



RESEARCH ON INFORMATION VISUALIZATION DESIGN OF XIJU OPERA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF VISUAL NARRATIVE

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CONTENTS

- 01 Rationale for topic selection**
- 02 Research content**
- 03 Research Plan**
- 04 Design Practice**



01 Reason for choosing the topic

Xiju, a national intangible cultural heritage with over 200 years of history, faces challenges including audience loss, weak dissemination, and limited recognition among younger generations. Traditional performances and static promotion cannot fully meet contemporary communication needs. Information visualization can transform Xiju's complex cultural heritage into accessible visual language, providing new opportunities for its preservation, dissemination, and revitalization.



1.1 Paper Information

1.Object of Research

Information on Xiju opera culture and its visual communication forms mainly includes the development of schools, makeup, hairstyles and costumes, as well as representative repertoires such as *Pearl Pagoda*, *Double Grinding Mill*, and *Meng Lijun*, which are core cultural resources

2.Research subject

Visualization Design Strategies, Methods, and Practical Applications of Xiju Opera Information from the Perspective of Image Narrative.

3. Purpose of Research

From the perspective of image narrative theory, combined with information visualization design methods, visually translate and practice the design of the development schools of Xiju, makeup, costumes, and representative repertoires, in order to lower the public 's, especially young audiences', cognitive threshold for Xiju, enhance the dissemination effectiveness and emotional identification of Xiju culture, and promote Xiju from “museum-style preservation” to “everyday life inheritance”.



1.2 Reason for choosing the topic

1

Policy support: Inheriting and protecting Xiju opera

The regulations clearly point out that through measures like promoting innovation, we should help Xiju art break through development bottlenecks, expand its ways of reaching audiences, and promote a deeper integration of Xiju with cultural tourism.

2

Valuable Cultural Heritage: The Cultural Roots of the City

With the diversification of modern entertainment and changes in aesthetic habits, Xi Opera is facing challenges in being passed down. As a cultural symbol of Wuxi, it needs to be protected and preserved even more.

3

Novel forms of communication: information visualization design

Combining information visualization design with intangible cultural heritage turns Xiju into more intuitive images, lowering the barrier for the audience to understand it and promoting Xiju.

1.3 Research significance

1.Theoretical significance

- Expanding the visualized theoretical dimension of intangible cultural heritage protection
- Enriching the information visualization design methods for intangible cultural heritage
- Strengthening regional cultural characteristics to support Wuxi's cultural tourism development

2.Practical significance

- Enhance Wuxi's cultural identity and promote diversified development of the city's cultural construction.
- Raise public awareness of protecting Xiju (Wuxi opera) and achieve its living inheritance.
- Promote cultural exchange and joint development between Wuxi and other regions.
- Boost Wuxi's cultural tourism development, along with the economic value of Xiju.



1.4 Current research status

Current status of theoretical research

China

Theoretical Research on Xiju Opera

Focus more on research from the angle of academic discussion, like development history, plays, characters, etc.

A Theoretical Study on Visual Design in Drama

Use CiteSpace software more to do visual trend analysis of drama, and then combine it with similar theories like semiotic translation.

Theoretical Study on Information Visualization Design of Xiju Opera

Use digital technology more to tackle the development challenges of Xiju, but there's not much involvement in the design practice part.

Abroad

Theoretical Research on Xiju Opera

In-depth research across multiple disciplines often focuses on Chinese traditional culture, cultural exchanges at home and abroad, and academic discussions.

A Theoretical Study on Visual Design in Drama

It shows diverse characteristics, focusing not only on the aesthetic features of modern design but also on how digital technology reshapes drama, yet it hasn't really explored the cultural meaning of the drama itself.

Both domestic and international research has delved into the history of drama development, character movements, and singing pronunciation, providing a solid theoretical foundation for the topic, but more in-depth work is needed on the practical side of visualizing Xiju information.

1.4 Current research status

1.Current Status of Practical Research – Domestic

Poster Design



"Full Moon Night"
Animated Poster



"Chinese Opera"
Character Posters Kunqu,
Peking Opera
Huangmei Opera,
Yue Opera



"Folk Shehuo" Character Posters
Stilts, High Platforms

Simplify the character's design into geometric shapes, use gradient or complementary colors, pick out key actions, gestures, poses, and clothing accessories, and combine them with dynamic effects to make the character leave a stronger impression.

