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Tradition and Modernity: On the Evolution and Development of Beijing Lord Rabbit's Materials

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Abstract: Based on analyzing the historical background and cultural connotation of Beijing Lord Rabbit, this paper conducts comprehensive research on the process, evolution, technological innovation, and application areas of Beijing Lord Rabbit's materials. By analysing the evolution of Beijing Lord Rabbit making materials from traditional to modern, and exploring the integration of traditional handcrafts of Beijing Lord Rabbit and modern technological materials in the process of continuous exploration and innovation, we put forward suggestions for the future development direction of Beijing Lord Rabbit making materials. It provides a basis for the development of Beijing Lord Rabbit's materials, a direction for the inheritance and innovation of Beijing Lord Rabbits, as well as a reference and revelation for the research of related traditional arts.

Keywords: Beijing Lord Rabbit; Materials; Technological Innovation.

1. Introduction

Beijing Lord Rabbit is a well-known representative of traditional Chinese folk crafts in Beijing. And its history can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty. With a long history, Beijing Lord Rabbit Craftsmen have taken different forms through the interpretation of folklore stories and creative play, as shown in Figure 1. The skills of Beijing Lord Rabbit Craftsmen have been inherited for a long period of time and evolved, and the materials used to make the crafts are rich and diverse, including paper, clay, wood, soft ceramics, and plastics, etc., Which are uniquely characterized by their delicate and exquisite production techniques. In modern society, Beijing Lord Rabbit is not only a traditional Chinese culture with intangible protection heritage value, it also has modern elements that keep pace with the times and is widely recognized. Under the dual role of cultural heritage and market promotion, Beijing Lord Rabbit have become a cultural and creative industry, and its market development has gradually matured. It is not only a handicraft; it is also the heritage treasure of Beijing folk culture and the ambassador of Beijing spirit [1].



Figure 1. Beijing Lord Rabbit Based Peony

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. There is little foreign literature on Beijing Lord Rabbit figurines, and most Chinese studies focus on the inheritance and preservation of traditional culture and the application of Beijing Lord Rabbit figurines in contemporary Chinese cultural products. The evolution and development of Beijing Lord Rabbit's materials is often only a small part of the research. Despite the fact that rabbit sculptures have attracted a great deal of attention in the contemporary art market, in-depth studies of the materials used to make them have been fewer in number.

This article provides theoretical support and reference basis for the further development of Beijing Lord Rabbit's materials, and provides direction for the inheritance and innovation of Beijing Lord Rabbit's materials through the study of the technological process. Evolution process, technological innovation, and application fields. Through the introduction of the historical background and cultural connotation of Beijing Lord Rabbit, we study the artistic elements and humanistic spirit contained in the production techniques and creativity of Beijing Lord Rabbit, reflecting the unique cultural connotation and folklore value of traditional Chinese culture. It is hoped that the results of this study provide reference and inspiration for the study of related traditional arts in the context of globalization today, reflecting the cultural value and practical significance.

2. Evolution of the Beijing Lord Rabbit's Materials

2.1. Traditional Beijing Lord Rabbit Making Materials and Techniques

Beijing Lord Rabbit is a traditional Chinese handmade artwork with a long history. He has gone from the altar to the folk, and not only his shape has been updated, but also his production process and materials have gone through a long evolution. According to research and evidence, the traditional materials used in the production of Beijing Lord Rabbit include paper, clay, bronze, jade, wood and so on.

2.1.1. Clay Sculpture of Beijing Lord Rabbit

Clay sculpture is a very ancient craft, and is the most recorded and applied material for traditional rabbit sculpture. Jikun's “Draft of Flowerking Pavilion” records, "During the Mid-Autumn Festival in the capital, the rabbit was often pinched in clay, dressed and seated like a human being, and worshipped by the children." Since the Qing Dynasty, there have been more and more written descriptions, paintings, and children's songs about Beijing Lord Rabbit. With the development of the Rabbit, the material of the Rabbit was not limited to clay sculpture, but was also added to cloth and paper, which were sold as children's toys on the street and were very popular [2]. Clay rabbit figurines are easy to make, low-cost, and the materials used are readily available and inexpensive, making them suitable for mass production, and they have been widely passed down in people's lives until now, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Clay Sculpture of Beijing Lord Rabbit

Gathered in, the clay sculpture of Beijing Lord Rabbit is made by hand, and the production process is very complicated and is still used today. Making Beijing Lord Rabbit clay sculptures requires a series of steps such as digging clay, clarifying clay, kneading clay, pinching molds, and turning molds, etc. Among them, pinching molds requires the artist to pinch the clay into the approximate shape of the rabbit with his bare hands, and then modulate the outlines and lines with a carving knife and make adjustments over and over again.

