

# The Application Status and Suggestions of Traditional Chinese Art Elements in Digital Media Art Design --Taking Chinese Paper-Cut Art as an Example

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**Abstract:** *Since the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese elements have been applied to many fields of art creation with certain success. Taking Chinese paper-cut art as an example, this paper analyzes the current situation and predicament of the development of Chinese paper-cut art. In response to these problems, it puts forward some innovative ideas for the innovation and inheritance of Chinese paper-cut art.*

**Keywords:** *Chinese art elements, Chinese paper-cut art, Digital media art design, Art design*

In recent years, the rapid development of information technology has brought new thinking and new models to art design, and Digital Media Art and Design (DMAD) is the product of the digital era. The elements of traditional Chinese art have profound connotations and have won recognition in the field of design. The organic integration of traditional Chinese art elements and digital media art has become an important form of the current art design. The close integration of the two not only meets the innovative development needs of the digital media art design, but also Chinese traditional art elements provide more resources and ideas for digital media art design. Taking Chinese paper-cut as an example, this paper analyzes the application of traditional Chinese art in digital media art design and tries to give innovative ideas.

## 1. The Concept of Digital Media Art Design (DMAD)

Digital media art design (DMAD), as the name suggests, is the effective integration of art design and multimedia information technology, using computer graphics and multimedia technology to expand, integrate and intersect the content of multiple disciplines. Digital media art mainly uses information design to innovate the form of expression for art design and adds artistic color through the design of related elements such as sound, image and digital. Compared to traditional art, digital media are innovative in several ways: First, comprehensive integration. DMAD has a richer form of artistic expression, which emphasizes the aggregation of a variety of media forms, breaking the boundaries between media, so that multiple media can carry multimedia content output, and choose different communication methods for each media characteristic. Second, the audience is wide and spread fast. DMAD relies on different media, it mainly depends on the network platform, using its advantages of information technology to cover a wider audience, and the speed of dissemination is faster.

## 2. The Significance of the Fusion of Chinese Paper-Cut Art and DMAD

Chinese elements represent the traditional art and culture of the Chinese nation, the rich artistic images accumulated by the Chinese nation in the long-term historical development process, and a concentrated reflection of a specific history, culture, politics, economy, folk customs, and other contents. Chinese elements are not only diverse in type and meaning, but also very diverse in expression. Among them, as a purely manual folk craft, the art of paper-cut is one of the most popular art forms. On May 20th, 2006, the State Council listed Chinese paper-cut art as "the First Batch of Cultural Heritage List."<sup>[1]</sup> In 2009, UNESCO included Chinese paper-cut in the "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity."<sup>[2]</sup>

### ***2.1 Enriched the Content and Improved the Quality of DMAD***

At present, there is not much presentation of Chinese traditional culture in DMAD, which will lead to the lack of connotation and depth of DMAD as a whole, and even cannot guarantee the long-term development of digital media art. If the elements of Chinese folk art can be effectively infiltrated into DMAD, it will not only promote the elements of Chinese folk art to a large extent, but also enrich the connotation and value of DMAD, because Chinese folk art has a long history of development and is extensive and profound. The artistic appeal is strong, which can greatly improve the quality and connotation of digital media art designers. DMAD can learn a lot of artistic content and artistic characteristics from Chinese folk art, and then continuously optimize the form and type of DMAD, and promote the development of digital media art in a higher quality direction.

### ***2.2 Favorable to Promote the Nationalization and Diversification of DMAD***

The current society is changing rapidly, and all walks of life need to have innovative technology to better adapt to the needs of social development. In the context of the new era, digital media art also needs to constantly update the concept of development and innovate development ideas to better adapt to the current stage of development needs.

Throughout the world's cultural composition, Chinese elements have always been the most important part, showing the unique charm and aesthetic value of the times. The organic integration of DMAD and Chinese folk art can achieve the effect of an ideal combination. Folk art can greatly enhance the innovation of art design, and further innovate the development concept, content and even the development mode of digital media art. The complementary relationship between Chinese folk art and digital media art design can help Chinese folk art to have new development momentum in the new era, as well as help digital media art to be able to achieve nationalization and diversification based on the excellent traditional culture.

