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Aesthetic Analysis of XU Beihong's Calligraphy Characteristics toward Creating Functional Artworks

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse and study the Xu Beihong calligraphy identity, as well as to create functional art inspired by this identity. The research methodology is the combination of calligraphy and design using various methods, including surveys, literature, experimental, interdisciplinary, and inductive/deductive approaches. The study consists of three phases: preparation, study, and evaluation, with a focus on Xu Beihong's calligraphy style and its connection to functional art creation. Moreover, this study utilises expert interviews, questionnaires, the Index of Project Objective Congruence (IOC), and an expert rating scale to evaluate contemporary functional art influenced by Xu Beihong's calligraphy. This study explores the use of Chinese calligraphy, a recognised intangible cultural heritage, to create a functional art system that integrates oriental aesthetics and modern design concepts for industry upgrading. Furthermore, cherry wood is a popular choice for creating functional artwork, especially Chinese-style stationery, due to its beauty, durability, stability, and processing performance. It's 37% more preferred than benchmark wood but has higher prices due to rarity and processing difficulty. Conclusion, the Chinese stationery set "Dignified and Respectful: Becoming Stronger Every Day" features five pieces inspired by Xu Beihong's calligraphy, integrating calligraphy art with functional art. The set embodies Confucian culture's spiritual core, representing virtue, respect, harmony, and self-improvement. The design bridges tradition and the present, showcasing the power of Confucian culture in a modern design language.

Keywords: Aesthetic analysis, Xu Beihong's Calligraphy, Calligraphy Characteristics, Functional Artworks.

Introduction

Chinese calligraphy is a traditional art form that involves writing Chinese characters with a brush to express people's living experiences and life states. This unique art form has been a cultural phenomenon for nearly three thousand years, integrating language, visual graphics, knowledge cultivation, and meaning interpretation. Chinese calligraphy has been an important field for all cultural classes to cultivate themselves, develop artistic qualities, and express their aesthetic ideals. In the past, all people who used Chinese characters in daily life participated in it. In 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheriting and Developing China's Excellent Traditional Culture", emphasising the importance of creative transformation and innovative development in integrating excellent traditional culture into national education, literary and artistic creation, and production and life. This has made the inheritance and protection of calligraphy, one of the important carriers of Chinese culture, and its integration

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into production and life an important topic in the new historical period.



Figure 1 Xu Beihong's copy of "Guo Jizi's White Plate"

Source: Ye Zhemin, "History and Theory of Chinese Calligraphy" (2013)

Chinese calligraphy has evolved significantly over time, with a group of calligraphers in the early and mid-twentieth century focusing on innovation. Xu Beihong, a renowned modern Chinese calligrapher and painter, has significantly influenced modern and contemporary Chinese calligraphy. His calligraphy incorporates new elements and personalisation, influencing both traditional and contemporary art. Despite his international reputation, most research on Xu Beihong has focused on historical textual and literature research, leaving no research on combining Xu Beihong's calligraphy with contemporary functional art creation.



Figure 2 Xu Beihong's Calligraphy on Fan Surfaces

Source: "Xu Beihong's fan surface "(2019)

Contemporary functional art requires innovation and breakthroughs due to societal development and advancements in science and technology. Xu Beihong's calligraphy, a representative of Chinese art, offers a unique style and artistic charm. In the context of globalisation and cultural diversity, the creation of functional art requires inspiration from diverse cultural resources. Xu Beihong's calligraphy provides a valuable art treasure house for contemporary functional art creation, as people's aesthetic and emotional needs for products increase. Studying and applying Xu Beihong's calligraphy can promote cross-cultural communication and integration.

Research Objectives

1. To study and analyze Xu Beihong calligraphy identity
2. To create functional art inspired by Xu Beihong calligraphy identity

Literature Review

1. Xu Beihong's calligraphy

China is experiencing a cultural renaissance, with calligraphy art regaining its former glory. With a history of over 3,000 years, Chinese calligraphy has produced numerous masterpieces, influencing modern art from the head of state to the common people. Xu Beihong, a calligrapher, painter, educator, and theorist, has influenced modern Chinese art for decades. He is proficient in five calligraphy genres, particularly running script, and is well-versed in ancient and modern times. Beihong's calligraphy art is rich in genres, including letters, manuscripts, prefaces, couplets, screens, and more. His unique style, combining Yan Zhenqing's Wei stele and other styles, is characterised by a profound and majestic spirit and simple, innocent, natural, and elegant beauty. Few calligraphers of the same generation can compare with him, making him one of the first-class calligraphers.

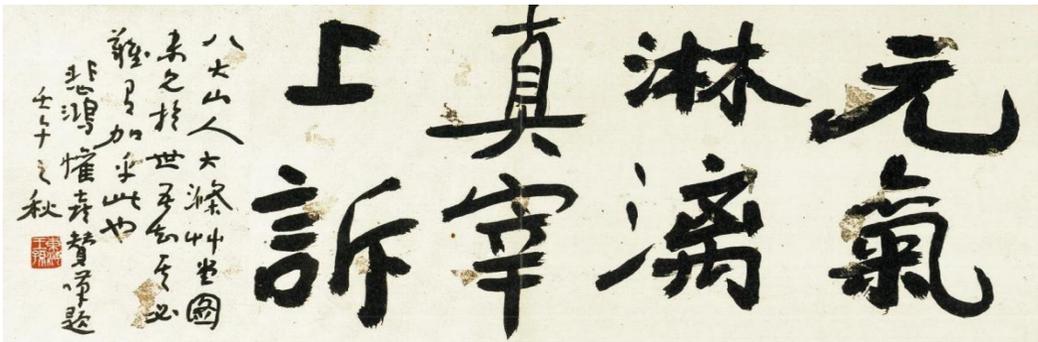


Figure 3 Xu Beihong's Calligraphy

Source: "Chinese Masters' Calligraphy: Xu Beihong's Calligraphy Collection" (1997)

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Figure 4 Xu Beihong

Source: Xu Beihong Memorial Hall (2021)

Xu Beihong, a prominent figure in modern Chinese art, established a new teaching system and cultivated numerous artistic talents. His unique style and teachings laid the foundation for New China's art. Research on his calligraphy art has led to increased recognition and understanding of his artistic spirit. His calligraphy has become a part of China's artistic tradition, contributing to the development of contemporary Chinese traditional culture and cross-cultural communication.

