

Exploring the Path of Art Empowering Rural Cultural and Creative Design Practice in Supporting Agricultural Practice

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of rural revitalization through cultural and artistic empowerment, “Culture + Agriculture” combines traditional agriculture with the cultural and artistic industry, integrating art design, technology, and agricultural elements with the logic of cultural thinking, developing and expanding the functions of traditional agriculture and enhancing and enriching its value. With the help of art principles, design, and symbols, the “artistic rural construction” uses the power of art to bridge the gap between past and present, connect urban and rural areas, reconstruct the relationships among rural people, scenery, and objects, cultivate cultural ecology and open up poetic spaces. The design team remains committed to deep engagement in practical experiences, both emerging from and returning to rural practices. They consistently focus on the focal points and issues within the vision of rural revitalization, incorporating the advanced ideological foundation and cutting-edge technological perspectives of capital’s universities into the grand cause of rural revitalization, thus promoting the spiritual and cultural construction as well as the economic growth of the new rural areas.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization, Artistic Rural Construction, Cultural and Creative Support for Agriculture, Value-added Agricultural Products

1. Introduction

Adhering to the prioritized development of agriculture and rural areas, promoting integrated urban-rural development, and facilitating the flow of factors between urban and rural areas. We are steadfastly advancing the revitalization of rural industries, talents, culture, ecology, and organizations. The construction of beautiful rural areas has become an essential requirement for rural revitalization. With the development of the capital in the new era as the guiding principle, we insist that the major cities drive the development of the larger suburban areas and larger suburbs provide services to the major cities, and accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas.^[1]

The team actively promotes the revitalization practices of nine rural areas in Beijing's suburban regions, expanding channels for increasing farmers' income. We promote rural characteristics, utilize local resources effectively, strengthen and optimize distinctive brands, extend the agricultural product industry chain, and drive rural development.^[2] Through methods such as agricultural product packaging design, interior design of villages, and the transformation of old village environments, we establish an interconnected industry chain among the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors, thereby expanding channels for farmers to increase income and achieve prosperity. We focus on industry assistance, driving sustainable growth in collective economic income in economically weak villages.

2. Exploration of the Practical Path of “Artistic Rural Construction”

2.1. Empowering Rural Revitalization through “Artistic Rural Construction”

Design innovation can “empower creativity” in rural areas by considering specific conditions in impoverished regions and applying relevant design methods and strategies. It involves discarding the advantages and disadvantages of poverty-stricken areas and transforming them into resources for self-development. By continuously enhancing the value of agricultural products, it drives the prosperity of industries in rural areas, promotes shared prosperity between urban and rural areas, and lays the

foundation for rural revitalization.^[3] In the realistic context of rural development, unlike the previous approach of “starting from scratch” or top-down governance, “artistic rural construction” is based on the traditions and aspirations of the rural community. It emphasizes emotional integration and active participation, making it more adaptive and dynamic. Therefore, it holds tremendous potential for empowering rural revitalization.

2.1.1. Artistic Rural Construction

“Artistic Rural Construction” refers to the use of artistic concepts, artistic design, artistic symbols, and other means to connect the past and present, bridging urban and rural areas through the power of art. It aims to reconstruct the relationships between people, scenery and things in the countryside, nurturing cultural ecology and creating poetic spaces.

2.1.2. Traditional Art and the Construction of Beautiful Rural Areas

Firstly, material foundation and spiritual cultivation. “Artistic rural construction” is a practical implementation of conceptual evolution, ultimately focusing on the aspect of “construction”. The concept of “construction” extends beyond material infrastructure and encompasses the construction of villagers’ concepts, thoughts, spirituality, and value systems.

Secondly, traditional culture and emerging trends. “Artistic rural construction” is a practical action based on current development and future needs, taking into account the present and future. To truly understand the entirety of rural areas, one must follow the folding marks and stretch out the countryside’s past gradually. Respecting rural traditional culture, building upon the local cultural forms, and engaging in creative transformation and innovative development, drawing lessons from history while being relevant to the present.

Thirdly, self-construction of rural areas and urban-rural interaction. “Artistic rural construction” is a development movement primarily focused on rural areas, presenting an alternative path to urbanization. Art serves as a medium and vehicle that connects urban and rural areas, and “Artistic rural construction” represents a coupling path that promotes symbiosis, co-construction, integration, and mutual benefits between cities and rural areas.

2.1.3. Experiences and Insights of “Artistic Rural Construction”

Firstly, creating aesthetically pleasing rural living spaces. In the process of “artistic rural construction”, art serves as the observer, designer, and participant in rural development. By understanding the needs, grasping trends, setting visions, and finding solutions, meticulous designs are employed for each village, courtyard, and building, creating a completely new rural space that combines practicality and artistic qualities.

