



Exploring the Artistic Design of Museum Creations

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Abstract. The continuous development of the country's cultural and creative industries have drawn public's affection and attention to museums and public exhibitions. This has not only promoted people's cultural activities, but also provided a new option for leisure. This phenomenon has also influenced a higher public demand for cultural exploration.

Good creative design not only bring monetary revenue, but also serves as a role of public promotion for fostering public awareness of the museum's history and culture. However, there are still some underdeveloped aspects of creative design in many museums that to be improved. This paper analyzes a few successful museum creative designs to provide some insights on the formulation of developmental approaches and methodologies for museum creative design in the future.

Keywords: museums · cultural creativity · art design

1 Introduction

The concept of cultural creation originated from handicrafts. Initially, it only covers “creation” but not “culture”, that implies the making of crafts and products. However, “culture” implies the embedding of cultural meaning to a product, stimulating emotional attachment to the product [1].

1.1 Primary Stage: Souvenirs with Local Landscape or Elements

In the past, individuals used to buy souvenirs with local characteristics, such as bracelets, badges, and coins, when they travelled. As economic and cultural level increased, the tourism industry developed rapidly that souvenir coins, jewelry, and models, usually associated with their infamous architecture or landscapes, were sold in scenic spots [1]. For example, if you go to a temple to worship, you will bring back a lucky bag to symbolize peace and health, etc. But this is simply a subjective attachment to these souvenirs, which has minimal genuine cultural significance or symbols associated to locality. This is the origin and primary stage of cultural and creative products.

1.2 Intermediate Stage: Products with a Brand Name

Creative products have been developed into brands and product trademarks [1]. In the beginning, souvenirs were typically replicas or scaled-down figures of scenic spots. Yet, museums then launched new creative products to be sold for tourism. For example, the Henan Provincial Museum launched a block based on a bronze vessel, which was exquisitely crafted for fun that carries both commemorative and cultural meanings. Souvenirs in recent years have also transitioned away from their typical varieties and purposes serving for tourism - for example, since this lipstick product line offers a wide range of colour variety and flavour with outstanding quality, it has also been popular among the locals. The Palace Museum has also launched a programme called “The New Palace”, that the Palace hires quite a number of contemporary artists for cultural and creative work for more artistic and visually pleasant cultural and creative products. The designers have sourced elements from the Forbidden City and incorporated them into the design of creative products. Thus, cultural creation has become not just a souvenir, a symbol, but a designed consumer’s experience for fulling their needs in mind. Through cooperating with other internationally renowned brands, it achieves a mutually beneficial effect for both parties.

2 The Use of Design in Cultural and Creative Products

Extracting and altering a typical graphic pattern into cultural and creative products is one of the most common practices for souvenir design. Occasionally, there is also a direct use of traditional graphic patterns, symbols, or cartoons.

2.1 Direct Use of Patterned Graphics

It is common to integrate shapes, images, graphics, and patterns from traditional artworks directly to the design of creative products. However, this limits the room for innovation. In other way, it is possible to combine new designs with traditionality for innovative creative products [2]. For example, the National Palace Museum has launched a series of bookmarks named “The Golden Ranking”, which is a direct extraction of parts of cultural relics, such as the carp leaping over the Dragon Gate model that is a part of the peach satin and gold embroidered carp jumping over the Dragon Gate bachelor’s coat redrawn in bright colors, making the whole exquisite and interesting, rich in historical and cultural meaning, for the emphasis of this series’ thematic nature through bright colors in association with its history and culture. The carp, which in ancient times had the allusion to jumping over the dragon’s gate, metaphorically upholds the best wishes to college entrance exam candidates’ for achieving outstanding results. It is a successful example of the application of creativity to a common design.

2.2 Cartoonish Use of Graphic Patterns

The carbonization of graphics is also a common technique in creative design, offering the product a relatable image that meets the emotional needs of the user and makes it easier for consumers to accept and buy [2]. For example, the British Museum's Anderson Cat mobile phone holder is based on the famous bronze statue of Gaia Anderson from Egypt. The design caricatures the noble-looking bronze statue and is based on the cat's daily movements, such as the cat sitting with its feet apart and the cat crouching with one hand raised. This design also fulfills the functional requirements of a mobile phone stand. The cute and interesting shape is more likely to gain people's affection and establish emotional attraction for consumers.

