

Research on the Historical Evolution and Innovative Design of Wuqiang's Woodblock New Year Paintings

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Abstract:

Folk New Year paintings in Wuqiang County Wuqiang woodblock New Year paintings are one of the national intangible cultural heritages. Intangible cultural heritage is the most dynamic and important part of cultural diversity. It is the crystallization of human civilization and the most precious common wealth. It carries human wisdom, civilization and glory of human history. Summarize the historical origin and development of Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures, summarize the artistic characteristics and themes of Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures, extract the shape and color characteristics of Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures, and use design techniques such as summary and exaggeration to condense the unique charm of Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures. Wuqiang's woodblock New Year paintings have a long history and are rooted in the loess soil. With the unremitting efforts of successive generations of inheritors, they have created art for the people. Its unique artistic style and characteristics are world-famous, truly making art for the people.

Keywords:

Wu Qiang Woodblock New Year Pictures, Historical Evolution, Innovative Design

1. Introduction

The study of folk New Year pictures and folk customs in my country started relatively late. The worldly customs of folk society were rarely seen in official history in the past. New Year pictures are a mirror of secular folk customs in different historical periods. In an era without video and audio recording, they are undoubtedly important images for folk custom research. The data provide important reference value for today's study of sociology, economics, folklore, aesthetics, and archaeology in various regions [1]. Although folk art has no written theoretical works handed down, it is passed down through oral instruction. While learning skills, you can master the concept of creation and inherit traditional design ideas and craft ideas. This

is the spiritual wealth that exists at the same time as the work. The theory in it and methods that require careful exploration of research.

2. The Historical Origin of Wu Qiang's Woodblock New Year Paintings

Wuqiang New Year pictures are one of the five major New Year picture production areas in my country. It has a history of more than 2,000 years since the establishment of the Wuqiang Marquis State in the sixth year of Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty (201 BC). In 1993, Wuqiang County was named "China's New Year Pictures" by the Ministry of Culture "Hometown of Woodblock New Year Paintings", and was approved by the State Council to be included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists in 2006 [2]. Wuqiang New Year pictures have a strong local flavor and unique artistic style. They are based on historical stories, folklore, customs, opera characters, flowers and landscapes that are popular among the masses. They are full of auspicious festival atmosphere and fully reflect folk customs and sentiments. and the people's ideological aspirations, and is known as "the symbol of peasant art".

2.1. Immigrant of Pingyang and Promote development

According to records, Pingyang in the Jin Dynasty (today's Linfen area of Shanxi Province) was a famous engraving and printing center in the north, and Hongdong was under the jurisdiction of Pingyang. In the early Ming Dynasty, it is said that wars broke out in Hebei due to the "King of Yan's Sweep to the North". As a result, people in Hebei, Henan, Shandong and other places were brutally killed, looted, displaced, and desolate, with no villages left. After King Zhu Di of Yan seized the throne, a large number of immigrants began to immigrate in the second year of Yongle (1404). Immigrants from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui and other places moved to Wuqiang through Hongdong, Shanxi. Among the immigrants were painters engaged in New Year paintings, and their craft skills were also brought with them. When they arrived in Wuqiang, the two sides learned from each other's strengths and promoted each other. At the same time, a large number of products were sold back to Shanxi, which played a certain role in promoting the development of Wuqiang's painting industry.

2.2. Land Ridge, Human Poverty and using paintings to support farmers

Wuqiang County in Hebei Province began during the reign of Emperor Hui of the Western Jin Dynasty and has a history of more than 1,600 years. Historically, it belonged to Shenzhou and was located in the Haihe River system. The ancient Yellow River flows through Wuqiang and enters the sea from Hutuo River [2]. The Hutuo River has been harmed since ancient times, moving south and north, and its body is unstable. Wuqiang is caught in the middle, and the whole country is low-lying, often suffering from droughts in spring and floods in autumn, and mostly in poor years. Due to the barren land in Wuqiang, agricultural development is very unstable, and farmers have lived in poverty for a long time. However, the industrious people of Wuqiang used their dexterous hands to create Wuqiang New Year pictures in their troubled life to meet their daily needs. As a result, the New Year picture industry gradually became the most important source of income for the survival and reproduction of the local villagers.

2.3. Sufficient raw materials and provide convenience

Due to the many rivers in Wuqiang, many depressions have been formed for a long time, which are rich in reeds and a large amount of wheat straw, providing excellent raw materials for papermaking. “The Legend of Wuqiang New Year Pictures” records that in the early Ming Dynasty, Yang Husband (eunuch), a native of Yangqiju Village in the county, once returned to his hometown and opened a paper mill in Nanguan to make paper for New Year’s couplets. Later, he developed a business of printing five-color paper and paper horses. In addition, the raw materials for various types of dyeing sophora japonica, indigo and other pigments and the wood used for engraving are also abundant here, thus providing convenient conditions for the production of New Year paintings.

