

Research on the Inheritance and Innovation Strategies of Traditional Ceramic Pinching Techniques in Jingdezhen

Tang Qingqing^a, Li Xuanyan^{b,*}

Jingdezhen Ceramic University, Jingdezhen, China

^a45637076@qq.com, ^b86114320@qq.com

* Corresponding author

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Abstract: Jingdezhen, the birthplace and stronghold of Chinese ceramic culture, is renowned for its distinctive traditional ceramic pinching techniques, which are considered treasures of Chinese ceramic art. However, with the transformation of modern production methods and the evolution of aesthetic demands, this traditional craft faces the dual challenges of inheritance and innovation. Based on this, the present study conducts an in-depth analysis of the historical evolution, technical characteristics, and current development status of the traditional ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen. Furthermore, it proposes a series of countermeasures and suggestions, including government guidance, educational cultivation, artistic innovation, industrial integration, and the establishment of a living community museum, with the aim of providing theoretical support for the inheritance and development of the traditional ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen.

1. Introduction

Ceramic Arts in Jingdezhen: A Timeless Legacy and Contemporary Challenges. The ceramic arts of Jingdezhen boast a millennia-long history and profound cultural heritage, serving as a shining emblem that China presents to the world [1]. The inherent research value and practical significance of these ceramic traditions are self-evident, particularly the revered ceramic pinching techniques, which embody extraordinary aesthetic qualities and carry profound cultural significance and historical memory. However, in the face of the rapid socioeconomic development and the swift advancement of artificial intelligence technologies, the ceramic pinching techniques of Jingdezhen, while exhibiting irreplaceable cultural value, are also confronted with a myriad of challenges, including the discontinuity in skill transmission, the lag in technological innovation, and the transformation of market demands. Against this backdrop, the national and local governments have implemented a series of robust policy measures to protect and inherit the country's intangible cultural heritage, including the enactment of the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage" and the recognition and support of national and provincial-level intangible cultural heritage projects [2]. These initiatives not only provide a solid foundation for the preservation of these precious traditional crafts but also hold significant implications for promoting local economic development and upgrading the cultural industry.

2. The Historical Evolution and Technical Characteristics of the Traditional Ceramic Pinching Techniques in Jingdezhen

As the birthplace of Chinese ceramic culture, Jingdezhen's traditional ceramic pinching techniques carry a long and illustrious cultural heritage, exhibiting unique and distinctive features.

2.1 Historical Evolution

The ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen have a long and storied history, tracing back to the Song dynasty. During the Song dynasty, Jingdezhen's ceramics were primarily characterized by celadon glaze, and the pinching techniques were mainly applied to the decoration of celadon wares,

showcasing a refined and elegant aesthetic. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the pinching techniques further developed, not only being applied to celadon wares but also extensively used in the decoration of polychrome ceramics and Doucai (bean-green) wares, resulting in an even more vibrant and diverse array of decorative patterns that embodied the rich traditional Chinese cultural characteristics. After entering the 20th century, the ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen, though faced with the impact of modern industrial production, have nonetheless maintained a relatively intact lineage of inheritance. In the 1950s, state-owned enterprises such as the Jingdezhen Ceramic Factory began to systematically cultivate talents in the pinching techniques and incorporate them into their regular production systems. Since the 1980s, with the support of government policies and increased social attention, Jingdezhen has witnessed a resurgence of the ceramic cultural industry, leading to greater focus and protection for the traditional pinching techniques.

2.2 Technical Characteristics

In the increasingly industrialized society, modern ceramics have become an important medium for people to connect with nature and return to their roots. Against the backdrop of this yearning for the natural and the vibrant, the pinching technique, as a unique sculptural language in contemporary ceramic art, embodies the fashionable sensibilities of the modern populace. This traditional ceramic craft not only reflects the exquisite aesthetic value of the artistry but also carries profound cultural significance and historical memory.

2.2.1 Meticulous Craftsmanship through Manual Manipulation

The pinching technique is entirely reliant on manual operation, requiring long-term practice and accumulation of skills by the artisans to master various techniques, such as pinching, carving, molding, and pressing, in order to create lifelike decorative patterns. This manual manipulation not only demonstrates the superior craftsmanship of the artisans but also manifests the unique allure of traditional Chinese handicrafts. For instance, the renowned Chinese ceramic artist Nie Lechun's work "Peacock Peony" showcases the artist's virtuosity through a series of pinching, pressing, lifting, and carving movements using bamboo tools, which give rise to a captivating peony blossom. Similarly, the celebrated Chinese arts and crafts master Yang Suming, drawing inspiration from Chinese painting techniques, has advanced the pinching craft from monochrome to polychrome, as exemplified in his work "Pinched Chrysanthemum Decorations on a Celadon Vase" (Figure 1).



