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Tionghoa Decoration Motifs Adaptation in Property Design in Animated Film "Cio Tao"

Abstract
Animated film "Cio Tao" highlights the topic of Cio Tao ceremony; a maturity ceremony before marriage in Tionghoa Peranakan (Indonesian Chinese) ethnicity. The practice of this ceremony is getting more and more forgotten because people don't know the moral meanings in every rituals of the ceremony. Those meanings are implied in the Tionghoa's (Chinese) properties used in the marriage ceremony. This paper interprets the decoration motifs and then implements the adaptation concept into the property design in the animated film "Cio Tao". This paper uses qualitative method research to explain the relationship between the motifs' meanings and shapes with the properties used. The design methodology was used to create this animated film. There are some modifications from cultural Tionghoa's visual pattern for designing property of the animated film. The visual adaptation of this study uses literature, existing visual pattern, and the Tionghoa's (Chinese) marriage ceremony properties observation as data for motif decoration conceptualization.

Keywords: decorative motifs, Tionghoa properties, Cio Tao

1 Introduction

In Indonesia, the development of animation films is gained rapidly. They are used for an entertainment, education and mediated cultural conservation. The "Cio Tao" is one example of the animated film that produced based on cultural perspective. The project was developed to preserve the tradition of Cio Tao Tionghoa's marriage ceremony.

The Cio Tao is a maturity ceremony which conducted before marriage procession. This tradition is practicing by Tionghoa Peranakan ethnicity in Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia [1]. The Cio Tao is full of moral meaning, especially when the bride and groom's older sibling give advice to them. Nowadays in Indonesia, this ceremony is becoming less implementation. As a result, people do not understand the moral meanings in each ceremony rituals. In some cases, Tionghoa Peranakan who conducting the Cio Tao ceremony, somehow do not recognize the philosophical importance of this ritual. Moreover, the older people could not explain the meaning of the ceremony to their children. Consequently, the cultural stakeholder of Tionghoa Peranakan can not ensure that their successor keep on practicing the Tionghoa's ceremony ritual.

Those moral meanings are implied in the property that used in the ceremony. Nelmes explained that property is the important things as same as a character used in film [2]. Property could describe the setting of the story, and even able to drive the plot of the story. In conveying a story through animation, the environment is arranged in such a way as to support the process of delivering the message to the audience. Layout, arrangement, color and texture of the property around the character can show the personality of the character [3]. In the animated film "Cio Tao", the motifs on the properties are designed based on the meanings relationship. The film tells

about a woman who is practicing the Tionghoa's maturnity before marriage ceremony. In each ritual, she is reminded of her parent's kindness in caring for her since she was born. In the film, along with every ritual, the narrator explains about the rituals' properties meaning.

2 Literature Review

A. 2D Animation

Traditional animation is an animation method where all the frames drawn by hand and the frames are arranged to create the illusion of motion [4]. Consequently, this technique is spending a lot of time, inefficient, and ineffective. Recently, 2D animation artists are using advanced techniques that produce animation more efficiently and effectively, such as digital production method [4].

Some animation studios are using limited animation technique. Of course, this method has limitation on the animation, which is the character movements are made not too much and parts of the characters are reused in different scenes [5]. Limited animation refers to animation that aims to reduce the number of images to be moved. This can be done by reducing the number of frames per second or by moving the required parts only in a scene, while the other part is left motionless. Although the movement in limited animation is limited, with well-designed images, this animation technique can also have its own uniqueness [4].

B. Property Design

Property is a removable object within the set. Property is not just an object used to decorate the set. Property can work to show story settings. In addition, property can also be key in the development of stories, and can be a representation of certain metaphors [2].

C. Ink Wash Painting Technique

The technique of focusing brush strokes in Chinese painting is based on the calligraphy techniques. This technique focuses on the use of brush stroke as the base or structure of forms in the painting. The technique in mixing water and ink defines the level of color value in the painting.

Chinese painting uses a principle called The Six Canons established by Hsieh Ho, a Chinese philosopher and art critic from the 5th century [6]. The Six Canons are: 1) Ch'i Yun or the soul of the painting, 2) brush strokes as the structure of forms, 3) the resemblance of object in painting and in real life is based on the painter's perspective, 4) black is considered as a color, and the color of objects are based on the object's color in real life, 5) the painter should think about the white space (empty space) for the painting's composition, not only the objects drawn, 6) in learning this technique, disciples have to study and conform traditional technique, until then they reach a point where they could paint with their own style.

