

# The Emotional Expression of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements in Huang Hai's Film Poster Design

Xiaokang Lei<sup>1\*</sup>, Hui Yan<sup>1</sup>, Beibei Chen<sup>1</sup>, Xiaofan Cai<sup>1</sup>, Zhongkui Yu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sichuan Fine Arts Institution, Chongqing, China

## Email Address

heycloris77@gmail.com (Xiaokang Lei)

\*Correspondence: heycloris77@gmail.com

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## Abstract:

The article aims to dig deeply into the significance of Chinese traditional cultural elements to movie posters, summarize the design form of Chinese traditional cultural elements in Huang Hai's movie posters, and further analyze the emotional expression of Chinese traditional cultural elements by analyzing Huang Hai's movie poster design works, so as to explore the inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional culture in movie posters.

## Keywords:

Chinese Traditional Culture, Movie Posters, Huang Hai, Emotion

## 1. Introduction

Movies are an important means for people to pursue spiritual enjoyment. By watching movies, they can resonate with them, obtain spiritual pleasure, and heal their inner emotions. A good movie wants to stand out in the increasingly competitive box office market, in addition to a good director, actors and scripts, the movie poster is also one of the factors that cannot be ignored. Movie posters have the function of conveying key themes, and to a certain extent, they can even affect the audience's first impression of the movie, arouse curiosity and expectation, and drive emotions and resonance. Huang Hai, known as "the first poster designer in China" [1], immediately caused a sensation when many of his works were published. His charm is that many people go to see related movies just because of the posters he designs.[2] He is very good at using traditional Chinese cultural elements as the language of visual communication in the pictures of poster design, and promotes Chinese design to the world stage.

## 2. The Significance of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements in Movie Posters

### 2.1. Enriching the cultural connotation of movie posters

In the context of globalization, films carry the important mission of cultural dissemination in various countries. As one of the forms of film propaganda, posters convey the connotation of my country's national culture and thought. Adding traditional Chinese cultural elements to the movie poster makes the content and form of the poster more advanced and three-dimensional, which greatly enriches the cultural connotation of the poster itself.

## ***2.2. Enhancing people's sense of identity with traditional culture***

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in his speech at the Peking University Teacher-Student Symposium on May 4, 2014: "Chinese civilization has stretched for thousands of years and has its own unique value system. The excellent traditional Chinese culture has become the gene of the Chinese nation, rooted in its roots. In the hearts of Chinese people, it subtly affects the way of thinking and behavior of the Chinese people." [3] The condensed, extracted and applied Chinese traditional elements in the movie poster works need to achieve a cultural and emotional resonance that not only arouses consumers' cultural resonance, but also does not lose the height of local cultural characteristics. Because of this, the use of traditional cultural elements in the design of movie posters plays a very important role in reflecting cultural confidence and highlighting cultural charm. It can enhance the national cultural identity and national pride of Chinese people in the process of appreciation.

## ***2.3. Promote Chinese culture to the world***

As the world pays more attention to traditional Chinese culture and puts forward the great vision of building a culturally powerful country, the poster design that integrates traditional Chinese culture into movie posters has become a trend in the new era. Movie posters such as "*Shadow*", "*The Sun Also Rises*", and "*Hidden Man*" are the excellent design works in this era, allowing the world to see the beauty of China and sublimating the artistic value, emotional value, and culture of Chinese movie posters. value and dissemination of value.

# **3. The Design Form of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements in the Posters of Huang Hai's Movie**

There are four main design forms of traditional Chinese cultural elements in Huang Hai's movie poster:

## ***3.1. Graphic language of folk crafts***

Chinese traditional folk craft graphics not only have unique modeling forms, which show the artist's subjective consciousness, but also have deep and specific ideological and emotional connotations. For example, paper-cut, as a treasure of Chinese folk crafts, is not only a decorative figure of folk art, but also a spiritual and cultural phenomenon of material inheritance. Chinese people often use the act of "sticking window grilles" to express their prayers for a better life in the New Year on the occasion of reunion. In the movie "*The Reunion*", Huang Hai used traditional Chinese paper-cut graphics as a "window" for visual communication. The paper-cut in the poster is located in the center of the poster, and the characters are cleverly placed on both sides of the paper-cut, which not only represents the theme of the movie "*The Reunion*", that is, the interpretation of "home", but also cleverly places the characters

on both sides of the paper-cut. Thinking and analysis of family ethics and family bonds behind the movie story.

