Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF UKRAINE

KHARKIV STATE ACADEMY OF DESIGN AND ARTS

Faculty of Design and Architecture

Department of Graphic Design

LiaoYuxuan

The Traditional Symbol of the Winged Horse as a Source for the Formation of Contemporary Poster Imagery

Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of **Master**

Specialty B2 Design

Educational and Professional Program "Visual Communication Design"

The qualification work contains the results of independent research.

The use of ideas, results, and texts of other authors is properly referenced.

Signed by: liao yuxuan 2F21D729281D408... Full Name

(signature)

Scientific Supervisor: Volodymyr Pogorelchuk,

PhD in Art Studies, Professor

Kharkiv – 2026

CONTENTS

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

	INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER 1.	**Research on Winged Horse Motifs and Research Methods**	11
1.1	Differences between Objects in Studies of Origins	11
1.2	Lessons from Studies of Types and Techniques	12
1.3	Lessons from Contemporary Design Studies	12
1.4	Adapting Earlier Project and Colour Methods	13
1.5	Research Methods	14
	Conclusions to Chapter 1	14
CHAPTER 2.	**Contemporary Transformation of Winged Horse Graphics and Design Principles**	16
2.1	From a Motif to a Poster Image	16
2.2	Formal Analysis of the Main Reference Image	16
2.3	Stable Structure and Variable Content	17
2.4	Mirroring and Direction in the Design	18
2.5	The Interpretive Structure of the Four Versions	19
2.6	Colour Organisation and Visual Hierarchy	20
2.7	Joint Recognition of Lettering and Graphic Form	21
	Conclusions to Chapter 2	22
CHAPTER 3.	**Winged Horse Poster Design and Evaluation**	23
3.1	Overall Concept and Design Process	23
3.2	Form and Colour in Archetype	23
3.3	Textile Ornament in Exchange	24
3.4	Cloud Curves and Colour in Localisation	25
3.5	Expressing Qinghai Landscapes through the Design	26
3.6	Organisation and Purpose of the Palette Sheet	26
3.7	Composition of the Vertical Posters with Chinese Characters	27
3.8	Spatial Design of the Panoramic Posters	28
3.9	Comparing the Two Poster Formats	29
3.10	Production Conditions and Further Validation	30
	Conclusions to Chapter 3	30

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

CONCLUSIONS 32

LIST OF REFERENCES 33

APPENDIX A (analogues) 34

APPENDIX B (sketch and project proposal) 35

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

ABSTRACT

LiaoYuxuan The Traditional Symbol of the Winged Horse as a Source for the Formation of Contemporary Poster Imagery— Manuscript.

Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of Master, specialty B2 Design, Educational and Professional Program "Visual Communication Design." — Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts. Kharkiv, 2026.

The winged horses are depicted on textiles, frescoes, and metallic items. They have the general body form of a horse.Their wings, ribbons and curling structures also express an imagination that extends beyond reality. Their poses, ornament and arrangements vary across different media. These variations offer rich material for contemporary design. They also raise a question about how designers can respect the source while introducing new ideas. This paper examines how a traditional winged horse symbol can become a contemporary poster image. It focuses on the relationship between recognisable form, reorganised ornament and page composition. The main visual reference is an image identified as a winged horse ornament from gilded bronze horse harness fittings. The fittings were excavated from a Liao dynasty tomb at Shazigou in Aohan Banner, Inner Mongolia. This study is also based on literature related to the Han and Tang winged horses and winged animals on the Silk Road. Winged horses' brocades in the Northern Dynasties until the Tang dynasty period are discussed. Additionally, design application of the elements of Dunhuang is examined. These sources serve as an aid in recognizing formal elements and possible design methods. The study involves literature review and image comparison as well as the practice of design.The analysis first separates the main visual reference from supporting comparisons. It then examines the relationships among the head, wings, limbs and joints. This step identifies the features that should remain recognisable and the ornament that can change. The method connects historical material with contemporary design. It gives new visual treatments a clear basis. It also avoids treating images from different periods, materials and cultural settings as products of a single source.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

The design uses one basic form. The raised head, open wings, jointed legs, bent joints, and horizontal movement are maintained. Modifications to the design of the internal decoration and colors generate four interpretations: Archetype, Exchange, Localization, and Reimagination. All four have a common silhouette, yet all are focused differently. The Archetype maintains the blue color scheme of the source image. Blue and ivory contrast create an effect of form and motion. This design doesn't consider the blue reproduction as a proof of the original color of the bronze sculpture. The Exchange is inspired by the rhythm of pearl borders and decorative fabrics.It includes rows of dots in the design continuously. Red, black and gold produce levels of decoration. Localisation makes use of cloud shapes and also the colours of minerals related to Dunhuang. Green, cinnabar red and ochre yellow enhance the curves of the design. Reimagination makes use of the colours related to Qinghai’s lakes, snow covered mountains, grasslands and blooming fields. These colours make a brighter expression of the design. Four names above are used to refer to interpretations of the designs. However, they do not mean the historical stages that have been confirmed. Four vertical posters including Chinese characters, four panoramic posters and one colour palette poster are produced. Vertical posters include large Chinese characters for “winged horse” on top of a horse figure diagonally.This arrangement creates visual tension around the theme. The panoramic posters organise space through mountains, water, reflections and information at both ends. The palette sheet explains the main and supporting colours of each version. This essay discusses the evaluation of the finished images. Lettering and figures overlap, landscapes composition, consistency in the whole series, and legibility of the information.

The study implies that having a static shape and varied decorations makes it possible to unite traditional themes into a common visual language. Nonetheless, the analysis needs to separate the historical facts from literary interpretations and additions of the designer. The findings prove that one original shape can be used to create different visual variations. In addition, they demonstrate partial obscuring, small texts on the panoramic posters, and deviations between the palette sheet and

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

practice.The design process and evaluation method may offer a useful reference for posters based on other traditional animal motifs. Audience research and print testing are still needed to assess communication outcomes.

Keywords: winged horse motif; traditional motifs; graphic transformation; poster design; colour system; cultural translation

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the research: There are certain traditional designs which provide good source materials for modern graphic design. This is because their unique designs have a way of relating a newly designed product to the traditional one. Nevertheless, the designer has to be cautious when using these traditional designs because there could be no good correlation between the two. Too much simplification could render the motifs unrecognizable.

