



Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts
Graphic design department
Visual Communication Design

Design of the Visual Identity System for the Historical Brand Suzhou Cai Zhizhai Based on the Concept of Emotional Design

Student: Wen Xiaoting

Group: DVC-25

Practice Supervisor:

Olga Hanotska, PhD in Art Studies, Professor

Object of Research:

The brand image system of Suzhou Caizhizhai, a time-honored brand

Subject of Research:

The methods and principles of applying emotional design to the renewal of the Caizhizhai brand image

Purpose of the research is to develop an emotional-design-oriented renewal method for Suzhou Caizhizhai and to apply it to three principal outcomes: logo design, packaging design, and IP design. The project seeks to improve brand recognition, product experience, and emotional communication while preserving a clear relationship with the brand's inherited cultural identity.

Territorial and Chronological Scope China, from the late Qing dynasty to the present

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Research Source

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Visual Research & Cultural Sources



Suzhou Cultural Context

Caizhizhai Brand

Audience Persona



Name

Lin Zhiwei

Age

26 years old

Occupation

Brand planner / new media freelancer

Location

Suzhou, often travels across the Yangtze River Delta

Interests

Jiangnan culture, city walks, Su-style tea snacks, cultural creative design, photography sharing, festival gifting

Goals

1. Buy Su-style souvenirs with cultural quality;
2. Express good taste and sincerity in daily gifts;
3. Experience time-honored brands with stories, memory, and shareability.

Needs

Refined and youthful packaging, clear product information, portable and giftable formats, convenient offline and online purchase channels, and a brand story with emotional value.

Frustrations

Traditional time-honored visuals feel old-fashioned; many souvenir products look similar; selling points are not intuitive; there is limited interaction and social media appeal.

Empathy Map

Sees

Urban spaces rich in Jiangnan charm, such as Suzhou gardens, Pingjiang Road, and Guanqian Street; exquisite pastry packaging designs, recommended souvenirs, and renovation examples of time-honored brands on social media; as well as similar Suzhou-style tea snacks, cultural and creative shops, and festive gift boxes.

Hears

Friends and colleagues recommend buying time-honored Suzhou specialties as souvenirs for visitors.
Family members trust these classic brands for reliable quality and decent gifting value.
Content creators on Xiaohongshu and Douyin highlight their good taste, attractive packaging and share-worthy looks.

Thinks & Feels

They seek brands embodying Suzhou's cultural charm without outdated vibes.
They value exquisite packaging, fine flavors and brand heritage to make gifts more heartfelt.
They are willing to pay for emotional comfort, cultural identity and a sense of ritual.



Does

They purchase pastry gift boxes, personal snacks and souvenirs during holidays and trips. They research on Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Dazhongdianping and other platforms before buying. They visit physical stores, take photos to share online, and are open to repeat online purchases.

Empathy

Who?

The target audience includes young consumers, Suzhou local residents, city tourists, gift purchasers, and people interested in Jiangnan culture, time-honored brands, and Su-style tea snacks.

What?

Caizhizhai offers more than traditional pastries and candies. It provides a consumer experience that integrates Suzhou regional culture, brand memory, gifting needs, and emotional value. Through visual identity, packaging design, store visuals, and cultural storytelling, it creates a recognizable and warm cultural impression.

When?

Consumers need it when traveling in Suzhou, choosing festival gifts, visiting relatives and friends, buying everyday snacks, or looking for cultural souvenirs with local characteristics.

Where?

Interaction takes place in offline stores such as Guanqian Street, scenic commercial streets, city gift shops, supermarkets, and online platforms including e-commerce websites, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and other social media channels.

Why?

Caizhizhai helps consumers connect with Suzhou cultural memory through familiar Su-style food and gift products. It satisfies the needs of buying local specialties, giving presents, and tasting regional flavors, while transforming traditional food into a shareable and memorable cultural symbol.

