

Traditional Carving Art and Modern Advertising Design

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Abstract

This paper studies carving art and modern advertising design, teases out the origin and features of form of carving art, explores the cultural spirit and artistic value of carving art, elaborates carving art's linguistic characteristics, forms and aesthetic similarities between modern advertising combined with examples, analyze innovation and integration of traditional carving art and modern advertising design, in order to develop and enrich the form of local design language.

Key words: Seal carving signet; Traditional culture; Advertising design

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1. THE ORIGIN OF ART OF SEAL CARVING

Seal carving is a performance of art combined calligraphy with carving to produce signets, is a symbol of Chinese traditional culture, and is a unique form of Chinese characters. "seal character" is a font formed in Qin Dynasty, including greater seal character and lesser seal character; "carving" is inscribing or sculpture; "signet" is a stamp to be used as evidence, such as the ancient government signet, private signet, and modern executive signet which serve as a symbol of the power of faith and social interaction. Most seal carving initially carved in seal script, which is the most practical font and highly

decorative art character, the origin of art characters evolved from, Chinese character on eaves tile is unadorned and rounded, always presents in missionary, educational and commemorative language like auspicious words and praises, mainly to record folk pattern in seal character. Chinese characters evolve from the pictograms, present ideographic and appearance with shape, the unique art form evolves from complexity to simplicity, from oracle-bone inscription, bronze inscription to seal character, then to regular script, cursive script and various writing styles, and the carving art also changes as the evolution of fonts.

Carving art is two-third of writing and one-third of sculpturing, and its beauty depends on the harmony of the knife and writing; the carrier of signet is the stone, using knife engraves Chinese characters on the blade of stone. The written form presented in Chinese calligraphy art is based on practicality and constantly expands and extends to the visual symbol with a certain aesthetic attributes. As cultural relics, it is not a game pleasing temperament, but a way to savor the universe, rationale and noble characters. Therefore, the writing of an era is not just about visible beauty or simple aesthetic, but serenity and atsushi, expanding spiritual dimension through rational thinking, putting affection on humane solicitude, and getting relief detached from outside.

Bronze and stone carving is extension and re-creation of calligraphy, first, seal carving signet is the material carrier of calligraphy, the style is presented by the writing; second, due to different material, texture, hardness of stone, and different carving strength, it results in unique humble charm, flavor and carving marks of bronze and stone differs from calligraphy, such as effect of leaking. In the long course of historical development, there are two peak periods of carving art, the first one was in Six Dynasty in the Warring States period, this phase of the material of this period were mostly gold and silver, jade, animal teeth, wood, porcelain, horn, ivory, etc.. After the Qin unified six countries, the emperor 's signet was

known as “jade seal” because it was made with jade, only when it was in Han Dynasty, there was a saying of “signet”, which existed as a marker and certificate.

Another peak period was in Ming and Qing Dynasties, seal carving art again was extensively spread and formed a variety of genres. There were more and more carving materials, but the most ideal one was stone, in which, Shoushan stone, Qingtian stone, Changhua stone, and Balin stone were called “four famous stones”, and the refined extravagance of Shoushan stone, nobility and elegance of Qingtian stone, soft and moist of Changhua stone, and clearance of Balin stone are permeated in the art of carving. Zhao Zhiqian of Qing Dynasty said: “There is China ink on ancient signet like pen, and today’s people have knife and stone”. The heart moves with a knife, and the combination of knife and bronze and stone produce a unique aesthetic of seal carving.

Modern artists like Wu Changshuo, Qi Baishi and Pan Tianshou’s artistic practice, have verified the same strain of Chinese traditional art of poetry, calligraphy, painting and signet. Carving and calligraphy is the same in writing and simplicity, and strive to the neatness and balance in writing, laying the aesthetic foundation of carving art. Wu Changshuo himself is a first-class calligrapher, he has deep foundation of carving, when he carves he often did not prepare a draft, he used the knife and straight from the heart, to give a strong natural flavor to the bronze and stone, the simple and vigorous artistic effect humbled the friction between knife and stone in carving to a new realm of taste. And only when calligraphy, carving skills and personal cultivation reached to be enigmatic, it can achieve the representation of artistic expression and heart-hand-in-one. Qi Baishi was deeply affected by Wu Changshuo, integrated the freehand painting features and the extensive composition into his carving, and integrated carving techniques into painting, with ups and downs, scattering and gathering, refining the artistic principle of “sparse for horse riding, and dense for airtight”.

