

Visual communication of traditional Yangzhou puppet theater in contemporary cultural product design

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ISSUES AND RELEVANCE

1. Why is this topic important?

It helps revitalise Yangzhou rod puppetry heritage and fixes shallow, repetitive local cultural-creative products.

2. What do you want to research or create?

It studies visual transformation strategies for Yangzhou puppetry and makes a four-scene historical narrative blind-box series.

3. How is it connected to culture, design, people, or history?

It combines Yangzhou puppet history with modern design, bringing traditional heritage closer to ordinary audiences.

4. What is the cultural, historical, or social background of this theme?

Yangzhou rod puppetry spans more than 1000 years. Today this intangible heritage struggles with limited public attention and poor-quality souvenirs.

Thesis Information

- Master's Thesis Topic:
Visual communication of traditional Yangzhou puppet theater in contemporary cultural product design
- Object of Research:
Yangzhou rod puppetry
- Subject of Research:
Visual-communication design for puppet-theatre cultural-creative products
- Territorial and Chronological Scope:
China, Yangzhou, puppet theatre heritage (Tang dynasty to present)



Project Background and Research Objectives

Project Background

Yangzhou rod puppetry is a valuable Chinese intangible cultural heritage. Its current cultural-creative products lack deep cultural meaning and have similar designs, so new visual design solutions are needed.

Research Objectives

1. Analyse the visual features of Yangzhou rod puppetry.
2. Explore ways to adapt its visual elements for cultural-creative goods.
3. Complete a set of blind-box design practice for this puppet heritage.



Research Content and Methods

Research Content

Study visual features of Yangzhou rod puppetry. Analyse problems of existing puppet-themed cultural products. Extract puppet visual elements and finish a historical-narrative blind-box design series.

Research Methods

Literature review to collect related materials. Fieldwork to gather first-hand puppet data. Case study of similar cultural-creative works. Design practice to test the proposed design ideas.



Research Source

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Survey results

Research Methods

Collect materials via literature review and fieldwork. Analyse existing product problems and define design principles. Extract and rework puppet-related visual elements. Complete and optimise the four-scene blind-box design for practical production.



The practical issues of Yangzhou's stick puppet play cultural and creative industry

Nowadays, most cultural-creative products of Yangzhou rod puppetry only copy puppet appearances without rich cultural content. Product types are limited to simple souvenirs such as keychains and fridge magnets, and many designs look similar to other tourist goods. In addition, these static products hardly provide story-telling and interactive experience for users, so audiences can scarcely understand the long history and unique craft of this intangible heritage.

Key Reference Projects



Small scene illustration



Scene blind box



Extraction and Transformation - Origin (Tang Dynasty)



Extraction and Transformation - Prosperity (Kangxi and Qianlong)



Extraction and Transformation - Decline (Late Qing Dynasty)



Extraction and Transformation - Contemporary inheritance

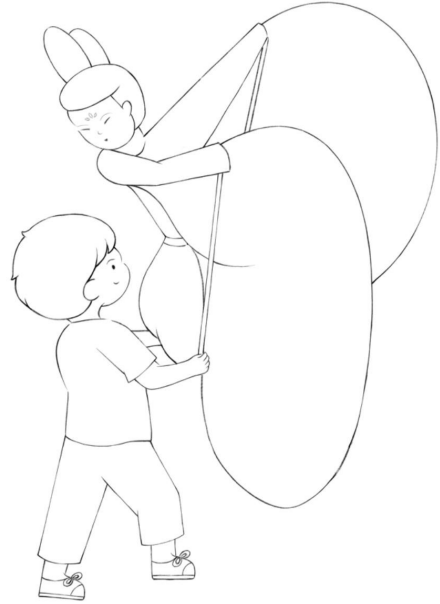


Illustration display (Tang-Dynasty Marketplace)

This scene shows folk puppet performances on Yangzhou's Tang-Dynasty streets. A performer manipulates an early plate-bell puppet at a simple outdoor cloth-tent stage to recreate lively ancient street-show atmosphere.



Illustration display (Salt Merchants of the Qing Dynasty)

This scene takes place in a rich Qing-dynasty salt merchant's home for a private banquet show. A performer controls the fancy Jiaguan puppet on a fine opera stage while guests watch, showing the high-level puppet art of that time.



Illustration display (Late Qing Canal Ferry)

This scene is set at a Grand Canal ferry in the late Qing Dynasty with a dull colour style. A travelling puppeteer with clown puppets prepares to get on a boat, showing folk artists' hard struggle to keep puppetry alive.



Illustration display (Modern Live Stream)

This scene shows the modern live-stream performance of Yangzhou rod puppetry. A performer uses streaming devices to show the Jade Flower Fairy puppet, presenting how this traditional heritage gets inherited in new-media times.



Scene blind box display



Tang-Dynasty Marketplace



Salt Merchants of the Qing Dynasty

Scene blind box display



Late Qing Canal Ferry



Modern Live Stream

Blind box packaging display



Conclusion

This research studies visual communication of Yangzhou rod puppetry in modern cultural-creative products:

1. Collect and change traditional visual signs: puppet shapes, clothes, scenes and colours.
2. Put forward four design rules: authenticity, innovation, narrativity and user-orientation.
3. Design blind boxes with four-period stories, turning thousand-year puppetry culture into collectible goods.
4. Consider cultural meaning, modern taste and product making.

This method breaks time-space limits of theatre shows. It gives useful ideas for similar performance-based intangible heritage projects.



THANKS