The Relationship Between Xu Beihong and Calligraphy Art

Xu Beihong's unique contribution to Chinese calligraphy art can be understood through his artistic experience, which was based on ancient calligraphy and painting. His father paid special attention to his calligraphy practice, giving him a solid foundation. Xu Beihong's research and exploration of calligraphy art allowed him to make significant contributions, including seal, official, regular, running, and cursive scripts. His works are considered treasures in the treasure house of Chinese calligraphy art.

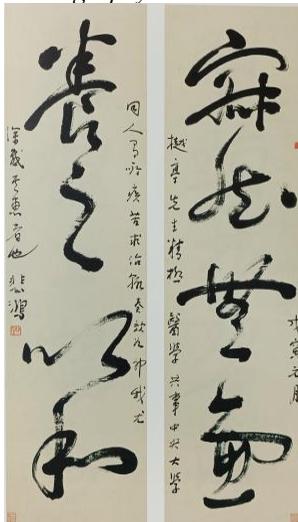


Figure 5 Xu Beihong's Calligraphy

Source: "The Calligraphy Volume of the Complete Works of Xu Beihong" (2021)

Xu Beihong, a renowned Chinese artist, significantly contributed to the development of Chinese calligraphy art through his unique creative style and artistic expression techniques. His works, incorporating rich emotions and personality, inspired later calligraphers to explore and develop the expressiveness of calligraphy. Chinese calligraphy, a treasure of the traditional Chinese culture, has evolved over thousands of years, from primitive to standardised scripts to running and cursive scripts. Today, the combination of Chinese calligraphy and contemporary functional art is booming, with designers using calligraphy fonts in trademarks, posters, and book bindings. This combination not only injects new vitality into contemporary functional art but also opens up new paths for the inheritance and development of Chinese calligraphy.

The History of the Development of Chinese Calligraphy

The five Chinese calligraphy fonts include seal script, official script, regular script, running script, and cursive script. Seal script, one of the earliest Chinese fonts, is characterised by regular lines, a uniform thickness, and a symmetrical structure. It is divided into large and small seal scripts. Large seal script refers to pre-Qin period characters, while small seal script, promoted by Qin Shihuang, features smoother lines, a standardised structure, and high artistic value.



Figure 6 Western Zhou Stone Drum Inscriptions (partial)

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ilpAt3e1rQT1dJ8diEL_xw

Official script, developed in the Qin and Han Dynasties, was a significant development in Chinese character development. It simplified strokes and changed round lines from seal script into square folds, making writing more convenient. The Han Dynasty saw the emergence of famous official script works, such as "Cao Quan Stele" and "Zhang Qian Stele". Regular script, developed in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, had regular strokes, rigorous structure, and high recognition. Zhong Yao, the "ancestor of regular script," influenced later generations. The Tang Dynasty saw the rise of outstanding regular script calligraphers like Ouyang Xun, Yan Zhenqing, and Liu Gongquan.

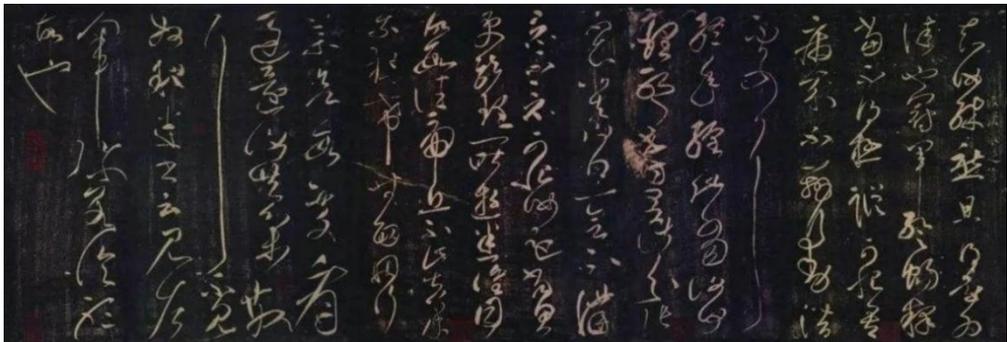


Figure 7 Zhang Zhi of the Han Dynasty: "Champion's Letter"

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/fdUQITLmVOIHKOb6FmSJPA>

Cursive script, a type of font created during the Han Dynasty, features continuous strokes, simplified structure, and high artistic expression. It is divided into Zhangcao, Jincao, and Kuangcao, each with its own unique characteristics. Kuangcao, represented by Zhang Xu and Huaisu, is known for its unrestrained brushwork and artistic style. Running script, a font between

regular and cursive script, originated in the late Eastern Han Dynasty and matured in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Its masters include Wang Xizhi, Yan Zhenqing, Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, and Mi Fu.

