

# **Interior Design of Shadow Puppet-Themed Homestays in the Context of Cultural Tourism Integration: A Case Study of Downtown Dalian**

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## **Abstract**

In the process of the constant deep integration between culture and tourism, how to keep living transmission of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and renew and revitalize modern urban spaces have become important issues in design scholarship. This paper mainly talks about historic districts in downtown Dalian, trying to look into and use the ways that traditional Chinese ICH—Fujian Shadow Puppetry—is changed into the interior design of today's themed homestays. Based on the historical evolution of shadow puppetry, the research thoroughly analyzes its unique aesthetic essence, light-and shadow- narrative methods, and collective memory characteristics formed through the cultural blending in southern Liaoning. The article states that a contemporary spatial transmission of shadow-puppetry is not simply a collage of traditional symbols or a static display, rather, it's to be totally immersed within and transformed by interior design so that key medium elements such as light, screen, shadow, as well as aspects of carving and color, and participatory performance practices all become inhabitable, interactive everyday spatial forms. By forming design translation logic starting from 'semantics reconstruction' moving towards 'formal spatialization' and ending with 'experiential scenario establishment', this research puts forward a design strategy for spatial design about ICH theme homestays that applies to urban central urban area. This not only is an innovative model for high-quality cultural tourism development in Dalian historical neighborhood but also provides a practically grounded academic reference for the contemporary spatial revitalization of traditional Cina folk art.

## **Keywords**

**Shadow Puppetry; Culture and Tourism Integration; Interior Design; Themed Homestay; Spatial Transposition; The Nau of Light and Shadow.**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Study Background and Issue Statement**

In modern cities, along with the increase of urbanization and the transformation of the model of mass cultural consumption, the social and cultural environment of the traditional intangible cultural heritage(ICH) is under deep structure destruction. In the past, regular ICH safeguard actions have mainly focused on static, rescue-oriented records, or museum-style closed exhibitions—that could be referred to as a "specimen" type of procedure. Although these ways maintain material form, they sever ICH from daily practices and social interactions that sustain it, marginalizing traditional culture in the daily life of contemporary urban areas, and thus depriving it of life. In an era where cultural and tourism development is being brought together, consumer demand on travel has changed from just simply "seeing with their eyes" to something that is more deep and involves being part of it through "embodied participation".

As a relatively fresh micro-scale spatial carrier which provides lodging services and localized cultural experiences, themed homestays provide a promising experimental space for the contemporary reconfiguration and living experience of ICH[1].

Dalian as a major coastal open city in the north of China contains deep urban memory and plenty of cultural variety within its central areas-as historical neighborhoods such as Dongguan Street. Fuxian Shadow Puppetry, which is representative intangible cultural heritage of southern Liaoning Province, carries the century-old aesthetic and social morals of southern Liaoning area. But under the new media environment in contemporary times, the traditional performance space of Fuxian Shadow Puppetry has become smaller and smaller[2]. The problem of the old puppeteers is getting old, lost in the crowd, and culturally marginalized. How to overcome the “culture shock” frequently observed in the “intangible cultural heritages enter the city,” so as to enable this ancient “art of light and shadow,” which was once dormant, to regain its lifeblood in contemporary urban commercial and residential spaces, now constitutes the primary problem awaiting prompt solutions in contemporary cultural tourism space design[3].

## **1.2. Research Object and Practical Significance**

This article takes cultural and tourism homestays in the central area of Dalian with Fuzhou Shadow Puppetry as its cultural foundation and investigates the translational strategies on using traditional folk art in the current interior environment. This research’s significance is to break through some common problems in usual thematic homestays: “over-symbolism and cultural flattening.” It is not just putting up some shadow puppet things on show. Instead, we dig into how shadow puppets work, their cultural background, and what kind of talks they tell. We bring all this old meaning about light and shadow, stories, and playing together into making new homes today[4].

In terms of theoretical research, this article builds a theoretical research method of "cultural mechanism extraction" to "spatial design transfer" in the process of this study, providing interdisciplinary research views for the spatialization of intangible cultural heritage. Practically speaking, the above proposed strategies such as improving spatial layout, combining light with design, and promoting participatory experience, etc., can directly provide practical guidance for the renovation and upgrading of cultural homestays in the central area of Dalian. By helping to recreate shadow puppetry’s past ‘presence,’ we can turn these homestays from simple places for people to live into cultural links for the past and future, for our hometown and the whole world, which will make homestays' cultural tourism in Dalian better and more personal.

