

Survey and Choice of Original Furniture of Contemporary China

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Abstract: this paper tries to find out the common creative features existing in this group as well as the internal and external influencing factors through the analysis of design features of furniture with typical original design features. Finally, it will explore the creative perspective of Chinese original furniture, starting from the design consciousness, design orientation and inherent requirements of design itself, to provide theoretical basis for Chinese original furniture to expand its own directions of creation.

1. Introduction

At present, the issue of original design is the most discussed issue in the domain of furniture design in china. “original furniture” originates from “original design”. Nowadays, as far as Chinese brand enterprises of original furniture and their products are concerned, the original furniture they have created through design innovation and practice deserve a place in the original design. The appellation of original furniture contains the expectation of industry for this type of furniture brand enterprises and their products as well. The original furniture in china ought to be rooted in the cultural soil of chinese furniture, focusing on the contemporary way of life and exploring in the pursuit of and respect for humanized life.

2. Analysis on Characteristics of Contemporary Original Furniture in China

The rising local design has become an important part of soft power of china. As a local original design brand, it pays attention to the humanistic sensibilities of current life and people’s livelihood as well as the pragmatic spirit and execution. As original brands in china, although they have natural chinese cultural genes, the expressions are different, which stands for their own thoughts and styles of chinese tradition and folk arts. Nowadays, there are original Chinese brands such as acf home, banmoo, shang xia, pusu, moreless, fnji, pinwu, zencasa, u+, pingze, thrudesign, domo nature, opal, which aim to inherit and develop chinese culture. They will show the world a brand-new china with this historic mission.

Stefano marzano, a famous italian designer, once pointed out that “designers should endow products with cultural connotation and can create value for consumers so that product design can reflect personality traits. After all, the cultural value and cultural identities of the product are conveyed through the element of product design, which is required to include meaningful content for users.” The content of product meaning and the production framework need to be constructed by culture. At the present stage, there are many commonalities in the group creation of chinese original furniture brands, regardless of their concepts or final results, with the core of “culture”:

(1) The basic design concepts are based on the current urban life, to advocate the notion of returning to nature and explore the contemporary local lifestyle.

(2) The category of single form innovation has been transcended through accepting the nurturing of traditional culture, while the typical comprehending of traditional aesthetic experience and modern expression is gradually formed in the excavation and refinement of cultural connotation and characteristics. The aim is to exceed the level of objects and move towards the construction of artistic conception.

(3) The designers are enamored of and focus on traditional materials and processes. For example, the ebony to Zhu Xiaojie, walnut to Lv Yongzhong and brass to Wen Hao, are typical among them.

They do not deliberately reject the modern production processes and make good use of them.

Great changes caused by globalization and social transformation have led to the disintegration of original beliefs and norms, the emergence of pluralism and sense of worth, and the uncertainty of the establishment of a new local culture. Under the circumstances, Chinese original furniture brand creation turned to draw inspiration, wisdom and strength from traditional culture, and complete the personal identity of the main creative group during this process.

3. Survey and Choice of Original Furniture of Contemporary China

3.1 Initiative Design

Initiative ought to be a proper significance to the topic, as design itself is a work possessed of initiative. However, in the practical environment, the design in the production system of large industry and the creation system under the guidance of consumer economy frequently falls into the position of dependency, and the so-called initiative is limited to a range which is quite small. It reflects that design is in an awkward position at the end of the industrial chain. Thus, it cannot be regarded as initiative. The proposal of initiative design is not intended to break the existing design thinking, but to advocate a spirit of introspection and explore new possibilities and paths of the development of design, which is a new progress of existing design consciousness. Furthermore, how can designers create a truly initiative position so that the design can provide driving force instead of being executed passively?

The proposal of initiative design is a promotion of existing design consciousness. The task of design has always been to solve the problem. The inherent concept is that the problem is already there and the designer works around it. Nevertheless, the default condition of the inherent concept is that the quizzier is commonly the consigner of the design task. Normally, the initiative of designers is to refine the problem or put forward derivative problems on the premise of accepting the problem, and then seek solutions. In this process that everyone is accustomed to, the responsibilities and rights for designers to ask questions proactively have been given up. Whereas, designers who have the ability to solve problems will obviously conduce to enhance the overall efficiency of the society if they take another step forward to ask questions proactively. In this sense, initiative design signifies the deeper realm of design study. It is based on this kind of reality that design awareness is increasingly becoming an issue of concern. Initiative design means that designers enter a wider social space, creating new possibilities and realize their own social values.

