

Research on Shanghai-style Culture's Impact on the Development of Chinese Domestic Luxury Brands - From the Perspective of "Shanghai Tang"

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Received: December 12, 2016

Accepted: January 4, 2017

Online Published: January 18, 2017

doi:10.5430/jbar.v6n1p14

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jbar.v6n1p14>

Abstract

"Shanghai-style culture", which was rooted in the traditional Chinese culture, produced the modern urban culture with unique Chinese characteristics after lasting collision and integration with the Western culture. It was inseparable from the development of Shanghai, which was China's first city to have a "capital market". Due to the unique historical background, Shanghai's economic development, social patterns and consumer attitudes contributed to the breeding of domestic luxury brands. As the earliest domestic luxury brand in Shanghai, "Shanghai Tang" has been affected by "Shanghai-style culture" since its creation. This paper attempts to illustrate the direct impact of "Shanghai-style culture" on the brands by analyzing the brand culture as well as the clothing design styles, which are characterized by revival of Chinese traditions and integration with current fashion.

In this paper, through the introduction and the first part summarizes the origin and development of local culture, expounds the relationship between the Shanghai style culture and brand culture, through the brand culture influence to the product design style.

The second part from the design of color and style reflects the idea of Shanghai style culture influence on design style, from the classical and modern combination of style, color change reflect the influence of the design to the brand.

Finally come to the conclusion that the influence of the Shanghai style culture from the design style that extends to the company culture, to the generation of Chinese luxury brand laid a solid cultural foundation.

Keywords: Design style, Shanghai-style culture, Luxury

1. Introduction

Originated in the late Qing Dynasty, "Shanghai school" is used to refer to a new faction emerging in the painting and opera fields at that time, generally understood as "too broad to have a range" (Xu Ke, 1984). The term partially shows the incomprehension of and unwillingness to accept new things. In the 1930s, the "Beijing-Shanghai dispute" extended from literature to sociology and culturology. The term "Shanghai school" was more widely known to the world, while the result was the concept of "vicious Shanghai school", which affected the public's cognition for a long time. In the late 1980s, while the history of the "century" was reviewed, the academic community launched a "movement" targeted at "rectification of the name of Shanghai school". In the principle of "being tolerant to diversity", the term "Shanghai school" was re-granted much more abundant connotations and more distinctive modern qualities. Its new meaning attained more and more attention and affirmation. (Lin Xuefei, 2014)

"Shanghai style" is not a geographical concept, but the formation of "Shanghai-style culture" had a close relationship with the development of modern Shanghai. In late 19th century and early 20th century, due to special location, Shanghai was the first to feel the irresistible change trend of the times. After its rapid development into a remarkable modern international metropolis, Eastern culture, Western culture, and Chinese regional culture converged on the land, where they collided and integrated each other, thereby resulting in the unique Chinese new modern culture. Inundated with commercialism, pragmatism, hedonism and other modern ideologies, the culture, i.e. Shanghai-style

culture, fully reflected the modern people's mental qualities in pursuit of novelty and speed: inclusive, rich and refined, modern and free. Known as incoming goods, luxury goods were not surely first imported from Shanghai. However, precisely because of Shanghai's location and cultural background, China's luxury brands took root in the city first. And the local luxury brand "Shanghai Tang" emerged in the 1990s. By adhering to the philosophy that clothing design shall revive Chinese traditions and integrate with current fashion, "Shanghai Tang" remained unique from many other classic luxury brands. If a brand remains robust in the downward trend of today's luxury market, its core culture surely works as the basis. This paper attempts to find out the impact of "Shanghai-style culture" on the design style based on the inherent cultural concepts of brands and the design styles of typical works, thereby identifying the impact of "Shanghai-style culture" on the luxury brand "Shanghai Tang". (Don schultz, Heidi schultz, don schultz on brand, zeng-an gao, Zhao Gongyi, 2005)

