

The Artistic Integration and Cultural Inheritance: Modern Interpretations of Qinqiang Opera Masks

Li Huidong,
Veerawat Sirivesmas and Ruenglada Punyalikit
Silpakorn University, Thailand.
Corresponding Author, E-mail: lhuidong045@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to explore the artistic and cultural significance of Qinqiang Opera masks by examining their role in modern cultural inheritance and integration. Through a combination of literature review, visual analysis, and field research, this study focuses on the design, color symbolism, and emotional expression of the masks as key elements of Qinqiang Opera performances. The research sample consists of traditional Qinqiang Opera masks from Shaanxi province, supplemented by modern interpretations found in multimedia and design projects. Research instruments include academic texts, interviews with artists and designers, as well as visual documentation of performances. Data collection involves qualitative analysis through case studies and interviews, while research analysis employs both historical and semiotic approaches to understand the evolving role of masks in contemporary settings.

The research results found that Qinqiang Opera masks not only serve as aesthetic symbols but also play a crucial role in connecting historical traditions with modern cultural expressions. The innovative application of traditional mask elements in contemporary art has allowed for the preservation and adaptation of this cultural form, ensuring its relevance in the modern era.

Keywords: Artistic Integration; Cultural Inheritance; Modern Interpretations; Qinqiang Opera Masks

Introduction

Qinqiang Opera masks represent a unique element of traditional Chinese folk art, particularly within the cultural landscape of Northwest China. As an integral part of Qinqiang Opera, these masks serve not only as aesthetic devices but also as powerful tools for conveying character traits, emotions, and moral values. Despite their historical significance, the study of Qinqiang Opera masks has faced several challenges in recent years, particularly in the context of modern cultural dynamics. With the rapid rise of globalization and the influence of modern media, traditional art forms such as Qinqiang masks are increasingly under threat of marginalization. The lack of systematic research on the modernization of these masks, specifically how they can be integrated into contemporary art without losing their cultural significance, underscores the need for renewed academic attention (Sun, 2023; Lan & Zhang, 2012).

Another pressing issue is the oversimplification and commercialization of Qinqiang masks in contemporary applications. As Qinqiang masks are increasingly used in modern design and media, their rich cultural symbolism is often reduced to mere visual elements, stripping away their deeper meanings. This trend is exacerbated by the lack of in-depth research

on the symbolic and emotional roles that these masks play in performances. Existing studies largely focus on their semiotic functions and color symbolism but fail to address how these elements contribute to character development and emotional expression on stage (Zhu, 2022). Therefore, there is a growing need to investigate the aesthetic and cultural value of Qinqiang Opera masks in a modern context, focusing on how they can maintain their traditional essence while adapting to new forms of artistic expression.

This research aims to fill these gaps by examining the artistic integration and cultural inheritance of Qinqiang Opera masks, exploring how these traditional elements can be revitalized in the modern cultural landscape. By doing so, this study will contribute to both the preservation of China's intangible cultural heritage and the ongoing development of contemporary art.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the cultural and symbolic significance of Qinqiang Opera masks colors.
2. To analyze the artistic design of Qinqiang full-face and half-face Opera masks.
3. To explore how Qinqiang Opera masks embodies emotional expression through color, pattern, and line.
4. To investigate how Qinqiang Opera masks convey emotional expressions through the use of colors, patterns, and design elements.

Literature Review

Chinese Opera masks art is an important part of traditional folk culture, and Qinqiang Opera masks art has formed a unique folk art system. In recent years, Qinqiang Opera masks culture has received widespread attention from academia and the outside world, exploring the artistic and cultural value of Opera masks in contemporary society.