As it is shown in Figure 1, Qi Baishi’s “white stone”, the feature is three sparse with one dense, activating the entire seal’s beauty with local change, constituting the signet and blank, and combining virtual with real. The triangle formed in the upper right corner of the screen plays a role in supporting the picture, three blanks borrow plaid patterning and make a balanced visual effect. This composition is similar with the representative western constructivist composition artist Piet Mondrian, by which the picture is structured by different sizes of rectangle, segmenting and controlling the picture, interspersing with a variety of rectangular around the square, being harmonious and varied, forming western artists’ unique perception of the universe.

Pan Tianshou has deep knowledge in the composition of Chinese painting, he often selects only a small part of nature as his painting elements, and his unique perspective and creative composition break the order and

unchangeability, with breathtaking power and beauty of modern composition, forming a unique personal style. He inscribes lots of seals on calligraphy and paintings and quite profound, he designs carving as painting, with peculiar arrangement and strokes of inconsistent sizes. As shown in Figure 2, Pan Tianshou’s painting “Lotus flowers in the sunshine”, structures uniquely, each blank of triangle and dots split the screen, the lotus stems full of bronze and stone flavor play a role of supporting skeleton, and the reeds interspersing in it balance the thick and fine lines and the strong contrast of chunks of color, adds a vivid charm for the picture.

The carving work “Pan Da”, the drops of “Pan” connect the “Da” as a sum linking the two words together, showing diagonal word-knotting handicraft, which is tautomeric and mutually virtual and real for each other, much better than symmetry and bland composition. Artists’ exploration presents us a unique structure handicraft and aesthetic taste of carving art. A seal and an image are presentation of the complement of seals, painting and calligraphy. Seal carving art is important visual document in the process of the development of historical context, it covers and is compatible with the aesthetic elements of Chinese philosophy, aesthetic orientation, and spiritual aspirations, etc. in continuously rheological, and the intrinsic aesthetic elements imperceptible penetrate into all levels in a variety of artistic styles, and play an important role.



Figure 1
Baishi



Figure 2
Lotus Flowers in the Sunshine and Pan Da

2. SEAL CARVING PRACTICED IN THE DESIGN OF MODERN ADVERTISING

The strokes of carving complement with writing of calligraphy, the knifing techniques penetrate stone which is rustic and vigorous, the writing flowing in lines which is subtle and soft. Carving knifing techniques can be divided into two types: rushing and cutting, no matter what kind of knifing technique may produce different visual effects through different depth and speed of knifing techniques, and different stones, and correctly use the knifing techniques, carving steadily, accurately and relentlessly, to demonstrate the spirit and charm of Chinese characters of calligraphy.

The structure of signet is very unique and is described as the classic which highlights the image mainly by characters, it is recording tool of history, is a combination of form, sound and meaning, reflecting the ancient people's unique way recording and cognizing the world. Most importantly, as an art form with the characteristics of nationality, seal carving has a strong design significance. It uses the combination of point, line, and surface and with clever ideas, presents "historical traces" one after another, and gives a seal an individual emotion and charm, which is rich in content and far-reaching in implication.

The overall arrangement and design of carving material, words on signet, type and shape of stone, and other aspects constitute an integration of seal carving, it likes painting, considering the changing of the size and every detail, the structure of flat space and visual expression, and these principles and rules of the art link with modern advertising design, so study and excavate aesthetic principles and rules of signet having a strong reference for the design of modern advertising. The small signet bears Chinese people's expectation and pursuit of spiritual world and aesthetic ideal.



