
Presentation and Innovation of the Spirit of Chinese Aesthetics in the Opening Ceremony Performances of Large-Scale Sports Events

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Abstract: Taking the presentation and innovation of the spirit of Chinese aesthetics in the opening ceremonies of large-scale sports events as the research object, and the opening ceremony of the 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games as a typical case, this paper deeply explores how traditional cultural elements integrate with modern science and technology and performing arts to realize the creative transformation of aesthetic spirit. The study holds that the opening ceremony of the Harbin Asian Winter Games has successfully constructed a snow and ice aesthetic system with Chinese characteristics through the artistic conception creation of “interaction between virtuality and reality”, the philosophical expression of “harmony between man and nature”, the artistic presentation of “vigor and vitality in spirit and rhyme” and the value pursuit of “the beauty of moderation and harmony”. With snow and ice culture as the carrier, the opening ceremony innovatively uses modern scientific and technological means to transform traditional Chinese aesthetic concepts into perceptible, visible and experiential audio-visual language, which not only shows the unique charm of Chinese culture, but also provides a new paradigm for the artistic innovation of the opening ceremonies of large-scale sports events. This paper elaborates from three dimensions: theoretical interpretation, case analysis and innovation path, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical enlightenment for the contemporary practice of Chinese aesthetics.

Keywords: the spirit of Chinese aesthetics; opening ceremony of sports events; snow and ice culture; cultural innovation; Harbin Asian Winter Games

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1. Introduction: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Opening Ceremonies of Large-Scale Sports Events from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

In the contemporary era with increasingly in-depth global cultural mutual learning, the opening ceremonies of large-scale sports events have transcended the simple ritual category and become an important window for displaying a country's cultural soft power. From the interpretation of the concept of “harmony” at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games to the poetic expression of “a single snowflake” at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, China has been constantly exploring innovative paths for the modern expression of traditional culture. The successful holding of the opening ceremony of the

2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games marks another important practice of the spirit of Chinese aesthetics in the context of snow and ice culture.

The spirit of Chinese aesthetics has a long history, containing the cosmic outlook of “harmony between man and nature”, the artistic outlook of “interaction between virtuality and reality”, the creative outlook of “vigor and vitality in spirit and rhyme” and the value outlook of “the beauty of moderation and harmony”. How to combine these aesthetic principles with contemporary large-scale square art, and how to realize modern expression while maintaining the essence of tradition have become theoretical and practical issues that need to be in-depth explored. The opening ceremony of the Harbin Asian Winter Games, with its unique regional cultural characteristics and innovative artistic expression, provides a vivid research sample for this issue.

Starting from the theoretical connotation of the spirit of Chinese aesthetics, this paper systematically analyzes the aesthetic innovation practice of the opening ceremony of the Harbin Asian Winter Games, explores the transformation path of traditional aesthetic elements in modern performing arts, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical reference for the creative design of China’s future large-scale cultural activities ^[1-2].

2. Theoretical Foundation: The Core Essence of the Spirit of Chinese Aesthetics and the Possibility of Modern Expression

2.1. The Four Dimensions of the Spirit of Chinese Aesthetics

2.1.1. Holistic Perspective of “Harmony between Man and Nature”

This philosophical thought emphasizes the harmonious unity of man and nature, and advocates that artistic creation should reflect the internal connection of all things in the universe. In the design of the opening ceremony, it is reflected in the echo between the performance content and the natural environment, and the integration of humanistic spirit and sports spirit.

2.1.2. Artistic Conception Creation of “Interaction between Virtuality and Reality”

Traditional Chinese art emphasizes “treating blank space as ink in painting” and “expressing reality through virtuality”, stimulating infinite aesthetic imagination through limited artistic images. In modern stage art, this aesthetic principle can be transformed into the mutual contrast between digital technology and physical performance.

2.1.3. Life Expression of “Vigor and Vitality in Spirit and Rhyme”

Proposed by Xie He in the Southern Qi Dynasty, “vigor and vitality in spirit and rhyme” emphasizes that artistic works should have inherent vitality and spiritual temperament. In the dynamic opening ceremony performance, this is reflected in the rhythmic rhythm, emotional tension and spiritual atmosphere of the entire performance.

