

Pedagogical Recontextualization of Traditional Graphics: Curriculum Innovation in Museum Branding

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Abstract: This paper takes the integration of Chinese traditional graphics into brand design teaching as the main research line, and explores the integration path of the two in the digital age through case studies. Starting from the "form" and "meaning" of traditional graphics, it sorts out their cultural characteristics and artistic values, and explores the integration methods, transformation methods, and innovative paths in combination with teaching practice. Taking the brand cultural and creative design teaching of Hemudu Site Museum as an example, it explains the complete teaching process from cultural interpretation, element extraction, formal reconstruction to systematic application, providing practical reference for curriculum reform and innovative talent cultivation in university design majors.

1. Introduction

With the development of the social economy and the continuous improvement of people's living standards, people's demands for commodities are no longer limited to the pure functions of material needs. They have begun to pay attention to the cultural spirit of brands, hoping to reflect their corresponding social status and distinctive personalities through consumption. Therefore, brand visual identity design is not merely a functional issue of establishing a brand's visual image, but should also serve as a vehicle for cultural dissemination. Integrating traditional graphics into modern brand visual identity design to endow brands with unique cultural connotations and attract more consumer groups has become an important topic in current brand design teaching.

2. The Cultural Value of Traditional Graphics and the Significance of Their Integration into Brand Design Teaching

2.1. The "Form" and "Meaning" of Traditional Graphics

Traditional Chinese graphics have a long and rich history. Long before the appearance of writing, ancient ancestors used graphics to convey emotions and thoughts. From Neolithic pottery patterns to stone carvings, these art forms rooted in daily life and folk culture not only reflect the awe and prayer for nature, but also condense the unique aesthetic pursuit of the Chinese nation and the wisdom of the working people.

In terms of expression, traditional graphics are mainly divided into four categories: first, characters, such as legends and dramatic images, such as the two immortals of harmony, the eight immortals of crossing the sea, etc.; the other is the image of characters, such as the two immortals of harmony, the eight immortals of crossing the sea, etc. The second is plants, including peonies and pomegranates, which symbolize wealth and glory, and the "four gentlemen" (plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum) that reflect the noble feelings of literati. The third is dragons, phoenixes, unicorns and other auspicious beasts and birds, among which the dragon pattern is the totem of the Chinese nation that has lasted for thousands of years; the fourth is the text symbol, including calligraphy characters (such as Baifu pattern, Shuangxi, etc.) and auspicious symbols such as longevity knot, Ruyi, etc. These graphics are often mixed and widely used in architecture, sculpture, paper cutting and other traditional carriers.

The core of traditional graphics is that "no pattern has a meaning, and no meaning is auspicious". In ancient times, when science was not really developed, people were afraid and confused about disease and death. Therefore, they will turn to fictional gods or totems to pray for blessings, peace, good luck, happiness - almost anything beautiful. In this way, many traditional patterns with beautiful meanings were born and have been passed down to this day. Take Baoxianghua as an example. It draws on the characteristics of lotus, peony and chrysanthemum and integrates them into an artistic pattern. After the Sui and Tang Dynasties, it became very common in brocade and porcelain, basically representing auspiciousness and joy. Times are changing, but people's desire for beautiful things has never stopped. Traditional designs with beautiful connotations can still express the ideas of modern designers, and they are very suitable for today's brand design.

2.2. The significance of integrating traditional graphics into brand design teaching

Integrating traditional graphics into brand design teaching is the inheritance and revitalization of China's excellent traditional culture. It is also an important path for the reform of design education in the new era and the improvement of the quality of talent training. Its significance is mainly reflected in the three levels of cultural value, professional value and social value.

