

The exploration journey of paper-cutting skills in the graduation creation of fine arts students in Chinese colleges and universities

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Abstract: Paper-cut art, as a treasure of traditional Chinese folk art, has a long historical origin and profound cultural value. According to archaeological findings, the embryonic form of paper-cutting art can be traced back to the Han Dynasty, and in the Tang and Song Dynasties, paper-cutting has been widely popular among the people, becoming an indispensable part of festival decoration and daily life. Paper-cutting is not only an art form, but also carries rich cultural information and national emotion. In the modern society, the inheritance and innovation of paper-cut art are particularly important. By combining the traditional paper-cutting skills with the college art graduation creation course, it can not only make this ancient art form glow with new vitality, but also promote the diversified development of college curriculum construction. As UNESCO has emphasized, "cultural diversity is the common heritage of mankind", and the inheritance and innovation of paper-cutting art is the vivid practice of this concept.

Key words: Chinese colleges and universities, fine arts, graduation creation, paper-cutting skills, inheritance and innovation

In today's society, the inheritance and innovation of paper-cut art is not only the respect for traditional handicrafts, but also the maintenance and development of cultural diversity. With the advancement of globalization, as an important part of Chinese traditional culture, it is particularly important to explore its skills in graduation creation. According to the Report on the Protection and Development of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage (2019), the inheritance and innovation of intangible cultural heritage is an important embodiment of cultural confidence, and paper-cut art, as a treasure, its inheritance and innovation plays an important role in promoting the promotion of cultural soft power. For example, by combining the paper-cutting art with the graduation creation course of college fine arts, it can not only attract the attention of the younger generation, but also make the traditional art glow with new vitality in the new cultural context. In addition, the innovation and exploration of paper cutting is also in line with UNESCO's guiding principles on the protection of intangible cultural heritage, that is, to encourage innovation on the basis of respecting tradition to meet the development needs of modern society.

1. Overview of Chinese paper-cutting skills

Chinese paper cutting art is a kind of vibrant art created by hundreds of millions of working people in China as the main body. It has the most extensive mass foundation, the most distinctive regional characteristics and the strongest modeling characteristics. It has a long history, is the art system formed by the agricultural civilization for thousands of years, and is an important part of the intangible cultural heritage of mankind. As defined in Cihai (1989 edition), paper-cut is one of the Chinese folk decorative crafts. As early as in the Han and Tang dynasties, folk women had the fashion of using gold and silver foil and colored silk to cut into flowers, flowers and birds pasted on the temples. Later, gradually developed, in the festival, with color paper cut into a variety of flowers, animals or character stories, posted on the window (called "window"), the lintel (called "door sign") as decoration, also as a gift decoration or embroidery patterns. Paper-cutting tools, generally only use a small pair of scissors, some professional artists with a special carving knife carving system, so paper-cutting is also known as "paper carving".

Cao Zhenfeng (1987) pointed out in his article "Message to Folk Paper cutting" that paper cutting is a national cultural phenomenon, which is not a mere or accidental product. In its artistic language, it has accumulated profound ancient artistic tradition, social consciousness and national aesthetic concepts. Chinese paper-cut has been continued to today through the inheritance of people from generation to generation and the creation of countless people, which is very rare in the world. (Selected from paper cutting newspaper 14, 1987, originally as a symposium speech, the title is editor Chen Jingjia).

JinZhiLin (2004) in the Chinese folk art evaluation the cultural value of paper-cut, far beyond the paper-cut art itself, and has extremely rich philosophy, aesthetics, archaeology, history, ethnology, sociology and human culture connotation, shows a complete Chinese original art system, modelling system and color system.

Paper-cut art integrates a variety of cultural connotations. Its cultural diversity, language diversity, continuity of inheritance and innovation of form are the reasons for the government support. The motivation that scholars are committed to research, and the field of education emphasizes the necessity of its inheritance. Therefore, the integration of Chinese paper cutting art into the graduation creation course of college art is not only a wonderful collision between ancient skills and modern thinking, but also a positive practice of the inheritance and innovation of paper cutting skills, and is of great significance to the deepening and expansion of college curriculum construction, which points out the direction of our continuous exploration and progress.