2.3 Symbolic Use of Graphic Patterns

A symbol is a metaphorical association, on the one hand as a carrier of contextual meaning, on the other hand, as a presentation of spiritual externalization. The use of these patterns and graphics as symbols in the design of modern cultural and creative products could occasionally bring unexpected results [2]. An example is the wooden night lamp from the Suzhou Museum designed based on the extraction of certain classic architectural elements of Suzhou Museum and the painting of the "Pavilion of Immortal Mountains" in the museum. It is a multi-layered openwork overlaps that demonstrates the beauty of the architecture and artefacts, and when the lights are turned on in a dim environment, it evokes the beauty of the south of the Yangtze River and the exterior of the Suzhou Museum. The wooden structure adds on to the antique impression for creating a timeless exchange between the cultural and creative product and the user, who can think of some figurative scenes through the cultural creation.

2.4 Transformation of the Use of Graphic Patterns

The conversion of a graphic pattern from one fixed usage to another can bring a sense of novelty to a product. Replacing the function of the object itself and incorporate another purpose within brings a sense of freshness to the design [2]. The Louvre Cupid Keychain is another interesting example inspired by the small Cupid sculpture in the Louvre. Cupid has always been a symbol of love and the design as a keychain plays on the same idea with a reinterpretation of door locking. The additional floral decoration adds on to the motif for romance, and the bright color scheme depicts a lovely, free feeling. Within the same product line, the goose holding storage pot is inspired by the sculpture "The Young Man Holding the Goose", in which the young man is holding the goose, portraying a realistic image reminiscent of innocent and happy childhood [4]. This scene is portrayed as a potted plant in product design to better build an ecological scene for the restoration of mood based on the sculpture.

Combined functionality and cultural meaning into the design of creative products, ancient history and culture can be incorporated in real life in a more interesting manner, increasing the attractiveness of the products and enhancing the users' enjoyment of everyday life.

3 Relatively Mature Museum Cultural and Creative Development

Since as early as the 20th century, due to mature development of the country, museums in Europe and America have raised funds for cultural development through the development and sale of cultural and creative products, and that has enabled a more mature design and manufacture process of cultural product and marketing model, thus forming a complete industrial chain. The development and sale of cultural and creative products have become an important means of marketing the museum and upscaling its reputation. Nowadays, the more maturely developed museums, include The British Museum, The Museum of Modern Art in New York and The National Palace Museum in Taipei, uphold business models that are recognized worldwide.

3.1 The British Museum: A Full Range of Series Development

Founded in 1753, The British Museum was the world's first national public museum opened to the public free of charge since 2001. Since then, it has lost a large proportion of its income from admission, but soon compensated back from the sales of cultural and creative products. Because the museum's collections are so diverse, with items from all over the world, the museum has exclusively chosen the most representative and well-known collections for comprehensive product development, offering visitors a wide range of souvenir choices, thus, encouraging the number of purchases at the same time. There have had 69 creative products developed based on the British Museum's star collection, the Rosetta Stone. The products range from stationery, lifestyle items, digital gadgets, and clothing. The British Museum's development of this 'holistic approach' not only applies to its retail and exhibition collections, but also to the development of British IP (intellectual property) in a range of visitor-friendly forms. For example, The British Museum has co-branded with the famous HelloKitty through authorizing features of the British Museum's collection to be incorporated to the character's costumes. In addition to the co-branded HelloKitty, Alice and Peter Rabbit have been made into IP products with unique British cultural characteristics [7].

3.2 New York Museum of Modern Art

Museums in the United States have been developing cultural and creative industries for museums since as early as the 19th century. They've regarded museum retailing spaces as an integral part of museums. According to a survey conducted by the Smithsonian Institution, Americans regard museum cultural and creative shops as the second most important element of their visit, after 'personal enjoyment'. The Museum of Modern Art in New York, one of the world's most distinguished art collections, is a direct replica of the creative industries, such as Marilyn Monroe's head, gumbo advertisements and so on [6]. The second is the representation of classic elements of artworks to everyday objects, such as mugs, T-shirts, and accessories with classic lines and color blocks created by famous artists such as Picasso [5]. The third is related to the modern design concepts embodied in MoMA, based on which practical artworks are developed, such as table lamps, vases, kitchenware, etc. Creating the museum's cultural and creative industries as its own independent design brand, the shop emphasizes the use of a unique aesthetic

sense that sets the merchandise completely apart from uninteresting products and makes it an exhibit in the same vein as the collection [5]. It is also relevant to the times, reflecting the design zeitgeist. The MoMA Creative Shop has brought enormous economic benefits to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the creation of a unique design brand is a major innovation for the cultural industry.