1. Research on the historical evolution of Qinqiang Opera masks:

Liu Xiaoli (2022) analyzed the performance style of Qinqiang, showing the unique life and labor aspects of Northwest China, and by exploring these distinctive aspects, provided new insights for the comprehensive development of Qinqiang and the dissemination of Chinese traditional culture. Li Kunjie (2019) pointed out in his research that the design patterns of Qinqiang Opera masks have gradually incorporated contemporary art elements, giving traditional Opera masks a new visual impact. Zhang Peng (2017) revealed the challenges and innovative attempts faced by traditional crafts in the process of inheritance through interviews with Shaanxi Opera masks artists. He Fanglin (2019) focused on the artistic characteristics of Qinqiang Opera masks, analyzed its artistic function and social value in costume dramas, and helped to understand the role and cultural significance of Qinqiang Opera masks in drama performances.

At present, there are many studies on the historical origins and development trajectory of Qinqiang Opera masks. Through archaeological discoveries and historical records, researchers have outlined the formation and evolution of Qinqiang Opera masks. Studies have shown that Qinqiang Opera masks originated from sacrificial rituals in the Qin and Han dynasties and was systematically developed in the Ming and Qing dynasties. However, most of these studies are historical reviews, lacking in-depth discussions on the functional

transformation of Opera masks in different historical stages and its relationship with social and cultural changes.

2. Research on the semiotics and aesthetics of Qinqiang Opera masks:

Zhu Anjie (2022) provided a theoretical basis for the analysis of the aesthetic concepts of Opera masks art, and deeply explored the visual elements and regional cultural aesthetic characteristics in Qinqiang Opera masks. Zhou Yangfan (2019) analyzed how Qinqiang Opera masks absorbs foreign artistic features and promotes cultural diversity from a cross-cultural perspective. Tian Huan (2023) and Zhao Biheng and Chen Bin (2022) provided cases for the application of Qinqiang Opera masks in cultural and creative design, and explored how to combine traditional artistic elements with modern design concepts to further inherit culture.

Semiotic research is one of the main paths to interpret the cultural connotation of Qinqiang Opera masks. Researchers have explored the personality traits and cultural significance represented by different Opera masks symbols by analyzing the colors, patterns, and shapes of Opera masks. For example, red usually symbolizes loyalty and bravery, while black represents integrity and honesty. However, these studies often focus on the static analysis of semiotics, ignoring the dynamic significance of Opera masks during the performance and the audience's aesthetic acceptance and cultural understanding.

3. Research on the color culture of Qinqiang Opera masks:

Sun Jing (2023) explored the rich connotation of traditional Chinese "five colors" culture and analyzed the relationship between the Qinqiang Opera masks color spectrum and the traditional "five colors" culture. This study explores the classification of Qinqiang Opera masks color spectrum and its embodiment of character morality and personality traits, which is of great significance to understanding the cultural background of Qinqiang Opera masks. The research of Sun Jing (2023) and He Fanglin (2019) analyzed the relationship between the color of Qinqiang Opera masks and the morality and personality traits of the characters it represents, which is of great significance to explore the use of color in modern design and the communication of cultural connotations. Liu Yuanyuan (2023) focuses on how the cultural value of Qinqiang Opera masks can be re-recognized and promoted under the intangible cultural heritage protection policy.

Color culture research mainly focuses on the symbolic meaning of colors in Qinqiang Opera masks and its traditional cultural roots. Many studies have explored the cultural symbolic meaning of red, black, white, yellow and other colors in Opera masks and their relationship with Confucian ethical and moral values. However, existing studies often start from the concept of traditional colors and lack a reinterpretation of these colors in the contemporary context and their relationship with modern design art.

4. Research on the integration of Qinqiang Opera masks and modern art:

Pu Pengju, Ren Xiaoli, Pang Like & Martin Ding (2023) demonstrated the innovative application of Qinqiang Opera masks in contemporary multimedia art through case analysis. Ma Yue (2021) explored the integration of Qinqiang Opera masks patterns in modern clothing design, emphasizing the new life of traditional cultural symbols in contemporary consumer culture. Hou Mengying (2020) and Jiang Yuan (2019) explored the application and innovative design of Qinqiang Opera masks through case analysis. These field studies can provide empirical support for the thesis. Wang Rui (2022) and Yan Xiao (2021) studied the dissemination methods of Qinqiang art under the background of new media, which is directly helpful for discussing how modern communication technology affects the inheritance of traditional culture. Yan Xiao (2021) focuses on the innovative dissemination methods of

Qinqiang art, explores the problems existing in traditional dissemination methods and its innovative paths. This study proposes to establish a new model of online and offline integrated dissemination, and looks forward to the potential of using 3D technology to disseminate Qinqiang art.

