

Research on Innovation and Application of Styling Elements of Tiger Head Shoes

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Abstract—As a very unique needlecraft, tiger head shoes are made by the elders to bless the children with good health, disease-free and disaster-free. The culture of tiger head shoes has a long history and has a high research value. This paper analyzes the styling characteristics of tiger head shoes and the aesthetic appreciation of tiger head shoes from the two-dimensional, three-dimensional and spiritual aspects and makes analysis on the derivatives of tiger head shoes to sum up the innovative application cases of tiger-head shoe styling elements in the new era, in order to achieve the purpose of promoting China's traditional cultural heritage by use of the media and new products in the new era, and to provide new ideas for the development of tiger-head shoe culture.

Keywords—*tiger head shoe; styling characteristics; innovation; aesthetics; inheritance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tiger shoes are one of China's traditional handicrafts, and need many stitches such as embroidery, jacquard, dazi and others. The materials are mostly cloth, and according to the season or regional culture, silk, cotton and other materials are also be used. Red, yellow and blue and other colors are applied to the shoes, and colorful cloth is stitched on the surface of shoes to constitute the vivid image of tiger, with thick eyebrow and big eyes, big mouth and small nose; in some areas, a big character of "王" will be sewed on the shoes to make the image full of tiger posture; because the shoe head is like a tiger, it is called "tiger shoes."

Jia Guotao, a Chinese scholar, mentioned in his research on tiger-head shoes in 2011 that "tiger-head shoes" is the recreation of "mother's art" in a specific conditions and is the mother-type characteristic of Chinese national culture and the deep-rooted cultural genes created under the specific conditions and social background, carrying the function and significance of "civilizing and helping human relations", and showing the prospect of "soul". [1] Scholar Zhang Pengfei also emphasized in his research in 2011 that the complex of the Chinese tiger culture has been integrated, cohered and permeated with many aesthetic qualities of traditional Chinese culture, becoming the indispensable composition gene of Chinese civilization, while the tiger-head shoes is a powerful element of material modalities. [2]

II. THE ORIGINS OF TIGER CULTURE AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF TIGER HEAD SHOES

A. The Origins of Tiger Culture

Chinese tiger culture has a long history. For the origins of Chinese tiger culture, "the biggest tiger in the world" in the Puyang ancient tombs; the tiger-rock paintings seen in the archaeological activities, the "Hunting Tiger" in oracle inscriptions, the Tiger Strengthening Military Might and the Huangdi Mausoleum with Dragons and Tigers in the ancient literature, are used to verify the long history of China's tiger culture. The ancient Qiangrong tribe considered them to be tiger's family, and inherited the culture of "sacrificial tiger" and "bogey tiger" all along. The worship of tigers was earlier than that of dragon because the hunting culture was earlier than farming culture. Besides, Wang Zhicheng described the origins of relations between human beings and tigers from ancient times through various symbolic meanings of tiger culture in the "symbolic meaning of tiger culture".[3] Some scholars pointed out in the origins of tiger culture that the ancestors of Korea were born by bears, So Korea took bear as the ancestor, and more honored the tiger as Korea's national animal.

B. The Classification of Tiger Head Shoes

Tiger head shoes culture has long culture, and tiger shoes in different regions have a variety of styles. Because of the influence of the regional culture, the tiger head shoes at the same time have many characteristics of their own area in terms of color, materials and modeling and so on.

Henan folk tiger-head shoes have their more significant regional characteristics, and they have many different colors, but the tones of the colors all are bright and colorful, with a rough shape and a strong local flavor in "Fig. 1". Shandong tiger-head shoes, unlike other tiger-head shoes in shape, often are exaggeratedly decorated to make them like cat head, lion head, and dragon head, with very realistic shape, which are even more unique in the pattern embroidery in "Fig. 2". Han's tiger-head shoes are made of yellow cloth, with a thick and loose shoe sole, which are very comfortable and easy. The shoe upper is mainly red, yellow, and black, making the image of tiger very lively in "Fig. 3". Yi's tiger-head shoes have a hard white-cloth sole, a round head, and a red-flannelette upper, with the features embroidered with different colored threads,

the red silk decorated on both sides of the line, and the tiger head and the shoe topline edged with orange and brown velvet in "Fig. 4". Bai's tiger-head shoes have unique ethnic characteristics. The shoes have cotton sole and a red flannelette upper, embroidered with "split" tiger shape; the front of upper is an image of tiger head, with a character of "王" on the tiger forehead, decorated with feather. It is exquisite in the composition and has profound moral, very different from the tiger-head shoes of other nationalities in "Fig. 5".