## **2. Fuzhou Shadow Play’s Artistic Traits and Cultural Connotations:**

### **2.1. Formative Systems and Carving Techniques Visual Language**

Sculptural systems and carving technologies in Fuzhou Shadow Play create its material foundations in visual language and show great craftsmanship abilities and strong symbolism as well. Fuzhou shadow puppetry has gone through a long period of historical development, combining the strong momentum of northern shadow puppetry and the delicate nuances of coastal southern Liaoning area for the development of a regional aesthetic characterized as both strong and gentle. In the designs of character, Fuzhou shadow puppets strictly follow the classical subdivisions by “Sheng, Dan, Jing, Mo, Chou”, with each part of the role having very coded facial proportions and postures as well as costume patterns. this is not fixed canon, it is more an efficient system, a visual-symbolism for from here, people can tell who the characters social standing, and their ethics in relation to the definite shadows, and symbols. For instance, military figures are depicted with intricately detailed and dynamically charged armor,

whereas civil officials wear costumes characterized by soft, restrained lines - thus achieving the aesthetic ideal of "conveying spirit through form".

## **2.2. Color Use and Lighting Narrative Connection**

Color and light interplay in Fuzhou shadow puppet shows are the main way in which they create character personality, narrative rhythm, and dramatic atmosphere. The color scheme is based on the combination of natural mineral pigment, plant pigment and semi-transparent animal skin material. The color usage is mostly cinnabar red, ochre yellow, malachite green, ink black, and also some metallic powders like gold and silver to highlight. Illumination causes different thicknesses and concentrations of pigment to make up many shades: red paint that is heavily applied looks very serious and solid when seen from the front, but if it is seen from behind it becomes almost clear and changes into a sort of coral color, which makes it seem full of life and breath: Fuzhou shadow shadow puppet has used strong color contrast and fine silver outline to satisfy visual requirements for night time performances, figures with shimmering and flickering like liveliness, output only in english, rewritten as one paragraph, no explanations or comments, no showing of prompts.

## **2.3. Regional Cultural Traits and Partaking Memory Places**

Fuxin shadow puppetry has always been a kind of "collective memory space" in the countryside of Southern Liaoning, which belongs to a highly participatory form of public culture. Shadow puppetry survival and spread depend on certain social formations and space rituals; at traditional markets and festive occasions, local communities build stages together, watch performances collectively and share feelings. The opening and closing of each puppet show is a re-production of community identity, and the cyclic revival of local historical memory.

In this situation, the audience is neither passive receivers nor simply spectators; instead, they actively take part. A dynamic feedback loop is formed by performers, light and shadow media, and viewers: performers adjust the rhythm via the manipulation of light and shadow, which in turn conveys narration on the screen, and the responses of spectators have a direct effect on the performers' impromptu expressions. This is also an "open stage", it breaks down the rigid division between the stage and the audience, which can give us some useful behavioral lessons for designing these types of experiential places. When the cultural essence of shadow puppetry combines with urban homestays in Dalian, it goes way deeper than just offering people something pretty to look at. Instead he tries to build a "memory container" via modern alienating cities which can evoke an emotional response and encourage embodied action.

## **3. Shadow Puppetry Artistic Characteristics Translation into Interior Space**

### **3.1. Re-configuration on a Semantic Level, Change the Spatial Order.**

Semantically speaking, the retranslation is remapping the ethical value, philosophical significance, and ritualistic connotation of shadow play onto the spatial structure of interior environments. The narrative structures of puppet shows generally follow social ethics which is a deep yearn for order. Also, as for the performance order, starting the ceremony by "lighting up the lamp", extinguishing it at the end. This has a very strong ritualistic meaning and it can also symbolize the cyclical nature of life.

