions are the two sides of the symbol, complementary and indispensable to each other. In the field of art, symbols play an important role, expressing the thoughts and emotions of the creator, and reflecting the theme, ideas and uniqueness of the artwork. At the same time, different individuals have different perceptions of the same symbols, and different individuals have their own understanding of the same artwork ^[5]. Figure 4 shows the four characteristics of design symbols.

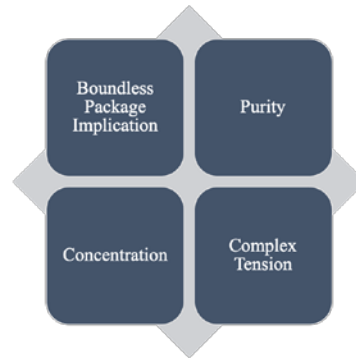


Figure 4 Characteristics of design symbols

4.1.2 Shape Grammar in Folk Art

Shape grammar, in essence, is a computer-aided design method that fully incorporates a shape computing algorithm. The algorithm was proposed by a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the 1970s, and once the method was proposed, it aroused a strong reaction from all walks of life. At the same time, the method was gradually applied to paintings and sculptures, and other creative works. At the same time, with the development of society, this method has also been applied to product brand identity and innovative design, which effectively meets the individual needs of a large number of customers.

In the design process, this method can be used to create a new style based on the original form according to people's design ideas and standards.

4.2 The application of folk art symbols in modern product design

Folk art symbols have a profound influence and special significance in the link of modern product design. Folk art symbols not only reflect the connotation of Chinese national culture, but also contain the contemporary Chinese people's love for the motherland and their aspiration for a better life. In the process of modern product design, the integration of folk art symbols should follow the following five principles, which are also the main ways of applying folk art symbols in the process of contemporary product design.

4.2.1 Sculpting and writing

Unlike Western culture, which is strict and rational, Chinese culture is characterized by a greater emphasis on both form and spirit, and is more concerned with the spirit it conveys. Therefore, Chinese cultural symbols often express the designer's emotions in a meaningful way. From this perspective, the core of Chinese folk art symbols incorporated in the process of designing products lies in the integration of the mood of Chinese culture and art.

Chinese traditional culture has profound metaphorical characteristics and rich connotations; therefore, scernography is an important feature of Chinese national culture and is the main way of painting in Chinese national painting. Through this principle, in the process of product design, the designer should fully consider the performance, color, material and structure of the product, etc., so as to make the folk culture symbols more in line with the appearance and functional characteristics of the product, and then create the beauty of the context of the product.

4.2.2 Festive and auspicious

Most Chinese folk culture revolves around festive and auspicious activities, and also contains the working people's love for everyday life; therefore, throughout traditional Chinese culture, the core of which is the people's desire for good fortune and good fortune. Therefore, the symbols of folk culture exist and mainly convey the message of happiness and auspiciousness. Therefore, in the process of product design, the designer should try to incorporate the symbols of happiness and auspiciousness into the products as much as possible, for example, the symbols of blossoming flowers, fortune, longevity, etc. These symbols have the beautiful symbols of happiness and auspiciousness.

4.2.3 Simplify

While integrating folk culture symbols into the product design, the principle of simplification should be followed. This is not only the principle of artistic design, but also the key to more reflect the organic integration of product style and folk art. Specifically, simplification means structuring and reshaping the symbols, extracting the most representative elements, and incorporating them into the product design. This can not only meet the contemporary people's pursuit of traditional culture, but also better allow people to accept the elements of traditional culture and integrate them with modern product design.

4.2.4 Context mapping

Contextual mapping can be divided into two parts, situational context and cultural context. The former, also known as linguistic context, refers to the relationships and meanings between contexts and, in academic terms, the factors that are abstracted from the actual situation and have an impact on linguistic activities. These factors include not only the participants, the occasion, and the degree of formality of speech, but also the medium, the topic, and so on. The latter is known as the non-linguistic environment, as opposed to the rest of the former, and by subdividing it, can be divided into two parts: cultural practices and social norms.

4.2.5 Unity of Heaven and Man

The "unity of heaven and man" was first proposed by Zhuangzi, and later, Dong Zhongshu developed it into a systematic philosophical thought system, and since then, the unity of heaven and man has become the main idea of traditional Chinese culture. From the connotation point of view, the unity of heaven and man refers to the harmonious coexistence between man and nature. In product design, following the principle of the unity of heaven and man is to consider the principle of ecological priority in the design process. Specifically, it means that in the selection of materials, designers should choose locally available materials as much as possible and choose environmentally friendly materials, which not only can preserve the characteristics of Chinese folk crafts, but also can make a contribution to environmental protection^[6].

5. Conclusion

To sum up, Chinese folk culture symbols embody the spirit and cultural connotation of Chinese culture, and they are not only the wisdom crystallization of Chinese working people, but also serve for the production life of Chinese people. Folk culture symbols are intuitive and can express people's aspirations and expectations for a better life in a simple way. Therefore, Chinese folk culture symbols have an important role in the process of product design, and have a profound impact on the current Chinese people's life.

Therefore, incorporating folk art and cultural symbols as one of the design elements into modern product design not only helps to improve the cultural value of products and services and meet consumers' individual needs, but also highlights Chinese national characteristics, thus attracting more consumer groups to buy them. In addition, products and services with local Chinese cultural characteristics can also allow Chinese culture to spread around the world, allowing other countries to better understand Chinese culture.

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