

The Inspiration of Ancient Aesthetics on Modern Jewelry Design

Take a Case Study of the Song Dynasty Aesthetics

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Abstract—The Song Dynasty aesthetics plays an important role in the Chinese aesthetics history. It worships plain color with an insipid and restraining art style, which is full of culture deposits. At the same time, it pursues elegance, highlights both shape and soul and shows a high art taste. The Song Dynasty aesthetics also contains deep thought of harmony between man and nature, emphasizing the harmony between man and the universe. Learning the essence of the Song Dynasty aesthetics and thinking it with contemporary jewelry together can identify the advantages and disadvantages of contemporary jewelry design more clearly and provide new ideas and inspiration for jewelry design.

Keywords—the Song Dynasty aesthetics; jewelry; design; life

I. INTRODUCTION

On the Song Dynasty culture, the Chinese modern historian Mr. Chen Yinke had an authoritative discussion: “the Chinese culture has developed for thousands of years and climbed on top in Song dynasty”. Therefore, “inheriting the Han and Tang Dynasties and being inherited by the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Song Dynasty lies in an epoch-making coordinates. In the three hundred and twenty years, the height attained by material civilization and spiritual civilization was the highest in the historical period of feudal society in China, and also took the lead in the history of the world”. Just as the status of the Song Dynasty culture in the history of Chinese culture, the Song Dynasty aesthetics is also the peak of the development of Chinese classical aesthetic thought.

The Song Dynasty aesthetic changed the self - publicity and the realm of the horizon of the Tang Dynasty aesthetics and learned from the natural and social image, it turned into the inner taste of life and interest. The grand images of long rivers and sunset, the desert and solitary smoke were replaced by elegant charm of deep courtyard and fallen flowers and leaves. Unlike in Tang Dynasty, emperors in Song dynasty did not pursue opening side or expansion, under the social conditions given by history, people create a unique culture and aesthetics. As put in Huo Ran's "Song Dynasty Aesthetic Trends": "It is not like surging wave, coaxing a lot of waves forward impetus; but like a gurgling river, showing long ring ripples in the slow flowing". The aesthetics of the Song Dynasty changes from the pursuit of

the external to the pursuit of the inner spirit of the people, with its unique gentle introverted temperament, the Song Dynasty aesthetics leads the ancient Chinese new aesthetic fashion.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF SONG DYNASTY AESTHETICS

A. *Combining the Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, Valuing Neo-Confucianism And Interests*

The integration of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism was completed and the Neo-Confucianism was promoted in the Song Dynasty, so the ethical thought with the national standard was formed. Under this background, the restraining aesthetic mentality and aesthetic tendency of valuing social function, humanistic pragmatism was emerged, making the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty value Neo-Confucianism and interests and pursue the poetic artistic realm. The Song Dynasty aesthetics requires simpleness, both on the color, texture and the material. It pursues creating the clearness and elegance of the Song Dynasty art with the simplest way. Historical records recorded Song Huizong likes playing and being tired of politics, but he has a deep knowledge in literature, calligraphy and painting. He worshiped Taoism and advocated the law of nature, so his own artistic style affected the aesthetic characteristics of the Song Dynasty to a large extent.

Song porcelain is mostly monochrome-based, but the simple color and shape makes the Song Dynasty porcelain elegant and vivid. There are many official wares and civilian wares in the Song Dynasty, but the decoration of the porcelain is only adhering to glaze decoration, neither the colorfulness of Tang three colors, nor the complex of blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty. The plain and restraining slicing technique is also an accidental surprise of the failure in making porcelain.

B. *Literati Aesthetics*

In Chen yinke's eye, among the six dynasties, the thought in Song Dynasty was the freest. Songtaizu Zhao Kuangyin and Songtaizong Zhao Jiong took worshipping civil but restraining military as the ancestor legislation. Principles such as “giving prior to scholars” and “not killing literati and officialdom as well as advisers” make the political

atmosphere relatively loose and the cultural management pretty open, which is conducive to form a multivariate compatibility. The compatibility has become the general value orientation of the literati in the Song Dynasty, which is most fully expressed in the openness and freedom of the Song Dynasty. Because of the policy, the literati of the Song Dynasty became the backbone of the bureaucratic class, and the aesthetic of the literati directly influenced the Song Dynasty aesthetics. After the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, the emergence of literati painting and calligraphy style at the same time is the refraction of independent consciousness and freedom in the field of painting and calligraphy. Painting in Song Dynasty abandoned the makeup in that of Tang Dynasty, promoting the Chinese ink painting to a new historical height. Literati scholars take calligraphy and painting as elegant spiritual activities and cultural literacy, with a simple ink color, expressing heart feelings of thousands of literati. They pay attention to ink and gas charm of the crack, rub, point, dyeing and other techniques. Snow Mountains, deep forests, dead wood and residual flowers turned meaningful, smooth and vivid under the pens of the Song Dynasty literati, which is rich in humanistic connotation.

