

Application and Value of Chinese Calligraphy in Visual Design of Anti-Smoking Advertisements from the Perspective of Life Aesthetics

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Abstract:Anti-smoking advertisements have great importance of value orientation and enlightening function, the visual design of anti-smoking advertisements can not only guide the formation of public health values through visual communication, but also promote the integration of economic and social benefits between media and tobacco enterprises. As an important category of visual language, Chinese calligraphy can form the natural fusion together with the linguistic features of visual design to be widely used in design practice. Being affected by the aestheticization of daily life at different levels, the functional fit between calligraphy "writing" and design "transmission", and the aesthetic contemplation on calligraphy "style" and design "meaning transmission", both become the new form for the aestheticization of daily life. From the perspective of life aesthetics, with the relationship between calligraphy art and contemporary visual design to be re-examined, in terms of the design of anti-smoking advertisements, calligraphy has realized the creation and transcendence of seeing "the ideal" from "the existence" in the application of visual design, thus forming the intention of reconstructing people's life value system in the current cultural context with "beauty", which is just the "human-oriented" design.

Key words: Chinese calligraphy; visual design; life aesthetics; anti-smoking advertisements

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INTRODUCTION

Anti-smoking advertisements can guide the formation of public health values through visual communication, and promote the integration of economic and social benefits between media and tobacco enterprises. As an important part of public service announcements(PSAs) advertisements, anti-smoking advertisements have widely spread by

multiple media technologies and art forms in different counties and regions. The visual design of anti-smoking advertisements mainly conveys information through graphics, character, meaning and form, in which text is one of the most important ways of expression. Currently, anti-smoking advisements ensure the clarity of communication by using printed fonts of characters, however, it lacks affinity and artistry

from the perspective of design. This essay attempts to analyze the application and value of Chinese Calligraphy in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements from the perspective of life aesthetics, tries to introduce this ancient art into contemporary public design, and seeks a visual design path which can not only deeply convey the public welfare ideas, concepts, but also reflect the health value evaluation and value pursuit.

As an ancient and unique art with independent artistic style, calligraphy has always been having a close connection with design, rather than existing alone. During the Chinese history, whatever the earliest design works combining calligraphy with ceramic technology such as the white pottery fragments of "the X-th sacrifice by Emperor Wen of the Zhou Dynasty" unearthed from the Yin Dynasty ruins,¹ or the commonly used calligraphy decorations in ancient houses such as the "ceramic calligraphy" used for utensil identification and decoration in the Tang Dynasty and the "wall calligraphy" used for hall decoration in the Ming Dynasty, all reflect the long-term connection between Chinese calligraphy art and design. Based on its "artistic features of advocating charm, style, conception, form, shape and skill" formed in the historical development,² calligraphy as an important category of visual design of anti-smoking advertisements can form the natural fusion together with the "indicative, pictorial, symbolic and metaphorical" linguistic features of visual design,³ so as to be commonly used in the practice of contemporary visual design. As a kind of activity, design of anti-smoking advertisements originating from the derivation of life also can provide "material basis and possibility for the aestheticization of daily life".⁴ The evolution of calligraphy, the change of visual design of anti-smoking advertisements, and the universal participation of people in contemporary design activities have further "promoted" us to re consider the application and value of calligraphy in contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements with a new value dimension from the perspective of life aesthetics.

FUNCTIONAL FIT BETWEEN CALLIGRAPHY "WRITING" AND VISUAL DESIGN OF ANTI-SMOKING ADVERTISEMENTS "TRANSMISSION"

Being tracked back to the origin of Chinese characters, Chinese calligraphy emerged as the derivation form of characters writing has been gradually developing with the formation and evolution of characters, from the daily "writing" stage, to the "calligraphy" stage with complete aesthetic system and norms, and then to the "calligraphy art" stage with artistry as the first nature of calligraphy,⁵ which has experienced the development process of focusing on practicality, separating aesthetics from practicability, and taking aesthetics as center, thus indicating the blending and infiltration of practicality and artistry during the process. This artistic feature has made the application of calligraphy to modern visual design of anti-smoking advertisements firstly realize the functional fit between "writing" and design "transmission".

The current calligraphy historical works generally believe that the early calligraphy formed under the driven of Chinese characters development is a writing state without artistic consciousness, just like Ouyang Xiu said: "Without any purpose, write freely and delightfully, whether the fonts with various styles are ugly or beautiful",⁶ whose contents in daily writing state are mostly about "mourning, patient visiting, separation narrative and communication for greeting",⁶ thus it can be said that calligraphy with its existence depending on characters is the writing that use the mapping and expression of linguistic symbols to achieve some practicalities, so "writing characters is an essential feature for calligraphy being calligraphy".⁷ In this sense, calligraphy as the most direct presentation carrier for the font and semantics of characters carries the task of recording and daily writing, with its writing consciousness to be practical and purposeful, which has also become the core function of the formation and development of calligraphy in the early stage.

