

Thoughts on Ceramic Handicrafts in Cultural and Creative Industries

Taking Jingdezhen as an example

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Abstract: In the perspective of cultural and creative industries, combined with the characteristics of Jingdezhen ceramic industry, the development of ceramic handicrafts is analyzed from two aspects, and the positioning and development methods of cultural and creative industries are proposed to promote the contemporaneity and sustainable development process of ceramic crafts.

Keywords: Cultural and creative industry; Ceramic crafts; Jingdezhen

1. Introduction

1.1. Ceramic craft interpretation

“Handicraft” is a concept corresponding to “machine production”, which is different from the unified and standardized production mode of the machine. It is simply driven by manual labor and guided by thoughts, and the carries out creation behavior by means of materials, which is the process of integration of spirit with matter, reflecting human emotions and the aesthetic characteristics of the time.

Ceramic craftsmanship is an artistic expression of mud and fire in terms of material properties; it can be divided into two aspects of “work” and “art” from the aesthetic attributes. What is “work”? It refers to the beauty of ceramic manufacturing technology. What is “art”? It refers to the sublimation and qualitative change to meet the spiritual needs with the help of the characteristics of materials and process, and expresses the individual subjective will.

2. Tracing the Past - the Reason for the Prosperity of Ceramic Crafts in Jingdezhen

“Millennium Porcelain Capital” is a priceless treasure left by history to Jingdezhen. It has a bright and splendid history. Ceramics are the best in the world in terms of quality and output. They are sold at home and abroad and are highly sought after. The thought proposed by Kaogong Ji is a testimony to the prosperity of Jingdezhen ceramics “there are seasonal changes in the weather, climate changes in the land, the difference in materials and craftsmen. It is best to combine these four”.

2.1. Unique natural resources

Ceramics is the art of mud and fire. Jingdezhen area is rich in porcelain resources- kaolin which is named after

its distribution in Gaoling Village, Fuliang County, Jingdezhen. Its characteristics include high refractoriness, not easy to deform, and being able to enhance the whiteness of ceramics. It is a rare natural porcelain material. In addition, Jingdezhen’s rich wood reserves provide fuel for the firing of ceramics. These natural resources have laid a solid foundation for the development and prosperity of Jingdezhen ceramics.

2.2. Ceramic talents accumulation

Shen Jiazhen’s poem Minyaoxing: “Jingdezhen produces wonderful porcelains but not craftsmen, who come from many other places, and its products go into the world.” The relatively stable social environment attracts skilled craftsmen from far and near, and they have various collisions, but they are compatible and learn from each other, inherit strengths, integrate the advantages, and provide various possibilities for ceramic innovation.

2.3. Transformation of production methods

When other regions were still in the production of individual hand workshops, Jingdezhen had quietly entered a semi-industrial production mode of coordination and cooperation. Tao Ji stated that “potter, case worker, and earth worker have their own way; the Lee Green, the shaping, and the glazed billet have their own methods; the printing, painting, and carving have their skills, and the rules are orderly”. Under the control of industrialization, the production of manual lines with clear division of labor has greatly improved the output and quality of ceramics.

3. Facing the Moment--The Problem of Jingdezhen Ceramic Handcraft in the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries

The academic circles have different opinions on the cultural and creative industries, but there is a general consensus that the cultural and creative industry is an emerging industry with innovation as the core, with culture as the main body under the market, creating new economic benefits through the deep exploration of culture.

3.1. Lack of awareness of innovation

Innovation is the core of the cultural and creative industry. Since ancient times, Jingdezhen has not lacked the sense of innovation. In the process of becoming the peak of porcelain making, it has innovated four famous porcelains of blue and white porcelain, glowing porcelain, famille rose porcelain and color glaze porcelain, which make Jingdezhen ceramics famous and has always dominated the aesthetic standards of ceramics. However, as far as Jingdezhen today is concerned, ceramic handicrafts lack innovation in terms of product style, craftsmanship and creative ideas. Looking at Jingdezhen ceramics market, from Guomao to Jinghan to Taoxichuan ceramic markets, it seems that there are many kinds of designs, as innovating, but the main ceramic handicrafts are still difficult to jump out in the traditional circle. Product features are insufficient, and homogenization phenomenon is serious.

3.2. The positioning of ceramic handicraft is not clear

The production of ceramics is derived from practicality. Whether it's the utensil for life or ritual, it serves people's life. It has developed into two directions. One is practical ceramic handicrafts. The beauty of ceramic materials and crafts adds beauty and for daily utensils and enhances the quality of life. The second is ceramic hand-crafted art, which refers to the artistic expression through ceramic media. The two have commonalities, and both of them have the characteristics of ceramic materials and craftsmanship, but they are fundamentally different in the essence pursuit, one is the appearance of beauty, and the other is the inner embodiment of beauty. The symbiosis of ceramic handicrafts is still unclear in its development under the cultural and creative industries.

3.3. The blindness of industrial development

As a traditional industrial form, ceramic handicrafts are self-sufficient in the era of farming and handicrafts, and quantitative sales in the industrial era, which are all an industrial development model that is compatible with them in accordance with the principle of balance between supply and demand. However, the development of ceramic handicrafts under the cultural and creative industries, due to the lack of understanding depth and breadth for the cultural and creative industries, driven by economic interests, has caused some ceramic crafts practitioners to fall into the situation that pursue economic benefits excessively and ignore that the core of cultural

creativity is creativity. The large-scale creation of Jingdezhen Creative Park is a phenomenon. In the view of Xindu Ceramics Creative Park, Jianguo Porcelain Factory Creative Park, Sanbao Porcelain Valley, Dongjiao Market, Taoxichuan and other parks, there is no difference in their respective characteristics. The blind industrial development has led to excessive consumption of resources, inefficient reproduction, and serious homogenization, which are full of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft industry.