Although some studies focus on the combination of Qinqiang Opera masks and modern art, overall, research in this field is still in the initial exploration stage. Some studies attempt to integrate Qinqiang Opera masks elements into modern visual arts, design and popular culture to explore the possibility of cross-cultural communication. However, these studies mostly focus on the integration of surface art forms, without in-depth exploration of the cultural significance behind this integration and its impact on the inheritance of Qinqiang Opera masks culture.

In the study of modern art integration, I found that many studies focus on the combination of traditional Qinqiang Opera masks and contemporary art forms, exploring its application in new media, visual arts and contemporary design. Over the years, more and more artists and designers have incorporated Qinqiang Opera masks elements into modern art works, such as animation design, costume design, advertising, etc. However, I noticed that these fusion attempts often emphasize formal innovation, but pay less attention to the significance of cultural inheritance and the acceptance of contemporary society. Although some studies have shown that this artistic fusion has promoted the international dissemination of Qinqiang masks to a certain extent, it has also caused people to worry about the oversimplification and commercialization of cultural symbols. For example, some contemporary artists have used elements of Qinqiang masks in their works, but in the process of this re-creation, the original cultural connotations have been weakened, and sometimes even misunderstood or misused. I think this phenomenon reflects an urgent problem in the process of modern art fusion: how to maintain the cultural significance of Qinqiang masks while meeting the aesthetic needs of modern audiences. Therefore, I think future research should pay more attention to the cultural background and audience feedback in this artistic fusion process, so as to promote a deeper combination of traditional art and modern art.

5. International research on Opera masks:

Japanese scholars began to study the history of Opera masks earlier than Chinese scholars, and believed that Opera masks is a symbol of wisdom and pride. After generations of scholars' unremitting efforts, Japanese Opera masks has been recognized by the world. Japanese Opera masks expert Noma Seiroku wrote in the preface of "History of Japanese Opera masks": "The types and production techniques of Japanese Opera masks have reached the highest level in the world. The Opera masks in Southeast Asia, Africa and other regions is primitive due to the underdeveloped culture. Even the Opera masks art of intellectually developed countries such as Greece, China, and Java cannot be compared with Japanese Opera masks."

Internationally, Chinese Opera masks has also been widely studied. For example, Professor Ritsuko Hirota of Kanagawa University in Japan explored the close connection between Chinese Opera masks and ritual performances in her book "The Origin of Ghosts - Chinese Opera masks and Ritual". Professor Hirota's research is mainly concentrated in Guizhou, Xiangxi, Guichi, Anhui and other regions, mainly exploring the origin and cultural significance of the "ghost and god" image, and conducting a comparative analysis of Chinese and Japanese Opera masks. She believes that Opera masks transforms all spirits into the power

to overcome disasters. This interpretation provides valuable insights into the complex psychological relationship between Guizhou people and Opera masks.

These studies provide us with a solid theoretical foundation, but there is still limited discussion on how Qinqiang Opera masks can be integrated into modern society through artistic integration and cultural inheritance.

Research Methodology

This section outlines the approach used in this study to explore the artistic integration and cultural inheritance of Qinqiang Opera masks. The methodology covers population sampling, research tools, data collection, and analysis, providing a comprehensive framework to investigate how Qinqiang Opera masks can adapt to modern culture while maintaining their traditional significance.

1. Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of Qinqiang Opera performers, mask designers, cultural scholars, and audiences familiar with the art form in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, where Qinqiang Opera is most commonly performed. Additionally, samples include cultural heritage experts and art educators involved in the preservation and promotion of traditional Chinese opera. The sample also includes students from universities with art and design programs where traditional and modern art forms intersect.