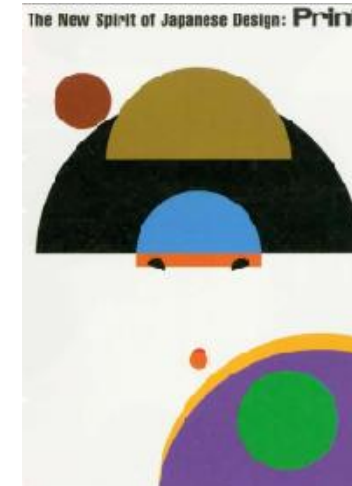
1.4 Current research status

1.Current Status of Practical Research — Abroad

Theatrical Visual Design



Germany · Gremler
Virtual Character from Chinese Opera



Japan · Ikko Tanaka
Japanese Dance Series Poster

Abroad, designs based on Chinese theater themes are mostly combined with digital media, drawing inspiration from the shapes, colors, and movements of Chinese theatrical costumes to add a human touch to their animations, but they lack a deep exploration of the core culture. Ikko Tanaka used geometric lines and bold blocks of color to turn Kabuki and Noh theater into a highly modern visual language, achieving a perfect blend of tradition and modernity.

1.4 Current research status

1.Current Status of Practical Research — Abroad

Local Cultural & Creative Products

Malaysian designer Vanessa Foo
Hamanala Theatre Magazine

● Illustrations of 16 performances in the theater

Combine imaginative performing arts with graphic illustrations, using geometric shapes and bold color combinations to create fun and playful theater packaging designs.





02 Research content

- Research content
- Research Methods
- Main References



Research content

1.An overview of Xiju opera

- The Origin and Development of Xiju
- Costumes and Instruments of Xiju
- The themes of Xiju opera
- The artistic features of Xiju opera

2.Overview of Information Visualization Design

- The Concept and Features of Information Visualization Design
- The Information Visualization Design Path of Xiju Opera

3.Design Strategies of Image Narrative Theory in the Information Visualization of Xiju Opera

- Overview of Image Narrative Theory
- Steps of Image Narrative in Information Visualization Design

4.Design Ideas for Visualizing Xiju Opera Information

- Analysis and Lessons from Excellent Information Visualization Cases
- Design Principles for Xiju Information Visualization

5.Practical Design of Visualizing Xiju Opera Information

- Information visualization design of Xiju opera pieces
- Peripheral cultural and creative products reflecting the characteristics of Xiju

3 Research Methods

1.Literature analysis method

Organize literature and materials related to Xiju, learn from other scholars' theoretical statements and research perspectives, and on this basis, make references and additions.

2.Fieldwork Method

Combine on-site visits with interviews of Xiju performers or inheritors to ensure the accuracy of Xiju information and the authenticity of design requirements.



3.Case Study Method

Analyze the visual elements of outstanding information visualization designs, like images, chart layouts, and color combinations, and dig into how the works convey cultural meaning and information, taking reference and inspiration from them.

4.Data Analysis Method

Analyze online and offline viewership data of Xiju, as well as survey data on the target audience's knowledge of Xiju, to make sure the final design can help promote it.

03 Research Plan

- Gathering Information on Xiju Opera
- Design method
- Design Principles



Research Plan

1 Collecting materials
on Xiju opera

2 Tin Opera Information
Visualization Design
Strategy

3 Principles of Visualizing
Xiju Information

Origin and development



Visual elements features



Elements related to the place of
origin



Values



Selecting representative
elements of Xi opera



Building a library of information
visualization elements



Arrange and combine elements
based on image narrative theory



Great case reference



Transforming images with
elements of Xiju opera



Scene building for a series
design



Peripheral cultural and creative
applications

Gathering Xiju Opera Materials

Origins and Development:

Duoxi (paired plays) — Small troupe plays — Large troupe plays

Visual Features:

Costumes and makeup, opera roles, musical instruments

Xiju Schools:

Three major Sheng (male) role schools, four major Dan (female) role schools

Repertoire Themes:

Talented scholars and beautiful women, family ethics, historical legends, modern plays

Collection of Visual Features of Xi Opera (Partial)

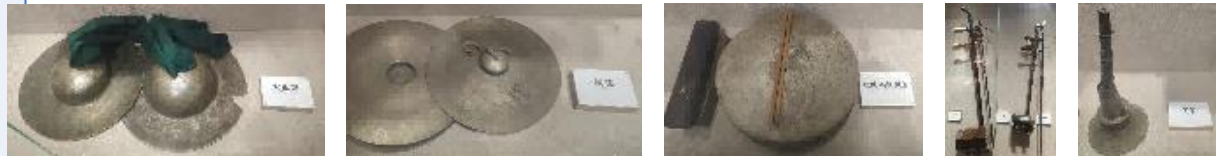
Clothing



Classic scene



Musical instrument



School Information



Design methods

➤ Information Visualization Design Methods Based on Image Narrative Theory

Image narrative uses symbolic images as a form of expression, including both single-image narratives and composite image narratives, constructing plot and emotional expression through methods such as the complementarity of text and images.

