



From History to Contemporary: An Analysis of the Influence of Traditional Chinese Sculpture Elements on Contemporary Ethnic-themed Sculpture

Jin Di^{1*} and Supachai Areerungruang²

Faculty of Decorative Arts, Silpakorn University, Thailand

^{1*}E-mail: 95771335@qq.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6597-268X>

²E-mail: supachai3833@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2431-3276>

Received 30/04/2025

Revised 29/05/2025

Accepted 06/07/2025

Abstract

Background and Aim: This paper explores the profound impact of traditional Chinese sculpture on the development of contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture art. It emphasizes the innovative integration of tradition and modernity in artistic expression. The objective of this study is to systematically analyze the compositional elements of traditional Chinese sculpture, examine how these elements influence the development of contemporary Chinese ethnic-themed sculpture, and uncover their intrinsic connections. Ultimately, the research aims to provide a theoretical foundation and innovative pathways for contemporary sculpture creation.

Materials and Methods: This study employs a mixed-methods research approach. The quantitative analysis utilizes a chronological timeline to systematically examine the compositional characteristics of traditional Chinese sculpture. A case study method is adopted to explore the integration of traditional compositional elements within contemporary sculptures themed around ethnic subjects.

Results: The research findings indicate that the compositional elements of traditional Chinese sculpture have profoundly influenced the structural components, artistic characteristics, intrinsic impact, and innovative methods of contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture. The study further emphasizes that contemporary artists should integrate traditional elements with novel forms of expression, thereby creating contemporary artworks deeply rooted in cultural heritage while pointing towards entirely new developmental directions.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that the compositional elements of traditional Chinese sculpture have a significant impact on contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture, fostering artistic innovation and development. The integration of tradition and modernity not only enriches the conceptual depth of the works but also reveals the potential for contemporary expression within traditional art. Looking ahead, innovation through inheritance should be encouraged to promote the diverse evolution of ethnic sculpture and facilitate international cultural exchange.

Keywords: Contemporary Art; National Themes; Style; Tradition; Transcendence

Introduction

Throughout thousands of years, Chinese traditional sculpture has developed a unique compositional system, imbued with a profound cultural spirit and aesthetic value. However, under the widespread influence of Western sculptural concepts, contemporary Chinese sculpture has undergone significant transformations in form and language. The reinterpretation and innovation of traditional elements within new artistic contexts have thus emerged as critical issues in current art research (Wu, 2013; Chen, 2007). Although there is a growing trend toward the revival of traditional art, systematic studies on how the compositional elements of traditional sculpture are inherited, transformed, and exert influence within contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture remain insufficient (Kou, 2021). A thorough investigation into this issue is not only essential for the development of sculptural language but also plays a key role in the reconstruction and dissemination of national cultural identity.

In response to this gap, the present study focuses on the compositional elements of Chinese traditional sculpture, systematically tracing their historical evolution and artistic characteristics. It further explores their transformation pathways and mechanisms of expression in contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture. By employing methods such as literature review and case analysis, this research seeks to elucidate the underlying logic connecting tradition and modernity, thereby providing both cultural grounding and practical references for the creation and theoretical advancement of ethnic-themed sculpture. Ultimately, the study aims to promote innovative expressions of Chinese sculptural art within the contemporary context (Sun, Lin, & Liu, 2025).



Objectives

1. To systematically sort out the compositional elements and artistic characteristics of traditional Chinese sculpture.
2. To explore the pathways through which traditional sculptural elements are inherited and transformed in contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture.
3. Exploring the pathways of inheritance, transformation, and intrinsic influences of traditional sculptural elements in contemporary sculpture.

