

# Research on the Application of Traditional Chinese Artistic Modeling Elements in Animated Character Design

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**Abstract.** The traditional artistic modeling elements of China are rich and colorful. Their application in animated character design not only highlights the distinctive features of traditional artistic modeling elements but also promotes China's excellent traditional culture. This paper mainly discusses in detail the measures of applying traditional Chinese artistic modeling elements to animated character design. Animation character designers can pay attention to the reasonable application of traditional Chinese artistic modeling elements against the background of new media, highlighting traditional Chinese literature, fine arts, and philosophy in the design process. Only by doing this can diverse artistic forms be reflected through animated characters, making the design more valuable and promoting sustainable development of China's traditional animation industry.

**Keywords:** Traditional Art; Modeling; Elements; Animated Character; Design.

## 1. Introduction

If animation character designers can delve into and draw from traditional artistic modeling elements during the creation process, they can make the characters exhibit the national and excellent aesthetic style of the times, making the characters more vivid. Traditional Chinese artistic modeling elements mainly include Chinese knots, shadow puppets, palace lanterns, papercutting, etc. The designers can deconstruct and integrate these elements to create brand-new character images, making the animated characters a carrier for the inheritance of national culture, and endowing the characters with practical significance in the presentation.

## 2. The Value of Applying Traditional Artistic Modeling Elements in Animated Character Design

The application of traditional artistic modeling elements in animated character design can innovate traditional animation modeling techniques and integrate folk art elements, enriching traditional animation aesthetics. This meets the audience's visual needs during the viewing process and promotes China's excellent traditional culture while incorporating Chinese characteristics.

For example, with the innovation of traditional animation modeling techniques, due to the variety of traditional artistic modeling elements, designers can use these as an inexhaustible source for creative processes, applying various modeling techniques to innovate and optimize the characters. This not only strengthens the visual impact but also enhances the spatial and artistic feel of the animation, satisfying modern viewing requirements. Many designers use perspective techniques to take advantage of the scattered point perspective in traditional Chinese painting, focusing on the dynamic movement of focal points, making the changes in dynamic perspectives more apparent to audiences during viewing. Compared with the fixed point perspective common in the West, traditional modeling can be showcased and applied within large-format animation, creating animated characters with Chinese characteristics.

For integrating folk art elements and endowing them with traditional animation aesthetics, many designers will use traditional Chinese artistic modeling elements to expand the creative space for models. These changes can be reflected in characters' facial features, hairstyles, and clothing, and also create an artistic atmosphere with a national style, enhancing the cultural value of traditional Chinese animations, increasing their national charm, and promoting traditional culture, creating

unique and lively works with a Chinese flair. Additionally, if designers can reasonably apply traditional artistic modeling elements, they can emphasize "Made in China" and Chinese characteristics, allowing traditional artistic elements to permeate the character design more comprehensively, making innovative characters more distinctive and valuable, and giving China's traditional animation industry stronger comprehensive development ability.

### **3. The Effectiveness of Applying Traditional Artistic Modeling Elements in Animated Character Design**

Traditional artistic modeling elements are inherently diverse and unique. Their reasonable application in animated design enriches character images and inherits national culture, enhancing national cohesion and making a wider audience understand and appreciate their nation's cultural ideology during the process of viewing innovative animations, thus promoting the maintenance and innovation of national culture and lifting the spirit of the society.

For instance, enriching animated character images, the public often has strong emotional connections to the images seen in animations. If character designers add traditional artistic modeling elements appropriately during the design process, it can deepen the audience's impression of the artistic theme, making the character image more durable in their minds and traditional elements more deeply rooted. By leveraging a rich character image, traditional artistic modeling elements can be carried on in various forms.

To inherit the national culture and enhance unity, as the primary audience of animated content is children, the future of our nation, if designers can incorporate traditional artistic modeling elements according to the children's needs, they can use the animation platform to innovate and develop these elements. By doing so, even more, children will become acquainted with traditional artistic modeling elements and national culture while watching animations. This helps instill pride and dignity in the nation from an early age, strengthening the cohesion and unity of the nation in the process of inheriting and innovating culture, making animated character design more valuable and meaningful.

### **4. The Characteristics of Integrating Traditional Artistic Modeling Elements into Animated Character Design**

The primary characteristic of integrating traditional artistic modeling elements into animated character design is that they are profound and distinctive, allowing the designed animation characters to highlight their unique personal characteristics. Take the work "The Monkey King: Havoc in Heaven" as an example. The painted faces in this work are full of expressive decorative features, which can highlight the divine appearances and individual traits of the characters, enhancing the viewer's memory of each individual. In the film, Sun Wukong's face is shaped like a peach heart, with a protruding mouth, and the sides of the mouth have two decorative lines. The thick eyebrows convey vitality. Additionally, in designing Sun Wukong's figure, designers focus on depicting his limbs to reflect agile monkey-like movements. The overall design theme revolves around red, yellow, and green, intensifying the colorfulness of the characters.

In addition to this, the characteristics of incorporating traditional artistic design elements into animated character design also include the charm of ink painting and a sense of profound conceptual beauty. This is because animators also use elements of folk art in the process of incorporating traditional artistic design elements. Folk art mainly displays the different painting techniques of meticulous brushwork and freehand brushwork through the use of the Four Treasures of the Study. As such, characteristics that reflect the charm of ink painting and a sense of profound beauty can be embodied. By emphasizing these features in their work, animators can incorporate them into the design philosophy of the characters through the use of transcendent and extraordinary painting methods, thereby enhancing the emotional appeal and aesthetic culture of the creations. This fosters the conceptual beauty of animated art and also conveys a strong sense of classic poetry, allowing the excellent traditional Chinese culture to stand out with impact in animated character design, making

the design more distinctive and valuable. Take the animation "Affection for Mountains and Rivers" for example, where the character creation mainly employs the techniques of Chinese ink animation. In the animation, the elder wears a light grey robe with flowing hair and beard, exuding an extraordinary aura. The children in the animation are wearing white shirts, showing their innocence and cuteness, which is in sharp contrast to the attitude of the quiet and introverted old man in the animation. The character appearance of the entire animation is used to penetrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture, highlight the charm of ink, and integrate traditional artistic modeling elements into the animated characters. The characteristics of the design are more prominent, making this type of animation more valuable for display.