Secondly, reconstructing rural cultural identity. During this significant period of social transformation, rural populations are experiencing increased mobility and looser structures. Rural areas face challenges of economic underdevelopment and a lack of cultural identity. The implementation of “artistic rural construction” contributes to the reconstruction of cultural and emotional identification in rural areas, gathering the intrinsic strengths of rural revitalization, and rediscovering the essence of rural communities.

Thirdly, activating the rural industry momentum. As a practical approach to rural construction, the ultimate goal is to stimulate industries and drive economic growth. By optimizing rural living spaces and reconstructing rural cultural identity, “artistic rural construction” reshapes the relationships between rural life, ecology, and production. It revitalizes the resource elements for rural development and becomes an innovative paradigm that propels the development of rural industries.

2.2. Conducting Cultural and Creative Design Practices to Support Agriculture

2.2.1. Connect Cultural and Creative Activities to Support Agriculture

Rural cultural creativity is a booster for promoting the strategy of rural revitalization.^[4] Through rural cultural creativity, agricultural products can be creatively packaged and culturally marketed, thereby further increasing their added value. Dilapidated and abandoned village houses and monotonous agricultural landscapes can be transformed into stylish lodging houses and beautiful scenery, further optimizing the overall appearance of the village and creating a leisurely agricultural atmosphere. The industrial development brought about by rural cultural creativity can promote local economic growth, paving the way for new avenues of production and prosperity in rural areas, and enabling villagers to

increase their income and achieve common prosperity by relying on characteristic economies.

2.2.2. Foster Awareness of High-Quality Brands

Efforts should be made to establish a sense of premium branding in the packaging design of local agricultural products. During the design process, brand awareness should be incorporated into the packaging design, taking into comprehensive consideration the local characteristics of the agricultural product brands. The product's brand serves as an identification system that can endow the product with value, longevity, uniqueness, and recognition. It consists of symbols, designs, and the name of the product.^[5]

2.2.3. Incorporate Local Cultural Elements

Local agricultural products should fully embody their regional characteristics in packaging design and incorporate local cultural elements into the design.^[6] Integrating local elements into product packaging design makes local agricultural products more distinctive, improves their market competitiveness, and makes products truly become local symbols.

2.2.4. Meet Consumer Needs to Achieve Rural Income Generation

The supply and sale of local agricultural products directly affects rural economic development.^[7] In product packaging design, it is necessary to effectively meet the demands of consumers for local agricultural products in order to stimulate their purchasing behavior and lead the construction of the local economy with the development of agricultural products.

3. Pre-survey and Research Results

During the design practice, in-depth and systematic field research was conducted on the actual situation of each village that required practical implementation. Now, a summary of the preliminary research results is provided.

3.1. Preliminary Research and Analysis of Huangtuliang Village in Dazhuangke Township, Yanqing District

The main sources of income for villagers in Huangtu Liang Village are economic forests such as chestnuts, walnuts, and red fruits. The natural endowment is weak, and it is classified as a village with a weak collective economy. The village lacks resources, has inconvenient transportation and limited arable land. The purchase prices of agricultural products harvested each year are low. The traditional characteristic features of the village are missing, and the phenomenon of hollow villages is gradually worsening, requiring guidance for the construction of spiritual civilization.

The research has identified the following current issues: Firstly, Huangtu Liang Village currently has 16 mu of arable land and 41 households with over 100 residents, most of whom are elderly or sick villagers. There is a scarcity of labour force, and the original vanilla industry has reached a bottleneck, requiring the enhancement of the existing industries' value. Secondly, the existing agricultural products in Dazhuangke Township are still at a low level of commercial value, lacking distinctive cultural IP with local connotations. Thirdly, the village lacks effective promotion of spiritual civilization, and it is necessary to boost the morale of the villagers.

3.2. Preliminary Research and Analysis of Shanmengou Village in Dahua Mountain Town, Pinggu District

Shanmengou Village is located in the northwestern part of Beijing's Pinggu District and is relatively remote. Its mountainous advantages and water resources should be fully utilized to develop animal husbandry, promote ecotourism, and establish a base for youth education. Shanmengou Village has a small area of arable land and is dominated by agriculture, which is not very profitable. Moreover, the cultivation types are relatively single and cannot adapt to the rapidly changing market. By considering agriculture from an industrial perspective, focusing on expanding and strengthening tourism reception, and cultivating characteristic folk industries, a rural comprehensive development model can be created. Through the integration and interaction of the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, the different sectors can mutually penetrate and blend. In response to market trends, it is important to develop health and wellness tourism.