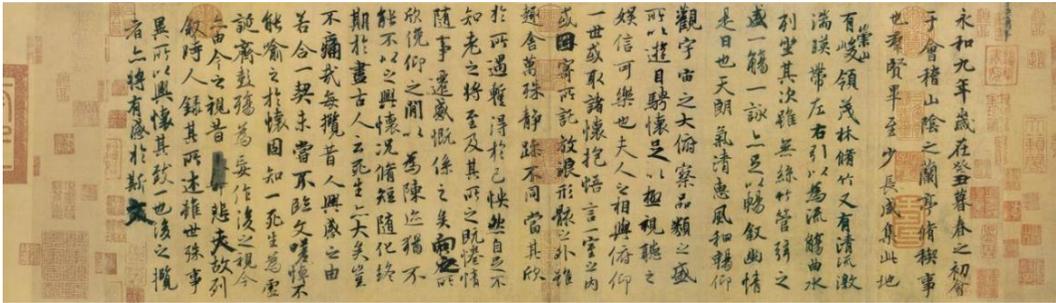


Figure 8 Lanting Preface by Wang Xizhi of the Eastern Jin Dynasty

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xXYgeZ_JiBytbbCe-DyU9w

The Qin and Han dynasties in China were a period of political stability, economic prosperity, and cultural exchanges. During this period, calligraphy was primarily based on seal script and official script, with seal script being more rigid and free, while official script developed significantly and became the mainstream font. Calligraphers focused on the expressiveness of strokes and the beauty of structure, pursuing artistic value. Confucianism and legalism influence calligraphy, with Confucianism emphasising etiquette and legalism emphasising the legal system. Cultural exchanges promoted the development of calligraphy, blending different styles. The Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern Dynasties were turbulent periods with political division and social unrest, but calligraphy art developed greatly. Regular and running scripts emerged, with Zhong Yao and Wang Xizhi exemplifying the highest level of calligraphy. Metaphysics and Buddhist thought also influenced calligraphy, with calligraphers expressing emotions and personalities through it.

Research Methodology

This study, entitled "The creation of contemporary functional art, inspired by Xu Beihong's calligraphy identity", is based on aesthetic theory and aims to study the combination of Xu Beihong's calligraphy characteristics and functional art and to create contemporary functional art. To achieve this goal, literature surveys, expert interviews, field surveys, questionnaires, and design methods were used to ensure that the study of Xu Beihong's calligraphy personality characteristics is scientific and objective, the functional art created is reasonable and appropriate, and the satisfaction evaluation is effective and credible. Through this comprehensive methodological framework, we can fully understand the specific impact of the creation of contemporary functional art on traditional cultural inheritance, modern design, and social aesthetic education.

Research Design

Design methods are essential tools for exploring the combination of calligraphy and design. Surveys, literature, experimental, interdisciplinary, and inductive/deductive methods help understand needs, build theoretical frameworks, and evaluate design optimisation. Interdisciplinary research combines cultural studies and psychology to analyse cultural connotations and audience reactions. Inductive and deductive methods summarise common

practices and derive new design ideas, collaborating to explore the deep value and innovative paths of calligraphy and design.

The study consists of three phases: preparation, study, and evaluation. Phase 1 involves literature collection and analysis, while Phase 2 investigates Xu Beihong's calligraphy style and its connection to functional art creation. Phase 3 involves a satisfaction evaluation on Chinese-style stationery inspired by Xu Beihong's calligraphy characteristics, data collection, and analysis using Excel.

Research Tools

This study uses expert interviews, questionnaires, the Index of Project Objective Congruence (IOC), and an expert rating scale to evaluate contemporary functional art inspired by Xu Beihong's calligraphy identity. The IOC evaluates works using Xu Beihong's calligraphy characteristics, providing a data collection tool. Feedback is provided for improvement.

Data Collection

This study used the powerful mini-program "Wenjuxing" as the main data collection tool, integrating online questionnaires, exams, 360-degree evaluations, forms, assessments, and voting. The program offers various questionnaire designs and powerful data analysis capabilities. Its intuitive interface and logical jump settings improve the speed and efficiency of questionnaire construction. The program supports real-time data collection, data backup, and recovery functions, ensuring data security and integrity. Researchers can monitor data collection at any time to maximise survey results. The SPSS data analysis tool built into "Wenzhouxing" allows for basic statistical analysis and deeper data mining, such as reliability, validity, cross, and correlation analysis. The program also provides chart analyses for easier comprehension. This approach improved the efficiency, quality, and professionalism of data processing, laying a solid foundation for the accuracy and reliability of research conclusions.

Data Analysis

This study utilised Excel to calculate the average and standard deviation of sampled data. The AVERAGE function, a powerful and easy-to-use function, provides an intuitive measure of data centre trends, laying a solid foundation for statistical analysis. The STDEVP function, a crucial tool for evaluating data dispersion, calculates the overall standard deviation. Combining these functions allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the data, providing strong data support for hypothesis testing, regression analysis, and advanced statistical analyses. Thus, Excel played a vital role in this study.

Results

Chinese calligraphy, a recognized intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO, is protected through national cultural strategies and legislation. This study explores the use of Xu Beihong's calligraphy art characteristics to create a functional art creation system. The research combines oriental aesthetics and modern design concepts, establishing a value link between cultural heritage protection and industry upgrading. This approach combines cultural inheritance efficiency and artistic innovation tension.

1. Aesthetic Analysis of Xu Beihong's Calligraphy Characteristics

Xu Beihong's development of calligraphy art can be studied through historical documents and handwriting analysis. The author identifies three periods: inheritance, apprenticeship, and self-

study. Beihong's calligraphy style is influenced by Wei steles and Jin people's calligraphy.

Inheriting family education, Beihong began studying under his father Xu Dazhang at the age of six. He learnt calligraphy from Yan's calligraphy and the calligraphy style of the literati around Taihu Lake and the Jiangnan region. In 1916, Kang Youwei accepted Beihong as his disciple, guiding him to learn poetry, calligraphy, and epigraphy. Beihong studied famous works of the Six Dynasties and later epigraphy masters like Chen Xiyi. Beihong's calligraphy during this period was based on imitating the original appearance of the stele, with thin, hard, and vigorous brushwork. He travelled to Japan in 1917 and studied with Nakamura Fusetsu, a renowned collector and calligrapher. Beihong also studied in France, where he often imitated Han and Wei stele plates he brought with him.

Despite the lack of records of Beihong learning calligraphy, his friends Liang Qichao and Yang Zhongzi were skilled in calligraphy and seal carving. These contacts influenced Beihong's calligraphy style, and his surviving works are mainly in the Han and Wei styles.