In terms of guesthouse space reconfiguration, designers can give feedback to such deeper semantic meanings through spatial axes, visual hierarchy, and rhythmic circulation. The public lobby can use a relatively symmetrical axial layout plus a central light design to present the ethical symbol of rigidity and integrity implied by shadow puppetry, thus creating a

solemn, ritual-like atmosphere. On contrary, guestroom areas can adopt asymmetry, flexibility layout, soft diffused lighting of low illumination to evoke a state of private rest and recovery, reflecting the reflective concept of interplaying emptiness and fullness of "the interplay between emptiness and substance" Furthermore, the circulation from the entrance to the rooms can be meticulously designed to mimic the narrative rhythm of stories in shadow puppet plays, with a gradual increase in lights and translucent lattice entrance hall as the "prologue" ; transitional corridors and localized scenic elements as "development"; the central cultural experience area as the "coda", and culminating with the tranquil retreat of the guestrooms as the "conclusion"

### **3.2. Formal Features Architectural Embodiment and Material Expression:**

Spatialization of formal characteristics refers to the transformation of the visual characteristics of shadow puppetry into tangible spatial objects. In terms of formal aesthetic assets, the "rhythmic lines," the kind of "translucent" materials employed, and the "multi-focal" composition all make up an integral part of the beauty of Fuzhou shadow puppetry. In today's interior design, "rhythmic lines" maybe not just 2D patterns - like carved motifs - but also turn to be 3D spatial structures Example: Use fluidive wave shapes/disks/pngs of clouds/pdfs from traditional speech shadow puppets TFTParametrize metal mesh/warpened stack of wooden walls They are usually seen on suspended ceiling system or background wall partition screen, and give the architectural wall a feeling like it is breathing.

On "translucent materials" transformation. In design we can heavily use some material system evoking traditional shadow puppets screen. The usual shadow puppet screen has the unique ability "to be see-through when exposed to light but obscure with images." Such modern materials as semi-transparent concrete, frosted glass, U-shaped glass, and coarse linen fabric all carry out this physical quality perfectly. These materials can effectively block visual lines, and they can make sure residents keep their privacy, at the same time, these materials can let nature light or artificial light seep through gently. As the occupants pass down the hallway their hazy silhouettes themselves cast upon these semi-transparent objects an authentic modern performance of light and shadow.

### **3.3. Behavioral Modes Conversion and Building of Experience Scenes**

Under the current cultural and tourism integration, today's consumers no longer have passive "looking" desires, but rather have a strong yearning for real participation. The charm of traditional shadow puppetry is found within this ever moving interactive field which is made up by performers, light and shadow media, as well as the audiences. In homestay design, we need to transform this type of behavior into the creation of participatory experiential environments, so that the space becomes a catalyst for human action.

Therefore, it must surpass the simple accommodation provided by traditional homestays, these designs should integrate a "Puppetry Culture Touch Workshop" and a "Drama and Shadow Interaction Area" into the core of their public space. The space needs to present some simple tools and materials for guests to personally experience making shadow puppets, that is, from picking the leather, carving, coloring, joint assembly. It also needs to use modern digital interactive technologies such as infrared motion detection. By creating a hybrid interaction between the virtual and physical world, we would have an interactive screen which projects real-time digital images of traditional Fuzhou shadow puppetry. This is done according to guests' movement. So this strategic mixing up of old performance customs with brand-new space events leads to a big, fundamental change in how visitors act—they go from just watching cultural stuff to actually being involved and creating it.

In order to more intuitively illustrate the translation logic described above, this paper will present a strategic matrix for translating the artistic features of Fuzhou Shadow Puppetry to interior space, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Translation Strategy Matrix of the Artistic Characteristics of Fuxiu Shadow Puppetry Transformed into Indoor Spaces

Core Artistic Characteristics of Shadow Puppetry	Corresponding Elements in Spatial Design	Design Translation Paths and Specific Applications
Line Rhythm and Hollow Carving	Interface Grilles and Wall Partitions	Extract traditional outlines such as water ripples and cloud patterns, and apply parameterized hollow panels to ceilings and screens to form three-dimensional rhythms and visual guidance.
Translucent Materials and Light-Shadow Variations	Multi-layer Skin Systems and Material Transmittance	Adopt "light-transmitting but not shadow-transmitting" materials like frosted glass, wired glass, and linen fabrics to recreate the texture of the screen, combined with a dimmable lighting system to create an intertwined depth of virtuality and reality.
Narrative Rhythm of Introduction, Development, Transition, and Conclusion	Spatial Circulation and Functional Node Zoning	Construct a narrative circulation of "Introduction (Lobby) — Climax (Experience Area) — Transition (Corridor) — Conclusion (Guest Room)", synchronizing the spatial flow with the dramatic rhythm.
High-Contrast Colors and Metallic Highlighting	Interior Soft Furnishing Color Schemes and Accent Lighting	Extract colors like vermilion red, mineral green, and ochre yellow as the main spatial color tones, and use metal components like brass and accent spotlights to provide visual focal points and highlighting effects.
Interactive Feedback between Puppeteers and Audience	Participatory Workshops and Digital Interactive Walls	Break away from one-way exhibition by setting up open shadow puppet making tables and infrared motion-capture light-shadow walls, realizing a behavioral transformation from static viewing to embodied participation.