The winged horse serves as a good case in point for this issue as it has both the animal figure for recognition and its wings and curved shapes that indicate something beyond the realm of mundane imagination. Historical instances reveal the differences in the way its pose, decoration, and layout have been treated in the past, providing opportunities for poster design today.

For the present analysis, an image of a winged horse decoration from the Liao dynasty gilded bronze horse harness decoration will serve as the main visual source. In addition to it, literature related to textiles and Dunhuang images will be taken into consideration as sources that can explain certain approaches to design.

Purpose of the research: The research focuses on creating a modern poster system through the use of a traditional winged horse image. The system retains the distinctive outline, while changing the decorations within, colors, and compositions.

To achieve this purpose, the **following objectives** are set:

1.Identification of the primary visual inspiration and differentiating it from other historic inspirations that support the primary.

2.Analysis of the motif silhouette, posture, wings, jointed segmented limbs.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

3.Setting design parameters for maintaining the basic form while modifying ornament and color.

4.Creation of four graphic inspirations; Archetype, Exchange, Localization and Reimagination.

5.Use of four vertical poster designs, four panoramic poster designs and a palette sheet in applying the above graphic inspirations.

6.Critique based on origin, recognizable form, differences between the variations, consistencies within the series, clarity of information and production requirements.

Object of the research –The research analyses conventional winged horse themes, as well as their implementation in posters. The collection will include the chosen image of the Liao horse harness decoration, along with appropriate examples from history and finished designs.

Subject of the research –Design relationships between the constant silhouette, internal decoration variations, colour arrangement and poster composition are examined in this study. The design relationships that aid in recognition and continuity in a series are also investigated.

Chronological framework of the research –Historical context would be defined by comparative elements from the Han Dynasty, Northern Dynasties, Sui and Tang dynasties, and Liao dynasty. The primary visual context would pertain to the Liao Dynasty. Previous elements could serve as a comparison for form and ornamentation. Contemporary context is based on the graphic development and poster design done for this project in 2026. The four design interpretations do not indicate a definite chronological sequence.

Territorial framework of the research –The primary source is from the Liao tomb in Shazigou of Aohan Banner, Inner Mongolia. The comparison is based on Dunhuang as well as the areas studied by research on silk road textiles. The

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

Qinghai landscapes serve as the source of color inspiration for Reimagination. The research utilizes these regional relations to make explanations regarding the design features. It does not assume that all the examples have similar origins or meanings.

Research methods: The methodology involved reviewing literature, comparing images and designing. The literature review categorizes the sources based on whether they discuss the source of inspiration, motif types, production methods, and contemporary design application.

Direction, posture, proportions of the body, wing construction, curled joints, segmented legs, and negative spaces are evaluated in the image analysis. Comparison will show what needs to be retained and what can vary.

The design method creates four variations out of one base form. This is then applied to two types of posters. Previous work has provided techniques for form simplification, regional color adjustment and proportionate color distribution. The assessment evaluates six areas: origin, recognizable form, variation differences, consistency in series, information readability and production requirements. The assessment deals with the finished images.

Practical significance of the research: The research provides a practical approach to adapting traditional animal motifs for contemporary posters. The approach connects source identification with graphic analysis and design decisions. A stable silhouette supports continuity, while changes in ornament and colour distinguish individual versions.

The completed work includes four graphic interpretations, eight posters and one palette sheet. These outcomes demonstrate how the same motif can work within typography and landscape compositions. The evaluation also identifies issues that require further development. These issues include obscured details, small supporting text and differences between the core palettes and their poster

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

applications. Designers can use the process and evaluation criteria when developing similar visual systems.

Publications on the topic:NO.

Structure and scope of the thesis： The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of references containing **8 items**, and an illustration album containing **10 items**.

Chapter 1 reviews the literature and establishes the research methods. Chapter 2 analyses the selected motif and explains the principles of its contemporary transformation. Chapter 3 presents the four interpretations, the two poster series and the palette sheet. It also evaluates their visual relationships and production limitations.

In the current formatted version, the main body of the research, from the introduction through the conclusions, comprises **25 pages**. The total volume with preliminary sections, references and appendices is 37 **pages**.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

CHAPTER 1

Research on Winged Horse Motifs and Research Methods

1.1 Differences between Objects in Studies of Origins

Li Xizhen and Sun Zhiqin analyze winged horses on fabrics dating back to the late Northern Dynasties era up until the Sui and Tang dynasties. Li Xizhen and Sun Zhiqin's analysis is based on archaeological evidence and written documents. The researchers consider the Sasanian Persia to be a direct source for this motif. Moreover, the authors find more remote links to the winged horse, which originally belonged to the ancient Greek mythology and had been modified and used by other cultures. This motif was subjected to religious and artistic changes while spreading to West and Central Asia and reached China due to weaving skills and Sogdian trade .

In comparing the winged horses of the Han Dynasty and those of the Tang Dynasty, Tang Hailin observes that the Han carvings of winged horses on stones and pictorial bricks usually possess a combination of simplicity in wings and strong movements . In the case of Tang designs of winged horses that are derived from Sasanian influence, greater importance is given to the layered wings, pearl borders, and ornamentations. The above comparison proves that the distinctive qualities of winged horse can be varied and are not necessarily restricted to specific characteristics.

Wu Zengbao discusses the designs of winged beasts on the Silk Road during the Han and Tang eras. Textiles are at the heart of the research. Other materials such as metalware and stones are used for comparison purposes. The investigation looks at local and foreign aspects . The research on winged beasts is associated with the research on winged horses; however, they are different. Winged beasts consist of more than one composite animal. A discussion on the Han winged beasts as a whole does not directly help in establishing the ancestry of the winged horse brocade.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

1.2 Lessons from Studies of Types and Techniques

ZHAO Aiqian & ZHAO Feng have categorized the motifs of winged horses in brocades from the period of Northern Dynasties to Tang Dynasty into several kinds. In addition, they make comparisons between the images in various media . From their materials, we learn that the pearl roundel is not an absolutely indispensable framework for all winged horse motifs.

