

The Applied Study on the Use of Huizhou Three-Carving Motifs in Ceramic Tableware Design

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ABSTRACT

This study takes the Huizhou Three Carvings culture of Wuyuan as its primary source of inspiration. As a significant treasure of traditional Chinese architectural art, Huizhou Three Carvings—comprising brick carving, stone carving, and wood carving—are renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship, yet they currently face challenges in contemporary inheritance and application. Through a systematic analysis of the cultural elements of Huizhou Three Carvings, this research extracts four core design dimensions: first, “pattern narration,” which reflects seasonal cycles and cultural symbolism embedded in carved motifs; second, “material dialogue,” highlighting the artistic interaction among brick, stone, wood, and ceramic materials; third, “craft inheritance,” which embodies the essence of traditional carving techniques; and fourth, “functional transformation,” which enables a creative shift from architectural ornamentation to functional tableware. Based on these traditional elements, this study develops a modern ceramic tableware series. By analyzing contemporary trends in the ceramic tableware market and the current development of intangible cultural heritage-inspired creative products, representative motifs from Huizhou wood carving, brick carving, and stone carving are extracted and innovatively integrated into tableware design through a four-season thematic system. While preserving the cultural essence of traditional craftsmanship, the design emphasizes compatibility with modern aesthetics and practical use, thereby revitalizing intangible cultural heritage in everyday life. This design practice not only provides new perspectives for the contemporary transformation of intangible cultural heritage, but also explores feasible pathways for the development of traditional cultural creative products.

Keywords: Huizhou three-carving motifs, ceramic tableware design, huizhou carving culture, integrative innovation

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the historical development of human civilization, traditional handicrafts have functioned not only as modes of material production but also as cultural symbols that embody regional culture, social structures, and aesthetic values (Yang et al., 2018). As an essential component of China’s outstanding traditional culture, traditional crafts reflect people’s lifestyles, value systems, and spiritual beliefs of specific historical periods through the integrated use of form, pattern, and technique (Poleć & Murawska, 2021). With the advancement of industrialization and modernization, mechanized and standardized production has greatly improved efficiency; however, it has also weakened the presence of traditional handicrafts in contemporary life, resulting in challenges such as disrupted transmission and limited application contexts.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the growing emphasis on cultural confidence and the implementation of national strategies such as “strengthening cultural power” and “intangible cultural heritage

protection,” the contemporary value of traditional crafts has received increasing attention from both academia and the design community. In the design field, the exclusive pursuit of functionality and industrial efficiency can no longer fully satisfy contemporary consumers’ demands for aesthetic experience, cultural identity, and emotional value (Muhsin, 2024). Integrating traditional cultural elements into modern product design has thus become an important approach to enhancing the cultural depth and artistic value of products (Liu & Zhao, 2024). This trend not only contributes to the living transmission of intangible cultural heritage but also provides abundant inspiration for contemporary design innovation.

Among various traditional crafts, Huizhou Three Carvings (brick carving, stone carving, and wood carving) developed in the Huizhou region, stand out as significant representatives of traditional Chinese architectural ornamentation (Cao & Mustafa, 2023). Known for their rigorous compositions, rich themes, and refined techniques, Huizhou Three Carvings are widely used in ancestral halls, residential buildings, and archways. Through visual languages such as figures, flora and fauna, and auspicious motifs, they convey Confucian ethics, clan values, and regional cultural spirit (Fang et al., 2024). However, research and application of Huizhou Three Carvings have long focused on architectural decoration and heritage conservation, while systematic transformation and innovative application in modern product design remain relatively limited.

At the same time, ceramic tableware, as a category of daily-use products with high usage frequency, combines practical functionality with aesthetic value and serves as an important medium for integrating traditional culture into modern life (Cao et al., 2024). Introducing Huizhou Three-Carving motifs into ceramic tableware design not only expands the application scenarios of Huizhou Three Carvings but also enhances the cultural value and artistic expression of ceramic tableware, enabling traditional craftsmanship to re-enter contemporary contexts in a more approachable manner.

