

# *The Importance of Beijing Lord Rabbit Sculpture in Chinese Contemporary Cultural Products*

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**Keywords:** Beijing Lord Rabbit, cultural products, traditional arts

**Abstract:** Beijing Lord Rabbit is an ancient traditional clay sculpture art in Beijing, China. It is an important part of China's intangible cultural heritage. It is famous for its unique image and exquisite craft skills, and is widely used in contemporary Chinese cultural products. Based on Chinese traditional culture, this paper expounds the important position of clay sculpture of Beijing rabbit in Chinese contemporary cultural products by understanding the combination of artistic expression form and modern design concept, combined with the research on the development and brand promotion of Beijing Rabbit cultural products, and plays a research role in promoting the combination of Beijing traditional art culture and contemporary cultural products. It provides reference significance for the modern development of Chinese traditional art.

## 1. Introduction

China is a country rich in traditional arts. In recent years, the public's awareness of the development of traditional culture and folk art has brought about a high enthusiasm for the promotion of traditional folk culture. The government has issued a policy on the protection of intangible cultural heritage and attaches great importance to the research field of traditional culture. The biggest challenge facing traditional art today is the commercialization and industrialization of art brought by the market economy, which, however, also contains huge market opportunities [1]. More and more traditional art forms are beginning to be combined with contemporary cultural products.

In recent years, "Culture plus" has dabbled in various fields. In 2021, eight departments including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee issued Several Measures to Further Promote the Development of Cultural and Creative Products in cultural and cultural relics Units, proposing to mobilize the enthusiasm and creativity of the development and operation of cultural and cultural creative products in cultural and cultural relics units [2]. At the same time, tourism commodities also play an important role in enriching the supply of the tourism market, stimulating domestic demand and expanding consumption.

Beijing Lord Rabbit is the most typical traditional art in Beijing. With the development of The Times and the revival of traditional culture, more and more Beijing Lord Rabbit cultural products appear in people's lives. Foreign literature hardly dabbles in the research in this regard. Most

Chinese studies pay attention to the inheritance and protection of traditional culture, but pay less attention to the importance of clay sculptures of Beijing rabbit in contemporary Chinese cultural products. Although the rabbit sculpture has attracted much attention in the contemporary art market, there are few in-depth studies on its status and influence.

Based on the traditional culture of the rabbit, this paper studies the application of the artistic image of the rabbit in contemporary cultural products. Through the research of Beijing rabbit's cultural product development and brand promotion, this paper expounds the important position of rabbit's clay sculpture in Chinese contemporary cultural products. It not only reflects the protection and inheritance of folk art brand from the perspective of developing cultural industry, but also cultivates valuable traditional art brand to promote the development of cultural industry in the transition period of Chinese civilization. It provides reference for the development of other traditional arts, and also has great cultural value and practical significance under the background of globalization.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Cultural Connotation of Beijing Lord Rabbit

#### 2.1.1. Origin and Development

There is a unique toy in the life of old Beijingers. Its shape is a painted clay figure of a human body standing upright with a rabbit face. Since the Ming Dynasty, every Mid-Autumn Festival, the people of Beijing city will worship it, called "rabbit boy". Where does the rabbit come from? If you ask the old Beijingers, they all say that the Rabbit came from heaven. The Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai once wrote a poem: "The white rabbit pound medicine into, ask who with dinner?" [3] Folklorists believe that the image of the rabbit in Beijing is derived from the legend of the Jade Rabbit in the Moon Palace. He helped people survive the plague, and since then, the rabbit is also worshipped when people worship the moon on the Mid-Autumn Festival.

The rabbit is more than three feet high, the small is only three inches, the image is generally dressed in red robes and armor, wearing a gold crown, two ears from the gold crown. The rabbit's face is fair and handsome, his eyes are bright, his mouth is three-petal, and his expression is quiet. With the development of folk art, the image of the rabbit has presented a variety of characters, including opera figures, folk customs, all kinds of mounts and so on (as shown in Figure 1).



Figure 1: Beijing Lord Rabbit on Peony.

#### 2.1.2. The Importance of Beijing Lord Rabbit

The Beijing Rabbit is a symbol of bravery and power, bringing auspicious and good luck to people. In the contemporary era, the products of Beijing Lord Rabbit have also been enriched. The

Beijing Lord Rabbit bears the excellent cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Beijing and even Chinese folk art. These cultural characteristics are the cultural foundation of brand image and the key to nationalized design.