Caizhizhai / Project Components



01 Logo Design



02 Packaging



03 Brand IP Design



04 Cultural Products

Visual Direction 01

Jiangnan Heritage Meets Contemporary Taste:

This visual direction explores the connection between Suzhou's cultural elegance and the emotional heritage of the time-honored brand 'Caizhizhai'. Inspired by Jiangnan waterways, Suzhou garden aesthetics, vintage confectionery labels, Su-style tea snacks, and everyday gifting rituals, it combines restrained contemporary design with nostalgic storytelling to create a refined, warm, and memorable brand identity. While preserving the brand's historical character, this direction renews its appeal for younger consumers through simplicity, cultural resonance, and emotional connection.

Description

Caizhizhai draws inspiration from the warmth of handmade tradition and the rich culture of Chinese pastries. The visual concept blends natural materials, folk craft details, and elegant typography with a refined contemporary approach. A palette of restrained earthy tones—kraft beige, warm brown, olive green, muted red, and soft pastels—creates a calm and inviting atmosphere. Tactile paper textures, simple layouts, and craft-based packaging reflect authenticity, quality, and a gentle, nostalgic emotional connection.

Moodboard 01



Description

The second visual direction for Caizhizhai embraces a bolder, more playful and graphic approach inspired by old shop signs, vernacular Chinese packaging, archival marks, ticket ephemera, and collage. It celebrates everyday culture through nostalgic yet energetic visual storytelling. The palette draws from earthy reds, mustard yellows, forest greens, kraft browns, muted pinks, and deep purples, creating a rich, timeworn warmth. Typography mixes strong display Chinese characters with vintage logos and hand-drawn details. The atmosphere is lively, youthful, and culturally rooted—unapologetically local and full of personality.

Moodboard 02



Current Results & Future Development

The current visual identity of “Caizhizhai” still maintains strong historical characteristics, but its connection with contemporary consumer groups and emotional experiences requires further enhancement.

Existing packaging mainly focuses on product recognition and traditional brand information, while lacking a systematic visual language and emotional storytelling for younger audiences.

Key Findings:

Research shows that consumers are increasingly interested in traditional brands with cultural meaning, aesthetic value, and emotional experiences rather than only functional products.

The cultural resources of Suzhou, including Jiangnan architecture, traditional craftsmanship, sugar-making techniques, and childhood memories, provide valuable visual and emotional elements for brand renewal.

The integration of emotional design and traditional brand identity creates opportunities for transforming “Caizhizhai” from a century-old candy brand into a contemporary cultural lifestyle brand.

Current Results & Future Development

Preferred Visual Direction:

At the current stage, Visual Direction 01 —
“Jiangnan Memory & Emotional Heritage”
appears to be the most suitable direction for further development.

This direction better reflects the cultural identity of Suzhou and the emotional value of Caizhizhai as a time-honored candy brand.

It combines Jiangnan aesthetics, traditional craftsmanship, and contemporary minimalist expression, creating a balance between historical heritage and modern consumer preferences.

Elements from Visual Direction 02 —
“Traditional Craft & Handmade Warmth”
can be incorporated as supporting visual elements to emphasize the handmade process, product quality, and brand authenticity.

Current Results & Future Development

Project

Potential:

The project has the potential to expand Caizhizhai from a traditional confectionery brand into a cultural and emotional experience brand.

Future design opportunities include:

Developing a complete visual identity system

Creating IP characters based on brand stories and product characteristics

Designing emotional packaging experiences

Developing cultural creative products and gift collections

Building stronger connections between traditional sweets and modern lifestyles

Through visual innovation, Caizhizhai can communicate not only the taste of traditional sweets but also the memories, emotions, and cultural identity behind the brand.

Current Results & Future Development

Future Development:

Further refine the extraction and visual translation of Suzhou cultural symbols.

Develop the final logo design, typography system, color palette, and supporting graphic language.

Complete the IP character design and explore its applications in packaging, illustration, and brand communication.

Design and test a complete packaging system for different product categories, including traditional sweets and cultural gift products.

Develop interactive emotional experiences through packaging structure, storytelling, and digital communication.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the design through user feedback and complete the integration of theoretical research with practical design outcomes.

