



# The Construction of Uniqueness of Museum Cultural and Creative Products from a Multicultural Perspective

## --Taking the British Museum and Zhoushan Museum as Examples

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**Abstract.** The British Museum leads various forms of development trends originating from literary creation by combining the cultural and commercial value of museum collections. The Zhoushan Museum opened in October 1986 and is a national first-class museum. The article explores the connotation of multiculturalism, compares and analyzes the cultural and creative products of the British Museum and the Zhoushan Museum, and explores the issue of how museum cultural and creative products should grasp the prominent characteristics of Chinese civilization and establish differences from competitors from a multicultural perspective. The aim is to provide practical reference for the construction of the uniqueness of museum cultural and creative products in China.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, museums, cultural and creative products, intellectual property

## 1 Introduction

Peter Keviston believes from its functional perspective that "multiculturalism is a way of finding ways to protect different ethnic identities Only in an open, inclusive, and equal society can people with different cultural backgrounds coexist harmoniously and achieve mutual success.<sup>[1]</sup> However, multiculturalism also brings about the diversity of cultural identity and the dilemma of cultural identity, as well as the infiltration and impact of various heterogeneous cultures, which may lead to individual identity confusion and loss of cultural confidence.

Museums are important places for inheriting culture and promoting cultural exchange. The design and development of their cultural and creative products meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the people, thereby promoting cultural exchange and diversity development. Therefore, how to use museums and their cultural and creative products to inherit and develop excellent traditional Chinese culture provides us with a tool to enhance cultural identity, strengthen cultural confidence, and maintain the uniqueness of products. In the context of globalization, the issue of multiculturalism has always been a hot topic of discussion in the academic community. On the basis of

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analysis of the connotation of multiculturalism, this article attempts to explore the construction of the uniqueness of museum products from a multicultural perspective.

## **2 Homogeneity and Heterogeneity: Analysis of Multicultural Connotation and Unique Cultural and Creative Products**

### **2.1 The Connotation of Multiculturalism**

The concept of "Culture Pluralism" was first proposed by American Horace Kallen in his 1915 article "Democracy and the Furnace". By the late 1980s, with the deepening discussion of cultural pluralism in American, the academic community began to increasingly use the term "multiculturalism" and replace it with "cultural pluralism".<sup>[2]</sup>

Peter Cawthon believes that "multiculturalism is a way to protect different ethnic identities." Although the academic community has different understandings and definitions of multiculturalism, people have reached a consensus on its basic connotations: multicultural coexistence is an inevitable choice of the times; the unique value of marginalized group cultures should be valued; The status of all cultures is equal.

With the transfer of comprehensive strength and national strength of major countries, scientific and technological innovation and personnel exchanges, ex-changes, collisions, conflicts and integration in the spiritual fields of ideology, social civilization and culture are increasingly frequent. Economic needs, political system design, geopolitical and ideological competition among major countries are still high. The COVID-19 has accelerated the arrival of the digital culture era, and the world has entered a multicultural era in the context of globalization.

### **2.2 Cultural and Creative Products and Their Uniqueness**

Cultural and creative products are the intersection of cultural and creative industries, and are a new business model generated in the process of integrating culture and tourism development. Cultural products convey cultural information to their target audience through dissemination, thereby enhancing identity, strengthening cultural confidence, and maintaining the uniqueness of local cultural products.<sup>[3]</sup>

In the context of globalization, different human civilizations collide with each other, and cultural development shows a basic trend of homogenization and heterogeneity. On the one hand, the development of globalization requires the homogenization of culture, and on the other hand, the need to maintain cultural uniqueness drives cultural subjects to pursue cultural heterogeneity. Therefore, the trend of diversified cultural development is further highlighted. Under this trend, if Chinese culture can maintain the concept of harmony and diversity on the basis of embracing diversity, further highlighting its own characteristics, it will undoubtedly make greater contributions to promoting the integration and diversified development of world cultures. If cultural and creative product design can integrate regional, urban, and national cultures with social, implicit, and diverse characteristics, it will undoubtedly make greater contributions to building and

maintaining the uniqueness of cultural and creative products, achieving cross-cultural communication, and strengthening cultural confidence.

