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## ANALYSIS OF CREATIVE PRODUCT DESIGN INNOVATION BASED ON TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT INHERITANCE

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*As an intangible cultural heritage, traditional handicrafts contain a great deal of design wisdom and aesthetic ideas. This paper aims to explore how traditional handicrafts activate inspiration in contemporary product design. A large number of creative product design cases based on the heritage of traditional handicrafts are analyzed in the study. Explored the application of traditional handicraft cultural elements in modern creative product design.*

**Keywords:** traditional crafts, creative products, intangible cultural heritage, product design, cultural innovation.

### INTRODUCTION

With the development of industrialization and the change in people's lifestyles, traditional handicraft products are detached from the original cultural ecology and gradually eliminated by society. However, it is worthwhile to pass on the design aesthetics and philosophy of creation contained in traditional handicrafts as a valuable national intangible cultural heritage. It is widely recognized by academics that the integration of traditional handicrafts with modern creative products can give new life to traditional handicrafts and thus realize the revitalization and sustainable development of traditional handicrafts. Therefore, exploring how to utilize and innovate the cultural elements of traditional handicrafts in modern creative product design has been an urgent proposition.

### PURPOSE

This paper aims to explore the possibility of the inheritance and development of traditional handicrafts in contemporary times and the application path of traditional handicrafts' cultural elements in modern creative product design.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Traditional handicrafts, as intangible cultural heritage, are the crystallization of the outstanding culture and wisdom of a country or nation. Traditional handicrafts not only have practical functions but also contain unique aesthetic values such as aesthetic and philosophical thoughts. In modern design, the concepts of natural, simple, environmental protection, and sustainability of traditional handicrafts have been further inherited and developed [1].

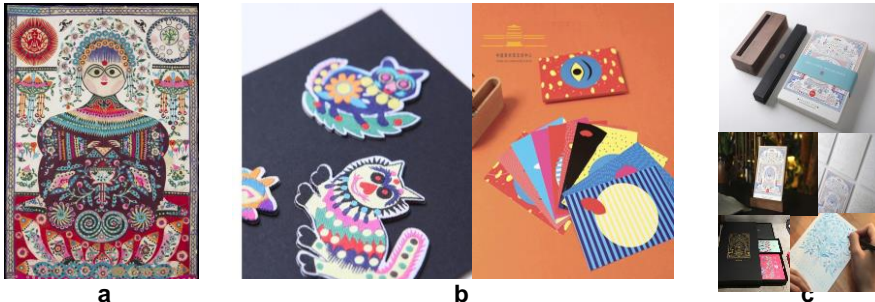


At present, traditional Chinese handicrafts have stood at a new historical starting point. With the rise of new cultural and creative industries, more and more young people have begun to invest a great deal of energy and resources in reviving traditional handicrafts and redesigning them by using modern high-tech means, which has injected fresh blood into traditional handicrafts. This is bound to bring traditional handicrafts to new heights and also bound to make traditional handicrafts embody new values in the new era.

Integrating traditional handicraft elements into the design of cultural and creative products is not only a simple implantation of traditional handicraft elements, not a simple superposition of elements, and not a "show-off", but also an intuitive embodiment of the excellent traditional culture in modern things, and an in-depth fusion of modern design concepts with the wisdom of traditional artifacts [2]. There have been many attempts by designers and design studios. Through case studies, this paper summarizes the following effective paths for creative product design based on traditional handicraft heritage:

1. Extracting, transforming, and applying traditional elements; traditional patterns, colors, and shapes are the most intuitive artistic expressions of traditional handicrafts. Specific colors, graphics, or shapes in the region are often endowed with certain cultural meanings, which can remind consumers of familiar local customs and the spiritual conversion within the culture. Traditional handicraft creative products need to meet the consumer's preferences and cultural aesthetics and integrate the cultural attributes of the product with the design elements, including pattern motifs, colors, shapes, and other elements, to design handicraft creative products that can bring emotional satisfaction and cultural enjoyment to consumers [3]. Which is the most common form of application at present. As shown in Figure 1, the paper-cutting work of the "flower cutter" Ku Shulan. The designer extracted the graphic elements of the work and re-creation, retaining the graphic or color characteristics of the original work, designed into postcards, refrigerator stickers, calendars, and other creative products.