As a visual language, calligraphy usually emerges as a kind of recognizable character symbols to play a role in transmitting information

through characters in modern visual design of anti-smoking advertisements. For example, the adoption of various calligraphy fonts and their variants dialect pronunciation for the composition of special form meanings of text messages in the anti-smoking advertisements with regional characteristics is to achieve the purpose of propaganda. For another instance, the copywriting as finishing touch being added into the pure graphic meaning in poster design of anti-smoking can be completed by using calligraphy, so as to clarify the meaning of graphics and contribute to the creation of the overall picture atmosphere. As another example, a similar study shows that, "health warning messages could be an effective means of communicating the health risks associated with waterpipe (WP) smoking".⁸ For the package design of tobacco, the text of "smoking is harmful to health" can also use the standard calligraphy font to match the package design characteristics and temperament, so as to win the favor of consumers. Moreover, in the spread of anti-smoking advertisements in new media calligraphy is often required to be used for the accurate conveying of information in the design of anti-smoking advertisements through the realization of its writing function whether in the traditional visual design or the emerging media environment, and whether in the realization of two-dimensional design, three-dimensional or even multi-dimensional visual design. Therefore, the practical function regression of calligraphy "writing" is just the driving force to promote the functional fit between calligraphy and visual design of anti-smoking advertisements, while this kind of regression and fit as the design practice-based confirmation on ontology value and characteristics of calligraphy is exactly what contemporary life aesthetics insists, namely, "a manifestation of being close to and respecting life and recognizing the original quality of life",⁹ which is also the so-called "good" visual design of anti-smoking advertisements under the aestheticization trend of daily life.

However, the practicality of calligraphy in contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements is greatly different from that of calligraphy originally used for the writing "without

artistic sense". The advent of information times and the integration of media audio-visual channels have driven the visualization transformation of information to be inevitable. In the context of gradual integration of visual design and information design, calligraphy as an artistic creation activity in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements will not only carry out the transmission of information amount contained in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements by serving as a medium for carrying and recording information with transmission as its first essence, but also form a fit with the consciousness matching or acceptance degree of people as the audience on the basis of aesthetic contemplation, so as to further enhance the effect of information transmission. At this time, it needs to be clear that the contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements limited by design principles and norms must be an effective design behavior to realize the accurate information transmission under the guidance of design objectives. Therefore, the accuracy of information transmission is an important purpose of its "human-oriented" design pursuit, while with calligraphy as the application of visual language to contemporary design of anti-smoking advertisements, its recognizability and readability fundamentally sought by design are the important embodiment of the main function and ethical pursuit of "transmission" in the visual design of anti-smoking advertisements with the focus on "transmitting words and meaning". In other words, the writing function of calligraphy and the noble "gene" of art forms as well as their continuous pursuit for the realization of beauty in the process of development have realized not only the functional fit between calligraphy and visual design of anti-smoking advertisements, but also the value embodiment of meaning "transmission" of visual design in their aesthetic contemplation.

ARTISTIC CONTEMPLATION ON CALLIGRAPHY "WRITING" AND VISUAL DESIGN OF ANTI-SMOKING ADVERTISEMENTS "MEANING TRANSMISSION"

Certainly, during the development of calligraphy, the gradual addition of artistic factors into the practicality of calligraphic writing from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties had pushed the complete development of calligraphy style after the Wei and Jin Dynastie, thus more emphasis put on the presentation of its artistic form during the separation from Chinese characters' development has made artistry the first essence of calligraphy. Based on the development of calligraphy as an independent art category promoted by the above process, the various calligraphy styles have been formed through the expansion and innovation of calligraphers' art consciousness, while these calligraphy styles with various artistic characteristics have not only established the pluralistic discourse system, but also brought the abundant visual expression forms to visual design of anti-smoking advertisements, so as to build a channel for the "meaning transmission" of design.

With China's constant stress on that calligraphy and painting are of the same origin, there is an old saying: "Calligraphy and painting are of the same origin. The ancient sage started the painting of the eight diagrams by observing the images of the "Hetu" and "Luoshu". You Yu Shi in ancient China drew paintings and made embroideries with five colors, in which, the patterns of sun, moon, stars, mountains, dragons and pheasant are mostly based on their images to be made. Calligraphy and painting with the same origin are divided but still combined."¹⁰ With the embryonic form originating from the primitive pictures of ancient pictographic chronicles, Chinese characters developing from pictorial symbols to the enlightenment and development of characters, and then to the evolution of character glyphs through the way of producing glyphs by meaning and presenting characters with glyphs, have made calligraphy integrate writing function and graphic beauty, with the generation of diversified calligraphy styles and abundant visual language connotation. The ancient

charm of seal script, the solemnity of official script, the regularity of regular script, the boldness of cursive script, and the fluency of running script, all reflect the unique aesthetic taste, which also echo with the aesthetic views of the public in the transmission process of generation, glyphs construction and meaning transmission.

