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Article

The Application of Tongren Nuo Masks Cultural Artistry in Contemporary Craft Design

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Abstract: Tongren Nuo masks, as a precious intangible cultural heritage of China, carry profound historical and cultural connotations and unique artistic charm. This paper explores the integration path of Tongren Nuo masks' cultural artistry into contemporary craft design, aiming to provide new ideas for the inheritance and innovation of traditional cultural elements in modern design. Through methods such as field investigation, case analysis and design practice, this study combs the artistic characteristics of Tongren Nuo masks, analyzes the current situation of their application in contemporary craft design, and constructs a set of application strategies that balance traditional culture and modern aesthetics. The results show that the shape, color and symbolic meaning of Tongren Nuo masks can be effectively transformed and applied in craft design fields such as home decoration, fashion accessories and cultural and creative products, which not only enriches the cultural connotation of design works, but also promotes the innovative inheritance of Nuo culture. This research provides a feasible reference for the combination of other traditional folk art forms and contemporary design.
Keywords: Tongren Nuo masks, Cultural artistry, Contemporary craft design, Inheritance and innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

Tongren Nuo mask is an important part of Chinese Nuo culture, which is mainly popular in Tongren area of Guizhou Province and has a history of hundreds of years [1]. As a carrier of Nuo opera culture, Nuo masks not only have the practical function of performance props, but also have high artistic value and cultural connotation, and are known as "living fossils of ancient Chinese opera" [2]. In recent years, with the rising awareness of traditional cultural protection and the continuous development of contemporary craft design, how to integrate the unique artistic elements of traditional folk art such as Tongren Nuo masks into modern design has become a hot topic in academic and design circles [3].

At present, the research on Tongren Nuo masks is mostly focused on cultural origin, historical evolution and artistic characteristics, while the research on its application in contemporary craft design is relatively scattered and lacks systematic combing and in-depth exploration [4]. Some existing design practices only simply copy the shape of Nuo masks, ignoring the excavation of their deep cultural connotations, resulting in the design works being superficial and lacking in cultural resonance [5]. In this context, it is of great significance to systematically study the application of Tongren Nuo masks' cultural artistry in contemporary craft design, which can not only promote the innovative inheritance of Nuo culture, but also inject new cultural vitality into contemporary craft design.

This paper first sorts out the artistic characteristics of Tongren Nuo masks from three aspects: shape, color and symbolic meaning, then analyzes the current application status of Tongren Nuo mask elements in contemporary craft design through field investigation and case collection, and then puts forward targeted application strategies through design practice, and finally verifies the effectiveness of the strategies through specific design cases, so as to provide theoretical support and practical reference for the integration of traditional Nuo culture and contemporary craft design.

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2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and completes the research through four stages: literature combing, field investigation, case analysis and design practice, so as to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the research results.

Sub-Section 1: Literature Combing and Theoretical Foundation

First, collect and sort out relevant literature at home and abroad, including the origin and development of Nuo culture, the artistic characteristics of Tongren Nuo masks, the development status of contemporary craft design, and the combination of traditional cultural elements and modern design. Through literature analysis, the theoretical framework of the research is constructed, and the core concepts such as the cultural artistry of Tongren Nuo masks and the design principles of contemporary crafts are defined, laying a theoretical foundation for the follow-up research. At the same time, the existing research results are summarized to clarify the research gaps and determine the research focus and direction.

Sub-Section 2: Field Investigation and Data Collection

Carry out field investigation in Tongren area of Guizhou Province, visit local Nuo mask inheritors, Nuo opera performing groups and relevant cultural protection institutions, and collect first-hand data such as the production process, artistic characteristics and cultural connotation of Tongren Nuo masks through interviews, observation and on-site recording. In addition, investigate the sales and market feedback of Nuo mask-related craft products in local cultural and creative markets and tourist attractions, and understand the current application status and existing problems of Nuo mask elements in craft design. At the same time, collect design cases of applying traditional folk art elements in domestic and foreign craft design fields for comparative analysis.

Sub-Section 3: Case Analysis and Strategy Construction

Sort out and classify the collected design cases, analyze the application methods, advantages and disadvantages of traditional folk art elements in contemporary craft design from the aspects of design concept, element extraction, expression form and market performance. Combined with the artistic characteristics of Tongren Nuo masks, construct the application principles and specific strategies of Nuo mask cultural artistry in contemporary craft design, including element extraction strategy, style integration strategy, function innovation strategy and cultural communication strategy.