2.1.4. Value Orientation of “The Beauty of Moderation and Harmony”

Confucian aesthetics advocates the beauty of moderation and harmony of “joy without wantonness, sorrow without distress”, pursuing the harmonious unity of various artistic elements. In large-scale comprehensive performances, this is manifested in the balanced coordination of science and technology and humanity, tradition and modernity, local and international^[3].

2.2. Technological Empowerment and Formal Innovation for Modern Expression

The rapid development of digital technology provides a brand-new possibility for the modern expression of Chinese aesthetics. The application of technologies such as holographic projection, augmented reality and artificial intelligence has given traditional aesthetic concepts an unprecedented dimension of expression. At the same time, the integration of modern artistic forms such as large-scale group calisthenics and multimedia symphony has injected new vitality into traditional culture.

3. Case Deconstruction: Aesthetic Innovation Practice of the 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games Opening Ceremony

3.1. Overall Conception: Poetic Translation of Snow and Ice Culture

With the theme of “Dreams United by Snow and Ice, Hearts United in Asia”, the opening ceremony of the Harbin Asian Winter Games skillfully combines regional cultural characteristics with the common values of Asia. The entire performance is divided into three chapters: “Source of Snow and Ice”, “Vibrant City” and “Heart of Asia”, which progresses layer by layer and constructs a complete narrative logic.

3.1.1. Aesthetic Sublimation of Regional Symbols

The opening ceremony deeply explores Harbin’s unique snow and ice cultural resources, and artistically processes regional symbols such as ice sculptures, snow sculptures and Russian-style architecture. The crystal clarity of ice lanterns, the European style of Central Street, and the magnificent scenery of the Songhua River have all been transformed into stage aesthetic elements, which not only maintain regional characteristics but also achieve aesthetic improvement.

3.1.2. Contemporary Awakening of Cultural Memory

The historical memory of Harbin as a “City of Music” and “Ice City” is reproduced through artistic techniques. The fusion performance of symphony and Northeast folk songs, and the creative combination of ice and snow sports and traditional folk customs arouse the audience’s cultural identity and emotional resonance^[4-5].

3.2. Technological Innovation: Digital Rebirth of Traditional Aesthetics

3.2.1. Scene Construction of Immersive Experience

Using 270-degree circular screen projection and ground interactive projection technology, an all-round snow and ice world is created. The audience is no longer a spectator of the performance, but a participant in the immersive experience. When virtual snowflakes fall from the sky and real water mist pervades the air, the boundary between virtuality and reality is broken, and the aesthetic experience of “harmony between man and nature” is realized.

3.2.2. Artistic Conception Creation of Dynamic Images

Through real-time rendering technology and motion capture system, the artistic conception beauty of Chinese landscape painting is transformed into a flowing visual poem. The ink wash-style snow and ice landscapes unfold slowly on the huge screen, and the actors’ dance movements are precisely synchronized with the image changes, creating a wonderful effect of “dancers moving in the painting, and the painting changing with the dancers”.

3.2.3. Interactive Expression of Intelligent Devices

Adopting programmable luminous costumes and intelligent ice crystal props, the actors become luminous pixels, forming constantly changing patterns and characters. This design not only reflects the dynamic beauty of “vigor and vitality in spirit and rhyme”, but also shows the innovative thinking of the integration of science and technology and art.

3.3. Artistic Language: Cross-Cultural Aesthetic Dialogue

3.3.1. Modern Expression of Oriental Rhythm

Combining the gentle and smooth features of traditional Chinese dance with the tense rhythm of modern dance, a unique “snow and ice ballet” is created. The actors’ movement design draws on the graceful postures of ice sports and integrates the body rhythm of Chinese opera, forming a cross-border artistic language.

3.3.2. Poetic Construction of Color System

With “ice blue” and “snow white” as the main colors, dotted with traditional colors such as “Chinese red” and “colored

glaze gold”, a color aesthetics that is both fresh and elegant, warm and solemn is constructed. This color collocation not only conforms to the snow and ice theme, but also reflects the traditional Chinese color philosophy.

3.3.3. Fusion and Innovation of Music Design

The music of the opening ceremony organically combines Western symphony, Chinese national music and electronic music. The melody of *On the Sun Island*, a characteristic of Harbin, interweaves with musical elements from various Asian countries, which not only shows cultural confidence but also reflects the concept of “One Asia”^[6-7].