D. Tionghoa Decoration Motif in Batik Peranakan

Batik Peranakan can be classified as coastal batik. The main characteristic of coastal batik is its bright color [7]. In addition, Batik Peranakan motif consists of Chinese mystical animal motifs such as liong, dragon, hong bird, and flower motif [8]. The property design in "Cio Tao" is based on Tionghoa decoration motifs which is Batik Peranakan. Batik Peranakan is the only one motif of Tionghoa Peranakan in Indonesia as a unique visual heritage. Commonly, the Batik Peranakan's motif has similarity with Chinese art motifs. The decoration motifs that are chosen as the property design are based on the relation of their philosophy meanings with the ceremonial rituals meanings. There are motifs' meaning according to Welch [9]:

- **Dragon**: believed as a powerful creature, able to repel misfortune, and bring good luck [10]. It could be depicted facing the front or the side, with its limb splayed out. A pair of dragon could be drawn facing each other or intertwined. Cloud or wave motifs are usually used as decoration in depicting dragon motif.
- **Hong bird** (Chinese Phoenix): a mix of several birds, the head of a golden pheasant, the body of a mandarin duck, the tail of a peacock, the legs of a crane, the mouth of a parrot, and the wings of a swallow. It could be red in color or the combination of 5 colors (black, white, red, green, yellow) [10]. Hong bird is believed to be able to bring good fortune, success, the symbol of femininity, beauty, and elegance.
- **Butterfly**: in Chinese arts, this motif is believed to represent eternal love, happiness, and longevity. Butterfly is often associated with the folklore of "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yungtai Tragedy", the Chinese version of "Romeo and Juliet" [10].
- **Lotus flower**: believed to be the symbol of purity [10]. It is because this flower could grow beautifully even though it lives in muddy environment. When lotus flower motif is combined with fish motif, it becomes the symbol of good fortune or prosperity.
- **Chrysanthemum flower**: believed to be the symbol of friendliness, cheerful attitude, and endurance in facing problems. It is also the representation of longevity and happiness in old age [10].

3 Methodology

Basically, this methodology of designing the properties could be described by five design process, such as data research, visual storytelling & conceptualization, properties list, motif design decision, and the last is simplification & stylization of the motif. This animated film project was not just "copy paste" the cultural pattern of the Tionghoa peranakan's motif. The designer also did philosophical meaning of the motif. So, there is some interpreting step before doing the visual conceptualization.

A. Data research

In this step, the designer did some literature study and observation. The sources are text and visual references which focuses on the Tionhoa Peranakan (Indonesian Chinese) in Tangerang.

B. Visual storytelling & conceptualization

Developing story of this animated film based on the ritual structure of Tionghoa marriage ceremony. There is some

modification of the ritual, especially on the timeline of the ceremony. The second, the designer develop visual concept of the animated film. The visual concept is generated based on oriental pattern. However, there is some adaptation to the Tionghoa Peranakan (Tangerang/ Indonesian Chinese) culture and tradition.

C. Properties list

According to the visual storytelling and the visual concept, there are some property needs on the animated film "Cio Tao". The listing of properties was inventoried as design objects for asset producing.

D. Motif design decision

The film's property assets were listed and need the motif decoration on them. The designer decided each motif of the properties. The motifs were modified from the original motifs, however there are still have the basic genuine pattern.

E. Motif simplification & stylization

The visual concept of the animated film "Cio Tao" is using simplify and styled concept, so the designer did some simplification & stylization of the motif.

Figure 1 shown below is the design process of producing the animated film "Cio Tao". There is some details of the asset of the properties and motifs needed.

