

## "DESIGNING THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE: A GUIDE TO CULTIVATING CREATIVITY AND CULTURE"

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### Article Info

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### Abstract

Museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs) are emerging as a new force in the cultural industry. They are developed by using the cultural resources of museums and giving full play to design creativity. MCCPs have a variety of basic attributes, including culturality, creativity, practicality, and commerciality. They also serve a variety of basic functions, such as education, communication, and economic development. By grasping the basic attributes and clarifying the basic functions of MCCPs, we can design excellent products that meet the needs of the public and promote the development of the cultural industry.

### Introduction

With the development and reform of modern society, the functions of museums have also changed. In addition to providing public cultural services such as collection, research, exhibition and education, museums have also added the task of meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the public. The cultural and creative products emerged in this context and have gradually become one of the focuses of the development of cultural industry. The core of it is to use the cultural resources of museums, give full play to design creativity based on fully extracting cultural relics information, and achieve the corresponding design purposes from multiple dimensions and levels, to meet the needs of compound functions. Therefore, grasping the basic attributes of museum cultural and creative products and clarifying their basic functions are conducive to the final design of excellent museum cultural and creative products through clear and complete design methods and processes.

#### 1. Attributes of museum cultural and creative products

Museum cultural and creative products have the following attributes. Analyzing and summarizing them, strengthening the understanding of museum cultural and creative products, is conducive to the smooth progress of subsequent design.

##### 1.1. Culture

The first attribute of museum cultural and creative products is culture. Different from general creative products, the design of museum cultural and creative products is closely related to the cultural resources of the museum, and the creative expression is carried out after fully digging the cultural connotation. Only the museum cultural and creative products really containing cultural factors can become an important carrier to make "cultural relics come alive" and deeply integrate into people's lives, and finally realize the creative transformation and innovative development of museum resources.

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### **1.2. Difference**

Museums are often located in rich cultural resources, containing the historical traditions and cultural customs of local people, so museums have become the main places and windows to understand the history and culture of various places. Museum cultural and creative products as an important carrier to continue this cultural feeling, their design should be based on the museum's special collection resources, and differentiated product research and development should be carried out around the local history and culture. At the same time, in terms of form, function, material, technology and other aspects, we should strive to achieve "what others have not I have, what others have I have better", and avoid homogenization.

### **1.3. Innovation**

Nowadays, the research and development of cultural and creative products of museums has made great progress under the promotion of the national level and the promotion of the market and consumer level, but the overall innovation is still insufficient. The product categories are similar, the form and function are similar, and the design ideas are similar. Most of the cultural and creative products of museums are only superficial use of the visual decoration level of the cultural resources collected in the museum. Only by using innovative thinking, breaking the inherent single design thinking mode, and making a deep, appropriate, and clever fusion of cultural content and product form from a new angle, can we give the cultural and creative products of museum fresh and lasting vitality.

### **1.4. Aesthetics**

As an important carrier to interpret and translate the cultural resources of the museum, no matter what strategy is used for design, it should pay attention to the embodiment of Chinese traditional aesthetics. First of all, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of the beauty of ancient Chinese creation and the creation thought behind it, and then fully combine modern design thinking and means to design from the aspects of product shape, function, material, technology, etc., so that the "old things" collected in the museum will shine with aesthetic new opportunities, convey the meaning of beauty, and nourish the material and spiritual life of contemporary people.

### **1.5. Practicality**

As an effective medium to "bring the museum home", museum cultural and creative products are mainly lightweight daily necessities, which should be close to the needs of daily life and have basic practicality. On the one hand, they provide a variety of usage functions as "products" to provide convenience for users, and on the other hand, they also make museum cultural relics truly integrate into the "daily life" of ordinary people in the process of high-frequency contact and repeated use.

## **2. Functions of cultural and creative products in museums**

### **2.1. Cultural dissemination**

With the development and transformation of society, the state has increasingly emphasized cultural confidence and attached great importance to the development of cultural industry, which has triggered a design boom of cultural and creative products of museum. As mentioned above, cultural and creative products of museum have the attribute of culture, and they are excellent media to make "cultural relics come alive". Cultural and creative products of museum with excellent design can help to understand the essence of culture to a large extent, play a positive role in cultural communication, arouse public attention to Chinese culture and find a sense of cultural identity.