Besides being taken as the recognizable Chinese character symbols, calligraphy as the visual language with its unique artistry added into contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements is also usually used as the non-verbal symbols to transmit information and ideas from the perspective of symbolism, metaphor, etc. "In the current product promotion, the tobacco industry uses terms like 'light' and 'mild' to mislead consumers to believe its product is less harmful".¹¹ In response to this misdirection, being presented as the advertisement copy for information transmission in anti-smoking advertisement design, calligraphy can also appear as a design form contained meaning in the way of being used as the designed picture center through the application of overall text or partial strokes of a calligraphy style, thus finally forming the graphic content expression of "transmitting meaning with pictures". Another example is that the creation of application graphics can also use the writing of different calligraphy styles in large sections to construct the picture background, so as to create a special cultural atmosphere together with the wearing graphic of anti-smoking. For another instance, by means of media technology, calligraphy as the main creative role emerging in the form of Gestalt can also be enabled to move in vision through technical means in a symbolic or metaphorical way, thus the formation of re graphic and re creative design by taking different calligraphy style Gestalt as unit has become the core of creative expression in the overall design of anti-smoking advertisements. The formation of these visual design ways is not only the concrete embodiment of the rich and diverse application of calligraphy, but also the direct or implicit emotional presentation of calligraphy under the background of aestheticization of daily life. At the same time, this emotion as a kind of "spiritual sublimity" is also conducive to arouse people's

awareness of a healthy life and form a new aesthetic contemplation.

As a means of expression and the result formed through the subjective form of eye function, visual design of anti-smoking advertisements pushes people to form value judgment and aesthetic experience on the observation object according to their own understanding. Bearing the comprehensive information content, calligraphy as an important carrier for human communication is also the sublimation of graphic form that is easy to understand, whose processing and application in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements are the dual expression integrating word connotations and graphic ideas. The application of calligraphy to visual design of anti-smoking advertisements with deeper cultural connotations and richer expression forms relative to graphics not only is the restoration of calligraphy writing function, but also forms a new form and new symbolic meaning from functionality to artistry for visual design of anti-smoking advertisements, so as to achieve the new meanings of old words, and promote the observers' plot-based and psychological rethinking on visual design of anti-smoking advertisements. It can be said that the complementation between the artistry of "calligraphy style" and the artistry of "transmitting meaning" pursued by design of anti-smoking advertisements is conducive to the conscious formation of aesthetic contemplation in people's daily life, so as to achieve the pursuit, exploration and realization of health and beauty. Therefore, the application of calligraphy to the contemporary visual design also needs the new reflection from the perspective of life aesthetics.

REFLECTION ON APPLICATION OF CALLIGRAPHY TO VISUAL DESIGN OF ANTI-SMOKING ADVERTISEMENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE AESTHETICS

Being closely related to the aesthetics in daily life, calligraphy art and visual design of anti-smoking advertisements provide material basis and possibility for the aestheticization of daily life under the impact of aestheticization of daily life. In terms of calligraphy art, originating from recording

and writing, calligraphy not only serves as normal symbols in people's daily life to undertake the transmission of text content and meaning, but also helps people establish their perceptual existence mode and carry on self expression, while the deepening pursuit for artistry in daily writing has promoted people to form the experience, reflection and creation of calligraphy art. Therefore, a close relationship of mutual promotion and forever accompaniment has been established between the development of calligraphy art and the aesthetics of people's daily life. In terms of visual design of anti-smoking advertisements, running through all the development stages of human material civilization, design is generated from human survival instinct, in which, visual design of anti-smoking advertisements as a kind of design behavior takes "transmission" as the ultimate goal. In daily life, the communication activity for information exchange through visual design of anti-smoking advertisements is also a kind of concrete embodiment of human social attributes. The creative combinations of visual factors as the reliance of visual design of anti-smoking advertisements to form the process of information transmission makes the aesthetic factor available in daily life, so as to improve the grade of daily life, and increases the pleasure of communication behavior in the process of "transmitting words to express meaning", thus deepening the aestheticization of daily life.