Traditional graphics carry the culture of China for thousands of years. They are not just ancient images - they have a way of looking at beauty, a way of thinking and a profound folk meaning. When integrating them into brand design teaching, students can explore their cultural roots. They began to understand that in traditional Chinese design, every image has a purpose, and this purpose is for good luck. This is very different from the logic of Western design. Therefore, they no longer just copied the Western style, but began to cultivate their own cultural awareness and true self-confidence. The national trend is on the rise, and the whole country is promoting the construction of a cultural power. Against this background, it is very meaningful to teach design from the perspective of local culture. It helps to cultivate a new generation of designers who truly understand the Chinese spirit. It allows traditional culture to grow and change in a fresh and creative way in modern design.

In terms of optimizing the teaching structure and improving the quality of teaching, traditional graphics provide rich modeling resources, composition methods and color paradigms for brand design courses, which can effectively make up for the problems of single materials and weak creativity in the current design teaching. Through the copying, deconstruction and refining of traditional graphics, students' modeling ability, composition ability and aesthetic ability will be greatly improved, and the course content will be more in-depth and hierarchical. At the same time, design practice with the theme of culture, so that teaching can shift from simple software skills training to comprehensive ability cultivation of "culture + creativity", and promote the upgrading of the teaching mode to a more scientific direction.

As people spend more money on better products and the intensification of global brand competition, the market does begin to like brand designs with an oriental feel. Therefore, if we introduce traditional graphics into teaching, we can cultivate talents who understand both modern design and cultural expression. These graduates can help local brands improve their image and increase their cultural value. This is how Chinese brands have shifted from just manufacturing products to actually creating culture. In the future, this kind of teaching practice also provides talent support for social projects such as urban image, cultural heritage, cultural tourism promotion, etc., and realizes the benign interaction between design education and social needs.

That's why it's so important. Traditional graphics in brand design teaching involve not only culture. They aim to cultivate better designers - designers with real cultural roots, real creative skills and real sense of responsibility.

3. The method of integrating traditional graphics into brand design teaching

In today's brand design course, traditional graphics is still a field that has not been fully explored. Teachers and students are still trying to figure out how to use them effectively. There are two particularly common problems. First of all, students tend to copy the visual form of traditional graphics and ignore the cultural significance contained in them. Secondly, they often rely on simple stitching of elements instead of developing their own ideas. In response to these problems, teachers can help students see that tradition and innovation are not contradictory. Students should go beyond simply copying Western design styles or using traditional graphics in a shallow, cutting and pasting way. A more useful way is to develop a design thinking to adapt traditional elements to contemporary needs while maintaining the vitality of creative expression. Next is the discussion on two key aspects: extracting forms from traditional graphics and expanding their cultural meaning.

3.1. Application of Form: Extracting Graphics and Reshaping Visual Language

The shape here refers to the external shape and frame structure expressed in traditional graphics. Traditional graphics pay attention to the integrity and decorativeness of the graphics in modeling, pay attention to the echo, courtesy and interpolation relationship between shapes, and follow the complete and symmetrical frame structure in composition. In the process of teaching, students should be guided to carry out systematic research and creative transformation of traditional graphics based on modern aesthetic concepts and brand design needs, instead of stopping at the reproduction of surface graphic elements and symbols. Teachers need to guide students to deeply explore the regional cultural spirit, folk emotion and philosophical connotation behind traditional graphics, and combine the modeling rules and aesthetic paradigm of traditional graphics with the modern brand design concept. Transform the connotation of traditional graphics into brand visual language, truly realize the concept of "plastic temperament with tradition and strong expression with innovation" in teaching, and cultivate students to design a brand image with distinctive regional cultural characteristics and meet the aesthetics of the times and market needs.

In the classroom, students can start by watching, copying and decomposing traditional graphics. This helps them understand the basic rules of form - such as lines, composition, density, and the relationship between physical form and blank space. After that, they can continue to simplify, generalize and geometrically process these figures. The goal is to make them play a role in modern applications such as logo design, auxiliary graphics or packaging. Take Chen Youjian's works as an example. When he designed the brand image of "Mr. Chen" tea, he drew on the Buddha's hand graphics in traditional Buddhist culture and gave it a sense of modernity. He also introduced the traditional cloud pattern. The result is a graphic with strong oriental characteristics. The elegant gesture echoes the shape of the tea, integrating the taste and mood of the tea. It is very suitable for the

brand's oriental image. This case is very effective in teaching because it shows students that reusing the traditional "form" does not mean simply copying it. This is to find a new way to shape the form while carrying forward the spirit.