### **3 Seeking Similarities and Differences: Comparative Analysis of Cultural and Creative Products between the British Museum and the Zhoushan Museum**

#### **3.1 Overview of Cultural and Creative Activities at the British Museum**

After the 20th century, English literature further elevated the literary image of the ocean or navigation. Therefore, the maritime culture and adventurous spirit of the UK still have a profound impact today. Nowadays, the British Museum has become an important place for cultural exchange among countries around the world, as well as an important representative of global cultural and artistic fields, and has always adhered to the principle of "free access to all 'eager learners'". The cultural and creative derivative products of the British Museum cover a variety of product forms, from pattern designs based on museum exhibits, to toys, stationery, clothing, jewelry and other products themed around museum collections, and even VR and AR games based on digital technology.<sup>[4]</sup> These cultural and artistic products, covering different cultural and artistic elements, not only extend the cultural connotation of the museum, but also inject new soul into the new face of the British Museum.

#### **3.2 Overview of Cultural and Creative Activities at Zhoushan Museum**

The Zhoushan Museum was approved by the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism and the Zhejiang Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau as a provincial-level cultural and creative pilot unit in 2018. In 2019, it officially established and started operating the "Zhoushan Museum Cultural and Creative Research and Development Center" in conjunction with the Municipal Culture and Sports Development Co., Ltd., in order to fully leverage the resource advantages of cultural and sports companies and museums, expand market channels, and deeply explore and develop high-quality cultural and creative products through the cooperation model between museums and enterprises. The progress of cultural and creative research and development is rapid, and as of 2022, more than 150 cultural and creative products have been designed and developed in 12 series. On November 25, 2022, the Zhoushan Museum announced data from the Zhoushan Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports that the sales of cultural and creative products in the cultural and creative zone museums increased by 200% year-on-year. In addition, as one of the top ten brands of marine culture derivatives in the first Zhoushan City, Zhoushan Wengshan Cultural Development Co., Ltd. has created a cultural and creative exhibition hall in the Zhoushan Museum, creating a cultural and creative product that combines Zhoushan's marine and Buddhist culture with the Zhoushan Museum, awakening consumers' intrinsic demand for spiritual value and promoting the further development of offline sales stores for cultural and creative products.

At present, Zhoushan Museum has developed and designed multiple distinctive cultural and creative products, connecting cultural creativity with the daily lives of the masses; Create a cultural and creative product catalog on its official website to showcase high-quality cultural and creative products; Integrate cultural and creative product stores, open up new retail channels such as online shop-ping malls and vending machines; Participate in cultural and natural heritage day activities and other exhibitions and sales at all levels, showcase the potential vitality and economic and social value of cultural and creative products, and highlight the characteristics of Zhoushan's marine culture and humanistic spirit.

### **3.3 Analysis of the Disadvantages of Cultural and Creative Products in Zhoushan Museum Compared to those in the British Palace Museum**

The UK and Zhoushan share a common marine culture and maritime spirit, and have both leveraged marine cultural resources to develop unique cultural and creative products with marine elements in the process of cultural and creative industry development.<sup>[5]</sup> For example, according to the British Museum, it has created a series of popular cultural and creative products that combine aesthetic needs and practical value, such as umbrellas, handbags, and playing cards, using the classic landscape woodcut print "Under the Wave off Kanagawa" by Japanese ukiyoe master Katsushika Hokusai, also known as "The Great Wave", in order to recreate the atmosphere, depth, and primitive power of the ocean contained in ukiyoe prints. Against the backdrop of the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the Zhoushan Museum has created a cultural and creative product called the "Yang Lian · Celadon Tea Set Five Pieces". By integrating cultural relics into Eastern aesthetic objects, the museum highlights the regional characteristics of Zhoushan culture, allowing the public to better understand the Guanyin culture of the Maritime Silk Road and endowing marine cultural and creative products with richer connotations and aesthetic values.

