

The Application and Exploration of Northern Jiangsu Cultural Elements in the Creation of Civic and Political Art Works in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: *As an important part of Jiangsu Province, the northern part of Suzhou has rich historical and cultural resources and unique folk art elements. In the education of ideology and politics in colleges and universities, art creation has become an important means of education, conveying ideology and politics through visual art and enhancing students' cultural identity and patriotic feelings. However, the application of northern Jiangsu cultural elements in the ideological and political art works in colleges and universities still faces many challenges, such as the difficulty of integrating the ideological and political themes with artistic expression, the limitations of the application of cultural elements, and the insufficiency of cultural cognition of the creative subject. This paper aims to explore these problems and puts forward the application paths of refinement and modernization of the cultural elements of northern Jiangsu, fusion of visual language and ideological and political connotations, innovation of expression methods and technology application, interdisciplinary cooperation and comprehensive creation mode, etc., in order to provide useful references and reference for the creation of ideological and political art works in colleges and universities. Through the exploration of these paths, we can not only enrich the form and content of the ideological education in colleges and universities, but also promote the inheritance and innovation of the Northern Jiangsu culture, and realize the win-win situation of culture and education.*

Keywords: *Northern Jiangsu; Cultural Elements; Civic and Political Art; Colleges and Universities*

1. Introduction

The historical and cultural heritage of Northern Jiangsu is profoundly rich, boasting a plethora of folk arts that not only encapsulate the region's memory but also harbor deep ideological connotations and moral values. As a pivotal avenue for nurturing builders and successors of socialism, college ideological and political education continually seeks to innovate its pedagogical forms and content. Visual art pieces, serving as direct and vivid modes of expression, effectively convey political and educational principles, fostering cultural identity and patriotic sentiment among students. However, integrating the cultural elements of Northern Jiangsu with political themes in a manner that enhances both artistic quality and educational impact presents a significant challenge. This paper embarks on an exploration of the primary types and core values of Northern Jiangsu cultural elements, scrutinizes the existing issues in college ideological and political art creation, and proposes specific solutions, aiming to offer new perspectives and methodologies for ideological and political education in higher education institutions.

2. Overview of Northern Jiangsu Cultural Elements

2.1. Main types of cultural elements in Northern Jiangsu

The cultural elements of Northern Jiangsu are rich and colorful, covering various aspects such as history, folklore, architecture, and art, each exuding a unique charm. Northern Jiangsu has a long history; this land has witnessed countless wars and changes, leaving behind numerous precious historical relics. Whether it's the ancient city ruins from the Qin and Han dynasties or the mansions and gardens from the Ming and Qing dynasties, these historical sites provide valuable resources for academic research and cultural tourism. Folklore is also an integral part of Northern Jiangsu's culture; these stories contain a wealth of folk wisdom and moral concepts, becoming a part of the spiritual life of the local people. In terms of art, paper-cutting and dough modeling are undoubtedly the most

representative forms of folk art. Paper-cutting art demonstrates the wisdom and creativity of the people of Northern Jiangsu with its delicate craftsmanship, rich patterns, and profound cultural connotations. Each paper-cut is an exquisite picture, not only beautifying the environment but also conveying auspiciousness and blessings. For example, during the Spring Festival, every household hangs paper-cut window flowers, which vary in appearance, from traditional symbols of fortune, prosperity, longevity, and happiness to modern representations of technological progress, fully showcasing the openness and inclusiveness of Northern Jiangsu culture. Dough modeling art is even more vivid and lively, using flour as the main material and shaped into various lifelike images by the skillful hands of artists [1]. The themes of dough modeling are extensive, from the auspicious dragons and phoenixes in mythological legends to the bountiful harvests in real life, each piece vividly displays the life scenes and spirit of the people of Northern Jiangsu. Dough modeling is not only a traditional skill but also a repository of emotions. Whenever festivals arrive, the older generation always passes on this precious craft to the younger generation, ensuring the traditional culture is passed down through generations. These folk arts not only enrich the cultural connotations of Northern Jiangsu but also provide valuable inspiration and materials for the creation of ideological and political art works in contemporary colleges and universities. They can guide students to more deeply understand and inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture, enhancing cultural confidence.

2.2. Core Values of Northern Jiangsu Cultural Elements

The cultural elements of northern Jiangsu not only carry a long historical memory, but also contain deep cultural heritage and moral values. Among these cultural elements, historical relics such as the Huaiyin Ancient Battlefield and the Xuzhou Han Cultural Ruins demonstrate the bravery and wisdom of the Chinese nation and inspire a sense of pride and responsibility for the country. Folk arts, such as paper-cutting, clay sculpture and Huaiju opera, are simple and vivid, conveying the national spirit of diligence, simplicity and resilience, which are indispensable and important contents in the ideological education. Ancient villages and traditional houses in the architectural culture not only embody the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, but also carry the blood ties of the family and the ethics of the society, which can evoke people's homesickness and care for the society. What's more, the family and national sentiment and regional characteristics in the cultural elements of northern Jiangsu can enhance the students' cultural identity and sense of belonging, and make them understand the history and reality of the country more profoundly in a broad perspective. The transmission of these core values not only enriches the content of the university's civic education, but also makes the art works have a stronger infectious force and educational significance [2].