Fig. 1. Henan tiger head shoes.



Fig. 2. Shandong tiger head shoes.



Fig. 3. Han's tiger head shoes.



Fig. 4. Yi's tiger head shoes.



Fig. 5. Bai's tiger head shoes.

III. THE SHAPE CHARACTERISTICS OF TIGER HEAD SHOES

From a horizontal perspective, the tiger-head shoes in the same area have different appearances due to different craftsmanship and aesthetics of handicraftsmen. In the vertical view, the tiger-head shoes in different regions have a very varied shape due to the influence of regional customs. The shape of tiger head shoes has a pattern of two-dimensional space and a volume of three-dimensional space. This paragraph makes an analysis on the shape characteristics of tiger head shoe from the two-dimensional and three-dimensional aspects, and provides an analysis on its spiritual significance based on the overall two-dimensional and three-dimensional shape characteristics.

A. The Pattern Characteristics of Two-dimensional Space — Typical and Romantic

1) *Typical*: In his book *The Philosophy of Art*, Danner said that "the essence of art lies in the fact that the basic characteristics of an object, at least the important features, is more dominantly performed, the art is better"[4] Focusing on the prominent parts of a tiger, like tiger's nose, eyes and mouth, make the tiger's eyes round and big, notes big and peach-shaped and mouth square shaped; by grasping these typical features, make the design of a tiger very awe-inspiring. And other parts separated from the subject are generalized simply and disengaged.

2) *Romantic*: The patterns of tiger head shoes are mostly created by a non-realistic method, using the decorative approach of traversing time and space to present the designer's romanticism. The designer adopts the exaggeration beyond the nature, reorganization and choice in the creation of the pattern according to their ideals, wishes, fun, focusing on visualization and irrepresentationalization, in order to express their romantic feelings in "Fig. 6"

For example, the pattern in combination of gourd flowers and the tiger's eyes meets the worship of Chinese nation for gourd totem.

B. The Volumetric Characteristics of Three-dimensional Space — Sincere and Natural

Tiger head shoes have a lovely and natural art appearance, concise and interesting shape, large and loose soles, with a tiger tail behind the shoes, easy to carry for children. Round and full shape seems clumsy, but round enough space allows

children's feet are fully free in it, giving a soft and comfortable feeling in "Fig. 7".

C. The Spiritual Characteristics — Symbolic

"In folk art, women's fabric products, embroidery, paper-cut and other designs, follow the idea symbolized by the metaphor, and are subject to the wishes of happiness and luck..."[5] the symbolic performance can be found everywhere in the design of tiger-head shoes, and the images of double dragons, double phoenix, gourd, bats, peach and others are often used to create various tiger images. These visual images are used to express people's wishes, for children expectation and for family harmony, and to carry people's spiritual ideas, endowed with the color and spirituality of life in "Fig. 8".



Fig. 6. Typical.



Fig. 7. Sincere and natural.



Fig. 8. Metaphoric.

IV. THE AESTHETIC ANALYSIS OF TIGER HEAD SHOES

A. The Beauty of Shape

Tiger-head shoes have a large sole, with a spacious inner space, making children's feet free in it, in line with the growth of children's feet. A large area of the shoe sole contacts the ground, helping children's steady walk, which is scientific and practical. The face shape of tiger-head shoes has unique artistic charm. Tiger-head shoes are originated from the lives of

ordinary people, and the women who sew tiger-head shoes do not have a high level of education, but they have a broader space of imagination for the creation of tiger-head shoes; their abstract and bold concept, makes the Chinese art features of symmetrical implication have a unique flavor.

B. The Beauty of Color

For the upper, the bright red and green are used achieve a visual impact, and the colorful collision brings a eye-catching effect, such as Chinese red for the undertone, faint yellow for tiger's nose, faint green for embellishment. The golden is used for eras to express a brilliant life of children. Eyes are the part to show spirit, so mixing color of red, yellow and black is used for tiger's eyes to bring people a colorful and bright visual experience; however, after embellished by other colors, the bright red and green is beautiful and elegant but not vulgar.

V. THE DERIVATIVES OF TIGER HEAD SHOES SHAPE AND THE INNOVATION IN THE NEW TIMES

A. The Derivatives of Two-dimensional Pattern

Mao Huiwei in his study of 2011 sorted out some very good products that integrated the tiger lines of traditional silks and folk needlecrafts for nearly a hundred years before thousands of years, and made a arrangement and study on the integration of tiger pattern with other national arts and culture, and further gave a plan for its development as in "Fig. 9", "Fig. 10" and "Fig. 11". [6]



Fig. 9. Dragon-phoenix-tiger pattern embroidery.