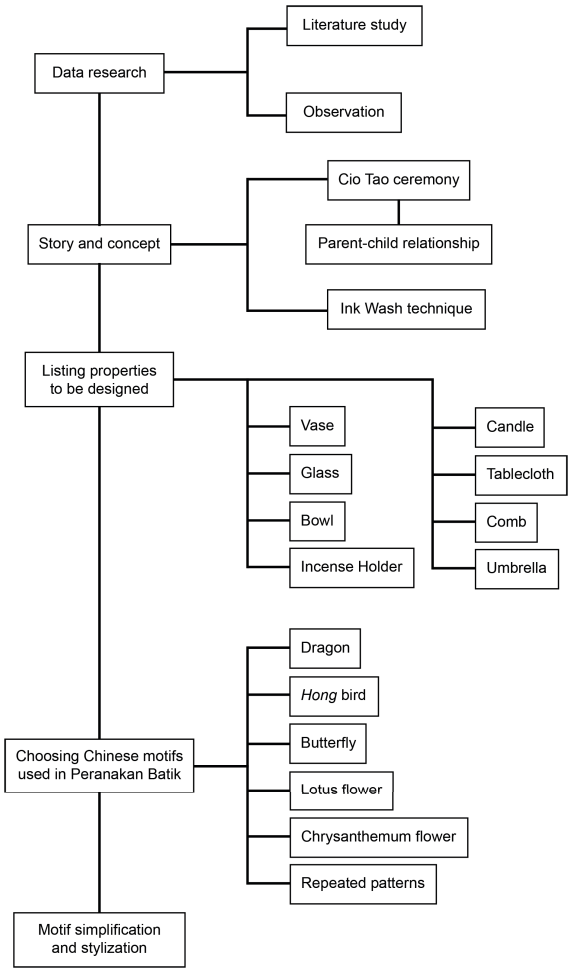

Figure 1 Design Process

4 Motif References and Sketches

A. Dragon Motif

The designer uses the visual reference of dragon motif on the Batik Peranakan (Figure 2) as a sketching guide and then interprets into dragon motif sketch (Figure 3).

Figure 2 Dragon Motif on Oey Soe Tjoen's Batik Peranakan

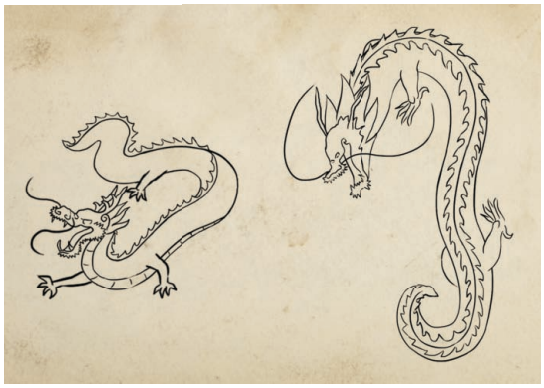

Figure 3 Dragon Motif Sketch

B. Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Flower Motif

The process of sketching of Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Flower Motif also use visual reference from Batik Peranakan (Figure 4 and Figure 5). So the sketch of Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Flower (Figure 6) can be created as shown on the figures below.

Figure 4 Hong Bird Motif on Oey Soe Tjoen's Batik Peranakan

Figure 5 Chrystanthemum Motif on Batik Peranakan

Figure 6 Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Motif Sketch

C. Lotus Flower Motif

The designer uses the visual reference of Lotus flower motif on the Batik Peranakan (Figure 7) as a sketching guide and then modified into Lotus flower motif sketch (Figure 8).

Figure 7 Lotus Flower Motif on Oey Soe Tjoen's Batik Peranakan

Figure 8 Lotus Flower Motif Sketch

D. Butterfly Motif

The designer uses the visual reference of butterfly motif on the Batik Peranakan (Figure 9) as a sketching guide and then interprets into butterfly motif sketch.

Figure 9 Butterfly Motif on Oey Soe Tjoen's Batik Peranakan

5 Design Applications

The motif adaptations are used for decorating the properties of the animated film "Cio Tao". This section will explain the implementation on the properties. The end of this section will describe the analysis summary.

A. Dragon Motif

1) Incense Holder

Dragon motif is used as the motif for incense holder. The incense is a medium for people to pray, which is related to the divine world. Thus, it is related to the dragon motif, which is the representation of divine power and repellant of misfortune.

Figure 10 Dragon Motif on Incense Holder

On this property the pair of dragon is depicted facing each other. This is also called the confrontation position, which shows that the dragon is ready to protect and fight. Geometric pattern is used as additional motif to emphasize dragon strength (Figure 10).

2) Candle

Candle is used as representation of 'guiding light' for the married couple so that they will not be lost in their life. Dragon motif is also believed to be the bringer of good fortune and protection. That's why dragon motif is used on the candles. The dragon is drawn vertically, adjusting to the candles' shape. Cloud motif is used as additional motif, related to dragon flying in the sky (Figure 11). Red is used as the candle's color because in Chinese art, red is believed to be able to repel bad luck and bring good fortune.

