

Artistic Presentation and Innovative Practice of Intangible Cultural Heritage Visual Symbols in Modern Visual Design

Jianfeng Nie*

Guangdong Nanfang Institute of Technology, Jiangmen 529000, Guangdong, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Visual symbols of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) are the concrete carriers of excellent traditional Chinese culture, condensing the unique aesthetic taste, handicraft wisdom, and deep cultural core of the Chinese nation. They are also indispensable cultural materials and innovative inspiration sources in the field of modern visual design. Focusing on the in-depth integration of ICH visual symbols and modern visual design, this paper systematically discusses the artistic presentation paths of ICH visual symbols in the modern design context, deeply analyzes practical problems such as the separation of craft core and distortion of cultural connotation in the current integration process, and then puts forward practical strategies with both cultural authenticity and contemporary innovation. The research aims to promote the living inheritance of ICH visual symbols, enrich the cultural heritage of modern visual design, and finally realize the two-way empowerment and coordinated development of excellent traditional Chinese culture and modern visual design.

Keywords: ICH visual symbols; Modern visual design; Artistic presentation; Innovative practice; Living inheritance

Online publication: May 25, 2026

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage is the living cultural gene bank of the Chinese nation. The condensed visual symbols carry the accumulation of thousands of years of Chinese civilization and are distinctive signs of national cultural identity. With the continuous improvement of cultural confidence and the deepening of design innovation, the organic integration of ICH visual symbols into modern visual design is not only an important path to inherit and carry forward excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also a key measure to enhance the cultural connotation and market competitiveness of modern visual design works.

At present, ICH visual symbols are increasingly widely used in the field of modern design. However, some design works only stay at the surface appropriation of ICH symbols, with rigid integration methods and a lack of cultural connotation behind the symbols, failing to truly highlight the artistic value and cultural

heritage of ICH visual symbols^[1]. Based on this, this paper focuses on the artistic presentation and innovative practice of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design. By deeply exploring the aesthetic characteristics and cultural connotation of ICH visual symbols, it explores scientific and reasonable integration paths, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical reference for promoting the living inheritance of ICH and the innovative development of modern visual design.

2. Artistic presentation of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design

The artistic value of ICH visual symbols lies in their combination of external formal beauty and internal cultural spirit. Their artistic presentation in modern visual design is not a simple superposition of elements, but an all-around integration and expression of form, color, craft to artistic conception, enabling traditional symbols to retain their authentic charm and glow with new artistic vitality in the modern context.

2.1. Aesthetic continuity in morphological reconstruction

Form is the external core of ICH visual symbols, carrying the aesthetic essence of traditional handicrafts. Therefore, the artistic presentation of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design is first reflected in the continuity of traditional aesthetics in the process of morphological reconstruction.

The original forms of ICH visual symbols are mostly deeply bound to specific traditional living contexts and handicraft skills. The abstract geometric patterns of Miao batik, the concrete patterns formed by the delicate stitches of Su embroidery, and the intricate interlocking branches of Song brocade all contain the unique modeling logic and aesthetic pursuit of the Chinese nation^[2].

The application of ICH form symbols in modern visual design is by no means a mechanical copying of original symbols, but through design techniques such as refinement, simplification, and reconstruction, combining the core form elements of ICH symbols with the aesthetic needs and application scenarios of modern design to realize the organic connection between traditional and modern aesthetics.

In the process of morphological reconstruction, designers must firmly grasp the core identification characteristics of ICH symbols, such as the iconic indigo background and abstract geometric outline of batik patterns, the unique silk luster and stitch texture of Su embroidery, while abandoning overly cumbersome detail depiction, making the reconstructed forms adapt to the simple and efficient aesthetic trend of modern design^[3].

For example, in modern clothing design, designers simplify and reconstruct the core geometric patterns of Miao batik and skillfully apply them to details such as hems, cuffs, and collars. This not only retains the unique national charm of batik patterns, but also meets the wearing needs and aesthetic preferences of modern clothing, truly realizing the harmonious coexistence of ICH form aesthetics and modern design.