Fig.1 YangSuMing,"Pinched Chrysanthemum Decorations on a Celadon Vase" 1988

2.2.2 Intricate production process and meticulous craftsmanship

The repertoire of pinching patterns encompasses a wide range of motifs, including flora and fauna, mythical creatures, landscapes, and human figures, which not only possess decorative qualities but also carry profound cultural connotations. Auspicious floral motifs, such as peonies, lotuses, and hibiscus, symbolize good fortune and prosperity; mythical beasts like dragons, phoenixes, and qilins represent blessings and auspiciousness; while landscape scenes evoke a reverence and yearning for the natural world. These vibrant and multifarious pinching patterns reflect the essence of traditional Chinese culture. The artisans have also explored the integration of pinching techniques with youthful

female imagery, fusing the timeless aesthetic of traditional craftsmanship with the fashionable sensibilities of the modern era, thereby showcasing the creative expressive potential of the pinching art. The captivating and vivacious depictions of young women are juxtaposed with the dynamic and ethereal pinching forms, not only highlighting the allure of the traditional techniques but also embodying the contemporary longing for the natural and the life-affirming, as exemplified in the work "Pensive Maiden" (Figure 2).



Fig.2 TangQingqing,"Contemplating the Maiden" 2023

2.2.3 Intricate Workflow and Meticulous Craftsmanship

The production process of the pinching technique is highly complex, involving multiple stages, including clay preparation, shaping, pinching, finishing, and firing, each of which demands the artisans' exceptional skills. During the pinching phase, the craftspeople, drawing upon their intimate understanding of the design motifs, deftly employ their fingers to sculpt the forms, ultimately manifesting lifelike decorative effects. This intricate and refined workflow exemplifies the virtuosity of traditional Chinese handicrafts.

2.3 Distinct Regional Characteristics

As the cradle of China's ceramic culture, Jingdezhen's ceramic pinching techniques also possess a strong regional identity. The pinching patterns often incorporate elements of the local natural landscape and folk customs, such as the scenic views of Jiangxi and the floral and avian motifs of Ganzhou, fully reflecting the unique cultural heritage of Jingdezhen.

The traditional ceramic pinching techniques of Jingdezhen encapsulate the essence of China's traditional handicrafts and represent a precious gem in the cultural treasury of the nation, deserving of our ceaseless exploration and inheritance.

3. The Current Development Status of the Traditional Ceramic Pinching Techniques in Jingdezhen

In the context of modernization, the prevailing master-apprentice transmission model has struggled to adapt to the current societal demands, as the younger generation exhibits a waning interest in traditional handicraft labor, while the emerging educational and community workshop models also exhibit inherent limitations. Although technological innovations have opened new avenues for the development of ceramic pinching techniques, how to reconcile the preservation of cultural characteristics with the integration of technology and art remains a subject requiring further

exploration. The commercialization of pinching techniques and the strategies for cross-disciplinary collaboration urgently necessitate breakthroughs, as the key challenge lies in ensuring effective communication and cooperation among professionals from diverse fields [3].

3.1 Challenges in Adapting Transmission Models to Modern Development Needs

The prevailing transmission models face the challenge of adapting to the demands of contemporary social development [4]. The current modes rely predominantly on master-apprentice relationships and familial education, while the younger generation exhibits a lack of interest in intimate engagement with clay and traditional handicraft labor. Although scholars have proposed diversified transmission approaches, such as school education and community workshops, their limitations in implementation outcomes, resource allocation, sustainability, and the integration of emerging technologies have become key impediments to the innovative dissemination of pinching techniques, necessitating the guidance of innovative transmission strategies.

3.2 Balancing Technological Innovation and Traditional Artistry

While technological integration, such as the application of 3D printing and digital modeling, has opened new paths for the innovation of pinching techniques, they are unable to fully replicate the artistic value and nuanced details inherent in traditional manual pinching. The uniqueness and irreplaceable nature of traditional pinching techniques lie in their deep cultural foundations and the personal insights of the artisans, which are beyond the reach of machines. Therefore, how to maintain an organic connection with the artisanal traditions while advancing technological innovation and embracing new creative ideas, preventing the loss of cultural essence through technological applications, requires more comprehensive strategies and practical case studies.