Figure 11 Dragon Motif on Candles

B. Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Flower Motif

1) Tablecloth

Tablecloth is used to cover the table in the ceremony. Its function is as a decoration, or to make things look beautiful. Thus, Hong bird motif, which is the symbol of beauty, is used as the tablecloth's motif. The motif is drawn repetitively in horizontal position, adjusting to the tablecloth's shape. For additional motif, chrysanthemum flower is used for the border motif (Figure 12). Red is used as the tablecloth's color, because red is a good fortune color, as stated before.

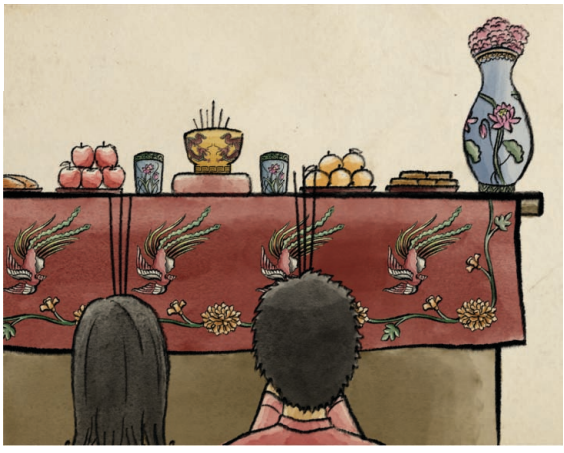

Figure 12 Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Motif on Tablecloth

2) Comb

Comb is used to comb the bride and groom's hair in 'Sisiran' ritual. This ritual symbolizes the wish that the couple will always be able to get through their problems. Thus, chrysanthemum flower that has the meaning as endurance in facing problems.is used as the main motif. Hong bird motif is used as additional motif because comb also represents femininity. Chrysanthemum motif is place in the middle because it is the main motif. Turquoise is used as the base color because in Chinese art, this color symbolizes youth (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Hong Bird and Chrysanthemum Flower Motif on Comb

C. Lotus Flower Motif

1) Vase and glass

Vase is used to place flowers, which functions as decoration to make the room look beautiful. Glass is used as container for water, whether it is to be consumed or to be used as offering. Water has the meaning of purity. Thus, both vase and glass use lotus flower motif that symbolize purity and beauty (Figure 14).

There are two glasses used in 'Cio Tao' film, one is for drinking and one is for offering. The one for drinking is shaped longer, following its function. Because of its longer shape, the lotus flower on this one is depicted with its stem. Meanwhile, the lotus flower on the shorter glass is depicted with its flower only. Both glasses use leaf motif as additional motif. Blue is used as the base color to symbolize water.

Figure 14 Lotus Flower Motif on Glasses

As for the vases, there are also two of them used in the film. But, both of them are shaped vertically long (Figure 15). Thus, the lotus flower motif used is the one that has long stem. Ruyi and leaf motif are used as additional motif. The base color is the same as glasses.

Figure 15 Lotus Flower Motif on Vases

2) Bowl

Bowl is used as food container in the 'twelve bowls' ritual. The combination of lotus flower and fish motif has the meaning of wish for prosperity to come to the family, thus it is used as the motif for bowl. The fish depicted is koi fish, which also the symbol of good fortune. Overall the motif design is interpreted as 'a wish for the couple to always prosper'. Lotus flower as the main motif is placed in the middle, while one koi fish motif is placed on each sides of the flower (Figure 16). Just like the glass and vase.

Figure 16 Lotus Flower Motif on Bowl

D. Butterfly Motif

Butterfly motif in Chinese art has the meaning of eternal love and is the symbol of lover. Umbrella is used in the moment when the bride and the groom meet for the first time in the whole ceremony. That's why butterfly motif is used in this property to emphasize the image of lover (Figure 17). The motif depicted a pair of butterfly flying over flowers. Chrysanthemum flower motif is used as additional motif. Red is used as the base color because red is good fortune color. Blue and green are used as the main color on the butterfly because they represent youth.

Figure 17 Butterfly Motif on Umbrella

5 Conclusion

According to the result of the animated film "Cio Tao", there are some modifications from cultural Tionghoa's visual pattern for designing property of the animated film. The visual adaptation of this study uses literature, existing origional visual pattern, and the Tionghoa's (Chinese) marriage ceremony properties observation as data for motif decoration conceptualization. The design application of the motifs on the asset properties also has adjustment consideration.

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