

Application of Folk Art in the Nationalized Original Furniture Design

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Abstract. This paper researched the value, significance and ways to achieve innovation of modern furniture, by studying folk art applied to the nationalized original furniture design. First of all, this paper analyzed the three ways for the development of nationalized furniture. Then, it studied the significance of folk artistic furniture design, and the role of folk art in realizing the changes in style of nationalized furniture, crossover design and serving the public. Through the analysis of the design principle, this paper investigated the specific performance and requirements of “utensil”, “man” and “morality” in the nationalized original furniture design. The research will help to achieve nationalization, richness and innovation for modern furniture, and enhance the cultural value of the product.

Introduction

At present, China has become a big country in furniture manufacturing, export and consumption, and its furniture production capacity has accounted for a quarter of the world. However, with the development of the furniture industry entering the bottleneck period, problems such as product homogeneity and lack of design innovation have become increasingly prominent. Obviously, innovation has become an important driving force for the development of the furniture industry in the future. China's long-standing traditional culture, especially furniture culture, is undoubtedly the source and treasure house of original furniture design. In recent years, there have been many researches on traditional furniture inheritance and innovative design. Many local designers and enterprises have also introduced some original furniture products with traditional charm, which have been welcomed by the industry. But, original furniture design is still small in terms of quantity, scale and impact, opportunities and challenges coexist. This paper started with folk art, discussed its enlightenment and reference to modern furniture design, and provided ideas for nationalized original furniture design.

The Path of Nationalized Furniture Development

The nationalized furniture is a product form with specific national cultural individuality, which can reflect the aesthetic characteristics of the nation. There are three ways to inherit and develop nationalized furniture:

Classical Imitation Furniture

The classical furniture is directly carried by traditional culture, and is the root of modern furniture design. [1] This type of furniture still uses hardwood, which is extended to classic shapes and traditional craftsmanship. The furniture has a simple and luxurious character, which meets the needs of some people for classical high-end furniture.

New Chinese Furniture

Guided by the traditional furniture aesthetics concept, this type of furniture uses the traditional furniture culture symbols to improve the shape of classical furniture through the innovative application of materials and crafts, and realize the inheritance and reinterpretation of traditional

furniture culture. [2] The new Chinese furniture has an elegant, dignified and fashionable culture. However, due to the “redesign” of classical furniture, the degree of innovation is limited. And some new Chinese furniture pays too much attention to the ideological nature of the products, resulting in fewer consumer groups.

Folk Art Furniture

Compared with "elegant art", folk art is an art form created by laborers in daily life such as clothing, food, shelter, entertainment, etc. It is a refinement of the beauty of life and has a strong local flavor. Folk art is widely distributed, including folk fine arts, handicrafts, folk music, dance, Quyi, etiquette, and folk literature. Folk art has rich formal language and strong cultural connotation. It is the most influential and richest cultural system in traditional culture.

"Folk art is a kind of primitive culture"[3]. This art form, which is formed in people's labor and life, has a broad mass base and unique regional cultural characteristics. As the country's protection of "Intangible Cultural Heritage" has increased, the issue of the inheritance and innovation of folk art has become increasingly prominent. The folk art furniture style provides a solution to this problem. By drawing on the essence of regional culture, inosculating folk art and furniture design, the original furniture has a national, regional and contemporary sense, and thus can meet the needs of the widest range of consumers.

The Role of Folk Art in the Design of Nationalized Original Furniture

Xiao-tong Fei said, “Everything has a history of production and development. The modernity of things is inseparable from tradition. All modernity can find its roots in tradition.” [4] Nationalized original furniture design should also grasp the relationship between tradition and modernity, inheritance and innovation, and correctly view the application of folk art elements.

Continuing the Context of National Furniture Style

The style of nationalized furniture is not static. Although the Ming-style furniture represents the highest level of Chinese classical furniture, it has had a profound impact on later generations; so many people now think that the style of national furniture is the Ming style. However, from the development history of Chinese furniture, the evolution of furniture style is a dynamic process. It has its own distinct characteristics in different periods, such as the gorgeousness of the Tang Dynasty, the comeliness of the Song Dynasty, the heroic of the Yuan Dynasty, the meaningful of the Ming Dynasty, and the heavyness of the Qing Dynasty, etc. The Ming style is not the starting point for nationalized furniture, nor is it the end. The style of nationalized original furniture should be continuous, stylish and diverse. The application of folk art in furniture design can make the furniture have a sense of freshness in the context of national implication, forming a unique and changeable era characteristics.

Realizing the “Cross-Border” Innovation of Furniture Design

The brilliance of the Ming style furniture has made people have a relatively narrow understanding of nationalized furniture. In fact, China's traditional cultural categories, such as paper-cutting, engraving, and weaving art, have had more or less impact on traditional furniture design. Such as the carvings on the details of the Ming style furniture, the woven seat surface in the chair. Therefore, the nationalized original furniture design can not only draw nutrients from the traditional furniture culture, but also get inspiration from other sister art, such as folk art, and also make the furniture design show a distinct national character. For example, Figure 1 is Kucapollo's totem chair. Inspired by the art of paper-cutting, it imprints the styling elements directly onto the surface of the seat, creating a strong and stylish oriental charm.

Meet the "Popularization" of Furniture Aesthetics

Compared with traditional Ming furniture, which is exclusive to “elite” people, the nationalized furniture should aim at serving the public. As shown in Figure 2, the numerous folk furniture, although their materials are not good enough, but the structure is solid and the traditional culture is distinctive. They reflect the perfect combination of form beauty and use function, and are deeply loved by the people.