The classification provides useful suggestions for designing a poster. The roundel in a circle draws the viewer's attention to the center. A design without roundels forms a continuous rhythm extending outward. The shape of the source image for the project is elongated and asymmetric. It is appropriate for a horizontal layout. The second version employs the rhythm of pearl dots but not the circular textile border.

The materials and methods of production affect the appearance of traditional motifs. There are new constraints when it comes to digital media; for instance, there is resolution and size of the output. Some of the fine details of the old motif will not appear clearly on the poster. Therefore, the designer will have to modify the image.

Wang Ju and Li Linshan studied and preserved a Tang blue-winged horse tapestry at Gansu Provincial Museum. It illustrates how factors such as deterioration of the fabric and contamination affect image recognition. They reconstructed the image using the remnants of two fairly complete horses . This research differentiates the characteristics of the craft from those added during the process of reproduction. The differentiation is made in great detail when analyzing the reference image.

1.3 Lessons from Contemporary Design Studies

A multi-level iconographical analysis method is used by Dong Miao in examining the representation of winged horses on Tang textiles. Three methods have been suggested in this analysis; reconstruction of the structure, extraction of the selected symbols and transfer of the original source image with some modifications . Each method requires varying levels of modifications. Preserving the whole image assists in identifying the motif. The extraction of parts enables the motif to fit into

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

the new medium. Reorganisation of the structure helps in generating new relationships.

Zhang Ling and Yu Yangjinghua investigate Dunhuang winged horses. The design elements of form, color and cultural implication are identified.They use shape grammar to develop several proposals. They also use questionnaires to select and refine the designs . In the present project, formal factors establish the overall silhouette and movement. Colour distinguishes the versions. Cultural meaning informs the design without requiring an accumulation of historical elements.

Wang Taidi and Ye Xinyue's Design Based on a Tang Red-Ground Winged Horse Motif combines traditional motifs, established colour relationships and modern clothing structures. The work also uses artificial intelligence to assist motif extraction and transformation . It offers a reference for colour organisation and the use of intelligent design tools.

1.4 Adapting Earlier Project and Colour Methods

The earlier project proposed a sequence of form simplification, regional colour adaptation and scene development. This project applies those steps through silhouette redrawing, four palette systems and two visual settings based on Chinese characters and landscapes. Colour proportion analysis provides a particularly useful method. The same number of hues can produce different effects when background colours and small accents occupy different areas. Each palette therefore identifies a main colour, supporting colours and accent colours. The proposed ratios serve as design references for comparing the versions. These are not statistical figures for the historical use of color or the ratio of pixels in the posters. The distinction is between design choices and history.

This fourth version incorporates the colors of lake blue, blue-green, snow white, and yellow, and the combination implies the landscape of Qinghai. This combination implies a modern regional understanding of colors. Its approach is related to that of the previous paper on the use of colors in clothes, buildings, and folklore. Nevertheless, it is not a universal standard for all cultures of Qinghai.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

1.5 Research Methods

Literature review starts with classifying the sources according to their objects of research. Origins research describes different backgrounds for imagery of winged horses. Technical research reveals the connection between image and materials used. The design research helps define the ways of transformation. Earlier manuscript offers a part of the methodology of the project.

Image analysis is carried out using the reference images along with the design. This is done in terms of direction, stance, wing formation, joints, segmented body parts, negative space, and ornamentation. The pearl dots may be turned into internal borders, while the cloud curls might be incorporated as bends in long lines.

The design process involves the generation of ideas, their testing and further refinement through practice. The evaluation is based on six criteria: provenance, identifiable form, distinguishable variants, series consistency, legible information and producibility.

Conclusions to Chapter 1

This chapter sets out the historical and methodological foundation of the project. In the literature it can be seen that winged horses are subject to change according to periods, materials and geographical locations. In origin studies it can be explained what the relationship is, while textile studies help understand how the technique of production influences the visual appearance. The contemporary studies of design help to apply methods of extraction and restructuring. These sources help in comparison but it does not prove the fact that there is an origin for all winged horses. The chosen Liao harness ornament is different from other examples of textile and Dunhuang. The previous project gives methods of simplifying form, colour adaptation for regions and analysis of colour proportion. In this project these methods are applied along with literature review, image analysis and design. Six criteria for evaluation of the outcome of the study are set up in this chapter.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

CHAPTER 2
Contemporary Transformation of Winged Horse Graphics and Design Principles

2.1 From a Motif to a Poster Image

Decorative Motif and Poster Image have different roles. Classical decorative motifs use repetition to decorate a surface. A poster should communicate the information hierarchy right away. If the winged horse is part of a textile design system, then it does not necessarily need to communicate any narrative by itself. However, as the focal point of the poster, the way it will be positioned relative to the poster title will determine how we read it. The task will include not only drawing but also reorganizing relationships between elements.

In the context of this paper, the imagery of the poster should be considered as an act of organizing and reorganizing design. While each motif is independent, nevertheless, the visual weight of the motif must be changed once it appears in the poster. In the case of the vertical format, the big title gets precedence. The winged horse motif adds color and motion. For the horizontal format, the use of landscape and open space creates the environment.

Development of the historical image is not comparable to the transformation of design within the current project. Both activities can use common methods; however, they are separate actions. The introduction of pearl spots and regional colors is a modern artistic technique. It will never help to restore the actual look of the object. Artistic creativity should be explained clearly. More modifications need more detailed explanations of the difference between design and the reference.

2.2 Formal Analysis of the Main Reference Image

In the reference image, there are two horses in side profile that have wings. One of these horses is selected for use in the project. There is an upward movement in the head and the forelegs are extended forward. The hind end of the body and the elongated limbs move towards the back side. Such elements give a horizontal pull

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

to the image. It does not have the continuity that characterizes a real animal's body. It has solid shapes and spaces.

Identification starts from the horse's head. Eye, open mouth, and short lines behind the neck create direction. Head has to show the directionality of the animal, even though it has no internal decoration at all. Redrawn version should preserve the general principle of the head and body relationship. Any modification of eye and mouth should fit into that framework. Silhouette and movement of the legs serve as the foundation for formal comparison. Exaggerated image cannot depend solely on the description "winged horse."