3. Problems of Combining Civic and Political Education and Art Creation in Colleges and Universities

3.1. Difficulty of Integrating Civic and Political Themes with Artistic Expressions

The combination of ideological and political themes and artistic expressions is always a complex proposition. Civic and political education pursues value leadership and ideological instillation, while artistic creation pays more attention to emotional resonance and aesthetic experience. This difference makes the two face many challenges in the combination process. On the one hand, the topic of ideology and politics often has a clear orientation and seriousness, while in art works, the overly straightforward way of expression can easily lead to a lack of artistic charm, and it is difficult to arouse the emotional resonance of students. On the other hand, artistic creation pursues individuality and innovation, and the frequent implantation of Civic-Political themes may sometimes restrict the creators' inspiration and expressiveness, and may even lead to the works being formal and lacking in depth. In addition, the diversity and complexity of Civic and Political contents also increase the difficulty of artistic expression. For example, although the themes of national unity and socialist core values are far-reaching, how to concretize and visualize them in art works, so that they have both educational significance and artistic value, is an issue that requires in-depth thinking.

3.2. Limitations in the application of cultural elements

Although the application of the cultural elements of northern Jiangsu is rich and varied in the creation of the ideological and political art works in colleges and universities, there are also some limitations. On the one hand, these cultural elements are often regional and historical in nature, and

students may find it difficult to resonate with them due to a lack of relevant background knowledge. For example, traditional art forms such as paper-cutting and clay modeling may be difficult for the younger generation to understand the meaning and value behind them without detailed cultural explanations and introductions of the historical background. On the other hand, the expression of Northern Jiangsu cultural elements in modern art is relatively limited, making it difficult to fully adapt to the aesthetic demands of the new era. Some traditional expression methods appear to be rather archaic in contemporary visual arts, lacking innovation and vitality, making it difficult to attract students' attention. In addition, the process of excavating and applying the cultural elements of Northern Jiangsu sometimes falls into the predicament of superficiality. The simple piling up of cultural symbols, although it can intuitively show the regional characteristics, lacks deep cultural connotation and depth of thought, making the works appear superficial [3].

3.3. Insufficient cultural cognition of the creative subject

In the creative process of the college ideological art works, the insufficient cultural cognition of the creative body is a problem that cannot be ignored. Although many creators have solid artistic skills, they seem to be unable to understand and grasp the cultural elements of northern Jiangsu. This has led to works that lack depth and accuracy in conveying the concept of Civics, and even misunderstanding and misinterpretation. For example, Huaiju opera, as a kind of traditional opera, contains rich historical stories and ethics behind it. If the creators fail to fully understand it, the performance in the work often appears to be hard and far-fetched, and it is difficult to trigger the audience's resonance. In addition, the lack of cultural awareness is also reflected in the neglect of cultural diversity in northern Jiangsu. Northern Jiangsu has rich cultural resources, including historical relics, folk art, architectural styles, etc. However, creators often limit themselves to one or two superficial cultural symbols, failing to comprehensively display the unique charm of northern Jiangsu culture. This kind of monolithic expression not only weakens the artistic infectiousness of the work, but also limits the breadth and depth of the ideological education. The creative body needs to be based on in-depth understanding and comprehensive cognition of the northern Jiangsu culture in order to better integrate it into the works of art of ideology and politics, so as to make it an important carrier for conveying thoughts and stimulating emotions.

4. The application path of Northern Jiangsu cultural elements in the creation of art works on ideology and politics in colleges and universities

4.1. Refinement and modernization of cultural elements

In the creation of ideological and political art in higher education institutions, the refinement and modernization of cultural elements from Northern Jiangsu are key paths to enhancing the artistic and educational value of the works. Creators can deeply explore the intangible cultural heritage of Northern Jiangsu, such as Huai Opera, Liuqin Opera, and paper cutting, and distill the core symbols and artistic elements, transforming them into more contemporary forms of expression. For instance, the traditional costumes and props of Huai Opera can be abstracted and integrated into modern paintings or sculptures, ensuring that the works retain the essence of traditional culture while aligning with contemporary aesthetics. Higher education institutions can organize thematic seminars with ideological and political educators and art educators to discuss the effective integration of ideological and political content with cultural elements from Northern Jiangsu. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, creators can gain more inspiration and guidance, avoiding superficial application of cultural elements. Moreover, creators can be encouraged to conduct field research, personally experiencing the customs and historical background of Northern Jiangsu, thus deepening their understanding and appreciation of the cultural elements. This immersive learning approach helps creators present cultural nuances more delicately in their works, enhancing the authenticity and emotional impact. Higher education institutions can also establish special funds to support the creation and exhibition of ideological and political art, this not only provides creators with material security but also ignites their creative passion [4].

