

Study on the Application of Traditional Lacquer Language in Modern Cultural and Creative Product Design

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Abstract—This paper interprets the visual expression language of lacquer art from several aspects through studying the language of color, technique and material in lacquer art and exploring the possibility of its application in modern cultural and creative products. Taking cultural and creative products as the expression carrier of traditional lacquer craft and effectively integrating traditional craft with modern design can not only highlight the uniqueness and cultural property of cultural creative products, but can also open up a new development direction for the development of traditional lacquer industry.

Keywords—*traditional lacquer art; cultural and creative product design; color; materials; texture; application*

I. INTRODUCTION

China's cultural market is booming and the development and dissemination of culture are inseparable from the promotion of the market. In addition to official cultural exchange activities, national culture is spread through commodity circulation and letting people in other countries know about it. For example, the tea culture and festival culture of China are all spread through tea, moon cakes, zongzi and other commodities. China is a multi-ethnic country, and its various ethnic cultures, native cultures and historical cultures all contribute to its splendid cultural deposits. It is the issue for designers to think about and face how to let the excellent traditional culture continue to inherit. In recent years, China's cultural and creative industries have developed vigorously, with the market for cultural and creative products as an important pillar. In stark contrast, many products made by traditional techniques have seen their market shrink for lack of integration with modern design concepts and popular elements, as a result, the craftsmanship fail to be handed down to new generations. Taking the traditional lacquer industry in Fuzhou as an example, at its best in 1880s and 1890s, now it is also facing the problem of industrial transformation and redevelopment. There are much to learn from in the innovation and development of traditional crafts in Japan. Many Japanese designers are inspired by traditional Japanese craftsmanship and techniques, which are well integrated into modern design by them. The combination of traditional craft and modern

design can well show the national characteristics. Therefore it is a meaningful exploration to study the combination of Fuzhou traditional lacquer craft and cultural creative product design.

II. MOTIVATION OF COMBINING LACQUER ART AND CULTURAL CREATIVE PRODUCTS

Traditional lacquer products are presented in the form of artwork and handicrafts, which are mainly targeted at the high-end market, with artists' personal styles as the main artistic characteristics. However, due to the different aesthetic and appreciation levels of the audience, this kind of lacquer art works can only be popular in the minority group of collectors. Therefore the promotion of traditional lacquer art is limited by the number of products and its market. While the lacquer handicrafts mainly sold in market in large quantities are mostly souvenirs. Unrefined production technology and style homogenization of this kind of products have affected the establishment of the brand image of lacquer art and the development of the industry. This problem also exists in the development and design of cultural and creative products. The design of cultural and creative products tends to be similar in various regions, lacking in individual design. The excellent cultural and creative product designs are those combining local cultural features with craftsmanship. Taking the cultural creative products developed by the Palace Museum in Beijing as an example, the classic court-beads earphone is a good design. The designers extract the ancient court beads culture and make a perfect combination of its decorative function with the utility function of earphone. Therefore, as for the localized cultural and creative product design in Fuzhou, designers should infuse lacquer art into it and integrate the practicality of cultural and creative product and modern aesthetic requirements in various forms of lacquer art language. In this way, not only can creative cultural and creative products be developed, but the traditional lacquer industry can be promoted through the huge consumer groups of cultural and creative products, so that a virtuous cycle of mutual development will be achieved.

III. THE APPLICATION OF LACQUER LANGUAGE IN THE DESIGN OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS

Traditional lacquer craft takes lacquer as the main raw material, which comes from natural lacquer tree, and combines various natural materials such as shell, jade, eggshell, etc., to make artistic expression on wooden carrier. This decides the main material of traditional lacquer as wood, wooden box as its main form, and square, cylindrical as its main shapes. Due to the material constraints, the product development lacks diversity and cannot keep pace with the changing fashion trend and aesthetic needs of modern times. Once the product loses its market competitiveness, it will lead to the risk of industrial development slowdown and even shrinkage. With the continuous improvement of modern material technology, it's necessary for lacquer production to remove the thought of using the traditional wooden carrier only. In terms of technology, lacquer and natural materials can already be attached to hard materials such as ceramics, glass, wood, metal and polyurethane, providing more possibilities for cultural and creative products to be integrated into the lacquer process. The development of modern cultural creative products is characterized by various types, small size and more practical functions, as well as decorative and creative features. The various types of cultural creative products provide a variety of attachable carriers for the lacquer process; the small size greatly shortens the production cycle of the lacquer process; and the creativity provides a performance platform for the lacquer process. Therefore, the application of lacquer technology in the design of cultural and creative products has great creative potential and market prospects.

