Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

THE PROMOTION OF CHINESE PAPER CUTTING THROUGH VISUAL INFORMATION

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THROUGH VISUAL INFORMATION

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DECLARATION

The project entitled **'The Promotion of Chinese Paper Cutting through Visual Information'** is prepared by **Lau Hui Ciin** and submitted to the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours **(Design Technology)**.

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CONTENT

MATTER	PAGES
APPROVAL SHEET	
DECLARATION	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
CONTENT	II
Abstract	X
Abstrak	XI

CHAPTER 1	RESEARCH BACKGROUND	
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Legend of Chinese paper cutting	2
1.2	Problem statements	3
1.3	Research Objectives	5
1.4	Hypothesis	5

1.5 Scope Research 6

1.6 Limitation 7

1.7 Conclusion 7

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chinese Paper Cutting 8

2.1 Publication 9

2.2 Campaign Strategies 10

2.3 Conclusion 11

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction 12

3.1 Qualitative Research 13

3.1.1 Interview 13

3.1.2 Photography 14

3.1.3 Books 15

3.1.4 Experimental 16

3.1.4.1 Printing on Red Paper 17

3.1.4.2 Printing on Rice Paper 18

3.1.4.3 Books Binding 19

3.1.5 Internet 20

3.2 Quantitative Methods 20

3.2.1 Questionnaire 20

3.3 Conclusion 21

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction 22

4.1 Findings Data through Questionnaire 22

4.2 Data Analysis 23

4.2.1 Part A- Demographic Research 23

4.2.2 Part B- General Research 26

4.2.3 Part C- Likert / Suggestion from respondent 28

4.3 Conclusion 33

CHAPTER 5 FINAL SUGGESTION

5.0 Introduction 34

5.1 Idea Development (Print Advertisement) 35

5.1.1 Tagline 35

5.1.2 Images 35

5.1.3 Images in Chinese Paper Cutting Style 36

5.2 Promotional Item – Print Advertisement 38

5.3 Idea Development (Publication) 40

5.3.1 Content 40

5.3.1.1 Illustration 40

5.3.1.2 Typography 42

5.3.1.3 Story of Chinese Paper Cutting 43

5.3.1.4 Composition and Layout Design 45

5.4 Book Cover Design 44

5.4.1 Book Cover Layout 48

CHAPTER 6 VALIDATION

6.0 Introduction 49

6.1 Findings from Validation 49

6.2 Validation Question

6.2.1 Questions for Print Advertisement 50

6.2.2 Questions for Publication 51

6.3 Data Analysis 52

6.3.1 Print Advertisement Validation Data 52

6.3.2 Publication Validation Data 54

6.4 Conclusion 55

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION 56

BIBLIOGRAPHY 57

APPENDIX 60

LIST OF FIGURES

MATTER	PAGES
CHAPTER 1	
Figure 1.0: Red Handicraft, which located at Jonker Street, Malacca.	6
Figure 2.0: Master of Chinese paper cutting, Ray Tan.	6
CHAPTER 3	
Figure 3.0: Mr. Tan was talking about the legend of Chinese Paper Cutting.	13
Figure 4.0: The process of making Chinese Paper Cuts.	14
Figure 5.0: Different kinds of paper materials for publication.	16
Figure 6.0: Printing on different color surface of red papers.	17
Figure 7.0: Printing on different thickness of rice papers.	18
Figure 8.0: Different material for books binding.	19
Figure 9.0: Tutorial or TV program about Chinese Paper Cutting.	20
Figure 10: One of the respondent in this research, Mr.Lee, 56, from Malacca.	21
CHAPTER 4	
Figure 11: The age of respondent.	23
Figure 12: The races of respondent.	24

Figure 13: Respondent education background. 25

Figure 14: Datas of respondents was being heard about Chinese Paper Cutting. 26

Figure 15: Understanding from respondents. 27

Figure 16: The preference theme on Chinese Paper Cutting. 28

Figure 17: Preference color from respondents. 29

Figure 18: The attractive part on Chinese Paper Cutting for promotion. 30

Figure 19: The efficiency way to promote Chinese Paper Cutting. 31

Figure 20: The sufficient way to promote Chinese Paper Cutting. 32

Figure 21: The preference color scheme. 33

CHAPTER 5

Figure 22: Development on tagline for print advertisement. 35

Figure 23: Animal with its foods. 35

Figure 24: Animal actions and Chinese Paper Cuts. 36

Figure 25: Images of monkey, rabbit and rat with its foods. 37

Figure 26: The first and second print ads publish for this campaign. 38

Figure 27: The third and last print ads publish for this campaign. 39

Figure 28: Watercolor brushes in Adobe Photoshop. 40

Figure 29: The process of using watercolor brushes in Adobe Photoshop. 41

Figure 30: Add text and content layout in Adobe InDesign. 42

Figure 31: Typography in the publication. 42

Figure 32: Door of imperial palace illustration applied on watercolor paper (100gsm). 43

