

Virtual Transcendence: IP Image Construction to Build Dongguan into a "Trendy City"

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Abstract: With the advent of the consumer era and the rise of the new media industry, cultural and creative products have gradually become brilliant in the commodity market, and "IP" has gradually become a hot word. People have predicted the economic value of IP copyright early, and its market benefits are gradually reflected, which eventually becomes a practical commercial means. In the IP industry, the derivatives market occupies a very important position, and art toys and derivatives are mutually connected and independent. The development models based on IP are constantly emerging, among which the source development of image IP has relied on the film, comic and animation markets for many years, while "art toys" have gradually penetrated into the cultural industry in China with an independent image IP development model. It not only relies on rich stories, texts and other content, but also relies on an image IP as the source to occupy the consumer market.

1. Introduction

In the Internet era, IP is an innovative business design based on the Internet. The concept of "Internet plus+cultural and creative products" has been extended. In 2013, IP began to develop in China as a game industry. With the development and improvement of the entertainment industry, the value of IP is also expanding. The main purpose is to gather more influential forces, ideas, stories, etc., so as to improve the strength of enterprises and shape brands. 2015 was called "the first year of IP" by the media, and films, books, animation, etc. derived from IP have attracted much attention in the cultural circle. Since the development of IP, the meaning of IP has also been generalized, which can be the role, story, music, or even a slogan that users like.

In the IP industry, the derivatives market occupies a very important position, and art toys and derivatives are mutually connected and independent. In recent years, IP based development models have emerged constantly. The source development of image IP has relied on the film, comic and animation markets for many years, while "art toys" have gradually infiltrated the cultural industry in China with an independent image IP development model. It not only relies on rich stories, texts and other content, but also relies on an image IP as the source to occupy the consumer market. Due to the rapid development of China's art and cultural industry, manufacturing industry and e-commerce logistics market in recent years, the art toy industry has begun to take shape in various aspects such as design, production, production, online and offline sales, IP and designer exploration, artist economy and exhibition. This emerging industry has shown its huge market potential preliminarily. The art toy industry itself has a very close relationship with the IP image, not only relying on the film,

animation, cartoon characters, but also the image of the original designer or art works. Nowadays, more and more art dealers and artists are beginning to realize that toys can be used as a new media of contemporary art. Many brands also promote their own brand IP in the form of art toys, combined with the operating mechanism of the art toy market and the communication methods of the audience, in order to increase the added value of IP itself. In a sense, the benefit path it generates is similar to the cultural and creative peripheral products and art derivatives, Just more directly materialize the image, and even give it more important image significance through the co branding integration between brands or some cultural concepts.

From the simple OEM to the creation of original IP, from the production of dolls to the cultivation of culture, the popularity of popular games also drives sales. According to the data of the 2021 China Fashion Toy Market Development Report of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the scale of the fashion toy market in 2021 is estimated to be 36.6 billion yuan. From the data of relevant departments in Dongguan, the total industrial output value of enterprises above the designated size involved in the production of fashion toys in Dongguan has reached 12.831 billion yuan. It is estimated that at least one third of the country's games are produced in Dongguan.

Based on the regional conditions, resource endowments and industrial characteristics, Dongguan has promoted the integration of culture and tourism industry according to local conditions. New types of culture and tourism consumption have been constantly enriched. Significant achievements have been made in the development of cultural industry resources and industrial agglomeration. A number of cultural and tourism industry parks with distinctive development characteristics, strong industrial agglomeration effect and obvious demonstration and driving role have been cultivated. At present, Dongguan is actively building a provincial cultural industry demonstration park to enable the development of Dongguan's cultural industry and help build a "trendy cultural city".

2. Literature review

2.1 IP related research

IP is often used in culture related industries in Chinese context. The concept of IP has been widely mentioned in China since 2015. From literary creation, derivative development to film and television animation, from self media promotion to brand marketing, the concept of IP has gradually entered the public's vision. Although the academic research on IP in China started slightly later than that in foreign countries, it has developed quite rapidly. Most of the early researches on IP were from the perspective of content IP, while most of the researches on image IP started from the role image design of enterprises, brands or competitions. IP related research in the United States is more concerned with the creation of IP commercial value. For example, American scholar Anita Elbers believes that super IP can continue to attract the public's attention and has unlimited commercial potential^[1]. Gaode proposed that the IP image in the super IP value chain can be used as a trademark for "image authorization", and make use of cross-border advantages to enable the public to repeatedly consume related derivatives, forming a brand community, thus generating sustainable value. Later, based on the global influence of American character culture, more people began to analyze the meaning of character images from the perspective of American comics, animation and movies. Secondly, there are also some researches related to image IP in advertising, such as Smith KR's concern about the impact of the classic image IP Pasteur Sharon's becoming a famous children's shoes advertising trademark on American consumer culture and consumer society.