The spiral formation of the curl in the body serves as a focal point for the viewer. It brings together the curvatures of the neck, forelimbs, and body. The segmented creature is endowed with a relatively obvious center due to the curl. Longer wing formations are repeated at various lengths. The ends of these formations extend backward.

Segmentation is an additional fixed characteristic. There are some gaps between the hooves, legs, and body. The recognition process is based not on contact but on orientation of these elements. Elimination of all gaps would turn the picture into a heavy one. An enlargement of all gaps would turn the picture into scattered pieces. The main idea of this work lies in the organization of these spaces based on movement. Each part may get its own color.

2.3 Stable Structure and Variable Content

These four images are united by the position of the head, the whole proportion of the body, the wings positioning, segmented legs and main curl points. This creates the structure level. The identity is maintained despite the variations of colors and decorations inside. It gives an opportunity to compare all four variations. Firstly, the viewers notice the same underlying figure. Then they observe its variations.

Major alterations are seen in the interior ornamentation and colour layers. The first alteration involves the use of rather uniform solid colour and gentle curves. The second alteration incorporates dot rows and red and black sections. The third

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

alteration focuses on the movement of green, cinnabar red, and ochre lines.The fourth introduces brighter blue-green relationships and geometric dots and lines. These changes need to follow the direction of the source silhouette. Decorative lines should not cut arbitrarily across the head or disrupt the relationship between the legs. More elaborate ornament also requires clear gaps. Otherwise, internal detail can overwhelm the animal's silhouette.

The degree of variation also needs control. A colour change alone may not explain each version's research connections. Replacing the pose, ornament and colours together would remove their shared identity. The project addresses this tension through a stable silhouette, moderate changes to ornament and clear colour differences. Internal rhythm and colour contrast become the main variables. Viewers can identify the shared motif through its outline. Details next clarify each design interpretation.

These variations employ three recurring motifs, namely, flowers, pearl dots, and cloud curves. Flowers act as localized interruptions. Pearl dots denote the direction of curves. Curved lines organize the voids between the body parts. The design uses these motifs based on their area, location, and interaction with the horse. The text describes new motifs based on their ornamental uses. It does not give them meanings which have not been established by literature.

2.4 Mirroring and Direction in the Design

Mirroring is a definite design alteration. Mirroring preserves the overall proportions and serves as a visual guidance. In the panoramic posters, the horse moves from the left towards the center. The movement of the horse creates a link between the figure and the title on the right side. In the vertical posters, the graphic moves diagonally through the lettering.

Mirror image alters the path and point of focus of the movement. Mirror image also necessitates a reevaluation of the interior design. A particular color area that could have been appropriate for the initial direction will now be closer to the title or complex background in case of the reflection. Contrast is also affected. This project

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

uses the right direction of movement. It uses big body colors and small lines on the forelegs and wings. There is thus no focus only on the head.

This diagonal positioning in the vertical posters also affects the connection between the illustration and the edges of the page. A completely horizontal figure may take up too much space on the width and interfere with the title. A tilted position gives the opportunity for the figure to pass through different levels of the lettering. The tilt goes in line with the direction and proportion of the figure itself. It is not just a purely decorative element. Too steep a tilt makes it difficult to differentiate the legs and the wings. The poster employs color contrast in the lettering in order to maintain the silhouette of the horse.

2.5 The Interpretive Structure of the Four Versions

The series is titled through Archetype, Exchange, Localisation and Reimagination. Archetype is the visual ground zero; Exchange brings in textiles ornamentation; and Localisation fuses the visual language with that of another region.Reimagination brings the traditional structure into contemporary landscape colours. They represent the amount and type of interpretation by the designer. They are not organized into a historical timeline.

Archetype stresses its formal relationship with the image that serves as a reference point. The blue of Archetype is taken from the already created reproduction. The pale curls and flowers form an entirely new internal composition. Exchange pays attention to the decorative links between various materials. Its pearl lines and red, black, and gold connections relate to the comparative textile. Both images feature some modern interpretations. However, their difference relates only to the emphasis on one aspect or another.

The localisation version makes use of the images in Dunhuang along with design research. It takes into account the cloud shapes and the effect of minerals. The localisation version does not try to emulate the complete color scheme of a particular mural in the caves. The project did not involve taking measurements for the colors used in the murals. The reimagination version involves associations of the

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

land of Qinghai province. The horse shape is retained with the increase in brightness of colors.

All four interpretations represent one form in four different ways. It facilitates the comparison process because it is easy to see the distinctions against the stable form. Distinctions make it clear what the commonality is. In order to understand all four versions of the object, viewers do not need to learn complex historical paths before they start looking at the series. First, they will see the continuity from the pictures and then will get information about the base of each version.

2.6 Colour Organisation and Visual Hierarchy

Colour indicates variations, divides spaces and determines visual emphasis in this design project. Every colour scheme is made up of one primary colour, light shades and accents. Yet, all the four schemes have different tonal associations. Archetype revolves around blue and ivory tones. In Exchange, the presence of red and black brings about some weightiness. In Localisation, the tonal association is warm green and ochre. The scheme for Reimagination is enhanced by blue, green and yellow tones, giving the impression that it is brighter. This is achieved through the use of colour combination.

These ratios are not identical in all palettes. For instance, the first one is made up of cobalt blue, which accounts for about 55% of the whole palette, while the warm ivory takes 25% of the whole. Textile blue and deep navy account for the other percentage. In the second one, the major colors include oxblood red, which is almost black, and antique gold. The third one is made up of mineral green, cinnabar, warm ivory, and earth ochre. The fourth palette comprises lake blue, turquoise, snow white, and grass green.Lettering area, background colour and graphic size all affect the final balance.

The background receives attention alongside the main figure. Warm or cool pale backgrounds make the black lettering clearer in the vertical posters. They also allow the coloured horse to emerge from the large characters. The panoramic posters separate a dark sky from a pale water surface. Supporting text occupies the open area

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

above. The horse stands in a quieter pale area below. A background too close to the figure's tone can merge its silhouette with the landscape. Excessive contrast can make the background dominate the theme. Colour decisions therefore need to consider both the figure and its setting.