3. 2. Extension of Meaning: Excavating Connotations and Conveying Cultural Spirit

The reason why traditional graphics can be passed down for thousands of years is that in addition to the aesthetic value of the shape itself, there is also a rich and profound cultural connotation behind it. The external form is the means to express the inner meaning; it is the externalization and objectification of the internal connotation. Therefore, traditional graphics, which initially originated from people's worship of nature and religion, have, through the evolution of time, extended into many beautiful symbolic meanings such as the hope for "the proliferation and prosperity of life, and a wealthy, healthy, and happy life."

In practical teaching, teachers should guide students to go beyond the surface of graphics and enter the level of cultural implication, combining brand philosophy and industry attributes with the auspicious meanings and spiritual symbols of traditional graphics to achieve a design expression of "writing meaning through form, conveying emotion through meaning." The brand visual identity for Wing Wah Bakery, designed by renowned designer Kan Tai-keung, is a typical case of utilizing the auspicious implications of traditional graphics. The basic graphics adopted for the brand image are square cakes, peonies, and the bright moon. The brand visual image of China Unicom is a classic case of following the auspicious connotation of traditional graphics. The brand logo evolved from the traditional Chinese auspicious graphic "pan length". Its roundabout and repeated lines that connect the beginning and the end imply the meaning of long-term and distance. It symbolizes the smooth development of the company's network communication, and also implies the long-term development of the company's career. The whole figure is also called "Chinese knot", which is full of auspicious, safe and good luck. Chinese red and ink black are used in the color, which not only has a strong oriental flavor, but also has a fashionable modern sense. Through the analysis of such classic cases, students can gradually establish a thinking chain from graphics to culture to brand design, and improve the cultural thickness of design works.

4. Teaching Practice Case Analysis—Hemudu Site Museum Brand Cultural and Creative Design

The most effective way to integrate traditional graphics into brand design teaching is to carry out project-based teaching relying on real cultural scenarios. The Hemudu Site Museum brand cultural and creative design practice is a typical teaching case that uses traditional cultural heritage as a carrier to guide students in the modernization, branding, and cultural-creative transformation of traditional graphics. It is rooted in regional cultural veins while facing brand communication and market application, capable of systematically training students' abilities in excavation, extraction, reconstruction, and application of traditional graphics.

4. 1. Design Project Background

This case originates from the cultural and creative brand upgrade practice project of the Hemudu Site Museum. Hemudu culture is one of the earliest Neolithic cultures discovered south of the Yangtze River basin in China, dating back approximately 7,000 years. It is an important representative of early Chinese civilization and the most iconic cultural card of Ningbo, Zhejiang. A large number of cultural relics unearthed from the site, including pottery, jade, bone ware, wood carvings, rice cultivation remains, and dry-column architecture, contain extremely rich primitive

graphic symbols, such as rope patterns, grain ear patterns, geometric patterns, bird patterns, fish patterns, sun patterns, and vortex patterns. These are "living fossils" of early Chinese traditional graphics, possessing extremely high cultural value, artistic value, and teaching application value.

To further enhance the museum's brand image and strengthen its cultural communication power and appeal to teenagers, the Hemudu Site Museum proposed creating a series of brand cultural and creative products to build a unified, distinct, and culturally recognizable brand visual identity. In brand design teaching, this project was transformed into a complete teaching topic, guiding students to aim for "Cultural Inheritance + Brand Innovation + Cultural Creative Implementation." Make classroom teaching closer to real design practice.

