VISUAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF "GUOCHAO" STYLE IN HAND-PAINTED ILLUSTRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to determine which visual design elements are important when the artists and designers are creating "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations. The "Guochao" style has become a popular trend in China, including the integration of Chinese traditional elements and modern aesthetics, representing the contemporary interpretation of Chinese culture, creating a unique visual aesthetic. Therefore, it is of great significance for artists and designers to determine the visual design development model of "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations. The research invited 100 participants whose ages over 18 years old, artists, designers, teachers and students majoring in art or design, to use quantitative research to explore the visual design development model. The results can contribute to a deeper understanding of this style, designers and artists interested in exploring the integration of traditional and contemporary aesthetics in visual design, and provide practical guidance for artists and designers seeking to integrate "Guochao" style aesthetics into their work, and provide criteria for judging the style type of hand-painted illustrations.

Keywords: Hand-painted illustrations, Contemporary, Art Elements, "Guochao" style, Visual Design Development Model

INTRODUCTION

The "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations not only inherits the excellent traditional culture of China, but also inserts the wings of modernization, and better adapt to the modern way of life under the background of commodity economy. Since 2018, "Guochao" style has been officially mentioned in a new product launch (Xu, 2018). Since then, the "Guochao" style

has become a synonym of Chinese contemporary fashion style. With the development of science and technology, hand-painted illustrations have also changed with the change of people's aesthetic style. They not only exist in books, but also appear in WeChat, Weibo, Ins, facebook, and commercial advertisements (Wang et al., 2018). Therefore, the visual design elements of "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations are especially important when artists and designers create them. To this end, the researcher conducted a work to determine the development model of visual design in "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the research is to determine the visual design development model of the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, and which visual design elements that artists or designers should use when creating the hand-painted illustrations to make the paintings conform to the "Guochao" style and win the public love. This is mainly in response to what Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping proposed in the Goverment Report of the 20th National Congress of Communist Party of China. The "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations has responded positively to the government's advocate. Today's society "more pictures and less text" seems to be mainstream. Who can seize the public's vision and who can master the password of traffic (Wang, 2021). Some artists insist on using the most traditional hand-painted methods to create illustrations, and the hand-painted illustrations using simple techniques seem to attract more attention (Su, 2021). For example, the film poster Monkey King is Back, drawn by the artist, has attracted nearly one million discussions on the Internet. In view of the ability and advantages of the above "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, it is necessary for researchers to explore their visual design development model.

RELATED WORKS

"Guochao" Style

"Guochao" style of understanding is usually a combination of "traditional + popular", and refers to a product or culture, carrying national characteristics or elements, its development trend generally depends on the market, and is formed by consumers a kind of fashion, is spread and consumer, if a product is higher than the public aesthetic, that is not called "Guochao" style.

The "Guochao" style must be inseparable from Chinese traditional painting (Wang, 2021). There are only two types of traditional elements combined with modern forms or new elements combined with traditional forms. It is very important for the artist to understand the traditional elements of the "Guochao" style. The "Guochao" style scholar Chen Tong (2023) believes that the traditional style is the soul of the "Guochao" style, and without the traditional Chinese style, the "Guochao" style will no longer exist.

Cao Xue (2022), the designer of "Bing Dwen Dwen", believes that "Guochao" is not a simple collage of Chinese elements. Only by integrating Chinese history and culture into the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) of design can a real "Guochao" style.On November 11, 2019, at the "Guochao Trend and Cultural and Creative Development Forum", the meeting discussed

and analyzed Guochao from the aspects of the Chinese brand, Chinese traditional culture, and Guochao design. The current popularity of my country's "Guochao" style is also a way of integrating my country's excellent traditional culture and contemporary trend culture, which is sought after and loved by most young consumer groups (Tian Y. & Tian M., 2022).

The "Guochao" style has achieved good results in the commercial field. At New York Fashion Week in February 2018, the Li-Ning brand received unanimous praise in China and abroad, which inspired the culture of the public. The sense of identity and emotional resonance have injected new vitality and impetus into the innovative development of related series of products (Sun & Wang, 2020).

Tsingtao Brewery from China, inspired by the century-old history and culture of Tsingtao Brewery, with the theme of "Century Guochao", used a cross-border guochao show to fully demonstrate the integration of "Guochao" style elements and traditional brands. We are also seeing one old brand after another, which is constantly using the concept of "Guochao" to achieve brand rejuvenation and innovation, constantly bringing surprises through new design concepts and new aesthetics, and gradually changing the trend in young consumption (Gao & Chen, 2022).