IV. THE VISUAL EXPRESSION OF LACQUER LANGUAGE IN THE DESIGN OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS

A. *The Color Language Expression of Lacquer Art*

In Chinese traditional lacquer art product, the match of red and black colors is common to see. This kind of color rich in Chinese aesthetic characteristics can be well used in the development and design of cultural creative products. Red, in the traditional Chinese culture, is on behalf of the festive atmosphere, wealth and rank as well as generosity. Therefore, it can be used in the design of wedding cultural creative products, such as the design of dressing box and jewelry box. In addition to the relatively simple shape, the drawer type can be adopted in structure, taking reference of the design elements of traditional curio box. In terms of color, red paint surface can be used to make the overall effect, setting off a happy and fashionable style. Black used to be cautiously used in the packaging and product design because it was thought to be too solemn and heavy in traditional Chinese culture, thus it was rarely used for commercial purposes. However, with the continuous change of modern aesthetics, the understanding of black is more inclusive, and the meaning of black is more diversified, reflecting the fashionable, proud and introverted temperament. It has been used in many high-grade commodities or gift designs for business purposes. The design of cultural creative products with black as the main body can be used in the category of

business souvenirs and digital products, such as card clips, pens and other cultural creative products. Such products are small in size, so the overall use of black will not make people feel depressed because of the large area of black. In addition, since gold and silver foil materials are often used in lacquer art, the gold and silver colors can also be well adopted in design of cultural and creative products. For example, copper and aluminum can be used to replace the color expression of gold and silver foil in terms of materials for cultural and creative products, or gold stamping, silver plating technology combined with black card and other special paper printing can be used in the packaging of cultural and creative products, which can presenting a simple yet luxurious visual effect. Moreover, the colors of natural materials in lacquer process are also distinctive, such as the beautiful colors of shells, the white of eggshells, the transparent luster of jade and so on, which can be used as the punch line of cultural creative product design.

B. *The Technique Language Expression of Lacquer*

There are many kinds of traditional painting techniques, such as xiu painting, portray, inlaying, carving and filling, each having their own characteristics. These techniques were mostly used in the creation of lacquer works of art, and were rarely considered in the development and design of modern commodities in the past. With the development of modern processing technology, many traditional processes can be replaced by precise digital processing, which provides more possibilities for the application of lacquer techniques in the development and design of cultural and creative products. For example, automatic drawing machine can be used in the portray technique to integrate the traditional painting brush with the drawing machine. Painting on the surface of cultural and creative products can create a texture distinctive from that of traditional printing process.

The inlaying technique is a unique technique in lacquer techniques. Since it often posts natural materials like shell, jade, eggshell, etc. on the surface of lacquer, a sense of natural beauty distinctive from that of industrial process material can be presented. This kind of craft and material can be fully used in the texture performance of cultural creative product design. Taking the design of lady brooch as an example, the currently sold ones in the market are mostly made from plastic, with high similarity in design and lack of artistic characteristic. The wood, ceramics, polyurethane and other hard materials can be used as the base, fashionable patterns like flowers and butterflies as the bottom can be adopted with gold, red and other paint colors as the background, and eggshells, shells and even jades are posted or inlaid on or into the surface. In this way products with more natural aesthetic feeling and texture can be designed. Moreover, products will be unique even compared with those of the same style because of their different natural materials and colors, which caters to modern shopping psychology of pursuing personalized products. In addition, the inlaying craft in lacquer art can also be used in the product transformation and redesign of traditional wares. Such as wooden utensils, wooden spoon, wooden chopsticks and so on, are made from wood and they can easily attach lacquer.

With combination of the performance of various inlaid materials, these wood-made traditional commodities can be easily made cultural creative products full of aesthetic feeling.