### **3.2. Traditional color language**

China's iconic traditional colors, namely Chinese red, blue and white, and ink colors, are not only simple visual perception objects, but also contain long-standing traditional cultural concepts and spiritual cultural concepts behind them, expanding the inherent nature of colors. Different from the cultural symbols of Western countries, in China, "red" means "pleasure". Since the Han Dynasty, people have used red as an auspicious and noble color. In the poster of the movie *"The Sun Also Rises"*, Huang Hai also used a large area of Chinese red in his heart as the background, showing the vitality of life and the illusory or real, beautiful and absurd Chinese magic artistic spirit in the movie.

### **3.3. The language of calligraphy and ink**

As a unique oriental art category, calligraphy shows its charm and tension with its flexible brushstrokes, reflecting the artist's cultural heritage and emotional temperature. In the poster of the movie *"Better Days"*, Huang Hai used a bold font to match the innocent eyes of the teenagers. In the poster of the movie *"Return to Dust"*, although the calligraphy work is still located in the center of the picture, it has become illusory, slowly dissipating in the air like dust and smoke, revealing the emotion and meaning of the film.

## **4. The Emotional Expression of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements in Huang Hai's Movie Poster**

The following introduces the emotional expressions of the four most commonly used traditional cultural elements in Huang Hai's movie posters:

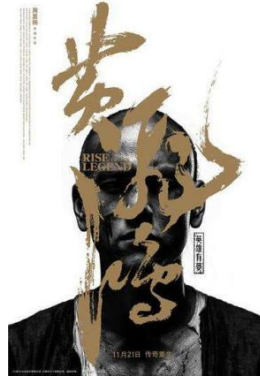
### **4.1. Emotional expression of calligraphy elements**

Calligraphy highlights China's long-standing concept of "beauty of neutrality" and "harmony between man and nature", showing the artistic characteristics of ancient and simple, or exquisite and elegant, or magnificent, or fresh and beautiful; Indulgence, people's thoughts and emotions are hidden in the dense relationship between the words in the lines.

The movie poster *"Rise of the Legend"* (i.e., Figure 1) uses black and white ink to deal with the characters, with strong contrast, showing the true nature of the hero and expressing a nervous emotion. The actor's frowning, scarred face, and torn clothes seem to have just gone through a fierce battle, but he still shows a determined and calm look, reflecting a state of calm and calm in tension. In order to fit the core concept of the film reshaped by director Zhou Xianyang, the Chinese calligraphy with full of emotional tension and the simple international style layout design are integrated. The dazzling bronzing calligraphy characters symbolize the vigor and fiery passion of the dream, rendering a passionate emotional state and reshaping the ultimate theme of the film "heroes have dreams".

In the TV series *"Run For Young"*, Huang Hai uses elegant and free calligraphy fonts as the center of the picture, and the blurred sky background adds the Chaotianmen Wharf with Chongqing characteristics. Huang Hai uses a special texture

effect to echo the unease of young people in the film and television, as well as the confused state of mind in the face of life.



*Figure 1. The movie poster "Rise of the Legend".*

#### **4.2. Emotional expression of seal engraving process elements**

Seal carving refers to the art of carving and forging seals on metal, jade, stone and other materials in the form of seal calligraphy, also known as seal art. [4] In the design of Huang Hai's movie poster, the seal cutting process elements mainly play the role of emphasizing the theme of the poster and highlighting the emotional expression.