## **5. Measures to Integrate Traditional Artistic Modeling Elements into Animated Character Design**

### **5.1. Highlight the Characteristics of Traditional Artistic Modeling Elements**

To use traditional artistic design elements more effectively in animated character design, and to achieve better design outcomes, animators must understand the application features of these elements and enrich the representation in the design process. This approach not only creates animated art with national characteristics and charm but also blends the creator's deep emotions and rich thoughts into the works, emphasizing their cultural value and the impact of national cultural characteristics.

### **5.2. Exude the Charm of Traditional Artistic Design Elements**

Traditional artistic design elements are diverse, and animators can strengthen their imagination and creative spirit when integrating these elements into the design process, managing their harmonious relationship properly. This allows not only for the creation of distinct character images but also for detailed shaping of characters with different styles. By utilizing a range of character images, they can pass on excellent traditional Chinese culture. Taking shadow puppetry as an example, animators can integrate this art form with character design. Since shadow puppetry mostly uses animal hide as material, designers can also use this feature to add coloring methods, leveraging the unique characteristics of carving craftsmanship to create varied character images, and infuse them with bright and vivid colors to display unique styles and spread the charm of using traditional artistic design elements.

Taking Chinese knots as an example, which are unique hand-knotted crafts in China, they demonstrate the delicacy and wisdom of ancient Chinese civilization, evolving into today's decorative art. Animators can integrate Chinese knots with character designs by using unique patterns to decorate costumes or other designs and by creating animated scenes with folk art patterns that align with traditional Chinese decorative customs and aesthetic concepts, allowing the excellent traditional culture to be inherited and promoted in the content of animations, and widely disseminating folk art.

Taking paper-cutting as an example, it is a folk art that decorates life by cutting patterns on paper with scissors or knives. Paper-cutting has a wide popular base in China and is part of the social lives of people from all ethnic groups, playing an important role in Chinese folk activities. By integrating paper-cutting with animated character design, animators can continue visual images and design formats and can highlight rich cultural and historical information within the content, allowing audiences to enhance their life ideals and aesthetic tastes, and to feel the social value displayed by animated characters. As paper-cutting inherently carries auspicious meanings, using it to showcase unique artistic themes is most appropriate. Designers can employ paper-cutting elements to highlight paper-cut animation arts, using exaggeration, deformation, and abstraction among other techniques to meet the needs of realistic, abstract, and decorative styling. This not only makes the animation more lively but also emphasizes the fun of it, enhancing the visual effect. For example, the animation "Zhu Bajie Eating Watermelon" mainly uses the technique of paper-cutting art to represent the scene of Zhu Bajie eating watermelon. When watching this kind of paper-cut animation, viewers can be refreshed by the comical scenes, quickly grasp the characteristics of the characters by viewing the

paper-cut designs, enhance the connection between the character's expressions and movements, and through realistic design, strengthen the visual effect of the paper-cut animation and enrich the audience's experience. Many animators can take this as an example, to wisely apply paper-cutting art in animated character design, employing it to enrich character motions and expressions and to dissect character design features, letting paper-cut animation art be passed down. Taking palace lanterns as an example, also known as court lanterns, they are among the most characteristic traditional handicrafts of Chinese lanterns. Palace lanterns flourished during the Sui and Tang dynasties, thus having a strong local flavor. If animators can integrate palace lantern elements into the character design, they can use various patterns of painted lanterns to display elegance and grandeur, bringing to life more magnificent animated scenes. Moreover, palace lanterns are mainly made with delicate wooden frames covered with silk or glass, and various patterns are painted on them to form colorful lanterns, exuding a strong imperial aura. Animators can also correctly select or adjust the shape of the lantern, painting screens with characteristic patterns showing dragons and phoenixes or symbols of good fortune and longevity to comprehensively display meaningful art in the content, allowing the features to stand out in the animation, and allowing excellent traditional Chinese culture to be passed down through the content. Taking facial makeup as an example, many animators apply the art of facial makeup to animated designs, combining the traditional aesthetics of opera with animation creation. This will not only create more distinctive animated images, but also enable animation viewers to enhance the character's memory and improve their viewing experience when watching this type of image. Take the cartoon "Tales from the Heavenly Book" as an example. There are three vixens in the cartoon. The images of these three vixens draw on the art of traditional opera facial makeup, which not only allows the viewer to understand their unique personality characteristics during the viewing process, but also You can also feel the national characteristics contained in it. By watching the opera facial makeup of the three foxes, you can feel the cherry mouth and splayed eyebrows on the vixen image, as well as the melancholy and anxious expressions.

## 6. Conclusion

Animation character design workers can, in the context of social development in the new era, meet the needs of viewers for more animation content, starting from the elements of Chinese national art, rationally applying elements of traditional Chinese art modeling in animation character design, and exploring national culture. The essence of animation design can effectively inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, so that the stage of my country's traditional animation design can gain a foothold in the social development of the new era. Let folk art be fully displayed, and let China's traditional animation industry gain the power to develop and sustainably improve. Of course, designers can optimize animated characters with the help of traditional Chinese artistic modeling elements, and can also add character characteristics to make the animated modeling more unique and more valuable.

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