

# Study on Feng Qiuping's Fashion Design Style in Modern Times\*

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**Abstract**—This paper explores the familiar art and Shanghai knitting master Feng Qiuping's design style and its formation reasons. At the same time, her works and clothing design style is analyzed and interpreted as a "beautiful and practical" style, the "combination of things" and "innovation and change". Due to her breakthrough and achievements in design ideas, design methods, design practice and design communication, she is regarded as a leading figure in knitting fashion.

**Keywords**—Feng Qiuping; modern times; fashion design; innovation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Feng Qiuping (1911-2001) was a famous modern knitting artist and educator. Feng Qiuping has been interested in art and needlework since she was ten years old. During her study in Shanghai high school, she showed her talent in embroidery, weaving and designing patterns, and won the first prize in related competitions. After graduation, she worked as a primary school teacher, teaching art, embroidery, sewing and other subjects. From 1934 to 1949, Feng Qiuping founded the school of Qiu ping knitting and the association of good friends knitting, mainly responsible for the design of wool clothing. After that, Feng Qiuping entered the peak of knitting career, and she created more than 2000 knitting patterns in her Life and wrote about 30 books. In a word, Feng Qiuping is not only a practitioner that is good at design, but also a theorist who is good at summing up, and also an educator who leads by example. Feng Qiuping designed a large number of beautiful and practical knitted clothes with novel needLing method, which created a fashion trend of wool clothing and thus promoted the rapid development of domestic wool manufacturers in the early stage.

## II. REPRESENTATIVE WORKS OF FENG QIUPING

Feng Qiuping's design works are very rich and extensive,

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including vest, cheongsam, parkas, scarves, children's shoes and hats, and even men's suits and sofa cushions. According to the use of tools can be divided into the following three: needle knitting works, crochet work, wool embroidery.

### A. Sticking to the Knitting Work

Crochet work refers to clothing works that are knitted with crochet tools. Crochet work is often used to weave flaky fabrics, such as the woolen clothes, woolen trousers and woolen gloves.

Representative works: wild chrysanthemum fashion cheongsam<sup>1</sup> which made in 1948, designed for fashionable ladies and ladies in Shanghai at that time. Qipao was a common dress on the Shanghai beach at that time, but it was obviously not common to weave with wool. Its use of color is quite elaborate, with the depth of two kinds of rose wool interweave, to imitate the posture of wild chrysanthemum. Shape to take the middle sleeve, and Lined with shoulder pads. It is very suitable for spring and summer, and won the first prize of Shanghai YMCA knitting exhibition.

### B. Crochet Work

Crochet work refers to a crochet work mainly used with tools such as crochet and embroidery needles. Crochet method is often used to hook out the local pattern effect of cashmere clothing or used to knit hats, scarves, coasters and pillows and other small items.

Representative works: floral shawl<sup>2</sup>. It was made in 1937 and used by fashionable ladies in Shanghai at that time. With the tool of crochet, eight flowers are hooked into a shawl, and lotus leaves are hooked from flower to flower. Whole pure and fresh and free from vulgarity, have new idea extremely. It was usually worn over the qipao, a popular garment in spring and autumn.

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<sup>1</sup> Feng Qiuping, Fashion Special Issue: Qiu ping Wool Embroidery Weaving Method, 1941, [no. 9-12, pp. 40], J 523.4

<sup>2</sup> Feng Qiuping, Friends of Housewives, 1937, [vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 23-25], C 55.

### C. Wool Embroidery

Wool embroidery is a kind of special embroidery needle (about 4 cm long, the needle eye is very big, can accommodate the wool to run through), which is used to embroider all kinds of flowers and animals and other patterns on the woolen clothes already woven, so as to play the role of decoration and beautification. It is usually used in parts of clothes, rather than a complete work.

Feng Qiuping divided it into three categories: "embroidery on plain needle sweater", "flower embroidery on sweater" and "crochet three-dimensional embroidery". The first is "to thread out of a stitch, through a Line of braids; Return to the original needle, to the side or the last needle, and then continue to wear embroidery according to the selected figure (pattern)", representative works include owl, tiger and so on. The 2nd kind is the size that USES design to need first with vain dot trace on a piece of thin paper, do not want paper in the place of embroidery, embroider again next petal, leaf and pedicel. Representative work has a diamond around the flower. The 3rd kind is to use crochet hook to give stereo part, so it's again stick on sweater, add certain detail with the method that encircle flower embroider next. Representative works include 3d embroidery panda.