3.3 Breakthroughs in Commercialization and Cross-disciplinary Collaboration Strategies

The ceramic pinching techniques of Jingdezhen boast a long history, yet their current operational models are primarily confined to individual studios and small-scale workshops, unable to meet the diverse market demands for these artisanal products [5]. Furthermore, although academia has explored cross-disciplinary collaboration and ecological innovation to some extent, there is a paucity of research on the construction of innovative cultural enterprise models centered on the inheritance of these artisanal skills, as well as the effective communication and cooperation among professionals from different domains, the assessment of the cultural sensitivity and appropriateness of cross-disciplinary projects, and the quantification of their specific contributions to the inheritance of these techniques - all of which are critical issues requiring further analysis.

The traditional ceramic pinching techniques of Jingdezhen face the dual challenges of traditional skill inheritance and innovative transformation, necessitating the concerted attention and participation of the entire society, with the implementation of effective measures to address these challenges.

4. Strategies for the Living Inheritance and Innovation of the Traditional Ceramic Pinching Techniques in Jingdezhen

The traditional master-apprentice transmission model has proven ill-equipped to adapt to the current societal demands, as the younger generation exhibits a lack of interest in manual labor, while the emerging educational and community workshop models also exhibit inherent limitations. Concurrently, although technological innovations have opened new avenues for the development of ceramic pinching techniques, how to achieve an organic fusion of technology and artistry while preserving the cultural characteristics remains a subject requiring further exploration [6]. The commercialization of pinching techniques and the strategies for cross-disciplinary collaboration urgently necessitate breakthroughs, as the key challenge lies in ensuring effective communication and cooperation among professionals from diverse fields. Facing these challenges, the living inheritance and innovation of the traditional ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen require systemic strategic support from the government, educational institutions, and enterprises [7]. Only through multidimensional efforts can we ensure the revitalization of this exceptional cultural heritage, thereby

contributing to the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese handicrafts.

4.1 Government Guidance and Creating a Favorable Environment

The government should play a key role in the inheritance and innovation of traditional ceramic pinching techniques. On the one hand, the government should introduce relevant policies to strengthen the protection of traditional crafts, creating a favorable external environment for their development. This includes establishing a sound intangible cultural heritage protection system, incorporating the pinching techniques into the protection scope, and providing policy support and financial assistance; meanwhile, encouraging enterprises and individuals to participate in the protection and inheritance of traditional crafts. On the other hand, the government should take the lead in the overall planning and development of Jingdezhen's ceramic cultural industry, promoting the deep integration of traditional pinching techniques with modern design and cultural and creative industries. For example, the government can build a cultural and creative park featuring the pinching techniques, concentrating on the display and promotion of this traditional craft; it can also encourage enterprises to collaborate with universities and research institutions, driving the innovation of the techniques.

4.2 Breakthrough in the Inheritance Model: "Hybrid Inheritance Ecosystem"

Talents are the fundamental guarantee for the inheritance and innovation of traditional crafts. Therefore, efforts should be made in the field of education and training to cultivate professionals for the inheritance and innovation of pinching techniques. This should not only incorporate the essence of the traditional master-apprentice model, but also integrate modern educational means such as online platforms, VR, and AR technologies, creating a new educational and training model that caters to the younger generation. Through workshops, online courses, and exhibition experience activities, the process of skill learning can be transformed into an engaging and accessible experience.

On the one hand, relevant majors such as Ceramic Art Design should be established in higher education institutions, incorporating the pinching techniques into the curriculum system to systematically cultivate students' theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Meanwhile, renowned master craftsmen can be invited as guest professors to share their valuable craft experiences. On the other hand, vocational schools and technical schools should also offer pinching technique training courses, providing a steady stream of skilled talents for ceramic enterprises. Additionally, the government and industry associations should establish a sound skill inheritance mechanism, such as implementing a "mentorship" system to encourage the older generation of master craftsmen to pass on their expertise to the younger generation; they can also organize various skill competitions to discover and cultivate outstanding pinching talent. Only by strengthening the talent foundation can Jingdezhen's traditional pinching techniques be provided with lasting driving force for their inheritance and innovation.