2. Exploration and research in graduation creation

In today's society, the inheritance and innovation of paper-cut art is not only the respect for traditional handicrafts, but also the maintenance and development of cultural diversity. With the advancement of globalization, the art of paper-cutting, as an important part of Chinese traditional culture, is particularly important in the graduation creation of fine arts major in universities. Through paper-cut graduation creation, it can not only attract the attention and research of the

younger generation, but also make the traditional art glow with new vitality in the new cultural context, which is also the development demand of non-genetic inheritance and innovation. Since 2018, researchers have guided art students to graduation creation. So far, they have guided seven students, and a total of 38 students have chosen paper-cut graduation creation. The students made in-depth exploration of material selection, theme conception, composition design, layout arrangement and color application of paper cutting, and committed to seeking innovative inspiration in the integration of tradition and modernity.

2.1 Pre-creation period

According to the requirements of the graduation creation syllabus, the following links will be arranged in the early stage of creation.

2.1.1 Learning and practice of skills

In the process of paper-cutting graduation creation, the learning link of skills is particularly critical, which is not only related to the survival of paper-cutting art, but also the basis of innovation and development. In this process, first of all, the teacher will guide students to ancient paper-cut works, folk paper-cut artists and literati paper-cut works of in-depth study, analyze the creative ideas, interpret the deep meaning of design, and learn its creation skills and picture processing skills, and understand the cultural connotation behind the paper-cut art creation. Then, students need to copy the paper-cutting works of traditional folk artists to master the essence of the traditional paper-cutting skills, the sense of rhythm of the lines and the sense of space. In addition, teachers encourage students to try the simple creation practice of paper-cut works, to pave the way for the later graduation creation, and to experience the unique charm of traditional paper-cut technology. For the class of 2018 and 2019, because they have not systematically learned the basic techniques of paper cutting, they need to complete all the links. Since the class of 2020, students have learned the course of "Traditional Handicraft Making" in the third year, and have mastered the basic techniques of paper-cut creation, so the second and third links can be omitted. This is an important way to pass on the skills. Through in-depth study of traditional paper cutting creation techniques and artistic concepts, we can have a deeper understanding of the essence of paper cutting art.

2.1.2 Establishment of the creative theme

In the beginning stage of paper-cutting creation, the determination of the theme is very important, and it is the core of the whole graduation creation. If students can examine the creation theme from multiple angles and multiple levels, it will help to expand the creative scope of paper-cutting, and can enrich and enhance the cultural connotation of paper-cutting. This can not only improve the aesthetic value of the work, but also expand the application field of paper-cut art. Make the traditional paper-cut in the inheritance of innovation, inheritance in the innovation. Students creative themes have the following directions:

2.1.2.1 Guide the students to transform the details of life into artistic expression. Through the

observation of common scenes in daily life, such as traditional festivals, students daily life, and the growth of animals and plants, students can capture those moments full of emotional colors and cultural connotations, and transform them into elements in paper-cut works. For example, Zhao Qians "year custom paper-cut", the work takes the year custom as the core, focusing on the four main aspects: "family reunion, visiting relatives and friends, Zhang Hong burning whip and dragon dance blessing"; for example, Le Lihua "Perfect · period", the creation inspiration comes from the youth story can not be completed in reality, so I want to present a complete period in the work. Therefore, according to the characteristics of each dynasty, the wedding clothes of 16 dynasties were created in the form of black paper cutting, and then colored with watercolor, so that all the people they see can feel the happiness of the freeze frame in the works. For example, Wang Mingzhou "back", choose young people in life, thousands of years ago, red brick and green tiles and now tall building background, express the Hanfu from ancient to ancient spread; then Lou Zhengyu "insects", by gathering dragonfly, spiders, grasshopper, caterpillar four insects, describe the common insects in life from different perspectives, and human nature to see insects, show the respect and love for life, and black to the biggest visual impact, let people feel the vitality of life. For example, Shen Tianshus "Dreamland", with his own dreams as the theme. Wang Haofengs "Xixi and Stay", with the theme of the university life area, expresses the authors memories in the town university, as well as the best impression of the soil and water. Tao Xiaohans "Twenty-four" takes the process of her own growth as the creative background, and records the process of growth with the paper and knife in her hand, a unique memory that only belongs to her.