Image storytelling	
Temporality	Images 'freeze' a moment (like paintings implying the cause and effect of an event through a character's movement or changes in light and shadow)
Spatiality	Guide the viewer's eye flow through composition layers, like foreground, middle ground, and background.
Symbolic	Convey deep meanings through cultural symbols (such as clothing colors, musical instruments)

Design Principles

Design Principles	
Intuitiveness	Organize the literature on Xiju to make the scattered information coherent. Xiju has a development history of more than 270 years, with a long time span and continuously changing forms of performance and musical instruments throughout its development.
Readability	In the practice of visual information design for Wuxi Xiju, after organizing relevant Xiju materials in the previous step, a selection is made to selectively promote the artistic charm and regional characteristics of Xiju, highlighting and emphasizing the core content of Xiju culture.
Memorability	Analyze the cultural connotations of Xiju to make the implicit explicit. Xiju features very distinct explicit culture, such as the costume color schemes often using pink, blue, and green to reflect the gentle and peaceful nature of people in Jiangnan, which differs from the bright tones of traditional opera costumes; the implicit culture behind Xiju, such as in plays like "Pearl Pagoda," "Double Push Mill," and "Meng Lijun," reflects people's past lives and value pursuits. This profound cultural connotation needs to be presented to the audience in a simpler and more direct way through visual design.

04 Design Practice

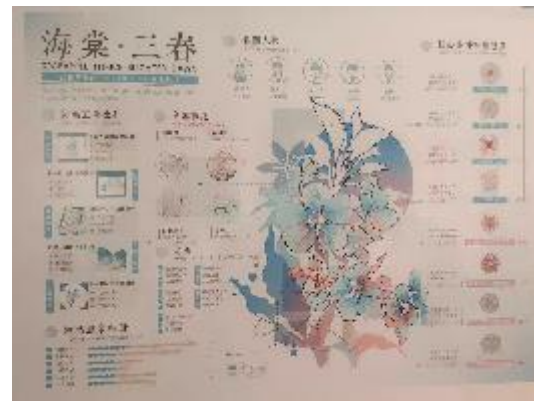
- Prepping
- Visual Design of Xiju Opera Information
- Application Effect



Preparation beforehand

➤ Collection of Excellent Cases

《Visualization Design of the 'Flower' Imagery in Dream of the Red Chamber》



Perspective Cut-in
Flowers Character
Ensemble Floral Imagery

Reference images
Simplified character design



Information Transmission
Floral Information Personal
Achievements

Preparation beforehand

➤ Collection of Excellent Cases



Visual Design of Two Horses Celebrating the Lantern Festival



Blooming Dreams—Visual Design of Costume Culture Information in Dream of the Red Chamber



