

Analysis of Chu Lacquerware Pattern from the Perspective of Image Science: Taking the Lacquerware Unearthed from the Tomb of Zeng Hou Yi as an Example

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Abstract: The lacquerware in Zeng Hou Yi's tomb is a representative of Chu lacquerware in the early Warring States period. In order to interpret the lacquerware patterns unearthed in Zeng Hou Yi's tomb, this paper adopts Panofsky's image research and analysis method combined with literature materials to explore the three aspects of the description of the former image, the interpretation of the image and the analysis of the image. The research shows that the lacquerware of Zeng Hou Yi tomb is featured by superb technology, exquisite pattern and rich story meaning. The formation of lacquerware patterns in Zeng Hou Yi's tomb was deeply influenced by Taoism, which carried Chu's primitive religious belief and diversified national culture. Based on the analysis of patterns, this paper aims to provide a new perspective for the study of contemporary art by studying traditional Chinese culture.

Keywords: Tomb of Zeng Hou Yi; Chu lacquerware; Patterns; Iconography

1. Introduction

In the 1970s, a mysterious and magnificent Chu underground palace in Leigudun, Suizhou, Hubei Province, came into existence. With the progress of Chinese archaeology. Later, through the research of the unearthed cultural relics, scholars found that hundreds of bronzes in the tomb were engraved with the three characters "Zeng Hou Yi". The identity of the tomb owner was confirmed as the monarch of the former kingdom of the Zhou royal family, surnamed Ji and named Yi, so the tomb was called the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi.

With the advance of the excavation and investigation, there are a large number of exquisite Chu artworks, among which the lacquerware in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi is the best preserved in the Warring States tombs so far, and there are more than 20 kinds of utensils, with a number of nearly 200 pieces. These lacquerware are famous for their exquisite craftsmanship and bright patterns, reflecting the highest level of Chu lacquerware production in the early Warring States period. The lacquerware patterns unearthed from the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi have various types, among which the patterns of social life and myths and legends are the most romantic in Chu, and such patterns have not been found in other regions, and animal patterns are more widely used in lacquerware. Based on the three levels of interpretation of artistic works in Panofsky's "Research in Iconography", this paper conducts pre-iconography description, iconography interpretation and iconography analysis of lacquer patterns unearthed from Zeng Hou Yi's tomb, and explores the cultural belief, religious art and Taoist connotation hidden behind the patterns, aiming to provide theoretical reference for the combination of traditional culture and contemporary design while inheriting Chinese excellent traditional culture.

2. Description of the image before the lacquerware pattern of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb

The first part of Panofsky's research in iconography is the pre-iconography description, that is, the explanation of the primary or natural theme of the work of art. This part requires the author to comment on the Chu lacquerware pattern of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb according to his own experience, which is the premise of a complete analysis of image science.

2.1 Craft and technique

The Chu people migrated to Jiangnan Plain several times to settle down, where the climate is humid and suitable for the growth of sumac trees, and the innate superior objective conditions make Chu lacquerware famous in the world. Raw paint is derived from the sumac tree and is most suitable for making lacquerware when heated until the moisture content is 6%-8%. The reason why lacquerware can replace bronzes as sacrificial utensils in the Warring States period is that the lacquerware is bright in color with not perishable paint layer, and the most important thing is that the quality of the lacquerware is much smaller than the bronze ware, which is more convenient to take. Most of the lacquerware unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi were wooden, and the choice of wood was slightly different. It can be seen from the analysis of the material of the tomb in Baoshan that the physical characteristics of the material are well used in the production of the lacquer ware of Chu. The reasonable selection of fetal bone materials from the production and use of artifacts should be the basic principle of Chu craft production. ^[1] The lacquer objects unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi were somewhat clumsy compared to the middle and late Warring States period, but the exploration of lacquer art by the Chu people never stopped.