Despite the increasing number of studies on the modern transformation of traditional motifs, several issues persist in design practice. First, some designs remain at the level of superficial “symbolic collage,” lacking in-depth understanding of the cultural connotations, formal logic, and aesthetic spirit of traditional motifs, resulting in decorative outcomes that fail to convey intrinsic cultural value. Second, there is still a lack of systematic methodological guidance on how to balance traditional charm with modern aesthetic and functional requirements when applying Huizhou Three-Carving motifs to modern products. In ceramic tableware design specifically, existing products often rely on simple motif transplantation, neglecting the coordination among ceramic material properties, vessel structures, and usage scenarios. Moreover, differences in scale, curvature, and function among tableware categories impose higher demands on motif reconstruction strategies.

From a review of existing research, scholarly studies on Huizhou Three Carvings primarily focus on historical origins, artistic characteristics, cultural meanings, and conservation strategies, while applied research that treats them as design resources remains limited. In particular, application-oriented studies centered on ceramic tableware design are scarce, and mature design pathways and methodological systems have yet to be established. Some related studies discuss the application of traditional motifs in modern design but remain largely theoretical, lacking concrete design practice to support operability. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the transformation and innovative application of Huizhou Three-Carving motifs in ceramic tableware design from an applied research perspective, thereby addressing gaps in existing scholarship.

The contributions of this study are reflected in several aspects. At the theoretical level, this research enriches Huizhou Three-Carving studies by introducing an applied design perspective and offers new insights into the transformation of traditional architectural ornamentation into modern product design. At the practical level, by systematically applying Huizhou Three-Carving motifs to ceramic tableware design, the study verifies their feasibility and expressive potential in contemporary daily-use products and provides a reference model for related design practices. At the cultural inheritance level, this research promotes the contemporary dissemination of Huizhou Three Carvings through design innovation, contributing to the living transmission and sustainable development of traditional culture. Furthermore, the research framework and methodology presented here may also serve as a reference for applied studies on other traditional motifs in modern product design.

Huizhou Three-Carving Motifs

Overall Artistic Characteristics of Huizhou Three-Carving Motifs

Huizhou Three Carvings represent an important form of traditional architectural ornamentation in the Huizhou region, consisting of wood carving, stone carving, and brick carving, and are widely applied in residential buildings, ancestral halls, academies, and memorial archways (Geng, 2024). Although these three carving forms differ in material properties, techniques, and spatial placement, they exhibit a high degree of consistency in motif selection, aesthetic orientation, and cultural connotation, embodying the Huizhou aesthetic principle of “unity of form and spirit, with meaning preceding form.”

In terms of subject matter, Huizhou Three-Carving motifs center on auspicious symbolism, emphasizing the communication of abstract cultural ideals through figurative imagery (Zhang & de Bont, 2023). Motifs are often derived from flora, fauna, landscapes, historical allusions, folk stories, and ethical concepts, forming decorative languages that are both visually engaging and symbolically rich. For example, the combination of flowers and auspicious animals not only enriches visual layers but also conveys blessings for prosperity, longevity, and harmony through symbolism and homophony (Yao & Ismail, 2025). This integration of aesthetic expression and spiritual aspiration distinguishes Huizhou Three-Carving motifs from other regional carving traditions.

Formally, Huizhou Three-Carving motifs pursue compositional fullness and balance, emphasizing clear hierarchical relationships and spatial organization (Li, 2022). Whether presented as independent narrative scenes or repetitive decorative patterns, they maintain a strong sense of order and visual rhythm. Line treatment balances rigidity and softness, using contrasts of curvature, density, and openness to achieve harmony within complexity. Aesthetically, Huizhou Three Carvings reflect an implicit and restrained Eastern sensibility. Rather than pursuing superficial extravagance, artisans emphasize material texture and spiritual expression. Wood carving highlights delicate lines and layered depth, stone carving emphasizes solidity and solemnity, and brick carving reinforces architectural dignity through multi-layered spatial construction. This “material-responsive craftsmanship” provides valuable inspiration for the contemporary reinterpretation of traditional motifs.

