Research and Practice on Campus Cultural and Creative Product Design—A Case Study of Suzhou Vocational University

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Jing Wang*, Chaoyong Pu
School of Fine Arts, Suzhou Vocational University, Suzhou, China
*Corresponding author, e-mail: wangjing@jssvc.edu.cn

Abstract

Campus cultural creative products are an important medium for displaying campus image, spreading campus culture, and inheriting the excellent academic atmosphere relying on the school history, school spirit and school philosophy. As an important way and carrier of propagating culture, campus cultural creation has become an important part of school cultural construction. This article takes the cultural and creative product design of Suzhou Vocational University as an example, expounds the design plan to reflect the school's rich cultural connotation, beautiful campus environment, rigorous school spirit and academic style. At the same time, elements are refined in combination with campus characteristic buildings, school standards and mottos, and natural landscapes. In addition, we integrated and innovated the patterns through graphic design, and then applied them to various carriers, then finally produced campus cultural and creative products that are both practical and reflect the characteristics of Suzhou Vocational University. After the results of this innovative practice, we look forward to providing some useful references for the future development of campus cultural creative product design.

Keywords

Campus culture; Cultural creativity; Cultural and creative products; Design practice

Introduction

There are many famous universities here, such as Oxford University and Harvard University, which have a large number of campus cultural and creative products (Zhu, 2018). These products are sold

in shopping malls, which greatly improves the visibility of campus cultural and creative products, and also expands the operation and sales channels. For example, the COOP souvenir shop, founded by Harvard University students in 1882, sells postcards and bags with Harvard campus celebrity, events and landscapes as creative elements, as well as various practical daily necessities, study supplies and a few high-end souvenirs (Cao, 2016). Teachers, students, alumni and tourists can buy campus cultural and creative products with novel style, exquisite design and rich characteristics in souvenir shops. Some studies have shown that campus cultural and creative products industry has achieved a win-win situation of spreading campus culture and economic benefits (Gao, 2019). Compared with the development and management of cultural and creative products in foreign universities, many cultural and creative products in Chinese universities are still in the exploratory stage, and only a few universities have formed their own distinctive cultural and creative products. Only famous universities with great influence, such as Tsinghua University and Peking University, have been recognized. However, on the whole, the categories of cultural and creative products in Chinese universities are seriously homogenized, with low quality, lack of originality, cultural connotation, and investment (Xu & Liang, 2019). Therefore, many colleges and universities need to constantly study, improve and integrate the modeling, graphic design and cultural connotation of cultural and creative products, establish their own campus cultural and creative product brands, pay attention to originality, improve operation, and establish design and marketing teams (Tang, 2017). Suzhou Vocational University has not yet developed mature campus cultural and creative products. At present, there are only office products such as meeting notebook, meeting bag, campus letter paper, paper cup, etc. These products are simple in shape, and the school name and logo are used in the decorative patterns. They lack of design elements and emotional connotation, and their own characteristics have not been excavated. Suzhou Vocational University is one of the windows of Suzhou's external publicity. If it can launch a series of cultural and creative products with school and local characteristics, it will be of great significance to promote campus culture and meet market demand.

Discovery of Materials for Campus Cultural Creative Product Design

The design of campus cultural creative products needs to be able to represent the elements of the campus, and the extraction of the elements needs to be based on a large collection of materials. Simplify the elements through the use of design thinking, and finally present unique cultural and creative products. In the process of collecting materials, we can start with things that teachers and students know well or not.

Discovery of School Motto and School Logo

The school motto is a reflection of a school-running philosophy and school-governing spirit. It is

one of the important contents of campus culture construction and a concentrated expression of style of teaching and study. It represents the core content of the school's cultural spirit (Song et al., 2018) . The school logo is a design formed by the school name or the initials of the school name. These two materials are the most common visual images with the highest recognition rate in each school, and there is no need to redesign them when they are applied to cultural and creative products. The school motto and the school logo are unified external publicity signs, which are standardized and rigorous and cannot be changed at will. Therefore, such materials should be used carefully in the design of campus cultural and creative products.

Discovery of Materials for Campus Characteristic Architectural Landscape

The characteristic campus architecture is different from the representative style and cultural atmosphere of other schools. For example, the buildings of art colleges are very different from those of science and engineering colleges in appearance and cultural classification. There are also some characteristic colleges, such as Jingdezhen Ceramic University, which has many ceramic architecture and landscape sculptures. In the design of campus cultural and creative products, characteristic buildings are also one of the commonly used design materials. We can choose the more prominent and unique buildings, monumental sculptures, and unique campus landscapes in the campus (Wang & Sun, 2019), and we can also use photography to get the appearance of the building and the partial details of the components. These architectural landscape materials can be refined into design elements and cleverly applied in the design of cultural and creative products.

Discovery of Materials for Exclusive "Memory"

College students study and live on campus, where there are many unique "memory" of their own, such as signature meals, classrooms, dormitories, playgrounds, etc. Anything that carries a "collective memory" can be used as cultural and creative materials (Wang & Sun, 2019). Applying these materials to cultural and creative products can make people moved by what he sees. In addition, in the context of the "One Belt One Road", many international students have come to China to exchange and study, which also brings many fresh international elements to the development of campus cultural and creative products.