2.1.2.2 Guide students to integrate into the innovation of hometown themes. Find the beautiful side of the familiar things around you, and explore the resonance point of the village feeling. This is also a deep emotional expression of my love for my hometown. ChuXiaoQing "nostalgia", choose the snake flat island, east before the grand canyon, tong town, liang huang mountain four hometown attractions as the theme of the creation, to express the beauty of the hometown, as she said: " familiar mountains beauty, familiar islands canyon, familiar ancient town, home carries me a lot of good memories, no matter how far away from home always have homesickness, through many places, the most beautiful or hometown —— ninghai." Wang Weiqi, " Drink feather ", choose Shaoxing flower carving wine and its wine culture. Yang strontium yu "a fold green peak", choose the hometown Fuchun River landscape as the creation theme.

2.1.2.3 Guide students to integrate the innovation of hot topics in the paper-cutting art. This has also become a new direction of exploration, through the in-depth analysis of the hot social issues, the use of a variety of innovative ways of expression, through such creation, paper-cut art has not only become an aesthetic enjoyment, but also become a tool of social education, but also broaden the scope of paper-cut art. When the class of 2021 graduated, it was just the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. The students chose the stories about the development of the Communist Party of China, the policies of the country, and the prosperity of the country. Huang Yijings "Sailing", with the red boat as the creative background. Zhu Zhiying "One Hundred Years of Footprints", the picture of a Red Army from freshman to old age, to tell the development of the Party, to all the soldiers on this road, a tribute to China. Zhang Lis "Standing Up", "Getting Rich" and "Getting Strong" chose the great and glorious course of the founding of the Party as the creative background. Wu Weis Manifesto, the work of the Communist

Manifesto as the clue, tells the birth of the first translation, the exile, the guardian, the final reappearance of the story.

2.1.2.4 Guide the students to describe the themes of ancient fairy tales and historical heroes through the in-depth study of the history of paper-cut art. These cultural elements provide rich materials and inspiration sources for the innovation of paper-cut art, which is not only a form of visual art, but also a carrier carrying rich historical and cultural information. For example, Hong Junjie and Kong Yixuan took the life story of the national hero Yue Fei as the background, and created eight works, including "Yue Fei's Mother Embroidered the Words", "Yancheng Victory", "Jailed in Storm", "Forced to Return", "Connecting Heshuo", "Study Hard", "Return My Rivers and Mountains", and "Recovering Jiankang". These eight works are collected by Yue Temple.

2.1.3 Practice investigation and material collection

After the theme is determined, students will collect relevant materials through the Internet, literature and pictures. At the same time, the teacher will guide the students on field trips to further collect the required information. In the process of collecting materials, students will learn how to screen, organize and summarize information, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They will make a thorough analysis of the collected material, understand the meaning and value behind it, and think about how to apply it to thematic research. Finding some information may be difficult, and students will even go to the used book market to pay more for the books they need. This dedication to academic research is a lifelong benefit for students. It will develop their habit of exploring things. Even though the student has graduated and entered the workplace, he still keeps in touch with the school and often raises questions about paper-cutting teaching. Therefore, the influence of graduation creation on students is profound.

Teachers will play the role of instructors in the whole process, providing necessary help and support. They will guide students to pay attention to the authenticity and reliability of the material, to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the study. At the same time, teachers will also encourage students to put forward their own views and opinions to cultivate their innovative thinking and expression skills.

Through the field visits, students will have the opportunity to experience and feel the actual situation related to the topic. This hands-on experience will enable them to understand the theme more deeply, and enhance the effectiveness and interest of learning. At the same time, the field visits can also allow students to get to know more professionals and industry experts, and broaden their horizons and interpersonal network.

In 2017, the teachers led the students to visit Teacher Song Shenglin. Mr. Song Shenglin is the consultant of art Professional Committee of Zhejiang Folk Literature and Art Association and the president of Hangzhou Paper-cut Art Special Committee. Song teacher is Zhejiang paper-cut doyen, in inheriting the traditional paper-cut techniques have certain innovation, work time feeling strong, decorative flavor, the content of the work from life, reflects the song teachers love of life, also set off the persistence of art, it is very helpful to the students creation, after inspiring. Mr. Song not only creates good works, but also has a deep research on paper-cutting teaching. The teaching of paper-cut in primary and secondary schools also made a detailed introduction to the students, but also personally teach students how to make classroom paper-cut demonstration works, how to make the paper-cut class vivid, for the students of normal major is a vivid teaching

practice class, for the future to the school teaching post to pave the way. This is a great help to the graduation thesis students. The interview with song teacher, students harvest is very big, the scene learned to different "flower", know how a work proposition how to create, from techniques to creation to the teaching, for students comprehensive shows the charm of paper-cut art, students also understand paper-cut introduction simple difficult, also understand paper-cut as a non-material cultural heritage, has its own integral role in folk custom. Mr.Song's dedication to art makes the students see the craftsman spirit of an artist.