4. Innovating the Future--Expanding Ideas for Jingdezhen Ceramic Crafts under the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries

Aesthetics is time-honored, and must keep pace with the times. How to make ceramic craftsmanship keep pace with the times, and combine with contemporary art to develop into a long-standing tradition that cannot only promote ceramic handicrafts, but also integrate into the spirit of the times and become a new force of the cultural and creative industry is a very important topic.

4.1. Clarifying development orientation of ceramic handicrafts

In the cultural and creative industries, the positioning of ceramic handicrafts can be carried out from two aspects of differentiation. First of all, for the daily-use ceramics that serve the creative ideas of life and production, it is the gap between industrial daily ceramics quantification and characteristic expression of ceramic art. It is both practical and aesthetic. Therefore, we must adhere to the idea of "artification, life-orientation, and marketization", while preserving the temperature and spirit of hand-made, and taking the market demand as the purpose, and drawing on the production method of the assembly line, let the flower of ceramic art bloom in daily life and move people in the form of beauty. The modernization and transformation of Japanese traditional crafts plays a good reference role for our development. Secondly, in terms of ceramic hand-crafted art expressed by individual thoughts, it is an independent art form, and it has a variety of ways to integrate with the cultural and creative industries. It can promote the development of the industry in the form of exhibitions, or promote public aesthetics in public art, no matter what forms, must maintain the beauty of the times, Hegel said: "Beauty is to show people, thus any art must enable contemporary people to understand, feel kind, and must be able to attract contemporary people."

4.2. Innovating ceramic handicraft development ideas

First of all, looking at the glory of Jingdezhen ceramic history, all the innovation of ceramic technology was built by innovative technology, leading the trend of the times, innovating new crafts and types in different eras, such as blue and white porcelain, famille rose porcelain, glowing porcelain, and color glaze porcelain etc. Today's ceramic firing environment has undergone tremendous changes. Ceramic handicrafts are preserving the foundation of hand-made creations, while following the needs of the time and constantly creating new technologies and processes that meet the needs of the times in the aspects of raw material research and development, firing technology, process innovation, etc.

Secondly, attach great importance to talent innovation and training. The cultivation methods of traditional ceramic talents are mainly family inheritance and master-student inheritance. With the popularization of higher education, colleges and universities have assumed the responsibility of talent cultivation and become the main field of talent cultivation. The traditional apprenticeship education method is gradually diluting in life and many traditional ceramic crafts are facing with problems of rare inheritance. Due to the special nature of traditional crafts, this method of inheritance of apprenticeship has its own advantages. Therefore, modern university education has the responsibility to integrate the apprenticeship education into modern education while cultivating research talents, and pays more attention to the cultivation of practical hands-on ability while cultivating theoretical research.

Thirdly, the innovation of idea, art and ornamental ceramics occupy the important position of Jingdezhen ceramics development, and the development of handcraft daily-use porcelain is weak. In today's vigorous development of cultural and creative industries, it is particularly important to learn from the successful development of other countries and regions. Foreign artists are constantly pouring into Jingdezhen. These foreign artists use new ideas and techniques to explore new forms with ceramic materials, forming a unique phenomenon of "Jingdezhen drifters", injecting new vitality into the development of Jingdezhen ceramics and greatly promoting the formation of new ideas.

4.3. Relying on ceramic crafts to strengthen the characteristics of the creative park and giving play to the industrial characteristics

Cultural and creative park takes culture as the main body and integrates production, sales and innovation in one through the subjective exploration and innovation of cultural depth and breadth to form specific geographical areas of industrial clusters.

In the development of Jingdezhen ceramics, respective characteristics of regions are spontaneously formed, such as the clay sculpture of the sculpture porcelain factory, the porcelain plate painting of Laoyatan, the antique ceramics of Fanjiaying. The various materials, types of workers and crafts in the area cooperate to form the prototype of regional industrialization. However, as far as the Jingdezhen government is vigorously building the cultural and creative industry, ceramic ceramics is used as the origin to create a number of ceramic creative parks, but the differences and the characteristics are not strong. In addition to Taoxichuan, other creative parks are only the collection of ceramic handicrafts, and do not play the industrial role. Therefore, only by strengthening the characteristics of the park, optimizing the upgrading of the industrial structure, and clarifying the development plan, can the industrial characteristics of the park be truly realized.

5. Conclusion

The ancestors of Jingdezhen pushed the ceramic handicrafts to the peak of the world with constant innovation and enterprising attitude, and wrote the immortal myth of ceramics. The roaring industrial production broke the tranquility of farming handicrafts, and people's lifestyles and aesthetic concepts have changed greatly. How does ceramics craftsmanship keep pace with the times and adapt to the lives of modern people? Cultural and creative industries need cultural accumulation. Ceramic handicrafts also need innovation to break through development, put them under the cultural and creative industries, explore the path of modern transformation, and combine them with the spirit of the times to give them new vitality.

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