

Designing a Place-Based Souvenir with the Purpose of Aesthetic Education in Universities—A Case Study on the “The First Scenery in the World” of Zhenjiang

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Abstract: As an important constituent of cultural transmission, aesthetic education can develop students' abilities in terms of enjoying beauty and art, and help the individual to act, either in their inner and outer life, act in accordance with a sense of optimism, harmony and confidence. By designing unique campus souvenirs under the aesthetic education theory, referencing the characteristics of local culture, the college students can recall and understand more about the story and history of a site. Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province, is a famous historical city in China, with one of the most beautiful mountain-river views over the Yangtze River Delta. Inspired by the features of culture and landscape of Zhenjiang City, this study designed the IP image of "Little Jingjiang", by selecting the most representative characteristics as the key point of cultural innovation. This study's specific aim is to report on the outcomes of an innovative and place-based IP product influenced by aesthetic education. This research delves into the complexity of understanding and the practice of designing authentic souvenirs, taking an inclusive approach to the promotion of local history and culture.

Keywords: Aesthetic Education, Souvenir, Campus, Design, Innovative IP

1. Background

1.1 The Significance of place-based souvenir for Aesthetic Education on Campuses of universities.

1.1.1 Beautifying the campus environment and enhancing the happiness of students.

The impact of environment on the development of individuals and social society cannot be underestimated. In a well-developed cultural environment, all creatures are benefited from nature and the universe, with the abundant vitality. Similarly, with the pursuit of beauty, human beings have made a huge progress physically and mentally. Specifically, the students living environment of university is improved. With the incorporation of local cultural elements, the landscape of campus can show an obvious and positive change ^[1]. This not only relies on the distinctively regional and cultural characteristics of different cities, but also creates a more comfortable and pleasant learning and living environment for students^[2, 3]. At the same time, this cultural influenced aesthetic experiences of students, enriching the content of local cultural content, increasing its interest, and thereby enhancing the happiness of university students^[4].

1.1.2 Promotes the development of aesthetic education and fosters a cycle of beauty.

The aesthetic education, as a crucial method for culture dissemination, explores the utilization of locally cultural resources^[5]. By developing university-based souvenirs that integrate the external appearances and the profound cultural heritage of the university, the essence of the university's culture can be advertised by consumers purchasing the souvenirs^[6]. This approach has a significant value in improving the aesthetic education^[7], helping the development of campus environment, and promoting the dissemination of university culture. Under the influence of aesthetic education involved local culture, students can perceive the beauty of local city^[8], and gradually their personal arts levels could be strengthened. Simultaneously, they have experienced novel regional cultures on campus with the arts, and thereby the effect aesthetic education to those students would be more successful. The

integration of aesthetic elements into cultural core through landscape aesthetics nourishes students' souls^[9], attracting them with its unique characteristics, leaving a lasting impression in their memories, and encouraging them to actively spread it, thus creating a broad impact over the society^[6, 10, 11]. The interaction between landscape and students forms a dynamic cycle of development.

1.1.3 Highlighting the features of campus and shape the characteristic of the university.

The dynamic nature of cultural resources is apparent, campus culture continues to evolve with the expanding and becomes more distinctive over time. To highlight their unique value, campus-based souvenirs should be designed closely around the distinctive cultural attributes of the city they are located in, and be innovated based on local cultural symbols^[12]. This approach enriches the essence and cultural significance of the souvenirs, while also reinforcing the figure of university to public. Moreover, through the effective marketing strategies, the dissemination and promotion of campus souvenirs can deepen the collaboration between the university and the city, with the maximization of their social functions^[3, 11]. Because of this process, it not only does foster the belonging among students, but it also strengthens their identification with local history and culture, creating a positive and upward learning and living environment.

1.2 New Approaches to the Design of place-based souvenirs

In exploring the design of place-based souvenirs, it is essential to notice the key of design is understanding local culture. The design process requires the in-depth research, comprehensive understanding, and a reimagining of local culture to uncover its unique features^[13], which should then be presented through graphic or visual ways. Furthermore, establishing a lecture to appreciate the place-based souvenirs is a core of aesthetic education of the university, which boosting the arts value of souvenirs. This not only enriches the content of the course but also strengthens students' aesthetic sense. Additionally, during the design, it is crucial to consider the emotional and practical needs of both college staff and students, integrating fashion the elements into cultural and innovative products^[14]. This approach facilitates a deep integration between aesthetic education, local culture, and innovative products.

1.2.1 Overview of IP Design of Urban Brand Innovative Products

The innovative products IP, serving as a visual business card for cities previously, is widely applied in various industries such as novels, e-commerce, films, TV programs, and games, nowadays^[6]. It is a consumption that is rooted in daily life and can reflect the spirit of ethnic, with the extraordinary appeal. Film and literature, TV program characters, game, and animations, can all evolve their own unique cultural and innovative IPs. For example, Chinese TV program names “Nirvana In Fire” (*Langyabang* in Chinese pronunciation) and “The Lost Tomb” (*Daomubiji* in Chinese pronunciation), American animated IPs such as Marvel and Disney, and Japanese anime IPs created from famous animator and filmmakers like Hayao Miyazaki and Osamu Tezuka. Kumamon, created in Japan in 2010, is a wide-eyed and red-cheeked bear representing Kumamoto Prefecture. The beloved, cuddly Japanese character has also been diplomatically employed to promote Japanese culture, drawing people from around the world to his prefecture, and has generated huge economic benefits, and also become a marketing superstar for merchandises.