2. "Being Tolerant to Diversity" and Shaping of Brand Culture

The fact that many luxury brands are created in Paris, which is known as the fashion capital, is largely because of that fact that it has a basis for the development of clothing brands: the consumers who have excellent fashion traditions and dressing preferences. (Bian Xiangyang, 2014) In the 1980s, under the influence of Shanghai-style culture which absorbed Paris culture, Shanghai, known as the "Paris of the East", gradually cultivated a group of mature consumers - "Old Shanghai", in the specific historical context. On the one hand, the maintenance and development of Chinese traditional clothing brands were promoted; on the other hand, with the economic development and the continuous integration of Chinese clothing and Western clothing, as well as the improvement of Chinese people's aesthetic taste, fashion progress was quite obvious. Chinese people believed and were in an urgent need of a truth that China's national culture shall create China's own world-renowned brands. This was not merely a narrow understanding of clothing styles with Chinese traditional characteristics. Furthermore, Chinese clothing brands targeted at specific groups and with distinct brand characteristics shall be created in accordance with the socialist market with Chinese characteristics. "Shanghai Tang" came into being in this environment. In terms of name, it is quite different from the existing brands like "Youngor", which uses a Western-style name. Youngor adheres to Western technology philosophies and claims European origin. Its brand culture seriously lacks Chinese traditional culture. (Bian Xiangyang, 2001) Shanghai Tang inherits and carries forward traditional Shanghai tailors' fine craftsmanship and perfect tailoring of fabric. By designing colorful costumes, it re-interprets Shanghai's beauty and wealth in the past on the foundation of modern Chinese aesthetics. Based on the Shanghai style culture and the "Shanghai" brand, for example, try to find the relationship between the brand culture and corporate culture, find the social culture from influence on design style will be further extended to the influence of the objective laws of brand culture. (Tom black, Bob baird, 2006)

3. "Inclusive" Design Styles and Combination of Tradition and Modernity

After opening as a commercial port in 1843, as a result of collision and integration with Western civilization, Shanghai escaped the Chinese traditional time-based progressive evolutionary trajectory. With a unique development process characterized by integration of Chinese culture and Western culture and spacial transmission, it became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal metropolis. "Shanghai-style culture" emerged in this historical context. Due to complex origins and coexistence of Chinese culture and Western culture, "Shanghai-style culture" was bound to grow deeply rooted in Chinese traditional culture in the face of invasion of foreign culture. It also accepted alien cultures when struggling against them, hence the "cohabitation of Chinese culture and Western culture".

3.1 Color

Here is Shanghai Tang's 2016 Spring and Summer series (Figure 1-1). The seasonal clothing is inspired by the passionate south of Spain: fragrant and lush bougainvillea and unique charm of the Mediterranean. Against the natural background of the Seville shrines, the series perfectly integrates the Chinese style with the modern Western fashion. With the intersection of the wild passion of Andalusia and the quietness and idleness of Seville, the relaxed and freestyle image of Shanghai Tang is created by bright yellow, cyan and patterns. Here is Shanghai Tang's 2015 Autumn and Winter series (Figure 2). The female adult series boldly integrates and breaks the boundaries of Chinese tradition and Western modernity. The Autumn clothing is mainly bright blue, while the Winter clothing maintains the Chinese traditional green and red in line with the main color of black, with lace patterns forming a delightful contrast in the laser leather belt and the dress. In addition to display of mysterious female curve, the overall shape is more delicate and layered because of the furbelow spread like a waterfall and the hollowed-out patterns, telling a story of visual innovation and flashy reproduction. Shanghai Tang's 2015 Spring and Summer series (Figure 3) fully displays the rich color of jade and gemstones: green-blue and red, showing the retro unique Chinese style. Silk upper garment is casual, and the knee-length skirt is light and smooth. Tailored leather belt and modern handbag are

ingenuous and fashionable. The design theme of Shanghai Tang's 2014 Spring and Summer series (Figure 4) is "a fashion adventure in the natural world". The red, pink, green, and blue-green of its Treasures series, which is inspired by colorful stones in the nature, are all integrated in the new mirror agate patterns. The matching of box-shaped shirt with cigarette pipe pants creates an immediate sense of three dimensions. Both the vivid floral patterns carefully designed on the handbag and the animal patterns using bold colors on the square bags make the overall shape more superior and unique. A new three-dimensional design, fresh use of color, and a comfortable contour are displayed.

"Shanghai Tang is a 'hybrid brand' going increasingly global. Its lifestyle should be innovation and breakthrough above the tradition and fashion, favoring similar colors and mixture. This also caters to the tastes of the younger generation of consumers who are becoming the mainstream of luxury consumers. To establish a luxury brand, you must first have a clear and unique brand culture. For Shanghai Tang, the core is the presentation of an inclusive and colorful China".

