

The Embodiment of Craftsman's Spirit in Silver Inlay Lacquerware and Its Inheritance in Furniture Design

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ABSTRACT

Analyses and investigates the craftsman's spirit and the silver inlay lacquerware, as well as the crafts of "silver inlay", "texture engraving", and "halo color" in the process of silver inlay lacquerware's "carved silver silk halo design". Interpretation the craftsman's spirit of the Chengdu silver inlay lacquerware, which includes improving constantly, constant striving for perfection, innovation and compatibility. Discusses the methods of applying the craftsman's spirit embodied in the silver inlay lacquerware to the modern furniture design both from theory and practice aspect. Find a way to combine traditional culture, modern art education and modern furniture design, so as to inheriting and carrying forward the excellent traditional crafts and the craftsman's spirit of them as well as offering new ideas for furniture design.

Keywords: Silver inlay lacquerware, carved silver silk halo design, craftsman's spirit, furniture design

1. INTRODUCTION

Lacquerware occupies a pivotal position in the history of Chinese handicrafts, from the Neolithic Age to the present, lacquerware has evolved from simple and practical to elegant art. With the change of dynasties, the craftsmanship of lacquerware has become more and more cumbersome and refined in the continuous inheritance and innovation, and different types with regional characteristics have been developed. Among them, Chengdu silver inlay lacquerware stands out among all kinds of lacquerware with its unique craftsmanship. Exploring the craftsman's spirit in silver inlay lacquerware and applying the essence drawn from traditional craft to furniture design can not only bring new inspiration to modern furniture design, but also enable silver inlay lacquerware and its craftsman's spirit inherit and develop through the cooperation and communication with furniture design.

2. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SILVER INLAY LACQUERWARE

Chengdu lacquer art is well-known for its "three carvings and one engraving" craft. The decoration craft such as carved silver silk halo design, carved lacquer pigment inlay design, carved lacquer hidden flowers design, broaching and needle carving design are very regionally characteristic [1]. Among them, the most representative ones is the carved silver silk halo design (Figure 1). In short, the carved silver silk halo design is to stick a silver flake or other metal flakes on the base of lacquerware, paint it layer by layer, and then polish the lacquerware until the silver flake is exposed and flush with the paint.

Then carved the line texture on the silver flake that inlaid in the lacquerware, and finally apply the transparent lacquer. Due to the crafts of carving, embedding and lacquering, the lacquerware patterns are vivid, stereoscopic and rich in layers. The ingenious integration of various craftsmanship also makes the silver inlay lacquerware stand out from many lacquerware genres.



Figure 1 Carved silver silk halo design lacquerware

3. THE CRAFTSMAN'S SPIRIT IN THE SILVER INLAY LACQUERWARE

3.1. What is Craftsman's Spirit

The spirit of craftsman is the spirit of professionalism, focus, and the pursuit of perfection. Through continuous improvement and perfection of their own craftsmanship, the craftsmen experience the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in the process of striving for excellence, create outstanding crafts in a working state that surpasses themselves, and form a creative spirit of pursuit of

excellence and a quality of excellence spirit, customer first service spirit [2]. It can be said that the craftsman's spirit is a kind of belief, just like religious beliefs, it has its own rituals and objects of worship, craftsmen complete the practice of heart and soul in the process of making products. Tracing back to the source. The craftsman's spirit was born in the handicraft industry that emerged to meet the needs of human life. Driven by time, various handicrafts have gradually become human survival skills, beliefs and spiritual sustenance, and have also formed folk culture and craftsman's spirit in production and practice.

3.2. The Craftsman's Spirit in the Silver Inlay Lacquerware

3.2.1. Improving constantly

At present, most scholars believe that the predecessor of the "carved silver silk halo design" in Chengdu silver inlay lacquerware is the gold and silver flat lacquerware of the Tang Dynasty. The predecessor of the gold and silver flat lacquerware is the gold and silver foil decal lacquerware. The difference is that the gold and silver flat lacquerware uses 0.2-0.3mm metal flake inlaid into the lacquerware, and the gold and silver foil decal lacquerware is to stick a 0.009-0.017mm metal flake on the surface of the lacquerware. The development of carved silver silk halo design is the result of continuous improvement after the original craftsmanship has been passed down from generation to generation. Its fundamental purpose is to solve the problem of discoloration or shedding of surface decorations after long-term use or placement, and embed the decorations into the lacquerware body instead of floating on the surface of the lacquerware, so that the lacquerware itself is integrated and will long-term preservation. Which means that people have higher requirements for lacquerware that was originally an auxiliary tool. It also means that lacquerware is no longer simply used as a common utensil, but instead of getting rid of the material restrictions of "ware", it has begun to pursue the existence of "art" and form a unique aesthetic culture [3]. The progress of lacquerware in aesthetics and art also reflects the progress of human civilization and spirit, reflects the human desire and challenge to conquer the primitives, and it has gradually transition from "survival" to "life".

