Contemporary Packaging Design on the Elements of the Republic of China

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Abstract. It was a rapid development period of Chinese packaging design in the Republic of China, and its distinctive design style was used to highlight the distinctive style of times. The study classified the styles of packaging applying and analyzed the packaging cases, which is about the elements of packaging design in the Republic of China. It explored the innovative redesigning in contemporary packaging design, such as Calendar Art, Meishuzi, trademark and decorative patterns. This paper generalized the elements of packaging design by analysing the contemporary packaging design and provided reference in design.

1. Introduction
China's modern packaging design started in the late 19th century. Packaging as a foreign word, only made a clear definition of packaging in national standard until 1983 [1]. During the Republic of China, Chinese packaging design developed at a relatively fast stage. As a large-scale industry at that time, packaging design demonstrated its distinctive style with unique technology and craftsmanship. Packaging design was an important part of commercial art when commercial art flourished greatly in the Republic of China. It was also glowing and leaving a large number of excellent packaging designs. The national enterprises began to pay attention to and improve the packaging design of commodities, in order to seize the market with western enterprises and promote their own products. As a result, packaging design has formed a new fusion of Chinese Art and Western Art. Based on the Chinese geography culture concept, the combination of Chinese and Western patterns has created countless exquisite packaging, and has also become a special era symbol. As a gem in the history of packaging design art in China, it still provides reference for contemporary art design.

2. Elements of the Republic of China for directly applying
The elements of the Republic of China in packaging design is mainly divided into two categories. One is applying directly, the other one is redesigning. Direct application in Minguo-style design uses extensive pattern externalization, especially using some landmark items, such as cheongsam and old buildings which were in the Republic of China is a more common design method [2].

In 2015, Disney’s Minguo-style Mooncake [3] has a traditional graphic design combination of typical things, such as cheongsam beauty, Shikumen, oil umbrella and rickshaw which are all in the Republic of China. It forms a brand new picture with classical charm and modernity.
3. Elements of the Republic of China for redesigning

3.1. The pattern of Calendar Art
The Calendar Art can be the earliest advertising paintings in the history of Chinese commercial art [4]. It is the product of the continuous integration of traditional Chinese painting and Western painting. It has a long tradition, distinctive nationality and wide practicality. It is also the advertising art of China and the most brilliant achievement in the development process. This is the Calendar Art advertisement of Guangshenghang [5] in 1928 (Figure 2). The center of the picture is the realistic character image of the company’s well-known brand, SHANGHAI VIVE. It is the most common that the products around the company are arranged neatly in rectangular rules in the Calendar Art. The form is that Chinese characters are on both sides of the pattern border, and the product is at the bottom.

![Figure 2. The Calendar Art advertisement of Guangshenghang](image1)

In contrast to the imitation of the Calendar Art [6] in modern design (Figure 3), it can be clearly seen that the style of the rectangular border of the picture is completely preserved. The border is either decorative graphic pattern or Chinese font pairing. The inside of the rectangular border is the main content of the advertisement. The decorative patterns in the frame are simplified in the modern design. It is a straight line curve to replace the complex border decoration of the Republic of China. The entire picture becomes clear and clear as it simplifies the design language. The content depicted on the screen is also more targeted. The purpose of the promotion is clear. The theme of the picture is clear at a glance, with a vintage flavor and good artistic effects.

3.2. Modern application of Meishuzi
Meishuzi is the art character in the Republic of China. The revival of art characters is not a simple copying [7]. It is a modern aesthetic transformation and is suitable for modern Chinese character design. As designers pay more and more attention to the traditional Chinese character design in China, the art of the Republic of China is naturally attracted by the designers. The classical art design is gradually emerging in modern design and out of its essence.
The Sans-serif of the *Literature Weekly*’s art characters in the cover of the book which was created by Qian Junyi in 1925 (Figure 4), had evolved from the black body. The glyphs are squeezed and stretched, and they are all in the whole picture. It looks full, full of tension, and the font is tough and straight. Based on the profound understanding of Chinese traditional books, Qian Junyi’s flexible art design has opened up the modernist design style from the sensitivity of Chinese characters.