First sketches

Logo (01) :



First sketches

IP (02) :

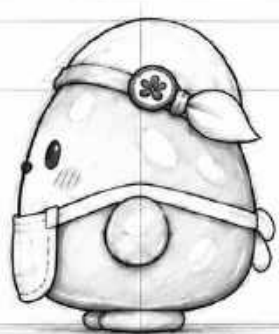
IP Sketch

芝小粽[®]

— CAIZHIZHAI —



正面
Front



侧面
Side



背面
Back

Packaging Structure Drawing — Black and White Draft

The packaging structure of Caizhizhai · Four Sweets is designed around a compact rectangular paper box, combining a restrained oriental visual language with practical production logic. The system consists of the main box, a central paper belly band, a product information label, a fine cotton cord, and a small Suzhou-inspired hang tag. Natural uncoated paper, subtle embossed patterns, and muted traditional colors create a warm and tactile material quality, while the unified structure and differentiated color system establish clear recognition across the four products. The design emphasizes simplicity, craftsmanship, and emotional memory, translating the heritage of Suzhou confectionery into a contemporary packaging experience that is elegant, functional, and suitable for real production.

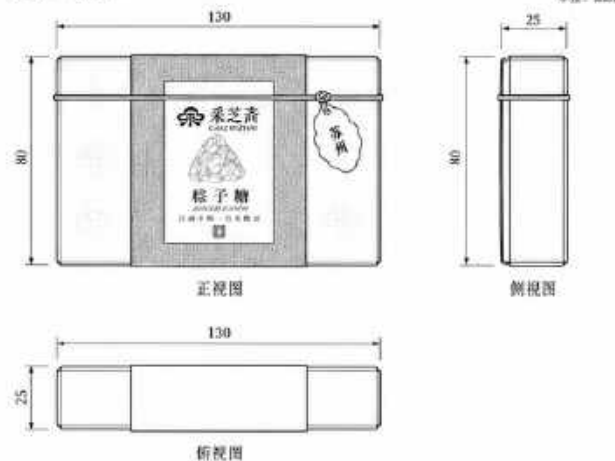
采芝斋·采芝四味 包装结构图 / Packaging Structure Diagram