Figure 1 Mr.Song comments on students works, and tells students to have their own ideas when creating works, and each work can express their own creative ideas.

On May 21,2018, teachers took students to visit the Wang Xingji fan factory, aiming to open students creative ideas, explore the inspiration of creation, broaden their horizons, and deeply understanding the carrier of paper cutting art exhibition.



Figure 2 The teacher took the students to visit the Star fan factory

Eventually, the students will combine the collected materials with the field trip experience to form a comprehensive, in-depth and creative research report. This report will not only showcase the students research results and academic level, but will also lay a solid foundation for their future study and career.

2.2 Creation process

Drawing is a crucial step in the process of creating a paper-cut work. Painting refers to the preliminary sketch designed by paper-cut artists for creation. These sketches often include key

elements such as the basic composition of the work, character posture, scene layout, and color collocation. Through the drawing, the creator can conceive and adjust each part of the picture in advance to ensure that the final work can achieve the desired results.

In folk, if paper-cut works are used in folk customs, generally, paper-cut artists can cut works with their exquisite skills, without drawing a draft in advance. These folk artists have long been well aware of the shape of paper-cutting. Of course, there are also some paper-cut artists who will draw pictures first, as shown in Figure 3, they first draw the design drawing with lines, and then put the pattern on the red paper, fix the paper, and then cut it. The same is true of the students creative process, and I will guide them to design the sketches first and provide suggestions for modification during the process.



Figure 3 Paper-cut manuscripts designed by folk paper-cut artists

The process of drawing is not only a simple description, but also involves the deep thinking of details and creativity. Students often revise it repeatedly during the drawing stage to ensure that each line and shape fit their creative intention. Sometimes, the drawings will also help them to better understand the visuals of the final work.

After completing the drawing, the students will create formal paper-cuts based on these preliminary designs. Whether it is traditional hand-painting, or modern digital painting technology, painting is an indispensable part of the whole creation process. In Figure 4, students can represent the abstract creative ideas in their minds and present a complete and vivid world of paper-cut art to the audience.

The following are the manuscripts created by some graduate students





Figure 4 Manuscripts created by students

In the process of creation, I have also encountered many challenges. Take Wang Jiaying as an example. She chose cloth for her creative materials. The fabric is easy to slide and it is difficult to cut, especially for the more detailed design details. The challenge of cutting is particularly significant, which tests students' patience. In addition, after the work is cut, it is not as easy to mount as the paper, which undoubtedly tests the professional skills of the instructor. Finally, by lining a layer of cloth on the back of the work and sewing it together, the teachers and students worked together to solve the problem. Therefore, students' graduation creation guidance is not only a professional ability challenge to the instructor, but also an opportunity for study and research. The more creative the students are, the higher the professional requirements for the instructor, which encourages the instructor to study deep into the academic field. This interaction has a positive impact on the growth of both parties. As shown in Figure 5, students should mount it on a screen, and the paper they choose is easy to fade. This mounting process is also a test for the instructor.



Figure 5 The mounting process of students' graduation creation

2.3 Creation results

The display, publicity and thinking of the graduation works is an important part, which can not only allow students to show their learning achievements during the university, but also let

more people understand and appreciate these works through publicity. At the same time, this process can also trigger students to reflect and think about their own creation, and further improve their artistic accomplishment and creative ability.

The presentation of graduate works is a great opportunity to showcase personal talent and creativity. Every May, the school will hold a grand graduation creation exhibition. By using the campus exhibition site or the public service platform outside the campus, through these ways, students works will attract more attention and let more people know their creative ideas and artistic style.

