

A Research on the Practical Approach of Cultural and Creative Design to Tell Chinese Stories Well in the Context of Digital Media— Taking Haikou Qilou as an Example

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Abstract: In the era of rapid development in digital media, cultural and creative design, as an important means of inheriting and disseminating regional culture, faces new opportunities and challenges. This paper takes Haikou Qilou as a case study to delve into the practical approaches of cultural and creative design in telling Chinese stories under the context of digital media. By analyzing the cultural connotations and values of Haikou Qilou and combining the characteristics of digital media, this paper proposes practical strategies in areas such as creative exploration, design expression, and promotion. The aim is to provide a reference for the inheritance and innovation of regional culture in the digital age, and to promote excellent traditional Chinese culture onto broader stages.

Keywords: Digital media; Cultural and creative design; Haikou Qilou; Chinese stories

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1. Introduction

With the rapid development of digital technology, digital media has permeated all aspects of social life, profoundly transforming people's lifestyles and information dissemination models. In the cultural domain, digital media has brought new opportunities for creative design, enabling it to break through traditional forms of expression and limitations in dissemination, presenting the charm of regional culture in more diverse and vivid ways, telling China's stories well. As a unique carrier of Hainan's regional culture, Haikou Qilou is rich in historical and cultural information, witnessing the cultural exchange and integration between Hainan and Southeast Asia. Actions taken to vividly present the Chinese story embodied by Haikou Qilou through creative design in the context of digital media not only helps to protect and inherit the culture of Haikou Qilou but also provides valuable references for the dissemination of other regional cultures.

2. Cultural connotation and value of Haikou Qilou

2.1. Architectural characteristics and historical origins

Haikou's Qilou buildings are mainly concentrated in the old districts of Deshengsha Road, Zhongshan Road, Boai Road, Xinhua Road, Jiefang Road, and Changdi Road ^[1]. They were built by overseas Chinese who returned from Nanyang in the early 20th century, drawing inspiration from Nanyang's architectural styles. Qilou buildings typically have two to three stories, with the front part of the ground floor being a Qilou colonnade and above the colonnade are the floors ^[2, 3]. The continuous flow of the Qilou colonnade creates a unique street scene ^[4]. Their architectural design blends traditional Chinese elements with Nanyang styles, such as the intricate carvings and painted beams of Chinese architecture complementing the latticed windows and pediments of Nanyang, showcasing a distinctive artistic charm ^[5, 6]. These Qilou buildings are not only typical representatives of modern Hainan architecture but also historical witnesses to cultural exchanges between Hainan and the Nanyang region, bearing witness to the struggles and homesickness of Hainanese people who ventured south ^[7].

2.2. Regional culture and social life

Haikou's Qilou Old Street is not only a collection of buildings but also a vibrant embodiment of regional culture and social life ^[8]. It preserves a wealth of intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional Hainan opera performances, the Eight Sounds of Hainan, and other folk arts, along with various traditional handicraft shops like coconut carving, shell carving, and Li brocade production ^[9, 10]. The commercial atmosphere on the old street is strong, with traditional Hainan snack shops and teahouses scattered throughout ^[11, 12]. People gather here to enjoy tea, chat, and shop, continuing the lifestyle passed down through generations. The regional culture embodied in Haikou's Qilou, including Hainan's folk customs, traditional skills, and commercial culture, is a testament to the wisdom of the Hainan people and holds immense cultural and social value ^[13].

3. The influence of digital media context on cultural and creative design

3.1. Expand the space for creative expression

Digital media technology provides rich creative tools and forms of expression for cultural and creative design ^[14]. Designers can use digital modeling, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and animation production to present traditional cultural elements in a more three-dimensional, dynamic, and interactive way ^[15]. For example, through VR technology, users can experience the historical ambiance of Haikou's Qilou old streets as if they were transported back in time. Using animation production techniques, the evolution of Haikou's Qilou architecture and folk legends can be vividly and engagingly presented in animated form, attracting more audience attention ^[16]. Digital media technology has broken the two-dimensional limitations of traditional design, expanding the spatial dimensions of creative expression, making cultural and creative design more imaginative and appealing ^[17].