#### 4. Puppet Theater Themed Homestay Indoor Design Practical Strategy Adventuring into the Middle District of Dalian

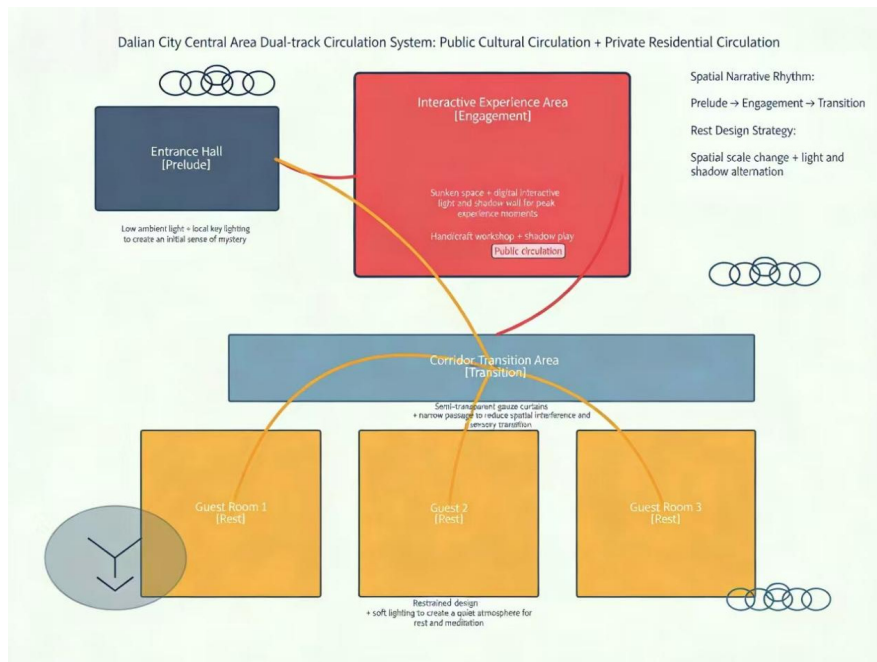
##### 4.1. Rhythm in Space and Promoting the Narrative:

In terms of renovation of existing buildings in the urban central area, the spatial layout of homestay need to consider both public cultural exhibition spaces and private accommodation function under limited space. To do this, we use the dual stream and narrative rhythm control strategy.

First, establish a dual-track circulation system from "public cultural circulation" to "private residential circulation." With a large number of visitors to Dalian's central urban areas, the public spaces of the homestay can also become open cultural exhibition venues at the same time. The Red circulation route (Public) lets non-guest visitors go straight from the street entrance (main entrance) to the lobby exhibition area and the workshop, so they'll be able to do their visits and experiences before leaving, without disturbing the internal guest rooms. On

the contrary, yellow circulation line(private) is especially for guests: after passing the lobby, guests need to go through a specified access controlled passage with transitional lighting effects before they can go into private bedroom area. This space configuration can realize both the widespread dissemination of cultural information and the maintenance of residential peace.

And then there's rhythm of the story moving forward. Taking the framework of shadow puppetry as a reference, it's divided into 4 different rhythmical experiences, "opening" when entering the main hall(where the low ambient lighting makes it more interesting with local highlights directing the viewer's focus, building initial mystery); "entering the show" when entering the interactive area(where the interactive space suddenly opens, full of activities and colorful scenes reaching a peak experience); "Transitioning" through the corridor(with semi-transparent grilles and narrow passages reducing external sounds and gradually controlling feelings and senses); "pausing" in the guest rooms (where the design is restrained, understated and soft lighting create a calm and peaceful environment for sleep and contemplation) Through different aspects of spatial scale and alternating combinations of light and darkness, the experience of moving through the space is itself a space play, a flowing movement, as shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Spatial Design for the Application of Shadow Puppetry

#### 4.2. Light, Integration, Shadow, and Interaction in Core Public Spaces

Public spaces are the main stage to display homestay culture, mainly including the lobby reception and interactive experience workshops.