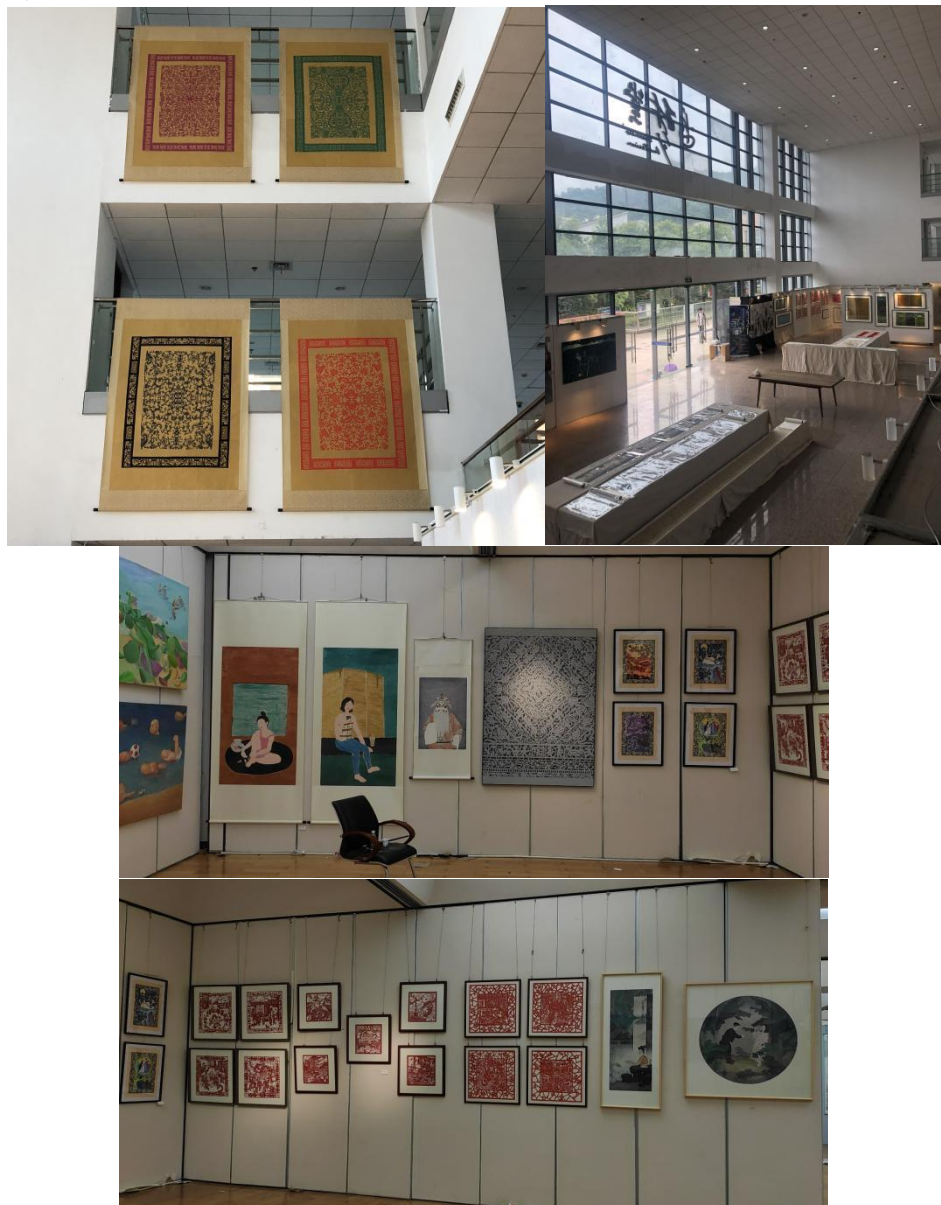


Figure 6 Exhibition of students created after graduation

Propaganda is one of the most important means of displaying the works. Through effective publicity, students can expand the influence of the works and attract more people to visit and appreciate them. Through these publicity means, students can not only better display their works, and enhance the popularity and influence of their works. Two sessions of students paper-cutting graduation works were published in "Zhejiang paper-cutting", which is the journal of the

paper-cutting art professional committee of Zhejiang Folk Literature and Art Association. The members are the elites of the provincial paper-cutting industry, and the works have been praised by the members of the provincial paper-cutting association.