Hand-painted Illustrations

The meaning of illustrations can be divided into narrow sense and broad sense. The narrow sense of illustration refers to the pictures attached to books and magazines, which often become "illustrations" by people. Its function is to supplement the content of the article for readers to appreciate; generalized illustration not only refers to the illustrations in various traditional media or children's books, but also often in the form of illustration or an independent painting, appears in new media tools such as WeChat public account tweets, weibo, circle of friends and commercial advertisements (Wang, Xu, Guan & Yang, 2018). It is an illustration that requires paper and pen or uses traditional painting tools and methods in the absence of computer software tools at all.

Chinese hand-painted illustrations can be traced back to ancient human cave paintings (Charles, 2019). In ancient China, the more famous hand-painted illustrations include the Temple Murals in the Spring and Autumn Period, the Chu Tomb Silk Paintings in the Warring States Period, the Mawangdui Silk Paintings in the Western Han Dynasty, the Dunhuang Murals in the Tang Dynasty, the "Luo Shen Fu" by Gu Kaizhi in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, and "Four Beauties" of Ji's family in Pingyang in Song Dynasty, "White Rabbit Pounding Medicine" trademark of Liujia Kung Fu Needle Shop in Jinan, as well as novel illustrations and New Year pictures in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties are all a historical example of Chinese hand-painted illustrations. During this period, hand-painted illustrations were mostly used in mausoleums, educating people, and folk entertainment, and a small number of them were combined with business (Li, 2014).

The Month Card is the earliest commercial advertisement hand-painted illustrations in China, and it is the result of the sinicization of Western advertisement illustrations (Liu, 2013). After the May Fourth Movement in 1919, Western culture impacted China's native culture, and a number of Western-style hand-painted illustrators appeared in China. Illustrator Ye Dinglu

was influenced by the style of British illustrator Audrey Bradsney, and Wen Yiduo used watercolor to draw novel illustrations. Pang Xunqin showed the style of modernism and Art Deco, and even used the drawing technique of montage.

Huang Zhou (1925-1997) was one of the most outstanding Chinese painters of the 20th century. In 1962, he created a poster for the film "Anaerhan", which is the only known film poster she created. Using the freehand techniques of traditional Chinese painting, the painter vividly sketches a beautiful poster with simple and elegant shades of ink, which is also an excellent work of art (Tang, 2016).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, China's economy entered a period of rapid development, and commercial development was unprecedentedly active. The demand for illustrations increased significantly. In 1998, China put forward the concept of "Chinese commercial illustration" for the first time, recommending the value of illustration to the society and the market.

After 2000, all kinds of digital board painting swept the country, and many young people were very keen on this new thing. However, after the prosperity came to an end, more and more people began to pursue hand-painted illustrations that returned to nature. Hand-painted illustrations work have the characteristics of originality, uniqueness, and contingency, and express the artist's aesthetic concepts and skills. Since then, new illustrators in China have sprung up. Chinese illustrations have entered a period of multi-style development.

Hand-painted illustrations have undergone drastic changes from ancient times to modern society, but they have retained the two characteristics of practicality and art (Yao, 2016). As one of the means of artistic expression, it is born out of traditional painting, but it does not belong to any traditional painting category, it is unique by itself. It can be regarded as "pure art" in the design world, and it is also a category that best reflects the author's personality. The true aesthetic product of hand-painted illustrators is a form of expression that reflects people's inner world and is a statement of yearning for a better life and the pursuit of individuality (Wang, 2022). The truth of "what is rare is more expensive" has also become a reflection of the value of hand-painted illustrations. The advantages of hand-painted illustrations compared to digital illustration are reflected in the solid art foundation, rich perceptual colors, flexible and free lines, traditional connotations of culture, and more humanized characteristics. Hand-painted illustrations are characterized by their unique creative materials and painting style. The form of expression allows people to find a sense of belonging in a two-dimensional medium (Sun, 2017).

"Guochao" Style Hand-painted Illustrations visual design model

The "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations refer to a form of contemporary artistic expression derived from Chinese culture and traditional elements. It expresses traditional culture in innovative ways, and at the same time, it also uses new media communication methods for modern communication and integrates with fashion and commerce to a style form. Visual elements refer to the basic units that constitute visual objects, the tools and media for human beings to receive and convey information, and the words and symbols that visually convey language (Castellano et al., 2021).