A purposive sampling method was used, targeting key informants with deep knowledge and experience in Qinqiang Opera masks. A total of 50 participants, including 20 performers, 10 mask designers, 10 cultural scholars, and 10 art students, were selected to ensure diverse perspectives in the research.

2. Research Tools

Multiple research tools were employed to collect data and facilitate analysis:

Literature Review: A thorough literature review of books, academic papers, and reports from cultural institutions provided a foundational understanding of the historical evolution, symbolism, and semiotics of Qinqiang Opera masks.

Field Observations: Direct observation of Qinqiang Opera performances was conducted in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. This included attending live performances to observe the use of masks in context and document their role in character portrayal and emotional expression.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Qinqiang performers, mask designers, and scholars. Questions focused on the cultural significance, design process, and challenges of maintaining traditional mask art in a modern context.

Visual Analysis: Visual data were collected through photographs and videos of Qinqiang performances and modern interpretations of the masks. This tool helped analyze the color, patterns, and designs used in both traditional and contemporary masks.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was distributed to audience members and art students to gauge their understanding and perceptions of Qinqiang Opera masks. This helped to assess the cultural relevance and audience engagement with the art form.

3. Data Collection

The data collection process involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods:

Qualitative Data: Interviews and field observations provided rich, descriptive data on the use and interpretation of Qinqiang Opera masks. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Photographs and video recordings from field observations offered visual data on the artistic and symbolic aspects of the masks.

Quantitative Data: Survey responses were collected from the audience members and art students. This data provided insights into the current perceptions of Qinqiang masks in terms of cultural relevance, aesthetic appeal, and emotional expression.

4. Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative techniques:

Qualitative Analysis: Content analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcripts, focusing on recurring themes related to cultural inheritance, artistic integration, and emotional expression. Visual analysis of photographs and videos was conducted to identify patterns in mask design, color usage, and symbolic elements.

Quantitative Analysis: Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to understand audience perceptions and engagement with Qinqiang Opera masks. The results provided a broader view of how traditional and modern interpretations of the masks are received by contemporary audiences.

Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this research is based on three core dimensions: Artistic Integration, Cultural Inheritance, and Emotional Expression.

Artistic Integration: This dimension explores how traditional Qinqiang masks are reinterpreted in modern art forms, such as multimedia design, fashion, and contemporary performance arts. It examines how traditional patterns, colors, and designs can be adapted to contemporary aesthetics while preserving their cultural significance.

Cultural Inheritance: This focuses on the transmission of Qinqiang Opera mask-making skills and knowledge to future generations. It looks at how traditional craftsmanship can be preserved in the face of modernization, and how educational institutions and cultural policies play a role in the continuation of these practices.

Emotional Expression: The role of colors, patterns, and mask designs in conveying emotions is a key aspect of this study. This dimension investigates how visual elements in Qinqiang masks communicate complex emotions such as anger, wisdom, and nobility, and how these expressions can be maintained or transformed in modern interpretations.

By integrating these dimensions, the study seeks to understand how Qinqiang Opera masks can evolve within contemporary culture without losing their traditional identity. This framework will guide both the analysis and interpretation of the data collected throughout the research .

Research Results

1. The color of Qinqiang Opera masks

The color of Qinqiang Opera masks is an important part of its expressiveness and has profound cultural and symbolic significance. The use of color in these Opera masks is not only decorative, but also a profound expression of the character's personality and emotional state. As Table 1, the traditional concept of "five colors" (blue, red, yellow, black, and white) forms the basis of the color of Qinqiang Opera masks, and each color has its unique symbolic meaning and application

