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# Visual Representation of Traditional Chinese Auspicious Beasts in Commercial Advertising Art

Mengze Yuan <sup>1,\*</sup> and Surendheran Kaliyaperumal <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, 47301, Malaysia

\* Correspondence: Mengze Yuan, Faculty of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, 47301, Malaysia

**Abstract:** Traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs serve as vital cultural symbols, embodying deep historical and artistic significance. With the ongoing trends of globalization and digital transformation, the innovative adaptation of these traditional elements in contemporary commercial poster design has become a key focus in the cultural and creative sectors. This study delves into the application of auspicious animal motifs in commercial poster illustration, exploring strategic methodologies and practical implementation. By employing literature review, case studies, and comparative analysis, the research investigates the cultural essence and artistic attributes of these traditional patterns while examining their synergy with the visual language and communicative intent of modern commercial posters. The study proposes several application strategies, including selecting motifs that align with thematic content, fusing traditional artistic elements with contemporary aesthetics, harmonizing color schemes with brand identity, and optimizing composition for enhanced visual appeal. Through an analysis of representative domestic and international cases, this research identifies both best practices and existing limitations, offering theoretical insights and actionable recommendations for modernizing the use of traditional patterns. Findings indicate that integrating traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs into commercial poster illustrations not only preserves and revitalizes cultural heritage but also elevates the cultural depth and market appeal of visual designs, fostering the long-term growth of the cultural and creative industries.

**Keywords:** traditional Chinese lucky animal motifs; modern commercial poster design; cultural and creative sectors; visual design in communication

## 1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs are invaluable components of China's cultural heritage, with origins rooted in ancient totemic beliefs. Over centuries, these motifs have developed into a distinctive artistic tradition. Symbols like dragons, phoenixes, Kirin, and cranes are not only prevalent in architectural designs, clothing, and artifacts, admired for their graceful shapes and deep symbolic meanings, but they also form an integral part of the Chinese cultural identity, representing aspirations for prosperity and a better life. Nevertheless, in today's era of globalization and digital advancement, the preservation and innovative application of traditional cultural elements encounter unprecedented challenges. The key issue facing the cultural and creative sectors is how to incorporate traditional symbols into modern design practices, retaining their core essence while adapting to contemporary aesthetic needs. As an essential form of modern visual communication, commercial poster design plays a crucial role in brand marketing, cultural transmission, and social messaging due to its striking, dynamic, and easily shareable nature. By integrating traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns into commercial posters, designers can infuse modern works with rich cultural meaning, attract wider au-

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diences through innovative visual storytelling, and simultaneously boost the cultural significance and market appeal of brands. This approach not only preserves and promotes traditional cultural values but also enriches and diversifies contemporary design language. This study centers on the application of traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs, investigating their implementation strategies and practical methods in commercial poster design. The research analyzes the cultural and artistic features of these traditional patterns and explores how they can be effectively merged with the visual language and communicative objectives of commercial posters. By examining various case studies, the research identifies successful practices as well as limitations, offering both theoretical insight and practical guidance for the modern use of traditional motifs. Through literature reviews, case studies, and comparative analyses, this study aims to support the contemporary adaptation of these traditional patterns, injecting cultural vitality into commercial poster design, and contributing to the sustainable growth of the cultural and creative industries. This research holds substantial theoretical value, advancing the understanding of the transformation of traditional patterns in the modern context and enriching the body of knowledge in visual communication design. It also provides practical significance by offering actionable strategies for designers to better integrate traditional cultural elements with contemporary design, fostering cultural confidence, and enhancing the global influence of Chinese design [1].

## **2. Current Use and Limitations of Traditional Chinese Auspicious Animal Motifs in Commercial Posters**

### *2.1. Current Application*

In recent years, as the cultural and creative sectors have rapidly developed, the use of traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs in commercial poster design has grown significantly, becoming a key tool for designers to convey cultural meanings and attract consumers. Domestically, numerous brands and organizations have started incorporating these traditional motifs into contemporary designs. For instance, the Palace Museum's promotional materials for its cultural and creative products seamlessly blend auspicious animal symbols, such as dragons, phoenixes, and Kirin, with modern design elements, effectively showcasing the allure of traditional culture while resonating with the aesthetic tastes of younger audiences. Well-established brands, such as Pechoin and Tongrentang, have also integrated these patterns into their commercial poster designs to highlight their rich historical heritage and cultural significance. On the global stage, these traditional motifs have caught the attention of international brands as well. Several global companies have embraced motifs like dragons and phoenixes in their advertising campaigns in China to adapt to local tastes. High-end brands like Gucci and Dior, for example, have frequently utilized traditional patterns in their China-specific advertising efforts to connect with Chinese consumers. These examples illustrate that the incorporation of traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns not only boosts the cultural value of the design but also strengthens brand identity and enhances market competitiveness [2].