Figure 33: The story begins after the reader open the "door of imperial palace". 43

Figure 34: Red color surface for text and white color surface for illustration. 44

Figure 35: White color fabric- one of the material for this publication. 44

Figure 36: The topic for every chapter. 45

Figure 37: The combination of illustration and text. 45

Figure 38: A short description page before all the content. 46

Figure 39: The content layout in every chapter. 46

Figure 40: Cover design for publication. 47

Figure 41: Book cover layout and measurement. 48

CHAPTER 6

Figure 42: Data Findings for Print Advertisement Validation 52

Figure 43: Data Findings for Publication Validation 54

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT **PAGES**

Attachments 60

Abstract

Chinese Paper Cutting is one of the richness component of the cultural aesthetics for Chinese community. In order to preserve the uniqueness, the creative campaign emphasizes on the Chinese Paper Cutting in terms of history and techniques of making Chinese Paper Cuts, purposely for publication design and printed media (below the line). The creative campaign for this research is to deliver message in a form of visual information in order to increase public awareness in the Chinese Paper Cutting.

Abstrak

Chinese Paper Cutting merupakan salah satu komponen nilai estetika budaya bagi masyarakat Cina. Dalam usaha untuk memelihara keunikannya, kempen kreatif menekankan sejarah dan teknik-teknik penghasilan *Chinese Paper Cuts*, terutamanya bagi penghasilan seni reka pada penerbitan dan media cetakan. Kempen kreatif untuk kajian ini berfungsi untuk menyampaikan mesej dalam bentuk visual informasi untuk meningkatkan kesedaran awam tenatng *Chinese Paper Cutting*.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to Chinese Paper Cutting

Chinese paper cutting is a kind of Chinese culture folk art. It originally created in China from 6th century and pass down through thousands of years until now. The Chinese national and folk culture began to attract public attention in the year 2001 when the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" project concerning the diversity of culture. In 2006, China's State Council issued "the first list of state level intangible cultural heritage" in the State Document [2006] 18 including 518 items, 315 of which were paper cutting with two items of Hebei Province on the top of the list (Wang, Liu, & Zhang, 2009).

Chinese paper cutting are widely using for decoration. People express their feeling, ideas, life experience through Chinese paper cutting. It is a very distinctive visual art of Chinese handicraft. People produce Chinese Paper Cuts for custom activities especially religious ceremony.

Scissors and graver are the tools of making Chinese Paper Cuts. There are two kinds of Chinese Paper Cutting, it including "paper-cutting" and "paper-engraving". Only one piece of paper cuts are produced in the cutting process; and

multiple piece of Chinese paper cuts are produced in engraving process. Besides, it has unified color and multiple colors on Chinese Paper Cutting art pieces. Most of the Chinese Paper Cuts are made by red paper. Red is a significant color in Chinese community. It represents auspicious, reunion, happiness, harmony, peace, dignity and prosperity. If people do Chinese Paper Cuts on white color rice paper, they can dye the paper cuts in multiple colors (UNESCO: Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2009).

1.1 Legend of Chinese paper cutting

Based on *Zhong Guo Feng- Jian Zhi Ru Men (2010)*, Chinese paper cutting has a long history in China. The invention of paper are creates paper cutting. According to the legend, the first Chinese Paper Cuts are created during Han Dynasty. Emperor Wu has a favorite woman, Concubine Li in Western Han Dynasty (265 – 316). Emperor Wu could not repose well after Concubine Li passed away because he was longing for Concubine Li. He asked a wizard to cut an image of Concubine Li and call up her spirit. The wizard cut out the image of Concubine Li on rice paper, and put it behind a white cloth. He lights up the candle at night and asked Emperor Wu to sit in front of the white cloth. The shadow of paper cuts reflects on the white cloth. Emperor Wu thought that was the spirit of Concubine Li. It might be the first Chinese Paper Cuts.

1.2 Problem Statements

1.2.1 Lack of visually-satisfying on Chinese Paper Cutting promotional piece.

When 2006, China's State Council issued "the first list of state level intangible cultural heritage" in the State Document [2006] 18 including 518 items, 315 of which were paper cutting with two items of Hebei Province on the top of the list – paper cutting in Yu County and Fengning Manchu Autonomous County (Wang, 2009). There are many promotions for Chinese Paper Cutting such as Chinese paper cutting training classes and exhibitions and at the same time, published books related to paper cutting (UNESCO: Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2009). But the traditional way to promote Chinese paper cutting is not really effective to carrying forward this heritage. We live in an age society in which our expectations are continually heightened by innovations in technology. People are more responsive to visually-satisfying and appealing aesthetics in a promotional piece (Zhao, 2008).