4 The Current State of Development in the Country

Compared with developed countries such as Europe and America, the development of cultural and creative establishments in museums in China started later. China's cultural and creative industries have not yet been recognized nationwide, and the weak development of creative industries in many cities has seriously affected its overall development level. Rich cultural resources are needed, but the lack of creativity has resulted in many resources being under-utilized. And there is still a big gap with developed countries, and research on cultural and creative industries as well as their promotion needs to be strengthened.

4.1 Taipei Palace Museum

Taiwan was an early starter in developing cultural and creative industries of museums in Asia. In 2002, the Taipei National Palace began a digital collection project, which took five years to preserve all three departments' collection-related materials in three-dimensional digital photography [3], enabling scholars and people from around the world to learn about the Palace's artifacts and knowledge via the internet, thus allowing for educational outreach, some current activities and the realization of commercial value [3]. Later in the year, manli Lin believes that good collections should not just stay in display cases, but that in order for Forbidden City artifacts to be truly understood, they must be understood from the people's perspective, so for the Forbidden City collections to create new value, action must be taken to develop cultural and creative industries. The first step is to apply for registered trademarks in major regions such as the US, EU, Japan and Australia, and then to license the registered trademarks and digital copies of the collection to manufacturers experienced in branding. After visiting the museum's extensive collection, visitors will want to go into the souvenir shop and buy some souvenirs. This is where branded licensed merchandise plays an important role. In 2005, on the occasion of its 80th anniversary, the National Palace Museum in Taipei released an advertising campaign with the slogan 'Old is New' and collaborated with the Taiwan Creative Centre to launch the 'Innovative Design Campaign for Collected Cultural Objects'. "This made Taiwan the starting point for the development of cultural and creative products for museums in the country. With the new image concept of 'Old is new - Fashionable Forbidden City', the programme is divided into three parts: firstly, a series of design competitions for the design of museum cultural and creative products, fully mobilizing the inspiration pool of the public and designers [3]. Secondly, a 'strategic alliance' to develop a new brand image for the museum's cultural merchandise; and thirdly, a 'dual-brand' approach with internationally renowned brands to launch their own cultural merchandise in order to spread the benefits of the Palace Museum.

5 Future Development of Cultural and Creative Products in Museums

In recent years, under the influence of the Internet, there have been some museums undergoing brand new reforms and developed rapidly, such as the National Palace Museum, where sales of cultural and creative products are increasing and up to 8,000 types of products have been developed. The Nanjing Museum and Suzhou Museum, for example, can reach annual sales of around 12 million RMB, but they are still a far cry from the sales of the National Palace Museum in Taipei or the billions of RMB in annual sales of museum cultural and creative shops abroad. Museums have ushered in a phase of popular popularity and should be developed together with local characteristics to form museums with special features that can drive greater benefits. The design of creative products should interact with the public to promote the long-term development of museums and fulfill the cultural needs of the people to play a greater role.

6 Conclusion

Many museums are exploring their own cultural and creative paths. From the development of cultural and creative products to the present, it is more important to study cultural needs in depth and learn from the design merits and marketing strategies of excellent museum cultural and creative products. With the help of a broader platform, museums can take a new approach to local cultural creativity. This is not only a great gain for the museum, but also a cultural output performance that allows more and more people to learn about the culture of the museum and the culture of the place. Nowadays, the new platforms provide the technical support to digitize the development of cultural creations and to develop related film, animation and recreational games, with a particular focus on aesthetic and educational communication to nourish the cultural heritage of the public. The new space gives the public an up-close and warm experience, attracting more and more young people to museums in this open cultural and creative space [8]. Therefore, the new platform, the new space, the new positioning and the new speciality in the cultural and creative development of local museums will enable them to think outside the box and provide a new direction for the subsequent development of cultural and creative development in museums.

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