2.7 Joint Recognition of Lettering and Graphic Form

The Chinese characters “翼马” first communicate the theme. They also act as visual forms within the page. Larger characters and thicker strokes create a contrast with the horse. The horse and the characters do not share the same structure. Their forms also differ considerably from the motif. The lettering design therefore gives priority to recognisable Chinese character shapes. Artistic treatment remains, but the design does not arbitrarily remove or alter essential components.

The vertical posters place the two characters one above the other. Their enlarged forms and narrow spacing create a black framework across most of the page. Curves on the horse are diagonal and cross through the big letters, creating motion continuity. Both elements combine to set the theme. Neither element is serving as illustration or a caption for each other. Lettering should be strong enough that the viewers start looking at letters before observing the horse. Overlap creates a problem for the silhouette of the animal. This needs to be taken into account while designing.

The panoramic posters form three layers of information. The small Chinese title is found to the right.The number and English version name appear in the upper left. A short description explains the series concept. The Chinese title identifies the theme. The English name distinguishes the version. The description explains the range of variation. The project consistently uses Archetype, Exchange, Localisation and Reimagination as the English names. The palette sheet uses more specific material and regional labels to explain its references. The two sets of labels maintain the same interpretive relationships.

The contemporary poster transformation needs to address stable form, variable ornament, direction and colour together. This paper retains the major structures of

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

the reference image. It explains mirroring, internal ornament and background organisation as distinct decisions. The four versions share a foundation and use different comparative relationships. Lettering and landscape are parts of the poster image rather than additional decoration. These principles provide a basis for assessing obstruction, colour differences and reading hierarchy. They also provide shared criteria for the two completed poster series.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

The current chapter provides an understanding of how to make use of the chosen winged horse in contemporary poster design based on the selected interpretation of the archetype. The raised head, spread wings, divided limbs and joints serve as key structural elements of the design. Their relationship maintains recognition in all four interpretations. Ornamentation and colour become controlled variations of the consistent structure. Mirroring is responsible for changing the direction of the movement and the diagonal placement enables interaction between the figure and large Chinese characters. Such variations are caused by compositional needs and should be justified in terms of contemporary design principles. Archetype, Exchange, Localisation and Reimagination represent different types of interpretations. The names of the types do not represent any chronological order. Color organization takes into account backgrounds, spaces and supportive information. Thus, the current chapter views poster design as the relationship between graphic elements rather than a single motif.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

CHAPTER 3
Winged Horse Poster Design and Evaluation

3.1 Overall Concept and Design Process

Multiple interpretations of one form show how a traditional image can enter contemporary communication. The four posters do not illustrate different stories. These posters concentrate on form, ornamentation, color, and space. One can study the individual posters. One can also compare all the four posters simultaneously. The posters have a common base. The explanations help to link these changes to the original work. This link contributes to the academic value of the posters.

The process started with an analysis of the source illustration and the comparison examples. This project involved four illustrations, palette design, and creation of vertical and panoramic layouts. The illustrations and layouts went through a number of revisions. Some initial suggestions had some flaws. Changes later on brought the pose closer to the source illustration and improved Chinese letter recognition as well as alignment with the visual motif of the background.

Graphics four offer common assets to the series. The vertical poster and panoramic poster have two application systems. The palette offers basis for comparisons and production. The three elements form part of a small design project. Its completeness relies on how well source graphics, applications and design directives fit together. It does not rely on creation of further products. The results do not include a full brand identity guide and cultural tourism operations. The project can therefore be described as a visual system for winged horse posters.

3.2 Form and Colour in Archetype

The primary color employed in archetype is cobalt blue. The warm color of the ivory and spaces within helps to outline the inner structures. Textile blue and navy help give the painting more depth. The colors work together to produce an integrated feeling. This makes it easy to focus on the head, wings, and legs of the figure. The

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

curling leaves and flower details are used to create interest when looking closely. It makes this one easier to identify among the four due to the controlled use of color divisions.

The palette is not a reconstruction of the colors of the original metallic object. Its blue color is because of the blue and white reproduction of it. It carries on the look of an image being circulated now. Keeping its color will enable people to relate the first image with the reference. It cannot be taken as proof that the actual artifact was blue. The archetype forms the formal basis of the other three images.

In the vertical Archetype poster, the large black letters are presented against a light and warm background. The blue horse is seen as going through the lettering. The light lines cut across the letters and make several levels of the poster. The panoramic poster makes use of a dark blue sky and light water to broaden the colour palette. The horse is positioned within the open light space. Both posters utilise the same colours but for varying spatial compositions.

3.3 Textile Ornament in Exchange

Exchange employs shades of oxblood red, dark almost black, and antique gold as the primary colors. Ivory provides accents for details. A little blue is added to offset the strong warm colors. The pearl dots enhance the curvature of the motif. Red and black fields alternate. The dots and colour areas increase decorative density. They respond to research on pearl borders, ribbons and wing decoration . The design employs the language of visuals from existing designs. It does not copy a textile design brush stroke by brush stroke.

It does not make the horse confined within a fully formed circle. Continuous dots are made on internal boundaries. The pearl border becomes internal rhythm instead of being a decorative element that is external to the image. This changes its function and placement. The design keeps the same structural feature of the comparison material where the pattern of dots are used. The extended motion of the flying horse is kept intact in this design. An imposed circular frame will distort its proportions.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

There is uniformity in the tones used for the dark red shapes and black texts in the vertical poster. The intersection of these tones is not as clear as in Archetype. Pink-grey local color application helps in minimizing obstruction of the colors. They also incorporate other colors that are not on the color palette sheet. The panorama poster incorporates black sky, red and gold mountains, and brown horse. This helps in creating a unifying environment. The design intends to balance the environment and information hierarchy.

3.4 Cloud Curves and Colour in Localisation

Localisation utilises mineral green as the key color. Cinnabar, warm ivory and earth ochre form the internal rhythm. Dark brown gives deep accents. Exchange utilises dense dot rows. Localisation pays more attention to the dynamics of long curves. Cinnabar and ochre correspond with the body and wings. Soft curls preserve the basic relationships. Small flowers create local pauses. Green horse continues to remain the key. Warm colors do not spread evenly all around.