## **3. Problems in the Application of Paper-Cut Visual Expressions in Domestic DMAD**

### ***3.1 The Theoretical Development of Chinese Paper-Cut Art Fails to Conform to the Trend of Digital Media, and the Research Perspective is More Traditional***

Although digital media has been developed in China for many years, not many domestic studies on paper-cut art focus on digital media at present. Only a few academic papers have conducted research on digital media in paper-cut animation. The theories are mainly focused on the following aspects: the research on Chinese paper-cut art is mainly focused on the graphic art itself, and there are more of them giving corresponding suggestions and countermeasures on the conservation of traditional paper-cut from the regional perspective than others. In her paper, Zhou Ying conducted art history and sociology research on the principles of the beauty of paper-cut art form and the cultural connotation of paper-cut, and analyzed art psychology<sup>[3]</sup>. In Ding Lei's "Innovation of Visual Art in the Context of Digital Media," it is pointed out that Wang Bei compares Shaanxi folk paper-cut with foreign paper-cut in three aspects: shape, color, and subject matter. She recognizes new media from the perspective of changing visual objects, and cognizes digital media art from the perspective of visual communication and art production and consumption.<sup>[4]</sup> All these perspectives are more traditional and fail to fully comply with the trend of digital media technology.

### ***3.2 In the Design Practice of DMAD Integrated With Paper-Cut Elements, Form is Emphasized over Content***

The application of paper-cut visual expression in DMAD not only adds traditional cultural connotation to DMAD creativity, but also adds unique artistic aesthetic taste to digital media artworks, which is valued by film and television advertising companies. The original intention of the integration of DMAD and Chinese elements is to spread and promote Chinese traditional culture, enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese traditional culture, and use the charm of traditional Chinese culture and art to increase the connotation of digital media art, and enhance the artistic influence and charm of the works. At present, some digital media artworks use the visual elements of paper-cut vainly. In fact, at this moment, the digital media art in our country is too superficial in design form and lacks the depth and connotation of culture. Some works lack the integration of Chinese elements and the work itself or the totality, and it is difficult to find the core theme or deeper cultural connotation, which

leads to the loss of cultural support for digital media art, and it is difficult to become a classic work.

Currently, many digital media arts have achieved the fusion with traditional Chinese folk art, but in the process of fusion, they only mechanically link the two together, ignoring the consideration of the depth and value of the work, and completing the integration of Chinese folk art and DMAD as an external form. The organic integration of the two is not just to add Chinese elements to DMAD, but to have a deep understanding of Chinese elements, and dig out the parts that fit the design, and choose the best entry point for penetration, to realize the "ideal combination" and to prevent superfluously.

Paper-cut art is very particular about techniques and materials. Different paper and different cutting methods can be used to express the shape and texture of different objects. The breadth and depth of traditional Chinese paper-cut art are not something that people can experience and comprehend overnight. It has its deep soil and strong atmosphere. The unique precision of computers, which is often pursued, is often external and superficial in shape, which makes it difficult to truly reflect the true nature of paper-cut artworks, lacking depth, and failing to achieve the realm of "both form and spirit". Before using folk art elements, designers must deeply understand whether the connotation of the elements conforms to the basic value of artistic design, and also pay attention to infiltrating Chinese elements in an appropriate amount.

### ***3.3 Paper-Cut Art Based on DMAD Has a Single Solidified Form and Lacks Innovation***

The art form of paper-cut is single, and it remains in traditional graphic media creation. Due to drawbacks of the graphic media, the number of creations is limited and brings in a moderate amount of economic income. The form of communication of paper-cut works makes the audience smaller and difficult to disseminate widely. In contrast, developed countries in Europe and the United States developed the application of digital media in art creation as early as 20 to 30 years ago, and have accumulated abundant experience and a substantial foundation.