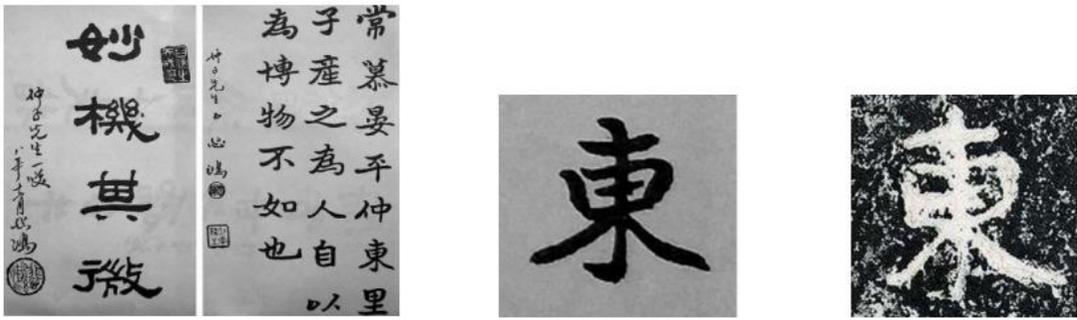


Figure 9 Xu Beihong Continued to Broaden the Scope of His Calligraphy Studies

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

The concept of "Five Calligraphy Fonts" is a summary and theoretical sublimation of the evolution of Chinese characters, reflecting the differences in writing techniques and aesthetic evolution of Chinese culture. It is the core paradigm of calligraphy research, education, and practice and is an important resource for the modern transformation of traditional culture. The classification system of Chinese character scripts dates back to the Pre-Qin period, with the systematic concept of "five types of calligraphy" formed in the Tang and Song dynasties. The development of script classification began from the Pre-Qin to the Han Dynasty, with Xu Shen's "Shuowen Jiezi·Xu" proposing the "Six Books" theory. The emergence of official script marked a major change in Chinese character script and laid the foundation for the systematisation of subsequent script theory. Zhang Huaiguan's "Book Judgement" in the Tang Dynasty systematically sorted out the origins and artistic characteristics of seal script, official script, regular script, running script, and cursive script. The concept of "Five Styles of Calligraphy" became a cultural consensus and was officially recognized in the Song Dynasty.

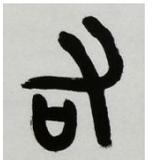
Dynasty	Time period	Font		Example	Font Features	Modeling method
Shang Dynasty	c.1600 - 1046 BCE	Seal Script	Oracle Bone Script		Sharp strokes Faster speed Variety of shapes	Pictographic
Zhou Dynasty	1046 - 256 BCE		Bronze Inscription Script		Round and straight strokes Uniform speed Rectangular shape	
Qin Dynasty	221 - 206 BCE		Qin Small Seal Script		Round and straight strokes Uniform speed Rectangular shape	
Han Dynasty	202 BCE – 220 CE	Clerical Script			Stroke deformation Flat square shape Stretch left and right	Towards abstraction, Multiple Expressions
Han-Wei-Jin Period	202 BCE – 420 CE	Cursive Script			Stroke Simplification Faster speed Variety of shapes	
Wei-Jin Period	220 - 420	Semi-Cursive Script			Stroke Variety Fast and Slow Combination Variety of shapes	
Wei-Jin Period	220 - 420	Regular Script	Wei - Jin Dynasty regular script		Stroke Variety Fast and Slow Combination Flat square shape	
Northern Dynasties	386 -581		Northern Dynasties Regular Script		Square strokes Fast and Slow Combination	

Dynasty	Time period	Font	Example	Font Features	Modeling method
				Variety of shapes	
Tang Dynasty	618 - 907	Tang Dynasty regular script		Stroke Variety Fast and Slow Combination Square shape	

Table 1 The Characteristics of "Five Calligraphy Fonts" In China

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

Xu Beihong, a renowned calligrapher, began his career with Yan's calligraphy and later studied under Mr. Nanhai. His stele tablets showcased his refined brushwork and majestic shapes. His mature script, combining styles from various schools, was rich in connotation and simple yet beautiful.

Seal Script					
Clerical Script					
Cursive Script					
Semi-Cursive Script					

regular script					
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Table 2 A Comparison table of Xu Beihong's "five calligraphy fonts"

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

2. Creating functional artworks (the process of design experimentation)

This study explores the creation and design of functional art "Chinese style stationery" using Xu Beihong's calligraphy. The researcher conducted field investigations at various museums and art galleries to analyse literature and find inspiration. Under the guidance of a tutor, interdisciplinary creative combinations and transformations were sought. The gratifying results were achieved through continuous deepening of research, ensuring that the functional art work "Chinese Style Stationery" uses creative methods and ways from design to production.

Country (2)	Inspection sites (14)
Thailand	National Museum of Thailand, Bangkok
	Pattaya Sanctuary of Truth Woodcarving Workshop
	Bangkok Design Week Pavilions
China	Xu Beihong Memorial Hall, Beijing
	Central Academy of Fine Arts Art Museum, Beijing
	Yixing Art Museum· Xu Beihong Memorial Hall, Jiangsu Province
	Xu Beihong's Former Residence, Yixing City, Jiangsu Province
	Xu Beihong's Former Residence, Yangshuo County, Guangxi Province
	Three Gorges Museum, Chongqing
	Xu Beihong Art Museum, Chongqing
	Woodwork Exhibition Hall, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province
	Poly Group Art Museum, Shanghai
	Hunan Provincial Museum, Changsha, Hunan Province
	Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House Art Museum, Changsha, Hunan Province

Table 3 Fourteen Museums or Exhibition Venues Where Investigations and Research Were Conducted

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)



Figure 10 A Roadmap for Conducting Investigations and Research

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

The Sanctuary of Truth Woodcarving Workshop in Pattaya, Thailand, is a renowned woodcarving art centre, built in 1981. It incorporates religious and philosophical elements from Asian countries and serves as a base for traditional woodcarving skills. The workshop uses high-quality native Thai wood to create exquisite religious statues, mythological figures, and decorative patterns.

