

The Combination and Interaction between the Art of Furniture Design and the Secularisation of Literati Aesthetics

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Abstract: This paper provides an in-depth study of the interaction between the art of furniture design and literati aesthetics in contemporary society as well as the trend of secularization of aesthetic concepts. The traditional literati aesthetic advocates the elegance and indifference of Confucian culture, however, in contemporary society, this concept is facing a shift. Furniture design, as a combination of art and practicality, has become a medium for the mutual integration of traditional aesthetics and modern lifestyles. Through case studies and empirical analyses, this paper dissects the performance of furniture design in the secularization of aesthetics and how it carries the connotation of literati aesthetics.

Keywords: furniture design, literati aesthetics, art, secularization, cultural integration

Introduction

The traditional literati aesthetic concept is deep and far-reaching in Chinese history, emphasizing elegance, indifference and connotation. However, with the development of society, this aesthetic is gradually facing the challenge of secularization and change in contemporary times. This paper focuses on the interaction between the art of furniture design and literati aesthetics, aiming to explore their mutual influence and redefinition of traditional aesthetic concepts in contemporary society.

1. Evolution of the literati aesthetic

Literati aesthetics is one of the profound aesthetic concepts in traditional Chinese culture, originating from the cultivation of ancient Confucian culture, which emphasizes the pursuit of the values of elegance, indifference and connotation. In ancient China, literati were the intellectuals of the society, who not only assumed the responsibility of knowledge transmission, but also the guardians of culture. In this context, the literati aesthetic formed a unique aesthetic concept. The core of ancient literati aesthetics is the Confucian system of thought, which emphasizes the cultivation of inner cultivation within the individual, focuses on the connotation of emotions, and especially prefers elegant and lofty artistic expressions^[1]. In the fields of painting, calligraphy, poetry and other arts, literati aesthetics pursued an abstract and ideal realm beyond the material world. Painter Li Tang expressed the ideal life in the eyes of the literati in his *Elegant Picture of the Literati*, in which secluded landscapes, simple dwellings, and indifferent moods all became important elements in the aesthetics of the literati. This aesthetic concept reflects the particularity of the social structure and values of the time, as well as the aesthetic taste formed by the literati as a highly influential group in society. However, with the development and change of the society, especially the advancement of modernization, the ancient literati aesthetic concept has undergone evolution and adjustment to a certain extent. During this evolution, the literati aesthetic was no longer

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confined to traditional forms and themes, but began to integrate foreign cultural elements and embrace diverse aesthetic experiences. This evolution is reflected in the works of art, with paintings, sculptures, architecture and other fields showing more diverse and personalized expressions. The evolution of modern literati aesthetics was also greatly influenced by social change. The literati class gradually evolved into an intellectual elite, and aesthetic concepts became closer to real life, with more emphasis on practicality and individuality. In the field of painting, modern literati painters, such as Xu Beihong and Qi Baishi, combined traditional techniques with modern themes, breaking through the boundaries of traditional aesthetics and expressing their unique understanding of the changing times. In addition, literati aesthetic concepts have undergone an evolution from tradition to modernity in the fields of literature, music and theatre, thus better adapting to the trend of social development. Although the ancient literati aesthetic concepts are still inherited in contemporary times, their evolution is not only reflected in the aesthetic objects and forms, but also in the diversity and openness of aesthetic values. The pursuit of aesthetics in modern society pays more attention to individual experience and emotional expression, and the traditional elegance and indifference are reinterpreted as the individual's pursuit of a better life. In this process, literati aesthetics has gradually freed itself from Confucian tradition and moved towards a more open and pluralistic direction. Overall, the evolution of literati aesthetics is a process of historical and social interaction. From the traditional concepts of ancient times to the pluralistic aesthetics of modern times, the evolution of literati aesthetics has been constrained by the social structure and cultural traditions, as well as shaped by the development of the times and individual experiences. This evolution process is not only the abandonment of traditional literati aesthetics, but also the re-examination and inheritance of its core values. In contemporary society, literati aesthetics has evolved into an aesthetic concept that pays more attention to individuality, pluralism and openness, injecting new vigour into cultural inheritance and innovation.