### *2.2. Existing Shortcomings*

Despite progress in incorporating traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs into commercial poster designs, several challenges persist. First, some designs merely apply traditional patterns on the surface without exploring their deeper cultural significance. This results in repetitive, shallow designs that fail to emotionally connect with viewers. Second, there are struggles in balancing traditional and contemporary elements, with some designs being overly traditional and lacking innovation, while others take excessive liberties, distorting the original essence of the patterns, leading to mismatched design styles. Additionally, misunderstandings of traditional motifs by some designers have resulted in misapplications, inappropriate combinations, and sometimes a distortion of cultural symbols, which reduces the cultural value and communicative impact of the designs.

From an industry perspective, the use of traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns in commercial posters lacks a structured theoretical foundation or clear practical standards. Designers often depend on personal experience and subjective opinions, without the benefit of a scientific or systematic framework to guide them. Furthermore, the limited availability of research and educational resources on this topic has led to a shortage of qualified designers, hindering the industry's ability to meet market demands. These challenges have slowed the broader adoption and innovative application of traditional Chinese motifs in commercial poster illustrations [3].

In conclusion, while traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs have made strides in commercial poster design, further progress is necessary in areas such as cultural interpretation, design innovation, and industry standardization. These improvements will help achieve a more seamless integration of traditional culture with modern design, facilitating the sustainable development of the cultural and creative industries [4].

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1. Semiotics Theory

Semiotics offers a valuable theoretical framework for this research. In semiotic theory, a sign consists of two components: the signifier (the form) and the signified (the meaning). Traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs, as visual signs, have signifiers in the form of distinct shapes, such as the coiling body of a dragon or the graceful wings of a phoenix, and signifieds in their cultural meanings and symbolic representations, like the dragon symbolizing power and authority, and the phoenix symbolizing good fortune and beauty. In commercial poster design, designers can translate abstract cultural meanings into clear visual elements through semiotic principles, allowing them to effectively communicate brand values and messages. Additionally, semiotics highlights the polysemous nature and context-dependent interpretations of signs, meaning that the same sign may hold different meanings depending on cultural context and design setting. Consequently, designers must take into account the cultural understanding and aesthetic preferences of the target audience when incorporating traditional patterns, ensuring the accurate transmission of their symbolic meanings [5].

#### 3.2. Cultural Creativity Theory

Cultural creativity theory serves as a key framework for this study, highlighting the dual role of the cultural and creative industries in fostering both economic and cultural growth. This is achieved through the creative reimagining and development of cultural resources. Traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns, which are rich in historical importance and widely recognized in society, represent invaluable cultural assets within these industries. In commercial poster design, these traditional motifs can be reinterpreted and transformed into commercial cultural products through innovative design approaches, thereby stimulating the growth of the creative economy. Moreover, cultural creativity theory emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-industry innovation. By integrating insights from diverse fields, designers can diversify the application of these cultural patterns. This approach encourages designers to seek inspiration from various artistic disciplines or collaborate with industries such as technology and fashion, thereby enhancing the originality and appeal of their designs [6].

#### 3.3. Visual Communication Design Theory

This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of visual communication design, which offers valuable methodological guidance. Visual communication design focuses on conveying information clearly and creating an emotional connection with the audience through the strategic arrangement of visual elements, including graphics, text, and color. In the context of commercial poster illustrations, designers are required to apply core prin-

principles such as contrast, balance, symmetry, and rhythm. These principles help blend traditional Chinese auspicious animal motifs with other design components, resulting in visually compelling and artistically engaging works. Furthermore, visual communication design theory underscores the importance of user experience and emotional design. By enhancing both visual appeal and emotional resonance, designers can increase the effectiveness of communication. As such, when incorporating traditional patterns, designers must take into account the visual preferences and emotional needs of the audience, using innovative approaches to foster greater engagement and connection.

The integration of semiotics theory, cultural creativity theory, and visual communication design theory provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for this study. By combining these perspectives, the research is able to explore the application processes of traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns in commercial poster design, suggest effective design strategies, and offer both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for the modern adaptation of traditional culture in commercial poster illustration [7].