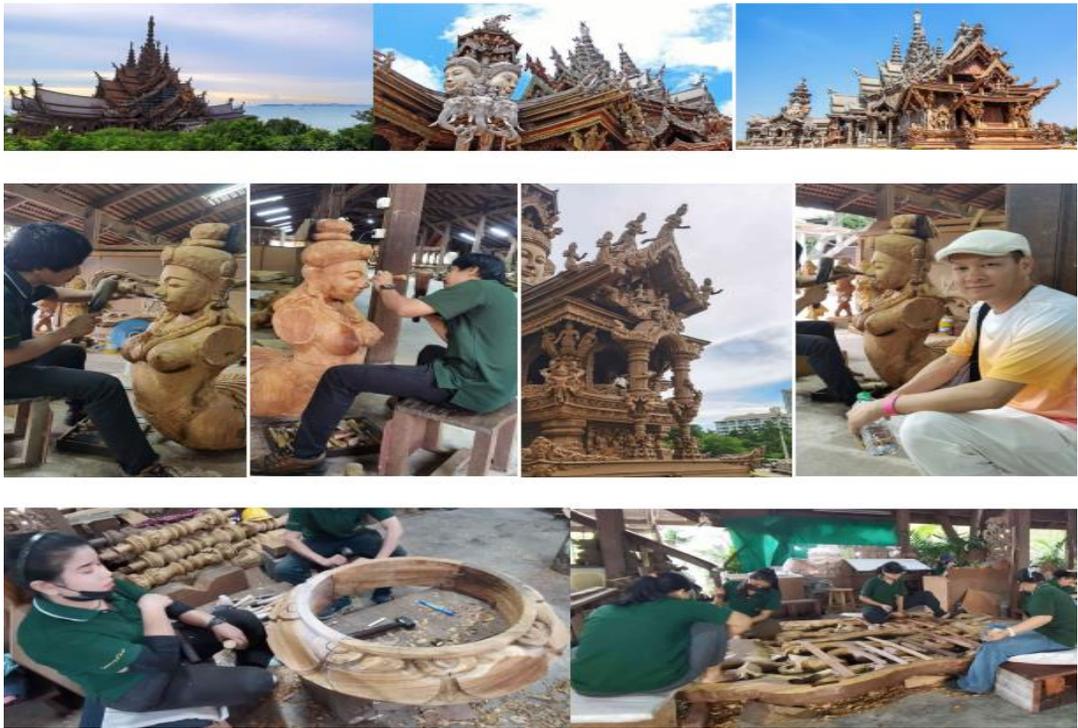


Figure 11 Pattaya Sanctuary of Truth Woodcarving Workshop

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

Researchers conducted a study on functional art creation using a questionnaire and invited three experts to evaluate it, providing IOC evaluation results.

Statement	Suitable (+1)	Uncertain (0)	Not suitable (-1)	Statistics
1. The combination of calligraphy and functional art reflects the cultural value of Chinese calligraphy.	3			1
2. The combination of calligraphy and functional art reflects the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture.	3			1
3. Extracting characteristic elements from Xu Beihong's calligraphy is suitable for functional artistic expression.	3			1

4. The extracted elements convey the identity of Xu Beihong's calligraphy.	3			1
5. When extracting the elements of Xu Beihong's calligraphy, it was considered to harmonise it with the functionality of the work.	3			1
6. The shape of the work is in harmony with the extracted elements of Xu Beihong's calligraphy.	3			1
7. Styling design takes into account the harmony of functionality and artistry.	3			1
8. Color design reflects the beauty of "harmony" that Chinese culture advocates.	3			1
9. Color design takes into account the harmony of functionality and artistry.	3			1
10. Color design takes into account the harmony of functionality and artistry.	3			1
11. The combination of calligraphy and functional art reflects innovative thinking.	3			1
12. Combination of Calligraphy and Functional Art explores New Ways of Cultural Inheritance and Promotion.	3			1

Table 4 IOC Evaluation Results of “Functional Art Works Evaluation Scale”

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

A questionnaire survey was conducted in Guangdong, China, involving 47 professionals from calligraphy, painting, design, wood carving, and history to evaluate design drawings and renderings of Chinese-style stationery.