## III. FORMATION OF FENG QIUPING'S DESIGN STYLE

### A. Ideological Innovation

Since the republic of China, the development of Chinese clothing has transformed from ancient times into modern times. During this period, women's clothing was stripped of the shackles of traditional concepts. "Release foot, break hair" started the women's Liberation movement. The establishment of women's schools and women started to study in western countries, women's participation in politics and other equal voices in the republic of China. The science and democracy advocated by the May 4th new culture movement have re-examined the social status of Chinese women. At this time, women's clothing rushed out of the shackles of the feudal society and embarked on the track of modernization.

The 20th century was a time full of changes. Chinese women and women all over the world ushered in many changes in the 20th century, among which the women's Liberation movement was one of the greatest changes in the 20th century, which undoubtedly had a huge and profound impact on women's fashion. Women can go out to work and vote. Wool knitting has become one of the most common household handicraft industries and developed into the urban "new needlework", which has become a new way for women to seek for professional needs. Wool knitting can be sold as a commodity to obtain wealth.

### B. Innovation in Design Techniques

The first is the innovation of using tools. Feng Qiuping is quite adept in the application of weaving tools and has discovered many creative new USES. For instance she will single head rod needle, double head rod needle and inwrought needle are integrated apply, form the circle Like a

honeycomb of a concave with pull needle method flat needle, formed wonderful flesh texture. It is the clever use of tools that makes her create a new and beautiful classic flower patterns such as wild chrysanthemum, wheat wave flower and gold cup, becoming a model for future generations to weave wool.

Secondly, it was the innovation of knitting techniques. Woolen sweater was a kind of "imported goods" at that time. Feng Qiuping not only brings regular knitting patterns with basic knitting methods, but also makes contributions to the promotion of knitting by constantly improving her knitting techniques and innovating widely. She creatively knitted two special textures, "imitation cloth" and "imitation leather", and made a breakthrough and innovation to the conventional process, which embodied the craftsman spirit of refinement, concentration and innovation Wang nan, Zhang Jingqiong. Feng Qiuping has knitted techniques of the "imitation cloth" and "imitation leather"<sup>3</sup> in modern times.

### C. Innovation in Communication and Promotion

As an excellent braiding design master and educator, Feng Qiuping's braiding has become a household name in modern times. In addition to her exquisite braiding design level, it is also related to the innovation of communication mode at that time. Feng Qiuping's knitting skills are increasingly advanced, embroidery patterns are emerging one after another, and social reputation is rising one after another. The knitted clothes designed by Feng Qiuping are novel and unique, and the color collocation is amazing. Once launched, it becomes a popular fashion style at present, and is pursued by famous actors and celebrities, thus it is also loved by women from all walks of Life. In addition, at the beginning of 1941, Feng Qiuping, together with all previous students of Qiuping knitting school, held a wool fashion exhibition on the 2nd floor of guotai clothing in Xiafei road, which was well received. When Shanghai knitting was popular, Feng Qiuping and other weaving experts broadcast the newly designed weaving women's wear, attracting a large number of loyal listeners to learn fashion women's wear weaving. Feng Qiuping has also made outstanding contributions to the construction and promotion of wool knitting industry by hosting radio knitting and broadcasting programs and creating all kinds of wool fashions suitable for Chinese people.

## IV. FENG QIUPING'S FASHION DESIGN STYLE

### A. Combination of Beauty and Practicality

Feng Qiuping attaches great importance to the design concept of combining beauty and practicality. The clothes she designed can be directly used in daily Life at that time, ignoring the concept of hierarchy in the classical society. Mainly with wool clothing, all kinds of fancy long and short outerwear full of beautiful things in eyes, such as short coat, vest dress, fancy cape, both beautiful and practical. In 1956,

<sup>3</sup> Wang Nan, Zhang Jingqiong. Modern Knitting Techniques of "Imitation Suiting" and "Imitation Leather" of Feng Qiuping [J]. Journal of Clothing Science, 2019, 4 (1):49-53.