C. Being Popularized and Secularized

Song Dynasty lies in a period of great changes in social structure, while commodity economy is highly developed and the city's economic status is improved and bustling to secularization. The public literature and art begin to rise. People can find almost all the popular aesthetic consciousness and form from the Song Dynasty. The emergence of the public place of entertainment and the prosperity of the acrobatics art, have an immeasurable impact on the history of Chinese aesthetics. Liu Yong's poem, story-teller's novels and shop and custom paintings are their representatives; even the painting scroll "Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival" also embodies hot breath of the secular publics without aristocratic character. The high development of the literati culture in the Song Dynasty did not hinder the development of folk art, instead, it provided guidance for the folk art of the Song Dynasty.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF AESTHETICS OF THE SONG DYNASTY ON MODERN JEWELRY DESIGN

The prosperity and development of the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty, has a special social and psychological structure. It has a strong human environment foundation. The rise of scholarly status, the freedom of academic, the rise and prosperity of civic culture are the important factors that make aesthetics of the Song Dynasty splendid in the history of Chinese aesthetics. Following the footprints of Song Dynasty aesthetics and reflecting on the current status of jewelry design, the author has the following considerations:

A. We Need to Trace the Source to Do the Design

The development of jewelry has been thousands of years, so its form and function changed a lot. The kinds of jewelry are increasing and the design style is also various. Jewelry design becomes more and more new, special, strange, false,

shallow and meaningless. They think that innovative materials and weird shape are more attractive, the design with a variety of artistic trends and genre can cause people to resonate with the feelings and thoughts, such works make jewelry design tasteless. Abandoned? At least they reflect breakthrough in the jewelry materials experiment and design style. Keep? But the design is nothing special indeed. Combined with the thinking of the Song Dynasty aesthetics, jewelry designers should pay attention to training their overall quality first of all because art and culture are always complementary and mutually promoted. Only improving their own cultural literacy and design literacy, can they distinguish beauty from ugliness. Second, designers should remove all the ostentatious things in jewelry design and give up the materialized surface to retain the most essential and simple things and do real design. They should not be utilitarian or formal but pay attention to their inner world expression and pursue true temperament of the design. Jewelry design can have nothing to do with jewelry, it can be not luxury. Designers should get rid of inner fickleness and start from the natural beauty of the material to dig the theme and mood of jewelry, make jewelry design more free, scientific, creative and aesthetic and improve the artistry and ideological of jewelry.

"Fig. 1" and "Fig. 2" are from the United States of America jewelry artist Wendy Mcallister. Her works focuses on expressing emotions and self-status in life. Fear, disguise, loyalty, happiness and so on are expressed through her design of color, texture and shape of the metal. Her works are mainly made up of copper, silver and other material, she uses enamel color changes and combinations to express the inner emotions, giving a strong visual impact. Her inspiration comes from the vibrant nature. Changeable texture and contrasting color make her think more profound to life.



Fig. 1.

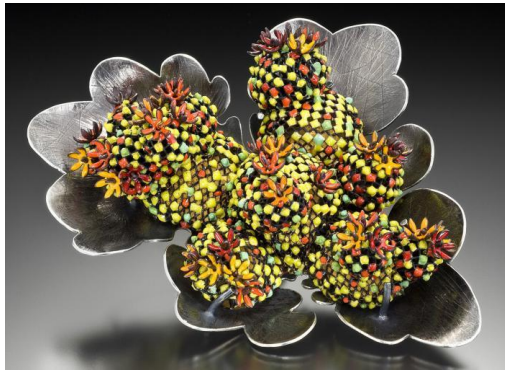


Fig. 2.