Visual Design of Sui and Tang Bronze Mirrors

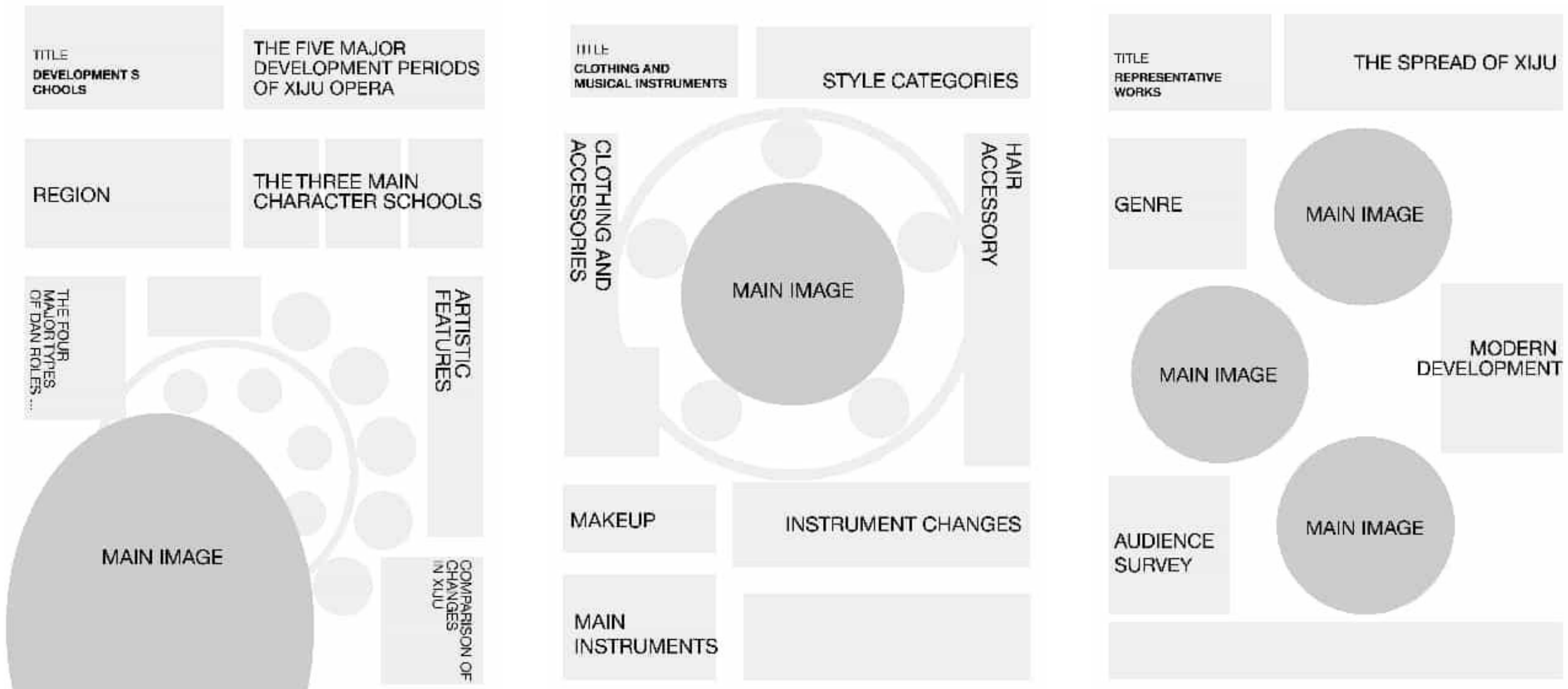


The designer transforms theme-related elements into images, with the main visual emphasizing the key points of the theme to attract the audience.

By combining the characteristics of the theme and design requirements, the overall