However, by visiting the cultural and creative exhibition hall of Zhoushan Museum, offline sales platforms such as vending machines, as well as online sales platforms such as Taobao store and local website, we learned about the current situation of cultural and creative products of the British Museum, compared them with the cultural and creative products and their sales models of the British Museum, and found two types of problems.

Firstly, homogenization of cultural and creative product innovation.

At present, the cultural and creative products of Zhoushan Museum are developing rapidly, and the variety and quantity of cultural and creative products are already rich enough. However, the carrier forms of some cultural and creative ideas and design services are still relatively limited, and their role in spreading and inheriting high-quality culture is not obvious. The product quality and cultural connotation also need to be improved. Firstly, some cultural and creative products lack innovation, and the application of cultural elements is only a practice of symbol appropriation, ignoring the uniqueness and differences of local culture. For example, the cultural and creative products with ocean elements launched by Zhoushan Museum are mostly self-service vending machines for commemorative coins. The cultural and creative exhibition hall also

features daily necessities and accessories with ocean elements, which are similar to other museums. Secondly, some cultural and creative products use ready-made fixed cultural and creative templates, which leads to homogenization issues. For example, in 2019, the Zhoushan Museum launched the "Maritime Silk Road Game Chess" inspired by the route map of the Tang envoy. In fact, on December 11, 2016, the China Port Museum released the first domestic board game chess set against the backdrop of the Age of Discovery, with the Maritime Silk Road as the theme.

Secondly, there is a lack of image IP for cultural and creative products.

IP, meaning intellectual property, is an important carrier of culture. With the rise of microblog, new media and the emergence of new consumer groups, IP has become increasingly close to the cultural industry, and has become an important form of cultural products and cultural connotation dissemination in the Internet era. While the collection resources and cultural and creative products of Zhoushan Museum are related to marine culture, they failed to seize the new market opportunities in the Internet era and incubate distinctive image IP around their historical and cultural positioning and marine culture. Secondly, the use of IP in most cultural and creative products is still in its early stages, mainly for symbol replication and application of resources, making some daily necessities, and lacking IP operation. Therefore, it is not possible to empower industrial development through IP authorization. For example, the Zhoushan Museum did not utilize the classic elements of this cultural relic and combine them with the characteristics of Zhoushan's marine culture to design and develop a series of cultural and creative products.

## **4 Upholding Integrity and Innovation: Development Suggestions for Cultural and Creative Products**

### **4.1 Explore Library Resources and Design Unique Products**

In the basic trend of cultural development showing the coexistence of homogenization and heterogeneity, people with different cultural backgrounds can only coexist harmoniously and achieve mutual success by adhering to the values of openness, inclusiveness, and equality, and strengthening cultural confidence. They can better face the infiltration and impact of various heterogeneous cultures, and more effectively promote the construction of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

Therefore, in the context of the new era, Zhoushan Museum should maintain the concept of harmony and diversity on the basis of embracing diversity, further demonstrate its own characteristics, grasp the prominent features of Chinese civilization, and use its collection resources to design and develop unique local cultural and creative products. To avoid blindly copying foreign theories and achieve spiritual independence and autonomy; Actively learn from and draw inspiration from all the excellent achievements of human civilization; Realize the organic connection between tradition and modernity. Furthermore, it strengthens cultural confidence, enhances cultural identity, and

effectively promotes the creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, making greater contributions to promoting the integration and diversified development of world cultures. The Zhoushan Museum should also break the closed and isolated nature of its collection resources, explore the cultural value of its collection resources from both depth and breadth levels, and implant cultural and creative products. It should excavate traditional Chinese aesthetics and popular culture in the tide of world cultural homogenization, maintain and inherit cultural identity and characteristics in cultural diversity, creatively express the spirit of cultural and creative activities, realize the transformation from museum cultural heritage to cultural resources, resonate with consumers, strengthen cultural confidence, and meet their spiritual needs.