These findings underscore the interwoven and complementary nature of design elements, providing crucial guidance for crafting a captivating "Guochao" style. Designers should grasp the characteristics of these elements, combine emotions and culture, and meticulously construct works that resonate deeply with the audience.

After a series of comparative analyses and a review of related literature, the elements of the conceptual model have finally been formulated. There are 10 elements of "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations in the visual design model. The visual design model of the "Guochao" style in hand-painted illustrations is shown in Figure 1. Because of the model was contributed by the researcher and was therefore named the MIAO model.
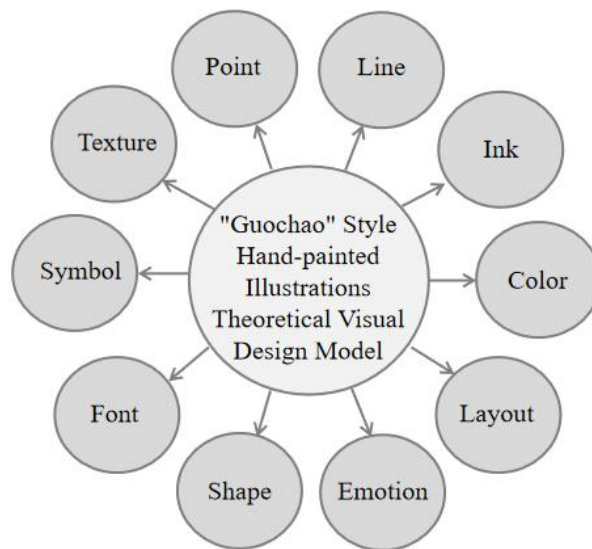
Figure 1: MIAO Model

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted and analyzed based on quantitative methods. This study reviews the "Guochao" style and its development process and application, the definition of hand-painted illustrations, and the development history and application in China. In the previous study, the visual model of "Guochao" style hand-painted illustration was named MIAO model. This study consists of research design, sample, data collection, instrument and data analysis, as shown in Figure 2.
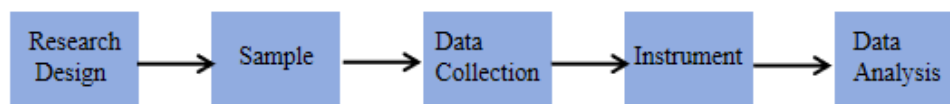
Figure 2: Research Stage

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study designed the study process from start to completion. Many aspects and limitations of this study have been considered. This study views on the development model of the MIAO model. Study objectives were first determined according to the questions of this study. A literature review was then conducted to understand the theoretical basis. After finding the rationale, the list of important variables to be measured in this study was selected, and then the method to be used for this study has been identified. Quantitative data is obtained by sending questionnaires to artists, designers, art or design teachers and students. In the context of this study, different regions, age, and background may provide different answers. Finally, the researcher will analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire and discuss the results.

SAMPLE

To easily access the sample, the researchers selected artists, designers, majoring art or design teachers and students as respondents in various regions of China. Start with a background check to ensure that the sample is compliant and over 18 years.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data collection methods from the questionnaire survey were used in this study. The questionnaire was used to measure the relevant variables. The questions in the questionnaire were specified under previous studies and expert guidance.

INSTRUMENT

The researcher prepared a fully structured questionnaire as a tool for collecting information from respondents consisting of Likert scale questions. The Likert scale questions enabled respondents to express their level of consent and choose the best answer for them. The five-point answer to the Likert scale question used in this study, the Likert scale used 1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree) in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire mainly consists of two parts, namely Part A and Part B, Part A includes 4 questions used to determine the background information of the respondents, and Part B includes 10 items and 53 questions. The questionnaire was written in Chinese and distributed online. The questionnaire has been made with WeChat QR codes (as shown in the Figure 3), and the QR code pictures are sent to Chinese people with relevant backgrounds. The questionnaire collected 100 valid answers.