2. Utilizing materials related to traditional crafts; materials are the material basis of handicrafts. The characteristics of the material have a decisive influence on the production appliances and craft technology of handicrafts, especially in the form of the appearance of the product and the sense of touch. Utilizing traditional materials or using traditional handicrafts as materials for creative product design can enhance the cultural attributes of the products. Paper-making was first invented by Cai Lun in 105 AD. In China, the papermaking process in each place is similar, the biggest difference is the different raw materials. Hangzhou is rich in bamboo forests, so the use of bamboo as a raw material for papermaking has become one of the characteristics of Hangzhou's traditional handmade paper. Nowadays, bamboo paper is mainly used for writing and painting, which leads to a narrower and narrower future for bamboo paper. As shown in Fig. 2, the bamboo paper produced by the traditional papermaking process is reasonably applied to the creative tableware product design, which not only expands the scope of the use of bamboo paper but also enhances the environmental and cultural attributes of the product. Thus, it realizes the productive protection of traditional handicrafts.



**Fig.1. a** - The paper-cutting work of the "flower cutter" Ku Shulan, China, 1992; **b** - Creative products based on the work of the "flower cutter", production by China Art Gallery Creative Center, 2023; **c** - Creative products based on the work of the "flower cutter", production by Natural Creation, 2017.

3. Function and form migration. The function of products is divided into explicit function and implicit function, the explicit function is the actual utility of the product, and the implicit function is the cultural and aesthetic function of the product. With the change of lifestyle, the practical function of traditional handicrafts is gradually weakened. Therefore, it is necessary to break through the traditional shackles of creative product design and enhance the practical function of products from the modern lifestyle. Creative products based on the cultural elements of traditional handicrafts should not only have practical functions, but also integrate cultural and aesthetic functions, and their functions need to meet the needs of current consumers. For example, the functions of handicraft cultural and creative products are innovated from the perspectives of functional utility, ease of use, and ingenuity of design. In the functional design of creative products, cross-border design can be carried out, integrating the utility of other products on the basic function of bamboo ware, such as combining the traditional bamboo weaving craft with intelligent products, children's toys, and household products, expanding the categories and methods of use of the products. As shown in Fig. 3, c is a chair fashioned out of paper and a grid of bamboo strips, following the traditional craft of Chinese lantern making. Applying this technique makes the chair surprisingly strong, durable, thin, and lightweight.

4. Deconstruction and reorganization of traditional craft elements. Craft process is the cultural core of traditional handicrafts and the most important inheritance element in traditional handicrafts. In addition to the direct application of traditional craft processes in the design of experiential creative products (Fig. 4). Designers can fully deconstruct the materials, processes, colors, functions, and decorative elements of various traditional handicrafts, and reorganize and utilize the deconstructed elements in creative product design, to realize the integration and innovation of various craft elements. PINWU Design Studio attempts to deconstruct traditional Chinese handicrafts, forming seven design sections according to materials, such as "bamboo, silk, clay, copper, mortise and tenon, coloring and weaving", and establishing a "fusion" design library. More than 100 designers from different design fields, including product, furniture, fashion, jewelry, textile,



porcelain, photography, and graphic design, were invited to participate in the deconstruction of traditional Chinese materials and crafts and apply them to contemporary design.



**Fig. 2.** Creative tableware product design, China, 2022



**Fig. 3.** “Piao” paper chair, PINWU Design Studio, 2023



**Fig. 4.** Woodblock New Year Picture Experience Kit, Suzhou Museum, 2023

In addition, the application of digital technology is also an important trend in the current innovation of traditional handicrafts. The application of digital technology not only, but also broadens the dissemination channels of traditional handicrafts and enriches the display and innovation methods of traditional handicrafts. Designers digitize and reconfigure the weaving patterns through different logical relationships, generate random patterns from traditional weaving patterns through computer programming, and combine them with 3D printing technology to apply them to different products, which becomes a new form of expression.

### CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it can promote the synergistic development of traditional handicrafts and creative product design because traditional handicrafts have both cultural and economic values. There are four main paths for the application of traditional handicraft cultural elements in modern creative product design: extraction, transformation, and application of traditional elements; application of traditional materials; functional and formal migration: deconstruction and reorganization of traditional craft elements; in addition, the use of digital technology in creative product design can also display and disseminate traditional handicrafts in a more multi-dimensional way.

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