Literature Review

1. Stylistic Classification of Traditional Chinese Sculpture:

Wu Weishan (2013) systematically summarized the distinctive styles of traditional Chinese sculpture in his monograph, emphasizing the necessity of reinterpreting and revitalizing traditional sculpture within the context of globalization. He pointed out that, since the modern era, Chinese sculpture has been marginalized for a prolonged period due to the dominant influence of Western systems, and urgently needs to return to an independent path of development. Wu classified ancient Chinese sculpture into eight stylistic types: the primitive and naive imagery style, the enigmatic and abstract style of the Shang dynasty, the decorative realism of the Qin terracotta warriors, the vigorous and expressive style of the Han dynasty, the idealized Buddhist sculptural style, the secular and realistic style of the Song dynasty, the formulaic and exaggerated style of imperial mausoleums, and the simple and expressive style of folk art. Each style corresponds to the evolution of spiritual beliefs, social psychology, and aesthetic orientation during its respective historical period. For instance, the primitive imagery style reflects an instinctive expression of vital energy; Shang dynasty sculpture embodies the spirit of Eastern mysticism; the Qin terracotta warriors emphasize formal unity and a monumental sense of space; Han dynasty sculpture developed a unique expressive spiritual system; Sinicized Buddhist statues exhibit idealized features through their contours and aura (Hu & Zhang, 2019); Song dynasty sculpture tends toward secularization and realism; while imperial and folk sculptures respectively manifest imperial majesty and primal artistic creativity through stylized and exaggerated forms (Zhang, 2019). Wu's classification not only reveals the core spirit of traditional Chinese sculpture but also provides profound cultural resources and developmental pathways for contemporary sculptural innovation.

2. The Influence of Traditional Chinese Sculpture on Contemporary Chinese Sculpture:

Chen Xuehua (2007) pointed out that traditional Chinese sculpture, with its distinctive formal language and profound cultural heritage, holds a significant position in the global history of art, forming a unique aesthetic system distinct from the Western logic of realism. This artistic tradition is deeply rooted in the historical continuity unique to the Chinese nation and the philosophical concept of the unity of heaven and humanity. Through the orchestration of natural spatial relationships and the creation of artistic ambience, it evokes emotional resonance and spiritual vitality. In terms of formal characteristics, it emphasizes "shaping based on objects," "structuring with lines," and "assisting form with color," achieving a harmonious integration between humans and nature through material-driven artistry. A typical example of this approach is the galloping horse stone sculptures at the tomb of General Huo Qubing from the Western Han dynasty. This tradition of linearity and spatial expression extends continuously from the bronzeware of the Shang and Zhou dynasties to the pictorial stones of the Qin and Han periods and the religious polychrome sculptures of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, demonstrating a coherent artistic lineage. In the contemporary era, although Chinese sculpture was once heavily influenced by Western realism and modernism, a renewed recognition of native cultural values has gradually made traditional sculptural spirit an important source of innovation. Chinese contemporary sculptures that achieve genuine international influence often integrate profound national characteristics and cultural spirit into their formal explorations, embodying the notion that "the more national, the more universal." In the context of globalization, they present a diverse and distinct mode of cultural expression.

3. Cultural Elements of Contemporary Chinese Sculpture:

Based on a historical materialist perspective, Xing Kai (2007) systematically examined the phenomenon of the revival of traditional cultural spirit in contemporary Chinese sculpture through literature review, artwork analysis, and empirical research methods. By tracing the development trajectories of both traditional and modern sculpture, the study revealed the historical accumulation of artistic spirit in Chinese sculpture. Furthermore, it analyzed how sculptors, under the impact of Western cultural influences, achieved cultural identity and artistic innovation through exploration and reflection. The paper further pointed out that the revival of traditional culture is not only driven by macro-level social transformations but also reflects the artists' conscious awareness and sense of responsibility. The author emphasized that, in the context of the new era, sculpture creation should be rooted in tradition while oriented toward the future, striving to develop artworks that embody both Chinese characteristics and the spirit of the times.

The research findings of the three scholars collectively reveal the unique value and contemporary significance of traditional Chinese sculpture within the context of globalization. Wu Weishan systematically summarized eight stylistic types of ancient Chinese sculpture, outlining the evolution of spiritual beliefs, social psychology, and aesthetic preferences, and emphasized that under the influence of Western sculptural systems, Chinese sculpture urgently needs to return to an independent path of development. Chen Xuehua, starting from the perspectives of historical continuity and philosophy, conducted an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of traditional Chinese sculpture, highlighting the crucial role of traditional spirit in contemporary artistic innovation and asserting that national identity is the key to achieving global recognition. Xing Kai, adopting a historical materialist perspective, explored the phenomenon of the revival of traditional cultural spirit in contemporary sculpture, pointing out that this revival is both a result of social transformation and a manifestation of artists' conscious sense of responsibility. Overall, the three scholars unanimously emphasize that traditional Chinese sculpture is not only a historical and cultural legacy but also provides a rich resource and intrinsic motivation for contemporary sculptural innovation. They advocate that future developments should be rooted in tradition, integrate the spirit of the times, and forge a new artistic path that embodies both Chinese characteristics and international influence (Liu, 2025) .