As an often used craft in lacquer technique, carving and filling process is the carving of patterns in the objects themselves, then filling the patterns with gold powder, silver powder, shell powder or metal strips, and coating the painting with lacquer and polishing it. This process is characterized by smooth and beautiful surface, and the interior with different materials reflected. With this carving and filling process, combined with modern laser engraving equipment and technology, it is easy to achieve the carving effect. In the design of cultural creative products with patterns as the main body, the use of carving and filling technology can be considered, such as hard shell, wooden product containers, wooden storage boxes and so on. Even for

rough-body made from resin, polyurethane and other chemical synthetic materials, the carving process can be used, with the integration of various powdery materials for filling. Take the mobile phone shells of limited edition. Many high-end limited edition mobile phones are equipped with corresponding mobile phone shells. Most of these limited edition shells are jointly designed and produced, which are often marked by the logo of the co-producer. And the logo of the producer becomes the key prominent content; therefore the carving and filling craft can be adopted in the select of materials and crafts. For example, the limited edition GALAXY S6 edge co-produced by Samsung and Marvel, different from the mobile telephone shells in the market which are made with common printing process, if the carving and filling craft is used, that is, the logo is painted with a laser engraving, and the grooves are filled with gold powder and at last the logo is processed with the coating technique, the cultural and technological value can be better highlighted and the value added as limited edition products can be greatly enhanced.

C. The Material Language Expression of Lacquer Art

The material beauty of lacquer art is the union of nature and craft. Lacquer works with wood to give people a warm, sweet and safe feeling in tactile sense, which is consistent with the implicit and introverted spirit of traditional Chinese culture, and is also the reason why lacquer art continues to be popular in modern times. Above all, the aesthetic feeling of lacquer art materials is a gift of nature. The beauty of shells, the nobility of gold and silver, and the elegance of eggshells are all the aesthetic feelings endowed by the texture of materials themselves, which cannot be replaced by modern digital processing. Therefore, applying the textural aesthetic feeling of lacquer material to the design and development of cultural and creative products can not only produce personalized products, but also integrate traditional Chinese aesthetics and spiritual temperament into them, reflecting the cultural nature of cultural and creative products. Secondly, with the adoption of various techniques, after the crafts of xiu painting, grinding, brightening etc., lacquer materials will present various textural effects, producing a natural

aesthetic feeling that cannot be replaced by modern processing. These textural effects of materials are highly recognizable in the visual expression of cultural and creative products, which just emphasizes the creativity and individuality of cultural creative products. Taking the cultural and creative products with "Sanfang-Qixiang of Fuzhou city" as elements and the development of local subjects as theme as an example, they can be designed around modern digital products such as USB flash disk, mobile power supply as the object. The design idea is to use the white wall gray tiles of the Sanfang-Qixiang in Fuzhou as the color collocation, and the wall with swallow eaves as the appearance reference to design the modeling of U disk or mobile hard disk. The white wall adopts the natural color of duck egg shell, and makes full use of the textural effect of cracked egg shell to express the historical sense of the building through embedding technology; the grey tiles adopts the black of Chinese lacquer. So the concave and convex surface made by the eggshell and the smooth texture of the Chinese lacquer form a sharp contrast, which makes the overall cultural creative products very creative with regional cultural characteristics.

V. CONCLUSION

Designers are not only the leaders of fashion trends, but also the defenders and disseminators of national traditional culture. Designing is not just looking to the future, it needs to absorb the quintessence in history from time to time. With thousands of years of history in China, Lacquer craft has been handed down to the modern because of the unique artistic charm. In the color expression of lacquer craft language, the silence and gentleness of black, the simple elegance of white, and the magnificence of various colors are represented by natural materials like tree paint, gold powder, egg shells, and shells and so on. These materials can present distinctive textural effects with the integration of lacquer coating, carving and filling and inlaying, etc., which makes the unique charm of lacquer craft. Integrating the expressive language of these lacquer crafts into the design of cultural creative products can not only make cultural creative products highlight their cultural value, and increase their uniqueness. It can also promote the unique traditional culture and open up a new direction for the development of traditional lacquer craft industry through the circulation of cultural and creative products.

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