

The Creative Value of Zhuhai Folk Art Illustration*

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Abstract—After years of baptism and accumulation, Zhuhai has formed a unique folk art that has been passed down from generation to generation. Nowadays, folk art is getting more and more attention from academic circles and the society. Protecting, propagating and inheriting Zhuhai folk culture and art is a necessary task in building a national historic city. As a kind of visual art, illustration is widely used in business, technology, culture and other fields, playing an important role in publicity. The creation of illustrations with Zhuhai folk art can make the illustration art be local and traditional, and the extensive use of illustrations with Zhuhai folk art in the business and cultural fields will help to display the cultural characteristics of Zhuhai and promote regional economic development.

Keywords—folk art; Zhuhai; illustration creation; value

I. INTRODUCTION

In this modern society where technology is increasingly developed, people's lives have undergone tremendous changes, and the improvement of material life has made people put more attention in pursuing spiritual satisfaction. To go for a travel is a good way to decompress. People can not only appreciate the beauty of different regions but also experience different folk customs. Most tourists will unconsciously purchase some local cultural products with local characteristics as the commemoration of their trips, but a phenomenon that often occurs is that the cultural products of different places are becoming increasingly the same. Although there are various kinds of cultural products, the products often lack local characteristics, and there is a lack of cultural products that can make people moved from the bottom of the heart and hit the soul. The reason is that the products lack local folk culture and art. To find a point of convergence between modernity and tradition and to integrate local folk customs into cultural products is the best way to inherit and promote the excellent traditional culture — folk art.

Folk art is a "living culture" that is closely related to the daily life of the people. It is an art that expresses folk customs or reflects folk psychology. The works of folk art are classified into material folk art works and non-material folk art works. The material folk art works mainly include New Year paintings, clay sculptures, embroideries, paper-cuts, kites, shadow puppets, architectures, etc. Non-material folk art works mainly include folk dances, folk operas, entertainment activities, oral

cultures and so on. Through these activities, people often express their desires and needs that cannot be satisfied in real life, so as to get spiritual compensation or comfort. Folk art reflects the production and life of the people in China's farming society. It contains the profound folk customs, habits and beliefs formed over thousands of years, which condenses the collective wisdom of the people. Folk custom is a kind of living culture, which contains the unique spirit of the nation. The colorful folk art is the identification system of national culture and the core of the national tradition. Folk art is active in various scenes, such as in the decoration of daily home environment, the painting of life etiquette, the decoration of urban and rural environment, the highlights of festival public cultural activities, and the highlights of traditional temple activities. It is also the focus of tourism activities, its static exquisite and dynamic performance is the object of tourism viewing; it inherits the tradition of Chinese culture with its profound folk culture connotation.

II. ZHUHAI FOLK ART

Zhuhai is located in the southwestern part of the Pearl River Estuary. People live here along the river and make a living by farming and fishing. Therefore, Zhuhai folk culture shows a strong fishing and hunting culture and water style. Zhuhai has a long history and profound cultural heritage, and its traditional folk customs are very distinctive. The traditional activities and cultures such as Qianwu's Piaose (High-platform Performance), Sanzao's crane songs and dances, Lianzhou's dragon dance, dragon boat race, Doumen's lion dance Town, Shatian's folk songs, famous towns, ancestral halls, fishing and hunting culture, Doumen's water marriage, etc. are all inexhaustible treasure houses of folk cultures.

The dragon and lion dance is a typical parade for Zhuhai folk festivals. The performance movements of dragon dance include the playing dragon, double dragons coming out of the sea, reversing the spine, coiled dragon, single jump dragon, double jump dragon, single move to the dragon door, double move to the dragon door, double coins, the dragon's fishtailing, etc. The drums, Chinese gong chimes, cymbals, hairpins, etc. are used to accompany the dragon dances, and the purpose of dragon dance is to pray to the dragon, hoping it can bless a good weather for the crops, praying for the lion to protect the local safety and peace, and people's health, and hoping for a crop harvest and the thriving of domestic animals. The lion dance is a skill of the Southern Lion and integrates martial arts, dance and music. Each town and village has its own lion dance team. The most representative is the lion dance of Doumen Town. It has diverse performance techniques. It is divided into

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the dance of a single lion and the dance of a group of lions. It is organized and performed during the festivals and has high folk art appreciation value and aesthetic value.