With the theme of "simple", the graduates sincerely believe in the unique charm of paper-cut art, under the guidance of teachers, carved a paper-cut graduation creation works. They use their own works to show their understanding of paper-cut art. With different theme contents, they inject thoughts and emotions into the works, pay attention to artistic inheritance and innovation, and concentrate the ancient meaning inherited for thousands of years into the works.

The exhibition of 2021, as shown in Figure 8, with the theme of "memory stretches". From 1921 to 2021, the Communist Party of China has gone through 100 ups and downs, including great changes in the first century. After a hundred years of glory days, the Communist Party is still in its prime. On the occasion of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, students choose to create this as the theme and create a series of exquisite paper-cut works. They choose different contents with the same theme, relying on paper cutting, understand the red culture, trace the red memory, express their love for the Party and the motherland, and show their inheritance and innovation in front of us.



Figure 7 Poster of the 2020 paper-cut graduation exhibition



Figure 8 Poster of the 2021 paper-cut graduation exhibition

Finally, thinking is an integral part of the creative process. In the process of displaying and publicizing the works, students should constantly reflect on their own creation process and the connotation of the works. Thinking can be carried out from multiple angles, such as the theme of the work, the techniques of expression, the application of technology, etc. Through reflection, students can find out their own shortcomings in the creation process, so as to constantly improve and improve in the future learning and creation. Thinking can also stimulate students awareness of innovation, help them to constantly break through themselves in the future creation, and create more profound and connotation works. For example, Wang Hanlu, a student of 2018, as shown in Figure 9, takes the red makeup of her hometown Ningshao area as the creative inspiration to describe the rich dowry when a girl gets married in the way of a long scroll. The work is exquisitely conceived, but the production process is full of hardships. When the work is finally completed, the joy of success is even more very happy. As she said: " the first time to create such a long work, from the small draft to the final draft experience is the most painful period of time,

choose the theme, the form, the painting changed, changed and changed, the final draft finally a small sigh of relief, and then began the formal cutting. It took about a month, and the most intense time in the studio for a day, I felt the most serious period in the past four years. Although there is spiritual and physical pain, but looking at the gradual formation of the work, the sense of pride and satisfaction arises spontaneously, I feel that so much pay is worth it. Only by experiencing the whole creation process in person can I more truly realize the fun and significance of paper cutting. I hope that I will be firmly devoted to the passion of creation and create more meaningful works!”

For example, in Wei Yi is works, as shown in Figure 10, she conducted innovative research on the theme, composition and layout. Through the field art investigation, she connected the folk culture of major cities along the Yellow River, and used the Yellow River as the dividing line of the picture. The scenes recorded during the investigation were cleverly arranged on both sides of the picture, highlighting several major cities of the Yellow River, and the works had more substantial and distinct themes. Especially when the works are presented in the form of a long scroll, the vigorous momentum of the Yellow River can be shown incisively and vividly.

For example, Wang Jiaying, Figure 11, replacing paper as the main material of paper cutting creation, using the traditional paper cutting language, coupled with cutting and sewing techniques, broaden the creative ideas and reflect the comprehensiveness and diversification of traditional paper cutting.



Figure 9 Wang Hanlu is creating his works



Figure 10 Wei Yi is creating her works



Figure 11 The work of Wang Jiaying

The display, publicity and thinking of the graduation creation works are a complementary process. Through the display and publicity, students can present their works to more people and expand the influence of their works. They can also improve their creative ability and artistic accomplishment to create more excellent works.

3. Summary

In short, in the process of graduation creation, students need to devote a lot of time and energy through continuous reflection and thinking, and conduct in-depth professional academic research to create excellent works. This process is undoubtedly challenging for students. Although paper-cutting techniques seem simple, it is very challenging to achieve innovation. Only students

personally experience and feel, can appreciate the essence of paper cutting skills, so as to really fall in love with the paper cutting art, feel its unique charm, and deeply understand its true value.

Therefore, graduation creation is not only the training of students personal skills, but also a profound exploration of the inheritance and innovation of paper-cut art. Through the integration of tradition and modernity, the stage achievements not only show the progress of the technical level, but also contain rich cultural connotation and historical accumulation. For the art of paper-cut, it is also a kind of inheritance and innovation of skills, is a process of creative transformation, represents a qualitative breakthrough, and has a profound significance for the inheritance and innovation of paper-cut art.

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