visual effects are arranged and combined, allowing the audience to intuitively perceive the transmission of the theme information.

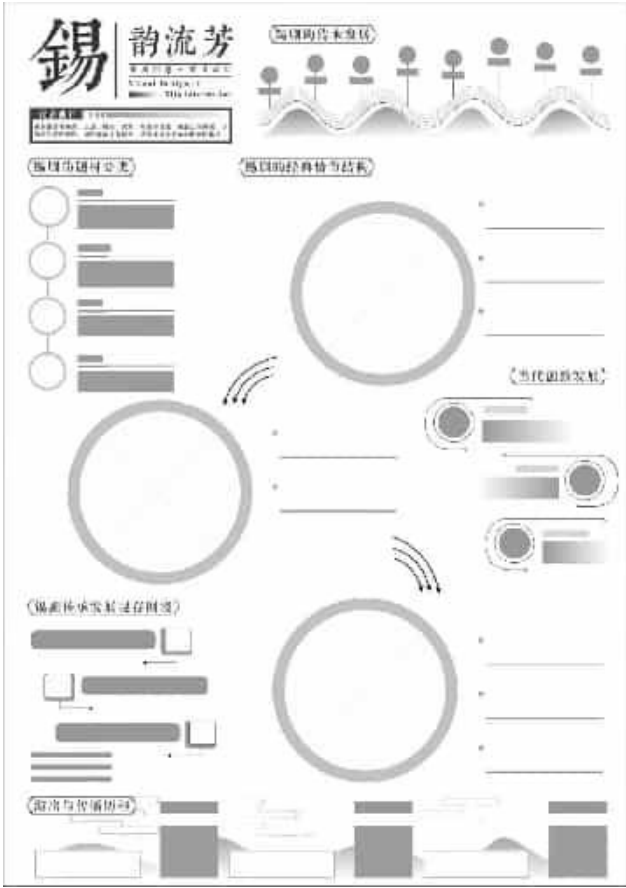
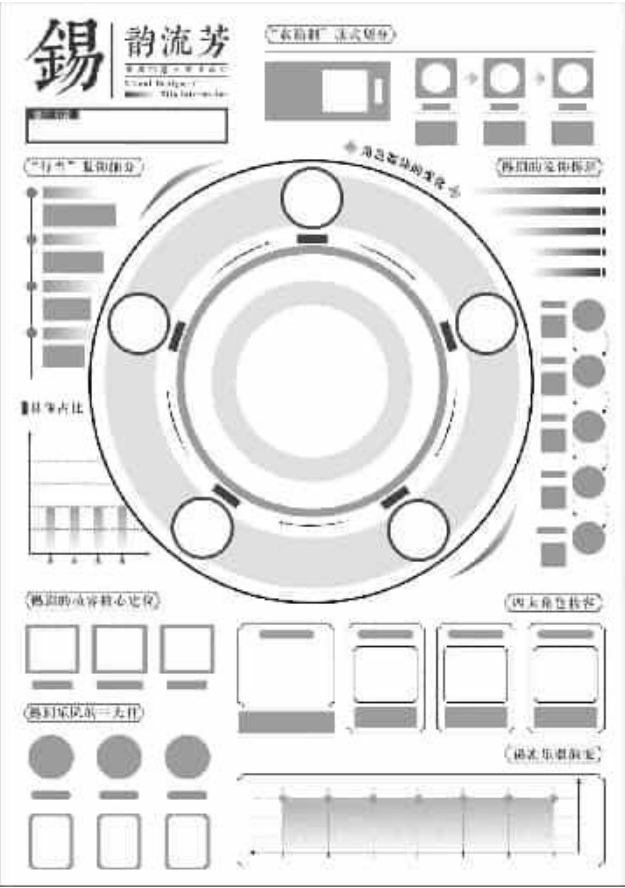
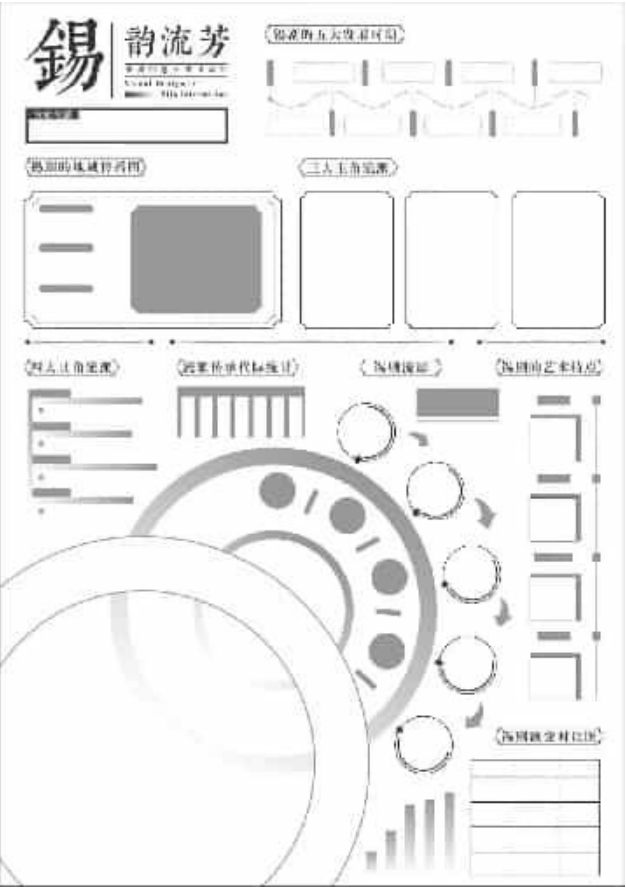
Practical Design of Xiju Opera Information Visualization