Figure 12 Improve the Design Through Questionnaire Surveys

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

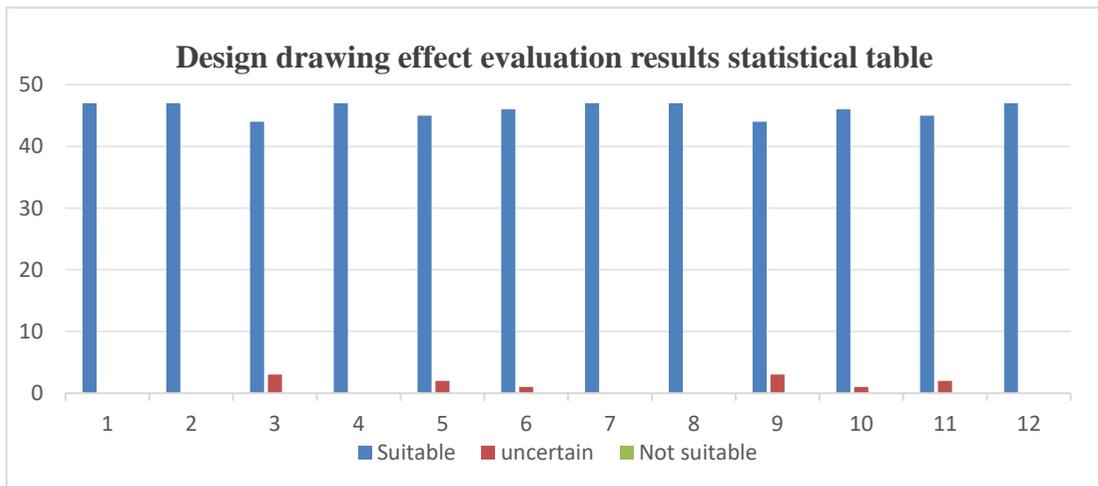


Figure 13 Statistical Chart of Design Drawing Effect Evaluation Results

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

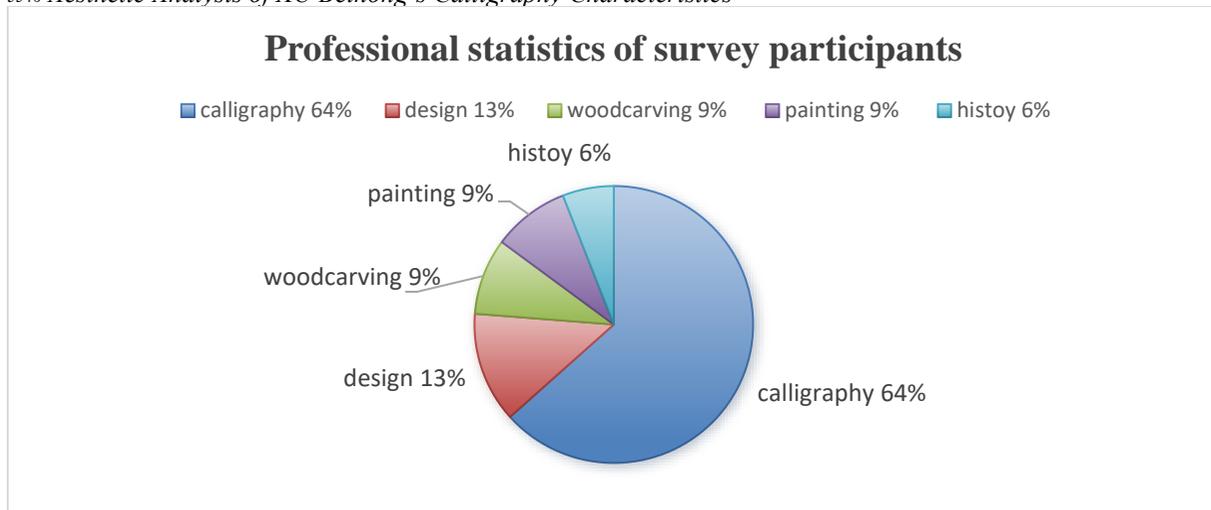


Figure 14 Professional statistics of participants in the survey

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

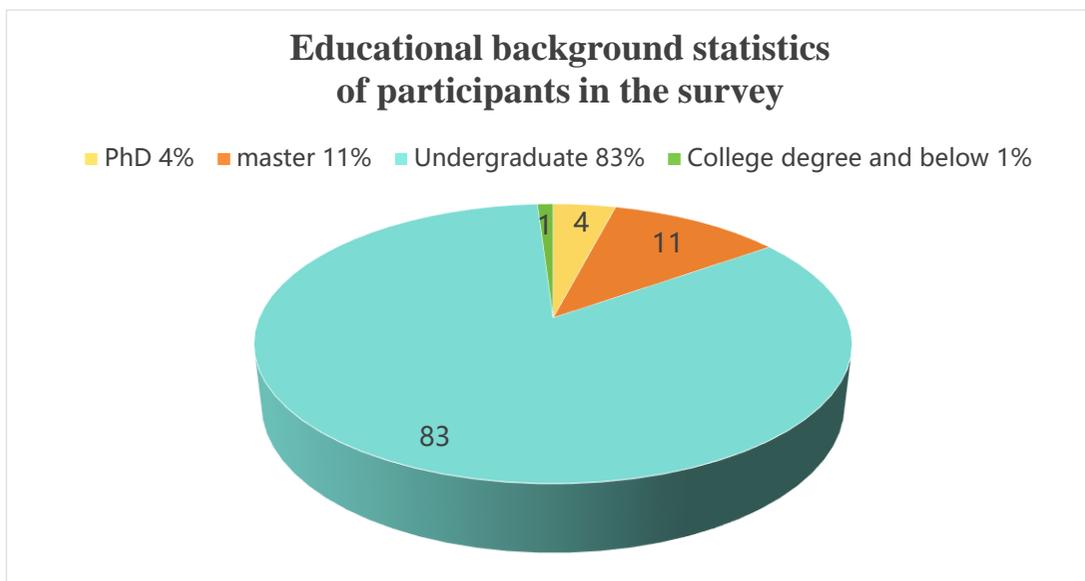


Figure 15 Educational Background Statistics of Survey Participants

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

The professional questionnaire, consisting of 30 calligraphy, painting, design, woodcarving, and history professionals, confirms the researcher's design drafts and research directions, providing a solid foundation for qualitative research, with educational background statistics including 2 PhDs, 5 Masters, 39 Bachelors, and 1 Associate degree.

Researchers have created contemporary functional art inspired by Xu Beihong's calligraphy identity. They used questionnaire surveys and expert interviews to identify five design experiments inspired by Chinese characters. The artworks were transformed into modern three-

dimensional pieces, reviving the significance of Xu Beihong's calligraphy in modern society. The study combines Chinese calligraphy and functional art, focusing on cultural elements, historical values, and aesthetic values. The design strategy uses six main techniques to revive Xu Beihong's calligraphy's significance.