Conceptual Framework

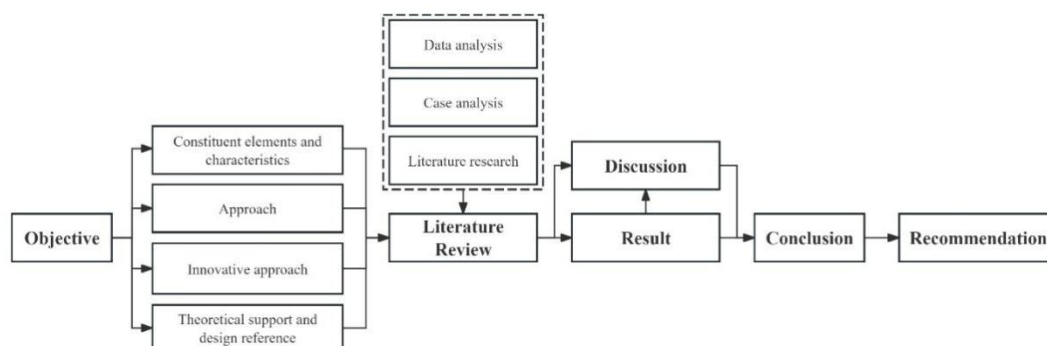


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework
Note: Constructed by the author

Methodology

This study employs a comprehensive research approach to systematically analyze the compositional elements of traditional Chinese sculpture and examine their influence on the development of contemporary Chinese ethnic-themed sculpture. To ensure the scientific rigor and validity of the research, this chapter focuses on the selection of samples, data collection, and analytical methods.

1. Sample selection

This study selects representative sculptures from various significant historical periods in China, spanning from prehistoric times to the modern era, to examine their diversity and innovation across different historical stages. To ensure the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the selected samples, three key criteria were applied. In terms of the temporal dimension, the study encompasses sculptures from all major historical periods, including the Pre-Qin era, the Shang dynasty, the Qin and Han dynasties, the Three Kingdoms to the Tang dynasty, the Song and Yuan dynasties, the Ming and Qing dynasties, and representative works from the period following the founding of the People's Republic of China. This selection ensures an in-depth examination of historical developments while maintaining the continuity of artistic evolution. Regarding cultural representativeness, sculptures from each historical period not only reflect the social, artistic, and philosophical contexts of their time but also hold significant cultural value in both form and content. For instance, the Terracotta Warriors of the First Emperor of Qin and the Buddhist statues of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang embody profound religious, political, and philosophical symbolism (Luo & Jiang, 2018). Concerning the uniqueness of compositional elements, this study places particular emphasis on sculptures that demonstrate remarkable innovation in their structure and exert a lasting influence on subsequent artistic developments. Notable examples include Wu Weishan's Poet Li Bai and Zhan Wang's Artificial Rock Series, both of which not only preserve the spiritual essence of traditional Chinese culture but also reimagine these elements through modern artistic language, breathing new life into classical forms. By employing distinctive artistic techniques, these works illustrate the fusion of tradition and modernity while serving as critical references for the study of contemporary Chinese ethnic-themed sculpture. Through an analysis of these representative works, this study aims to provide deeper insights into the impact of compositional elements in traditional Chinese sculpture on contemporary artistic creation.