In the design of the lobby and reception, space is conceived as "prologue to a narrative," and there isn't traditional direct lighting at the entrance, instead, indirect wash lighting and ground-guiding light strips are used. The background wall of the reception desk is the focal point of the whole picture. The background is made of custom-made translucent acrylic and wooden perforation carving with the motif of clouds of Fuzhou shadow puppet. There's a color-temperature LED matrix behind it. During the day it shows a warm wood texture, but when the night comes and the back lighting is turned on, those detailed perforation patterns appear as if in a shadow puppet drama being shown against that half transparent wall - it has quite an immediate sense of plunging you into a specific cultural milieu.

The interactive experience zone is the “behavioral transformation theater”. There is a sunken or semi enclosed space around the main point where there is a large circular or oval handmade work table. Suspended above is a custom pendant light made of a shadow puppet-like metal frame. The work table both works as an operational station of the guest where they perform leather cutting and coloring and is also a social focal point for bringing strangers together. The side wall is equipped with a large "digital interactive light wall". The wall contains a special diffusing reflective layer. There are hidden projectors and detection setup on it. Guests that walk up with there completed shadow puppets or pose dynamically in front of the wall, imbeded systems capture what is being done and creates amplified and changing shadow puppet effects which are projected to the wall. The deep integration of light, motion and interactivity fully arouses the modern entertainment value and communication function of intangible cultural heritage.

#### **4.3. Cultural Penetration and Detail Improvement of the Private Space of the Guest Room**

As the main body of residential function, the guest room design has to change from “boisterous outward” in public space to a more “reserved/nice” direction, so as to maintain cultural elements without sacrificing basic functions of sleeping and relaxing. The focus of guest room design is in the implicit metaphor of the integration of cultural exchange and the detailed presentation of material and light effects.

As for the application of visual symbols, large-scale and figurative representations of shadow puppet figures should also be avoided in guest rooms to avoid a feeling of visual oppression. Instead it uses particular elements from Fuzhou shadow puppetry--like the flowing sleeve lines of female character (Dan) or the geometric patterns of male character (Sheng) armor--and applies them partially, abstractly. These improvements are found behind gentle partitions of the headboard wall or are woven quietly into the carpet's tonal tapestry. The headboard wall is the visual anchor of the room. It's equipped with a double-layer architecture: its surface is made up of a warm wood lattice and contains semi-translucent linen hard panels inside. when the hidden light stripe on the top of the bed gets switch on during the nighttime, the light travels through the wooden lattice then it casts some not-so-stiff oscillating light projections onto the bedsheet This is a peaceful environment where there is a shadow but no light visible.

As for the color system, the guest rooms take the high-contrast color of Fuzhou shadow puppetry as a reference, using lower-saturation colors like "stone green" and "lotus blue", with small amounts of "ochre yellow", or barely any "matte gold" metal furniture. This kind of color combo keeps the true flavor of traditional folk art and matches today's interior design ideas that focus on making people feel calm and comfortable and having a good sleep. In terms of material selection, wood, cotton-linen textile, and localized hand-woven rattan are mostly utilized—“breathable material” —to echo the original artisan's warmth created by the shadow puppetry 's leather body. Through such restrained but thorough design plans, the guest room area transforms into a quiet corner for locals to enjoy the regional cultural characteristics. In the end, it is reaching light-shadow puppetry's complete transformation from a play with shadow puppets, into a lived, every-day aesthetic.

### **5. Conclusion**

Cultural and Tourism integration macro strategy background, spatial renewal of ICH has the important position both preservation historical memory and forming urban cultural competitiveness. This study takes the central district of Dalian as a practical scenario, and it fully examines the translation mechanisms involved in the incorporation of puppetry art of

Fuzhou into interior design within themed homestays. The result demonstrates that a successful ICH themed spatial design is far beyond the simple superficial use of symbolic elements, and delves into the core of the media mechanism, aesthetic implication, and behavioral pattern contained in the heritage.

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