Fig. 10. Qing-dynasty flying tiger pattern Kesi.



Fig. 11. Qing-dynasty tiger pattern embroidery Buzi.

In 2016, Yang Jinping in the *Ancient Ornamentation Portraits and the Tiger-Themed Studies*, enumerated the implications of ancient different ornamentations. It is pointed out that the pattern of tiger had been applied by the ancients since the totem worship began, and its connotation had a closely relation with life, disease, descendant multiplication and witchcraft. In the “Tiger Culture of Yi Tusi Architecture”, it is also mentioned that the “patterns of tiger head” in various forms are also specially carved on the best-preserved Great Tuscan manor buildings to indicate people’s awe and veneration for tigers [7].

B. The Derivatives of Three-dimensional Shape

In 2013, Yuan Guoxiang in the “Traditional Chinese Children's Clothing — Tiger Head Cap”, pointed out that the tiger head cap with a tiger image, is a typical kid cap in the folk children's clothing in China, and has distinctive features. Add the pattern of tiger on the clothes of children to express the blessing and care and protective mind of people for their future generations in "Fig. 12" and "Fig. 13".



Fig. 12. Tiger-head cap.



Fig. 13. Tiger-head cap.

C. The Innovation of Tiger Head Shoe Shape in the New Era

According to the modeling characteristics of tiger-head shoes and the existing derivative products of tiger-head shoes shape, preserve the basic characteristics of tiger-head shoes and actively create the national culture of tiger-head shoes with the national characteristics and fashion in the new era, breaking the traditional color matching methods from the two-dimensional aspect and making bold innovation, to meet the aesthetic concepts in the new era. Reminiscence is not to wear old clothes or use old handicrafts, but is to revitalize the culture by giving the old culture with a historical sense of time to a new carrier.

1) *The innovative design of tiger head shoes in the two-dimensional plane:* "Fig. 14", "Fig. 15", and "Fig. 16" highlight the characteristics of round and big eyes and square mouth in the design of tiger head shoes, and apply yellow, red and green and other highly bright colors to make the pattern more eye-catching, and additionally the color matching is more stylish and trendy than the traditional color matching. A series of tiger head pattern are similar but different in design, with a generalized and abstractive shape, which can be used for the creation of poster with happy and auspicious meaning.



Fig. 14. The innovated tiger-head pattern.



Fig. 15. The innovated tiger-head pattern.



Fig. 16. The innovated tiger-head pattern.

2) *The application of Tiger head shoes style in the game design:* Integrate the traditional ethnic elements into the electronic game industry, to advocate and carry forward our nation's cultural elements in virtue of the powerful promotion of electronic media. "Fig. 17" and "Fig. 18" show a two-dimensional decryption game with the tiger head culture element, for which the tiger head shoe element are used in many scenes. The happy and auspicious meaning of tiger head shoes and the cheerful and bright colors make the scenes more joyful and lucky. From the point of view of user experience, it also provides the players with a comfortable atmosphere of scene to make them desire to continue the play.



Fig. 17. The electronic game with tiger-head shoes elements.



Fig. 18. The electronic game with tiger-head shoes elements.

3) *The innovation and application of tiger head shoes in three-dimensional shape:* In the new era, break the shackles of the inherent shape carrier of traditional tiger-head shoes, and transfer the tiger-head shoe styling elements to other carriers, as shown in "Fig. 19" and "Fig. 20", in which the styling elements of tiger-head shoes are applied to dolls and wallets, with flexible and skilled color matching, to make the color not vulgar; the dolls are in an ingenious and lively style and the wallets in a rich and honorable design. These all are the products of tiger head shoes style elements in three dimensions to meet the needs in the new era.



Fig. 19. Tiger-head shoes element — doll.



Fig. 20. Tiger shoes element — wallet.

VI. CONCLUSION

As a cultural or artistic form of the history and reality integration in a region or a nation, tiger-head shoes not only has their symbolic meanings, but a particular social existence, a specific interpretation of a particular mode of production and life, and more a regional spiritual characteristics and cultural meanings carried by a specific explicit form and structure; and it has a high research value because it is a representative form of folk art in our country. However, according to the above research, the application of the tiger head shoe style and even the tiger head culture is still only on ancient silk and buildings and some ancient objects, which is difficult to get a development and a big breakthrough. In the new era, tiger head shoes are innovatively applied in the graphic design, animation game design and new hot products design, to keep pace with the times and make our national culture still serve the public in the new century.

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