4. Innovation Path: Paradigm Transformation of the Modern Expression of the Spirit of Chinese Aesthetics

4.1. Innovative Transformation of Symbols to Realize the Youthful Expression of Traditional Aesthetic Elements

Chinese aesthetics contains rich cultural symbols. The key is to abandon simple reproduction and stacking, and carry out creative transformation based on contemporary aesthetic trends. The core characteristics of traditional patterns and classic images can be extracted and integrated into modern design language. For example, the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games integrated the “Chinese knot” element into the snowflake design, outlining an ethereal shape with simple lines, which not only retained the traditional auspicious implication but also fit the modern aesthetic feeling of the snow and ice theme. At the same time, combining with the aesthetic preferences of young groups, traditional arts such as calligraphy and paper-cutting are combined with dynamic sports elements, and through visual simplification and color innovation, traditional aesthetic symbols move from “classical” to “fashionable”, enhancing the recognition and resonance of young audiences^[8].

4.2. Upgrading of Technological Empowerment to Construct Immersive Aesthetic Experience Scenes

Relying on modern digital technology, break the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional performances, and make the artistic conception beauty of Chinese aesthetics presented concretely. Technologies such as full LED ground screen, naked-eye 3D and AI real-time interaction can be used to integrate aesthetic images such as ink wash landscapes and solar terms into performances. For example, the scene of a drop of ink transforming into the water of the Yellow River at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games interprets the aesthetic realm of “the great image has no form” by means of science and technology. At the same time, create a virtual-real interwoven performance space with light and shadow effects, allowing the audience to feel the unique charm of “unity of form and spirit” of Chinese aesthetics in an immersive experience, and realize the perfect integration of traditional artistic conception and modern technology.

4.3. Accurate Creation of Artistic Conception to Convey the Core of the Spirit of Chinese Aesthetics

Chinese aesthetics values “artistic conception” over “specific image”, and the core is to convey emotional and spiritual connotations. The opening ceremony performance can learn from the techniques of “expressing emotions through objects, seeing the big from the small” in traditional art, and carry profound aesthetic heritage with a simple artistic form. For example, the ignition ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games gathered “small snowflakes” into a “big snowflake”, using a simple design to symbolize unity and symbiosis, and convey the aesthetic concept of “the greatest truth is the simplest”. At the same time, integrate ritual and music culture and natural concepts, and create an “empty and clear” aesthetic artistic conception through the blank design of body performance and music arrangement, allowing the audience to experience the core of the spirit of “harmony between man and nature” of Chinese aesthetics in the blank space, and realize the dual improvement of visual experience and spiritual resonance^[9].

4.4. Two-Way Integration of Values, Balancing National Characteristics and International Vision

While presenting Chinese aesthetics, based on the international attributes of sports events, realize the organic integration of

national aesthetics and the Olympic spirit. Explore the concepts of “self-improvement, harmony and symbiosis” in Chinese aesthetics, combine them with the Olympic spirit of “Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together”, and convey the common values of mankind through performances. At the same time, interpret Chinese aesthetics with international audio-visual language to avoid obscure cultural expression, so that the world can understand the spiritual connotation of Chinese aesthetics through the opening ceremony performance, and realize the two-way development of cultural communication and aesthetic resonance.

5. Future Prospect: Development Direction of the Innovation of Chinese Aesthetics

5.1. Deepen Theoretical Construction and Establish a Chinese-Style Aesthetic Discourse System

The innovative practice of Chinese aesthetics in opening ceremony performances is inseparable from systematic theoretical support. At present, the application of aesthetic elements in some opening ceremonies is fragmented and superficial, rooted in the insufficient theoretical combing, unclear discourse expression, and the failure to form an academic framework for dialogue with modern art and sports communication theories. In the future, it is necessary to deeply cultivate the core of Chinese aesthetics, sort out the origin and contemporary connotation of core concepts such as “emphasizing simplicity and expressing spirit” and “harmony between man and nature”, and clarify their expression paradigms and criteria in the opening ceremony; break theoretical barriers, combine the particularity of the opening ceremony, construct an aesthetic discourse system with both national characteristics and the times, realize the in-depth connection between theory and practice, provide guidance for innovation, and avoid the predicament of blindness and homogenization^[10].