2.2. Cultural expression in color matching

Color is an important part of ICH visual symbols, complementing form. It not only carries rich cultural implications but also conveys unique aesthetic emotions. The artistic presentation of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design is also reflected in the expression of cultural connotation in the process of color matching.

The color system of ICH visual symbols is mostly derived from the color extraction of natural things and the living customs of various ethnic groups, with distinct regional characteristics and cultural connotations:

the ochre red, azurite and bright yellow of Dunhuang murals outline the solemnity and profundity of Buddhist culture; the plain white of Miao silver ornaments and the indigo of batik highlight the simplicity and vividness of ethnic minorities; the sky blue of Ru porcelain conveys the warmth and etherealness of Chinese minimalism aesthetics ^[4].

When applying ICH color elements in modern visual design, it is not a simple copy of traditional colors, but a reasonable matching and innovative application of ICH colors combined with specific design themes and modern aesthetic trends, so that colors not only retain their original traditional cultural implications, but also meet the visual experience and aesthetic needs of contemporary people.

Designers can combine the ICH color system with the color logic of modern design through color contrast of cold and warm, harmony of light and dark, and matching of primary and secondary colors, making colors a carrier for conveying design concepts and cultural emotions ^[5].

For example, in modern cultural and creative product design, designers combine the classic colors of Dunhuang murals with the modern minimalist design concept, taking azurite as the main color with a small amount of ochre red and bright yellow as embellishments. This not only restores the profound heritage of Dunhuang culture, but also conforms to modern consumers' pursuit of minimalism aesthetics, making color an important cultural link connecting tradition and modernity.

2.3. Texture presentation in craft integration

The formation of ICH visual symbols is inseparable from traditional handicrafts. Behind each ICH visual symbol corresponds a unique handicraft skill, and the humanistic temperature and unique texture contained in handicrafts cannot be replaced by modern mechanical standardized production.

The artistic presentation of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design is also reflected in the accurate presentation of texture in the integration of traditional crafts and modern crafts. There are many kinds of ICH handicrafts, such as Su embroidery, Daqi lacquerware, and rattan weaving. Each skill can endow visual symbols with unique material texture and tactile sensation, conveying the ingenuity and wisdom of traditional craftsmen ^[6].

Modern visual design increasingly focuses on the integrated expression of materials and crafts, and combining ICH handicrafts with modern design crafts is the key path to fully display the texture of ICH visual symbols in modern design.

For example, in modern furniture design, designers combine rattan weaving skills with the simple shape of modern furniture. The natural texture of rattan and the delicate texture of hand weaving, matched with smooth furniture lines, not only retain the unique traditional charm of rattan weaving skills, but also enhance the artistic texture and practical value of modern furniture ^[7].

In modern jewelry design, designers combine Daqi lacquer skills with metal materials. The warm luster and delicate texture of Daqi lacquer form a sharp visual and tactile contrast with the tough texture of metal, creating jewelry works with both traditional charm and modern beauty. This frees modern design works from the coldness of mechanical production, endows them with the humanistic temperature and unique artistic texture of handicrafts, and further enhances the artistic value and cultural connotation of design works.

3. Innovative practice paths of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design

Based on the artistic presentation methods of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design and combined with

the current problems such as craft separation, cultural distortion and symbol appropriation in the integration process, to realize the in-depth integration of ICH visual symbols and modern visual design and promote the living inheritance of ICH and the innovative development of modern design, it is necessary to explore practical paths with both authenticity and innovation from multiple dimensions such as cultural connotation, form design, technical application and collaborative mechanism.

3.1. Deepen cultural connotation and avoid symbol appropriation

The core value of ICH visual symbols lies in the cultural connotation behind them. Therefore, the primary path for innovative practice of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design is to deeply explore the cultural connotation behind the symbols and fundamentally avoid the design misunderstandings of simple appropriation and similarity in form but not in spirit.