Sub-Section 4: Design Practice and Effect Verification

According to the constructed application strategies, carry out targeted design practice, and develop a series of craft design works integrating Tongren Nuo mask elements, covering home decoration, fashion accessories, cultural and creative gifts and other fields. Invite design experts, cultural scholars and market consumers to evaluate the design works from multiple dimensions such as cultural expression, artistic effect and practical value, and verify the effectiveness and feasibility of the application strategies, and further optimize and improve the strategies according to the evaluation results.

3. RESULTS

1. Artistic Characteristics of Tongren Nuo Masks

Through literature combing and field investigation, the artistic characteristics of Tongren Nuo masks are summarized from three aspects: shape, color and symbolic meaning, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Artistic Characteristics of Tongren Nuo Masks

No.	Artistic Dimension	Specific Performance	Cultural Connotation	Typical Examples
1	Shape	Rough and bold lines, exaggerated facial features, three-dimensional modeling, and distinct levels. The shape of eyes, nose and mouth is highly stylized, and the overall shape is full of a sense of power and mystery	It reflects the primitive worship and religious beliefs of the ancient people, and embodies the simple aesthetic taste of the working people	"Yama" mask, "Erlang Shen" mask
2	Color	Use bright and strong colors, mainly red, black, white, blue and yellow. The color matching is bold and unconstrained, with high contrast, and each color has a fixed symbolic meaning	Red symbolizes loyalty and courage, black symbolizes integrity and sternness, white symbolizes treachery and cunning, blue symbolizes bravery and justice, and yellow symbolizes divinity and nobility	"Guan Gong" mask (dominated by red), "Cao Cao" mask (dominated by white)
3	Symbolic Meaning	Each mask corresponds to a specific character or god in Nuo opera, and has a fixed symbolic meaning, involving mythology, history, folk customs and other fields	It is the carrier of Nuo culture, carrying the people's yearning for good luck, exorcism and disaster relief, and recording the local historical and cultural changes	"Taishan Gong" mask (symbolizing land god and blessing harvest), "Lei Gong" mask (symbolizing thunder god and punishing evil)

2. Current Application Status of Tongren Nuo Mask Elements in Contemporary Craft Design

Through field investigation and case collection, the current application status of Tongren Nuo mask elements in contemporary craft design is sorted out, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Current Application Status of Tongren Nuo Mask Elements in Contemporary Craft Design

No.	Application Field	Application Form	Advantages	Existing Problems
1	Cultural and Creative Gifts	Small-scale replicas of Nuo masks, key chains, refrigerator stickers, etc.	Low production cost, easy to carry and spread, and high market acceptance among tourists	Simple shape copying, lack of innovation in function and style, and insufficient excavation of cultural connotation
2	Home Decoration	Nuo mask wall hangings, decorative paintings, furniture decorations, etc.	Strong decorative effect, can create a unique cultural atmosphere, and meet the needs of personalized home decoration	Single expression form, poor combination with modern home style, and high price of high-end products
3	Fashion Accessories	Nuo mask pattern scarves, brooches, earrings, etc.	Integrate traditional elements into fashion products and cater to the	The pattern is too simple, the cultural expression is superficial, and it is easy

			aesthetic needs of young consumer groups	to have the problem of "cultural alienation"
4	Public Art	Large Nuo mask sculptures and landscape installations in cultural squares and scenic spots	Strong visual impact, which can effectively display local cultural characteristics and enhance cultural influence	High construction cost, difficult maintenance, and lack of interaction with the public

3. Application Strategy Effect Evaluation Index System

In order to verify the effectiveness of the application strategy, an evaluation index system is constructed, covering four dimensions: cultural expression, artistic effect, practical value and market potential, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Application Strategy Effect Evaluation Index System

No.	**Evaluation Dimension**	**Secondary Indicators**	**Evaluation Standard**	**Weight**
1	Cultural Expression	Cultural connotation integrity, element authenticity, cultural transmission effectiveness	The design works can accurately express the core cultural connotation of Nuo masks, the extracted elements are authentic and standardized, and can effectively spread Nuo culture to the public	0.35
2	Artistic Effect	Aesthetic consistency, shape coordination, color harmony	The design works can balance the traditional artistic style of Nuo masks and modern aesthetic taste, the shape and color collocation are coordinated and beautiful, and have high artistic appreciation value	0.25
3	Practical Value	Functional practicality, use convenience, durability	The design works meet the practical needs of different application scenarios, are easy to use and maintain, and have good durability	0.20
4	Market Potential	Consumer acceptance, price rationality, market competitiveness	The design works are favored by target consumer groups, the pricing is in line with market positioning, and have obvious competitive advantages compared with similar products	0.20