The lacquerware in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi is elegant and simple, however, with more details, which is considered by scholars to be a style of transition from bronzes to lacquerware, in which there are many imitation bronzes. In terms of modeling, the four-horn animal relief in the beast pattern ban (Figure 1) of Zeng Hou Yi Tomb is the design of imitation bronze ware covering edges and corners, and it is decorated by carving and painting, and the pattern is drawn with the fluctuation of the wooden carcass structure. In terms of decoration, the lacquerware in Zeng Hou Yi's tomb is mainly painted or painted, and the production process must go through three processes of primer, painting and painting. The Chu lacquerware is generally black background and red pattern or red background and black pattern, and after the primer is applied to a certain number of layers to dry, the pattern is depicted with other colors. After the raw paint is collected and reacts with oxygen, it will become black, and red is obtained by adding red vermilion to it, so red and black are used more in the lacquer painting. On the basis of the main color of red and black, Chu people added gold, green, blue, ochre and other colors for contrast and foil in order to paint various patterns, and red was also distinguished into brilliant red or deep red, etc. These details reflect Chu people's rigorous attitude towards art and pursuit of perfection. Therefore, the lacquerware in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi has vivid colors and strong contrast, and the style is rough but without losing the charm of details. As the representative of Chu lacquerware in the early Warring States period, the exploration of lacquerware techniques and styles is of great significance to the later development of Chu lacquerware, which lays a good foundation for the prosperity of Chu lacquerware in the middle and late Warring States period.

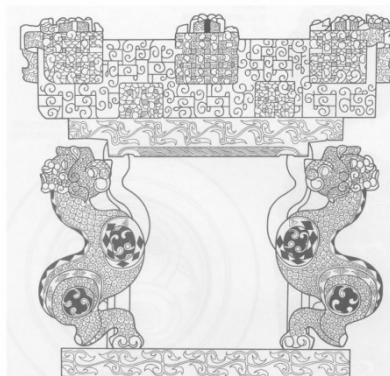


Figure 1: Beast pattern ban

2.2 Pattern classification

Most of the lacquerware decorative patterns unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi are mainly animal patterns, including dragons, phoenixes, tigers, deer, birds and other animals, and the expression forms of animals are realistic, concrete and vague and abstract. Chu art makes good use of curves. From the unearthed lacquerware in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, it can be seen that the expression of Chu lacquerware patterns is smooth and natural, and the pursuit of strength beauty and vitality. Compared with the lacquerware patterns in other regions of the same period, the animals on the lacquerware patterns of Chu are dynamically displayed. In animal pattern, Chu people prefer dragon and phoenix

pattern, which is displayed in lacquer by abstract deformation geometry treatment. The main coffin of the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi (Figure 2) is painted with 413 dragon patterns of different shapes, and phoenix patterns are decorated on the side. In the lacquerware fragments unearthed at the same time, we can also see that the lacquered horses were decorated with dragon patterns.



Figure 2: The main coffin of the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi

The lacquerware unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi appeared a large number of patterns of social life and myths and legends, which were more like exquisite decorative paintings than patterns, among which the most famous were Houyi shooting the sun, the picture of Xia Houqi finding the music in the heaven, the picture of bell beating the Fou and so on. There are also some separate mysterious shapes of Yuren and Fang Xiang Shi's patterns, which are found outside the main coffin of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb. Compared with the travel map of people, chariots and horses unearthed from Baoshan No. 2 Tomb in Jingmen, Hubei Province in the middle and late Warring States period, the narrative patterns in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi are more rough and casual, and their shapes are more abstract and simple, pursuing images rather than similarities.

Natural patterns and plant patterns are rarely used in the lacquerware of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb, but they are indispensable. These two patterns need to complement the main patterns in order to achieve the density change and highlight the primary and secondary. However, the main pattern in the suitcase of the twenty-eight stars is natural pattern, which has its particularity.