Consequently, a city needs to develop its own cultural innovative IP. This is to find the city's distinctive historical and cultural features and make these features into a symbolic and virtual representation. The urban IP is not solely a manifestation of the city, but it also conveys the city's specialty to people, which benefits the city's popularization and enhances the community identification among citizens^[1, 4]. Moreover, as the release of the cultural and innovative IP, the production and promotion of its spin-off products can also boost economic development of the city.

1.2.2 Grounding in local culture and seeking an innovative base

When designing local cultural innovative products, the primary task for designers is to identify and establish the main cultural foundation of products. To create outstanding cultural innovative products, designers must study the historical development of the region, gaining a deep understanding and appreciation of local culture as well as its characteristics^[11]. Furthermore, designers should show the respect and recognition to local culture, infusing the conceptualization and realization of campus cultural innovative products with artistic design techniques that absorb the essence of local culture^[13]. Meanwhile, the design of cultural innovative products should take local culture as the core starting point, while also considering aesthetic principles, utilizing modern innovative design thinking and

technological means to reinvent local cultural elements, and ultimately producing the campus cultural innovative products that are highly welcomed by staff and students.

Zhenjiang is a historic city with rich culture and talents, situated on the southern bank of the Yangtze River^[15]. Following the conquest of southern China by the Sui in 581, the town was made a garrison, commanding the entrance to the Yangtze River^[16], and in 595 it became a full prefecture named Yanling (later Runzhou). Because it was the place where the Jiangnan Canal (which in turn was connected to the Grand Canal) joined the Yangtze, its importance was greatly increased. Under the early Song dynasty (960–1279) it remained of strategic importance and in 975 became the military prefecture of Zhenjiang. In addition to being connected with a dense canal and waterway system, it has been linked with Nanjing and Shanghai by rail since 1908. Its trade is based not only on the area south of the river but also on the northern part of Jiangsu^[15]. Zhenjiang has many well-known temples and other relics; important archaeological finds have also been made in the area. It boasts many sites of historic interest and scenic beauty—including Jinshan Hill on the south bank of the Yangtze; Jiao Hill, a ridgelike island in the river; and Beigu Hill at an ancient strategic point by the river, all of which are wooded and have historic Buddhist and Daoist monasteries. Additionally, the deep, potent vinegar is named after Zhenjiang City, formerly known as Chinkiang, and can be dated back 2,600 years ago. Zhenjiang vinegar is one of China's Four famous vinegars, having won numerous brand awards over the world^[15].

Overall, under the trend of integrating cultural tourism, Zhenjiang should grasp this opportunity to make the good use of cultural tourism IPs, finding the inherent potential of the livable and rich tourism resources of Zhenjiang. Innovative products IP of Zhenjiang should focus on the protection, inheritance, and revitalization of cultural heritage, promoting the harmonious coexistence of diverse cultures, and thereby converting the unique humanities and social advantages into a stable driving factor for urban economic development.

1.2.3 Design lectures with the aesthetic education concept

Aesthetic education plays an important role in the cultivation of college students' ideal personality, the perfection of their soul, the improvement of their quality and the promotion of their cultural self-confidence as well as aesthetic sentiments and judgement. Previous education courses have faced challenges such as outdated content and a single teaching-method lacking the interesting alternations. However, college students prefer the modern art education activities with the more engagement and frequent interaction between team members. Aesthetic education should focus on practical activities, stimulating the interest of students through practice and enhancing the learning initiative among youngsters, which enables students to perceive and create beauty through practical experience. Cultural and innovative products on campus should embody aesthetic values. With this aim, teachers should guide students to designing innovative IP products which can explain the cultural connotations between the university environment and people. This approach does not only deepen the students' understanding and affinity of local and campus culture, but also increases their skill of artistic design and cultivates their appreciation of aesthetics^[4, 9, 10].

2. Practice of IP Design of Zhenjiang

2.1 Selection and Improvement of Cultural Element of Zhenjiang

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, along with the “Three mountains”(Beigu Mountain, Jinshan Mountain and Jiaoshan Mountain) in Zhenjiang, serve as the core elements of the IP design in this paper^[15], fully embodying the regional characteristics and profound historical and cultural heritage. The IP mascot designed by this study named “Little Jingjiang” is intended to portray a symbol of youth filled with positive energy and optimistic. The local history, culture, and customs of Zhenjiang have provided lots of inspiration for the creation of named “Little Jingjiang”. Considering that youthful characters are more appealing to modern young generations, the author has designed the large eyes and a mountain-shaped head for “Little Jingjiang”, with the overall round body figure. Given the beautiful and natural feature of the Three mountains in and the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the color scheme for the IP mascot is blue-green.

