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INVESTIGATION ON PATTERN OF CHINA MIAO SPLIT LINE STITCH AND ITS INNOVATIVE APPLICATION IN FASHION DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

Miao Split Line Stitch craft in China southeast is one of the most famous special one in multiple miao embroidery. It's one of China's ancient national art and well known for its exquisite embroidery skill/delicate screen and pattern formation, while, it is always lack of investigation and research compared with it's history. Through the investigation in Taijiang country of Guizhou in China, this paper starts from the pattern of Split Line Stitch, analyzes and summarizes the artistic characteristics such as visual impression/features and color matching, and then through restructure the pattern lines and color combination by refer to other arts such as Pop and Trompe L'oeil, in order to use this traditional pattern in fashion design through a new exterior, rediscovery this national art and achieve its value reproduction. At the same time, we can be inspired from this way to find a mode to use traditional pattern into fashion design in a quick way. Keywords: Miao Split Line Stitch, pattern, restructure, fashion design

INTRODUCTION

In the Southeast of Guizhou Province, Split Line Stitch is a kind of special embroidery craft that is spread throughout the area surrounding the Qingshui River. Split Line Stitch is a skill that breaks one line into several, pad on with paper cutting, and then embroidered by needle with silk lines; it was made famous by its full composition and delicate view. The most delicate and representative Split Line Stitch is found in the Shidong area located in Tanjiang county. The craft of Split Line Stitch is particularly luxurious, but the procedure is rather meticulous so it is also very time consuming. Therefore, Split Line Stitch is the most delicate of all the Miao embroideries. Miao still does not have its own text, so the pattern of Miao embroidery has become a kind of recording of Miao's history. Acting as a non-verbal symbol, Split Line Stitch portrays all kinds of information about the history and cultural beliefs of the group.

As an ancient embroidery, there are few scholars who have completed academic papers for it, though most of the content revolves around the cultural background or just as a report in the newspaper. Some works even have a few segments such as *Folk crafts and talents in Guizhou*,¹ and *One Needle, One Thread: Guizhou Miao (Hmong) Embroidery and Fabric Piece work from Guizhou*,² while others have analyzed its craft such as *The analysis of cultural connotation and craft crafts in Guizhou Miao embroidery*.³ Some have disused the other kind of Miao embroidery pattern and its application such as *Explore parent of Miao costumes' pattern in Guizhou*⁴ and *Explore parent of Miao costumes' pattern in Guizhou*.⁵ However, they still do not have the related research to

analyze Split Line Stitch's characteristics and how to use the pattern in fashion design. This paper begins with an analysis on the characteristics within the pattern found in the Split Line Stitch craft, then discusses how to use it in fashion design by effectively referring it to Pop art in.

1.Split line stitch and the pattern

Before embroidery, three main materials should be prepared: silk thread, paper cutting, and home weaving. Every silk thread should be broken up into 4 to 16 and then dealt with more smoothly by gleditsia, a splitted silk thread covering the paper-cut pattern for embroidery. All the patterns displayed are composed only of silk thread; the entire exterior of the embroidery is very smooth because the silk thread is more meticulously processed. Figure 1 exhibits the complete embroidery process of Split Line Stitch, with Figure 2 displaying the completed work.



Figure 1 – Process of Split Line Stitch



Figure 2 –Completed Split Line Stitch

We can see that the pattern is the most wonderful factor in this embroidery's

screen,; its characteristics of decoration, composition, and varied colors are unique.

1.1.Decoration feature

Images in Miao’s embroidery are not just copy or an imitation of the real thing, but rather a kind of recreation by complex national infection; specific aspects and different images are abstracted and exaggerated and permeate one another.⁶





The patterns of Split Line Stitch can be divided into two categories: natural pattern and animal pattern. Natural pattern is mainly based on plant patterns, including various flowers and plants; animal pattern is primarily based on character patterns, such as fish, dragons, or birds. As a result of all of the patterns being made by silk threads, the patterns of Split Line Stitch are more delicate and vivid compared with Miao’s other embroidery. All of the patterns are inspired from natural phenomena, but are exaggerated by the imaginations of Miao people; for example, we can see the fish with person’s head or a cow head attached to the body of a dragon, and so on. There is not a single pattern in the view of Split Line Stitch, but rather a variety of mixed images put together to tell a traditional story, such as “Butterfly Mother” or “Rats’ Wedding”.

1.2. Composition feature

Split Line Stitch is often sewed in shoulder and sleeve of the cloth and combined with several parts when finished, usually having a square or round frame. For the composition, as a single piece for example, Split Line Stitch is mainly divided into four styles: symmetry, independent equilibrium, lace, and closed style.