5.2. Broaden Technological Boundaries and Explore New Forms of Virtual-Real Integration

Science and technology is an important engine for the innovative presentation of Chinese aesthetics. Technologies such as LED ground screen and naked-eye 3D have initially realized the concrete presentation of the beauty of artistic conception. With the development of emerging technologies such as metaverse, VR and AR, the presentation form of the opening ceremony will usher in a subversive change. In the future, we should break the limitations of the physical stage, explore the virtual-real integration mode of “virtual + reality” and “online + offline”, build virtual scenes with the help of metaverse, and allow the audience to experience aesthetic images such as ink wash landscapes immersively; use artificial intelligence to realize the real-time adaptation of aesthetic elements and performances, and enhance interactivity. At the same time, adhere to the core of aesthetics, avoid the misunderstanding of “technology supremacy”, and realize the organic unity of technology and aesthetics.

5.3. Strengthen the Youth Perspective and Activate the Innovative Genes of Traditional Culture

Young people are the core force for the inheritance and innovation of Chinese aesthetics, and their aesthetic and creative vitality can inject fresh blood into the modernization of aesthetics. At present, the presentation forms of some opening ceremonies are disconnected from the youth aesthetic, making it difficult to arouse their recognition. In the future, it is necessary to strengthen the youth perspective, build a creative platform, encourage young creators to combine the core of Chinese aesthetics with trend culture and sports spirit to create works with both classical heritage and youthful vitality; fit the youth communication habits, make aesthetic elements enter young people’s lives with the help of short videos, live broadcasts and other forms, guide them to take the initiative to inherit and innovate, and realize the intergenerational transmission of the aesthetic spirit^[11-12].

5.4. Construct a Communication Matrix and Extend the Influence Chain of Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the opening ceremony of large-scale sports events should not be limited to the visual presentation on the day of the performance, but should realize value extension through diversified communication and derivative development, forming a sustainable cultural influence. At present, the communication of aesthetic elements in the opening

ceremony is mainly based on on-site viewing and TV broadcast, with a single communication form and unsustainable follow-up influence. In the future, it is necessary to construct a diversified communication matrix of “online + offline” and “traditional media + new media”, make full use of the authority of traditional media such as TV and radio to convey the core connotation of the aesthetic spirit; build fragmented and interesting aesthetic communication content with the help of new media channels such as short video platforms, social media and we-media, expand the communication coverage and attract audiences of different groups. At the same time, promote the industrial transformation of the aesthetic value of the opening ceremony, develop cultural and creative derivatives, tourism experience projects, art performance activities and other products with Chinese aesthetic elements as the core, allowing the audience to continuously feel the charm of Chinese aesthetics in daily life, realize “one performance, long-term communication, continuous empowerment”, extend the influence chain of aesthetic value, and make the opening ceremony of large-scale sports events a long-term carrier for spreading Chinese aesthetics and showing national cultural confidence^[13-15].

6. Conclusion

The opening ceremony of the 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games is a successful practice of the contemporary innovation of the spirit of Chinese aesthetics. Through the in-depth excavation and modern translation of snow and ice culture, it has realized the organic integration of traditional aesthetic concepts and contemporary artistic expression. Constructing artistic conception in the “interaction between virtuality and reality”, embodying harmony in the “harmony between man and nature”, showing vitality in the “vigor and vitality in spirit and rhyme”, and pursuing balance in the “beauty of moderation and harmony”, the opening ceremony has created a complete snow and ice aesthetic discourse system. This innovative practice shows that the contemporary vitality of Chinese aesthetics lies in creative transformation and innovative development. It must be rooted in the profound soil of traditional culture and face the aesthetic needs of modern society; it must use cutting-edge technological means and maintain profound humanistic care; it must show the unique charm of national culture and convey the common values of mankind. The success of the Harbin Asian Winter Games opening ceremony not only provides a Chinese solution for the artistic innovation of the opening ceremonies of large-scale sports events, but also explores a new path for the international communication of Chinese culture. In the future, with the continuous enhancement of cultural confidence and the deepening of creative practice, the spirit of Chinese aesthetics is bound to shine more brightly on the world stage and contribute Chinese wisdom and strength to the exchange and mutual learning of human civilizations.

Disclosure statement

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