#### 4. Application Strategies of Traditional Chinese Auspicious Animal Patterns in Commercial Poster Illustrations

##### 4.1. Pattern Selection and Theme Alignment

In commercial poster design, choosing the right pattern is essential, as it should embody traditional cultural meanings while also aligning with contemporary visual trends and market demands. For instance, in Figure 1, the snake is used as the central auspicious animal pattern, reflecting the festive spirit of Chinese zodiac traditions. In Chinese culture, the snake represents qualities like agility and wisdom and is commonly featured in celebrations such as the Lunar New Year to symbolize good fortune and blessings. In this design, the snake's image is transformed into a playful, cartoonish character, making it more relatable and charming, especially to younger audiences. This approach not only maintains the traditional symbolic significance but also boosts its commercial appeal by adding a whimsical and friendly touch [8].



**Figure 1.** Innovative Fusion of 2025 New Year's Auspicious Traditions and Commercial Design.

The background elements further strengthen the alignment with the theme. Red lanterns evoke a sense of celebration and family unity, while traditional palace architecture and auspicious cloud motifs enhance the Chinese cultural atmosphere, highlighting the deep-rooted legacy of traditional culture. The floral designs symbolize prosperity and optimism, complementing the "Happy 2025" text and conveying New Year wishes. This seamless connection between the chosen patterns and the overall theme exemplifies the successful integration of traditional culture with modern design. By merging traditional auspicious animal symbols with festive elements and using playful, cartoonish representations, the poster captures the spiritual essence of the Chinese New Year while enhancing the cultural memorability in commercial communication. This approach appeals to a wider audience and demonstrates the varied possibilities of cultural innovation in contemporary commerce.

Additionally, from a brand communication perspective, these design strategies show strong market flexibility. By transforming traditional motifs into distinctive visual symbols, brands can foster cultural recognition both domestically and internationally, engaging global consumers' interest in Chinese cultural themes while promoting the spread of traditional Chinese auspicious culture. These visual designs not only honor traditional culture but also reflect a proactive exploration of the future of commercial design, creating lasting cultural value for brands [9].

#### 4.2. Stylistic Design and Modern Aesthetic Integration

In contemporary commercial design, stylistic choices serve not only as a means of conveying information but also as a powerful medium for emotional expression and cultural communication. For instance, in Figure 2, the poster creatively blends traditional floral and bird motifs with modern visual aesthetics, showcasing the seamless fusion of culture and art in commercial design.



**Figure 2.** Fusion of Chinese New Year Floral and Bird Patterns with Modern Illustration Design.

At the heart of stylistic design is the reinterpretation and refinement of traditional elements. This poster incorporates classic floral and avian patterns, such as the phoenix, plum blossoms, and lanterns — symbols of good fortune in Chinese culture. The phoenix signifies nobility and prosperity, the plum blossom stands for resilience and renewal, while the lantern evokes a vibrant festive mood. Through fine brushwork and balanced compositions, these traditional symbols effectively convey the cultural essence of Chinese New Year.

Secondly, in terms of form, the designer effectively integrates modern illustration techniques, injecting new energy into traditional motifs. The deep green background sets off the combination of classic Chinese red and gold, creating a festive ambiance while also adding a modern, sophisticated touch to the overall composition. As for the styling, the phoenix is reinterpreted with simplified, geometric lines, blending seamlessly with the flowers and branches to establish a visual rhythm. This approach avoids the complexity of traditional designs, making it more in tune with the preferences of contemporary audiences.

The typography and layout further emphasize the blend of tradition and modernity. The phrase “Gong Xi Fa Cai” on the lantern is rendered in traditional calligraphy, maintaining consistency with the poster’s overall theme. Meanwhile, the English version of the phrase, “GONG XI FA CAI” is presented in a sleek sans-serif font, aligning with modern design principles and catering to international audiences.

This inventive design strategy not only preserves the cultural essence of traditional elements but also amplifies the visual impact and market adaptability by utilizing contemporary design languages. It is especially effective for promoting Chinese culture on



the global stage, helping to foster cultural identification among local audiences while sparking interest internationally, thus facilitating cross-cultural dialogue.

In conclusion, Figure 2 introduces fresh possibilities for integrating traditional Chinese floral and bird motifs into commercial design through the seamless blend of stylistic design and modern aesthetics. This approach signifies an innovative expression of traditional culture and a bold step forward in the artistic and cultural development of commercial poster design.

#### 4.3. Color Application and Brand Identity Unification

Color plays a pivotal role in the application of traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns, serving not only as an essential element of visual design but also as a powerful tool for conveying both brand identity and cultural meaning. The traditional Chinese color palette is diverse and rich, with each hue carrying distinct cultural symbols and emotional significance. For instance, red is associated with celebration and passion, yellow represents authority and nobility, green evokes nature and vitality, and blue symbolizes calmness and wisdom. In the context of commercial poster design, designers should leverage these cultural associations to align the color scheme with both the brand image and the thematic message.

