

Inheritance and Innovation of Chinese Folk Art Elements in Modern Illustration Design

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Abstract—The modern illustration design in China presents a trend of rapid development, and Chinese begin to explore the Chinese folk art elements, while introducing the western concept of modern art design and achieving the convergence with the international art trend. The folk customs, cultural psychology and aesthetic ideals in Chinese folk art are an effective supplement to the modern design art. Therefore, the modern illustration design must overcome the "fetishism", actively and flexibly use and make reference of the folk art elements to embody the design idea of compatibility and inclusion.

Keywords—*inheritance; innovation; folk art; illustration design*

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the most outstanding folk art among the national arts, it plays an extremely important role in the art history. Its rich cultural heritage and rich creative experience provide a helpful connotation supplement for modern illustration design. After continuous improvements, innovations and developments, Chinese folk art has met the needs of working people in production and life, expressing people's longing for a better life, praising and highly generalizing the optimism of working people, which must be carried forward and developed in modern illustration design

II. THEORETICAL COGNITION OF FOLK ART

The definition of "folk art" in the art volume of *China Encyclopedia* is: "fine arts is created collectively by the masses of people, with the purpose to beautify the social environment, enrich folk custom activities and is applied and popular in daily life." Folk art is inseparable from the mass spirit and life. It is both an expression of the collective public opinion and the aesthetic art of the people, and also the crystallization of their wisdom."

A. National Aesthetic Taste

In the aesthetic category, Chinese folk art is not only reflected in the presentation of works of art, but more in the "meaningful form", and it conveys people's state of life and spiritual pursuit through presentational modeling and color creation. For example, people often use the Liu Kai Bai Zi, Ma Shang Feng Hou, Long Feng Cheng Xiang to express their wishes of flourishing population, continuous good luck, wish

fulfillment and bright prosperity. From an artistic point of view, folk art belongs to the category of spiritual culture, and it is the result of the collective wisdom of the working people and shows the aesthetic taste and aesthetic psychology of working people. In the process of folk creation, there is no any political utility, which reflects the subconsciousness of practical utility in real life. Folk art meets the rules of people's psychological activities for aesthetics, can always make people (including the creator) feel the aesthetic taste and form the aesthetic affinity, which can be seen in the decorative symbolism of Chinese folk paper-cut. For example: the image of "frog" is common in the folk paper-cut, which is regarded as a symbol of power, and as a God of protection. In the creative process, by applying the folk art into modeling, the image of "frog" becomes a sacred and clumsy, kind and beautiful paper-cut pattern. From this, we can see the folk totem worship as well as people's pursuit of life and aesthetic taste.

B. Cultural Connotation of Folklore

Chinese folk art spreads across the vast land of China, blended with and influenced by each other in different regions and different ethnic groups, becoming rich and colorful. The traditional folk activities and the profound folk culture provide a foundation for the survival and development of folk art. For example, among these folk activities, the flying a kite originally represents the release of unlucky, posting the image of door god is purposed to make family peaceful and exorcise evil, and the paper-cut is used to call back the spirit of the dead, all of which are originated from the folk customs such as praying for happiness and releasing disaster, exorcising and evading evil, and as time goes by, they gradually lose the original purpose and functions to evolve into the distinctive folk art works. A small paper-cut, a thin New Year pictures, an exaggerated and grotesque mask, and a lotus flower pattern, all show people's wishes. This indicates that folk art is based on folk culture, so it must reflect the concept and psychology of the folk.

At the same time, the cultural material in folk activities is the driving source of development of folk art, and folk art also makes folk activities more vivid, more interesting and more abundant. New Year paintings for Spring Festival, colorful lantern for Lantern Festival, the character of "喜" for wedding, the paper crafts for funeral, steamed Jujube bun for birthday congratulations, purse for token of love and so on, all

these are the wonderful creation of folk art, but also it makes folk culture more abundant and colorful.

III. ANALYSIS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS OF MODERN ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration is commonly known as inbetweens. Modern illustrations include illustrating pictures for publications, mascot designs, game character setting, scene designs for games, advertisements, comics, greeting cards, decals, packing and others, as well as the virtualized items on popular web and mobile platforms and the related visual applications and so on.

A. *The Basic Characteristics of Modern Illustrations*

Illustration is to use patterns to represent the image, and in accordance with the principle of unity of the aesthetic and practical, we try to make lines and shape clear and vivid for easy making. In the modern design, it can be said that illustration design is most expressive and it has close affinity with the art of painting. For many performance techniques of illustration art, we referred to the artistic methods of paintings, making great progresses in the depth and breadth of design theme performance, displaying more unique artistic charm. In the information era, people's daily life is full of all kinds of commercial information, and illustration design has become a really irreplaceable art form in the world.