It is Dunhuang that mainly recognizes the comparative elements and visual analogies of this version. Zhao Aiqian and Zhao Feng present parallels between the murals in Dunhuang and winged horses in textiles . Zhang Ling and Yu Yangjinghua analyze the process of separation of cloud, pearl and color elements. This project applies their methods of transformation of the visual material. The design does not involve the usage of the specific palette from a particular cave. The independent graphics do not aim to reconstruct the mural completely. Modern screen design defines the shades of green and cinnabar colors.

A warmer pale background is used to complement the black text and the green horse in the vertical poster. The yellow overlapping spaces create a distance between the figure and the black lines. In the panoramic poster, there is a green sky, ochre mountains, and red layers. The green horse is standing on the pale water space. Its motion towards the right is dictated by the extension of the mountains.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

3.5 Expressing Qinghai Landscapes through the Design

Reimagination features the colours of lake blue, turquoise, snow white, grass green, and tiny yellow highlights. It retains the same pose of the horse as the original work. Few long lines have been used to create more vivid blue-green colour contrasts. Zigzag lines and yellow dots have been added to create a more modern local rhythm. Lakes, snow-covered mountains, grasslands, and blooming fields offer colour references.

The brighter shades of blue and green contribute to this being a lighter version compared to Exchange. Yellow spots could possibly help in highlighting the body area. The yellow dots and the zigzag lines made of white color seem to be representing geographical elements. But there is no clear evidence of these figures being elements of the original ornament design. They are thus considered to be geometric designs added by the designer.

Panoramic poster no.4 makes use of purple reflection under the horse which helps in avoiding the tiredness and confusion associated with too much blue colour. In addition to this, there is some purple-grey overlapping colour used in the vertical poster. This colour is used in quite a small area. Hence it is not a core colour.

3.6 Organisation and Purpose of the Palette Sheet

There are four sections on the palette sheet that match up with the posters. These sections have the winged horse above its colors, color coding, ratios, and some instructions on how to use each. The viewers do not need to look at eight different posters each time, as they can look at the figure and palette together on one sheet. This sheet tells people the graphic assets and how the main colors, open space, and accents were used.

The palette names are more descriptive compared to the poster names. Names such as Archaeological Source, Textile Exchange, Dunhuang Localisation and Contemporary Qinghai reveal the comparative associations. Names like Archetype, Exchange, Localisation and Reimagination are used as the brief description of the

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

poster names. Both the names sets can co-exist; but the design prefers the more abstract version names to avoid confusion.

These ratios in the sheet will be helpful. The area covered by the colours on each poster is different from that of the palette bars. The black letters cover a considerable amount of space in the vertical posters. The panoramic posters make use of considerable areas of the sky and water colours. It is clear that the ratios of the colours on these posters are bound to differ. Future guidance can make use of separate palettes for figures, background, and letters to minimize any confusion.

3.7 Composition of the Vertical Posters with Chinese Characters

All four vertical banners follow a single design. There are two black Chinese characters placed one on top of the other. A winged horse crosses the bottom portion diagonally. There is a number along with the name in English placed at the bottom. A small flower in the upper left corner forms a common element. The text sets the theme. The horse's color and motion depict the dissimilarities among the versions. The same positioning and scale eliminate irrelevant factors.

The dominating factor on this page is the black Chinese characters. Their massive strokes provide stability. The winged horse flows from the bottom left corner towards the top right one. This flow is opposite to the structure of the lettering, which consists of vertical and horizontal lines. The head flows towards the top right corner. The wings and hind legs flow towards the bottom left corner. The flow happens within the empty space between the characters and inside the "马" character, which means horse. The movement is created by the interconnection of figure and lettering.

Overlap adds to the visual expression. Areas of pale grey, pink-grey, ochre, and purple-grey from the horse merge within the black letters. The connections imply both foreground and background spaces. The combination gives a certain individuality to each version. The first one is done by using blue and provides some contrast between various elements. In the second one, there is a connection between red and black with the letters creating an atmosphere that is more cohesive. And the

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

fourth version has a new color interpretation because of purple-grey. Therefore, the same template allows for different views.

The grain in the letters makes the solid black appear less flat. Furthermore, it matches the vintage look of the motif. Nonetheless, the grain is not an original historical rubbing but a modern artistic technique. Grain shows up as variations in grey shades in smaller scale while showing its texture in a larger one.

The small flower in the top left corner is another repetition of the floral decoration in the horse. This element gives continuity to all the posters in the series. The English name of the poster located in the bottom is what differentiates every poster from one another.

3.8 Spatial Design of the Panoramic Posters

Panoramic posters employ a dark upper region, a light lower region, and reflections on the mountains throughout the width of the image. Winged horse takes up the space in the lower left region. Chinese title appears at the lower right side. The serial number and English title appear in the upper left region. Extended image of the horse fits well with the wide format and landscape space. In contrast with vertical posters, this design is different.

Landscape includes layered outlines, dot textures and colour regions. Reflections continue from the upper elements into the water. The project provides a modern environment to the winged horse. It does not recreate any specific ancient scene. Mountain colors are according to the four palettes. Each panoramic poster will therefore have the same color tones with its horse. Background adds to the differentiation of each version. It goes beyond a pasted base image.

The horse and its reflection produce a rhythmic pattern on the left side. The reflection gently fades to the bottom. The reflection binds the motif and the water at the same time leaving the central object identifiable. Also, the reflection creates vertical depth for this rather wide composition. The reflection that has an absolutely new set of colors may become an additional decorative graphics element. A

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

reflection that preserves the basic color but decreases the brightness and opacity can serve to extend the feeling of the space. All four options use one or another approach.

The title on the right duplicates the black "翼马" characters from the vertical composition series. It helps to preserve the project identity. The title area intersects the mountain reflections. On the one hand, there is a horse and on the other hand, there is a title. The landscape is the connection between the two.

The explanation to the main idea of the project is provided in the English text above. There is a traditional motif that leads to four modern visualizations.