When creating a commercial poster illustration, the designer must select a color palette that reflects the brand's positioning and marketing goals. For instance, vibrant and dynamic colors like orange and pink may be ideal for youthful, trendy brands aiming to capture the attention of a younger audience. On the other hand, high-end luxury brands may benefit from using sophisticated, subdued tones such as gold and black, to communicate elegance and exclusivity. Designers should also be mindful of color balance, ensuring that the palette isn't overly complex or too monotonous, and instead creates a harmonious and unified visual effect.

By skillfully utilizing color, designers can seamlessly integrate traditional patterns with contemporary brand identities in commercial poster illustrations. This approach not only preserves the essence of traditional Chinese culture but also caters to modern tastes and market demands. Aligning color choices with the brand image enhances the poster's visual appeal and strengthens the cultural value and market competitiveness of the brand.

### 5. Case Analysis

To gain deeper insights into the use of traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns in commercial poster illustrations, this study focuses on the "Palace Museum Cultural and Creative" poster series, as illustrated in Figure 3. As a prominent symbol of traditional Chinese heritage, the Palace Museum has effectively incorporated traditional cultural elements into contemporary designs. In recent years, through its cultural and creative products and new media campaigns, the museum has successfully captured the interest of younger audiences, drawing significant attention.



**Figure 3.** Palace Museum Cultural and Creative.

The "Palace Museum Cultural and Creative" poster series is a prime example of the seamless blend of traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns and contemporary visual design. These posters use iconic symbols such as dragons, phoenixes, and qilins, skillfully merging traditional cultural motifs with modern design techniques to create visually striking and culturally rich posters.

To start, the designers select auspicious animal patterns based on the theme and the branding objectives of the poster. For instance, in the "Dragon and Phoenix Bringing Prosperity" poster, the dragon represents power and authority, while the phoenix symbolizes beauty and fortune. Their pairing not only aligns with the Palace Museum's cultural narrative but also conveys the auspicious symbolism behind the museum's cultural and creative products.

When it comes to stylistic design, traditional patterns are modernized without losing their cultural essence. For example, the dragon pattern is depicted with smooth, flowing lines and geometric shapes, while the phoenix is abstracted using elegant feather designs, adapting it to current design trends. This approach allows the posters to retain the charm of traditional culture while also appealing to modern artistic tastes.

Color application plays a crucial role in reinforcing the design's cultural and aesthetic value. The use of classic colors from the Forbidden City — such as red, gold, and black — creates a sense of festivity and luxury. Red signifies joy and enthusiasm, gold evokes honor and opulence, while black adds a sense of sophistication. This color scheme not only ties in with the Palace Museum's brand image but also heightens the visual impact and cultural recognition of the poster.

In terms of layout and composition, the designers employ symmetry along with the strategic use of white space. The dragon and phoenix motifs are placed centrally, framed by minimalist decorative elements to create a strong focal point. The use of white space allows the design to breathe, maintaining balance and avoiding visual clutter.

The success of the Palace Museum Cultural and Creative poster series has garnered significant attention from younger audiences, both online and offline. These posters have increased the market visibility of the Palace Museum's cultural products and amplified the brand's cultural significance. Many consumers have expressed that the designs sparked their interest in Chinese traditions, prompting them to purchase related cultural products.

This case demonstrates how traditional Chinese auspicious animal patterns, when thoughtfully applied in commercial poster designs, can preserve the essence of cultural heritage while meeting contemporary aesthetic and market demands. The Palace Museum Cultural and Creative poster series illustrates that with careful selection of patterns, innovative stylistic approaches, strategic use of color, and balanced composition, traditional cultural elements can be revitalized in modern commercial designs, creating both cultural and commercial value.

## 6. Conclusion

This study delves into the application of Chinese traditional auspicious animal patterns in commercial poster illustrations, highlighting their cultural value and practical relevance in contemporary design. The findings reveal that these patterns, as distinct cultural symbols, not only embody rich historical and national significance but can also be seamlessly integrated into modern commercial design through innovative techniques. This integration imparts the design with deep cultural meaning and artistic appeal. By carefully selecting patterns, aligning them with themes, combining traditional shapes with modern aesthetics, unifying color schemes with brand identity, and enhancing layout and visual impact, designers can successfully blend traditional patterns into modern visual communication, thereby enhancing the cultural value and market competitiveness of brands.

Furthermore, this study validates the effectiveness of these application strategies through case analysis. For instance, the success of the "Palace Museum Cultural and Creative" poster series demonstrates the immense potential of traditional patterns in modern design and offers valuable insights for other brands. In conclusion, the use of Chinese traditional auspicious animal patterns in commercial poster illustrations serves not only to preserve and promote traditional culture but also injects new vitality into modern design, supporting the sustainable growth of the cultural and creative industries.

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