Table 1 Five Color

Visual Front	History	Story	Mask Types	Character Traits	Mask Color Palette
	the late period of the Yuan Dynasty	The Conquest of Ning Nation by Chang Yuchun	Slanted Spin Face	Brave and skilled in battle, resourceful, and strong in youth.	Black
	Song Dynasty	The Cutting of the Yellow Robes by Zhao Kuangyin	Full-face	Loves wine and women, easily swayed by slander.	Red
	Song Dynasty	Mu Ke Village - Jiao Zan.	Universal Pillar Face	Straightforward, with fish-shaped eyes indicating intelligence and cunning, adept at scheming.	White
	Three Kingdoms period	Sima Bитай Sima Yi	Four Major mask Types	Cunning and crafty, adaptable, intelligent, and strategic.	Pink
	Ming Dynasty	Hei Ding Ben Xu Yanzhao	Passing Heaven Pillar Face	Generations of loyalty, straightforward personality.	Pink Old Face

Five-color Theory: This theory analyzes the five traditional Chinese colors (blue, red, yellow, black, and white) and their application in Qinqiang. It reflects cultural beliefs, cosmology, and moral values.

Symbolic meaning: Each color in Qinqiang has different symbolic characteristics and is associated with a specific role. For example:

1.1 Red mask

Symbolic meaning and role type:

In Qinqiang, red symbolizes loyalty, bravery, and justice. Red is often used to express characters with noble moral character and bravery. Its use is not just for visual impact, but to reflect the inner morality of the character. For example: Loyal and brave characters: In "Passing Five Passes", Guan Yu's mask is red, highlighting his loyalty and righteousness. Guan Yu is a symbol of loyalty and righteousness, and his mask uses bright colors and bold patterns to express his heroic and fearless spirit. Chivalrous and brave: In "The Battle of Red Cliffs", Huang Gai's mask shows loyalty and bravery at critical moments, emphasizing his great

contribution to the country and the people. Color application: Red Opera masks usually uses bright red with simple patterns, such as straight lines and curves, to highlight the main personality traits and emotions of the character. For example, the combination of red and gold can add a sense of magnificence to the Opera masks; the contrast between red and black can highlight the justice and decisiveness of the character.

1.2 Black Opera masks

Symbolic meaning and character type: In Qinqiang, black represents integrity, justice, and fearlessness, and is often used to portray characters with noble character and firm stance. For example: Characters of integrity and justice: In "Chen Shimei Kills His Wife", the character Bao Gong wears a black face mask, which conveys his fearless, fair, and upright character. The depth and calmness of black are consistent with the character's sense of justice and moral integrity. Use of color: The design of black face mask is usually simple and powerful. Black is used as the main color, with simple patterns and lines, to highlight the seriousness and integrity of the character. For example, black face mask usually features straight and cross lines to express the character's firmness and decisiveness.

1.3 Yellow face mask

Symbolic meaning and character type: In Qinqiang, yellow symbolizes authority, wisdom, and nobility, and is often used to express powerful and noble characters. For example: Emperors and generals: In "The Greatest Emperor in the World", Qin Shihuang's face mask is yellow, emphasizing his imperial majesty, and the use of yellow highlights his ruling power. Immortal characters: In "Investiture of the Gods", the yellow face of Taishang Laojun represents his wisdom and divinity, emphasizing his extraordinary status. Use of colors: Yellow mask generally uses bright yellow, supplemented by exquisite decorative patterns such as dragon patterns and cloud patterns to enhance the visual luxury and majesty. The combination of yellow and gold further highlights the nobility and sacredness of the character.

1.4 Blue mask

Symbolic meaning and character type: The blue (or green) in Qinqiang symbolizes power, justice and bravery, and is often used to portray people with noble character and great talent. For example: Heroes and leaders: In "Da Ming Palace Ci", Qin Shihuang wears a blue mask to show his extraordinary talent and authority. The use of blue conveys the power and majesty of the character. Mysterious characters: In "The Romance of Sui and Tang Dynasties", Li Yuanba's blue mask emphasizes his mystery and extraordinary power, enhancing the supernatural atmosphere of the character. Use of colors: Blue mask often uses blue-green gradient tones, with complex lines and patterns, such as cloud patterns and wave patterns, to reflect the dynamic and mysterious feeling of the character. The different shades of blue in the Opera masks illustrate the multifaceted personality traits of the character.