3.9 Comparing the Two Poster Formats

Vertical and Horizontal formats provide two options for looking at the same visuals. Vertical posters place an emphasis on personal experience of confrontation between lettering and the design. Big Chinese letters create the first stage of visualization. This format gives you a clear topic, readable lettering and ability to compare versions. The only weak point is some obstruction between the text and picture. Horizontal format uses space to define near and far distance. First it defines the color atmosphere of the whole composition. The advantages are long motion and harmony of tones between the figure and background. Disadvantages are small secondary text and interference between textures. There is no perfect format in itself.

The analysis should not make a claim about every issue resulting from poor image quality. It should take into account different parameters such as text size, layering, tone value, and density of elements individually. Such an approach will allow for making changes appropriate for the current piece of art. Similar templates, letter forms and horse position create coherence in the images. Differences in colours, decorations and background differentiate between the versions. Such an analysis provides evidence of existence of a small visual system. Nonetheless, a consistent series does not necessarily imply cultural knowledge.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

3.10 Production Conditions and Further Validation

The vertical files have dimensions of 3,508 × 4,961 pixels. The panoramic files have an approximate width of 2,100 pixels and height of just over 700 pixels. The aspect ratio and effective resolution of the two kinds of files are different. Therefore, there are different possibilities for their enlargement. Vertical files offer more pixels than the other kind for usual screen sizes. The enlarging of panoramic posters into exhibition wall sizes may blur dots, letters and curves. The production has to determine the viewing distance and physical sizes to allow for selecting sufficient quality images or creating new ones.

The tests of printing still have to consider the dark areas and the pale lines. New paper type may influence the red and black borders in Exchange, the dark blue borders in Archetype and the light-colored areas in Reimagination. There is a need to inspect small letters and tiny pearl dots at full print sizes. These have to remain separate and legible. The project has not yet done the proofing of the prints. It has recognized this as the necessary follow-up step. Screen view details may not transfer to the paper.

Audience validation may serve to solve two problems: to see whether viewers are able to identify a winged horse if it is small or partially obscured or colored in a different color scheme, and to see whether the interpretation assists them in identifying the primary image from its comparative materials. For this study to be conducted, we require a record of the subjects participating, display conditions, and questions to ask. One possible next step is to re-design the text size and the color scheme.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

In this chapter, the four versions of winged horses are discussed as an example of how a series is created. The versions have a common outline but differ in ornamentation and color. The two poster versions reveal character connections and landscape expansion. The discussion includes structural preservation, differences between versions and usage on various layouts, as well as obstruction, text size,

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

background colors and clarity of the output. The project has led to creation of a miniature visual system that could be shown. Cultural knowledge, printing effectiveness and communication consequences require further verification.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

CONCLUSIONS

This study explores how a classical winged horse symbol evolves into poster image of contemporary era. The literature and finished works make up the analytical chain from the recognition of sources to their evaluation. First of all, this study defines the Liao harness from Han and Tang silks and Dunhuang materials. Resemblance of forms does not mean similarity of periods and materials. Besides, the literature confirms that winged horses can occur in roundel, continuous design and various materials. Pearl borders become an important element. Nevertheless, pearl borders are not the obligatory frames for all designs.

The graphic transformation keeps the recognition due to the head, extended wings, segmented limbs and center curls. Inner ornamentation and colors differ in four variants. Mirror symmetry, redrawing and additions become the elements of contemporary creativity. The reasons for these transformations lie in relations between these elements and composition. These transformations do not mean substitution of historical facts. This work uses the approaches of earlier study for simplification of the form, regional color adaptations and composition. It also uses the approach of earlier study for the organization of color proportions.

The vertically hung posters develop a theme of contrast by the use of big Chinese characters and a horse placed diagonally. The panorama posters create space reading through the use of landscape, reflection, and information at both ends. The eight posters and the palette poster form a visual system which people can make comparisons from. These posters illustrate how a single character is adapted to fit different arrangements.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

REFERENCES

1. Li, Xizhen, and Sun, Zhiqin. The Origins and Causes of Winged Horse Motifs on Textiles from the Northern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Periods. Journal of Silk, 2021, 58(2): 93–100.
2. Tang, Hailin. A Comparative Study of Winged Horse Motifs in the Han and Tang Dynasties. Art Market, 2024(8): 82–83.
3. Wu, Zengbao. A Study of Winged Beast Motifs on Silk Road Textiles in the Han and Tang Periods. Master's thesis. Beijing: Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology, 2021.
4. Zhao, Aiqian, and Zhao, Feng. Types, Techniques and Genealogy: Winged Horse Brocades from the Northern Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty. Art and Design, 2026(1): 97–103.
5. Wang, Ju, and Li, Linshan. Conservation and Restoration of the Tang Blue-Ground Winged Horse Brocade in the Gansu Provincial Museum. Journal of Silk, 2022, 59(1): 88–94.
6. Dong, Miao. An Analysis of Winged Horse Motifs on Tang Textiles and Their Transformation in Bag Design. Footwear Technology and Design, 2026, 6(16): 35–37.
7. Zhang, Ling, and Yu, Yangjinghua. Innovative Applications of Dunhuang Winged Horse Elements in Shell-Shaped Bag Design. China Leather, online publication, 15 September 2026. https://link.cnki.net/urlid/11.2649.ts.20260911.1422.002.
8. Wang, Taidi, and Ye, Xinyue. Design Based on a Tang Red-Ground Winged Horse Motif. Journal of Textile Research, 2026, 47(2). Design work.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

APPENDIX A

Source Image



Figure A1. Supplied reference image. Caption supplied with the project attributes the motif to a Liao-period gilt-bronze horse-harness ornament excavated at Shazigou, Aohan Banner, in 1982–1983. The blue reproduction is not a record of the object's material colour.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED

APPENDIX Б

Colour System and Poster Designs

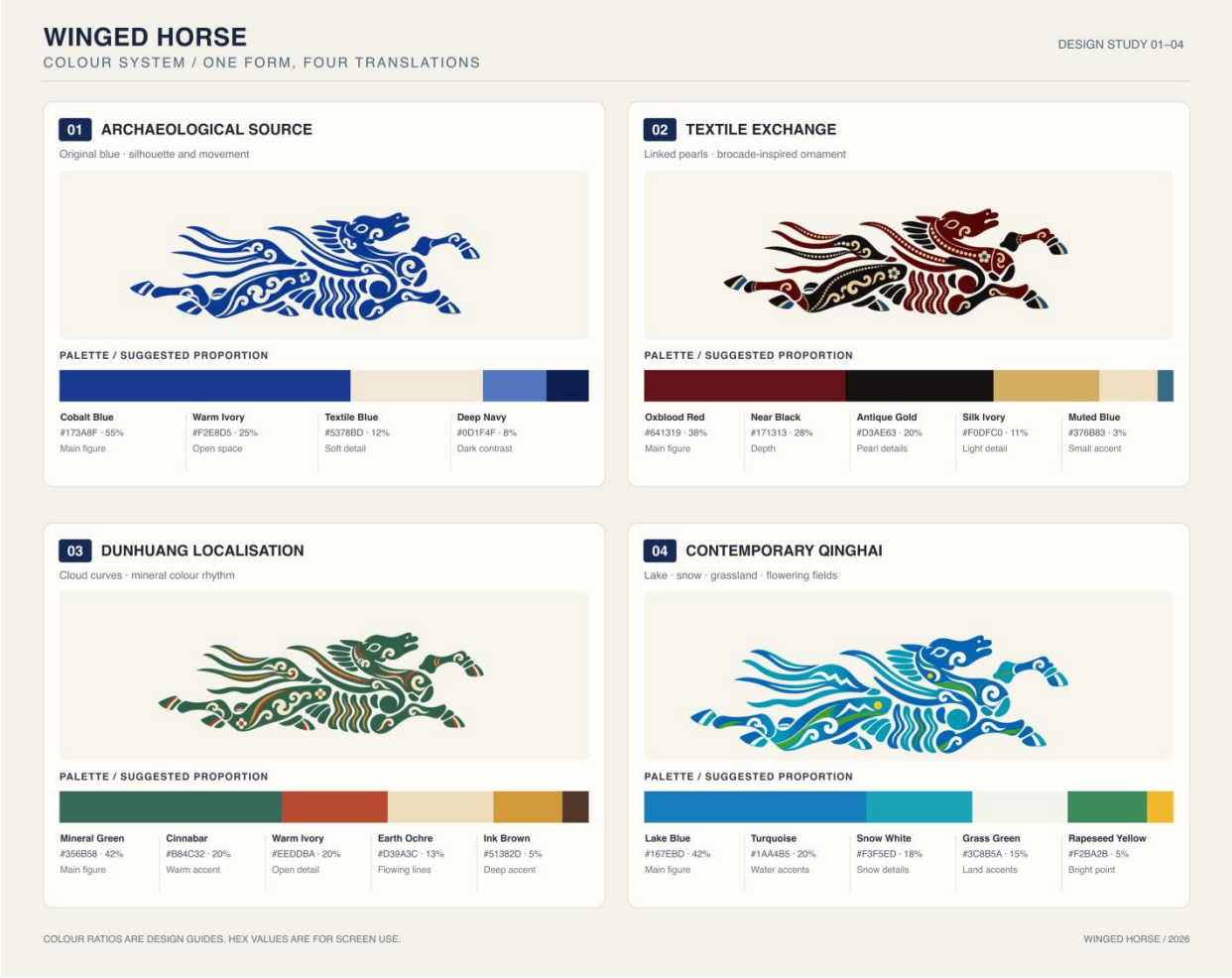

Figure B1. Four completed horse variants and their proposed colour ratios. Design sheet supplied by the project author.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED



Figure B2. Vertical poster 01: Archetype. Artwork supplied by the project author.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED



Figure B3. Vertical poster 02: Exchange. Artwork supplied by the project author.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED



Figure B4. Vertical poster 03: Localisation. Artwork supplied by the project author.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED



Figure B5. Vertical poster 04: Reimagination. Artwork supplied by the project author.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED



Figure B6. Panoramic poster 01: Archetype. Artwork supplied by the project author.



Figure B7. Panoramic poster 02: Exchange. Artwork supplied by the project author.

Docusign Envelope ID: 75F4B983-3CC2-88BE-82FE-1B79B3ADA2ED



Figure B8. Panoramic poster 03: Localisation. Artwork supplied by the project author.

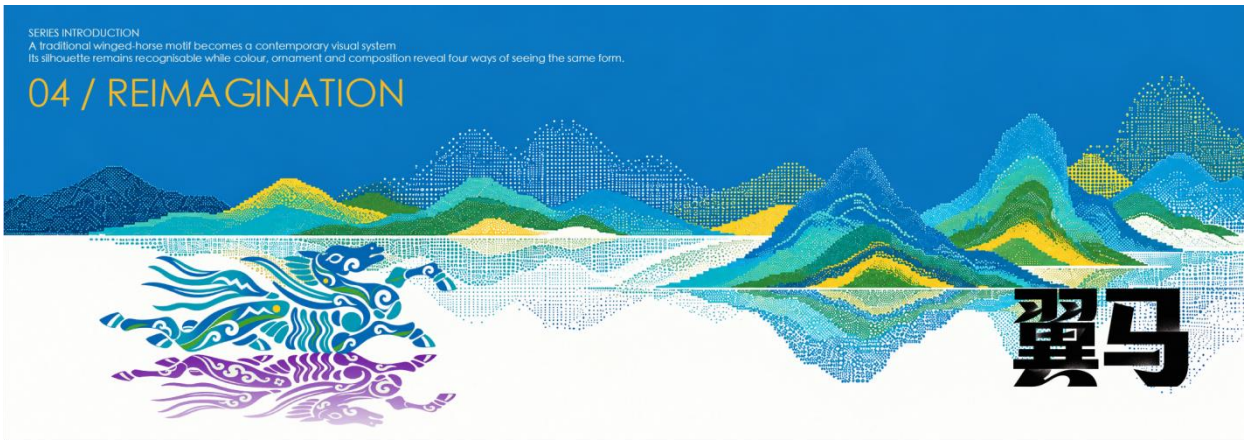

Figure B9. Panoramic poster 04: Reimagination. Artwork supplied by the project author.