Carving Media and Technical Characteristics

The artistic style of Huizhou Three Carvings is closely linked to their materials and techniques (Yao & Sabrina Ismail, 2024). The physical properties of different media directly influence motif modeling and artistic expression. The Huizhou region’s abundant natural resources have fostered the development of diverse carving techniques.

Wood carving, the most extensively used form, typically employs maple, camphor, and cypress woods known for fine texture and durability. It is widely applied in interior architectural elements such as beams, brackets, doors, windows, and furniture. Techniques include round carving, low and high relief, openwork carving, and multi-layer hollow carving, often combined within a single piece to create intricate spatial depth and dynamic light–shadow effects. Stone carving primarily uses bluestone, granite, and marble, and is commonly applied in exterior or semi-public architectural spaces. Its techniques include round carving, relief, and openwork carving, with an overall emphasis on solemnity and monumentality. Brick carving, made from locally fired grey bricks, is prominently featured in gateways, eaves, and ridges, with multi-layer deep carving as its most distinctive technique, producing strong spatial depth and symbolic emphasis.

Motif Categories and Symbolic Meanings

The decorative motifs of Huizhou Three Carvings encompass a wide range of subject matter, covering almost every aspect of Huizhou social life, ethical values, and aesthetic ideals. From the perspective of content structure, these motifs function not only as visual decorative elements but also as carriers of cultural information, reflecting the traditional artistic philosophy of “conveying moral principles through form.” According to their thematic characteristics, Huizhou Three-Carving motifs can be categorized into five main types: narrative figure scenes, auspicious birds and animals, floral and plant motifs, object-symbol motifs, and textual–geometric motifs.

Narrative figure motifs are primarily derived from historical allusions, theatrical scenes, and everyday folk life (Figure 1). Through figurative and narrative compositions, these motifs convey ethical values, social ideals, and life philosophies. Works such as Emperor Suzong of Tang Hosting Officials and Fishing, Woodcutting, Farming, and Studying not only reconstruct specific historical or daily-life scenarios but also reflect Huizhou society's emphasis on official achievement, moral cultivation, education, and diligence. In terms of composition, such motifs are often rich in layers, with clearly defined relationships among figures, demonstrating strong narrative coherence and visual appeal.

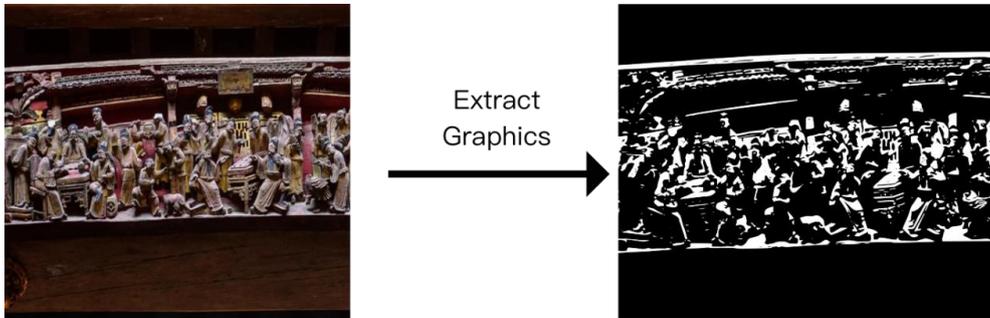


Figure 1: The banquet of emperor Suzong of the Tang Dynasty

Auspicious bird and animal motifs mainly feature symbolic creatures such as dragons, phoenixes, lions, cranes, bats, and deer, emphasizing metaphorical meanings and auspicious connotations (Figure 2). Through homophonic associations or symbolic representation, abstract blessings are transformed into concrete visual forms. For example, bats symbolize “fortune” (fu), deer represent “emolument” (lu), and the combination of pine and crane signifies longevity. These motifs are frequently combined with floral or geometric patterns, enhancing both decorative richness and cultural symbolism within the overall composition.