1.5 White Opera masks

Symbolic meaning and character types: The white color in Qinqiang Opera masks represents insidiousness, cunningness, and evilness, and is often used to portray characters with negative personalities and villains. For example: Treacherous character: Cao Cao's white Opera masks in "The Burning of Red Cliff" highlights his cunningness and treachery, emphasizing his villainy. Tyrant: King Zhou's white Opera masks in "The Hairpin Hidden" expresses his cruelty and selfishness, conveying the character's coldness and evil. Color application: There are usually two types of white Opera masks: water white and oil white. Water white is mostly used to portray insidious and cunning characters, and oil white is mostly used to portray

arrogant and conceited characters. The design of white Opera masks often contains black or gray details to emphasize the evil and cold nature of the character.

2. Types of Opera masks

Qinqiang Opera masks has two types: full face and half face, each with its own unique use and expression style. The design of Opera masks involves not only colors and patterns, but also modeling and decorative details, which together constitute the visual image of the character.

2.1 Full-face Opera masks

Features and uses: Full-face Opera masks covers the entire face and has strong expressiveness and visual impact. They fully display the character's personality and characteristics and are usually used for main characters. The design of full-face Opera masks is usually more complex, and the colors and patterns are richer.

Main characters: In "The Eternal Emperor", Qin Shihuang uses a full-face Opera masks to show his majesty and authority. The design of the full-face Opera masks highlights the overall image of the character, allowing the audience to recognize their status and characteristics at a glance.

2.2 Half-face Opera masks

Features and applications: Half-face Opera masks only covers part of the face and is often used to express the character's personality or emotions. The design of half-face Opera masks is relatively simple, focusing on highlighting a certain aspect of the character.

Supporting role: In "Li Kui Breaks into the Camp", Li Kui uses a half-face Opera masks to emphasize his straightforwardness and honesty. The design of half-face Opera masks allows for changes in color and pattern to show a specific character of the character.

Emotional expression: In "The Hairpin", King Zhou uses half-face mask to highlight his sinister cruelty. The design of half-face mask helps to express the character's emotional state and personality traits through changes in color and details.

3. Composition/Components of mask

The composition of Qinqiang mask includes multiple elements such as color, pattern, line, material, etc. Each component has a significant impact on the expressiveness and symbolic meaning of the mask.

3.1 Color Selection

The color selection of Qinqiang mask is not only for beauty, but also to convey the character and emotion of the character. Different color combinations can convey different messages, such as the combination of red and black emphasizes loyalty and integrity, while yellow and gold highlight majesty and nobility.

3.2 Pattern Application

The pattern is an important element in the design of mask. Traditional patterns include stripes, spirals, dots, etc., which not only play a decorative role, but also have profound symbolic meanings. For example:

Stripes: used to express the seriousness and majesty of the character, such as the stripes of the black mask, emphasizing the integrity and fairness of the character.

Spiral: used to convey the complexity and mystery of the character, and the spiral pattern on the blue mask enhances the mystery of the character.

4. Emotional Expression of mask

The emotional expression of Qinqiang mask is an important aspect of its artistic expression. Through colors, patterns, and mask design, Opera masks can convey the inner emotions and personality traits of the characters.

Symbolic Expression of Emotions

Anger and Rage: By using bright colors and bold lines, Opera masks can effectively express the anger and rage of the characters. For example, the combination of red and black can be used to highlight the strong emotions and decisiveness of the characters. The bold lines and sharp angles on the Opera masks enhance the feelings of anger and impulsiveness.

Sadness and Melancholy: Soft colors and simple patterns effectively convey the sadness and melancholy of the characters. For example, blue and gray Opera masks is often paired with straightforward lines and soft patterns to express inner pain and worry. The use of color gradients and delicate pattern details on the Opera masks enhances the emotional expression.

Wisdom and Authority: Wisdom and authority are often expressed through balanced and harmonious designs. The Opera masks uses yellow and blue as the main colors, with delicate decorative patterns such as dragon patterns and cloud patterns, to highlight the wisdom and dignity of the characters. The symmetrical design and delicate patterns on the Opera masks reflect the thoughtfulness and noble status of the characters.