The development level of domestic digital media is relatively low, and paper-cut works are still traditional framed paper-cut works to achieve the purpose of appreciation and sales; paper-cut works are mainly in the form of traditional monochrome paper-cuts, failed to introduce new materials, and adapt to the new situation. The media of paper-cut works are mainly traditional graphic media, and digital media are used to display less. The application of digital media in foreign paper-cut is more common, and the degree of innovation is also high. For example, the application of paper-cut works in various aspects such as product design, clothing design, architectural design, new media creativity, streaming media works display, etc. These are the aspects that Chinese folk paper-cut should learn from in the application of digital media technology.

## **4. Innovative Ideas for Applying Paper-Cut Art to DMAD**

Facing the problems in the application of traditional paper-cut visual expressions in DMAD, the author puts forward some ideas for the development and innovation of Chinese paper-cut from the perspective of DMAD.

### ***4.1 To Achieve Harmony Between Form and Content***

It is important to deeply understand the artistic truth of Chinese paper-cut art, so that the form and content of digital media art can reach a harmonious unity. China's traditional paper-cutting art has evolved over thousands of years and has been influenced by many schools of thought, which has given it a distinctive charm. Only when the true essence of traditional paper-cut art is deeply understood and grasped can the unity of form and content between DMAD and paper-cutting works be truly achieved. This is also the basic requirement for paper-cut works to be created using DMAD.

### ***4.2 To Grasp the Innovative Philosophy of Using DMAD for Paper-Cut Creation***

The famous painting master Qi Baishi once said, "Those who learn from me live, and those who resemble me die."<sup>[5]</sup> Digital media art designers must constantly innovate in their creations, and cannot simply "clone" and "copy", otherwise, they can only be craftsmen and never become artists. If digital media artworks lack originality, it will inevitably make the audiences feel bored, which will cause the audiences to have aesthetic fatigue, and thus lose the corresponding market share. Only paper-cut works that use DMAD with unique creativity and visual effects can be liked and accepted by audiences.

The details are as follows:

#### ***4.2.1 Innovation in the External Expression of Paper-Cut Art***

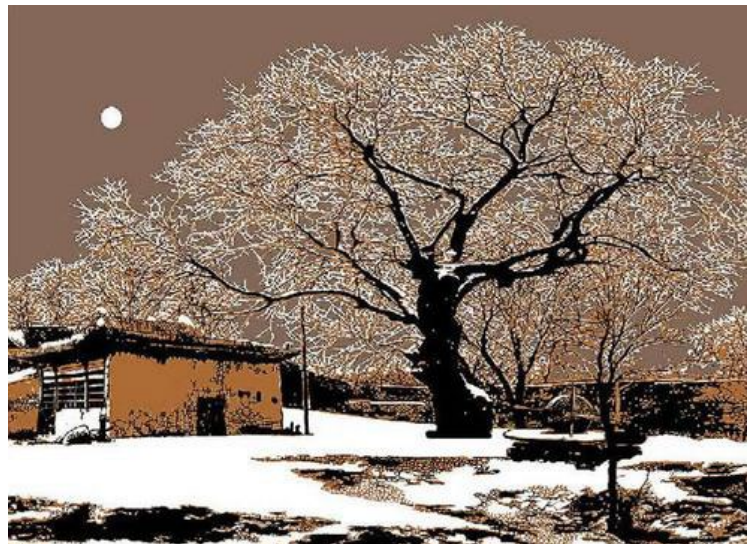
The new media technology in the DMAD provides more technical support for the inheritance and innovation of Chinese paper-cut art in terms of expression. With the continuous improvement of material life, people have more and more channels to obtain information, and it is becoming more and more convenient. From newspapers, periodicals and magazines, movies and TV programs, to the application of various new technologies such as digital media, paper-cut art should be innovated on the traditional expressions under the tide of digital media development. For example, some scientific research institutions and museums can establish an electronic resource library of paper-cut art, and disseminate it to the audience in the form of digital media images.