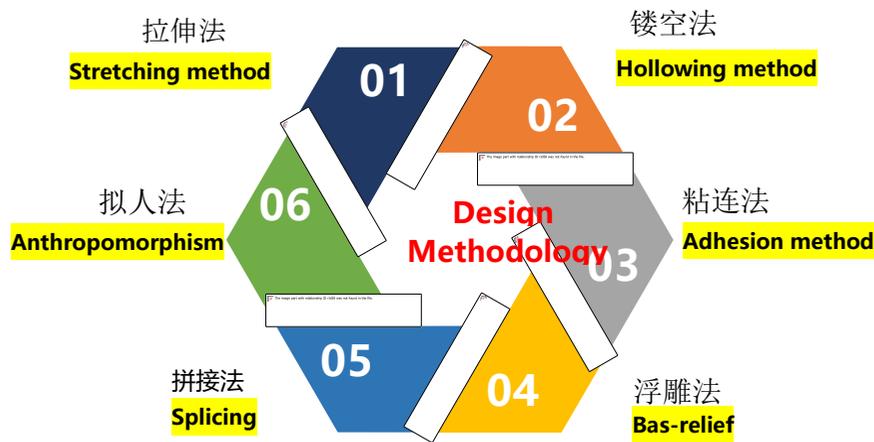


Figure 16 Schematic Diagram of Design Methods for Functional Artworks

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

Cherry wood is a popular choice for producing functional artwork, particularly Chinese-style stationery. Its beauty, durability, stability, environmental protection, processing performance, sound effect, and colour change make it suitable for high-end home furnishings, cabinets, joinery products, doors, decorative lines, floors, musical instruments, and car interior carvings. Cherry wood's market preference is 37% higher than benchmark wood, making it an ideal material carrier for modern translation of traditional cultural elements. However, it has higher prices due to its rarity and processing difficulty. Cherry wood is suitable for various applications, including furniture, cabinets, high-grade joinery products, doors, decorative lines, floors, musical instruments, and car interior carvings.

<p>Band saw machine 带锯机</p>		<p>Rough processing of curves and thinning of thick plates. 曲线粗加工，厚板锯薄。</p>
<p>Flat Planer 平刨床</p>		<p>The surface is smooth, which is equivalent to the function of a hand plane. 表面平整，相当于手工刨子的作用。</p>
<p>Planer 压刨床</p>		<p>Surface (opposite faces) are flat and of fixed thickness. 表面（相对面）平整和定厚</p>
<p>Ground gong machine 地锣机</p>		<p>Processing slotting, chamfering and milling. 加工开槽，倒角，铣型。</p>
<p>Sliding table saw 滑动台锯</p>		<p>Saw various lengths and widths, make tenons and grooves. 锯各种长宽，做榫头，开槽。</p>
<p>Longitudinal cutting saw 纵向切割锯</p>		<p>Longitudinal section of solid wood. 实木的纵向剖切。</p>

Table 5 Lathe Equipment

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2024)

The concept of "harmony" in Chinese culture is central to the philosophy of unity between man and nature. It is a criterion of social ethics and individual cultivation. Xu Beihong, an artistic master who integrates Chinese and Western art, embodies this harmony through his work. His calligraphy lines blend rigidity and softness, achieving dynamic balance in conflict. This harmony is not only an aesthetic law but also a way to settle the soul. It acts as a bridge, connecting tradition and modernity. The word "harmony" has been an anchor of cultural confidence and a spiritual code in Chinese civilisation for thousands of years. The "和" pen holder is a prime example of this harmony.

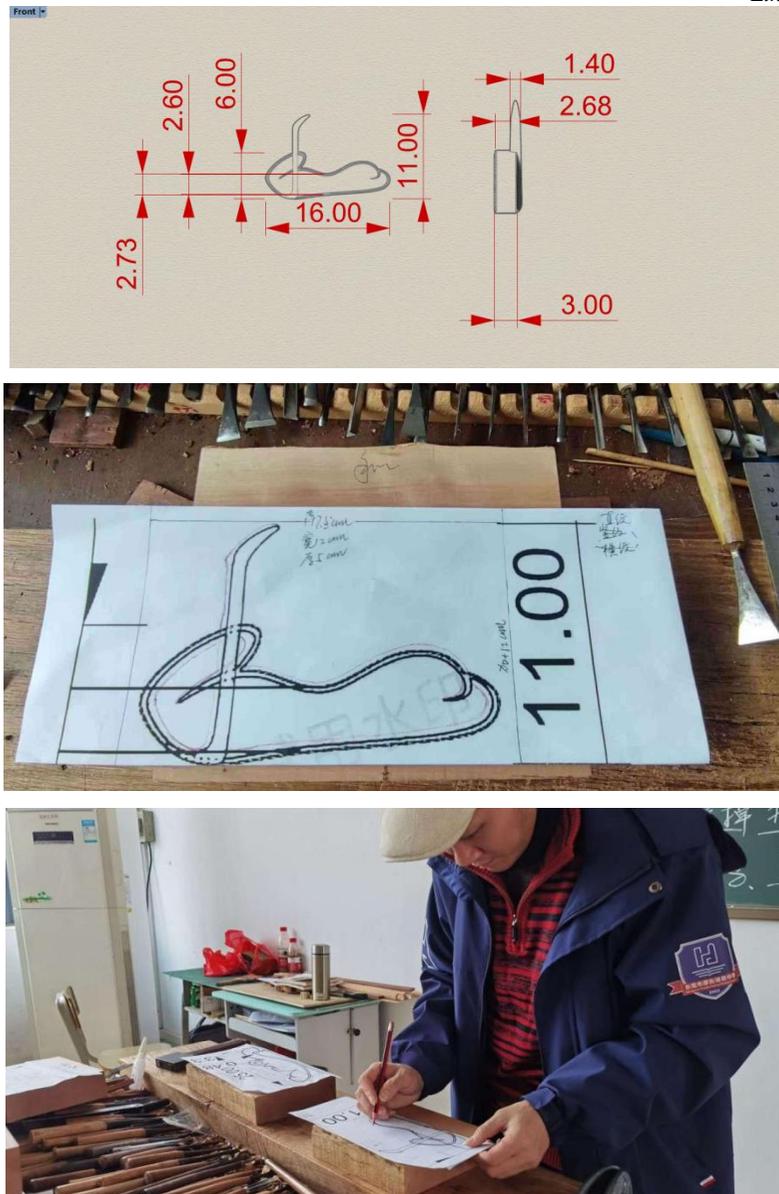


Figure 17 Step 1

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2025)

Cut out the prototype: Use a band saw to cut the prototype out of the draft board.

