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## Analysis of the Design of Cultural and Creative Products from the Perspective of Regional Culture

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# Analysis of the Design of Cultural and Creative Products from the Perspective of Regional Culture

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**Abstract.** Under the context of the rapid development of regional culture, the highly distinctive regional culture has become the important resource for the cultural and creative products. Therefore, it is necessary to study the regional culture and its features, derive and consolidate the regional cultural resource and include the extraction principles of the regional cultural symbols into the research. Meanwhile, because the regional cultural can only be transmitted culturally through the cultural and creative products, the two of them are in a mutual penetration and influence relationship. Therefore, the study starts from the relationship between regional cultural and the design of cultural and creative products to explore the concepts, forms and nature of cultural and creative products. Also, the application of regional cultural in the design of cultural and creative products is illustrated to provide strategies for the design of regional cultural and creative products and offer effective path for the long-term development of regional culture.

## 1. Introduction

Because the nationality and territoriality of the culture mutually reflect each other[1], finding common grounds with others and all-embracing are the sources of the design inspiration for the national culture[2]. For one thing, the application of national cultural symbols has increased the cultural connotation of the product; for another, people's sense of belonging and pride can be enhanced with the national cultural embedded in the design[3]. Therefore, it has become increasingly important to demonstrate local cultural features in the cultural and creative product. As a result, current design academic filed focuses on reflecting national spirituality and regional cultural characteristics in the cultural and creative products. As the soul of cultural and creative business, cultural and creative products is not only copying the cultural treasures or the product with traditional craftsmanship. Rather, it is a product of regional culture, product innovation, and technology industry guided by the needs of modern consumers. The cultural and creative products designed from the perspective of regional cultural should integrate regional culture into the products, make product based on the soil of regional culture, imprint the cultural stigma on the products and put on the regional culture outfit for the product. In this way, the unique national spirit and regional characteristics of cultural and creative products can be demonstrated.

## 2. Regional Culture

Regional culture refers to the cultural tradition with long-standing and unique features in a region. It integrates with the environment within certain territorial scope and remains distinctive[4]. Because of the different behavioral patterns and thinking modes of people in different area, together with the diversified regional cultural elements in different regions, they have become the root of the



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distinctiveness for a regional culture. At the same time, regional culture is featured with the characteristics of universality, group, inheritance and permeability. For example, historical sites, cultural features, social customs, methods of productions, etc. On the material level, it should reflect local people's diet, architecture, clothing, utensils, etc.; on the spiritual level, it should reflect their values, customs, etiquette, law and religion.

### **3. Cultural and Creative Products**

Cultural and creative products refer to the products taken cultural connotation as the inspiration, and convey the cultural connotation in the design factors to the consumers through design. With the prerequisite of satisfying consumers' utilization demand, cultural and creative products should maximize their cultural demand in the product. In short, it refers to the recognition of cultural value from the consumers in the cultural and creative products, so as to gain recognition from more consumers and arouse cultural sympathy from the users in regard to the product design. For example, when a consumer sees a notebook with hometown features, it can trigger his memory of hometown and arouse cultural sympathy of homesick. Also, when you see a souvenir with local characters, it can reflect the function and features of cultural and creative products.

Derrick de Kerckhove believes that design is the external form of the visible and audible manmade products with texture in the cultural sense. Therefore, design is the "skin of culture" [5]. Regional culture is the rich soil to create cultural and creative products, which is at the center in the cultural and creative products design, the leading factor in forming "cultural identity" of the product, the material source of the product design and the important measure to improve the product's additional value. The cultural and creative products use design as a principle to transform regional culture into products, so that products are ultimately presented to consumers in a certain cultural form that convey and spread cultural meanings themselves. This is the cultural attribute of cultural and creative product design. For example, the exquisite design of Japanese company Sony comes from the reflection on the national resources and the oriental philosophical expressions of "small, subtle and emptiness", which is based on the deep understanding of regional culture and is reflected by the design. On the other hand, if the product design only considers technical skill and is in lack of the cultural and spiritual exploration, it will fall into the formality and the vicious cycle of imitation. Therefore, it is shown that regional culture should be studied to realize the industrial upgrade of the cultural and creative products and render indistinctive cultural character to the products.

While studying the relationship between regional culture and cultural and creative product design, the specific culture of a regional or a nationality (group of people) should be taken as the starting point to study the design application in the cultural and creative products, which is to transform the regional culture into a symbol to convey the product's cultural attribute. From the realization method, cultural and creative products mainly transmit the hidden factors contained in culture into explicit design elements, using design as a cultural factor to seek a new language that conforms to the modern life form, and explore the satisfaction of the human spirit after using the product [6].