Figure 3: Research QR

DATA ANALYSIS

First using the SPSS 24.0 software for reliability and validity testing, determined that the questionnaire was reliable, and then descriptive analysis was used to perform a frequency analysis of the importance of visual design elements of the respondents. The development MIAO model was obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' situation

As shown in Table 1. From the perspective of gender distribution, females in the sample accounting for 47%, and 53% of male participants, the overall gender distribution is relatively balanced; From the perspective of the age group, 16 - 25 years was 16%, 26-35 years was 32%, and 36-45 years was 28% and 45+ years was 24%; From a professional perspective, the majority of the sample are students and teachers, accounting for 29% and 31%, and artists accounted for 24%, and designers accounted for 11%; From a professional perspective, fine art accounts for the largest proportion at 51%, and next design accounts for 47%.

Table 1: Files of Sample Demographic Characteristics

Name	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
sexual	Male	53	53
	Female	47	47
Age	16-25	16	16
	26-35	32	32
	36-45	28	28
	45+	24	24
Occupation	Art Student	29	29
	Art Teacher	31	31
	Artist	24	24
	Designer	11	11
	Others	4	4
Major	Fine Art	51	51
	Visual Design	47	47
	Others	3	3

Reliability Test

As shown in Table 2, the color is 0.945, the layout is 0.957, emotion is 0.94, shape is 0.949, ink is 0.96, font is 0.923, texture is 0.966, point is 0.945, and symbol is 0.922. The coefficient of all scales is above 0.9, indicating that the reliability of the MIAO model elements scale has high accuracy and can be used for further research.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Factor	Cronbach α
Line	0.953
Color	0.945
Layout	0.957
Emotion	0.94
Shape	0.949
Ink	0.96
Character	0.923
Texture	0.966
Point	0.945
Symbol	0.922

Validity Test

In the study, the validity analysis of the 100 data collected was conducted once to justify the questionnaire design.The validity analysis of the scale was tested by KMO and Bartlett's tests, and the test results are shown in Table 3. The KMO result was 0.915, greater than 0.6, and p <0.001 in Bartlett, indicating that there are correlation factors among variables, which is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3: Preliminary Research KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO of Sampling Adequacy		0.915
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx	6156.721
	df	1378
	P value	0

Description of Line Elements

Table 4 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, soft lines are considered the most important element, with the highest average score of 3.38. The line elements of density change were highly evaluated with a score of 3.366. Chinese traditional lines are also considered to be more important, with a score of 3.331.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Line Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The traditional Chinese lines (eg: Line drawing in traditional ink and brush style) are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.331	1.367
The dynamic lines are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.247	1.374
The soft lines are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.38	1.382
The straight lines are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.305	1.378
The bend lines are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.274	1.357
The density change lines are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.366	1.402

Description of Color Element

Table 5 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, warm color is considered the most important element, with a score of 3.26 and a relatively low rating of 3.225. However, the evaluation opinions on these color elements are relatively scattered and may vary from person to person. Therefore, the illustrator or designer should pay attention to the certain diversity and difference in the color selection when creating "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Color Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The traditional Chinese colors (eg: Green landscape color) are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.256	1.363
The stronger contrast colors are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.243	1.368
The weak contrast colors are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.249	1.373
The cold colors are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.225	1.35
The warm colors are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.26	1.386

Description of Layout Element

Table 6 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustration, the circular layout is regarded as the most important layout element with a score of 3.27, while the blank score is low with a score of 3.172. In addition, the dispersion degree of scoring also shows that the evaluation of symmetrical layout is more scattered, while the overall evaluation of full layout is more consistent. Therefore, illustrators or designers need to pay attention to the innovation and differentiation of layout in the process of designing "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Layout Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The full border layout is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.188	1.299
The symmetry layout is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.215	1.385
The center layout is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.204	1.355
The blank layout is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.172	1.326
The circle layout is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.27	1.347
The triangle layout is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.207	1.349

Description of Emotion Element

Table 7 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, the angry emotion is considered the most necessary element, with the highest average score of 3.268, while the fear emotion evaluation is low, with an average score of 3.198. An illustrator or designer can choose emotional characteristics suitable for expressing the theme and emotions, and realize that there are certain diversity and individual differences in emotional choices. To decide how to use different emotional elements to create great works that match the "Guochao" style.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of the Emotional Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The surprise emotion is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.205	1.374
The anger emotion is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.268	1.342
The sad emotion is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.252	1.354
The happiness emotion is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.204	1.296
The fear emotion is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.198	1.326
The disgust emotion is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.229	1.381