2. Secularization in the art of furniture design

In contemporary society, the secular expression of furniture design art has become one of the important trends in the field of design, which reflects the evolution of aesthetic concepts in social change and the influence of modern lifestyles. Traditionally, the literati aesthetic concept focuses on elegance, indifference and connotation, and emphasizes the humanistic spirit and exquisite artistic expression. However, with the development of society and the change of people's lifestyles, furniture design is no longer just a delicate craft, but pays more attention to practicality, comfort and fit with the modern living environment. Furniture design art in the trend of secularization presents the following significant features. Furniture design art of material selection and process application pay more attention to practicality. In the ancient and modern cultural appreciation of Chinese people revere the fine art of handicraft and expensive raw materials, but along with the contemporary scientific and technological progress, design experts prefer to adopt innovative materials and cutting-edge manufacturing techniques, which not only ensures that the functionality of home furnishings can be satisfied, but also highlights its unique aesthetic style. For example, the application of new technologies such as composite materials, metal alloys, and 3D printing has given designers unprecedented creative freedom, breaking through the limits of conventional aesthetics. The creation of interiors places emphasis on communication with modern civilization and community concepts. In the vein of secular evolution, creative practitioners are increasingly focusing on the cultural diversity of modern communities, and have integrated diversity and inclusiveness into their design philosophies. The conception of interiors as an expansion of cultural tastes is gradually taking into account the habits, values and aesthetics of the modern inhabitants^[2]. Such exchanges have led to the creation of a gateway between classical and contemporary home styling, allowing aesthetics to reveal their value in a broader social context. Home décor styles took on a more relaxed and liberated stance in the course of everyday life. In contrast to the ancient cultural elite, which favoured simplicity and subtlety, contemporary interiors have been created with a preference for a broader diversity that breaks through old constraints. Creative experts are showing more courageous breakthroughs in styling and aesthetics by incorporating more trendy artistic components to make their home furnishings look more vibrant and trendy. The durability and ecological awareness of home décor design has been enhanced. As the public's awareness of ecological protection increases, designers are paying more and more attention to the durability of the selected materials and the harmony of the environment. In the

face of great uncertainty, home décor is conceived as functional and must take into account ecological sustainability. As a result, creators are turning to resilient materials, implementing green production methods, and reducing the consumption of natural wealth, which has led to an increased sense of public responsibility in the pursuit of popularization of home design. Overall, the secularization of home decoration design demonstrates the design community's high sensitivity to changes in social dynamics and aesthetic concepts. The evolution of the art of furniture design in the face of extreme uncertainty has focused on increased practicality, interaction with modern culture, a creative and open attitude, and a deepening awareness of environmental protection. This shift has resulted in furniture design that not only retains the aesthetic understanding and values of the ancient cultural elite, but is also more in tune with the diverse aesthetic preferences and living habits of today's people, presenting a richer and more diverse character. The evolution of this trend not only inspires the innovation of home decoration design but also gives designers a broader creative field, so that home decoration design is more closely integrated with the modern society, and brings an artistic flavour to people's daily life.

3. The interplay between furniture design and literati aesthetics

The mutual influence between furniture design and literati aesthetics presents a complex and rich relationship in contemporary society, reflecting the continuation of traditional aesthetics and echoing the needs of modern life^[3]. In the evolution of aesthetic concepts, furniture design, as a product combining artistry and practicality, is not only inspired by literati aesthetics, but also feeds literati aesthetic concepts through its unique expression. Furniture design carries the core of traditional aesthetics at the same time, through modern technology and innovative techniques to present a more diverse and inclusive qualities. Traditional literati aesthetics focus on the expression of connotation and emotion, while modern furniture design through the choice of materials, form of innovation and functionality of the emphasis, so that the furniture is not only a functional object, but also conveys the designer's aesthetic concepts of art. This fusion transcends the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, forming a new aesthetic context that inherits the essence of literati aesthetics and injects the vitality of the modern era. The concept of literati aesthetics has also found a new way of expression in furniture design. Traditional literati aesthetics favour abstract, lyrical artistic expression, while modern furniture design through delicate craftsmanship, unique design concepts, as well as references to traditional culture, for the literati to provide a more concrete and practical aesthetic experience. This way of expression not only promotes the spirit of traditional literati aesthetics, but also provides an opportunity for the majority of consumers to participate in the experience, so that the literati aesthetic concept can be inherited and developed in a wider social level.

4. Reach a verdict

Through a thorough exploration of the interplay between interior art and intellectual aesthetics, this thesis demonstrates their prominence in modern communities and the impact of their interaction. Rather than fading away in the face of increasingly secular trends, traditional aesthetics have been reinvigorated by the combination of contemporary design styles. The conception of interior decoration as a carrier of the aesthetics of the cultural elite, through its interaction with aesthetic concepts, not only conveys new meaning to contemporary home culture, but also gives new life to the aesthetic concepts of the classic cultural elite.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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