3.2. Innovative communication mode

In the context of digital media, the channels for disseminating cultural and creative design works have become more diversified and convenient ^[18]. The widespread use of the internet allows information to spread globally in an instant, making social media, video platforms, and digital museums key platforms for the dissemination of cultural and creative design works. Compared to traditional methods, digital media dissemination is characterized by immediacy, interactivity, and precision ^[19]. Users can interact with works through likes, comments, and shares, while communicators can promptly adjust their strategies based on user feedback, achieving precise targeting. For

example, posting Haikou Qilou cultural and creative design works on social media platforms can quickly attract a large number of users' attention and discussion, generating topic heat and thus expanding the reach and influence of the culture^[20].

3.3. Meet the needs of multiple users

The development of digital media has made users' demand for cultural and creative products more diverse and personalized. Users of different ages, genders, and regions have varying needs for such products. Digital media can use big data analysis and other technologies to gain deep insights into users' interests, consumption habits, and other information, providing them with personalized cultural and creative products and services. For example, for young user groups, mobile games and anime merchandise themed around Haikou's Qilou can be developed to meet their needs for fashion and entertainment. For elderly user groups, digital documentaries and audiobooks about the history and culture of Haikou's Qilou can be produced to help them understand and preserve local culture. The creative exploration of telling Chinese stories well, with Haikou Qilou as an example, in the context of digital media will help to increase the awareness of the people regarding Chinese culture.

4.1. Dig deep into historical stories and folk legends

Haikou's Qilou houses conceal many little-known historical stories and folk legends, all of which are valuable materials for telling China's story well. By consulting historical documents, interviewing local elders, and engaging with cultural scholars, these stories can be deeply explored. For example, understanding the background of the construction of Haikou's Qilou, the arduous journey of overseas Chinese to Nanyang, and the legendary tales that took place in the old streets of Qilou. These historical stories and folk legends should be organized and adapted, integrated into creative cultural designs, making them vivid carriers for cultural dissemination. For instance, historical novels, comics, and short films set against the backdrop of Haikou's Qilou can be created. Through engaging plots and lifelike characters, these works can capture the audience's attention, allowing them to appreciate the history and culture of Haikou's Qilou while enjoying the content.

4.2. Extract unique cultural elements

Haikou's Qilou architecture and regional culture contain numerous unique cultural elements, such as the architectural style of Qilou, decorative patterns, traditional handicrafts, and folk activities. Systematically organizing and analyzing these cultural elements, extracting representative and recognizable ones, can serve as core elements for creative design. For example, incorporating the pediment designs and Chinese window lattice patterns of Qilou into graphic design and product design to develop Haikou-themed cultural and creative products, like postcards, stationery, and home decor items, combining traditional Hainan coconut carving and shell carving techniques with modern design concepts to create innovative crafts. By extracting and applying these unique cultural elements, creative design works can be made more regionally distinctive and culturally rich.

5. Cultural and creative design expression based on Haikou Qilou in the context of digital media

5.1. Digital display and experience design

Using digital media technology to create a digital exhibition platform for Haikou's Qilou, providing users with an immersive experience. Through 3D modeling technology, the old streets of Haikou's Qilou are digitally restored

comprehensively. Users can freely explore every corner of the Qilou Old Street via computers, smartphones, VR devices, and other terminals, experiencing its unique architectural style and historical atmosphere. In the digital exhibition, rich information tags and audio guides are added to introduce the historical background, architectural features, and cultural significance of the Qilou, allowing users to gain a deeper understanding of Qilou culture. Additionally, interactive experience segments are designed, such as virtual restoration of Qilou buildings and simulations of traditional handicraft production processes, enhancing user participation and engagement.

5.2. Digital cultural and creative product design

Develop digital cultural and creative products themed around Haikou's Qilou to meet users' diverse needs. For instance, create mobile phone wallpapers, emoticons, and animated posters featuring Haikou's Qilou as the backdrop, making them easily accessible for users to incorporate into daily communication and online sharing. This approach helps increase the visibility and cultural presence of Qilou. Additionally, develop mobile games centered on Haikou's Qilou, integrating its unique architectural features and historical background into the storyline and visual design. This allows users to explore and experience Qilou culture interactively while playing. Furthermore, launch digital artworks related to Haikou's Qilou, such as digital paintings and 3D sculptures, and enhance their artistic and commercial value through online exhibitions and auctions.