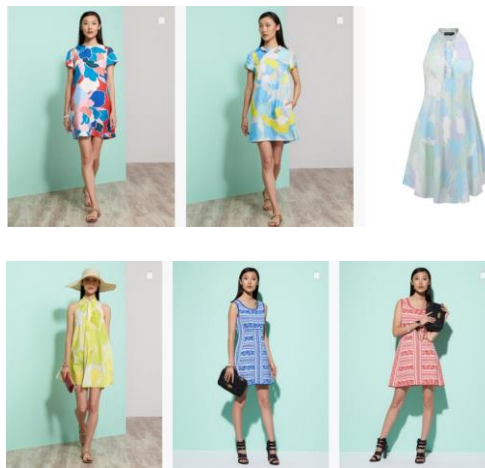


Figure 1. Shanghai Tang 2016S/S



Figure 2. Shanghai Tang 2015 A/W



Figure 3. Shanghai Tang 2015 S/S



Figure 4. Shanghai Tang 2014 S/S

Shanghai Tang has relatively high color brightness but low purity. The overall effect seems soft and comfortable, which is relating to its high-end but low-key style design. With sapphire blue, scarlet, bright red, cherry red, wheat red, white, khaki, purple, apple green, light blue, brilliant yellow and other bright colors as the color matching series, Shanghai Tang clothing uses black, dark gray, dark blue, coffee, wine red, jeans blue and other major color tones. The colors with high color brightness and relatively low saturation achieve the overall effect of mildness, low-key but luxurious. With respect to seasonality, highly bright colors are added into light colors to create contrasting but not intense briskness, increasing the overall results of vivacity, fashion and recreation of the clothing. (David aaker, 2005)

From the perspective of popularity, a single dress in this series of colors is simple, generous, neat, and self-contained in terms of use of color. With respect to use of color, Shanghai Bund clothing still adopts usual practices. For use of traditional colors, emphasis is put on the matching of bright Chinese colors and the use of popular usual colors in line with the life to achieve popular and fashionable dressing, which is of great spanning of colors, good visual effects and free of exaggeration and absurdity.

For use of Chinese elements, emphasis is still put on the Chinese concept on the normal five colors. Black, white, blue, red and other colors are still commonly seen in the clothing to achieve the effects of generosity and solemnity. In addition, for use of other colors, the theme of the current season, as well as the different seasonal nature of the four seasons, is taken into account to develop different color schemes and achieve a better effect of modernity. (Peng Rong, 2013)

3.2 Styles

Stand-up collar is mainly used for traditional cheongsams in a classical or a traditional style. In general, household clothing rarely uses it. The uniqueness of Shanghai Tang's use of stand-up collar (Figure 5) is the application of the collar element to the casual clothing, revealing the characteristics of combination of traditional Chinese elements and modern Western fashionable casual clothing and showing the clothing's sufficient Chinese features. (Yu Ming Yang, Jiang Huizhu, 2006)



Figure 5. Design of Shanghai Tang's Stand-up Collared Casual Clothing

As basic elements of Chinese traditional clothing, cross collar and slant opening are intrinsically linked. With respect to pattern of Chinese traditional cross collar, under the influence of Confucian traditional clothing etiquette, "the five principles of compass, square, rope, scale and balance should be complied with: the cuff is as round as a compass; the collar is as orthogonal as a square; the back is as vertical as a rope; and the lower hem is as balanced as a scale". Therefore, the shape of traditional cross collar is almost the same with that of Western V-shaped collar. "The shape is like the letter Y". Shanghai Tang's design of deep V-shaped small stand-up collar not only retains the charm of traditional stand-up collar, but also to some extent breaks the shackles of tradition, freeing stand-up collar from the traditional image and creating a compact, stylish, and cool V-shaped small stand-up collar. When the small stand-up collar is designed and combined, the shape immediately changes its traditional charm and becomes more fashionable (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Shanghai Tang's Design of V-shaped Small Stand-up Collar

On the basis of the simple and refreshing deep V-shaped collar, there is a kind of cheongsam collar opened below, a unique collar in new Chinese women's clothing, which displays the subtle beauty of Chinese cheongsam and has the beauty of sensuality and nakedness that modern clothing and Western aesthetics advocate. It can be said that it is a combination integrating practicality, aesthetics and tradition (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Shanghai Tang's Design of Chinese Deep V-shaped Collar

4. Conclusion

This paper studies the relationship between the Shanghai style culture and Shanghai, found the social culture not only affects the design style, and further influence the brand's corporate culture. So it is concluded that China also has the cultural soil of luxury goods. During the colonial cultural aggression, "Shanghai-style culture", which was inclusive and tolerant to diversity, ultimately became a unique Chinese culture upon collision and integration with

Western culture. In fact, under the influence of Shanghai-style culture, China's luxury environment was similar to that of the West. (Lawrence vicente, 2004) In the strong cultural background that most foreign luxury brands claim their genuineness and long history, Chinese domestic luxury brands shall make the consumers in the global market be aware that luxury brands can come from the East by its "being inclusive and tolerant to diversity". In addition, China's domestic consumers shall believe that their own culture can absolutely nurture world-renowned brands and establish national confidence, thereby enhancing national self-identity. China's domestic luxury brands shall always stick with exquisite traditional techniques during the design as "Shanghai-style culture" did, and, on this basis, constantly draw on design concepts and essence from foreign cultures, thereby eventually creating "Chinese famous brands" in the field of luxury goods. (Yang Lihong & Divia Harilela, 2013)

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