The crane song and dance is a folk art that has been passed down from generation to generation in Zhuhai. It has a history of more than 700 years. It originates from the local respect for the crane and has the meaning of "having outstanding performances in learning and making good achievements". The Crane Dance focuses on performing the graceful posture of the white crane. From grooming feathers, searching for food, treading water, flying to playfulness, the folk artists imitate the crane vividly. The crane songs are melodious, the content is good and healthy, and most of the songs praise good people, good behaviors and social development, and the songs persuade people to be kind and to make progress, which has a strong festive atmosphere and the function of educating people through lively activities.

Piaose is a kind of makeup parade in Zhuhai. It is a folk art with characteristics, also known as "showing color". It has a history of more than 400 years. It integrates various elements such as literature, drama, acrobatics, sports and decorative arts, and integrates physical mechanics and aesthetics. The entire art form is comprehensive and unique, with high artistic value. The most striking thing is that children from seven to ten years old play the characters in folk tales or historical allusions, floating on the color sticks, as if flying freely, uniquely shaped, and highly appreciated.

There is a folk custom — marriage on water, which has been popular for hundreds of years in Doumen. After several hundred years of vicissitudes as well as changes, integration and precipitation of generations, the unique folk customs of Doumen watery region have been formed. The main characteristics are as follows: first, the form of marriage is complicated and diverse, and it pays attention to etiquette with relatively fixed procedures and customary etiquette items. The etiquette mainly includes "sitting in the lobby", "above", "antiphonal singing among women", "ending a party to escort the bride to the groom's house by flower boat" and "returning to the bride's home" etc. Second, it is inseparable from the water environment of residence and has the obvious characteristics of "water". For example, "sending a party to escort the bride to the groom's house by flower boat", worship to "the Old Man of Boat" and "Sea Dragon King". Third, there is an inevitable connection with Shatian folk songs. Doumen's water marriage is also a spiritual link to maintain the nostalgia of overseas Chinese and Hong Kong and Macao compatriots; so, it enjoys pretty high social value and artistic value.

Dragon boat race is an important Dragon Boat Festival activity in Zhuhai. Besides that, in ancient times there were witchcraft activities to dispel disasters and evil spirits. The Sanzao sea dragon boat race is a rare one hosted on the sea in the Pearl River Delta region. In the traditional Sanzao sea dragon boat race, villagers should row several times from their villages to the combat area before returning to the villages to pick a seedling from the paddy field and put it on the dragon boat for blessing.

Ancestral temple is one of the unique forms of Lingnan culture and the representative of local folk culture. It directly

embodies the clan blood relationship, ethical concepts, ancestral worship, ancient laws and regulations, geomancy, architectural art and regional characteristics. Typical villages of ancestral halls in Zhuhai include Nanmen Village and Paishan village etc.

III. THE STATUS QUO OF ZHUHAI FOLK ART PROPAGANDA

With a long history and profound cultural accumulation, Zhuhai City has very distinctive traditional folk customs. Among them, Doumen's Water Marriage, Catching Mud Fish and Sanzao's Crane Dance are listed as national intangible cultural heritage projects, and the Qianwu's Piaose (High-platform Performance), Shatian's Folk Songs, and Mid-Autumn Songs Festival are listed as provincial intangible cultural heritage projects. Lianzhou's Dise (Tour Performance), Lianzhou's Dragon Dance and Lion Dance are listed as municipal intangible cultural heritage projects. [1] In order to inherit the folk culture and further develop and prosper the cultural undertakings, the Folk Culture Research Association was established in Zhuhai on September 8, 2012, not only to explore the historical and traditional folk culture, but also to promote the outstanding historical and traditional folk customs. It organizes experts and scholars to actively carry out research, collection and sorting of folk culture, carry out regular folk culture exchange seminars, create more and better folk culture, and make greater contributions to the prosperity of Zhuhai's local culture. "Sea Breeze" magazine serves the propaganda of folk culture in Zhuhai.

The second series of "Zhuhai Humanities and Tings Series" includes such four books as "Zhuhai Folk Customs", "Zhuhai History and Culture", "Vernacular Oral Historical Materials on Modern Zhuhai Historical and Cultural Celebrities", and "Zhuhai Historical Celebrities and Xiangshan Culture", which fill up the blank of written materials of Zhuhai's folklore history and culture research and has greatly enriched the historical and cultural connotation of Zhuhai.

In summary, a lot of work has been done on the dissemination and publicity of folk art in Zhuhai, but most of them are concentrated in the large-scale exhibitions and festivals, and they are mostly in the form of stage performances or partial parades or the physical objects or literal data displayed in exhibition halls, with a relatively small scope spread. A large number of the people in Zhuhai are migrant workers or short-term tourists, who cannot understand the unique folk culture and art of Zhuhai. Today, modernization and urbanization gets a rapid development, many of the folk arts are shaded, busy and exhausted modern people can't understand and know the folk customs well, so a multi-channel propaganda and guidance is needed to create an atmosphere, expand space, and let more people know about Zhuhai folk art.