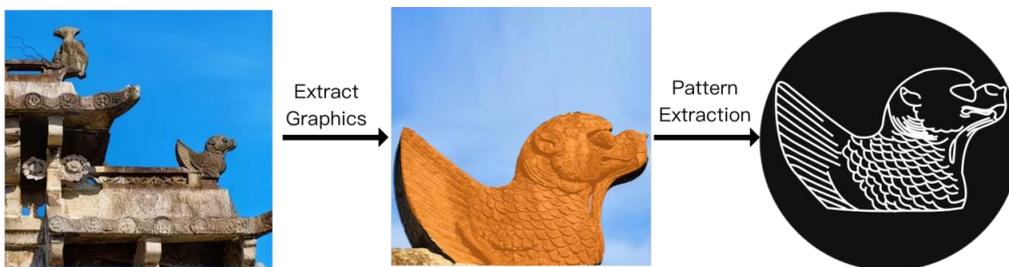


Figure 2: Stone-carved nursing chicken beast (Ming Dynasty)

Floral and plant motifs constitute one of the most abundant categories in Huizhou Three Carvings. Common examples include peony, lotus, plum blossom, chrysanthemum, scrolling lotus, and arabesque patterns. Beyond their natural beauty, these motifs embody profound cultural symbolism. The peony represents wealth and prosperity, the lotus signifies purity and moral integrity, the plum blossom symbolizes resilience and perseverance, while scrolling lotus and arabesque patterns convey ideas of continuous vitality, lineage continuity, and family prosperity.

Although object-symbol motifs are not numerically dominant in Huizhou Three Carvings, they possess a high degree of formal abstraction and decorative value in both visual language and symbolic meaning. Among them, the cloud motif is the most representative. Typically composed of flowing and spiraling curves, cloud motifs appear light and dynamic, creating a striking contrast with the inherent solidity and heaviness of stone carving materials. This visual tension between softness and rigidity enhances rhythmic variation and spatial depth in Huizhou stone carvings. In practice, cloud motifs are often carved from large stone blocks, with undulating lines forming a grand and dynamic visual effect, commonly seen in stone balustrades, wall bases, and memorial archway components. Culturally, clouds in traditional Chinese symbolism represent elevation, auspiciousness, and transcendence, embodying aspirations for career advancement, family prosperity, and a promising future. Thus, cloud motifs function not merely as decorative symbols but as important cultural media linking natural imagery with human ideals.

Textual–geometric motifs reflect the Huizhou regional aesthetic orientation of “using literature to convey moral values.” This category mainly includes poetic inscriptions, aphorisms, couplets, and abstract geometric patterns, among which the ruyi motif is particularly representative. Textual motifs are typically presented in calligraphic form, emphasizing rhythmic line quality and compositional balance. They serve both decorative and didactic purposes, often conveying moral teachings related to learning, self-cultivation, and family governance, thereby reflecting Huizhou society’s strong tradition of valuing education and scholarship. Geometric motifs, by contrast, are characterized by concise formal language. The ruyi motif is usually composed of continuous, rounded curves with smooth and resilient lines; through repetitive, revolving structures, it reinforces auspicious symbolism. Its symmetrical and orderly form effectively stabilizes the overall visual order when applied to walls, door frames, or decorative borders, allowing complex architectural ornamentation to achieve harmony without visual clutter.

Integration Strategy

Morphological Characteristics and Color Gene Analysis of Core Huizhou Three-Carving Motifs

As a significant component of traditional Huizhou architectural decorative art, the motif system of the Huizhou Three Carvings has, through long-term historical evolution, developed a highly stylized visual language rich in cultural symbolism. Differences in material properties, craftsmanship, and aesthetic orientation among brick carving, stone carving, and wood carving have resulted in diversified layers of form and expression within Huizhou Three-Carving motifs. From the perspective of applied design, this study selects seven representative motifs—swastika pattern, ruyi pattern, scrolling lotus, arabesque, cloud motif, camellia motif, and chrysanthemum motif—for systematic analysis. These motifs are examined in terms of formal composition, symbolic meaning, and color genes, thereby establishing a foundation for motif translation in subsequent ceramic tableware design.