2. Data collection methods

In this study, a multidimensional strategy combining literature review and field investigation was adopted to ensure the comprehensiveness, reliability, and scientific rigor of data collection. First, by extensively consulting secondary sources such as academic monographs, journal articles, and museum catalogues, representative sculptural works from various historical periods were systematically reviewed. These materials not only encompass in-depth theoretical discussions by scholars on sculptural art but also include detailed records of sculptures held in museum collections, providing a rich theoretical foundation and data support for the research. Second, for sculptural works of high artistic value and representativeness, the research team conducted field investigations and on-site observations at cultural institutions and heritage sites, including the National Museum of China, the Shaanxi History Museum, and the Dazu Rock Carvings. Through direct observation, detailed records were made regarding their compositional elements, material characteristics, and artistic techniques, yielding valuable first-hand data. In addition, high-resolution images of each sculpture were collected during the research process and subjected to meticulous analysis using image analysis software, with particular focus on the morphological structure, compositional styles, and light-and-shadow treatments. This comprehensive, multidimensional data collection approach enabled an in-depth and holistic analysis of the constitutive elements of sculptural art.

3. Data analysis methods

This study employs an explanatory sequential design, combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to ensure the scientific rigor and precision of the research conclusions. Through a systematic analysis of representative sculptures from various periods of Chinese history, a timeline of sculptural art development was constructed. This timeline not only illustrates the evolutionary process of sculpture art but also reveals the changing trends in compositional elements and artistic styles across different periods, providing a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent cultural and historical analysis. Additionally, qualitative analysis deeply explores the core compositional elements of the sculptures, including materials, composition, and cultural connotations. Through detailed analysis of artistic techniques, material choices, and form designs, the study examines how these elements were inherited and innovated in the creation of sculptures across different periods. Furthermore, it interprets the profound



impact of these elements on contemporary Chinese ethnic-themed sculpture creation. By employing multidimensional analysis, this study aims to uncover the deep internal connections between historical and contemporary sculpture art and explore innovative pathways within this context.

Results

1. Clarifying the Structural Elements and Artistic Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Sculpture

In this study, a systematic review and summary of the representative structural elements of traditional Chinese sculpture was conducted by constructing a timeline that covers nine historical stages from prehistoric times to the contemporary period. From the use of materials and design of forms to the spatial organization and changes in aesthetic styles, traditional sculpture exhibits distinct stage-specific characteristics. These changes not only reflect technological advancements but also embody the cultural spirit and value orientation pursued by each era. From the early primitive symbolic expressions, to the grand narratives and realistic styles of the Qin and Han periods, to the idealized sacred imagery in religious sculptures, and later to the more secular and expressive forms, the development of traditional sculpture delineates a clear and profound path of cultural evolution. Representative works are listed in Table 1. The works of contemporary sculptors Chen Yun'gang and Wu Weishan further exemplify this evolution; see Table 2, Figure 2, and Table 3, Figure 2. The findings indicate that traditional Chinese sculpture, through a long historical process, gradually formed a complete structural system. This system not only embodies the core concepts of Chinese aesthetics but also serves as a solid foundation for understanding contemporary sculptural creation, clarifying the value direction of traditional resources in contemporary artistic expression.

Table 1 Timeline

Period	Years	Representative Works
Pre-Xia Dynasty	? - c.1600 BC	Jade Man
Shang Dynasty	c. 1600 BC - 1046 BC	Bronze Bird
Qin Dynasty	221 BC - 207 BC	Qin Dynasty Seated Pottery
Han Dynasty	202 BC - 220 AD	Horses trample the Huns
Three Kingdoms Period - Tang Dynasty	67 AD - 907 AD	Vairocana Buddha Statue
Song Dynasty, Yuan Dynasty	960 AD - 1368 AD	Dazu Rock Carved Bodhisattva Statue
Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty	1368 AD - 1912 AD	Ming Tombs Stone Sculptures
Modern	1840 AD-1949 AD	Statue of Sun Yat-sen
After the founding of the People's Republic of China	1949 AD -	Relief of the Monument to the People's Heroes
After the Reform and Opening Up	1979 AD -	Confucius Statue

Table 2 Chronological table of Cheng Yungang's works (incomplete statistics)