After the clay sculpture is made, it has to be colored, in order of the base color, coloring the open face, and covering the light. " Three billets, seven painting ", the rabbit's pigments are mostly used ore pigments, which have the characteristics of bright color and durability. Base coloring, in order to enhance the beauty of the rabbit, it is usually necessary to put a layer of base color on the clay rabbit, i.e., using a brush dipped in white pigment to brush the clay tires into white, the white rabbit for the subsequent coloring to make a pad. The most important step in the coloring process is to "open the face", i.e., to paint and outline the facial expression. Only when you understand the culture and put your heart and soul into it, can you paint the charm of the rabbit. Then, specific materials such as egg white, paint or tung oil are smeared on the surface of the clay sculpture to make it shiny and moist, which is called overglaze. Finally, a clay sculpture of a Beijing Lord Rabbit is finished.

The production of Beijing Lord Rabbit may seem simple, but its craftsmanship is reflected in the shape of the carving, the process of tracing gold, and color matching. During the late Qing Dynasty, Beijing Lord Rabbit was not only hand-kneaded, but also had the process of brick mold carving, and the production process was constantly upgraded.

2.1.2. The Tie Paper Painted Beijing Lord Rabbit

Research found that the late Ming and Qing dynasty Rabbit material is mostly clay, to the late Qing dynasty and the Republic of China, retained the basis of clay, but also added a new material, "Tie Paper Painted " appeared in "Hat Askew to Talk", as shown in Figure 3 and 4. Paper painted Rabbit due to the age of the long-distant, fragile material, so the number of rare and difficult to preserve. Because of its age and the fragility of the material, Beijing Lord Rabbit is scarce and difficult to preserve, and the process has almost been lost, making the collection extremely valuable. In the study, it can be seen that although the material of Beijing Lord Rabbit is different from that of the rabbit in the later period, the form of the rabbit is almost the same.



Figure 3. The Tie Paper Painted Beijing Lord Rabbit (1)



Figure 4. The Tie Paper Painted Beijing Lord Rabbit (2)

2.1.3. Bronze and Jade Beijing Lord Rabbit

The Beijing Lord Rabbit made of bronze and jade bronze has a long history, beautiful and fine modeling, and is loved by people. The production process is mainly based on carving. However, due to the high price of materials, the cost is too high, mostly for the ruling class to play and enjoy the works of art. Even today, they are only bought and collected by a small number of people.

2.1.4. Wooden Beijing Lord Rabbit

Wooden Beijing Lord Rabbit, feel good, smooth lines and soft texture gives people a comfortable and pleasant feeling, and the price is moderate, for people generally accepted. The production process is based on carving. But the wooden material is not high environmental protection, not durable, easy to moisture, easy to rot, and processing difficulty. so, they are gradually replaced in the long process of evolution, and are not commonly used in modern production.

2.2. Modern Beijing Lord Rabbit’s Materials

Traditional clay Rabbit has the characteristics of ancient style, but also has the shortcomings of fragile and not easy to

transport, with the development of the times, in order to meet people's aesthetic needs, Beijing Lord Rabbit began to add new materials. At present, the main materials used in the production of Beijing Lord Rabbit are plastic, paper, fiberglass and other materials.

2.2.1. Polymer Clay Beijing Lord Rabbit

Polymer clay is the most common modern material in the Beijing Lord Rabbit Market. Polymer clay also called soft pottery, originated in Europe, he is a PVC artificial low-temperature polymerization material, named polymer clay because of its properties similar to clay.

Hu Pengfei, the maker of Beijing Lord Rabbit, is an explorer of modern production materials. He shaped the Beijing Lord Rabbit inheriting the original appearance of old Beijing, with its ancient shape and festive colors, but constantly exploring and innovating in the production process and raw materials. The role of the traditional Beijing Lord Rabbit has begun to change from a festival toy to a cultural product. As long as the rabbit as a festival toy successfully completed the Mid-Autumn Festival worship rituals even if the mission is accomplished, its own preservation time is relatively short, easy to fade, cracking and other shortcomings will not affect people's love for it. Nowadays, as a cultural product, Beijing Lord Rabbit needs to have a longer lifespan. In order to make up for the shortcomings of the traditional Beijing Lord Rabbit craft, Hu Pengfei and his "JiTuFang " developed the polymer clay Beijing Lord Rabbit [3]. The polymer clay material is close to plastic, with delicate, flexible and stable hardness, which ensures the storage of the polymer clay Rabbit, as shown in Figure 5.

The colors of the polymer clay Beijing Lord Rabbit need to be prepared in advance, and in order to retain the unique charm of the color painting, the face of Beijing Lord Rabbit as well as the patterns on his body are still painted. Combining the traditional image of Beijing Lord Rabbit with the modern polymer clay material and retaining the painted part of the traditional craftsmanship makes the Beijing Lord Rabbit's works present the characteristics of keeping up with the times.



Figure 5. Polymer Clay Beijing Lord Rabbit

2.2.2. Plastic Peking Beijing Lord Rabbit

In recent modern times, plastic has become a popular material for making toys, which is welcomed by a large number of consumers because of its cheap price, simple manufacturing process, rich colors and diverse shapes. However, in the process of long-term use, plastic toys will produce a large amount of waste plastic, the degree of environmental protection is extremely low, so it cannot be popularized.