2.3 Composition rules

There are three kinds of decoration patterns in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, including independent pattern, continuous pattern and suitable pattern. The social life and mythological patterns mentioned in the previous section are decorated with individual individuals. Continuous pattern is used more in lacquer, which is divided into two kinds of continuous square and continuous square, and the role is to assist the main pattern, and this arrangement mostly appears on the flat ware. Moreover, under the support of continuous patterns, the lacquer decoration is symmetrical and uniform as a whole, and visually rigorous without loss of change. The decoration of Chu lacquer does not pursue perfect symmetry, so the main patterns are different from each other carefully. The suitable pattern is filled according to the shape of the object, and the pattern is both vivid and varied. The decoration on the duck shaped box (also known as the Mandarin duck box) is not only decorative, but also embellished with the shape of the duck itself. It is worth mentioning that Li Bo in his paper "Research on the application of derivative design of lacquerware in the Tomb of Zeng Hou Yi" talked about the use of the golden ratio composition method that appeared in ancient Greece in the drawing of the side of the duck box, and there are two groups of golden ratio relations between the left and right, and the left and right are divided by the neck of the bird pattern, and the bottom and the bottom are divided by the feet of the artist pattern. [2] From such ingenious thinking, it can be seen that Chu people's profound attainments in the field of art and strict layout of the picture. The reason why Chu lacquerware can shine brightly in the history of Chinese lacquerware is inseparable from Chu people's unremitting pursuit of art and exploration of aesthetics.

3. Zeng Hou Yi'tomb lacquer pattern image interpretation

In the previous chapter, the analysis of the image records before the lacquerware patterns in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi has got the correct motifs in the world, and the analysis of the story and meaning behind the patterns is called the image records interpretation. We need to discuss the mystery behind

the lacquerware patterns unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, explore the concept and way of the composition of the lacquerware patterns under a specific historical background, and then gradually complete the whole image research process. Throughout the history of Chu lacquerware, the lacquerware patterns unearthed from Zeng Hou Yi's tomb are more typical. This chapter intends to show the characteristics of Chu people's artistic expression under the influence of primitive religion by collating and discussing the stories and connotations behind their patterns.

As mentioned above, among the lacquerware patterns unearthed from Zeng Hou Yi's tomb, animal patterns and the patterns of social life myths and legends are the most distinctive. The analysis of the implied meaning behind these patterns is more helpful for the following research and exploration.

3.1 Dragon pattern and phoenix pattern

The Chu people respect the dragon and worship the phoenix, thinking that the dragon and phoenix can defend the dead, symbolizing auspiciousness, guarding the soul of the dead, symbolizing auspiciousness. Many dragons are driven by the soul of the master, and they are all gods, and the master is the most honorable god among these gods. Chu people's worship of dragon and phoenix patterns is totem worship in essence. In ancient times, the productivity was low and people's cognition of the surrounding things was limited, so they formed a mentality of reverence for all things in nature. Animal prints are spiritual objects in witchcraft, and dragon and phoenix prints are considered auspicious signs, and used in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, representing the hope for eternal life. Li Sao writes: Wangshu, as the moon God, opened the way for Qu Yuan, and Flilian, as the wind God, followed closely behind, and accompanied Qu Yuan on the road of search. Let the Phoenix bird fly above, to know the way ahead for me, and let Thor watch behind, to make sure everything is ready, not missed. These two poems depict the scene of Qu Yuan's ascension to the earth, horses, dragons, phoenixes, and gods all serving him, which is enough to confirm the worship and exploration of the animal pattern of the Chu people. Chu people's treatment of dragon and phoenix patterns is also different, with abstract, deformation, simplification, geometric art creation following the shape of dragon and phoenix patterns. For example, in the Chu lacquer painting of Xia Houqi finding the music in the heaven that was unearthed from the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, the figure of Xia Houqi is mainly shaped by gods, but the arms and legs are decorated with deformed dragon and snake patterns, forming the shape of half man and half god. The picture of Xia Houqi finding the music in the heaven is found on the bottom of the last section of the banjo in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi. It describes the story of Xia Houqi taking part in a banquet and obtaining the music of "Nine Songs" and "Nine Debates", which is the yearning of the Chu people to travel in heaven and earth.