### **2.2. Social Education**

"Education is the inherent social function of museums, and the arrival of the learning society makes education the soul of museums." [1] Museum cultural and creative products, as a bridge connecting museum resources and culture with modern life of the public, are an important way to realize the public education function of museums. After visiting museum exhibitions, buying cultural and creative products is also taking the cultural

information of museum resources home. Therefore, museum cultural and creative products expand the temporality and spatiality of museum education to a certain extent and are a means to extend the educational function of museums.

### **2.3. Emotional resonance**

Museum cultural and creative products can establish a link between historical relics and audiences across time and space, creating an opportunity for consumers to empathize with the life experiences of historical figures and their social environment, thus causing emotional resonance, just like being in the middle of it. At the same time, museum cultural and creative products are like "a key". On the one hand, they help audiences open the door of dusty history, and even after the museum visit, they can continue to deepen their historical knowledge and cultural cognition brought by the exhibition. On the other hand, as a commemorative object, it can also let audiences recall the good experience of visiting a museum years later.

## **3. Design Method of Museum Cultural and Creative Products**

### **3.1. Fun replica**

Museums provide audiences with close contact and understanding of historical relics through planning exhibitions. At this time, if some highly recognized cultural relics can be turned into museum cultural and creative products, they can "make precious collections that can only be seen but cannot be profaned exist in another way around users", [2] among which replicas are undoubtedly the most direct way. However, the so-called replica does not refer to the mass-produced or poor quality or expensive "straightforward" type, which can only be put on the shelf as decorations, but the replica that should be incorporated into the careful design of the interesting copy. According to cultural relics and cultural information, the design of cultural and creative products of museum can be changed in size and proportion, or the use of new materials and new processes, or even based on the context of the times to give new aesthetics of the times. These creative methods based on the characteristics of cultural relics can bring unique five senses of fun, so as to improve the value of "replicas". It is worth noting that creativity should have a sense of boundary, with historical relics information, aesthetic propositions as benchmarks, and not blindly "excessive entertainment" design.

### **3.2. Use form to convey meaning**

Museum resources and culture are all-inclusive, in addition to the "beauty of objects" visible to the naked eye, they also contain many abstract cultural connotations, ideas, spiritual beliefs and other contents. At the beginning of the design, it is necessary to clarify the relevant cultural context, grasp every detail of the cultural relics and understand the social environment in which the creation is located, popular ideas and universal spiritual beliefs, etc. On this basis, the product design, color expression and other aspects are all based on the above abstract content for visualized translation, striving to grasp the cultural core, to achieve cultural infiltration.

### **3.3. Old style with new style**

Ancient Chinese creations were designed and made by ancient people using different materials and corresponding crafts according to various needs of daily life. They have both aesthetic and practical functions, and contain infinite wisdom and simple and exquisite design ideas, [3] which have an irreplaceable inspiration to modern design. However, many museum cultural and creative products are only designed for ancient creations, that is, the so-called "traditional elements" are slightly designed and applied to the visual decoration level of products. This superficial way of interpreting ancient creations does not really understand the deep connotation of ancient Chinese creations. [4] Therefore, we should first have a deep understanding of the style and development of ancient Chinese creations, accurately grasp the logic of ancient creations, actively explore the cultural connotation behind, and then creatively use their design forms, design languages and design methods for modern design, to show the "skill" of ancient creations in museum cultural and creative products at a high level.

#### **4. Design process of museum cultural and creative products**

##### **4.1. Research on Museum Resources**

How to properly reflect and apply museum resources to the design of cultural and creative products is based on the knowing, understanding, sorting, and summarizing of museum resources in the early research system. Through the collection of museum cultural relics information resources and combined with relevant literature to help understand, while completing the logic of the arrangement, finally summarized and put forward views. This research process can help designers build a "design database" and provide strong support and guarantee for the implementation of subsequent design practices.

##### **4.2. Creative Planning and Refinement**

###### **4.2.1. Adopt professional advice**

After the overall sorting out of the cultural resources of the museum, the cultural relics with the most value of the research and development of cultural and creative products of the museum are determined through analysis, and the authoritative interpretation and feedback of cultural and creative professionals are actively referred to improve and supplement the three-dimensional structure of the information of the selected cultural relics, and the cultural value points that the products can eventually carry and output are determined. To ensure that the dissemination of museum resources and culture is established on an accurate and correct basis.