5.3. Cross-media narrative design

Using cross-media storytelling techniques to construct a multi-dimensional narrative world of Haikou's Qilou culture. Focusing on the historical and cultural heritage of Haikou's Qilou, this approach involves using various media forms such as films, TV series, animations, novels, and games to tell stories from different perspectives, forming an interconnected and complementary narrative system. For example, start with a documentary about Haikou's Qilou, introducing its historical background and cultural value. Then, build upon this foundation by creating a film or TV series that showcases the lives and emotional stories of people in the old Qilou streets. Simultaneously, develop related animations, novels, and games to further enrich the content and character development. Through cross-media storytelling, attract users with diverse media preferences, expand the audience for Haikou's Qilou culture, and enhance the effectiveness of cultural dissemination.

6. The dissemination and promotion of cultural and creative design with Haikou Qilou as the theme in the context of digital media

6.1. Social media communication strategy

Make full use of social media platforms to promote cultural and creative design works. Create a dedicated official social media account for Haikou Qilou culture, regularly posting content such as cultural and creative design works, historical knowledge, and information about offline activities related to Haikou Qilou. Utilize short videos and live streams to vividly showcase the charm of Qilou culture. For example, invite local residents and cultural experts to host live-streamed tours of Haikou's historic Qilou streets, offering real-time interaction with viewers to deepen engagement. Additionally, produce high-quality short videos showcasing the creation process and practical applications of digital cultural and creative products themed around Haikou Qilou, encouraging users to purchase, share, and further promote Qilou culture. At the same time, collaborate with influencers and major VTubers on social media, inviting them to experience and promote cultural and creative design works of Haikou Qilou, leveraging their influence to expand the reach of the content.

6.2. Online and offline integration promotion

Combining online dissemination with offline activities to form a comprehensive promotional model. Online platforms such as official websites and digital museums can be used to showcase creative design works and historical and cultural materials related to Haikou's Qilou. Additionally, hosting virtual exhibitions, online competitions, and other interactive events can encourage active user participation and engagement with Qilou culture. Offline, host exhibitions of Haikou's Qilou creative design, thematic lectures, cultural festivals, and other activities to display and promote the results of creative design. For example, a creative design exhibition can be held on Haikou's Qilou Old Street, featuring a range of cultural and creative products as well as digital artworks themed around Qilou. Designers and cultural scholars can be invited to deliver thematic lectures, sharing insights into the concepts and approaches behind Qilou-inspired creative design. Through integrated online and offline promotion, enhance the recognition and influence of Haikou's Qilou culture.

6.3. International communication and exchange

Actively promote the international dissemination and exchange of Haikou Qilou cultural and creative design works to let the world appreciate the charm of Chinese regional culture. Utilize international social media platforms and cultural exchange activities to promote Haikou Qilou cultural and creative design works overseas. Participate in international exhibitions, film festivals, animation festivals, and other events to showcase films, animations, and digital art pieces themed around Haikou Qilou, engaging in exchanges and collaborations with international peers. At the same time, establish cooperative relationships with cultural institutions and universities abroad to conduct academic exchanges and talent development programs, jointly advancing the international dissemination and research of Haikou Qilou culture.

7. Conclusion

In the context of digital media, telling the story embodied in Haikou's Qilou through cultural and creative design is of great significance for the protection and inheritance of regional culture and the development of the cultural and creative industry. By deeply exploring the cultural connotations and values of Haikou's Qilou and integrating the expressive potential of digital media, it becomes possible to present the charm of Qilou culture in more diverse, vivid, and impactful ways. This approach can attract broader public interest and participation in the preservation and innovation of regional culture. At the same time, research using Haikou's Qilou as an example provides a practical approach for the development of other regional cultures in the digital age, promoting the global spread and exchange of China's excellent traditional culture, and enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture.

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