

Introduction to the Integration of Modern Art Design and Traditional Humanistic Thought

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Abstract. Chinese traditional humanistic thought, which is rich and bright, has a long history. It is the core content of traditional culture, people's understanding and expression to the world, the nature and the society, and an important philosophy and methodology. Through the exploration of Chinese traditional humanistic thought, this article analyzes the integration significance of the modern art design and the traditional humanistic thought, discusses the application of traditional cultural thoughts in modern art design, finds out the combining points between the modern art design and traditional humanistic thought and puts forward a new development direction for modern art design.

Introduction

China has a long history of about five thousand years, and its traditional culture is very profound of which humanistic thought is the core. Art design comes from life and serves for the life of people, which is formed on the basis of production and practice as cultural product. To bring traditional humanistic thoughts into modern art design is to inherit and carry forward the traditional culture, which has practical significance.

The Connotation of Chinese Traditional Humanistic Thought

In ancient times, schools in China developed fast with their thoughts contending and blooming like flowers, of which the Confucianism, the Mohism, the Taoist and the Legalism are the main stream whose thoughts have a great influence on us. "Nature and humanity", "the coordination of Yin and Yang" and "five elements" are the basic content of Chinese traditional humanistic thought. Represented by Lao-tzu and Confucius, Confucianism culture has an opinion that the nature is unlimited. Though human activity is subject to the conditions of nature, people can use the laws of nature for the benefit of mankind, which means that man and nature are harmonious and unified, namely "nature and humanity".

Yin and Yang represent the opposite sides of all things in the world. It is an objective laws of nature by which all the things are going, and at the same time it is the basic laws human get to know things. Yin and Yang are interdependent based on the Unity of Opposites Theory. The ancient Chinese believed imbalance between Yin and Yang always led to disease or disaster, as a result, the coordination of Yin and Yang becomes the important content of Chinese traditional humanistic thought.

In China's traditional culture, the five elements refer to metal, wood, water, fire and earth that coexist to form all things of the world. In terms of System Theory, the constant motion and interaction of five elements under different conditions result in the change and development of all kinds of things and phenomena in nature.

The Significance of the Integration of Modern Art Design and Traditional Humanistic Thought

China has a long history and profound traditional culture of which the traditional humanistic thought has significant influence on our modern art design. First of all, the traditional humanistic thought is the precious cultural heritage of our country, the crystallization of the wisdom of our

ancient people and the preserved essence that is continuously improved during historical development, which is worth inheriting and carrying forward. Modern art design serves for people's lives, so its design concept needs to comply with the development requirements of the society and people's aesthetic needs to arouse public resonance, As a result, the integration of traditional humanistic thought and the modern art design help people to understand these thoughts and culture, and also help to carry forward and develop the traditional humanistic thought.

Secondly, with the development of the society and the improvement of people's life, the standard of human spiritual needs is becoming more and more high, which puts a more and more demanding requirement for the art design works related to people's daily life, so that the designers need to give the rein to their wisdom continuously to design better works that meet people's needs. Traditional humanistic thought is an important summary and expression for Chinese people's thinking which has the characteristics of tradition and inheritance, and these thoughts have been widely known and integrated into people's life and ideas. Therefore, the integration of traditional humanistic thought and modern art design can make the designed products more accord with people's cognitive needs and aesthetic demand that are more quickly accepted by the people, and the integration is also the innovative development of the traditional humanistic thought, which offers inspiration and materials for the modern art design.

The Application of Traditional Humanistic Thought in Modern Art Design

Traditional humanistic thought that is the precious spiritual treasure of human beings and gradually integrates into people's daily life in the process of the continuous development of history guides people's social practice, so we can see a lot of shadow of humanistic thoughts in art design.

The Application of “Nature and Humanity” Thought in Modern Art Design. The Chinese traditional culture and art are different streams of school, but they rely on each other and care about each other. The Nature and Humanity thought is one of perfect combinations of Chinese traditional humanistic thought and aesthetics. A “human face and fish body” basin was found in the painted potteries of China's primitive society, which embodies the “Nature and Humanity” thought. Particularly in the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven, these thoughts are reflected more often. Because "nine" is considered as the largest number in Chinese traditional culture, ancient Chinese always called the emperor “the honor of nine-five” with “five” —the middle number in Chinese traditional culture which is also very important. And the names of the buildings in the Forbidden City such as “Palace of Heavenly Purity”, “the Hall of Union” all embody the thought of “Nature and Humanity”.