2.2 Research on art toys

The western world defines art toys as a design movement. For example, Nadir Sule Atgen, a scholar at the University of Ghazi in Türkiye, defined the birth of art toys as a movement that can

affect the consumerism culture and design methods in the twenty-first century in his published paper^[2]. Centered on DIY culture, this paper analyzes and classifies the art toy movement. In his article, Mark Steinberg explained how art toys critically and creatively criticized the commercialization of characters through physical objects. Taking platform toys as an example, he pointed out that in this era of wanton image circulation, art toys, as artificial material products, have become an important place for design criticism.

3. Problems in dongguan trendy toy market

3.1 Chaoplay design is a mixture of good and bad, with serious plagiarism

The trend toy market in Dongguan has developed rapidly in the past five years. According to Frost Sullivan's report, the scale of China's trend toy market has increased from 10.8 billion yuan in 2017 to 34.5 billion yuan in 2021, with a compound annual growth rate of 33.7%. It is expected that the market will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 24.0% from 2022 to 2026, and the growth rate will slow year by year. By 2026, the scale of China's trend toy market is expected to reach 110 billion yuan.

In recent years, with the popularity of art toy products, many entrants have been attracted, including enterprises with weak design ability and rough manufacturing. The intellectual property protection of IP image in China is relatively weak, which also leads to many popular IPs being copied by many imitators as soon as they come out, making it difficult for consumers to distinguish the true from the false.

3.2 The industry relies too much on blind boxes, and non head IP recognition is low

According to relevant data, blind boxes will be the largest segment of the market size of China's fashion toy industry in 2021, with a market size of 9.7 billion yuan, accounting for 28.12%. For example, the leading enterprise Bubble Mart, its most profitable business will also focus on blind box products. From the perspective of consumers' purchase intention, consumers are mainly willing to choose products with head IP. For example, the gold product line of Bubble Mart Molly will have an income of up to 710 million yuan in 2021, driving the group's annual growth rate of up to 80%, while other non head IP images lack growth momentum.

At present, the IP image of high-value art toys should still be concentrated in Europe, America, Japan and other developed countries. The recognition of the domestic IP image in the international market is relatively low, and the number of "going to sea" is also relatively small. According to the 2022 interim report of the leading enterprise Bubble Mart, in 2020, the omni channel revenue of regions other than Chinese accounted for only 3.4%, only 1/28 of the market revenue of Chinese, The IP image of domestic art toys has a long way to go.

3.3 Serious hype is not conducive to the long-term development of art toys

In 2022, the epidemic situation will be repeated, and many popular shops will be suspended due to the epidemic situation, and the offline passenger flow will also be reduced accordingly. In addition, the epidemic situation will also affect the timeliness of logistics, and consumers will have a poor online shopping experience. Both online and offline channels have been impacted. The revenue of art toy enterprises has been affected to varying degrees. Leading enterprises can also rely on strong user stickiness to maintain revenue, but small enterprises and emerging trend IP have weak risk resistance and are easy to be out.

The price of art toys varies greatly. Many consumers are willing to pay a lot for the value of their

art attributes. A large part of art toys have a certain collection attribute, and even have a large appreciation space. This has led to the extremely opaque trade of art toys, a serious phenomenon of hoarding and speculation. For a long time, the art attributes of art toys have been vulgarized and over commercialized.

4. Build the IP image of art toys

4.1 Strengthen the IP image design and enhance the sense of experience

As a combination of art design and toys, art toys are also a carrier of free form, which can well graft various artistic and cultural elements. Artistic toys also cover a wide range of fields. Many creators are from different industries, including illustrators, graphic designers, industrial designers, sculptors, contemporary painters, etc. The creators in each field show their different artistic styles. Art toys not only have authorized products, but also provide creators with a free creative carrier, which can express more intuitive ideas in this three-dimensional form. This also makes art toys become a kind of first-hand creative materials, instead of being separated from the ancillary and derivative one-way roads, and conveys people different values and brand characteristics, so as to attract consumers and enhance art symbols and brand values.