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ILLUSTRATION AND FOLK ART

A. *The Integration of Folk Art into Illustration Towards the Development of Illustration*

With the advent of the "era of picture-reading", it has ushered in a trend of illustration fever. As a kind of visual art,

at present, illustration has been widely used in business, science and technology, culture and other fields, playing a vital role in publicity. There are many kinds of illustration designs nowadays, which can be divided into hand-drawn illustration, vector illustration, commercial illustration and CG illustration, and other illustrations according to painting methods. Based on painting style, it can also be divided into Japanese and Korean cartoon illustrations, European and American realistic illustrations, digital illustrations, original game drawings and so on. [2] However, both hand-drawn illustration and digital CG illustration are confronted with the situation of reused materials and similar theme, and this situation even may lead to a debate about plagiarism. At present, the application of Chinese folk art elements is less in the illustration field. What modern illustration needs to focus on is how reasonable mutual learning and combination of folk elements and modern illustration makes the works reflect the spirit of the time and national features.

Extracting typical images of folk art, contrasting strong colors and environment and architecture with local characteristics are the inspiration for modern illustration creation. Such combination will make illustration have strong national features and local flavor. The characteristics of color in folk art are most prominent. The high-purity primary color matching forms a strong and gorgeous decoration style, and the expression of character shape, clothing style, ecology and architecture, and other related elements with local characters is also an important means to highlight the uniqueness of illustration.

The integration of illustration and folk art not only reflects its own personality and advantages, but also has a high degree of commercial practicality and artistic appreciation. Folk art elements are refined, reformed and reconstructed with modern aesthetic ideas to create national image works reflecting the unique cultural connotation of China, which provides theoretical and practical basis for the innovation of modern illustration design.

B. Using Illustration to Reflect Folk Art Is to Propagate and Inherit Folk Art

Folk art has been neglected and destroyed in the tortuous process of Chinese society. Meanwhile, under the impact of Western aesthetics, the enthusiasm for the inheritance of folk art has been affected, and even some folk art is on the verge of extinction. In recent years, China has attached great importance to the excellent culture and traditional culture represented by folk art, which makes folk art more and more concerned by the people. The concept that "only the nation is the world" has gradually penetrated into the hearts of the people. How to publicize and inherit folk art is an important problem nowadays.

The publicity and inheritance of folk art requires a carrier, and the expression of illustration is one of the carriers to publicize folk art. In the era of picture reading, illustrations are widely used in business and culture, and can play a very intuitive role in the promotion of folk art. At the same time, we bring illustrator creation into the art education classroom, and set the proposition about the folk art illustration drawing for

students' homework. When young students create the folk art works, they also subtly accepted the propaganda role of folk art.

C. The Value of Integration of Illustration and Zhuhai Folk Art for the Region

1) *Displaying regional cultural characteristics:* Zhuhai has a long history, profound cultural deposits, and highly distinctive traditional folk art. We can use illustrations to publicize, activate Zhuhai's cultural characteristics, promote industrial research and development, and enhance the attraction of Zhuhai's folk art. We can find a suitable integrating point for folk art in Zhuhai on illustration techniques and styles, and draw the Piaose activities, Sanzao's crane song and dance, Lianzhou's Dize, dragon boat race, line dance, Shatian's folk song, famous town, ancestral hall, fishing and hunting culture and water marriage with folklore characteristics in the form of illustration.

2) *Developing regional economy:* Nowadays, with the rapid development of modernization and urbanization, a lot of splendor of folk art is obscured. The busy and tired modern human beings cannot understand and recognize folk customs well. Besides, a certain proportion of the population of Zhuhai is composed of migrant workers and short-term tourists. We apply the illustrations with Zhuhai folk art characteristics to cultural and creative products to further highlight its cultural and economic value and exert aesthetic, educational and practical functions. This not only plays a very good role in the propaganda of folk art culture and makes more people understand and madly love Zhuhai, but also plays a certain role in boosting the economic development of Zhuhai.

V. CONCLUSION

Artistic creation cannot be divorced from tradition. No matter how times change, the creation of artistic works should focus on inheriting and carrying forward Chinese culture. Zhuhai folk art provides an inexhaustible resource for illustration creation. Zhuhai folk art is disseminated in the way of illustration, so that more people can understand Zhuhai and love Zhuhai, and make a contribution to Zhuhai's creation of a national historical and cultural city.

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