The definition of aesthetics as *Asthetik* from the western ideological system of knowledge, emotion and meaning by Baumgarten, the "Father of Aesthetics", has driven the official establishment of aesthetic discipline with perceptual experience as the research object, but the previous aesthetic researches with more emphasis on perceptual aesthetic experience in the field of art ignores the perceptual experience generated in daily life, while Marx insists that aesthetics should take human needs and perceptual existence as the core to return to people and people's perceptual value. Therefore, we should advocate the returning of aesthetics to the "perceptual" dimension, the authentic existence and the perceptual daily life. Moreover, the above mentioned close relationship between calligraphy art, visual design of anti-

smoking advertisements and the aestheticization of daily life further indicates that the application of calligraphy in contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements practice should be based on the reconstruction of art form and the innovation of design creativity from the perspective of life aesthetics, with the purpose of realizing the "human-oriented" design.

Firstly, with the functional fit between calligraphy "writing" and design of anti-smoking advertisements "transmission" as an important way to seek the effective transmission of meaning in the perceptual reality of people's daily life, the accuracy of content perception and the effectiveness of information identification and acceptance by people as the existence of perceptual noumenon are not only the returning of calligraphy art to its original attribute, but also the recognition on its noumenon value, and the practice-based confirmation on its characteristics. On this basis, as the returning of writing essence, calligraphy art also provides certain enlightening significance for the realization of visual design of anti-smoking advertisements recognition function, for example, as reading object, the readability of calligraphy required when being used as artistic language is consistent with its daily writing requirements; for another instance, the combination of characters and semantic artistic conception in calligraphy plays the rhetorical role in the content transmission of linguistic symbols in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements. Calligraphy as design factor can bring about stronger derivative ability to visual design of anti-smoking advertisements through the aesthetic sense in writing and the beauty of language narration.

Secondly, the artistic contemplation on calligraphy "writing" and design of anti-smoking advertisements "meaning transmission" is the presentation mode and the result satisfaction-based perceptual practice of human as the existence in daily life. The application of text symbols in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements is generally shown with two trends, namely, the application of linguistic symbols and the application of nonverbal symbols. Besides playing the role in transmitti

ng text content and meaning, calligraphy art served as "text image-based narrative way" of graphic symbol in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements has a unique appearance characterized by beauty, free change, vividness and intuitive expression by taking advantage of the unique artistic form of calligraphy, such as the insinuation of coexistence form at the bottom of the graph by its design concept of "reckoning blank as inked", or the metaphorical and symbolic significance brought by the use of whole and local glyphs under its characteristics of character appearance and word table in different calligraphy. Calligraphy as design factor can also bring about the essential innovation for visual design of anti-smoking advertisements through the aesthetic feeling of art form.

Of course, there still have some problems about the fusion of calligraphy application and design itself, for example, for the writing style, structure and organization of calligraphy, the partial overlap of work between designer and calligrapher makes it difficult to achieve one person having one works characterized by one calligraphy style. The traditional Chinese calligraphy theories, such as Yang Xiong's "writing as the painting in heart"¹², Sun Guoting's "reflecting personality and forming the style of emotional expression"¹³, and the saying in Liu Xizai's "Introduction to Art Introduction to Calligraphy" that "the writing mirroring the writer can show his knowledge, talent and ambition. In short, just like him"¹⁴, all believe that calligraphy is the expression of artists' inner spirit, while the current calligraphy fonts replaced by computer font bank are difficult to show the essential beauty of calligraphy. Then, in the application of calligraphy as visual language to design of anti-smoking advertisements, due to the restrictions of information transmission and design rules on the selection of calligraphy style and the performance of calligraphy, the requirement of accurate information transmission makes the writing and using of calligraphy in current design of anti-smoking advertisements works show some problems, such as usage confusion, unidentifiable typesetting and calligraphy style, reading inconvenience, etc. For these problems in design practice, the specific solutions possibly to be

sought according to the specific issues must follow the principle that it must be the "human-oriented" design from the perspective of life aesthetics, and this principle is the most important pursuit of calligraphy in the application of contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements.

CONCLUSIONS

Existing in living artistry and artistic life, the contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements integrated with calligraphy art can arouse people's daily aesthetic echo to pursue the "most efficient combination" of public service announcements(PSAs)design and life by taking calligraphy as media through the perception, understanding and creation of visual image. Nowadays, the aestheticization of daily life has promoted the interweaving of visual language and life to be taken as the normal symbol in people's daily life, and people's aesthetic subjectivity that once stayed in subjective imagination needs to be truly broken through and fully demonstrated. If calligraphy art is said to be poetic, the aesthetic creation subject and object integration conducted by its interweaving with visual language and its presentation as writing in visual design of anti-smoking advertisements can achieve the creation and transcendence of seeing "the ideal" from "the existence". The application of Chinese calligraphy in contemporary visual design of anti-smoking advertisements from the perspective of life aesthetics has also become the direct embodiment on the intention of aesthetics to rebuild people's life value system in the current cultural context.

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