2.2 Design Process

Based on an in-depth exploration and analysis of Zhenjiang's unique cultural symbols, this study

innovatively applied the advanced design strategies such as summative synthesis and reconstruction, which resulted the distinctive creation of an IP product. Following a systematic review of the culture of Three Mountains and the Grand Canal, we designed symbolic patterns and color elements, which integrated and generalized the distinct cultural identity to the IP products. Ultimately, a new IP named "Little Jingjiang" is emerged as Figure 1-4, and characterized with enterprising and positive thinking, vividly showing the essence and attraction of Zhenjiang's culture.



Figure 1: The front view of "Little Jingjiang".



Figure 2: The side view of "Little Jingjiang".

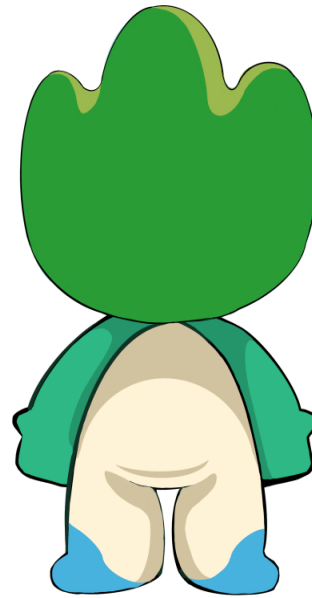


Figure 3: The back view of "Little Jingjiang".

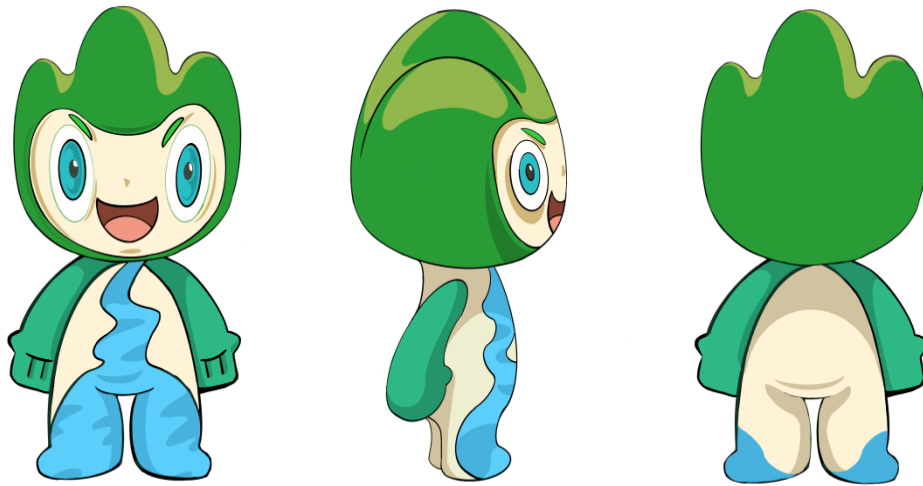


Figure 4: A three-dimensional view of "Little Jingjiang".

2.3 IP Image Application Design and Presentation

In the field of design, color perception is regarded as a primary and essential element. To align with the relaxing and funny points of innovative cultural products, designers tend to utilize bright colors and incorporate complementary colors to enhance visual impact and appeal of IP image. To accurately determine the color of IP products, the research group have employed a quantitative analysis tool named the color histogram, which help the deep analysis of representative colors in the cultures of Three Mountains and the Grand Canal. Using Adobe Illustrator software for color calibration, this study established a color resource library that includes primary, secondary, and associated colors, ensuring that the design pieces accurately reflect the cultural essence of Zhenjiang and the rendering is shown in Figure 5-7.



Figure 5: Handbag with "Little Jingjiang".



Figure 6: Template of T-shirt 1.



Figure 7: Template of T-shirt 2.

For the "Little Jingjiang", the main color scheme was high luminosity green and blue. Green, as a symbol of life, always means hope, and nature, which represents the vitality and dynamism and also conveys the feeling of safety and tranquillity^[2]. Under the substantial scenarios, green is normally viewed as a symbol of positive and blessing. Blue, with its connection to the color of river and sea, represents the calmness and relaxation, while "Little Jingjiang" also was design in blue by referencing the color association with open spaces, inspiration and wisdom. In conclusion, finding the right combination of colors for IP image with the full consideration of local culture, is tricky, but the audiences can perceive the stories we would like to tell by a very effective design.

3. Conclusions

Zhenjiang has rich cultural and historical resources, among which "The First Scenery in the World" composed of the "Three mountains" and the Grand Canal are significant elements. This paper deeply studies and analyzes the scenic spots with regional characteristics, and designs IP images accordingly, to make more people understand the history and culture of Zhenjiang and is inspired by the distinctive and irreplaceable features of this city. This approach not only positively promoted Zhenjiang culture, but also can effectively boost the development of aesthetic education in Zhenjiang University.

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