以苏州传统风物为意，提取采芝商品牌元素与苏式窗棂意象，
通过简洁克制的结构与精致细节，呈现江南糕点的雅致气质。

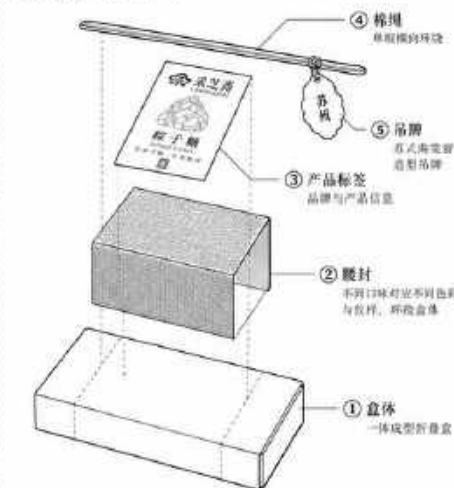
传统为形·江南为意·韵味为魂

CAIZHIZHAI

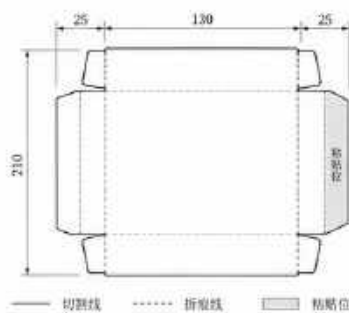
1 三视图 / Three Views



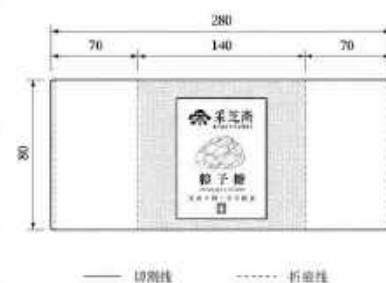
2 结构爆炸图 / Exploded View



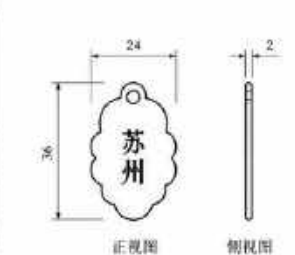
3 盒体展开图 / Main Box Die-line



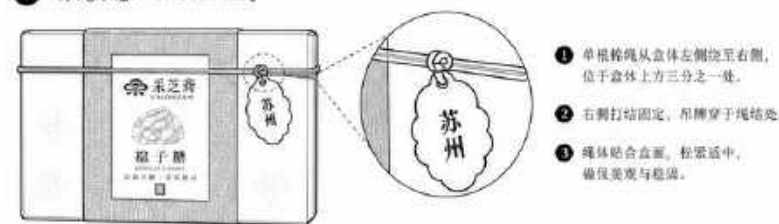
4 腰封展开图 / Belly Band Die-line



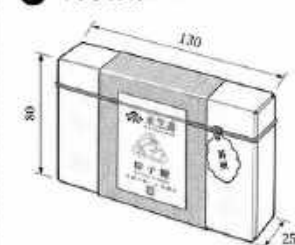
5 吊牌结构图 / Hang Tag Die-line



6 穿绳示意 / Cord Assembly



7 尺寸说明 / Size



Logo completed



CAIZHIZHAI BRAND MARK

The brand mark integrates the form of Lingzhi with the Chinese character “采”, forming a concise and recognizable symbol for Caizhizhai. It conveys the heritage, warmth and contemporary identity of a time-honored Suzhou confectionery brand.

Color system

CAIZHIZHAI BRAND

PALETTE

The palette draws from traditional paper, Suzhou confectionery, natural ingredients and the visual memory of the historic brand, creating a warm and restrained contemporary identity.

PRIMARY COLORS



PRIMARY COLORS



AUXILIARY GRAPHIC SYSTEM

CAIZHIZHAI BRAND VISUAL IDENTITY

The auxiliary graphic system is derived from the brand's core visual symbol, and arranged as a repeating pattern language. By combining the Lingzhi-inspired emblem with a small geometric accent, the system extends Caizhizhai's visual identity in a gentle, orderly and contemporary way.

Built on the brand's signature color palette, the auxiliary pattern offers flexible color variations that adapt to different communication scenarios, while maintaining a consistent and harmonious brand character.

01 BASE MOTIF



02 REPEATING PATTERN



COLORWAY 01



COLORWAY 02



COLORWAY 03



COLORWAY 04

IP design

ZHI XIAO ZONG · BRAND CHARACTER



SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW



BACK VIEW

Inspired by Caizhizhai's traditional zongzi candy, Zhi Xiao Zong transforms its rounded triangular form and embedded nut details into a warm and approachable brand character.

The design conveys the sweetness, craftsmanship and emotional memory of the historic Suzhou confectionery brand.

IP EXPRESSION SYSTEM

ZHI XIAO ZONG · EMOTIVE CHARACTER LANGUAGE

The expression system extends Zhi Xiao Zong into a more interactive and emotionally resonant brand character. By combining exaggerated facial expressions, playful gestures and small symbolic props, the IP gains stronger warmth, recognizability and communication value across packaging, social media and branded touchpoints.



IP CLOTHING EXTENSION

ZHI XIAO ZONG DAILY OUTFITS

Based on the core character of Zhi Xiao Zong, the blind box series explores diverse daily outfits inspired by Caizhizhai's traditional culture and contemporary lifestyle, bringing warmth, fun and collectability to the brand experience.



IP SCENARIO EXTENSION

ZHI XIAO ZONG • EMOTIONAL BRAND EXPERIENCE

—— From craft to connection.



01

CRAFTING SWEETNESS

Traditional Craftsmanship

Zhi Xiao Zong acts as an emotional brand mediator, connecting craftsmanship, service, sharing and gifting through everyday brand experiences.