4.2. Integration of visual language and connotation of ideology and politics

In the realm of ideological and political art creation within higher education institutions, achieving a profound integration of visual language with the core of ideological and political concepts is of paramount importance. Creators can employ symbolic imagery, such as the red cultural sites, traditional

architecture, and folk customs of northern Jiangsu, to directly manifest the ideological and political ideals within their work. For instance, the architectural style and historical context of Zhou Enlai's former residence can be harmoniously woven into modern paintings, which not only showcases the cultural essence of northern Jiangsu but also conveys a sense of patriotism and dedication. Higher education institutions can establish specialized ideological and political art courses, inviting experts in ideology and professors of art to co-teach, guiding students in accurately grasping the ideological and political content within their creative endeavors. These courses can include field trips and practical creation sessions, allowing students to engage with and experience the unique charm of northern Jiangsu culture firsthand alongside their theoretical studies. Additionally, creators can leverage multimedia technologies, such as digital painting and animation, to merge traditional visual elements with modern technology, thereby making their works more vibrant and three-dimensional. Furthermore, institutions can periodically organize exhibitions of ideological and political art pieces, inviting members of society to participate. Through feedback from the audience, works can be continuously refined and improved. This interactive mechanism not only enhances the impact of the works but also aids creators in gaining a deeper understanding of the fusion points between visual language and ideological and political content.

4.3. Innovative expression methods and technology application

In the realm of ideological and political art creation within higher education, the innovation of expressive techniques and technological applications can significantly enhance the visual impact and ideological depth of the works. Artists may endeavor to fuse traditional painting methodologies with contemporary digital art, harnessing digital painting software and virtual reality technologies to craft more immersive artistic pieces. For instance, reimagining traditional Su Bei cultural elements, such as the Taoyuan fishing drums and the picturesque scenes of Hongze Lake, through digital art can rejuvenate these motifs in the language of modern aesthetics. Universities can establish dedicated innovation labs equipped with cutting-edge creative tools and technical support, providing a platform for faculty and students to engage in practice and exploration. These labs could periodically organize technical training sessions and creative workshops to assist artists in mastering the latest expressive techniques and technical tools. Moreover, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration by inviting experts from fields such as computer science and media studies to participate in the creation of ideological and political artworks can facilitate a deeper exploration of the convergence between technology and art. Artists can also draw inspiration from advanced international artistic practices, like contemporary installation art and interactive art pieces, integrating these with the regional culture of Su Bei and ideological and political themes to create works that are both innovative in form and rich in content. Additionally, universities can host domestic and international art exhibitions and exchange programs to introduce a diverse array of artworks, offering rich sources of inspiration for faculty and students [5].

4.4. Interdisciplinary cooperation and comprehensive creation mode

In the realm of artistic creation within ideological and political education at higher education institutions, interdisciplinary collaboration and comprehensive creative methodologies have the potential to infuse fresh inspiration and perspectives. Art colleges could collaborate with departments of history, literature, and sociology to offer specialized courses, inviting experts from various fields to lecture. This approach enables students to not only comprehend the culture of northern Jiangsu from an artistic standpoint but also to delve deeply into its cultural essence through multiple dimensions such as history and literature, thereby enriching and deepening their work. Universities can establish dedicated interdisciplinary creative teams, regularly organizing seminars and creative exchanges to explore the interpretations and applications of northern Jiangsu cultural elements across different disciplines. These teams might encompass artists, historians, literary critics, and sociologists, collectively engaging in the planning and creation of works. Such multifaceted collaborations can avert limitations imposed by a singular perspective, resulting in works that are more comprehensive and representative. Additionally, universities can support students in undertaking interdisciplinary creative practices, encouraging them to integrate multimedia technology, computer programming, and film production to create diverse ideological and political art pieces. For instance, traditional northern Jiangsu operas could be fused with modern animation technology to produce interactive story shorts, preserving the charm of traditional culture while resonating with the aesthetic sensibilities of younger generations. By establishing both on-campus and off-campus practice bases, students can continuously enhance their interdisciplinary collaboration skills through hands-on experiences. These bases can provide abundant resources and platforms, fostering interaction between students and society, thereby making the works

more grounded in reality and more impactful. This innovative collaborative model is poised to inject fresh vitality into the realm of ideological and political art creation within higher education institutions.

5. Conclusion

The application of cultural elements from Northern Jiangsu in the creation of ideological and political art works in higher education institutions not only infuses new vitality into ideological and political education but also provides a platform for the inheritance and development of local culture. Through the refinement and modernization of cultural elements, the integration of visual language with ideological and political content, the innovation of expression techniques and application methods, and interdisciplinary collaboration and comprehensive creation models, ideological and political art works in higher education institutions can become more diverse and can better convey ideological and political concepts, fostering students' sense of social responsibility and cultural confidence. Future research should further deepen the understanding and application of cultural elements from Northern Jiangsu, promoting the high-quality development of ideological and political art creation in higher education through a wider range of forms and more extensive cooperation.

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