Discussion

This study delves into several key aspects of Qinqiang Opera masks, focusing on their cultural, symbolic, and emotional significance. The findings, in combination with existing literature, provide a deeper understanding of how these masks function within the realm of traditional and modern Chinese art.

1. Exploring the cultural and symbolic significance of Qinqiang Opera mask colors

The study found that the colors used in Qinqiang Opera masks are not just decorative elements but carry profound cultural and symbolic meanings. Each color corresponds to specific traits and values, such as red symbolizing loyalty and bravery, and black representing integrity and honesty. This finding is consistent with the traditional five-color theory of Chinese art, which attributes moral and ethical significance to colors. The alignment of these colors with character traits in Qinqiang Opera further reinforces their importance in maintaining cultural continuity, as supported by Sun Jing's (2023) and He Fanglin's (2019) analyses.

2. Analyzing the artistic design of Qinqiang full-face and half-face Opera masks

The research revealed that the artistic design of full-face and half-face Qinqiang Opera masks serves different functional and expressive purposes. Full-face masks are often used for major characters and are more elaborate, while half-face masks are typically reserved for secondary characters or to highlight specific emotional traits. This differentiation in design is consistent with the role distinctions in traditional Chinese opera, as well as the need for visual impact on stage. The finding aligns with the work of Li Kunjie (2019), who noted the incorporation of modern design elements into traditional masks, ensuring both functionality and aesthetic appeal.

3. Exploring how Qinqiang Opera masks embody emotional expression through color, pattern, and line

The study found that Qinqiang Opera masks use a combination of colors, patterns, and lines to convey complex emotions. For instance, the combination of red and black may indicate strong emotions such as anger or courage, while softer patterns and colors like blue or gray can express sadness or introspection. This finding is consistent with Sun Jing's (2023) and other scholars' work, which emphasizes the moral symbolism of colors in Qinqiang Opera but extends the analysis to include emotional nuances. This is an important contribution as it highlights how visual elements are used to communicate not just character traits but also their emotional states.

4. Investigating how Qinqiang Opera masks convey emotional expressions through the use of colors, patterns, and design elements

The research found that the design elements of Qinqiang Opera masks—particularly the use of patterns, shapes, and color gradients—play a significant role in conveying the emotional and psychological depth of characters. Bold lines and angular patterns are used to express intense emotions like rage or determination, while softer curves and pastel shades are employed to depict more subtle emotions, such as sorrow or contemplation. This observation is consistent with previous studies but adds a layer of insight into the dynamic interaction between form and emotion, which has been underexplored in earlier research. This reinforces the findings of Zhu Anjie (2022), who highlighted the aesthetic significance of Qinqiang Opera masks but did not delve deeply into their emotional expressiveness.

In summary, this study deepened the understanding of Qinqiang Opera masks art, especially the important role of color in character image shaping and emotional expression, and enriched the research on the cultural connotation of Qinqiang art. At the same time, the conclusions of this study provide a new perspective and reference for future research on opera art.

Recommendations

1. Theoretical Recommendations

Future research should deepen the exploration of how Qinqiang Opera masks embody regional identity and reflect the perceptions of beauty, morality, and cultural values in the northwest. Investigating the visual language in relation to symbolism and traditional Chinese values will enhance understanding of their historical and contemporary significance. Furthermore, research should emphasize how Qinqiang masks convey ethical values like loyalty and justice, while exploring their emotional and visual impact in audience perception and cultural expression.

2. Policy Recommendations

Cultural heritage policies must prioritize the preservation of Qinqiang Opera masks, ensuring their protection as a national treasure. Public campaigns should raise awareness both domestically and internationally. Educational initiatives should integrate Qinqiang Opera into national curricula with practical workshops, and cultural exchange programs should highlight these traditions. Grants should also encourage artists and scholars to innovate within the cultural framework, promoting both traditional and modern uses of the masks.