02

BRAND SERVICE

From heritage shop to contemporary experience



03

SWEET MOMENTS

Sharing and Companionship

04

A GIFT OF SWEETNESS

Emotional Connection through Gifting



PACKAGING SYSTEM

CAIZHIZHAI · FOUR SWEETS SERIES

Traditional sweetness reinterpreted through paper, color and memory. The packaging system translates Caizhizhai's time-honored confectionery culture into a restrained modern language, using natural paper textures, soft color blocking and product-specific color bands to establish a coherent four-SKU series, while the cord binding details reinforce the brand's craftsmanship, gifting and Suzhou cultural memory.



PACKAGING BAG DESIGN

CAIZHIZHAI · SHOPPING BAG SYSTEM

The shopping bag design extends Caizhizhai's contemporary brand identity through natural kraft texture, restrained typography and Lingzhi-inspired graphic language. By combining the iconic mark, subtle paper texture and a branded hanging tag, the design conveys Suzhou elegance, gift value and the warmth of a time-honored confectionery brand.



CAIZHIZHAI PACKAGING STILL LIFE

This still life scene evokes the memory of traditional wrapped sweets through tactile paper, restrained packaging colors and warm directional light. It presents Caizhizhai not as a nostalgic brand, but as a refined and contemporary translation of Suzhou confectionery culture.



PACKAGING DESIGN DISPLAY

CAIZHIZHAI. BRAND APPLICATION

01 Visual Language

The packaging system extends Caizhizhai's visual identity through restrained typography, Lingzhi-inspired graphics and a balanced color structure, forming a coherent contemporary expression of the time-honored brand.

02 Material & Craft

Natural kraft paper, uncoated textured surfaces, hanging tags and paper wrapping details strengthen the tactile warmth of traditional confectionery packaging while maintaining a refined modern presentation.

03 Design Value

By integrating shopping bags, product boxes and printed accessories into one unified system, the design enhances recognition, gifting quality and emotional communication



IP Cultural and Creative Exhibition

01

Wall sticker for refrigerator

手捧糖果，分享每一份甜蜜心意。

A SWEET COMPANION FROM CAIZHIZHAI,
BRINGING GOOD LUCK AND SWEETNESS INTO EVERYDAY LIFE.



DETAILS

手绘质感笔触，
传递温暖可爱的治愈感。



IP Cultural and Creative Exhibition

02

Wall sticker for
refrigerator

手捧四叶草，把好运陪在身边。



米白

CREAM WHITE



糖蜜橙

HONEY ORANGE



灰松绿

SAGE GREEN



茶褐

TEA BROWN



小小粽子
大大幸福

A SWEET COMPANION
FROM CAIZHIZHAI.
BRINGING GOOD LUCK
AND SWEETNESS
INTO EVERYDAY LIFE.



幸运四叶草，
把好运陪在身边。

LUCKY CLOVER



ZHI XIAO ZONG
MERCHANDISE

IP Cultural and Creative Exhibition

03

Wall sticker for refrigerator

穿上小雨衣，也能元气满满出发。

EVEN ON RAINY DAYS,
YOU CAN SET OUT FULL OF ENERGY.



小小雨衣
大大幸福

A LITTLE RAINCOAT,
A LOT OF HAPPINESS.



IP 2026 CALENDAR

A seasonal calendar concept featuring the signature Zhi Xiao Zong character. The display adopts a warm handcrafted illustration style with low-saturation colors, and a gentle everyday narrative inspired by Korean indie stationery presentation.



Conclusion

RESEARCH CONCLUSION · CAIZHIZHAI BRAND RENEWAL

This research explores the renewal of Caizhizhai, a time-honored Suzhou confectionery brand, from the perspective of emotional design. Based on the analysis of its brand history, cultural resources, visual identity and customer experience, this study establishes an emotional design strategy and a design system—visual, behavioral and reflective—to develop a systematic brand image.

The design practice establishes a coherent visual identity system, including the brand mark, color palette, auxiliary graphics, character design, packaging design and brand applications. Through the contemporary translation of Suzhou cultural memory, traditional confectionery craftsmanship and emotional brand expression, this research aims to enhance Caizhizhai's visual recognition, emotional connection and contemporary brand expression while preserving the brand's historical and cultural identity.

THANK YOU !