Fig. 1, Totem chair



Fig. 2, Folk furniture

In recent years, at the domestic and international trade fairs such as the Milan Furniture Fair, many excellent nationalized original furniture were exhibited, which has played a role in the inheritance and publicity of traditional culture. However, the symbolic meaning of many products is far greater than the practical significance. There is still a long way to go before mass production and popularization of nationalized original furniture. The characteristics of popularization of folk art are easy to be understood and accepted by people. Therefore, the method of designing folk art furniture is conducive to maximally satisfying the needs of consumers at different levels for nationalized original furniture and realizing the “popularization” of furniture consumer group.

The Application of Folk Art in the Design of Nationalized Original Furniture

The Book of Zhou Yi recorded, “the utensil is from Immetaphysical, and the morality is from Metaphysical.” The combination of “utensil” and “morality” is a high-level summary of the traditional cultural connotation of our country, and also a concentrated expression of the design concept. Taking folk art as the source, constructing a set of highly recognizable and popular cultural symbol system and realizing the integration with modern furniture, is an effective way to realize the innovation of nationalized original furniture.

The Creative Design of “Utensil” from Immetaphysical

The “device” includes both “shape” and “color”, while also considering the influence of material factors.

The shape can be divided into “material shape” and “immaterial shape”. The tangible artistic elements in traditional performing arts, traditional art and handicrafts are “material shape”, such as paper-cutting. Some of the images in folk music and folk literature are shaped like “immaterial shape”, such as “high mountains and flowing water”. In the design, we can digest and refine the morphological elements, and adopt the combination, simplification, deformation and other modeling methods to achieve the fusion with the furniture form.

Arnheim pointed out that “specific colors have certain meanings in any culture.” [5] In our folk art, the five colors of green, red, yellow, white and black have typical symbolic significance. The use of national colors in modern furniture can evoke emotional resonance and highlight the cultural temperament of products. The sofa shape of Figure 3 combined with the embroidered material reflects the unity of shape and color, as well as the reproduction of national culture.

In order to highlight the regional cultural characteristics, the furniture material should be made locally. In addition, the application of new materials, such as Bamboo Zephyr Board and black bamboo, can give modern furniture a sense of fashion and eco-friendly.

Humanized design in Furniture Design

In the furniture design activities, man is both a subject and an object. Furniture design should meet both the user's functional and aesthetic needs.

The satisfaction of the use function should be guided by ergonomics. In traditional furniture design, the scale of furniture is based on experience, and some structural relationships are contrary to ergonomics. For example, the straight backrest of the fauteuil gives a sense of majesty and solemnity, but in modern furniture design, it should be avoided. Secondly, it is necessary to design the functional parts of the products according to the actual needs of modern people, such as the design of computer tables and chairs. Through the reasonable design of the furniture size and functional components, the purpose of the object is achieved.

The good aesthetics of furniture is based on the harmonious relationship between product shape, color, material and decoration. The aesthetics of a nation are essentially the same, which is why we can perceive whether furniture has national characteristics. [6] After a long period of aesthetic accumulation, the beauty of "the golden mean" and the beauty of "harmony" have become our common national aesthetic psychology.



Fig. 3, Embroidered sofa



Fig. 4, Lotus table and chair



Fig. 5, Folding stool

The beauty of the "the golden mean" is to demand appropriateness and balance in the design of furniture. It is required that the choice of folk art elements should be appropriate, and the components of furniture should be balanced and not aroused. The beauty of "harmony" requires the integration of folk art elements and furniture forms to be natural, not to give people a sense of patchwork. Coordination between the various elements of furniture, the whole and the part, and the pursuit of the harmonious integration of furniture-people-environment. As shown in the design of the lotus table and chair in Figure 4, the lotus pattern commonly used in folk art is abstractly deformed, and it is isomorphic with the form of the table and chair. The combination method is also handled ingeniously, reaching the beauty of harmony between local and partial, partial and overall.

The Expression of Morality from Metaphysical

In the relationship between "utensil" and "morality", "utensil" is an external, visible representation, while "morality" is internal and implicit. "morality" is equivalent to "lasting appeal", which is the meaning of charm, imagery, connotation and symbol. In the design of nationalized furniture, we should always use "morality" as the center of design, and then conceive the formal elements of furniture, so that the cultural connotation can be permeated throughout the design of furniture, and the artistic conception and charm of furniture can be naturally revealed.

The richness of Chinese folk art can give a wide range of cultural meanings to modern furniture. For instance, auspicious patterns are common in paper-cutting art, folk embroidery and sculpture art. Its form is rich, there are animals and plants, such as peony, peony, etc., there are words, such as Fu Lu Shou xi, etc., there are symbols, such as auspicious cloud, Chinese knot, etc., but these patterns all

convey people's yearning for a better life and have the symbolic meaning common to traditional culture. [7]

The "morality" of furniture should also be advancing with the times, reflecting the cultural concept of the new era. The folding stool of Figure 5 is as a whole as a traditional pier. The stool uses a manual origami method to facilitate the replacement and recyclable felt as the main material. The folk straw cushion is used to incorporate the low-carbon and environmentally-friendly ecological concept in the furniture design.

Summary

Tagore once said, "All nations have an obligation to show their national things to the world." [8] Under the background of building a strong socialist culture and promoting the prosperity of national culture, it is an effective means to highlight the nationality of modern furniture by taking the inheritance of folk art as an opportunity to reshape the furniture design culture.

Modern furniture design, by learning from folk art and absorbing its cultural value factors, should look at the continuity of national culture from a dynamic perspective, and serve the public as its own responsibility. At the same time, by merging the essence of folk art, it will help to improve the richness of modern furniture, and innovate the furniture style with both nationality and fashion, and continue the connotation of national traditional culture. In turn, the integration of utensil and morality, the harmonious integration of "furniture-people-environment", and the construction of a nationalized furniture culture creative industry system will be realized.

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