Feng Qiuping was admitted to Shanghai arts and crafts research institute as a researcher and created many excellent works, such as: "Wild chrysanthemum flabella spring", "wave flower crochet 2 times", "azalea zipper unlined upper garment", "big leaf shoulder type jumper", "golden bell flower cardigan", etc., these works because of the color harmony, the style is pure and fresh, with dress pants, qipao, skirts and other kinds of clothing collocation, new and national characteristics, beauty in one, a product launch soon caught on in society<sup>4</sup>.

### *B. Intergration of the East and West*

Sweaters at that time were "imported". After knitting technology was introduced into China in the 19th century, it gradually evolved into a leisure way of small family jasper. Feng Qiuping borrowed from the west knitting technique, and still has Chinese aftertaste in decoration and style. For example, the knitted cheongsam designed by Ms. Feng Qiuping for movie star Li Hong in 1939 was called "a new offering in the field of knitting in 1939"<sup>5</sup>. The material used for this kind of woolen cheongsam is fourteen coarse threads a pound, one thin velvet thread, a pair of pointed needles, a crochet needle, a wool embroidery needle, three fine copper wires and eight studs. "The first cheongsam knitting method, before and after the knot method, put the collar ring, before and after the body seam is legal, leads the way the knitting method, the nuzi pulling method, the wool embroidery and so on each has the characteristic. The woolen cheongsam she designed and knitted is light, warm and novel in style, which can be matched with woolen waistcoat and other kinds of clothes, making the style of knitted cheongsam popular in Shanghai. The style of the woven qipao is from the middle to the west and from the middle to the west.

In addition, Feng Qiuping also expanded the field of knitting wool, so that sweater from originally used to keep warm underwear to outer garment, from clothing to shoes, hats, shawls and other accessories, from the original pure "foreign products" to qipao and other varieties of the combination of western and Chinese. Feng Qiuping designed knitted sweaters, vests, shawls, even jackets, dance skirts and so on, which greatly enriched the clothing varieties at that time. The sweater that cover on cheongsam, shawl and glass filer socks, high heel leather shoes are dressed up together the beautiful beautiful figure that gives Shanghai fashionable young woman of 20 centuries 30 time. This combination of Chinese and western dress style became part of the historical trend of "the west wind gradually spreads to the east" in the republic of China period.

### *C. Seeking for the New and Striving for a Change*

Feng Qiuping suffers from the difficulty of using new materials, creating new stitching methods, and designing a variety of fashionable and color-coordinated plaited clothes.

<sup>4</sup> Yu Shian. A brilliant Life of Knitting - A Record of Feng Qiuping, A Famous Knitting Artist in Shanghai [J]. Shanghai light industry, 2000: 26-27.

<sup>5</sup> Feng Qiuping: Film Stars Li Hong's Woolen Cheongsam, Shenbao, January 19, 1939.

Her designs of peacocks' spreading shawls, wild flowers' spring dresses with lotus leaf edges, and qipao and zipper sweater of Du Hua are all well received. She created wild chrysanthemum, canna, peacock feather, morning glory and other novel flower patterns and spread widely. Feng Qiuping introduced the "Sai fang era cashmere cheongsam"<sup>6</sup> in 1942, D50, 1942. The practical and decorative application of wool textile in the field of fashion design, from a distance, cheongsams are made of kilt. In addition, Feng Qiuping USES superb techniques to weave the fabric effect of "imitation suiting" and "imitation leather", which not only solves the economic problems and meets the requirements of people to wear fashionable coats, but also broadens the application field of wool knitting.

## V. CONCLUSION

As a leading figure in the knitting design in the republic of China, Feng Qiuping's costume design represented the development direction of Chinese costume design at that time. At that time, there were not a few people who spread knitting technology. Among them, Feng Qiuping became one of the outstanding knitters with her exquisite knitting skills and unique flower pattern creation, and was praised as "a rare talent in knitting field". In design practice respect, or westernize or the work that Chinese and western match well is published through newspaper magazine come out, affected famous and beautiful girl, enlarge influence to small home jasper again, for period of the republic of China "change dress" shabby establish new offered material and model. In terms of design theory, Feng Qiuping has written dozens of books all her Life. Her research on practical and aesthetic functions of clothing not only influenced designers at that time, but also influenced the future of Chinese fashion design in a deeper level.

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