Layout division of three themes



Practical Design of Xiju Opera Information Visualization

Layout division of three themes (Further refine)



Practical Design of Xiju Opera Information Visualization

The process of creating the main illustration



Topic 1: Cousin in the Pearl Tower

The young lady's outfit in the boudoir scene is styled for the moment she receives unexpected bad news from the male lead, Fang Qing. She wears a square scarf on her head, emphasizing a sickly look. ...



Practical Design of Xiju Opera Information Visualization

The process of creating the main illustration



Topic 2:(On the left)
The attire of a young lady in the boudoir;
this scene is the first appearance in the
Xiju opera 'Meng Lijun'

Topic 3: (Right side) The outfit of a woman
disguised as a man is from a scene in the Xi
opera 'Meng Lijun,' where she is tested by her
fiancé.

This costume represents Meng Lijun dressed as
a man, specifically a male official who has
achieved top honors in the imperial examination.



Practical Design of Xiju Opera Information Visualization

The process of creating the main illustration

Topic 3:A classic scene in the Pearl Pagoda
Cousin gifts the pagoda to Fang Qing



Practical Design of Xiju Opera Information Visualization

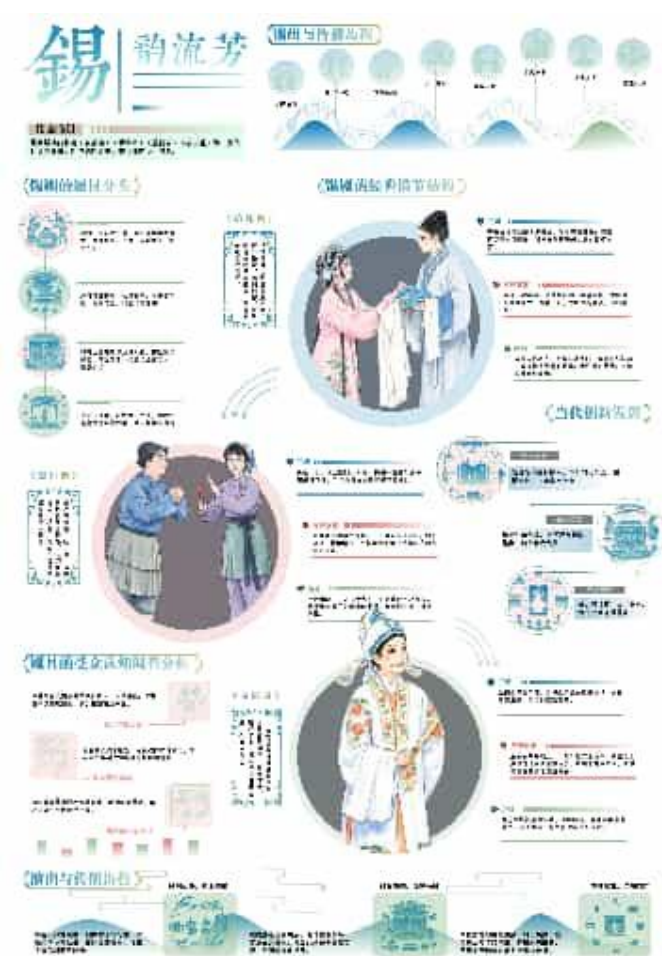
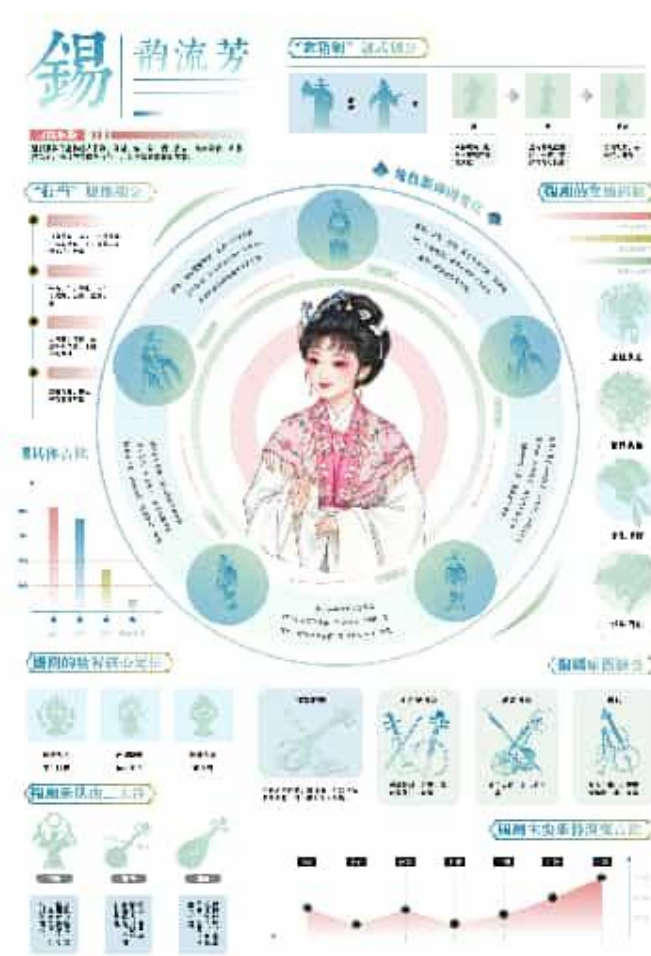
The process of creating the main illustration



Topic 3: A scene from 'Shuang Tui Mo,' one of the representative Xiju
Both people are dressed as ordinary citizens



Color scheme1



Light tones: Overall soft, but the information is unclear, and the illustrations are not very prominent.