The swastika pattern is a typical geometric motif characterized by its continuous revolving structure, which generates a strong sense of rhythm and order. Frequently applied to wall surfaces or component borders in Huizhou architecture, it symbolizes continuity, longevity, and the unending extension of blessings. Its color palette is dominated by low-saturation tones such as ochre and bluish gray, reflecting the heaviness and stability of brick and stone materials. The ruyi pattern, based on cloud-head forms, features smooth and rounded lines with pronounced decorative rhythm, conveying auspiciousness and fulfillment. In wood and brick carvings, it is often highlighted through cinnabar pigments or gilding to reinforce visual focus. The scrolling lotus motif forms intricate yet orderly compositions through the repeated interweaving of vines and lotus blossoms, expressing both the vitality of plant growth and cultural ideals of purity, elegance, and prosperity. Its classic color scheme is exemplified by cobalt-blue underglaze combined with white porcelain.

The arabesque motif constructs continuous decorative bands through the curling posture of plant stems and leaves. With elastic and dynamic lines, it is commonly found in wood-carved architectural components, while dark green and mineral green tones are frequently used to enhance its sense of natural vitality. As a representative of object-symbol motifs, the cloud motif contrasts its flowing curves with the solid, heavy texture of stone, achieving a powerful visual effect through integrated carving. In traditional culture, clouds symbolize ascension and auspicious fortune. The camellia motif, known for its layered petals and full form, signifies abundance and resilience, often rendered in crimson or rouge tones to emphasize warmth and richness. The chrysanthemum motif features radiating petals and curling branches, forming a stable and restrained structure. Warm gold and amber hues are commonly employed to express autumnal harvest and the noble, unyielding spirit associated with the flower. Together, these motifs constitute the formal and chromatic gene pool of the Huizhou Three-Carving system.

Design Translation Principles of Huizhou Three-Carving Motifs in Ceramic Tableware

Applying Huizhou Three-Carving motifs to modern ceramic tableware is not a direct transplantation of traditional architectural decoration, but rather a process of redesign shaped by changes in function, material, and aesthetic context. Accordingly, clear principles of design translation are required to ensure that motifs retain their cultural significance while meeting contemporary requirements of usability and visual appeal. Based on

design practice, this study proposes three core principles: form simplification, structural reconstruction, and continuity of imagery.

At the level of form translation, intricate details inherent in architectural motifs must be selectively refined and simplified. Architectural decorations are typically attached to large-scale facades, allowing for complex structures and dense ornamentation, whereas ceramic tableware, as everyday objects, is limited in scale and prioritizes comfort and practicality. By extracting essential contours, rhythmic relationships, and representative elements while reducing redundant details, motif recognition and visual harmony on tableware surfaces can be significantly enhanced. At the level of structural reconstruction, motif compositions must be reorganized according to the curved surfaces and functional zones of tableware, such as rims, bowl walls, and central bases. For example, motifs originally arranged horizontally can be transformed into encircling, radial, or localized compositions to better adapt to three-dimensional vessel forms.

Regarding imagery continuity, design translation should preserve the cultural symbolism embedded in Huizhou Three-Carving motifs—such as auspiciousness, harvest, and vitality—so that they continue to evoke emotional resonance within contemporary life contexts. Moreover, the inherent qualities of ceramic material—its warmth, cleanliness, and high plasticity—offer new possibilities for reinterpreting traditional motifs. In terms of color application, this study adjusts traditional high-contrast or heavily saturated palettes in accordance with glaze characteristics by lowering saturation, incorporating blank spaces, or employing gradient glazes. These strategies align visual expression with modern aesthetic preferences. Through the integrated application of these principles, Huizhou Three-Carving motifs achieve a balance between traditional meaning and contemporary form within ceramic tableware design.