Year	Title of work	Year	Title of work
2000	Play chess	2009	Wang Bo
2000	River water in spring	2011	Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin
2001	zhang Ailing	2011	Go fishing alone
2001	Faint light	2012	Cross the Guan Mountain
2002	High mountains and flowing water	2012	Dancing on top of the mountain
2002	Lao Zi	2012	Lift the mountain
2003	The three eastern saints	2012	Ask for advice
2004	Seven sages in the bamboo forest	2012	Liu Rushi
2004	Lao Zi	2013	Zhuangzi-leisure tour
2005	The white crane has bright wings	2013	Sun Zi
2005	The river flows east	2013	Mencius
2006	Confucius was lecturing by the river	2014	Eight masters of the Tang and Song dynasties
2006	Confucius meets Laozi	2014	Wang Bo
2007	The landscape of sages	2014	Gong Sunlong
2008	The eight masters of Yangzhou	2014	Fan Li and Xishi
2008	The four Great Painting monks	2014	Inhale and exhale series
2009	Qi Baishi		



Figure 2 Chen Yungang, The river flows eastward, 1999.

Note: https://www.namoc.org/xwzx/zt/xj/syzt/zp/201403/t20140306_274354.html

Table 3 Chronological table of Cheng Yungang's works (incomplete statistics)

Year	Title of work	Year	Title of work
2003	Sleeping child	2010	Philosopher Feng Youlan
2004	Qi Baishi	2011	Shi Lu
2004	Lin Sanzhi in Singing	2012	Conversation over time - Italy
2005	Zhu Ziqing and Yu Pingbo	2012	Tan Yao
2006	Chinese painting master Pan Tianshou	2012	Lao Tzu passed through a gate
2006	Master of all ages - Confucius	2012	Poet Li Bai
2006	National spirit - Lu Xun	2014	Torch bearer
2006	Master Hong Yi	2016	Confucius
2006	Master Xu Beihong	2016	Yuan Mei
2006	Ma Sanli	2016	Marx
2007	Ah Bing	2016	Confucius learned from Lao Tzu
2009	Lao Tzu	2021	Nie Er
2009	Li Keran		



Figure 3 Wu Weishan, Poet Li Bai, 2012.

Note: <https://www.duitang.com/blog/?id=707715958>

2. To explore the pathways through which traditional sculptural elements are inherited and transformed in contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture.

Building upon the foundational elements of traditional sculpture, this study further explores the expressive pathways of these elements within contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture. By examining current trends in contemporary art creation, the research identifies three principal modes through which traditional elements are transformed into a contemporary artistic language: the abstraction of traditional symbols to align with modern aesthetic preferences; the recombination and innovative presentation of traditional materials to explore the continuity of cultural meaning embedded in materiality; and the reconstruction of spatial configurations to enhance a sense of immediacy and contemporaneity in the artworks. These transformative strategies not only revitalize the formal aspects of traditional elements but, more importantly, enable the reinterpretation and innovative expression of their cultural connotations (Xiang, 2010). The findings suggest that such transformations are not mere imitations of tradition, but rather deliberate reconstructions shaped by present-day contexts, striking a balance between respect for heritage and responsiveness to contemporary realities. This reflects a conceptual approach in contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture that harmonizes cultural inheritance with artistic innovation. See Table 4, Figure 4.

Table 4 Chronological table of Zhu Ming's works (incomplete statistics)

Year	Title of work
1975-1990	Tai Commencing Form N
1975-1990	Tai Chi- Grasp Peacock's Tail
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Single Whip
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Lifting Hands
1975-1990	Tai Chi-The White Crane Flashing Wings
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Apparent Close-up
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Fair Lady Works at the Shuttle
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Heel Kicks
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Wave Hands Like Clouds N
1975-1990	Tai Chi-Cross Hands N



Figure 4 Zhu Ming Tai Chi-Arch, 2000.

Note: <https://www.namoc.org/zgmsg/xw2023/202312/4896b11b49484aa5a1621f47a4ac656f.shtml>

The study also reveals three intrinsic mechanisms through which traditional sculptural elements influence contemporary creation, thereby reinforcing the internal logic of the theoretical framework. First, the continued use of traditional symbols strengthens the construction of cultural identity, enhancing viewers' sense of belonging and recognition. Second, the continuity of traditional aesthetic philosophies offers an Eastern mode of thinking to contemporary artistic practice, ensuring cultural distinctiveness in global artistic exchanges. Third, the extension of traditional materials and craftsmanship encourages creators to reconsider the relationship between humans and nature, promoting a sustainable artistic philosophy that aligns materials with environmental awareness (Sun, Lin, & Liu, 2025). These mechanisms further confirm that traditional elements are not merely formal references, but deeply influence contemporary practice in terms of values, concepts, and methodology. Additionally, the research points out that with the advancement of technology, traditional cultural content is increasingly embedded into contemporary art in

more flexible and diversified ways, thereby enhancing its communicative power and resonance with contemporary audiences. See Table 5, Figure 5.