### 2.1.3. Cultural Status of Beijing Lord Rabbit

On September 15, 2009, the rabbit was designated as the "image ambassador" of the Mid-Autumn Festival by the Beijing Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center. The image ambassador "Father Rabbit" was designed by Wu Guanying, a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts of Tsinghua University, absorbing the styling elements and style of the traditional "Father Rabbit" in Beijing. The head is the human eye, the eyebrows are like clouds, the human nose and the haft lip, and the head is wearing a golden Chinese ancient military officer hat with two long pointed ears symbolizing the characteristics of rabbits. The whole body is standing (as shown in Figure 2). The rabbit has become the most representative cultural gift for Beijing's foreign exchanges.



Figure 2: Beijing Mid-Autumn Festival Image Ambassador.

## 2.2. The Application of Beijing Lord Rabbit Sculpture in Contemporary Cultural Products

In July 2022, the VR audio digital collection Beijing Lord Rabbit "Duofu" was officially put on limited sale (as shown in Figure 3). This series of digital collection is the first original virtual Beijing cultural mascot. The first digital collection of Rabbit's "Duofu" was released with the themes of spring, summer, autumn and winter [4].



Figure 3: Beijing Lord Rabbit "Duofu".

In 2022, a hotel in Guangzhou and the Institute of Arts and Crafts under Guangzhou Light Group jointly created a series of activities of "When the Rabbit meets the Mansion", and launched "Huashan Shenghui TOOYEH Cultural and creative Mooncake Gift Box" to spread traditional culture(as shown in Figure 4). It is reported that in the future, the hotel will also launch parent-child rooms, Internet celebrity restaurants, T-shirts, crafts and other cultural and travel integration products around the "TOOYEH Rabbit" IP [5]. It is not difficult to see that the application of

"Tooyeh Rabbit" as a cultural and creative product design has entered public life.



Figure 4: TOOYEH Mooncake Gift Box.

### 3. The Significance and Value of Beijing Lord Rabbit in Chinese contemporary cultural products

#### 3.1. Inherit traditional Culture

As one of the representatives of Chinese traditional handicrafts, the clay sculptures of rabbit and doll carry rich connotations of traditional culture. Beijing Lord Rabbit has a profound cultural heritage, and the innovative cultural product design on the image of traditional Beijing Lord Rabbit is also the inheritance and development of traditional culture of The Times [6].

#### 3.2. Pass on Cultural Values

As an art form with profound cultural heritage, clay sculptures of rabbit children can convey the values of traditional Chinese culture. The clay figurines of the rabbit usually symbolize luck and happiness. Through the clay figurines of the rabbit, we can convey the Chinese people's pursuit and blessing for a better life [7]. The use of clay sculptures of the rabbit in contemporary cultural products can make people more deeply understand and feel the values of traditional Chinese culture.

#### 3.3. Enrich Cultural Creativity

The clay figurations of the Beijing Lord Rabbit are rich and varied, and can be designed and made according to different creative needs. In contemporary Chinese cultural products, the application of clay sculptures of rabbit dolls provides creators with more imagination space and creative inspiration. Through the unique image and craft of the clay sculptures, we are able to create cultural products with more Chinese characteristics and cultural connotations, which enriches the contemporary Chinese cultural creativity.

#### 3.4. Promoting Local Economic Development

Clay sculptures of rabbit children have a long history and unique craft skills in many places in China. It is not only an art form, but also a representative of local culture. By applying the clay sculptures to contemporary cultural products, it can promote the development of local economy [8]. By promoting and selling clay figurines made of rabbit dolls, it can promote the development of local handicraft industry, improve people's income level and promote the prosperity of local economy.

## 4. Results

The importance of clay sculpture of Beijing Lord Rabbit in Chinese contemporary cultural products cannot be ignored. It not only carries the inheritance of traditional culture, but also transmits cultural values, enriches cultural creativity and promotes the development of local economy. Through the application of the Beijing Lord Rabbit clay sculpture, we can better display the unique cultural charm of China, so that more people can understand and love Chinese traditional handicrafts. Therefore, the clay sculptures of the rabbit have an important position and function in the contemporary cultural products of China.

## 5. Conclusion

More than 80% of people's cognition of things comes from vision. We should deeply study the shape, color and meaning of the rabbit doll, and then simplify and innovate the shape, so that the innovative IP image is more contemporary, in line with the market needs and contemporary aesthetic needs. Increase the recognition of the innovative IP image of the rabbit in the young generation, so that they can deeply realize that China's traditional culture and art have injected new vitality in fashion. Mooncake gift box packaging product design tells the story of Beijing with the image of new rabbit IP, expresses the concept of new Beijing gift with auspicious meaning and cultural heritage, and transmits Chinese tradition and culture.

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