Application effect

Promotional Material Extension Xiju Character Poster



Application effect

Promotional Material Extension
Phone case & mouse pad

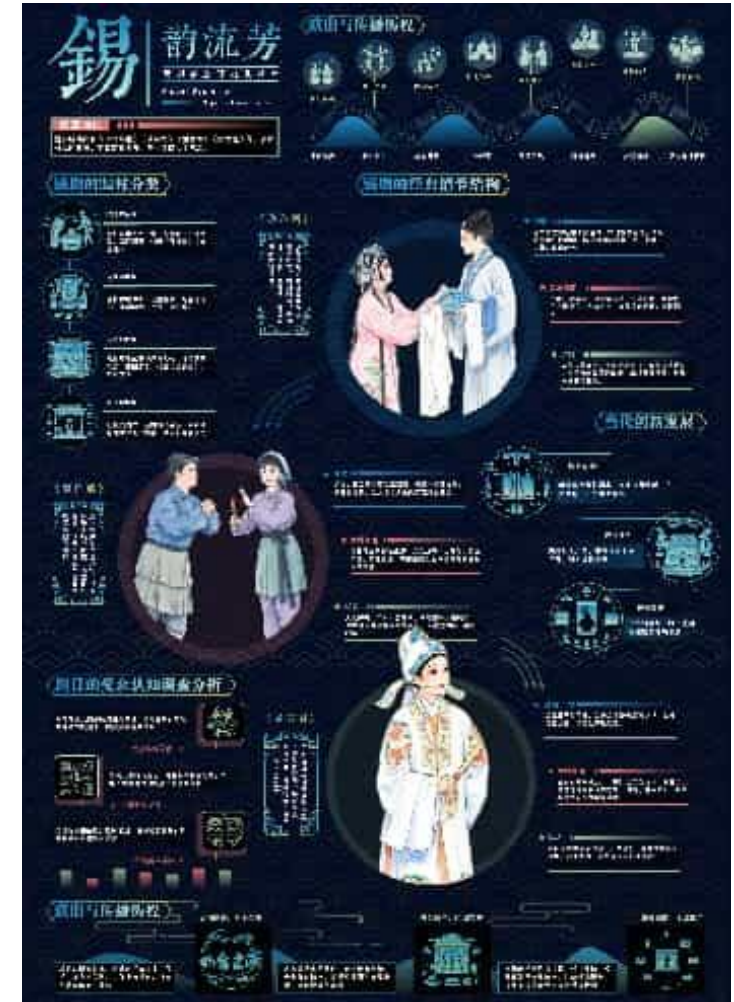
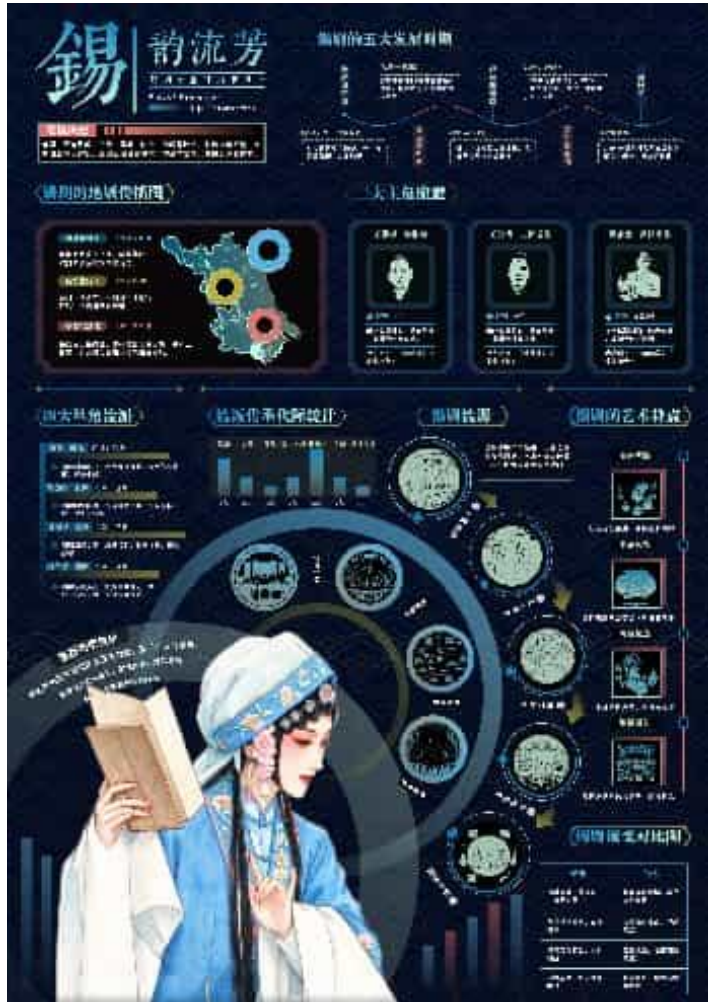