In modern art design, many domestic and foreign masters also apply the thought of “Nature and Humanity” to their works, such as Han Meilin, Alan Chan in Hong Kong and Frank Lloyd Wright, etc. The Green Bamboo Tea is like bamboo leaf with two heads sharp and thin and it will stand up after soaking in the hot water. According to these, Mr. Chan designed a special package for the Green Bamboo Tea using the color of yellow and green together with long and short leaves combined patterns to improve its quality. (Figure 1) Another package Mr. Chan designed is called “on Tao”, which obviously stresses the thought of “Nature and Humanity”(Figure 2)



Figure 1. The Package of Green Bamboo Tea



Figure 2 The “On Tao” Package of Green Bamboo Tea

The Application of “Yin” and “Yang” in Modern Art Design. Harmony of “Yin” and “Yang” in the Book of Changes is an important part of Chinese traditional humanistic thought, regarding the universe as the existence of interdependence and mutual confrontation on the basis of dialectics of the unity of opposites. Under the influence of this thought, our country’s “Harmony” aesthetic style was formed. For example, our country's most influential design of Tai Chi reflected the movement of the cycle and the tenacity of life, at the same time, only with the opposite colors of black and white to demonstrate the situation that “one attacks, while the other retreats and the two rivals are coexisted and integrated”, which embodies the theory of the harmony between “Yin” and “Yang”.

In the same way, Yin-Yang Tai Chi pattern has been applied and developed in modern art design and development. For example, in 2001, the UN adopted the Tai Chi (Figure 3) as the emblem pattern of the World Congress against racial discrimination. (Figure 4) On the basis of Tai Chi pattern, designers added gray transitional zones of different depth and levels, which symbolizes that people in the world of different regions, races and colors can be friendly to each other and build the world family hand in hand. This design shows China’s traditional humanistic thoughts to the people all over the world, which not only spreads the Chinese traditional culture and thoughts, but also develops the national spirit of China’s harmony to the world. And it also shows that traditional humanistic thoughts can provide materials for modern art design and make the integration real.



Figure 3. Tai Chi Pattern



Figure 4. The Emblem of World Congress against Racial Discrimination

The Application of Five Elements in Modern Art Design. In Chinese culture, gold, wood, water, fire and earth —the Five Elements constitute the material world. On one hand, art comes from life and serves for life, which is the result of people’s constantly improving spiritual pursuits. On the other hand, the five elements provide material foundation for art design. Moreover, the coexistence

and restraint of the five elements also provide inspiration and materials for artistic creation, thus enriching the content of it.

Five elements can express different colors, seasons and food. For example, Wood can be expressed by navy or green; fire by red; earth by yellow or brown; gold by white or ivory; Water by blue series. The most famous design is the mascots of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games — Fuwa (Figure 5) in which there are five personified dolls whose prototypes and headdresses are connected with the sea, forest, fire, the earth and the sky, which takes the full advantage of Five Elements and applies them to the design. Meanwhile, the design fully demonstrates that people, animals, and the nature are living in harmony, which embodies the thought of “Nature and Humanity”.



Figure 5. the Mascots of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games — Fuwa

The Application of “Ideography” Thinking Mode in Modern Art Design. “Ideography” refers to imaging and deducing the new meaning according to the specific things, which is one of China’s traditional thinking modes and has been in use until today. In Chinese ancient paintings, “spirit likeness” and “realistic” are always pursued, with specific things to express new emotions and cognition. So it has the characteristics of implicit beauty, the same as our tradition thoughts whose content includes modesty and reserve.

By the thinking mode of “ideography”, different numbers and symbols can be used to convey themes and names in art design. This kind of art design is numerous, in which logo design is the most common. For example, the logo of the Bank of China (figure 6) which makes good use of “ideography” thinking mode organically combines the Chinese character “中” with ancient Chinese coin, making both the subject and the name easy and clear at a glance for people to understand and accept. The design is ingenious and full of artistic conception. (Figure 6)



Figure 6. Logo of the Bank of China

Conclusions

As the Famous designer Mr. George Yarrow once said: “the connotation of design relies in culture”, art design is also an expression of culture and thought. Traditional humanistic thought is the precious spiritual treasure of our country that affects the forming people’s aesthetic thoughts. The organic integration of modern art design and traditional humanistic thought not only can carry forward and innovate the traditional thoughts, but also can provide creation inspiration and sources for designers to endow the art designs with our unique national brand of obvious characteristics and to proclaim to the world the profoundness and unique charm of China’s traditional thought.

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