3.3. Research Findings

Cultural creativity and design services play a significant role and have tremendous value in cultural revitalization, product manufacturing, and the creation of new consumption processes.^[8] As the main type of creative industries and productive service industries, how creative design can better serve rural revitalization and enhance the high-quality development of the entire rural economy and society is crucial. By integrating cultural and creative design with rural cultural traditions, it is also possible to achieve cultural renewal at a higher level, improve the cultural production of rural spaces, and promote the creation of a new rural tradition.^[9]

4. Implementation of Rural Revitalization Practice Activities

4.1. Conducting “Rural Revitalization” Practice Activities in Huangtuliang Village

During the “rural revitalization” practical activities in Huangtuliang Village, various initiatives were carried out based on the rural revitalization project and previous research and work achievements. These initiatives included thematic wall painting activities, support for agricultural product sales, and discussions on the current economic and cultural situation.

4.1.1. Thematic Wall Paintings

The wall paintings in Huangtuliang Village, themed on rural revitalization, showcase the beautiful scenery of Huangtuliang and bring the art of painting and the innovative spirit of young people to the impoverished village. The activity utilized three-dimensional art pieces in public spaces, promoting socialist core values and the construction of rural customs in the new era. With natural beauty and distinct cultural artistic forms, the spiritual outlook of Huangtuliang Village has been enhanced.

4.1.2. Discussion on Agricultural Product Sales Assistance, Economic and Cultural Status

The symposium and on-site research were conducted around the theme of improving the effectiveness of poverty alleviation. The focus was on discussing how packaging design can enhance the sales of agricultural products and exploring assistance initiatives based on this aspect. Opinions were exchanged regarding the implementation, expansion intentions, and other related aspects.

4.2. Practice of Rural Complex Project in Shanmengou Village, Dahua Mountain Town

4.2.1. Analysis of the Concept of Rural Complex

The rural complex refers to rural development that is carried out through farmer cooperatives as the carrier, with active participation from farmers, integrating circular economy, entrepreneurship, and interactive elements.^[10] It demands the protection and further development of the originality of rural areas. The rural revitalization strategy emphasizes the development of rural areas, following the overall requirements of thriving industries, livable ecology, civilized rural customs, effective governance, and improved living standards. It aims to promote integrated urban-rural development and advance agricultural and rural modernization.

4.2.2. Practice Content

The outdoor landscape enhancement of Shanmengou Village focuses on showcasing natural ecology and cultural characteristics, intending to improve the landscape and quality of life. It takes into consideration landscape beautification, functional modernization, and convenience in its design approach. Through the display of ecological agriculture and leisure tourism, it showcases the unique charm of the rural area, meeting the urban residents’ imagination of idyllic scenery and creating a distinctive paradise-like place for them.

5. Application Value and Practical Significance of Artistic Rural Construction

5.1. Empowering Rural Areas with Art and Design for Value

Artistic rural construction empowers rural areas through art and design, promoting the simultaneous development of rural spiritual civilization and economic construction, boosting villagers’ aspirations and confidence in a prosperous future life. It reflects the organic integration of design, art, local cultural and

economic characteristics, enhancing the spiritual outlook of the countryside and the market competitiveness of economic products through natural beauty and distinct cultural artistic forms.

5.2. Collaborative Efforts between Schools and Localities to Boost Rural Spiritual Civilization and Economic Development

By empowering rural areas through art and design, it demonstrates the synergy between schools and local communities, creating a high starting point and staying grounded, jointly promoting the development of rural spiritual civilization and economy. It has facilitated the organic integration of local rural cultural characteristics and support from universities, mobilizing the participation and enthusiasm of the masses and students, and enhancing the effectiveness and precision of the work.

5.3. Leveraging the Advantages of Higher Education Institutions in Integrating Science and Education

The design practice has honed the collaborative workability of the teacher team, introduced interdisciplinary and interprofessional models, and reinforced complementary competencies with practical needs and pragmatic grounding. It leveraged the professional strengths of the teachers, honing their practical skills, enhancing their sense of responsibility and mission, and expanding the space and horizons for future research and teaching endeavors.

6. Conclusions

The practice team approaches rural revitalization from the perspective of cultural industries, researching how cultural and creative design can enhance the added value of agricultural products. Through design projects that foster emotional resonance based on cultural, design, and brand identity, they aim to promote consumption, achieve premium pricing, and provide new ideas for the inheritance and comprehensive revitalization of rural culture in Beijing.^[11]

Under the background of culture and art empowering rural revitalization, “Culture + Agriculture” combines traditional agriculture with the culture and art industry. Leveraging cultural thinking, the team integrates art design, technology, and agricultural elements to develop and expand the functions of traditional agriculture, enhancing and enriching its value. The design team continues to pay attention to the key areas and issues within the vision of rural revitalization, continuously deepening their work and striving for improvement. They aim to integrate the advanced ideological foundation and cutting-edge technological perspectives of capital’s universities faculty and students into the cause of rural revitalization, driving the spiritual and cultural construction as well as economic development of the new countryside.

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