1.2.2 Most of the Chinese Paper Cuts are produced using computer software and machines.

Using a scissor and knife as paper cutting tools is the most traditional and original way to produce Chinese paper cutting artwork. This Chinese paper cutting technique is complicated for most people to learn, and it takes long time to practice for a perfect cutting skill (Qiu, 2010). Machine or software is the best option to produce Chinese paper cutting artworks for public. For example, a team member of *Shining Light on the Lost Beauty of History: 2010 Microsoft Student Challenge* from China says that they wanted to create a computer-aided design system to simplify the paper cutting process, and it is help to increase youths' interests in culture traditional. People buy Chinese paper cutting artwork with cheap price when they need it. This is very convenient for them but they have no chance to do paper cutting by their own. This traditional handicraft still using and popular on certain festival now, but it already lost the Chinese paper cutting originality and history.

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1.3 Research Objective

i. To identify the problems on Chinese paper cutting in the promotional visual information.

ii. To analyze the culture background and the technique of making Chinese paper cuts as a content of the visual information.

iii. To produce the visual information campaign for promotional printed media and publication.

iv. To validate the effectiveness final outcome of the campaign.

1.4 Hypothesis

Chinese paper cutting is an important element of folk activities. Promote Chinese paper cutting through visual information will fulfill the visually-satisfying in promotional pieces. It can attract more attention from public with the visual information but not only with text and images. Besides, publication on Chinese paper cutting will state out clearly about the history and technique to produce Chinese Paper Cuts. Steps and skills to produce Chinese Paper Cuts will easier to remember and it can make public to increase their interest on Chinese Paper Cutting. The originality and history of Chinese paper cutting would not easy to lost because public received the message and give response even take action from the visual information campaign.

1.5 Scope Research

This research is focused on the respondents who are 15 years old and above. Place to get information for this research is Red Handicraft, a Chinese handicraft shop which located at Jonker Street, Malacca. The steps and skills in making Chinese paper cutting will be record from master Chinese paper cutting.

Figure 1.0: Red Handicraft, which located at Jonker Street, Malacca.

Figure 2.0: Master of Chinese paper cutting, Ray Tan.

1.6 Limitation

This research is focused on Chinese Paper Cutting and it is a traditional culture from China. Most of the information comes from China researcher, website or journal which in Chinese language. Some books are published at China and Taiwan; there is lack information in English language. But translation from Chinese to English is needed for this research. The most hardly part is translate Chinese jargon to English words. Perhaps, the instructions in making Chinese Paper Cuts will be more concern.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter already had given some important information including problem statements, objective, scope of this research and limitation. The next chapter will provide the information about background study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chinese Paper Cutting

"...Chinese folk paper-cut has been popular in China, which has a cultural impact on the tradition and characteristics of the nation. It has a rich inheritance including almost all the elements of the customs. It is the root of other types of folk art works. Its graphic symbols are widely applied to woodcarving, brick carving, pottery, embroidery, and New Year Pictures. It has a history of two thousand years with spontaneous retention in rural China. With the evolution of industrial civilization, the intangible cultural treasures are faced the situation of disappearance all of a sudden..."

(Wang, X. F., Liu, Y. R, & Zhang, W. S., 2009)

"...民间剪纸正在渐渐失去依托得名俗文化背景。年轻一代农村妇女由于居住环境的改变和消费方式的改变，已不再去传承民间剪纸技艺。民间剪纸的妇女群正在迅速萎缩。中报联合国教科文组织评大师的"天才传承者"也大部分年逾古稀，不能剪了，并有多位相继去世。有着广泛社会基础和民间剪纸艺术的消失，关系着民主整体原生态文化的消失，关系到人类非物质文化遗产的消失..."

(Xia, H. F., 2007)

With the changes of living environment, Chinese Paper Cutting is less to be concern and this culture is not popular among the young generation. Chinese Paper Cutting is gradually threatened with extinction. This culture should not be disappearing because it brings an important culture impact in Chinese society. It has great contributions for the nation especially in arts and culture heritage.

2.1 Publications

"...Publications are extended applications of text and image and, as such bring to bear a tremendous number of considerations for a designer. Unlike single-format items, such as poster or ads, even singular multipage documents with more than eight or twelve page require designer to focus on issues that derive from extended reading: organizing large volumes of content into related parcels of information; crafting the typography to make it comfortably readable over many pages, yet lively enough to continually engage the reader; structuring the parts of pages and sections to accommodate a variety of content, whether image or text based; and integrating images with typography to achieve a unified from that builds a communication much bigger that its parts..."

(Samara, T., 2005, p. 11)

According to Samara, designer has to consider all the elements in the publication which including content, words and images, pages for information organizing, grid system and layout design. The application on typography design is important for readers to read and browse easily all over the content. For the