The service object of modern illustration is first the goods. Commercial activities require the information are accurately and clearly communicated to the audience, in order to make people properly accept and master the information and make them have a sense of beauty while making action, so we say it serves commercial activities. The categories of illustration include:

Publications illustration: the illustrations are used on book covers, pages, outer and content for auxiliary, including that used in editors' work such as newspapers and magazines, as well as the children's picture books that are very popular nowadays.

Commercial promotion illustrations: the illustrations used in newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements, signboards, posters, flyers, television advertisements; the illustration style designs used for product logos and corporate images (mascot); the illustrations used in package design to achieve language expressions, such as consumer guidance, product descriptions, manuals, charts, directories and so on.

Video multimedia illustration: the role and environment art setting or interface design of movie and television play, advertising film and networks and other aspects; promotional illustrations for games, game character settings, scene settings; original painting setting of animation, comic design, cartoon design.

B. *The Functions of Modern Illustrations*

As a text supplement, illustration can make people get the satisfaction of perceptual knowledge. Its function is very strong, and the pure art of deviating from visual communication for the purpose, often makes the function of modern illustrations weakened. Therefore, in the design, we

can not make the theme of illustrations have the possibility of ambiguity, and must make it clear, simple and accurate. The basic function of modern illustration is to convey the information to the audience in the most concise and clear way, arousing people's interest, and striving to convince people to believe the content and readily accept the content of propaganda in the course of aesthetic, and further induce people to take the final action. The specific functions: first, make a vivid display of specific products and services image, visually convey information; second, inspire consumers' interest; third, strengthen the persuasiveness of advertisements; fourth, enhance the appeal of the product to inspire consumers' desires.

IV. THE BASIC PATH OF MODERN ILLUSTRATION DESIGN INTEGRATING FOLK ART ELEMENTS

A. *Illustration Design Should Be Widely Studied, Drawing the Essence of Folk Art*

Folk art has a long history, profound connotation, diversified forms and rich variety. It not only contains valuable knowledge, emotion, science and technology, but also contains the most primitive artistic spirit of creation and aesthetics in national culture. There are many successful illustrations, all of which attach great importance to the unique value of folk art. In the design and creation, the extensive absorption of the artistic spirit of folk art and the application of the superb creative techniques, make the folk art style and modern illustration design content closely combined together, to create the outstanding works, not only reflecting the modern art style and highlighting the traditional culture. For a simple example, the idea of Chinese for the logo of the 2008 Olympic Games in China is inspired by the "Chinese knot." Modern art designers skillfully give traditional graphics with modern fashion. The logo implies the profound meaning of unity, cooperation, exchange and development of the five continents in the world. The shape of the logo not only possesses beautiful visual enjoyment, but also contains deeper cultural connotations, thus it is recognized universally by the international community.

Actually, modern illustration design draws artistic nutrients from folk art, which can not simply be of "copinism". Folk art began in the primitive society, grew up in a slave society, developed in a long feudal society, so it is inevitably imprinted with feudal culture. On the one hand, illustration design should cover a wide range of folk art, and both in form and in concept of creation, a systematic application should be made; on the other hand, we must uphold the scientific and realistic attitude, bring its essence and remove its dross, grasp the spiritual essence of folk art, transform its artistic spirit into self-cultivation, naturally revealed in the design, make an innovative integration of the folk art elements with the inherent elements of modern illustration design, and design the perfect works that can be accepted by China and even the world.

B. *Illustration Design Should Reflect the Inclusive Idea*

The idea of modern illustration design should have an inclusive pursuit. Illustration design has a wide range of inspiration sources; for such art activities, we should grasp the integration and absorption of different creative elements; and

for such a folk art with profound connotation as the creative element, we should grasp the essence of it and better apply it into the illustration design. As a modern illustration designer, we must learn and master folk art, not only to extend the artistic life of folk art, but also to obtain creative inspiration from it, drawing a power of artistic source and finding a language way to express our own spiritual world, and further make innovation in the tradition and achieve the inheritance and protection of folk art in the innovation. When the western modern culture and art collide with the traditional culture and art, it is particularly important to uphold the philosophy of inclusive design.

For creative thinking of illustration design, first we should cultivate the correct concept and understanding of folk art from concept and emotion, and profoundly understand and grasp the essence and connotation of folk art and the special significance of its culture; second, we should understand the concept of folk art modeling, expression form and performance techniques. And we should thoroughly comprehend different art forms and connotations after grasping the elements of folk art, to integrate the aesthetic ideas into the creative ideas and practices of design.

V. CONCLUSION

All the successful illustrations at home and abroad, are inspired and enriched by folk art, and folk art has become an indispensable element of illustration design. With the internationalization of art and design, the integrative development of illustrations and folk art is certainly a correct way. Humane care and cultural values embodied in a large number of outstanding folk art models are precisely the core forces in the nationalization of modern illustration design. We have the responsibility to make China's illustration design based on the cultural connotation of folk art, enhance the folk art in the design, and create the illustration works both with national feature and with international aesthetic standards, to make it shine brightly in the international stage of illustration design!

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