The creation of cultural and creative products is not only the construction of objects, but also a cultural expression guided by people. If the design of cultural and creative products can integrate regional, urban, and national cultures with social, implicit, diverse, and differentiated characteristics, it will undoubtedly make greater contributions to building and maintaining the uniqueness of cultural and creative products, establishing differentiation from competitors, enhancing cultural identity, strengthening cultural confidence, and achieving creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

#### **4.2 Creating Well-Known Intellectual Property Rights and Empowering Industrial Development**

Museum cultural and creative IP emphasizes creative transformation of collection resources and innovative development of cultural and creative products. British Museum has designed many "treasures of the museum" into diverse and popular cultural and creative products.<sup>[6]</sup> The development of new cultural and creative products by the Zhoushan Museum can be studied and researched from its cultural and creative examples. For example, one of the treasures of the British Museum, the Rosetta Stone, is a great feature of excavation. The British Museum integrates the daily needs of the public with the IP of the Rosetta Stone, using ancient texts to create a series of cultural and creative products that combine aesthetics and functionality.<sup>[7]</sup>

Museums are not only educational institutions that collect cultural and natural resources, but their rich historical heritage and unique cultural value make them a natural and culturally rich IP. Zhoushan Museum should seize the value of its IP and provide creative and content sources for cultural and creative products. Based on the existing products, innovative design and development of Zhoushan tourism cultural and creative products should be carried out, focusing on solving the problems of serious homogenization and outdated design of tourism products. The unique regional culture of Zhoushan should be integrated into the design of tourism cultural and creative products, taking into account the cultural connotation while considering the circulation value and practical value of the products, and meeting the current consumption needs of tourists.<sup>[8]</sup> For example, by utilizing the "Fishing Wind and Sea Charm - Zhoushan Folk Customs Exhibition", elements with local characteristics and regional culture such as fishermen's lives and marine traditions can be integrated into cultural and creative design.

In addition, Zhoushan Museum can develop creative, fashionable, and malleable image IP around its historical and cultural positioning and characteristics, and showcase its design concepts and story background. By using animation, figurines, models, and other cultural and creative display products that combine IP images, it can seize new market opportunities and attract new consumer groups. The IP image is a unique and distinct cultural symbol that carries the city, which can quickly evoke people's emotions, identify with the spiritual connotations and cultural information behind it, and independently spread it. It is conducive to the dissemination of the cultural core of museums, further attracting investment, industry, and consumption flows. Secondly, Zhoushan Museum can consider practicality, culture, design, and high quality from multiple aspects, select suitable cultural and creative products, and carry out design and research and development of serialized and themed cultural and creative products that combine image IP and have Zhoushan marine cultural characteristics, creating its own highlights and features, and cultivating regional characteristic cultural and creative IP. At the same time, empowering industrial development through IP authorization, the Cultural and Creative R&D Center of Zhoushan Museum collaborates on the authorization of collection IP resources, carries out external IP authorization business, and fully participates in and cooperates with brand product development, controlling production quality from the design source. Through authorization, the integration of cultural relics elements in the collection with the brand can be achieved, and IP marketing can be carried out in conjunction with games, music, dance, poetry and drama, integrating contemporary aesthetics, bringing precious cultural relics into ordinary life, and enhancing the cultural value of the brand. Subdivide the market, meet the needs of different customers, and use the Internet platform to help spread, supply and sell cultural and creative products.

## 5 Conclusion

In the context of globalization, cultural development has become more diverse, and exchanges between different cultures have become more frequent. The development of China's cultural and creative industry is still in an upward stage, which is both an opportunity and a challenge. The inclusiveness of Chinese civilization fundamentally determines its openness and inclusiveness towards world civilization. Building the uniqueness of museum cultural and creative products and maintaining their differentiation from competitors cannot be achieved without the openness and inclusiveness of Chinese civilization and the connection and reorganization of the information age. Museums need to grasp the prominent characteristics of Chinese civilization, use collection resources to design unique local cultural and creative products, and use the spiritual and cultural values hidden behind IP to spread the cultural core of museums.

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