###### **4.2.2. Use research data**

The category definition of museum cultural and creative products should be based on the results of market research and consumer profiling, and relevant research plays an important role in the specific product planning and design. Combining online and offline data to help determine the product category that can match the selected cultural object and meet the consumption needs of different groups, in order to truly complete the design of a successful museum cultural and creative product.

##### **4.3. Design Practice and Implementation**

After completing the research of museum resources, market and consumer research, and making a clear product research and development creative planning, the design practice stage will be entered. This stage can be roughly divided into four parts: design draft drawing, rendering, model and proofing, and finished product production, emphasizing hand drawing, software skills and practical ability. The proofing link is a key step to verify the feasibility of the design, including the overall control of materials, processes, costs, cycles and other factors, which is conducive to the birth of the final product.

#### **5. Curriculum Design Practice**

After leading students to analyze and sort out the attributes and functions of cultural and creative products in the museum, the above three main design methods were proposed and taught to students, focusing on guiding students to give full play to their creativity. At the same time, the complete design process was emphasized and the importance of repeated demonstration in each link was pointed out. After actual course teaching and design training, students in the class have a more systematic understanding of the design of cultural and creative products in the museum, master certain design methods, and can complete the core tasks of each stage according to the process, and finally achieve good design results. For example, the work "Only this green smoke - cultural and creative humidifier" is based on the design prototype of the bronze stove of the Western Han Dynasty, which cleverly translates the function and meaning of the original objects into modern design, which is to create an image of "Penglai Fairy Island" and meet the daily needs of modern life (as shown in Figure 1). The work "Bronze God Bird Refrigerator Sticker" focuses on finding a kind of fun to create. First, the bronze god bird of Sanxingdui is copied to a small fridge sticker by a narrowed proportion, and the head decoration is removed and replaced by a bottle mouth that can be inserted into flowers and grass. The user can replace it daily as if the bronze god bird has changed into a different decoration. Such interactive behavior virtually brings the consumer closer to the Sanxingdui culture (as shown in Figure 2). The third work

takes the lantern bell as the prototype. After fully understanding the basic characteristics of the object and its historical period and social background, the work takes the good wish of safe travel, and transforms it from an ancient chariot and horse tool into a modern car pendant, which also shines with new vitality.



Figure 1: Jinlian Huang: "Only this green smoke - cultural and creative humidifier", 2023, Guided by Min li.

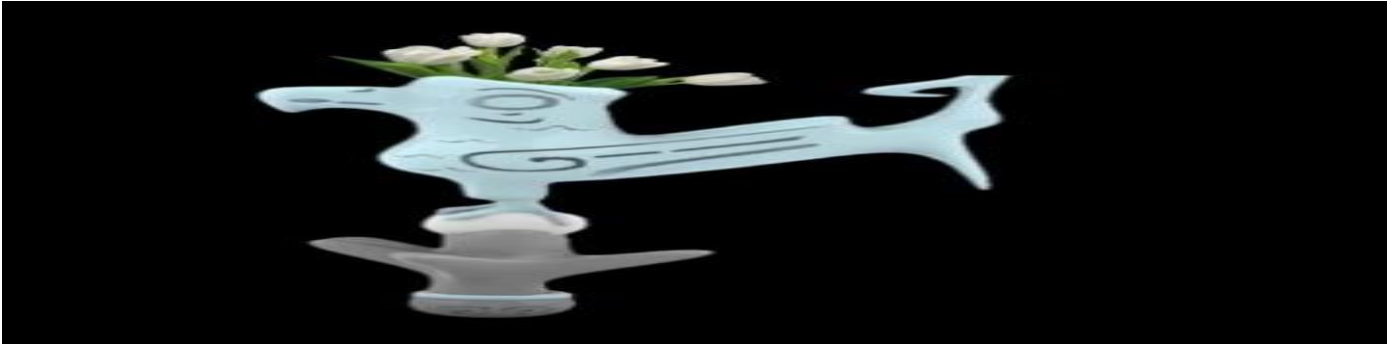


Figure 2: Siyu Liu: "Bronze God Bird Refrigerator Sticker", 2023, Guided by Min li.



Figure 3: Qiuju Deng: "Lantern bell", car hanging decoration design, 2023, Guided by Min li.

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