The first is the symmetry style pattern, which has bilateral symmetry with a stable screen; as can be seen from No.1 in Table 1, two side patterns are the same around the center of an animal or person. The second pattern is the independent style with a lively and eclectic pattern, which is mainly used to tell some traditional story of the Miao; as can be observed in No.2, it is likened to an independent painting that conveys a thought of the relationship between people and animals. The third pattern is the lace style, which is a rectangle composed of several similar or differing animals together, such as the lace shown in No.3. The last pattern is the closed style, which is mainly round with an animal in the center and others circling around it, as displayed in No.4. The first three styles are often used in the shoulder and sleeve of Split Line Stitch cloth, while the last one is either on the front or back of the garment.

Table 1 – Different composition styles of split line stitch

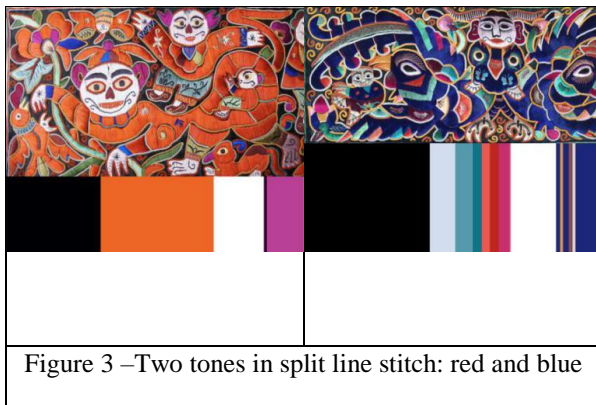
NO	Graphics	Style	Part in cloth
1		Symmetry style	Sleeve or shoulder
2		Independent style	Sleeve or shoulder
3		Lace style	Sleeve or shoulder
4		Closed style	Back or front

1.3. Color feature

The colors within Miao’s embroidery are exaggerated, it does not copy the true color of the subject but makes them more bold and flexible based on traditional aesthetics and personal preferences.⁷

As shown in Figure 3, red and blue are the main colors found in Split Line Stitch, as well as combined with other auxiliary colors. Color by blue indigo staining is the bottom color for Split Line Stitch. In Shidong and Laotun area in Taijiang county, most of the colors in Split Line Stitch are red and blue, while brown and purple can also be found in some cloths made by elderly women. At the same time, other auxiliary colors are collocated, such as white, green, and pink. The entire picture of Split Line Stitch is clearly highlighted.

The color in Split Line Stitch is bold but not overwhelming. From the hue, some complementary colors may appear on the same screen, such as red and blue or yellow and purple. For the purity, most colors have high purity to make the screen bright; for the color match, complementary and contrasting colors are used to harmonize the whole tone, though black and white play neutral roles



2.Application of split line stitch pattern in fashion design by referencing other arts

Becoming inspired from other arts is an effective way to learn color combinations or lines to create a new design. Many famous fashion designers have been inspired from other arts such as Pop and Trompe L'Oeil; Paco Rabanne and Mary

Quant are typical designers. In this section, using Pop as an example, a new pattern of Split Line Stitch is designed by referencing Pop and applying it in fashion design. Firstly, it is essential to compare the characteristics of Split Line Stitch with Pop. Secondly, the similar points are combined to design new patterns. Comparing Split Line Stitch with Pop, we can find some similar aspects within their patterns: bright colors and flat, which are both important to use in fashion design. Direct and indirect application are two methods for the new patterns in fashion design.

2.1.Direct application

“Direct application” means to directly use the tangible part of something, such as pattern, color, and shape in another part to create some new design form. Comparing Split Line Stitch with Pop, we find that the colors are all bright, and reverted the original pattern in Split Line Stitch by software to bright the color, as can be seen in Figure 4. In this way, we have not changed the original pattern, but just reduced the graphic lines and brightened the colors.



There are two methods to apply the pattern in fashion design: overall application and partial application. Essentially, either the whole garment is decorated as a full piece, or only certain sections are decorated as an

embellishment. Different decoration leads to differing visual effects or psychological feelings. The above pattern will be used as an example to explain how this pattern can be used in fashion design.