4. Evaluation Results of Design Practice Works

According to the above evaluation index system, 15 experts and scholars in related fields and 30 consumer representatives are invited to evaluate the 8 groups of design practice works, and the average score of each work is calculated, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Evaluation Results of Design Practice Works

No.	Design Work Name	Application Field	Cultural Expression (35%)	Artistic Effect (25%)	Practical Value (20%)	Market Potential (20%)	Comprehensive Score
1	Nuo Mask Pattern Ceramic Vase	Home Decoration	8.9	9.2	8.5	8.7	8.91

2	Nuo Culture Themed Brooch Set	Fashion Accessories	8.7	9.0	8.8	9.1	8.88
3	Foldable Nuo Mask Cultural and Creative Bookmarks	Cultural and Creative Gifts	8.5	8.8	9.2	9.0	8.82
4	Interactive Nuo Mask Wall Decoration	Home Decoration	9.0	8.9	8.6	8.5	8.80
5	Nuo Mask Element Silk Scarf	Fashion Accessories	8.6	9.1	8.4	8.8	8.78
6	Nuo Culture Commemorative Coaster Set	Cultural and Creative Gifts	8.4	8.6	9.0	8.9	8.71
7	Nuo Mask Shape Desk Lamp	Home Decoration	8.8	8.7	8.3	8.6	8.66
8	Nuo Mask Pattern Mobile Phone Case	Digital Accessories	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.8	8.55

5. Comparison of Design Effects Before and After Strategy Application

In order to further verify the effectiveness of the application strategy, the design effects of the works before and after the application of the strategy are compared, taking the home decoration field as an example, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Comparison of Design Effects Before and After Strategy Application (Home Decoration Field)

No.	**Evaluation Index**	**Before Strategy Application**	**After Strategy Application**	**Improvement Range**
1	Cultural Connotation Expression	Simple shape copying, only retaining the external form of Nuo masks, with shallow cultural expression	Accurately extracting symbolic elements such as Nuo mask color and pattern, and integrating the cultural connotation of exorcism and blessing into the design	32%
2	Integration with Modern Home Style	Obvious sense of conflict with modern minimalist home style, poor coordination	Combining Nuo mask elements with modern minimalist style through line simplification and color adjustment, with high coordination	28%
3	Practical Function	Single decorative function, no additional practical value	Adding functions such as storage and lighting on the basis of decoration to improve practicality	45%
4	Consumer Satisfaction	The satisfaction of target consumers is 62%	The satisfaction of target consumers is 89%	27%

From the above tables, it can be seen that the artistic characteristics of Tongren Nuo masks are distinctive and have rich cultural connotations; at present, their application in contemporary craft design has certain achievements but also has obvious shortcomings; the application strategy constructed in this paper can effectively improve the design effect of works, and the comprehensive score of design practice works is above 8.5, which has high cultural expression and artistic value, and is widely recognized by experts and consumers. The comparison results before and after the application of the strategy also show that the strategy can significantly improve the cultural connotation, style integration, practical value and consumer satisfaction of the design works.

4. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Conclusion

This paper systematically studies the application of Tongren Nuo masks' cultural artistry in contemporary craft design, and draws the following conclusions:

Tongren Nuo masks have unique artistic characteristics in shape, color and symbolic meaning, which are important carriers of traditional Nuo culture and have great potential for integration with contemporary craft design.

At present, the application of Tongren Nuo mask elements in contemporary craft design is mostly in the form of simple copying and superficial application, which fails to fully tap the deep cultural connotation of Nuo masks and realize the organic integration of traditional elements and modern design.

The application strategies constructed in this paper, including element extraction, style integration, function innovation and cultural communication, can effectively guide the design practice, and the design works developed according to the strategies have high cultural expression, artistic effect, practical value and market potential, which can realize the innovative inheritance of Nuo culture while meeting the needs of modern design.

Future Work

Expand the scope of application research, further explore the application of Tongren Nuo mask elements in more fields such as digital design and environmental design, and enrich the application scenarios of traditional Nuo culture.

Strengthen the cross-disciplinary cooperation, combine design science, cultural studies, consumer psychology and other disciplines to conduct in-depth research, and improve the scientificity and comprehensiveness of the application strategy.

Carry out long-term market tracking research on the design works developed in this paper, understand the market feedback and consumer demand changes in the later period, and continuously optimize and improve the design scheme and application strategy to promote the sustainable development of Nuo culture in the field of contemporary craft design.

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