Figure 3
Chinese Signet, A dancing Beijing (The signet for 2008 Olympics)



Figure 4
Signet for 100th Anniversary of the Revolution of 1911

Take the Olympic emblem in Figure 3 for example, the word "Jing" word comes from the greater seal, which takes hieroglyphy as the carrier, combines Chinese traditional carving, calligraphy, bronze and stone, and movement characteristics. The structure is unique, and the vivid calligraphy and quaint carving distillate the word "Jing" and "Ren", makes the emblem containing a strong Chinese flavor and solemn feeling. Figure 4 is a signet commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Revolution of 1911, which directly uses seal, signet and other elements to highlight the theme, stressing the "100th anniversary of the Revolution of 1911." This signet uses diagraph, the knife techniques present a special bronze and stone flavor and intensity, reflects the heritage of the Chinese revolutionary pioneers' spirit and deep mood of the 100th anniversary of the Revolution of 1911, and conveys the profound historic charm of the revolution. Using carving art techniques to design advertising, on the one hand it fully uses Chinese characters' shape, conveys information by the cultural connotation of Chinese characters. On the other hand, the comprehensive imagery constituted by carving strokes and layout extremely fits the theme of contemporary design, and achieves the effectiveness of dissemination and communication.

The formalization and globalization of contemporary society has affected all aspects of society, people's aesthetic view changes accordingly. Modern advertising design is dependent on culture, plays a subtle role on our lives with its own media and content. The charm of advertising design is convey ideas through the composition, layout, and colors, which uses the interaction of points, lines, surfaces, and other ways to construct design work and make advertising design with the visual intuition. With the change in the form of advertising art, advertising, the use of graphic is more abundant in advertising design. The advertising value becomes more prominent through performance practices, and with the promotion and involvement of different media, making modern advertising with more visual impact and shocking.

The pursuit of minimalist and individuation in contemporary advertising design comes from the demand of the transmission of information, the use of simple colors and smooth lines, clearly and intuitively reflects the form and content of design. This demand strengthens the visual sense to the extreme, and strong visual impact has a strong impact on the viewer's emotion and mind in the aesthetic process, and maximize meeting the demands of the spread. The traditional carving art has similarities in the artistic language and aesthetic aspects with contemporary advertising design, and the pursuit of language individuation and the achievement of advertising effectiveness need to have a new form of fusion and innovation in regional differences and cultural features. The aesthetic of Chinese traditional carving art design is a combination of abstract graphic and text, and a combination of real physique and virtual imagery.

Modern advertising design is not just processing and scheduling for image and text. It is more important that it is an important way conveying culture and information through visual language. Individualized and local traditional cultural language and art forms will greatly enrich the spread effect of advertising. The mutual support of design and culture highlights the cultural content of design work. Integrating seal carving elements in contemporary advertising design, the designers need to enhance the consciousness of traditional culture, deeply study the traditional culture, creatively fuse modern advertising design concepts and elements of seal carving, and achieve innovation and expansion of the localized language of advertising design.

3. MEANING OF THE TRADITIONAL CARVING ART FOR CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Carving art has a strong recognition, culture and typicality, contains rich traditional philosophy and national spirit, it is undeniable that today's carving art has become a symbol of national culture, a label. We explore cultural heritage of carving art, draw elements and spirit and connotation of carving art, and expand cultural depth of design work. Building national indigenous languages needs to build national self-confidence of culture, not building on a narrow nationalist sentiment, conceit and arrogance, but building on the basis of the fusion of awakening of the national culture and modern design concept, creatively transform and sublimate the nation's tradition of excellence, which is inheriting the tradition but not simply diverting the symbolic language elements,

only when we deeply understand traditional culture, deeply refine cultural elements, we can integrate them with modern advertising design and improve the quality of advertising expression.

Today, advertising has become one way of people exchanging information and passing demands, and the design work has also become a vehicle for designers to express ideas. Artistic qualities and forms of expression of carving art have typical cultural imagery and will give new meaning and new possibilities to modern advertising. Gropius of Maestro Bauhaus School of Art and Design said, "A real tradition is the product of continuing to move forward, its essence is moving but not static, tradition should push people to continue to move forward." The learning, application, innovation and development of traditional culture will be our real motivation to research and explore carving art.

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