3.2 Focusing on Daily Life

The original design in China is on the threshold. Design is a discipline of the application domain, and the good one is rooted in the life of people and constitutes a living culture. Due to the regional differences of living culture, only when design truly conforms to regional humanities and environmental resources can there be diversification. So far, the “Chinoiserie” commonly mentioned cannot form the current mainstream design style, because it pays too much attention on the performance of Chinese elements and ignores the in-depth study on the recent life style and life culture of the country, as well as the technology development and application domain based on the unique regional culture and local resources. In fact, the pursuit of classics makes the design today more and more divorced from the concern for the purest daily life. It is dangerous to understand design unilaterally with aesthetics and style, which will lose the grasp of design wisdom and attribute design to a superficial form. Facing daily life is always an effective source for designers to find design opportunities.

Design for real life is a design concept focuses on daily life, which ought to lead people to experience it little by little in their daily life with willingness and get full and lasting happiness from it. By returning to the origin, re-examining, exploring the essence of life and design in the most approachable way to bring joy to those people who own and use daily things. Therefore, daily things are a design of life. This kind of design for daily life is not only to beautify life, but to consider daily needs and the improvement of life quality of people, which is a way of “creating life”.

As a daily thing, every piece of furniture and household goods is required to have prominent functions and convenient use; it should be plain, simple and unadorned in the form; the price needs to be low, suitable for the public, economically. All these constitute the principles of convenience, practicality and economy in daily design.



Fig.1 Found Muji China Ming

As it can be seen in Figure 1, MUJI insists on searching permanent, timeless and daily necessities in the world, then combines the changes of human life, culture and habits with a little modification, and eventually presents them to customers at a suitable price. Found MUJI China is seeking materials which will get more lingering charm by more usage, and the forms will never be eliminated.

3.3 Spirit of Craftsman

Craftsman's spirit is the spirit of the craftsman to carefully carve out and continuously refine his products, which is required in all trades and professions. As American sociologist Richard Sennett pointed out in his new book *the Craftsman*, "as long as we have the desire to do things well in order to do them well, each of us is a craftsman." Advocating the spirit of craftsman is not to return to the life of craftsmen who have drifted away from us for a long time, but to pursue a more rational way to cooperate with the digital industry. Under the conditions of modern industrial production and information society, the quality of "Made in China" has been steadily enhanced, and the spirit of craftsmen is gradually transformed into the realistic productivity of Chinese furniture design and manufacture.

Craftsman's Spirit Required for Contemporary Original Furniture in China:

(1)The spirit of extreme and continuous improvement. Pay attention to details, pursuing perfection, continuously ameliorating products from technology, aesthetics, economy and other aspects, and pursue excellent quality.

(2)The professional attitude of strictness and meticulousness. For a preeminent designer, meticulousness is a type of work attitude, a sort of behavior as well as a kind of professional ethics, and throw himself into design with awe from beginning to end.

(3)The professionalism of patience, concentration and persistent. Persistence is a spirit of concentration and devotion, as well as the persistence of ideals and beliefs, and the experience of extraordinary willpower which is necessity for achieving excellence. Only by maintaining a focused and persistent professionalism can the products and services be continuously improved.

4. Problems and Thoughts

The present China is a testing ground. Under the circumstances of economic globalization, social informatization and cultural diversity, she is experiencing a series of continuous changes such as

economic restructuring, industrial transformation and upgrading, and changes in consumer demand. The contemporary original design is launched in such a complex social environment. Therefore, the so-called Chinese original design has never been an act of self-discipline. It has been involved in the transformation and promotion of the modernization of China, constantly colliding with various factors such as politics, economy and society. Hence, the treatment of Chinese contemporary original design needs a little tolerance, expressing the greatest understanding, support and approval for all design efforts with independent exploration consciousness and practical spirit. More importantly, the original design furniture of China will stand more confidently on the world stage by continuously improving the design consciousness, focusing on the design orientation, enhancing the design quality and constructing the advanced posture of Chinese original design in practice.

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