At present, the application of ICH visual symbols in some modern design works only stays in the copying and mechanical splicing of surface forms, ignoring the cultural connotation, historical origin, and craft essence carried by the symbols. This not only makes the design work lack cultural heritage, but also may lead to the misinterpretation of cultural implications and national symbols, violating the original intention of ICH inheritance^[8].

To realize the real integration of ICH and modern design, designers must conduct in-depth cultural research, visit the birthplaces of ICH, communicate deeply with ICH inheritors, fully understand the origin, development context, cultural implication and handicraft characteristics of ICH visual symbols, and organically combine the external form and internal connotation of ICH symbols from the cultural core, truly achieving the design goal of “taking its form, extending its meaning and passing its spirit”^[9].

For example, when using Miao embroidery symbols, designers should not only refine the pattern form and color matching of embroidery, but also deeply understand the national legends, totem beliefs, and living customs represented by the patterns, integrating these deep cultural connotations into all aspects of design, making the design works not only have visual beauty, but also profound cultural depth.

At the same time, designers must always maintain a reverence for ICH culture, strengthen communication and cooperation with ICH inheritors, carefully listen to their opinions and suggestions, accurately grasp the cultural essence of ICH symbols, and avoid problems such as cultural distortion and symbol misreading^[10]. Only by deepening cultural connotation and making ICH visual symbols truly carriers of excellent traditional Chinese culture can modern design works have distinctive cultural identification and lasting spiritual value.

3.2. Promote morphological innovation to adapt to modern design needs

The original forms of ICH visual symbols are mostly suitable for traditional carriers such as traditional utensils, ethnic clothing, and classical architecture, which are somewhat different from the diverse carriers and simple aesthetic trend of modern design. Therefore, promoting the morphological innovation of ICH visual symbols to adapt to the needs and scenarios of modern visual design is the key path to realizing the in-depth integration of ICH and modern design.

Morphological innovation is not a complete subversion of ICH symbols, but an optimization and transformation in line with modern aesthetics on the basis of retaining their core identification characteristics and cultural connotation^[11].

Designers can adopt various design techniques, such as deconstruction, recombination, simplification, and abstraction, to innovate the forms of ICH visual symbols. On the premise of firmly grasping the core identification characteristics of symbols, optimize the lines, proportions, and structures of forms to meet the simple, efficient, and diverse aesthetic needs of modern design.

For example, simplify and abstract the intricate interlocking branch patterns of traditional phoenix coronets, extract core elements such as phoenix birds and phoenix beads, and reconstruct them into simple forms suitable for modern cultural and creative products, clothing decoration and visual logos; deconstruct the flying apsaras images in Dunhuang murals, extract their elegant lines and flexible postures, and apply them to modern visual communication design and product appearance design through flat and abstract design techniques, giving traditional symbols new visual expression forms ^[12].

At the same time, designers should pay attention to the adaptability of form and design carrier, flexibly adjust the form size, presentation method, and combination form of ICH symbols according to the characteristics and application scenarios of different carriers such as graphic design, product design, space design, and digital design, to ensure the overall coordination and practicality of design works.

Through morphological innovation in line with modern aesthetics, ICH visual symbols can break free from the constraints of traditional contexts, better integrate into the modern design system, and glow with new vitality in modern design.

3.3. Integrate modern technology to enrich presentation forms

With the continuous development of science and technology, modern design technology and production techniques are constantly updated, providing more possibilities for the innovative presentation of ICH visual symbols. Therefore, integrating modern technology to enrich the presentation forms of ICH visual symbols is an important technical support for the innovative practice of ICH visual symbols.

Traditional ICH visual symbols are mostly presented in physical and static forms, with certain limitations in communication scope and presentation methods. The integration of modern technology can break this limitation, enabling ICH visual symbols to achieve diversified, three-dimensional, and interactive presentation, further enhancing the visual impact and audience experience of design works ^[13].