Table 5 Chronological table of Zhan Wang's works (incomplete statistics)

Year	Title of work	Year	Title of work
2001	Rockery Stone10#	2006	Rockery Stone82#
2001	Rockery Stone16#	2006	Rockery Stone83#
2001	Rockery Stone31#	2006	Rockery Stone84#
2001	Rockery Stone42#	2006	Rockery Stone85#
2001	Rockery Stone43#	2006	Rockery Stone93#
2005	Rockery Stone59#	2006	Rockery Stone94#
2006	Rockery Stone62#	2006	Rockery Stone95#
2006	Rockery Stone75#	2006	Rockery Stone96#
2006	Rockery Stone76#	2006	Rockery Stone97#
2006	Rockery Stone77#	2007	Rockery Stone117#
2006	Rockery Stone80#	2007	Rockery Stone123#
2006	Rockery Stone81#	2007	Rockery Stone133#



Figure 5 Zhan Wang Rockery Series, 1995.

Note: <https://www.namoc.org/zgmsg/xw2023/202312/768b85c0600a46b3806c7a44689ce633.shtml>

3. Confirming the Innovative Expressions of the Artistic Value of Contemporary Chinese Sculpture

By analyzing multiple representative works, the study further validates the broad application and innovative value of traditional compositional elements in contemporary expression. Despite stylistic differences, these works consistently demonstrate the successful integration of traditional spirit with modern visual language, reflecting the artists' continuous exploration between inheritance and innovation. This integration not only enriches the expressive possibilities of contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture but also provides a sustainable creative approach. The findings confirm that applying traditional elements in contemporary contexts can preserve cultural memory while responding effectively to societal change and contemporary needs. These insights offer valuable implications for future sculptural practice and provide both theoretical and practical guidance for the continued development of ethnic-themed art.

Discussion

This study primarily explores two key dimensions. The first dimension reveals that the compositional elements of traditional Chinese sculpture directly reflect the cultural, philosophical, and social contexts of various historical periods, demonstrating distinctive artistic forms and material languages. These elements have undergone continuous transformation and reconstruction throughout historical evolution, exhibiting



clear period-specific characteristics. However, it is crucial to recognize that the transmission of traditional sculpture has not been a seamless process; historical shifts in power and societal changes have often led to discontinuities and ruptures in cultural expression. Therefore, while emphasizing the positive influence of traditional elements on contemporary sculpture, it is equally important to critically examine the phenomena of selective memory and the reinvention of artistic expression within specific historical and cultural contexts. Such scrutiny enables a more comprehensive understanding of the actual role and potential challenges of traditional elements in contemporary artistic innovation. The second dimension highlights the profound impact of traditional sculptural elements on contemporary creation. This is exemplified in the works of artists such as Wu Weishan and Zhan Wang, who effectively integrate and reconstruct traditional elements. Their creative approaches transcend the limitations of mere replication or inheritance. Through the use of streamlined lines and metallic materials, they reinterpret classical figures with new symbolic meanings in modern cultural contexts and imbue Taihu stones with renewed cultural vitality through the aesthetic potential of new materials. This mode of creation not only facilitates in-depth dialogues between tradition and modernity, as well as between Eastern and Western aesthetics, but also significantly enriches the expressive forms of contemporary Chinese sculpture and enhances its dissemination within the global art scene. These works achieve a fusion of traditional cultural essence with modern artistic forms through distinctive manipulation of material and spatial language, revitalizing ethnic-themed sculpture in contemporary China. The findings of this study further affirm the profound influence of traditional Chinese sculpture on contemporary artistic practice. They also provide a significant theoretical and practical foundation for future artistic creation, contributing to sustained innovation and globalization in the field.