Overall application means to fully apply the pattern in fashion design, to completely decorate and bring out a strong visual experience. The cloth should be simple because the original pattern will be used to for the design. This is the simplest method to use Split Line Stitch in fashion design. From Figure 5, we can see a simple skirt with the full print pattern. It should be noted that a suitable pattern should be chosen first that will pair well with the cloths. Partial application in fashion design places the pattern in some segments of the garment as an embellishment, such as collar, shoulder, sleeve, or waist, and to highlight the overall design of the clothing. It is essential to first determine which portion is the center of the decoration, and to deal with the relation with primary and secondary. One pattern can be used in one section or several areas, or different patterns used together in one part. It should be noted that the position of the pattern should be based according to the garment.



Figure 5 –Overall application and partial application

2.2. Indirect application

“Indirect application” recreates the patterns through either exaggeration or deformation, and then uses them in other arts through other design methods as a new look. Indirect application is implicit and patterns are changeable. Color reverse, decomposition, and reorganization are the ways in which indirect application can be implemented.

Color reverse is a typical characteristic in Pop art, it does not obey the typical color schemes, but some colors are reversed to provide a more visual feeling. For example, red is switched to green or white is changed to black. While the graphics remain constant, color combinations and original color schemes are altered. As shown in Figure 6, the hues of colors have partially reversed when compared with Figure 4, and some contour lines are emphasized these modifications bring about a new feeling for the viewer. In fashion design, the color of the pattern and the style of the cloth need to match, as exhibited in Figure 6.



Figure 6 – Color reverse pattern in fashion design

Decomposition and reorganization is a method used to pick up some single graphics and then organize them together to become a new design. It is not done just by breaking down the existing pattern or materials and reorganizing them, but it also includes replacing, increasing, or decreasing some elements; the structure, unity, and entirety are the essential elements in this process. The aim of reorganization is innovation; the new patterns have varying styles and a

changeable form after the decomposition and reorganization process.

Another characteristic of pop art is evenly arranged patterns. Attention should be paid to the coordination of the colors for different combinations in the graphics. During decomposition, we can pick one or several elements and place them repetitively in one screen to become an evenly arranged pattern, similar to what can be seen in Figure 7. This continuous pattern can be printed in fabrics and designed into different clothes.

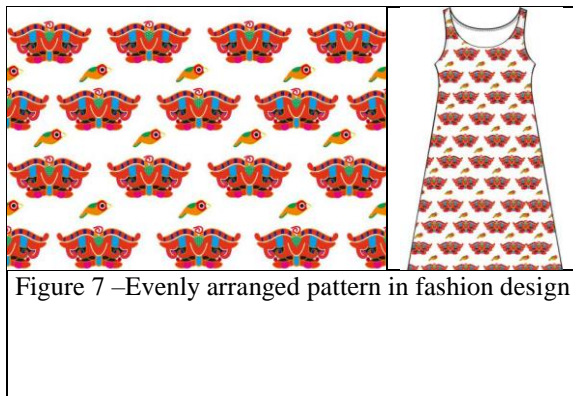


Figure 7 –Evenly arranged pattern in fashion design

The evenly arranged pattern is one way to design a new pattern from Pop art, the other method is through combining the characteristics of both the Split Line Stitch pattern and Pop art together; the closed rounded style is one of the compositions in Split Line Stitch, while having an evenly arranged design is an attribute of Pop art. For example, repeat the selected elements in a round circle and place it over a square to become a new pattern; after that, repeat the new pattern again or single use it in fashion design, as exhibited in Figure 8.

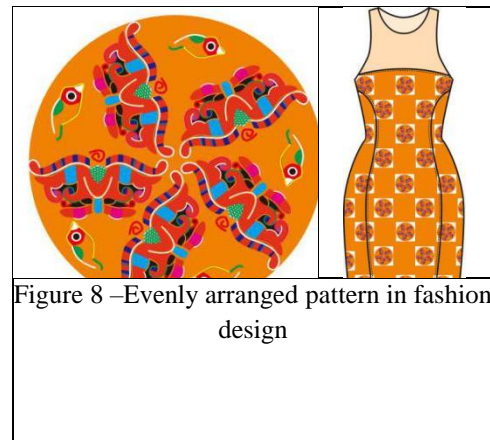


Figure 8 –Evenly arranged pattern in fashion design

CONCLUSION

Patterns in Miao Split Line Stitch have the vivid characters, exaggerated images, and bright colors that are seen as valuable materials in fashion design; the composition feature can also be an inspiration to us. Compared with other art such as Pop, some similar attributes can be found between these seemingly unrelated works, and new patterns can be designed by making references to it. Direct and indirect applications are two methods utilized to design patterns in fashion design. Overall and partial application, color reverse, decomposition, and reorganization are all useful techniques in fashion design, not only for this pattern in particular, but also for the application of other patterns. This paper provides a mode to quickly apply traditional patterns into modern fashion designs.

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