3. The Evolution of Wu Qiang’s Woodblock New Year Paintings

3.1. Ming and Qing Dynasties

The production of Wuqiang New Year paintings truly took shape during the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty. In the second year of Yongle of the Ming Dynasty (AD 1404), a large number of immigrants from Hongdong County, Shanxi Province came to Wuqiang, including the descendants of Fan Yinglong who worked in Shanxi’s “painting business”. According to Fan’s genealogy records, after they settled in Wuqiang, they ran the “Dongdaxing Old Painting Shop” in Nanguan, present-day old county. They discussed and cooperated with local painting industry personnel and vigorously developed paintings based on Shenma and couplets. The painting industry has greatly improved the artistic achievements of Wuqiang New Year pictures. The development of Wuqiang New Year paintings reached its peak during the Kangxi and Jiaqing years of the Qing Dynasty (1662-1820). At that time, after the Mid-Autumn Festival every year, art dealers from all over the country would gather in Wuqiang. All painting workshops in the county would sell in the front store and produce in the back room. After the Opium War broke out in 1840, the imperialist invasion of China began and intensified. Wuqiang folk painters created a large number of New Year paintings that reflected real life and described the people’s anti-imperialist war and peasant uprisings. “Gangxiangguan” (Figure 1) borrows the form of a folk flower party, using monkeys in official uniforms to play officials and servants of the Qing Dynasty. It satirizes the farces performed under the banner of “ban opium” [2].



Figure 1. Gangxiangguan.

3.2. Anti-Japanese period

During the July 7th Incident in 1937, the Japanese invaders occupied Wuqiang and the New Year painting industry was destroyed. Folk artists used paintbrushes and knives as weapons to draw and print New Year pictures to promote the Anti-Japanese

War, such as door gods and defending the motherland [3]. Some well-known painters and scholars also came to Wuqiang and collaborated with local artists to create. They engraved a large number of door god statues with the slogans of “Fight Japan and Save China” and a series of New Year paintings such as “Defend the Border Area”, “The Glory of Resistance Against Japan” and “Good News for Meritorious Service”. This opened a new chapter in which Wuqiang New Year pictures served the actual revolutionary struggle and inspired the fighting spirit of the anti-Japanese soldiers and civilians.

3.3. Liberation period

After the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, as the situation developed, in 1946, under the initiative of Jiang Feng, then director of the Fine Arts Department of the North China Lianda University College of Literature and Art, and Wang Yabo, director of the Liaison Department of the 11th District of Central Hebei Province, the Yiwu Qiang Institute was established in Xinji. “Jizhong New Year Painting Research Society” is based on New Year painting practitioners [4]. The Anti-Enemy Drama Society and the Fine Arts Department of North China Lianda University collaborated to create and print a large number of works that reflected realistic themes, such as “Brothers and Sisters Opening up Wasteland” and “White-Haired Girl”. In less than three months, more than 380,000 copies of the woodblock New Year paintings were issued.

3.4. New China period

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Wuqiang New Year pictures were still centered on Nanguan and gradually recovered and developed on the ruins of the war. In early 1950, the State Publishing Administration transferred some of the masters of engraving and mounting of Wuqiang New Year pictures from Popular Art Society to Beijing, including Xiao Furong, Li Changjiang, Zhang Fuwang, Han Wanjuan and Wu Zhaiqiang, and transferred them to Rongbaozhai Woodcut and Watermark Factory. They successively engraved Qi Baishi's “Shrimp” and Xu Beihong's “Horse”, and copied the “Han Xizai Night Banquet” and “Ladies with Hairpins” collected by the Forbidden City, bringing woodcut watermark traditional Chinese painting to a new level and arousing strong repercussions at home and abroad.

3.5. Reform and opening up period

With the deepening of reform and opening up and the continuous development of the commodity economy, people's appreciation level and perspective of New Year pictures have undergone significant changes. Woodblock New Year pictures have gradually fallen out of favor in rural areas where they were originally very popular. In order to adapt to the new market needs and firmly grasp the initiative in issuing Wuqiang New Year pictures, on the basis of retaining the traditional woodblock printing technology, offset printing technology has been introduced since the early 1980s. The content of offset-printed New Year pictures is still mainly based on traditional historical stories, legends of characters and auspicious landscape patterns.