3.2 Twenty-eight starts map

The map of the twenty-eight starts is found in one of the lacquered-coat boxes unearthed from the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, which is consistent with most of the names of the twenty-eighth stars recorded in the Book of Shiji and Tianguanshu. This is not only the earliest written record of all the names of the twenty-eighth stars found in China so far, but also the earliest record of the corresponding relationship between the twenty-eight stars characters and Canglong and Baihu. ^[3] Later, some scholars laid out the painted picture of the suitcase and found that the two sides were also painted with the representative patterns of Zhuque and Xuanwu, forming a complete cosmic system, which was also a great progress of Chu people's exploration of the universe during the Warring States period.

3.3 Drumming long sleeve dance diagram and bell beating Fou diagram

These two pictures are found on both sides of the duck-shaped box unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, which records the real scenes of Chu people beating drums, singing music and dancing, but the protagonists are half-human and half-gods. In these two pictures, it can be clearly seen that the protagonists have obvious bird characteristics, which is related to the religious belief of worships phoenix birds mentioned in the previous paragraph. These two pictures reflect the scene of court music and dance in the early Warring States period, and also reflect the pursuit of the unity of heaven and man and the common happiness of man and beast. With the chime bells unearthed from the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, it laid a good foundation for the subsequent research on the music of Chu in the Warring States period, and described the social life of Chu more vividly.

3.4 Interior coffin decoration of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb

The decoration of the inner coffin of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb is diverse, with three kinds of animals wrapped around the coffin, "New Preface · Miscellaneous" contains: When Sun Shu'ao was a baby, he often travelled, saw two snakes, killed and buried them, returned and wept, worried and did not eat. Mother asked him the reason. He replied: He heard that who saw a two-headed snake must die. I'd be afraid to die if I saw it. It can be seen indeed that there is a two-headed snake on the lacquered coffin here. Sun Shu'ao was from Chu, and what he heard when he was a child should be the legend of Chu, which shows that Chu has two snakes as the symbol of death. In addition to symbolizing death, the snake also has the meaning of returning from the dead. Snakes have the habit of hibernating and molting, hibernating in winter and recovering in spring, which, in ancient times, seemed to be resurrected from the dead. The story of the dragon and phoenix pattern on the lacquer coffin is described in detail, and according to the historical materials of the Han Dynasty "White Tiger Tong · Five Elements": Zhu Rong's spirit transforms into a bird, and this bird is Luan bird, namely the phoenix. Therefore, in the eyes of Chu people, phoenix is an image of the highest truth, the highest goodness and the highest beauty. Phoenix-bird pecking snake means the protection of the tomb owner^[4].

In addition to these animal patterns, some half-human half-god shapes were also seen in the side decoration of the main coffin of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb. He has a human face and animal body, the wings is stretched out, and the abdomen is striped with fish scales, with the right hand holding the halberd, which called as a "feathered man". With a mask, the lower part of the body is replaced by fire lines, no wings, and the right hand holds a halberd, which is the "Fang Xiang Shi" for driving out ghosts and epidemic. With bull head and human body, two horns on its head, long beard on two gills, the right hand holding halberd, under the Fang Xiang Shi, it is a god beast dressed up by a group of officials led by Xiang Shi. The fourth, at the top, is a long-necked bird with two wings and a body covered with scales, a phoenix bird loaded with souls to heaven (Figure 3).

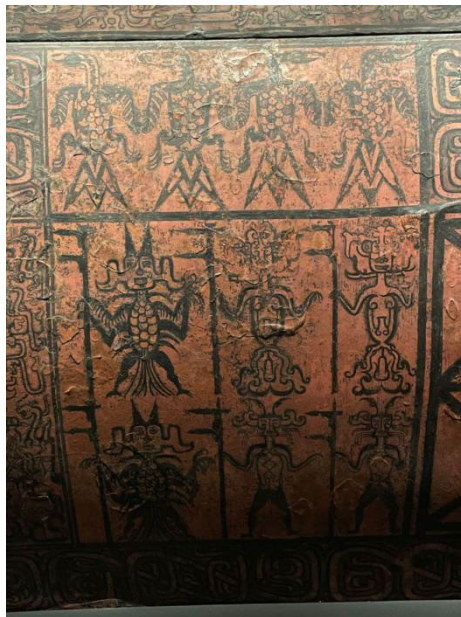


Figure 3: The main coffin of the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi

4. Iconographic analysis of lacquer ware patterns in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi

The third part of Panofsky's iconography study is the analysis of iconography, which is the explanation of the inner meaning and content of art works, the explanation of the "symbolic" value world of art works, and the basic principle under the moral story of art works. In the chapter of the pictorial analysis of the lacquer ware patterns in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, it is necessary to analyze the cultural and religious factors behind the patterns. As a vassal state of Chu, the cultural and historical background and art of Chu have a great influence on the artworks in the tomb of Marquis B of Zeng. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the culture of Chu.

4.1 The mysterious and treacherous Chu Witch Culture

The ancestors of the Chu people are believed to be the Zhu Rong clan. The Zhu Rong tribe was forced to move to Nanman after losing the battle with the Xia Dynasty, and gradually formed a unique Chu culture after integration with the local Sanmiao ethnic group. At the same time, because it was less restricted by the rational thought of the Central Plains, the Chu culture developed freely and formed a culture and art completely different from the Central Plains, which was highly recognizable. The formation of each type of culture has its own unique environment, and in the issue of cultural inheritance and development, it implies the mechanism of optimal and reasonable selection. [5] After several times of southward migration, Chu people settled in the present Jiangnan Plain, and the superior natural environment made the local products rich, so people no longer struggle for survival, with more time invested in romantic creation and imagination. The southern climate is suitable, and the boundlessness of the scenery filled the brain of Chu people, stimulating their creative nerve. Jiangnan Plain geographical environment is diverse, making the natural landscape varied, and providing inspiration and imagination for Chu people's artistic creation. As we can see, many lacquer ware patterns unearthed from the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi are derived from local natural products.

Zhang Zhengming pointed out: "The society of Chu was born directly from the primitive society, and the spiritual life of the Chu people still exudes a strong mysterious atmosphere. They feel at once familiar and strange, close and distant from the world in which they live. There is a strange connection between heaven and earth, between gods and ghosts, and between animals and men, which seems easy to discern and impossible. In the struggle for survival, they have an almost omniscient mentor, a wizard." [6] At that time, because of the constant war and low social productivity, people's cognition was limited, so the custom of asking gods and ghosts to pray for the peace of the tribe spread in the state of Chu, and the people from the king's room to the people were infiltrated by witchcraft. The lacquer ware patterns unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi have a strong flavor of Chu witchcraft. The dragon, snake and phoenix patterns in front of the tomb mentioned above, as well as the Yuren, Fang Xiang Shi and other various images are the externalization of the prosperity of Chu witchcraft culture. Even the square decoration reserved on the side of the coffin outside the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi is also considered to be the "door of ascension", which means that the dead souls are reborn in the sky under the leadership of the husband and wife. Due to the influence of Chu witch culture, once the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi was unearthed, it was linked with words such as mysterious and shiftless. This style is full of supernatural power and awe and worship of nature, which makes the lacquer wares from the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi qualitatively different from those unearthed in other regions. The complex ornamentation, elaborate design and unique color matching all show the Chu people's yearning for eternal life, their positive attitude towards life and their imagination far beyond that of the northern people.