Whether it is *dalbergia odorifera* or *lignum santali albi*, the traditional wood jewelry is round as pearls and smooth as jade after polishing. There are very little works whose designer make them following the wood's own texture, while "Fig. 3" and "Fig. 4", the two rings designed by the British London designer Anthony Roussel, who fully follows the wood texture of the birch, divides the birch into slices and then re-bond them. The ring and bracelets made in such way are as rich sense of rhythm as modern sculpture, but also return the personality of logs to the wearer's fingers.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

B. Making the Design Lifelike, the Life Can Be Artistic.

The relationship between design and life is indivisible, and their common ground is to meet the dual needs of the human spirit and material. Life is the basis of design and provides the source and material for the design; design is the needed for life and brings convenience and taste to life and creates the environment that meet the human physiological and psychological needs. Only the design is close to life, design is lifelike, can the life be artistic, can people pursue artistic state in the realm of life and pursue the life fun in the design at the same time. Design comes from life and is higher than life. Making design lifelike not only requires designers start from the nuances of life to find the beauty of design, and then improve the art of life, but also requires that the design should serve for practical services of life. They should be not inconvenient or hinder the normal life. In terms of the jewelry design, from the practical point of view, it requires jewelry should be suitable for people to wear, meet people's daily comfort need. It shouldn't be too heavy, too sharp or too large, or simply cannot be worn properly. Designers should gradually improve their skills on jewelry functions and processes in the life experience, such as the fashion watches belonged to jewelry category, they should consider their waterproof function as well as how to improve jewelry antioxidant layer to be more solid and durable. Only with the practicality, the design of jewelry works can be accepted by life and improve the artistic atmosphere of life. Second, the jewelry design inspiration and philosophy should come from the life and find the beauty of life. The design close to life is surefooted, with a sense of intimacy, it can narrow the emotional distance with the wearer.

Maria Cristina Bellucci, a jewelry designer from Italy, uses a color pencil that is widely used in life to design a series of jewels called "color in hand" "Fig. 5", "Fig. 6". Through the arrangement and combination of different colors of colored pencils, she gets a new kind of jewelry "new material composed by colored pencils. By shaping this material, she gets these jewelries both are free and easy, bringing a sense of warmth to jewelry.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.

“Fig. 7” and “Fig. 8” is the works of a Philadelphia girl Zoe Einbinder, she turned the fruit into the nation's best-selling jewelry. Nature is the best designer. She found fresh fruit and vegetables are very attractive, so she tried to make jewelry out of fruits and vegetables. The biggest technical problem in this design is how to keep fresh fruits and vegetables bright to the largest extent when sealing them into the jewelry. After thousands of attempts during two years, she finally found a special waterproof resin, which can make up beautiful jewelry together with fruits.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.

C. Human Beings Must Live in Harmony with Nature

Heaven and earth have the biggest achievements while they don't show off; the four seasons have clear rule while they say nothing; everything has a rise and fall while they keep silent. Everything in nature has its own laws, which cannot be changed by human beings, the small part in the vast universe. "Xishan travelling map" by Fan Kuan in song Dynasty showed a strong idea of harmony between heaven and man. He drew the mountain largely, so the people walking in the mountains and waters seemed very small, showing the painter's fear of nature. Human respect for nature, the nature will be presented to humans. On the contrary, if human beings destroyed nature at will, they will be overturned by nature and die. Therefore, human beings must live in harmony with nature, though the design serves for human beings, they should also pay attention to green lifestyle, low carbon and environmental protection. In terms of jewelry design, the designs should try to achieve the second use of materials as much as possible and reuse the waste materials through the design. At the same time, they should use of environmentally friendly materials as much as possible, materials such as diamonds that is difficult to main, gems cost greatly in labor and environment should be hardly used. They can create a new artistic language for the ordinary life materials through their own design. Their design concept should also conform to respecting and worshiping nature. Using the wearer's appreciation of jewelry to guide them to love nature, protect nature and live in harmony with nature.

The cutting-edge brand Lalo Treasure from Israel is inspired by flowers, leaves, butterflies, fruits, shells, waves, etc. and is based on shells and other organic materials. By changing the colors of the shells, the designers produce the jewelry of Smart Ocean series “Fig. 9” and the vital forest series, making people enjoy the beautiful scenery given by the earth on the jewelry, interpreting a natural symphony.



Fig. 9.

Linda Ezerman uses jewelry as a medium to feel outside world. Her jewelry was made up of environmentally friendly materials in daily life such as hemp rope, linen, and wool felt, through the winding and bonding of these materials to form a great many natural and simple rings, releasing the art of these materials “Fig. 10”, “Fig. 11”.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

IV. CONCLUSION

Knowledge about the Song Dynasty aesthetics is broad and deep, compatible and implicit. We cannot understand it completely just by reading a few history or aesthetic books. It almost affects all the contemporary design categories. The author is inspired in the learning and exploration of the Song Dynasty aesthetics, and has some thinking on contemporary jewelry design. By summarizing the shortages of contemporary jewelry design and exploring the future jewelry, the author hope to do something for the healthy development of contemporary jewelry design.

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