Designers can empower the innovative presentation of ICH visual symbols with the help of digital technology, new media technology, modern production techniques and other means: use high-precision digital collection technology to accurately collect and digitally transform complex silk patterns such as Song brocade and Yun brocade, establish a cloud digital gene bank of ICH visual symbols, providing designers with standardized design elements that can be called, recombined and edited. This not only reduces the design application threshold of ICH symbols, but also ensures the cultural authenticity and form accuracy of ICH symbols ^[14]; use AR augmented reality technology to combine ICH visual symbols with modern space design and cultural and creative product design, allowing audiences to see the dynamic presentation, historical evolution and cultural interpretation of ICH symbols through mobile devices such as mobile phones and tablets, greatly enhancing the interactivity and interest of design works; use modern printing technology and 3D printing technology to apply innovative ICH visual symbols to many fields such as cultural and creative products, decorative materials and industrial products, realizing the standardized mass production of ICH design products and further expanding the communication scope and influence of ICH culture ^[15].

4. Conclusion

The integration of ICH and modern design is essentially the creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture in the contemporary era. With the continuous renewal of design concepts and the continuous progress of technology in the future, the application of ICH visual symbols in modern visual design will be more diverse and in-depth.

Only by always adhering to cultural authenticity, basing on contemporary needs and constantly exploring innovation can ICH visual symbols continue to glow with vitality in modern design, enable excellent traditional Chinese culture to be better accepted and inherited by contemporary people through modern design language, and realize the two-way empowerment and coordinated development of traditional culture and modern design.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Jiang H, Liu RN, Yu JR, 2026, Visual Design and Communication Strategy of Wenzhou ICH Culture in Digital Context. *Shoes & Design*, 6(2): 36–38.
- [2] Teng YY, Wang W, 2025, Research on ICH Visual Design Innovation in the New Era. *Dahe Art News*, December 5, 2025, 9.
- [3] He QH, 2025, Translations and Innovation of ICH in E-commerce Visual Design. *Chinese and Foreign Cultural Tourism Exchange*, 2025(16): 179–181.
- [4] Zhou XH, Liang XY, 2025, ICH Cultural and Creative IP Visual Design of Xinhui Fish Lantern from the Perspective of Design Semiotics. *Shanghai Packaging*, 2025(11): 189–191.
- [5] Li QY, 2025, Practice of Integrating ICH Elements into Visual Design of Cultural and Creative Products. *Art Panorama*, 2025(33): 151–153.
- [6] Zhang LB, 2025, Innovative Application of ICH Cultural Elements in Visual Design of Cultural and Creative Products. *Art Panorama*, 2025(32): 22–24.
- [7] Yao Y, 2025, Research on ICH-themed Visual Design and Educational Application Based on the Concept of “Living Inheritance”. *New Art Field*, 2025(11): 98–100.
- [8] Zhang K, 2025, “Cultural Translation” of ICH in Contemporary Visual Design. *Cloud*, 2025(45): 70–72.
- [9] Liang XY, Zhou XH, 2025, Innovative Visual Design of Xinhui ICH from the Perspective of Design Semiotics. *Toy World*, 2025(10): 115–117.
- [10] Zhou LJ, 2025, Research on Innovative Expression Strategies of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Brand Visual Design. *Central Plains Culture and Tourism*, 2025(19): 140–142.
- [11] Li FF, 2025, Research on Visual Design Strategy of ICH Cultural and Creative Products Empowered by AI. *Yunnan Daily*, July 1, 2025, 8.
- [12] Cai QY, 2025, Digital Visual Design and Innovative Practice of ICH Elements in the Intelligent Era. *Shoes & Design*, 5(11): 39–41.
- [13] Wu YY, 2025, Research on Brand Image Design of Wenxi Flower Bread from the Perspective of ICH Inheritance

and Innovation, thesis, Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication.

- [14] Su YH, Dai DD, Zhu YH, 2024, Extraction, Translation and Application of Visual Symbols of ICH Handicrafts — Taking UI Design of Wanzai Ramie Virtual Interactive System as an Example. *Zhuangshi*, 2024(10): 127–129.
- [15] Feng DY, 2024, Design Research of Modern Visual Symbols on Yixing Purple Sand ICH Based on Extenics, thesis, Jiangnan University.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.