### **4. Regional Culture Symbols**

#### *4.1 Concept and Features of Regional Culture Symbols*

To select regional cultural phenomena such as natural environment, cultural heritage, customs and habits as objects and extract the material as well as ideological elements that represent regional cultural features are the combination of regional cultural symbols. Also, the regional cultural symbols cover the elements of shapes and patterns visually, which are of unique features, visuality and rich regional cultural connotation. Regional cultural symbols have representativeness and symbolic meaning. The representativeness means that the symbols can take people to have cultural imagination and arouse cultural sympathy.

## 4.2 Extraction of Regional Cultural Symbols

### 4.2.1 Abstraction

Because the entity of the regional culture is specific, such as the historical sites, architecture, humanities and folk culture, which are the fixed form of the objects that cannot make consumers have more profound cultural interpretation. Therefore, the extraction of cultural symbols must be summarized abstractly. With abstraction as prerequisite, the simple language can generalize regional culture and extract the symbolic modelling. According to the visual abstraction and the morphological beauty of the form, it is abstracted and classified into several core key elements, and the symbolic prototype for the design of the literary product is obtained. For example, picture 1 below is the design of cultural and creative products in Yiju Temple. In this case, we can see that the designer has optimized the design symbols with Buddha statues, niches and embossments on top as the representative design symbols. The symbols that can represent Buddhist cultures are selected to demonstrate regional culture. Also, the abstract extraction principle of cultural symbols is put in the first place.

### 4.2.2 Reconstruction

Secondly, the extraction of regional culture should follow the principle of reconstruction, and adopts design methodologies including appropriate forms, deformations, dislocations and metaphors to analyze and reconstruct the cultural symbols. In the process of transforming specific regional cultural symbols to the abstract design symbols, the procedures of extracting classic symbols, optimizing the abstraction of symbols and reconstructing the symbols, so as to realize the artistry of the symbols and realize the reconstruction and sublimation of the symbols. For example, picture 2 shows the design case of the public chair design in American Grand Canyon Area. Because American Indian culture is generated here, and the railway has played important role in the western development in American history. To maximize the historical background of the region and the unique geographical culture, the designer utilizes the reconstruction principle in the geographical cultural symbols to reflect the hidden culture in the public chairs. The design approaches enable the communication between the product and the user, and highlight the historical meaning conveyed in the geographical cultural symbols.



Figure 1. Case Study of Cultural and Creative Products in Yiju Temple



Figure 2. Design of Cultural and Creative Public Seats in the Grand Canyon Area of the United States

#### 4.2.3 Integration of Tradition and Modernity

The cultural and creative products based on the regional culture carries the past and flows into the future. Therefore, the regional cultural tradition should integrate into modern life and realize the regional cultural symbol “rebirth”. The mode of life and thinking pattern of modern people should be included in the research. The optimization and extraction of design symbols can be realized through the modern design approaches to convert them into design elements and use them reasonably and appropriately in the product. The new forms should be created to satisfy the design concepts of the cultural and creative products and give the cultural promotion. For example, the design of torches in 2008 Beijing Olympic Games is a classic design case to integrate tradition and modernity together. It successfully demonstrates the paper in traditional Chinese culture to domestic and overseas tourists. As it is known to all, the application of paper is transmitted with the development of human society. The cultural and creative design symbols of the Olympic torches come from the traditional Chinese paper scroll (shown as picture 3). The paper scroll conveys the cultural sensation to the audience that paper has made tremendous contribution to the record of culture. Also, the adoption of paper which is a representative regional cultural signal can better express the cultural concept. At the same time, the sports spirit is embedded in the product form of torch. The product uses traditional Chinese auspicious clouds as decoration, which is of distinctive cultural representativeness and visual identifiability. Also, the proper and vivid application of regional cultural symbol is a self-evident way to show the cultural connotation in the product.



Figure 3. The design of Olympic Torch

### 5. Case Study of Regional Cultural and Creative Product Design

Faced with the identical and homogeneous issue in the market currently, it is especially vital to integrate regional cultural characters into the product design to win in the competition. Meanwhile, it is also important to add cultural additional value in the product. Next, faced with numerous cultural creative materials, the expression way must be distinctive, artistic and meeting market demand no matter it is the specific pattern or the condensed abstract symbol. The cultural element or symbol cannot simply exist as a “surface”, it should carry more significant meaning and function except for the visual effects. The development direction of cultural and creative product design lies in how to maximize the regional cultural features, symbolic meaning and value of the product. Therefore, the problem can only be solved by illustrating and analyzing the regional culture.