Conclusion

This study, grounded in the tradition of Chinese sculpture, systematically organizes its constitutive elements and thoroughly investigates their mechanisms of inheritance and transformation within contemporary ethnic-themed sculpture. The findings reveal that the material language, formal symbols, and aesthetic structures embedded in traditional sculpture constitute a vital component of Chinese cultural visual identity. These elements have been reinterpreted and revitalized in the context of contemporary art. Modern sculptors, while inheriting the spirit of tradition, employ advanced technologies and new media to transcend conventional limitations of materials and forms. They construct expressive modalities with heightened spatiality and interactivity, bridging the figurative and the abstract. In summary, three key conclusions emerge from this research: First, traditional compositional elements have evolved into a cultural wellspring for contemporary creation, continually shaping the expressive core of ethnic-themed sculpture. Second, the integration of national cultural spirit with modern artistic methodologies has significantly enhanced the global recognizability and communicative power of such artworks. Third, sculpture, situated at the intersection of tradition and modernity, the local and the global, must continuously explore future development trajectories in response to present realities. Therefore, the sustainable development of ethnic-themed sculpture hinges on the contemporary articulation and innovative reinterpretation of traditional cultural values. It is essential to construct an artistic philosophy that is “rooted in tradition and guided by innovation.” This approach not only enriches the expressive vocabulary of Chinese sculpture in the new era but also provides a profound foundation and expansive prospects for its cultural dissemination and aesthetic dialogue on the international stage.

Recommendation

1. Expanding the Regional Dimension of Research

It is recommended to conduct in-depth investigations into indigenous sculptural resources across different regions and to compare the similarities and differences in traditional compositional elements, thereby enriching the diversity of research perspectives.

2. Emphasizing the Relationship Between Material and Culture

It is suggested to approach the study from the perspective of material culture, examining the cultural connotations embedded in various materials and exploring their modes of expression in contemporary contexts.

3. Constructing a Systematic Impact Model

It is advisable to establish a logical model illustrating how traditional elements influence contemporary sculptural creation, thereby enhancing both the theoretical depth and practical significance of the research.





4. Conducting International Comparative Studies

Through comparative studies with traditional sculpture from other countries, the international communicative power and cultural confidence of Chinese ethnic-themed sculpture can be strengthened.

5. Tracing Contemporary Creative Practices

It is proposed to closely follow the creative practices of emerging artists, so as to extract and summarize contemporary strategies and pathways for the transformation of traditional elements.

References

- Chen, X. (2007). *The national characteristics of traditional Chinese sculpture and its influence on contemporary Chinese sculpture*. *Film Literature*, 18, 85–86.
- Hu, W. J., & Zhang, H. P. (2019). A discussion on three periods or types of Buddhist art in the Han dynasty and their fundamental differences. *Image Historiography*, 2, 122–140.
- Kou, L. X. (2021). *Research on the application of compositional elements in contemporary sculpture*. *Art Education Research*, (15), 46–47.
- Liu, Q. (2025). *Regional cultural genes in the visual translation of contemporary Chinese sculpture*. *Sculpture*, 2, 92–93.
- Luo, C., & Jiang, W. (2018). *Research on sculpture art and aesthetic standards in the Qin and Han dynasties*. *Web of Proceedings*. <https://doi.org/10.25236/ecomhs.2018.121>
- Sun, Y. R., Lin, S. Y., & Liu, D. Z. (2025). *Exploration of the evolution of material language in contemporary sculpture art*. *Sculpture*, 2, 90–91.
- Wu, W. S. (2013). My perspective on the stylistic characteristics of Chinese sculpture art: On the eight major types of ancient Chinese sculpture. *Journal of Hubei Institute of Fine Arts*, 4, 29–39, 2.
- Xiang, Y. (2010). *The dimension of concept: Conceptual expression in contemporary sculpture creation*. *Sculpture*, 6, 64–66.
- Xing, K. (2007). *The spirit of traditional culture in contemporary Chinese sculpture works* (Master's thesis, Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts).
- Zhang, C. (2019). *A brief discussion on the secularization of sculpture in the Song Dynasty*. *Home Drama*, 22, 136–137.
- Zhang, X. L. (2017). *An analysis of the localization characteristics and significance of contemporary Chinese sculpture* (Master's thesis, Shaanxi Normal University).