Application effect

Promotional Material Extension
Stationery & canvas bags

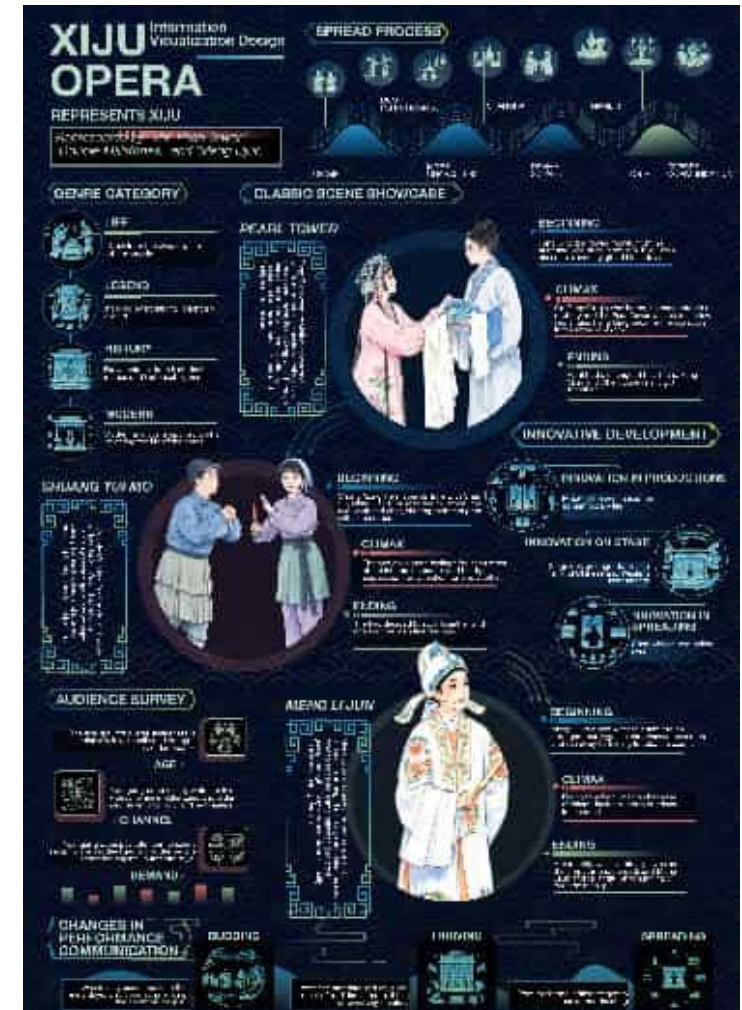
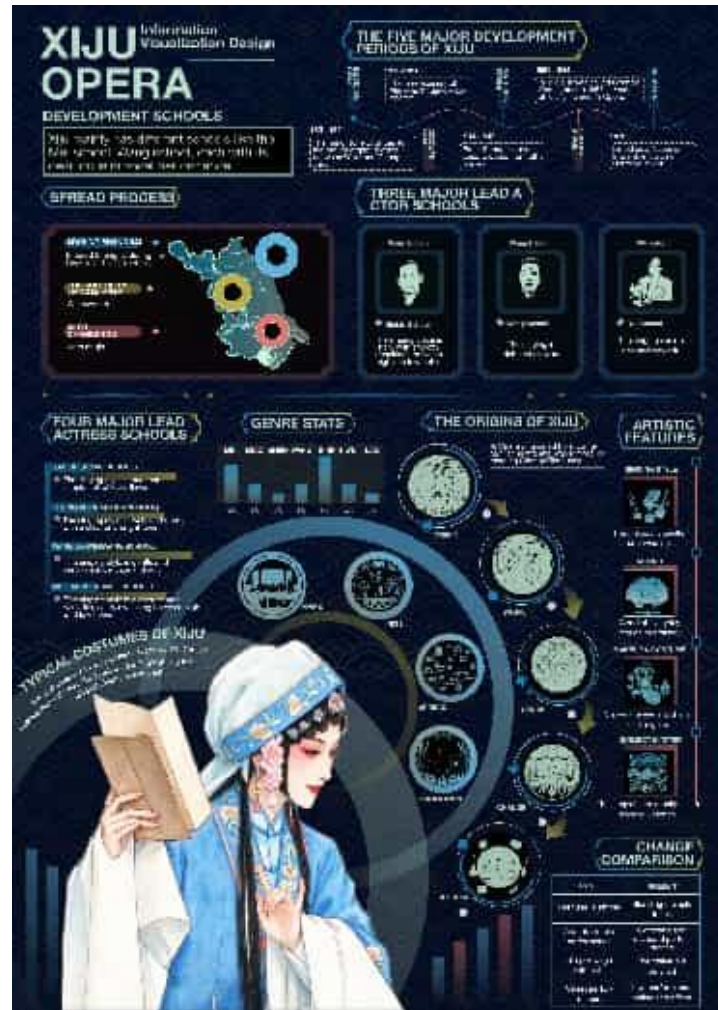


Color scheme2 (Final adoption)



Dark tone: The dark blue background makes the icon text and illustrations stand out more, and it also attracts attention.

Color scheme2 (English version)



Application effect

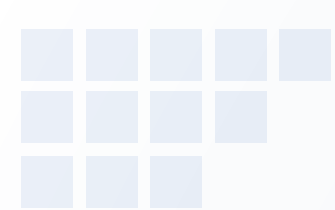
Application effects of the Xi opera information visualization chart at different locations



Application effect

Promotional Material Extension Introduction card





THANKS FOR WATCHING