3. Practical Recommendations

Further research should explore how Qinqiang Opera masks can incorporate modern themes while preserving traditional values. New materials, including sustainable options,

should be considered in design evolution. Technological advancements like 3D modeling and augmented reality (AR) can revitalize performances and enhance audience experience. Comparative studies with other mask traditions would enrich understanding and encourage global cultural collaborations, helping Qinqiang Opera masks expand their international influence.

References

- He, F. (2019). *Research on the artistic characteristics of Qinqiang facial makeup* (Master's thesis, Xi'an Conservatory of Music). https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=sMQVub3UVPiWYU8chRp4O6FUe5hKyyXuKmGrHPzcBFw7wekjIjCflcSHLdNntNtyuGpem1i7K3WhIRpjWdpBLZJPRiw9i0mYqlK11Iil7TWYRLvjwyjvQoEByZ-AbmgWawnNwEpLKr-_2c9_YCeJBjuVakizn4tFUHT9rBhB1T0lAV_XcIvIKsYl4W8FbKp0tuyDWUYEo=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Hou, M. (2020). *Qinqiang facial makeup painting art*. In 2020 National Education and Teaching Innovation and Development High-end Forum Conference Proceedings (Vol. 1, pp. 205-206). Xianyang Normal University.
- Jiang, Y. (2019). Research on UI interface design based on Qinqiang facial makeup elements. *Art Panorama*, 09, 140-141.
- Lan, Y., & Zhang, L. (2012). The aesthetic expression of Qinqiang opera masks. *Beauty and Times* (Part 1), 11, 30-32. <https://doi.org/10.16129/j.cnki.mysds.2012.11.026>
- Li, K. (2019). Research on the artistic characteristics of Qinqiang. *Drama Home*, 21, 44.
- Liu, X. (2022). Analysis of Qinqiang artistic style and performance methods. *Ancient and Modern Cultural Creation*, 34, 89-91. <https://doi.org/10.20024/j.cnki.CN42-1911/I.2022.34.029>
- Liu, Y. (2023). *Shaanxi intangible cultural heritage "touching the Internet" opens up a new way of dissemination*. People's Political Consultative Conference News, 009.
- Ma, Y., & Chen, B. (2021). Research on the application of Qinqiang character images in clothing and apparel design. *Textile Report*, 05, 41-42.
- Pu, P., Ren, X., Pang, L., & Ding, M. (2023). Construction of traditional cultural inheritance and dissemination design based on APP model - taking Qinqiang as an example. *Shoe Crafts and Design*, 09, 96-98.
- Sun, J. (2023). On the cultural connotation of Qinqiang facial makeup colors. *Contemporary Drama*, 02, 72-75. <https://doi.org/10.13369/j.cnki.ddxj.2023.02.011>
- Tian, H. (2023). Research on the cultural and creative design of Qinqiang facial makeup elements from the perspective of regional culture. *Baihua*, 06, 53-55.
- Wang, R. (2022). *Research on the new media imaging presentation of Qinqiang* (Master's thesis, Northwest Normal University). <https://doi.org/10.27410/d.cnki.gxbfu.2022.000628>
- Yan, X. (2021). *Analysis of the creative communication methods of Qinqiang art* (Master's thesis, Xi'an Conservatory of Music). <https://doi.org/10.27402/d.cnki.gxayc.2021.000106>
- Zhang, P. (2017). Research on the contemporary innovation of Qinqiang culture and art. *Tomorrow's Fashion*, 10, 386.
- Zhao, B., & Chen, B. (2022). Application of Qinqiang facial makeup elements in cultural and creative product design. *Chemical Fiber and Textile Technology*, 01, 190-192.

- Zhou, F. (2019). Traditional cultural consciousness in Qinqiang Yang Wulang facial makeup. *Chinese Artists*, 12, 86.
- Zhu, A. (2022). Research on the aesthetics of Qinqiang facial makeup art. *Art Education Research*, 14, 48-50.