4.2 Taoism thought of romantic and carefree

The connotation of Taoist aesthetics is to emphasize the aesthetic observation of the universe and nature, which is based on a clear state of mind. It pursues the purpose, form and essence of artistic aesthetics, and emphasizes that "wonderful" originates from "nature". This thought was fully demonstrated in Chu lacquer art. [7] "Taoism gives birth to one, one life gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, three gives birth to all things, all things contain Yin and Yang, and Yin and Yang collide and blend, reaching a new state of harmony." What is emphasized is Taoism's thinking about the natural world and the universe, and its obedience to the laws of nature. There's a saying in the *On the Equality of Things*, that is, from the point of view of the Tao, no matter the small straw sticks or the big pillars, ugly people and beautiful people, big, distorted, deceitful, and strange things, they are all connected and unified". Zhuangzi inherited and transformed the thought of witchcraft in Taoism, and the characteristic of this transformation thought can be summed up as "identity", that is, the organic integration of witchcraft thinking and Taoist philosophy. [8] The influence of these ideas on the art of Chu lacquerware is undoubtedly huge, which can be clearly felt through the analysis of the patterns of Chu lacquerware in Zeng Hou Yi's tomb. It is needless to say that the depiction of the universe in the twenty-eight stars diagram mentioned above is self-evident, and the unity of man and nature is also reflected in the patterns and shapes. It can be seen from the lacquerware patterns unearthed from Zeng Hou Yi's tomb that Chu lacquerware patterns like movement instead of static, and all animal images are presented in a moving posture, corresponding to the Taoist idea of "swimming", including the use of s and c lines to depict the patterns, full of vitality and vitality, reflecting the natural law of endless life in the universe. The deformation and imagination of animal images in the lacquerware is the most noteworthy feature of the Chu lacquerware. The zigzag shape of the deformed dragon on the outer

coffin of the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi blurred the features of the dragon, leaving only the expression of its movement; Moreover, the personification or feature splicing of dragons, phoenixes and snakes are Chu people's artistic treatment of natural forms at a higher level. Natural patterns are widely used in lacquerware, and Chu lacquerware is good at observing nature. Natural objects such as clouds, thunder and water vortices are presented in physical patterns in the lacquerware, and all natural things seem to be touchable entities, which also proves the point mentioned in Zhuangzi · Grand Master: Taking heaven and earth as a melting pot, the creator as a superb smelting craftsman, people can change and adapt as they like, and nothing is impossible.

4.3 Chu art that embraces all rivers

Chu art is a product attached to Chu culture. As mentioned above, Chu culture is a complex cultural form after moving to the south and blending with the local primitive culture. In addition to the combination of witch culture and Taoism mentioned earlier, Xiao Bing mentioned in Chu Ci and Myth that there was a genetic connection between the Chu people and the Chu culture, and he believed that the ancient Dongyi culture had an important influence on the Chu culture.^[9] At the same time, lacquerware in the Warring States period, because of its beautiful, anti-corrosion, light and other functions, it replaced the bronze and became the sacrificial utensils of Chu people. From the unearthed lacquerware in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, many patterns also carry the shadow of many bronzes, and those ferocious animal face patterns appear again in the lacquer decoration with a lively and lively image, then a bright and vivid Chu art form was born. This respect for life and movement in Chu art is a free style that the North lacked in ancient times, so Chu art is extremely precious in the entire history of Chinese art. Chu art is an all-encompassing palace, which contains a variety of disciplines such as history, culture and archaeology. As a representative of Chu art in the early period of the war, the lacquerware of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb reveals some shadow of Central Plains culture and has distinct characteristics of the times with an inclusive style of the North and the South. The era of Chu art is an era of fierce war and contention of a hundred schools of thought, social and economic development, political change and strong culture, which all promote the development of Chu art. The unique artistic wisdom and extraordinary artistic imagination of Chu art are derived from their philosophical attitude towards life, their persistence and love for spiritual life, and their selfless pursuit of the mysterious unknown world and free spiritual realm.^[10]

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the Chu lacquerware patterns represented by the lacquerware patterns unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi from the perspective of imagology, and studies the three aspects of the interpretation of the former image, the interpretation of the image and the analysis of the image. We have understood the technique, pattern type, black and red color matching and pattern composition rule from the previous image interpretation; The pictorial interpretation explores the stories behind these patterns, the worship and use of dragons, phoenixes, sorceries and myths; Finally, the image analysis explains Chu people's worship of witchcraft and nature through the understanding of Chu witch culture, Taoist culture and Chu art. Through progressive research, we have a more comprehensive analysis and understanding of the history and culture of Chu, and a better understanding of the important role of lacquerware unearthed in the tomb of Zeng Hou Yi in the history of Chinese art. The study of traditional Chinese culture from the perspective of iconography provides new ideas and new methods for the study of contemporary art, and also provides strong historical background support for the author's design practice.

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