4. The Artistic Characteristics of Wu Qiang's Woodblock New Year Pictures

Wuqiang New Year pictures are folk and local art developed under the influence of primitive farming methods, Buddhist ideas, traditional concepts and ancient national

habits. They inevitably reflect the cultural psychology of the nation [5]. Wuqiang New Year pictures are mostly made by folk artists and are based on local materials. They are rarely influenced by court and literati paintings, and have a strong local flavor. In terms of local differences, it is different from the rigorous and meticulous New Year paintings of Taohuawu in Suzhou, Jiangsu, and the beauty and beauty of Yangliuqing paintings in Tianjin. It is a pure peasant art with unique charm.

4.1. Full composition and exaggerated styling

Advocating perfection is our country's traditional aesthetic concept. As festive and customary decorative paintings, Wuqiang New Year pictures mostly pursue fullness and completeness in terms of form and composition. At the same time, this concept of wholeness, completeness and beauty is also reflected in the character modeling. When it comes to a certain character, it is generally necessary to draw the whole body, and avoid half a face, otherwise it will be considered incomplete. New Year paintings generally pay attention to symmetry and balance, and the concept of pairs is associated with beauty in the minds of Chinese people and is the embodiment of people's good wishes. Due to the lack of three-dimensionality in woodblock New Year pictures, exaggeration and deformation are mainly accomplished by emphasizing and increasing the proportion of major parts in the picture, while omitting and reducing the proportion of minor parts in the picture. Taking the depiction of characters as an example, they are mostly exaggerated and deformed based on natural forms. They are not limited to natural appearance and are not bound by natural phenomena. In terms of animal shapes, such as the liger to ward off evil spirits, the head is exaggerated and the eyes are deliberately sculpted. Although it is not a natural lion with big ears and eyes, it is majestic but not ferocious, charming and cute. This kind of modeling method not only highlights the theme image, but also is full of childlike childishness.

4.2. Rough lines and Bold colors

The style of Wuqiang New Year pictures is simple and rough, with bright and bright colors and exaggerated shapes. They skillfully use symbolic techniques to express auspicious wishes [6]. Its style has two forms of expression. One is mainly Yang carving, and also uses Yin carving. It uses contrasting expression techniques, combining hardness and softness, showing a simple, elegant and clumsy traditional style, such as "Tao Yuanming Loves Chrysanthemums" and "Fish Swallowing Ink When Washing Inkstones". The other type is expressed with smoother lines, with twists and turns, just like the single-line outline of a painting, such as "Guan Sheng Emperor", with vivid shapes and smooth lines. The main purpose of New Year pictures is to decorate the New Year pictures and increase the festive atmosphere. In particular, the main audience of Wuqiang New Year pictures are farmers. Therefore, painters will fully consider these factors when drawing New Year pictures, and add colors as they wish based on the colors of life. Express your emotions. No matter what kind of color is used, it is all about freehand brushwork rather than form, and does not pursue the reality of life. The use of colors is bold and exaggerated. In traditional concepts, red and green are symbols of prosperity, giving people a sense of joy and exuding a cheerful festive atmosphere.

4.3. Metaphorical symbol and meaning auspicious

Wuqiang New Year pictures are in line with the working people's desire to pray for a long life and good fortune, and express people's fervent hopes and wishes [7]. For

example, the peony and magnolia symbolize wealth and longevity, the pomegranate symbolizes fertility, the painting of five bats and peaches symbolizes “five blessings and longevity”, and the pine, crane and *Ganoderma lucidum* symbolize longevity. The ingenious allegorical symbol not only reflects the intelligence of folk artists, but also reflects the optimistic and positive life attitude of the people. In addition, folk New Year pictures have many other typical artistic features, such as stylization, randomness, generality, and abstraction of shapes, inheritance, and conceptuality of subject matter and content. In short, the style is simple, rough, and straightforward. Zhang Daoyi once summarized the auspicious meanings of folk art as “blessing, wealth, longevity, joy, and wealth; good fortune, harmony, safety, nourishment, and completeness” [2].

5. Innovative Design Practice of Wuqiang Woodblock New Year Pictures

China has been a country with agricultural civilization since ancient times, and New Year pictures are a manifestation of farming culture. The development of New Year pictures is closely related to farmers' lives. In the process of the country's new urbanization, the cultural heritage and cultural identity carried by New Year pictures will promote the new era. The cultural prosperity of rural areas is of great significance. In recent years, the themes of New Year paintings have become outdated and there is a lack of re-creation. The styles of paintings are single and repetitive, making it difficult to introduce new ones. They do not combine the needs of the times and people's spiritual consensus, and cannot arouse people's resonance [8]. By building them into traditional cultural brands and exploring their “advantages” and “values”, they can become unique cultural symbols that transcend the times. Provide strong support for promoting the national strategy of urbanization, local tourism and the industrialization of traditional crafts [9].