2.2.3. Fiberglass Beijing Lord Rabbit

Fiberglass can be used as an innovative attempt to modernize the material of Beijing Lord Rabbit. Fiberglass has excellent moisture, water, corrosion resistance and long service life, but on the other hand, the processing of fiberglass materials is more troublesome, and the fiberglass material itself is harmful to the human body and the environment will cause a certain degree of pollution, so the material to make the Beijing Lord Rabbit House representative case is not much.

2.3. Conclusion

In general, the evolution of materials used in the production of Beijing Lord Rabbits is closely related to social history, cultural inheritance, technological progress, and market demand. During the traditional period, the production materials focused on handicraft products, with low material costs and good quality. However, with the rapid development of industrialization and the maturity of marketization, the production materials gradually shifted to economical and practical materials that leave a deep impression on people. It reflects the superiority of new materials in the production of Beijing Lord Rabbit. In the future, both the choice of materials and the innovation of production process are important driving forces for the progress and development of Beijing Lord Rabbit production.

3. Innovation and Development of Beijing Lord Rabbit's Materials

With the continuous change of the society and the continuous progress of science and technology, the culture production materials are also constantly updated. For the Beijing Lord Rabbit brand, the innovation and development of its production materials are of great significance and impact. This chapter will focus on the trend of diversification, high-tech and environmental protection, the integration of traditional and modern production technology and materials, and the development trend of emphasizing the functionality and entertainment, in-depth study of the innovation and development of the production materials of Beijing Lord Rabbit.

3.1. Trend of Diversification, High Technology and Environmental Protection

"Diversification, high-tech and environmental protection" is the trend of the times, and also the direction of innovation and development of materials used in the production of cultural products. At present, more and more materials are being used in the production of cultural products, and the production technology of cultural products is constantly updated. Coupled with the consumer's increasing demand for quality toys, the innovation and development of cultural products production materials is also logical.

Diversification and high-tech are mainly manifested in the richness and diversity of materials used in the production of cultural products. At the same time, with the continuous emergence of new materials, some materials with special functions are also being applied to the field of toy production, such as sensors, mechanical components and so on.

On the other hand, environmental protection is also an important direction for the production materials of cultural products. As the environment becomes more and more complex, the application of environmentally friendly materials is also getting more and more attention in the field of cultural product production. Most of the environmental

protection materials are mainly plant materials, biodegradable materials and green textiles.

3.2. Integration of Traditional and Modern Production Techniques and Materials

The integration of traditional and modern production techniques and materials is also an important direction for the innovation and development of production materials for cultural products. Beijing Lord Rabbit is a cultural product with a long history, and its toy production techniques and materials are very traditional. However, with the development of the times and changes in consumer demand, traditional cultural product production techniques and materials can no longer meet the market demand, so these traditional techniques and materials are fused into modern toy production techniques and materials to create more value and market space.

3.3. Trend of Emphasizing the Functionality and Entertainment of Cultural Products

With the development of science and technology and the change of the times, consumer demand for cultural products is also changing. At this time, people no longer only value the cultural attributes of cultural products, but pay more attention to its function and entertainment. This requires that the innovation of the production materials of cultural products needs to pay more attention to the functionality and value of cultural products. For example, the work of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, "Rabbit Touring Beijing", as shown in Fig. 6. combines Chaojiao and traditional Chinese culture to create New Cultural Playism from the perspective of young people. Created the Rabbit's five basic images, used new materials to innovate, but also the combination of Chaojiao and Beijing Museum cultural relics in the form of a young people's market, creating a new image of Beijing cultural Chaojiao [4].

4. Suggestions for the Future Development Direction of Beijing Lord Rabbit’s Materials

As one of the representatives of traditional Chinese handicrafts, the clay sculpture of the Rabbit carries a rich traditional cultural connotation. The Beijing Lord Rabbit has a profound cultural heritage, and the innovative cultural product design of the image of the traditional Beijing Lord Rabbit is also the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture in the era [5]. Strengthening the research and development and application of environmentally friendly materials, innovative processes, improve the production level and quality, and rely on high-quality production materials and processes to open up the market and other aspects of practical significance of the proposal. First, the environmental friendliness of materials is a very important topic nowadays, and the use of environmentally friendly materials can reduce the damage to the environment. Secondly, innovative technology is the key to keeping the art of craftsmanship up-to-date. Finally, high-quality production materials and processes are an important guarantee for market expansion, and stabilizing the market is also a driving force to promote the development of the entire industry.

5. Conclusion

This paper summarizes the significance and contribution to the industry of the innovation and development of the production materials of Beijing Lord Rabbit toys under the new era, as well as the suggestions for the future development direction by introducing the history, cultural connotation and the evolution of the production materials of Beijing Lord Rabbit toys, with a view to providing some meaningful references for the related research and promoting its further development.

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