Description of Shape Element

Table 8 shows that in "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, Chinese traditional culture modeling is considered the most necessary element, with an average score of 3.27, showing a high evaluation. In addition, exaggerated styling is also considered an important styling

element, with an average score of 3.256. The dispersion degree of the score shows that the evaluation opinions on different modeling characteristics are relatively dispersed, showing some diversity and difference. The illustrator can decide how to use different styling elements according to the target audience and creative purpose to create unique works consistent with the "Guochao" style.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Shape Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The traditional Chinese culture shapes (Nezha) are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.27	1.371
The exaggerated shapes are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.256	1.313
The paint realistically shapes are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.221	1.371
The complex shapes are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.227	1.366
The extremely simple shapes are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.235	1.366
The abstract shapes are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.223	1.336

Description of Ink Element

Table 9 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustration, Qing ink is considered the most necessary ink element, with an average score of 3.231. Other ink color characteristics (Jiao ink, Dan ink, Zhong ink, and Nong ink) are relatively close in the score, and the overall evaluation is relatively consistent. An illustrator or designer can effectively convey the desired emotional and visual effects. Nong ink can be used to emphasize the theme or create a strong atmosphere, while other ink elements can be flexibly used according to the need to increase the level and expression of illustration.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the Ink Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Jiao ink is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.196	1.368
The Nong ink is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.207	1.324
The Dan ink is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.213	1.355
The Zhong ink is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.205	1.327
The Qing ink is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.231	1.338

Description of Font Element

Table 10 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, Chinese calligraphy is considered the most necessary font element, with an average score of 3.272, showing a high rating. In the creation of hand-painted illustrations, the characteristics of Chinese calligraphy are considered to be very important and can be used to highlight Chinese cultural elements and traditional atmosphere. Artistic font and print font elements can also play a role in the creation.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of the Font Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Chinese calligraphy fonts are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.272	1.379
The Art fonts are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.229	1.372
The Print fonts are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.221	1.349
The Foreign language fonts are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.151	1.337

Description of Texture Element

Table 11 shows that the collage texture is considered the most necessary texture element, with an average score of 3.294. Other texture elements were scored slightly lower but still considered important elements. Hand-painted texture can increase the authenticity and texture of the illustration. Other texture elements can be used flexibly according to the needs, which can enhance the expression of the work. The illustrator can decide whether to use this texture element based on the creative goals and personal style to achieve a more consistent visual effect.

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics of the Texture Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Hand-painted is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.288	1.327
The Collage is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.294	1.372
The Monotype is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.268	1.342
The Spray is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.235	1.356
The Fire is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.247	1.326
The Dip-dye is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.25	1.312
The Self-sealing is important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.278	1.352

Description of Point Element

Table 12 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, the point of density change is considered the most necessary element, with a score of 3.303, which got a high evaluation. Point elements of size change were also considered important elements with higher scores. Moving points and motionless point element scores are low, but still have some importance. The point elements of density change can be used to create a sense of hierarchy and dynamics, while the point elements of size change can increase the visual interest of illustration. The points of movement and motionless points can also be applied according to the needs to present different emotions and atmospheres.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics of the Point Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Move points are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.188	1.328
The Motionless points are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.225	1.325
The change in Size points are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.27	1.38
The density change points are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.303	1.389

Description of Symbol Element

Table 13 shows that in the "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations, emotional symbols are considered the most necessary symbolic elements, with a score of 3.209 and a high evaluation. Moral sign traits are also recognized as important elements, scoring near emotional symbols. The elements of traditional symbols and political symbols are low, and the evaluation is relatively scattered. The use of symbols in the work can enhance the expression and appreciation of the work, expand the meaning and touch of the work, and establish a deeper connection with the audience, and make the work more artistic and unique.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics of the Symbolic Elements

Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Traditional Chinese cultural symbols (eg: dragon, yinyang) are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.155	1.357
Moral symbols are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.178	1.405
Political symbols are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.139	1.377
Emoticon symbols are important in the "Guochao" style of hand-painted illustration.	3.209	1.37

SUMMARY

As an artistic style actively advocated by the Chinese government, it is a way to promote Chinese culture and make Chinese sound to understand the visual development model of "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations and provide visual design element guidance for artists and designers. The results show that the respondents always have their own creative preferences in the process of artistic creation, and not all visual design elements are applicable to "Guochao" style hand-painted illustrations. For example, in the color elements, traditional Chinese colors and warm colors are considered to be important elements in the creation process. These findings are useful references for artists and designers when creating hand-painted illustrations in the "Guochao" style.

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