The designer can only find the direction of design through understanding the geographical cultural uniqueness and conducting research on the local people. For example, more than 70 procedures of

making Yuhang traditional Chinese umbrella are disassembled in reference to the manufacturing skills, materials and inspirations of the regional culture. Also, they are utilized in the design of chair. “From Yuhang” integrates the regional handcraft and Yuhang cultural together to reconstruct Yuhang culture and blends them into modern design. The design is the interpretation to the traditional culture of handcraft in Yuhang region, which is of important impact to its transmission and development. Extracting design element from the unique cultural object and use them into the product design improves the cultural additional value of the product, and transmits the culture in daily life through the usage of the product has achieved dual effect in using and inheriting the culture[7].

Picture 5 below is the innovative design of red clay exorcising dance pottery. It uses Zhanjiang red exorcising dance as the classic representative of regional cultural symbol. Through processing the cultural symbols, the signals including the design modelling, pattern, ornamentation and color are converted into design element to achieve the regional culture feature that the product wishes to convey. Another example in picture 6 is the design of tea set of swimming fish in clear water. The swimming fish, sea and the wave on the surface of the water are used as the design elements by the designer. With the combination of product and sea culture, the distinctive and rich ocean culture features are reflected. The two cultural and creative products in picture 5 and picture 6 are used properly in the culture and creative products, which accurately demonstrate exorcising culture and sea culture. It is shown that reflecting regional cultural features can accurately and effectively demonstrate local features, highlight the characteristics of cultural and creative products, and improve the product’s cultural taste.



Figure 4. The future of Yuhang paper umbrella exhibition

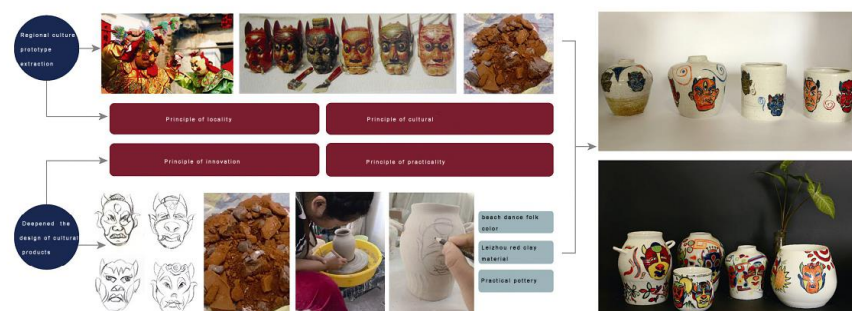


Figure 5. Clay potteries with Luowu



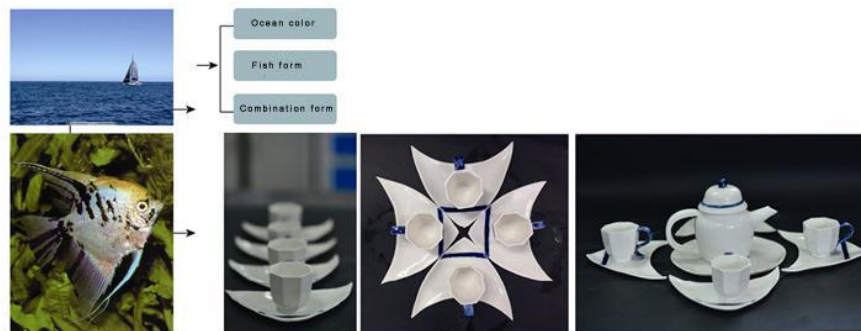


Figure 6. The tea set with fish in blue waves

Picture 7 below shows the cultural and creative product of earphone design using court beads. It is designed by a team of designers from the Palace Museum and has a strong Chinese cultural identity. As a design symbol, the bead string in the Qing Dynasty is smartly combined with the earphone products to perfectly show the cultural connotation behind the product.

Picture 8 below is the cultural and creative product with Changzhou regional cultural features. The designer uses a new bookmark modelling to increase the sense of fun in the product. Also, the architectural symbols with local features are converted into the form of bookmark. While functioning as bookmark, it is full of interactive meaning while reading with strong Changzhou regional cultural feature of the product.



Figure 7. The Pearl form of earphone      Figure 8. Oriental Salt Lake City Bookmark Form

## 6. Conclusion

As a great cultural country boasts rich geographical and cultural resources, which provides diversified inspirations for the designers, it is of high value for their attention and utilization. The design and development of cultural and creative products centering around regional culture cannot only better express the cultural connotation of the cultural and creative products, but also inject vitality into the products. It is capable to drive the promotion of regional culture and build new regional cultural brand. Through analyzing the regional culture and cultural and creative products together with interpreting the extracting principle of regional and cultural symbols, the corresponding design strategies are put forward. Also, the real cases are studied for the application of regional culture in cultural and creative products to provide beneficial reference to the product design and promote the interference and innovation of regional culture.

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