Design Practice of Campus Cultural Creative Products in Suzhou Vocational University

Basic Information

Suzhou Vocational University was established in May 1981 as a public full-time general college. Its

history can be traced back to Suzhou Industrial Technical College founded in 1911. There is a creek across the north and south campuses in Suzhou Vocational University. In addition to the teaching area, office area and student dormitory area, there is an independent library, and a centennial gate tower stands on the central square. The campus building is very modern, simple and beautiful, making it an ideal living and learning paradise for students.

Design Analysis

Relying on the Jiangsu University Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Project, we have set up a design team, the members are mainly design students from the College of Art, and two teachers are instructed at the same time. The team held regular seminars, determined the design plan, and analyzed the selection of product patterns, types, and materials. Through the excavation of campus materials and research, the team decided to design a series of products with the theme of "Campus Scenery". In terms of decorative patterns, we collected and sorted out the representative characteristic buildings and landscapes of Suzhou Vocational University, and refined the design elements that can highlight the campus characteristics. After the aerial photography and photography collection of the building's shape, various methods such as hand-painting and graphic design are used to refine and design the collected pictures. After various professional experiments, we chose to use wood, ceramics and flat packaging materials as the carrier, and interpret the cultural connotation of the campus in a rich form of expression through the campus cultural and creative product design (Li, 2019).

Design Expression

(1) Data collection. We photographed some typical characteristic buildings of Suzhou Vocational University, such as the campus signboard near the school gate 1, the library building, the centennial gate, the bridge over the stream, and the black swans in the river, memorial sculptures, the central square and other unique landmark buildings and landscapes. At the same time, we have established a design database of campus cultural and creative products through the collection of materials in the early stage. (2) Element extraction. We select the materials in the database, and the angle is preferably the front side view. After that, use PS, AI and other software to outline the contours of characteristic buildings and landscapes in order to capture the prominent features of the materials (Wang & Li, 2019). In addition, some unnecessary details can be omitted, and the flat lines are mainly presented, which requires accurate modeling and clear pictures. (3) Pattern design. For creative pattern design, we can use "line drawing" with "flat painting" to express a flat style. The color can be the original green of the school logo, while matching the school motto, adopting the same color, hue, brightness and purity to achieve the overall coordination and unity of the picture, and highlighting the rigor of Suzhou Vocational University as a science school. The landscape and buildings are arranged in

a staggered pattern and combined in layers. The buildings are connected by a river pattern, which truly reproduces the creek that spans the north and south areas of the campus. Many flowers and trees are decorated in the picture so that different buildings and landscapes can blend naturally. The pattern design style is simple and modern, showing a campus culture full of youth, vitality, innovation, civilization and harmony.

Production

After several modifications, the team completed the pattern design of cultural and creative products, and combined with the production process in the professional training courses of the College of Arts, listed the types of cultural and creative products suitable for campus: ceramic office cup, mahogany office pen, notebook, USB drive, canvas bag, bookmark ruler, crystal paperweight, key chain, wood fragrant tea plug, etc. (Huang et al., 2019). The finished pattern was implanted creatively and effectively integrated with appropriate materials and production process. Taking the ceramic office cup as an example, the team members first found a manufacturer and purchased a few samples. Then in the training room, they pasted the ceramic decals on the cup body and affixed the campus logo on the bottom. Afterwards, they were put into the kiln for baking at a temperature of 780°. After completion, we found that although the effect of this batch of samples was average, the cost was low and the yield was high, which was suitable for mass production. Then, under the guidance of the teacher, the team members decided to design their own ceramic cup shapes. After the cup model is made, the plaster mold will be opened for mass production. The cup is made of two kinds of clay materials after being fired at a high temperature of 1300° to make porcelain, and then a floral paper pattern is pasted according to the curvature and position of the cup body. In addition, the members also made corresponding cup gift boxes based on the finished products.

After half a year of practice, we have designed two sets of cultural and creative products. The first set is the ceramic office cup series, as shown in Figure 1. These three different types of cups can be used as event prizes, inter-school exchange gifts, graduation souvenirs, etc., suitable for the diverse needs and preferences of most people. The second set is daily necessities for study and daily life, mainly including canvas bags, notebooks, mouse pads, bookmarks and rulers. The main consumers of these products are school students, and they are customized for the various club activities carried out by the school, as well as new students and graduates. In addition, the team established the school's cultural design resource database by classifying, summarizing, and refining the school's cultural resources, making preparations for the subsequent campus cultural and creative product brand building.



Figure 1 Design of cultural and creative products of ceramic office cup series

Conclusion

Creative products of campus culture play an important role in spreading campus culture and publicizing school image. Through the above design practice of the campus culture and creative products of Suzhou Vocational University, we insist on embodying campus culture from the collection of materials to the extraction of design elements, and fully integrate local characteristics. Adhere to the original, take modern design as the concept and market demand as the guidance, the campus culture construction is displayed through the visual image of art design. Displaying the image and cultural connotation of colleges and universities through cultural and creative objects can enhance teachers and students' sense of identity and honor with the school, improve students' learning and quality of life, and ultimately promote the continuous, rapid and coordinated development of campus cultural and creative industries.

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