#### ***4.2.2 Innovation of the Spiritual Core of Paper-Cut Art***

Traditional Chinese paper-cuts were born in the life of the general public, embodying the expectations of the common people for a better life, and a large number of patterns with auspicious meanings represent their unique symbolic meanings. Nowadays, in the context of digital media, these functions of paper-cut artworks are gradually transformed and replaced by some new spiritual cores. Therefore, it is necessary to keep pace with the times and innovate in the language of paper-cut art forms.

First, the innovation of modeling in the creation process. In the process of creating paper-cut art, creators can use new media means to make photocopying and in-depth modeling, then obtain accurate and detailed patterns of paper-cut works, and finally create nuanced and realistic paper-cut works. This can change the graphic generalization, symbolization, and symbolism once encapsulated in the modeling language of paper-cut art.

For example, Li Min, the inheritor of paper-cutting in Weixian County, Hebei Province, used digital media technology to digitally process patterns, and finally came up with vivid and nuanced multi-layered realistic paper-cut works. This series of new technology creation methods also enabled him to obtain a multi-layer realistic paper-cut creation patent. The Figure 1 shows Li Min's multi-layered realistic paper-cut works.



<https://image.baidu.com>

*Figure 1: The Art of Multi-layered 3-D Paper-cut, by Li Min.*

Second, some modeling languages in modern design are introduced. As a classic of Chinese patterns, the pattern design in the paper-cut works is one of the important sources of inspiration for modern art design. Some classic paper-cut art modeling languages such as axial symmetry, central symmetry, etc., as well as the most popular philosophical ideas in Chinese graphic art, such as round sky and square earth, rather full than empty, line and curve connection, graphic generalization, scatter perspective, etc. can be seen everywhere in traditional paper-cut works. The application of DMAD for paper-cut art creation and the development of cultural and creative products around paper-cut requires some innovations in the modeling language. In the context of DMAD, some modeling languages such as blank-leaving, fracture, and angular perspective are introduced, resulting in a sense of conflict in the

picture.

The third is to modify the traditional paper-cut art and apply it to new media art forms such as animation and other new media art forms. There are many excellent works of art based on paper-cut modeling arts, and it has become a trend for modern animation films to apply them to animation film and television works. From adjusting the colors of the paper-cuts to fit the whole picture to adjusting the shapes of the paper-cut characters and scenes to fit the whole script, and more importantly, in the process of creating the paper-cut art, we need to apply visual images and DMAD, so that it can deeply express the spiritual core of the Chinese nation.

Finally, in the process of innovation, we should insist on the diversification and nationalization of paper-cut art. The progress of science and the popularization of computers have made paper-cut works using DMAD have a lot of room for development. Its artistic conception is fresh and elegant, simple and meaningful, and has been favored by more audiences. This is undoubtedly the driving force behind the development and innovation of paper-cut works. At the same time, this also makes the development of paper-cut works increasingly diversified. This diversity, however, is not only the diversity of computer technology level, but also the diversity of ideological and cultural schools and many other aspects, as well as the diversity of paper-cut creation forms, expressions, and so on. However, while diversifying, we must not abandon our national characteristics. The famous writer, Mr. Lu Xun, believes that with local features, it is easy to become the world. That is, the more national and local the work is, the more global it is.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

By analyzing the visual composition elements of paper-cut art and creating a language suitable for the lens, the quality of paper-cutting works using DMAD will be enhanced, and eventually the application space will be expanded. The digital media artworks that embody traditional paper-cut elements are not only simple and clear in their production process, but also have beautiful and elegant images, as well as good communication and publicity effects. Therefore, using the unique bright colors of paper-cut elements, as well as the modeling elements of dots, lines and surfaces, combined with ethnic themes with Chinese characteristics, the paper-cut artworks produced by DMAD can better express the uniqueness of the Chinese nation. The aesthetic taste and artistic conception can also better inherit the traditional Chinese paper-cut art. It is worth affirming that the expression of paper-cut art is undoubtedly indispensable creative value in DMAD.

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