Recombination Strategies of Huizhou Three-Carving Motifs Based on Seasonal Imagery

To enhance the overall coherence and cultural narrative of the ceramic tableware series, this study introduces the concept of the “four seasons” as a central design theme, reorganizing Huizhou Three-Carving motifs in a thematic manner. Beyond representing natural cycles of time, the four seasons embody rich cultural connotations in Chinese tradition, symbolizing life, growth, harvest, and preservation. Employing this concept as a design framework facilitates the construction of a product system with emotional depth and cultural continuity.

In practical recombination strategies, spring, summer, autumn, and winter are respectively associated with the scrolling lotus motif, arabesque motif, chrysanthemum motif, and camellia motif. The spring theme centers on the scrolling lotus motif, deconstructing its vine framework and transforming continuously growing lines into spiral borders along plate rims, while lotus blossoms are simplified into geometric petal forms accenting the plate center, symbolizing renewal and the emergence of life. The summer theme is based on the arabesque motif, translating the curling stems and leaves into wave-like curves along partitioned areas of bowls and dishes. Openwork or relief techniques are employed to enhance light and shadow effects, conveying the lush vitality of midsummer.

The autumn theme focuses on the chrysanthemum motif. Its radiating petal structure is reconfigured into divergent textures at the center of plates, while the curling branch lines extend into handles or edge decorations, suggesting harvest, abundance, and restraint. The winter theme highlights the camellia motif, abstracting layered petals into frost-like reliefs applied to cup walls or the inner surfaces of deep plates. Combined with the swirling layers of cloud motifs, this design evokes a visual atmosphere of latent vitality within winter’s stillness. Through the systematic recombination of seasonal imagery, Huizhou Three-Carving motifs maintain cultural continuity while forming a series-based tableware design language characterized by contemporary aesthetics.

Design Practice and Outcomes of Huangzhou Three-Carving Motifs in Ceramic Tableware

Design Thinking and Overall Scheme Development

This chapter focuses on the design practice, systematically presenting the application process and outcomes of Huizhou Three-Carving motifs in contemporary ceramic tableware. In the overall design approach, the study does not treat the motifs merely as decorative symbols for superficial application. Instead, they are regarded as

a design resource with cultural narrative attributes and formal logic, enabling an effective connection between traditional craftsmanship and modern functional objects. Based on this understanding, the practice emphasizes a holistic coordination among “cultural connotation—formal language—functional carrier,” ensuring a balance between aesthetic value, cultural expression, and usability.

For the overall scheme, the study uses the “four seasons” as the thematic thread, recontextualizing common plant motifs from Huizhou carvings into seasonal imagery. This allows the motifs to be liberated from their original architectural context and translated into a contemporary product language suitable for modern lifestyle and aesthetic preferences. The seasonal themes carry clear temporal metaphors and cultural symbolism, while also structuring the product series into a coherent and systematic whole. Furthermore, unified proportions of vessels, glaze tones, and rhythmic motif arrangements ensure visual consistency across different items. Practical considerations of ceramic use—such as hand comfort, cleaning convenience, and safety standards—are fully integrated into the scheme. Over-decoration is avoided to maintain functional integrity. By applying typical Three-Carving compositional styles—*independent, continuous, and symmetrical*—to specific parts of each vessel, the design principle “*motif serves function, decoration conforms to use*” is established. This ensures that the final design is culturally expressive while conforming to contemporary product design norms.

Sketch Development and Vessel Form Design

The sketch development stage represents the critical transition from theoretical analysis to physical practice, serving as the phase in which the design language becomes progressively clear. Designers generate numerous hand sketches and proportion studies to repeatedly test how the motifs will appear on different surfaces of the vessels. This stage addresses the challenges of adapting traditional flat or architectural motifs to the curved surfaces of plates, bowls, and cups. Without careful planning, curves can distort motif proportions or interrupt visual flow; therefore, sketching emphasizes motif extension paths and visual balance.