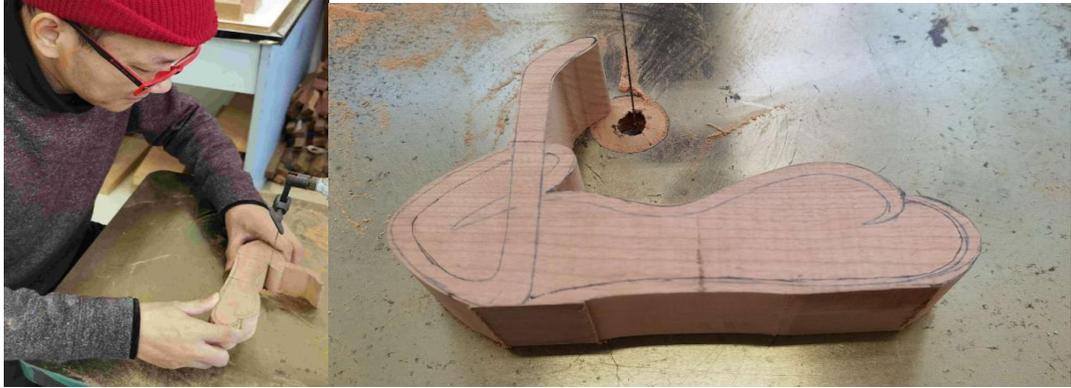


Figure 18 Step 2

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2025)

Coarse sand inspection: After the band saw machine completes the cutting and shaping, the coarse sand appearance inspection of the work is carried out.



Figure 19 Step 3

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2025)

Hand carving: Carve and polish according to the appearance shape, rough blank forming and pattern of the pattern.



Figure 20 Step 4

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2025)

Pneumatic fine grinding: Pneumatic fine grinding of the workpiece, and manual fine grinding of the edges and gaps.



Figure 21 Step 5

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2025)

Oiling is a traditional treatment for wood surfaces, enhancing texture and durability. It involves applying natural oils like linseed, tung, and walnut oil, which requires patience and care. Cherry wood, a temperate hardwood, is ideal for covering materials due to its elegant appearance. Wood paints like polyurethane, nitro, and acrylic offer excellent adhesion, wear, and weather resistance.



Figure 22 Wood Paint

Source: Zeng Lingfei (2025)

This Chinese stationery set features five pieces, titled "Dignified and Respectful: Becoming Stronger Every Day." The characters are inspired by Xu Beihong's calligraphy, which uses metal and stone to represent family and country. The set explores the contemporary design transformation of traditional cultural symbols, aiming to integrate calligraphy art with contemporary functional art by using objects as mediums. The concept of virtuousness and self-improvement is central to the design.



Figure 23 The Combination Presentation of the Works: Five Functional Art Pieces Inspired By Xu Beihong's Calligraphy

The set of stationery, titled "Dignified and Stronger Every Day", embodies Confucian culture's spiritual core. The designs, including the incense holder, pen bed, paperweight, pen hanger, and pen holder, represent virtue, respect, harmony, and the determination of self-improvement. These contemporary translations of oriental aesthetics, crafted by Xu Beihong, serve as a bridge between tradition and the present, showcasing the power of Confucian culture in a modern design language.

Conclusion

This study explores the use of Chinese calligraphy, a recognised intangible cultural heritage, to create a functional art system that integrates oriental aesthetics and modern design concepts.

1. An Aesthetic Evaluation of the Calligraphy Features of Xu Beihong

Xu Beihong developed his calligraphy art through inheritance, apprenticeship, and self-study. Influenced by the Wei steles and the Jin people's calligraphy, Beihong began his education under his father and later studied under Kang Youwei. His style was based on imitating stele appearances with brushwork. Beihong's contacts with skilled calligraphers in Japan and France influenced his style, with surviving works mainly in the Han and Wei styles.

The concept of "Five Calligraphy Fonts" represents the evolution of Chinese characters and writing techniques, reflecting the cultural and aesthetic changes. It is the core paradigm of calligraphy research, education, and practice. The classification system of Chinese character scripts dates back to the Pre-Qin period, with the development of script classification from the Han Dynasty.

Xu Beihong, a renowned calligrapher, combines styles from various schools, showcasing refined brushwork and majestic shapes.

2. Producing Functional Artworks (The Methodology of Design Experimentation)

This study investigates the creation and design of functional art "Chinese style stationery" using Xu Beihong's calligraphy. Researchers conducted field investigations at museums and art galleries to analyse literature and find inspiration. They sought interdisciplinary creative combinations and transformations under the guidance of a tutor. In Pattaya, Thailand, the Sanctuary of Truth Woodcarving Workshop crafts exquisite religious statues, mythological figures, and decorative patterns. A professional questionnaire with 30 calligraphy, painting, design, woodcarving, and history professionals confirmed the researcher's design drafts and research directions. The study combines Chinese calligraphy and functional art, focusing on cultural elements, historical values, and aesthetic values. Cherry wood is used for creating contemporary functional art, particularly Chinese-style stationery, due to its beauty, durability, stability, environmental protection, processing performance, sound effect, and color change. The Chinese stationery set "Dignified and Respectful: Becoming Stronger Every Day" features five pieces, representing virtue, respect, harmony, and self-improvement. These contemporary translations of oriental aesthetics showcase the power of Confucian culture in a modern design language.

Recommendations

Xu Beihong, a key figure in modern Chinese art, is known for his unique calligraphy style that combines multiple elements. His calligraphy has a significant impact on contemporary functional art creation, providing a visual and emotional experience. It also enriches design, promoting interaction and symbiosis between modern and traditional culture. Xu Beihong's

calligraphy adapts to people's increasing aesthetic and spiritual demands for functional products, promoting the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture. It also promotes cross-cultural communication and integration, showcasing the unique value of Chinese cultural elements in the global design field. This approach can further enrich and improve contemporary functional art creation based on Xu Beihong's calligraphy.

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