The brand and style of toys are the two symbols of art toys. Style and brand are the symbols of designers' entry into the commercial system. Personal design to a certain extent accumulates into style, which brings product recognition. Brands can directly and systematically show designers' creativity. However, art toys in the middle zone are not like traditional toys, but also different from ordinary works of art. Therefore, designers often tend to export their personal styles in both style maintenance and brand operation, in order to seek differentiated creation and grasp the balance between art and business. While the creators of art toys often have the characteristics of story and symbolism when shaping their styles. The so-called story is a brief background story of the IP image, which aims to make the image more vivid and enable players to better resonate and interact, so as to enrich the IP image and enhance the sense of experience. However, it is generally limited to the original basic story of the IP image or a script of a certain series of IP images. Because of the special nature of art toys, they cannot be limited by the fixed story content, which is not conducive to their sustainable circulation in the commodity market, and also easy to cause aesthetic fatigue for consumers. To sum up, it is necessary to story flexibly. As for symbolization, some designs, even the designers themselves, are symbolic symbols. Through the social commodity attributes of toys, some concrete symbols or abstract symbols are implanted to trigger associations. Different audiences will also stimulate different symbolic meanings, but they still have certain directivity and universality.

4.2 IP based brand to enhance sustainable development potential

As a means of communication and platform for art toys, brands can systematically display the works of designers or artists in the market, which includes two levels of brands: one is the designer's or artist's own platform, which is produced and sold by itself, and some are small in scale. Especially in today's Internet era, more channels and display platforms are provided for the public, and more minority designers will participate; The other is the agent in the form of signing, such as Bubble Mart in China, which explores artists and IPs and signs contracts to provide them with production and marketing platforms.

From the perspective of cultural creativity, IP is a combination of intellectual property rights and brands. There are both connections and differences between IP and brand IP. IP, as the source of product development, represents a certain cultural significance, has mining value, can trigger empathy, and truly valuable IP can be inherited through time and space. The brand IP is generally attached to a

specific product. Once the brand is IPed, it will give consumers another kind of spiritual consumption, imperceptibly engrave the brand IP into consumers' thoughts and behaviors, which means that the brand has the potential for sustainable development.

Artistic toys can be divided into presentation and serialization in terms of product output form, and serialization can be subdivided into theme, shape, color and material serialization. This is also a main process of continuous output and enrichment of IP image library of the flat IP, as well as a main way to gather fans. The marketing mode of art toys is the commercial marketing and expansion based on IP authorization with IP image as the center.

4.3 Decoding consumption symbols, radiating new momentum of IP image

All products have use value and symbol value in the eyes of consumers. The use value refers to the satisfaction of functions, while the symbolic value refers to the aesthetic experience brought by the combination of product modeling and materials. Artistic toy products generally do not have the function of use. They are more about transforming cultural symbols into external aesthetic images, and becoming consumption objects is one of the ways to transform things into symbols.

In a symbolic society, good products will enable consumers to consciously or unconsciously decode the symbols they carry, such as the triggering of subcultural consumers' collection of art toy products, secondary creation, community gathering and other behaviors. While people consume, they also internalize symbols in products, which not only reflects the value of products or services, but also reflects the value of consumers. Symbolic consumption mainly touches on the level of consumer cognition. Through consumption, the public spreads or consolidates their recognition of products and themselves. In the community, it enriches the meaning of products and brings more consumption. In the consumer society, the functional difference between products is minimized, so consumers' demand for unique meaning symbols is increasing. Different consumer groups have different symbolic perception, so they will have different symbolic decoding behaviors. In the contemporary innovation driven society, the participation of consumers will make the brand glow with different innovative colors.

5. Conclusion

In today's consumer era, the rapid development of online media has made art toys appear in the vision of more and more people. This kind of commercial and artistic form with toys as the carrier has also attracted more and more brands and designers. It is believed that with the support of national policies and industrial strategies, China's huge subcultural groups will glow with different innovative forces, and the development of art toys is expected in the future. Dongguan town streets (parks) with different resource endowments should adjust measures to local conditions and develop characteristic industries according to their respective industrial bases and cultural resources. For example, Shipai Town, where toy OEM enterprises are relatively concentrated, has accurately grasped the opportunities for the development of the Chaoyou market in recent years, vigorously supported the transformation and upgrading of local toy OEM enterprises, developed Chaoyou characteristic industries represented by backbone enterprises such as Deshen, Lezhibao, Wenbo, Wolf Bowang, and emerged TOYCITY, LAMTOYS and other brands. By exploring and building a trendy play industrial park, we will inject cultural vitality, promote the deep integration of advanced manufacturing and cultural innovation, drive toy OEM enterprises to gradually move towards the new business form of IP trendy play, strive to build Dongguan into an important creative incubation place and R&D and production place of domestic trendy play, and help Dongguan to build a "trendy city". (Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program for College Students of Guangdong University of Science and Technology)

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