For vessel forms, the principle of “*simple shapes carrying motifs*” is followed, using restrained, minimalist forms to support motif expression without visual interference. Plates are categorized into shallow and deep types, distinguishing between center and rim areas to accommodate independent and continuous compositions. Bowls focus on rim curvature and wall contour, ensuring that motifs remain continuous and rhythmic from multiple viewing angles. Through multiple rounds of selection and refinement, sketch development adjusts motif density, decorative scope, and vessel proportions, gradually forming a design plan that balances aesthetic harmony with functional practicality. This phase provides clear operational guidance for subsequent fabrication and validates the feasibility of integrating Huizhou Three-Carving motifs into contemporary ceramic vessels.

Ceramic Tableware Production Process and Technical Implementation

At the production stage, the study aims to systematically transform the design plan into functional ceramic products. The process adheres to established ceramic craft principles while accommodating the unique expression requirements of Huizhou Three-Carving motifs. Production is divided into three main phases: forming and bisque firing, motif refinement and glazing, and glaze firing with final inspection.

Forming and Bisque Firing: Vessel bases are created through a combination of hand-throwing and mold shaping. Semi-dried vessels undergo precise refinement to ensure uniform wall thickness and structural stability. Shallow relief is applied to allow space for deeper motif carving later. Bisque firing strengthens the vessels and provides a suitable surface for glaze adhesion.



Figure 3: Blank forming

Motif Refinement and Glazing: This stage focuses on translating the delicacy of wood carvings, the weightiness of stone, and the layered texture of brick into ceramic language. Techniques include depth carving, layering lines, and selective application of glazes. Transparent glaze, brown glaze, and matte gray glaze are combined to simulate different material textures, while partial scraping and leaving areas unglazed enhance visual contrast and emphasize motif depth. **Glaze Firing and Final Inspection:** High-temperature firing and controlled cooling stabilize colors and ensure compliance with modern tableware safety standards. The process preserves visual clarity, textural richness, and structural integrity of the motifs, resulting in aesthetically compelling and functional products.

Seasonal-Theme Tableware: Final Products and Design Analysis

The final stage presents the four-season series as a cohesive set, with each theme systematically analyzed for design language and cultural significance.

Spring – “Spring• Revival”: Centered on the scrolling lotus motif, the design extends vine structures along plate rims and simplifies lotus forms into dot-like shapes at the plate center. This arrangement evokes the rhythm of new life and the resurgence of nature. **Summer – “Summer• Prosperity”:** Featuring the arabesque motif, curling stems are transformed into wave-like edges on plates and bowls. The interplay with water-inspired patterns on bowl walls creates a flowing visual effect, symbolizing lush growth and vitality. **Autumn – “Autumn• Harvest”:** Focused on the chrysanthemum motif, radiating petal patterns are combined with fish motifs. The composition evokes a sense of abundance, bounty, and seasonal prosperity, maintaining visual stability and rhythmic appeal. **Winter – “Winter• Conservation”:** Emphasizing introspection and cohesion, cloud motif spirals intertwine with layered camellia petals on deep plates and cups, producing a serene, warm visual atmosphere. Across the series, consistent compositional styles, color application, and motif rhythm ensure each piece retains individual aesthetic value while collectively forming a complete cultural narrative.



Figure 3: The spring-themed product



Figure 4: The autumn-themed product

CONCLUSION

This study takes Huizhou Three Carvings (brick carving, stone carving, and wood carving) patterns as its research object and conducts a systematic analysis and design practice focusing on their application paths in modern ceramic tableware design. The main findings of the study are summarized as follows. First, Huizhou Three Carvings patterns exhibit a high degree of systematicity and symbolic richness in terms of subject matter, compositional logic, and formal language. The auspicious meanings, ethical values, and aesthetic ideals embedded in these patterns provide a solid cultural foundation for their transformation into modern daily-use objects. Through a systematic classification of narrative figure scenes, auspicious animals, floral and plant motifs, object-symbol patterns, and textual and geometric motifs, it can be observed that Huizhou Three Carvings demonstrate a highly refined visual structure and condensed cultural expression. These characteristics offer abundant and stable sources for contemporary design reinterpretation and creative translation.