Figure 4. "Literature Weekly” cover by Qian Junyi (1925)

Figure 5. The post of Homage to Meishuzi by Jiang Hua (2005)

Jiang Hua, a famous modern designer, designed the poster “Homage to Meishuzi” in 2005 for the Chinese Book Design Forum. He changed the vertical text to English letters (Figure 5). Compared with the 1925 version of the design, it can be seen that although the typographic style is similar, the overall style is completely different. In the poster design of Jiang Hua, the triangular and linear stroke design gives a more rigid and sharp vision. It is full of modernity and structuralism. In this way, the layout of the bottom text in the middle of the text is also used in modern design.

These imitations of the modern design’s typography and fonts have fully proved that the design art, in the Republic of China, has gradually received the attention of the public and returned to the sight of the modern art world. It also shows that the new generation of Chinese designers began to re-examine China. The text design explores a design path that integrates Chinese traditional culture into a modern and internationalized world.

3.3. Contemporary application of Logo and decorative pattern in the Republic of China

Contemporary Mingguo-style design, its edge decoration and decorative elements have been simplified. And it shows color block flat wind design. However, it can be clearly seen that compared to the complex and decorative trademark design of the Republic of China.

There are two aspects of design elements that are retained and widely used. The first is to retain the border design of the trademark frame (Figure 6). Whether it is a square or a circular frame design, it plays a decorative role and defines the theme content. In addition, contemporary design style is compared with the period of the Republic of China. It is more realistic than before. The trim design condenses into a more abstract line border, which is more succinct. Secondly, it retains the design method of using the trim design around the font to highlight the text content (Figure 7), and decorates the words in the picture with different border designs such as the shape of the circle, ribbon, heart, and fan.
Figure 6. Fonts decorated with ribbon patterns in the design of trademarks in the Republic of China

Figure 7. The design of the trademark in the Republic of China using an oval frame to highlight the subject

Zhiyaoju Studio [8] designed this group of labels (Figure 8). It uses simple wireframe to outline graphics, fills colors into flat shapes, and uses three or less colors in a picture. Therefore, design elements are diverse, but it still appears disorderly. The design of the text in the picture is either in the form of a banner across the whole picture, or placed on the top of the picture like a tag. It’s also not placed in the upper left corner of the picture in the form of an embellishment, decorated in a continuous circle. The decorative techniques of the characters are various, and the different typesetting styles in the pictures also show different design styles. There are Chinese traditional elements (Guanyin and Koi carp), as well as western design themes (western doctors and angels wearing white hexagrams) in the pictures. The unified design language constitutes a series of complete Mingguo-style designs. The theme and content are humorous and interesting, which are deeply loved by young people.

Figure 8. The products of Mingguo-style by Zhiyaoju Studio

4. Conclusion

With regard to the contemporary application of packaging design elements in the Republic of China, this paper summarizes two common design methods and trends in modern retro design. First, the image of beauty in cheongsam was used more in packaging design in the Republic of China, and the figure image was usually simplified by design. Second, by imitating the style of contemporary design, there are many cases of five-color printing (yellow, eosin, turquoise, blue, black) in the period of the Republic of China, which can also adjust the brightness and purity of color. It is worth mentioning that purple is one of the commonly used colors in contemporary cosmetics design. Third, the design of Calendar Art was more and more widely used in contemporary application, and it was used for reference and imitation from layout structure to pattern style. Fourth, art characters, in the Republic of China, were widely used in contemporary packaging design, such as logo design, posters, books and other theme fonts design. Generally speaking, based on the sustainable development strategy of the times, the designers go to learn
the inspiration of innovative design from the packaging design for a long time by using the elements in the Republic of China, and to find the fitness between Minguo-style design and the contemporary packaging design.

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