5.1. Wu Qiang's innovative strategy for woodblock New Year pictures

Keep pace with the times and combine with the current context to strengthen the cross-border thinking of the regeneration of Wuqiang New Year paintings. On the one hand, to strengthen the cross-border application of the overall brand of Wuqiang New Year paintings, we should take the initiative to marry well-known brands. For example, Bentley Motors has launched an interior design with a Chinese ink painting version [10]. This type of cross-border operation will help establish the high-end image of Wuqiang New Year paintings, and will also help expand the influence and popularity of Wuqiang New Year paintings. On the other hand, strengthening the cross-border capabilities of Wuqiang New Year paintings in derivative details will ultimately require the strong support of consumers. Keep pace with the times, combine tourism, and pay attention to the international trend of the regeneration of Wuqiang New Year paintings. Keep an eye on the future and actively expand online sales channels on the Internet. In today's society, online shopping has become an essential way of life for Chinese people. Some online shopping platforms have completely reached village-level users, and the purchase and sale of New Year paintings can also be completed online. With inheritors as the core, we should combine the protection and inheritance with politics and economy, such as Tujia cultural heritage and ethnic unity to jointly build a tourist city, vigorously develop the tertiary industry, and inject more power into the upgrading of the city's industrial structure [11].

5.2. Innovative design and implementation of Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures

Applying the artistic features in Wuqiang New Year pictures to modern visual communication design to express design concepts and visual design interests will make modern visual communication design more connotative and culturally valuable [12]. The innovative design of Wuqiang New Year pictures serves as the starting point for promoting intangible cultural heritage, allowing people to better understand the culture of traditional Chinese New Year pictures, and at the same time increasing the popularity of New Year pictures in society. By designing innovative and popular designs, the cultural connotation Carry out export and dissemination, promote traditional culture and achieve the inheritance and development of Wuqiang New Year paintings. Wuqiang New Year pictures created symmetrical composition, framed composition, literary and painting composition and scattered composition, with rigorous structure and rich changes [13]. The design elements were extracted based on the whip mace door god, its main modeling features and colors were refined, and transformed into an image of the door god with an engraving style. The door god is a symbol of justice and force. It means praying for blessings and ensuring peace. It also means exorcising ghosts, avoiding evil, and welcoming wealth. The characters of Qin Qiong and Jingde, the whip-machine door gods, have obvious facial features. Qin Qiong is on the right with a red face, and Jingde is on the left with a painted face. Both of them are flattened while retaining their original features, so that they do not lose their true colors. The important thing is to express the expression of the characters. Expressions and psychological characteristics, some choices are made in the image design, and through detail processing and deletion, the aesthetic needs of modern people can be met on the basis of retaining the original flavor. Two background colors of red and yellow are used, with strong color contrast, combined with current fashion trend elements, to add interest to the picture, forming two posters with the style of woodblock New Year pictures (Figure 2).



Figure 2. "Whip mace door god"Poster.

In a sense, New Year pictures are the predecessor of modern posters. Therefore, the visual elements of Wuqiang New Year pictures are highly consistent with modern poster design. We can organically combine the two, which will not only promote the excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also It can find a new direction for the development of Wuqiang New Year pictures [14].

As a cultural commodity, Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures should be combined with cultural products in the application of derivatives to achieve the purpose of spreading influence. Therefore, the selection of popular application carriers such as stamps, badges, and handbags is not only suitable for cultural creation in museums, but also for daily use, integrating collection value, use value, and

aesthetic value. Regardless of the material or craftsmanship, it can be widely disseminated, so that the value of folk art can be reflected and traditional excellent culture can be promoted (Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5).



Figure 3. stamp.



Figure 4. badge.



Figure 5. handbag.

6. Conclusions

The development of Wuqiang woodblock New Year pictures has a long history, which can be traced back to the Yuan Dynasty. After the development of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the types and systems of Wuqiang New Year pictures gradually matured. As a folk art, it has lasted for hundreds of years and is not only inseparable from being passed down from generation to generation. Folk artists are inseparable from the New Year picture creators who closely follow the themes of the times and create works that the people love to see and hear. Only innovation can activate the survival status of Wuqiang New Year paintings in modern society. Only when they are appreciated, understood and accepted by the people can they better find their own position and be passed on and continued [15]. At the same time, the professional knowledge of design is used to make Wuqiang's woodblock New Year paintings rejuvenate in the present, creating new paths and new inspirations for the dissemination and regeneration of traditional intangible cultural heritage.

Conflicts of Interest

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

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