3.2.2. Constant striving for perfection

Texture carving craft is the most important process of carved silver silk halo design. After the silver flake is inlaid, the lines are drawn on it with a carving needle. The Lines of different length, depth, density depict the details of animals and plants, making them come alive; or spread the fine lines on the silver flake to give the pattern a richer gloss.

Therefore, furry birds and beasts or plants and flowers are common in silver inlay lacquerware. For this reason, pandas living in Sichuan are the preferred pattern for silver inlay lacquerware. In addition, peonies, lotuses and ginkgo leaf are also common themes of pattern on silver inlay lacquerware. Panda and ginkgo leaf, which originated in Chengdu, are widely used in Chengdu lacquerware and perfectly combined with the carved silver silk halo design, which can not only express two local characteristic cultures, but also upgraded the traditional craftsmanship, using texture carving craft to express animal hair and plant textures, making them more vivid and rich in texture. The invention of texture carving craft fully demonstrated the lacquer artist's creative attitude of good at observing and striving for perfection.

3.2.3. Innovation and compatibility

With the improvement of people's aesthetic taste, Chengdu Lacquer Art's original carved silver silk halo color design has applied the shading technique of traditional landscape paintings to lacquerware, and fusing the two excellent traditional cultures (Figure 2). Throughout the color development history of lacquerware, from the primitive and rustic red and black to the dazzling shell decoration, no matter how the color changes and increases, it is decorated in a tiled manner, the carved silver silk halo color design is undoubtedly a breakthrough. We emphasize the inheritance of traditional culture, not by copying and copying it mechanically, but by affirming the positive factors in traditional culture, it continues the development of culture and emphasizes the continuity of cultural development in the timeline [4]. The combination of tradition and tradition is not only the inheritance and innovation of the two traditional techniques, but also to find the characteristics and adaptability between culture and craftsmanship, and weave them together ingeniously, so that different cultures and the craft continues and develops in a symbiotic manner. This inheritance method of learning and progress with other traditional cultures not only reflects the lacquer artist's love and cultural tribute to the nation, but also reflects the spirit of inclusive contemporary art and the spirit of learning innovation.



Figure 2 Carved silver silk halo color design ginkgo leaf lacquerware

4. INHERITANCE OF THE CRAFTSMAN'S SPIRIT OF SILVER INLAY LACQUERWARE IN FURNITURE DESIGN

4.1. Innovative Design “Collision” Traditional Culture

The “collision” of silver inlay lacquerware and furniture design can not only promote excellent traditional craftsmanship and traditional culture in another way, but also increase the ornamental and cultural characteristics of furniture, and also reflect the craftsman's spirit of compatibility and continuous innovation. The integration of lacquerware and furniture design should not only be the splicing of patterns or materials, but the exchange of craftsmanship and culture. When designing furniture, we should pay attention to the inheritance and innovation of traditional decorative symbols, and organically combine the essence of tradition and national culture with the characteristics of the times, so as to meet the needs of the public for the cultural and national emotions of furniture [5]. As far as furniture is concerned, the special luster brought by the silver inlay lacquerware process adds a layer of subtle beauty to the furniture, increases the ornamental nature of the furniture, and also makes the furniture cultural and storytelling.

4.2. Progress and Inheritance with Contemporary Art Education

The development of carved silver silk halo design lacquerware is not optimistic. Part of the reason is that the inheritance model of “mentorship” hinders its development. However, due to the lack of practical experience in the teaching mode of contemporary art education, the students are unable to test the feasibility of the scheme in the design process. From the perspective of inheritance mode, the dilemma of silver inlay lacquerware stems from the inability to open the door to progress. From the perspective of educational methods, the lack of depth in furniture design stems from lack of practice. Only by combining the traditional inheritance of handicrafts with modern art education, and pushing handicrafts from tradition to modernity, can we give contemporary art meaning while retaining the essence of traditional handicrafts [6]. The handicraft inheritance cannot be immutable, and art education cannot just impart theoretical knowledge. Only by setting aside the backward inherent patterns and solving the contradictions and problems that restrict development can the silver inlay lacquerware and the craftsman's spirit contained in it be carried forward, and contemporary furniture design can break out of the comfort zone and open a new chapter.

5. CONCLUSION

The exquisite and gorgeous silver inlay lacquerware embodies the wisdom of Chinese folk artists for thousands of years. It is the spiritual wealth left by ancestors to descendants, and it is also a cultural treasure that China has shown to the world. Integrating traditional culture into furniture design and returning tradition to modernity can not only help people understand and inherit traditional culture subtly, but also give furniture new connotations and functions. At the same time, let design become a medium to create a new way of cultural communication and create a better life of spiritual abundance.

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