4.2. Design Objectives and Requirements

The whole design project is a brand cultural and creative design with museum cultural relics graphics as the creative core. The design needs to be cultural, educational and practical. In teaching practice, students are guided to explore traditional graphic resources from archaeological relics, historical images and site textures, and understand the expression connotation and structural principle behind them. Guide students to refine, simplify and reconstruct traditional graphics, and learn the transformation method from cultural relics patterns to brand graphic symbols. Let students complete the brand visual system and cultural and creative product design, so that traditional graphics can truly be integrated into modern brand design.

The overall design needs to retain the originality, simplicity and historical sense of Hemudu culture, and also needs to have the simplicity and recognition of modern brand design. Under the premise of highlighting the geographical characteristics of rice culture, marine culture, etc., the systematic application of traditional graphics in brand design, cultural and creative products and publicity materials is realized, until a set of museum brand cultural and creative design schemes that can be implemented and promoted is formed.

4.3. Design Application

4.3.1. Brand Logo Design: Extraction and Reshaping of Hemudu Traditional Graphics

The logo design takes the most representative bird pattern, grain spike pattern and sun pattern in Hemudu cultural relics as the creative source. These patterns are the simple expression of nature, life and production of the ancestors, and are also the most distinctive graphic symbols of Hemudu culture.

In the teaching process, guide students to observe, copy and disassemble cultural relics patterns, extract the most representative outlines and structures, and then carry out modern visual reconstruction. The design retains the original charm of traditional graphics, removes tedious details, enhances the sense of geometry and simplicity, and makes the graphics more in line with the application needs of modern brand logos. The final logo graphics reflect the ancient civilized temperament of Hemudu culture, and also have a clear, concise and easy-to-remember brand visual effect, realizing the graphic transformation of traditional graphics from "cultural relic decoration" to "brand symbol".

4.3.2. Symbolic Graphic Design: Deconstruction and Systematization of Hemudu Typical Patterns

The symbolic graphics are creatively sourced from the rope pattern, vortex pattern and geometric line pattern on Hemudu pottery. These graphics are simple, rustic and rhythmic. They are the earliest

decorative graphics of the ancestors, which are very suitable for the extension of the brand's visual system.

In the teaching process, it focuses on training students' ability to modularize, combine and repeat traditional graphics. Students form a series of recyclable, splicable and adaptable symbolic graphics through deconstructing, reorganizing, deforming and other techniques of original rope patterns, water patterns, etc., which are used in IP modeling, packaging, publicity materials and other scenarios. Through this teaching, students can understand that traditional graphics are not only a single element, but also a brand visual language that can be continuously extended.

4.3.3. Brand Cultural Creative Design: Application of Traditional Graphics in Cultural Creative Products

Cultural and creative products are the final landing carrier of brand design, and they are also the most intuitive embodiment of teaching achievements. The whole design revolves around the traditional graphics of Hemudu, and designs brand cultural creations such as IP modeling, cultural and Expo peripherals, and packaging systems.

In teaching practice, students will extract and reconstruct traditional graphics and apply them to IP modeling, notebooks, canvas bags, badges, bookmarks, gift boxes and other products to realize the transformation of traditional graphics into brand image, and then follow the complete connection of cultural and creative products. It is emphasized that traditional graphics are not a simple copy, but combined with product functions, usage scenarios and modern aesthetics, so that the ancient patterns can be re-presented in a younger, more fashionable and closer way to life. The whole set of cultural and creative design has strengthened the brand image of the Hemudu Ruins Museum, and also let students truly realize that traditional graphics can only be truly activated and inherited when integrated into modern brand design.

5. Conclusion

Integrating traditional Chinese graphics into brand design teaching is not only the inheritance of traditional culture, but also a kind of teaching reform. In teaching, students should be guided to explore the "shape and meaning" of traditional graphics, and exercise students' ability to distill and reshapes. As Mr. Li Keran said, "hit in with the greatest effort and fight out with the greatest courage". At the same time, it can also improve students' comprehensive design literacy through classic case analysis and design practice. Only by adhering to the equal emphasis on tradition and innovation, and the unification of culture and commerce, can traditional graphics truly live within contemporary brand design, continuing the national cultural root while helping Chinese brands move towards a future with greater cultural recognizability.

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