Second, at the level of design practice, the study demonstrates that Huizhou Three Carvings patterns are not limited to direct figurative reproduction in modern design. Through processes of deconstruction, recombination, and abstraction, their formal features can be effectively adapted to the forms, functional structures, and usage requirements of modern ceramic tableware. By adopting “the four seasons” as a thematic framework for a series-based design exploration, this study verifies the effectiveness of thematic narration and systematic construction in enhancing the expressive capacity of traditional patterns in contemporary products. The results indicate that, through serial design thinking, traditional motifs can be transformed from isolated decorative elements into design languages that carry cultural narratives and symbolic meanings, thereby strengthening the overall cultural depth and emotional value of the products.

Third, in terms of materials and craftsmanship, this study translates the visual characteristics of wood carving, stone carving, and brick carving into ceramic carving techniques and glaze-based expressions. This approach preserves the spirit of traditional craftsmanship while achieving a contemporary interpretation of material properties. The findings suggest that traditional craft elements are not confined to their original materials and techniques; rather, their cultural attributes possess the potential for cross-material and cross-media transformation. By fully utilizing the inherent qualities of ceramic materials, Huizhou Three Carvings patterns can gain new expressive possibilities and practical value within modern daily-use objects.

Based on the above findings, several design recommendations are proposed. First, in the contemporary application of traditional patterns, designers should avoid superficial replication or symbolic accumulation. Instead, they should focus on cultural connotations, compositional logic, and formal principles, integrating traditional elements into the overall product structure through systematic extraction and redesign. Only when patterns form an intrinsic relationship with vessel forms and functions can aesthetic and practical values be effectively unified. Second, greater emphasis should be placed on serial and contextual design approaches. By establishing clear themes and narrative structures, individual products can be incorporated into a coherent design system, enhancing cultural continuity and integrity while meeting modern market demands for systematic and brand-oriented design. In addition, material and process selection should respect the technical principles of ceramic production. On the premise of ensuring safety and usability, designers are encouraged to explore diverse glaze languages and decorative techniques to enrich the contemporary presentation of traditional patterns.

Despite the systematic theoretical analysis and design practice conducted in this study, certain limitations remain. First, the research primarily focuses on representative pattern types within Huizhou Three Carvings and does not sufficiently address regional variations, historical evolution, or individual craftsmen's styles, which may limit the generalizability of the conclusions. Second, the validation of design outcomes relies mainly on design practice and finished product presentation, without incorporating user experience testing, market surveys, or long-term usage feedback. Consequently, the acceptance and performance of the designs in real consumption contexts require further empirical verification. Moreover, due to constraints of time and conditions, the number of produced samples is limited, and a wider range of vessel types and usage scenarios has not been fully explored.

Future research may expand and deepen this study in several directions. First, the research scope can be broadened to include comparative studies between Huizhou Three Carvings and other regional traditional decorative arts, enabling an exploration of both common principles and distinctive features from cross-regional or cross-cultural perspectives. Second, future studies may adopt diversified research methods, such as user surveys, experimental studies, or digital analysis tools, to systematically evaluate user experience and aesthetic acceptance of traditional patterns in modern products. Furthermore, with the advancement of digital technologies and intelligent manufacturing, future research could explore the integration of Huizhou Three Carvings patterns with digital design, parametric modeling, and new material processes, thereby extending their application boundaries in contemporary product design, cultural and creative industries, and public art. Through the continuous exploration of contemporary transformation pathways for traditional craft elements, this line of research may contribute to the sustainable inheritance and innovative development of traditional culture within modern life contexts.

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