4.3 Balancing Technology and Culture: The Balanced Concept of "Culture First, Technology Auxiliary"

Exploring the integration of modern technologies, such as 3D printing and digital modeling, with the ceramic pinching techniques not only expands the theoretical framework for artistic innovation but also provides valuable references for the innovation of other traditional arts, thereby laying a theoretical foundation and offering new perspectives for the living preservation and inheritance of traditional handicrafts [8]. The cultural innovation workshop enterprise model aims to create a four-dimensional platform encompassing artistic creation, educational training, exhibition and exchange, and market promotion. While protecting and inheriting the essence of pinching techniques, this model explores new commercial avenues and consumer experiences to enhance market appeal [9]. Building upon the inheritance of traditional pinching techniques, it is crucial to actively drive artistic innovation and expand the development scope of this craft. Specifically, this can be achieved by integrating modern design concepts, developing new materials and techniques, exploring diverse applications, and excavating cultural connotations, thereby revitalizing the traditional pinching craft with renewed vigor and vitality.

4.4 Cross-Industry Collaboration and Ecological Innovation: "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum"

The "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" is a cultural ecosystem where the craft production group, sales personnel, consumers, and visitors participate together. Through regularly organizing skill demonstrations, workshops, lectures, and other interactive activities, it will stimulate the public and the younger generation's interest in and enthusiasm for the pinching techniques, ensuring the active inheritance of this excellent traditional craft.

4.4.1 Establishing a Cross-Industry Integrated Innovation Platform

The "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" will integrate the resources of ceramic enterprises, design agencies, universities, and research institutions, establishing a cross-industry integrated innovation platform. On the one hand, it will encourage ceramic enterprises to collaborate deeply with universities and research institutions, transforming the latest technological achievements into production practices, thereby enhancing the technical content and innovation of products. On the other hand, it will also encourage ceramic enterprises to cooperate with enterprises in the fashion design, cultural creativity, and other fields, jointly developing creative ceramic products to meet the diversified needs of consumers. By integrating the advantages of various resources, the "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" will become an important platform for promoting the innovative development of traditional techniques.

4.4.2 Creating a Participatory Cultural Ecosystem

The "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" is not only a place to showcase traditional techniques, but also a cultural ecosystem that encourages public participation. It will regularly organize various interactive activities, such as skill demonstrations, craft experiences, and thematic lectures, allowing visitors to experience the charm of the pinching techniques and cultivate their love and recognition of this excellent traditional culture. At the same time, it will also encourage the craft producers and sales personnel to participate, engaging in exchanges and interactions with the public to enhance mutual understanding and trust. By building an open and interactive cultural ecosystem, the "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" will become an important window for Jingdezhen's traditional ceramic culture, injecting lasting vitality into the living inheritance of the craft.

4.4.3 Exploring a Sustainable Business Model

While inheriting and innovating, the "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" will also explore a sustainable business model. On the one hand, it will attract more visitors through skill demonstrations and craft experience activities, increasing the operational revenue of the venue. On the other hand, it will encourage the resident ceramic enterprises to develop creative products that meet the diverse needs of consumers, expanding their sales channels. It can also collaborate with e-commerce platforms to achieve coordinated online and offline development. By exploring diversified business models, the "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" will become an important engine for promoting the transformation and upgrading of Jingdezhen's traditional ceramic industry.

The "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum" will become a comprehensive platform that integrates the inheritance of techniques, innovative development, cultural experience, and business practice, injecting new vitality into the sustainable development of Jingdezhen's traditional ceramic pinching techniques.

5. Conclusion

The traditional ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen are a precious gem in the treasure trove of Chinese culture, reflecting the profound cultural heritage of the Chinese nation through their long history and exquisite craftsmanship. However, in the process of modernization, this excellent traditional craft also faces numerous challenges, such as the interruption of inheritance and the lack of innovation vitality. To promote the living inheritance and sustainable development of the pinching

techniques in Jingdezhen, we must take action from multiple perspectives: The government should increase policy support and financial investment to create a favorable environment for the development of the craft; education and training should keep pace with the times, constructing a "hybrid inheritance ecosystem" to attract the younger generation to participate; technological innovation should be equally emphasized alongside cultural inheritance, achieving a balance of "culture first, technology auxiliary"; cross-industry collaboration should drive the integration of industry, academia, and research, creating innovative platforms such as the "Ceramic Pinching Living Community Museum".

Only by implementing a comprehensive and systematic strategy of government guidance, educational cultivation, technological innovation, and cross-industry integration can we ensure the full protection and inheritance of this brilliant intangible cultural heritage, contributing to the innovative development of China's excellent traditional culture. Let us join hands and work together to write a new chapter for the ceramic pinching techniques in Jingdezhen, allowing this cultural treasure to shine perpetually and become a dazzling calling card of Chinese civilization.

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