Speaking of the film "*Aftershock*" (i.e., Figure 2), the word "Tangshan" on its movie poster is presented with seal cutting, and at the same time, the pattern of cracks in the seal pad is added. The red color used is alarming, and the pattern of cracking on the ground of the earthquake is used. Correspondingly, combining the three words "Great Earthquake" is similar to the writing style of the inscription in "*Cuanbaozi Monument*", giving people a sudden and trembling visual experience, and conveying the emotional state of tension, fear and anxiety that the film wants to create.



*Figure 2. The movie poster "Aftershock".*

#### **4.3. Emotional expression of shadow play elements**

Shadow puppetry is a traditional folk craft in the intangible cultural heritage. Its characters usually have a profound cultural heritage, a sense of story and a sense of history. Combining the elements of shadow puppetry can let people understand and mobilize psychological emotions in many ways. [5]

In the poster design of the international version of the movie "*The Eight Hundred*" (i.e., Figure 3), Huang Hai used the image of a single-riding warrior in the traditional Chinese shadow puppet play as the main visual point of the poster screen. The comprehensive visual effects conveyed by visual elements, such as dim and old tones,

and the texture of leather dolls convey the tragic feeling of fighting alone and the vicissitudes of history that the film wants to express. The blood splattered in the poster corresponds to the location of the Battle of Songhu - Shanghai, as told in the movie. The overall tone is grasped in the nostalgic tone of beige, adding cinnabar red and the colorful colors of the shadow puppet itself, so that it expresses the nostalgic sense of history and renders the emotions, not only expressing the sadness and loneliness in the outnumbered battle, but also showing the brave spirit of the Chinese soldiers.



*Figure 3. The movie poster “The Eight Hundred”.*

#### **4.4. Emotional expression of ink and wash elements**

Huang Hai is very good at using the combination of Chinese ink and calligraphy elements and design, especially in the poster design of the mainland version of “*The Golden Era*” (i.e., Figure 4), he combines Chinese ink and wash elements with the emotional expression of visual design to the extreme. The heroine in the poster is standing in a static form. The essence of the Chinese painting technique of splashing ink is used in the picture. The ink marks are of different shades, intermittent and majestic. The shapes, sizes, and thicknesses of the lines are different, and the shades and shades of the ink are handled to create an emotional feeling of hesitation, tension, and turmoil, which is in line with Xiao Hong’s life situation. The combination of static character images and rippling ink traces, on the basis of implying Xiao Hong’s turbulent fate and the emotional theme of acting calmly, also has a certain symbolic meaning and imagination space. At the same time, the combination of blank space and ink painting in the picture can not only enrich the hierarchical relationship of the picture, but also create a Chinese-style artistic conception, creating a unique visual emotional experience with traditional elements. Not only that, but also using ink elements, through the use of different compositions, light and shade, colors and other expressions, Huang Hai designed different versions of posters for different aesthetic cultures, such as the warm and minimal Japanese version and the sad and emotional Korean version.

Movie posters are the spiritual product of the aesthetic inclinations of movie directors and poster designers. As a leader in bringing Chinese design to the world, Huang Hai’s works perfectly integrate traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern poster design, and use extremely refined and classic visual symbols and visual language to condense and express the emotions of the film that take hours to present. The foundation of the creation of the Huang Hai’s is carried on the Chinese culture, originates from the Chinese culture, inherits and promotes the traditional Chinese

culture, and brings new inspiration, ideas and directions to the creation of Chinese movie posters.



*Figure 4. The movie poster “The Golden Era”.*

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Xiaokang Lei.; Methodology: Xiaokang Lei.; Software: Xiaokang Lei.; Validation: Hui Yan.; Formal analysis: Hui Yan.; Investigation: Beibei Chen.; Resources: Beibei Chen.; Beibei Chen: A.B.; Writing – original draft preparation: Xiaofan Cai.; Writing – review and editing: Xiaofan Cai.; Visualization: Hui Yan; Supervision: Xiaokang Lei.; Project administration: Beibe Chen.; Funding acquisition: Xiaokang Lei.

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