

CHINESE PREFERENCES FOR HOUSEHOLD WOODEN PRODUCTS:
IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING
A CANADIAN ABORIGINAL DESIGNER STRATEGY

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Abstract

The iconic Canadian aboriginal culture is deeply rooted in the lives of Canadian aboriginal people. It is widely spread and represented across Canada by distinctive and sophisticated art styles. However, Canadian aboriginal designed products are sold mainly on the domestic market. Expanding to international market will be attractive to some aboriginal designers. The Chinese household product market is desirable since it is very large but there are a host of unique domestic designs and cross-cultural designs preferred by Chinese consumers. The purpose of this research is to evaluate Chinese culture and consumers and designers/artists' preferences toward household products, in order to assist in designing a cross-cultural wood household products marketing strategy for Canadian aboriginal designers. This study collected exploratory information through open-ended questionnaire surveys of 407 Chinese household product consumers at 22nd China International Furniture Expo in Shanghai, China. Semi-structured interviews with 22 Chinese designers and artists at the home show and Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre were conducted to develop further insight into Chinese design preferences. The results indicated that Chinese household product market is currently dominated by "New Chinese" style designs, which is a representative of a cross-cultural style that combines traditional Chinese design elements and modern design elements. Most Chinese consumers at the home show preferred cross-cultural designs other than traditional designs. The surveyed consumers and the interviewed designers/artists revealed their preferences in household product designs with a focus on design style, design elements, and materials. Both consumers and designers/artists indicated that they preferred to use Alibaba-Taobao as a purchasing/selling channel due to its enormous consumer base in China.

Lay Summary

The key goal of this research is to identify and collect information on Chinese culture features and consumers and designers/artists' preferences of household products to assist Canadian aboriginal designers considering the Chinese market for household wooden products. The author conducted a questionnaire survey to evaluate Chinese market acceptance, household product designs (e.g. design style, design elements, and materials), and preferred purchasing/selling channels at Chinese consumers' level. Chinese designers and artists' interviews were also conducted for further insight.

Preface

This dissertation is an original, unpublished, independent work of the author Xuan Jun, under the supervision of Dr. Gary Bull. The research project was mainly completed by Xuan Jun. The research objectives were identified by Xuan Jun and approved by her supervisor Dr. Gary Bull and committee members Dr. Christopher Gaston and Dr. Robert Kozak. The fieldwork reported in this project has been approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The UBC Ethics Certificate number is H13-02277.

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1 Introduction

In British Columbia, First Nations play an ever-increasing role in managing and utilizing forest resources. First Nations partnership provides additional forest-based business opportunities and greater certainty on the land base (Anderson, 2002; Hickey & Nelson, 2005; Mendoza-Ramos, A & Prideaux, B., 2018 and Roundtable on Forestry, 2009). However, most First Nations forest products businesses are unable to capitalize on the economies of scale and subsequent price competition of the larger international manufacturers. Although the small scale and lack of market awareness in many First Nations businesses contributes to their disadvantaged position in product exports, wood sourced from First Nations territories provides added advantages. For instance, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification requires that forest companies “identify and uphold Indigenous peoples legal and customary rights of ownership, use and management of the land, territories and resources affected by management activities” (Forest Stewardship Council, 2012) in order to gain certification. In fact, as of February 2015, 53.6 million hectares of Canadian forests (representing 34% of all certified forests in Canada) are certified by FSC (Forest Stewardship Council, 2015). Numerous studies have measured consumers’ attitudes and willingness to pay higher prices for forest products that are certified as coming from sustainably-managed forests (Kozak *et al.*, 2004; Chen & Chai, 2010; Vlosky, Ozanne & Fontenot, 1999; Forsyth, Haley & Kozak, 1999; Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001).

The partner organization for the proposed research (Yun Ka Whu’ten Development on behalf of the Ulkatcho First Nation), owns a sawmill in Anahim Lake at the western edge of BC’s Chilcotin region. The Chilcotin forests are generally comprised of drier ecotypes and dominated

by Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), spruce (*Picea*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and aspen (*Populus*); while spruce (*Picea*) and Subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) are found in the minor but wetter climatic zones. With the outbreak of the mountain pine beetle, the annual allowable cut (AAC) has increased from 2.5 to 2.9 million cubic meters per year for the Chilcotin forest district in the short term, but forecast to drop significantly for the medium-term (Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, 2014). Due to the large salvage operations conducted by larger industry companies, it requires creative collaboration between neighboring First Nations in the region to successfully manage the remaining fragmented forests and engage in international markets for wood products. In recent years, increased awareness of the benefits of sustainable development and a low carbon economy have led to a number of policy measures to promote the use of wood product in China (Wood Canada, 2014; Ren *et al.*, 2005). This has led to the creation of new markets in China for sustainable wood products. In 2011 for instance, there were more than 20,000 wood-frame construction projects either in the planning stage or actively under construction, most of which were located in the Northern and Eastern part of China (FII, 2011).

However, the sawmill in Anahim Lake closed since 2015. The author then visited the two aboriginal designers in Anahim Lake. The two designers have been studying design at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver for over three years. They showed great interests in Chinese culture as well as the collaboration towards a cross-culture design (between Chinese and Canadian aboriginal cultures) on household products. Initially, the two aboriginal designers would like to have a preliminary understanding of traditional Chinese elements that are attractive to Chinese consumers, which motivated the author to start this project. The strategy

then changed to a broader level – promote cross-culture designed household products, as unique cultural features enhance the product value, the identity of the products in the global market, and the individual consumer experience (Handa, 1999; Yair, Press, & Tomes, 2001; Yair, Tomes, & Press, 1999). Due to the prevalent applicability of culture, this study can benefit most Canadian aboriginal designers, should these wish to sell household items into Chinese markets.

By the end of 2014, there were approximately 1.37 billion consumers in China, with about 749 million Chinese living in urban areas (China Statistical Datasheet, 2015). Figure 1.1 shows per capita annual income (break this down to lower-mid and upper income) and expenditure of urban household in China was steady increasing in the last decade. Annual living expenditure increased from CNY¥8,696.6 to CNY¥18,022.6 from 2006 to the end of 2013 (China Data Online, 2018). China remains a country of extremes in terms of purchasing power. This indicates a huge potential market for Canadian aboriginal designed household products to middle- and high-end market in China.

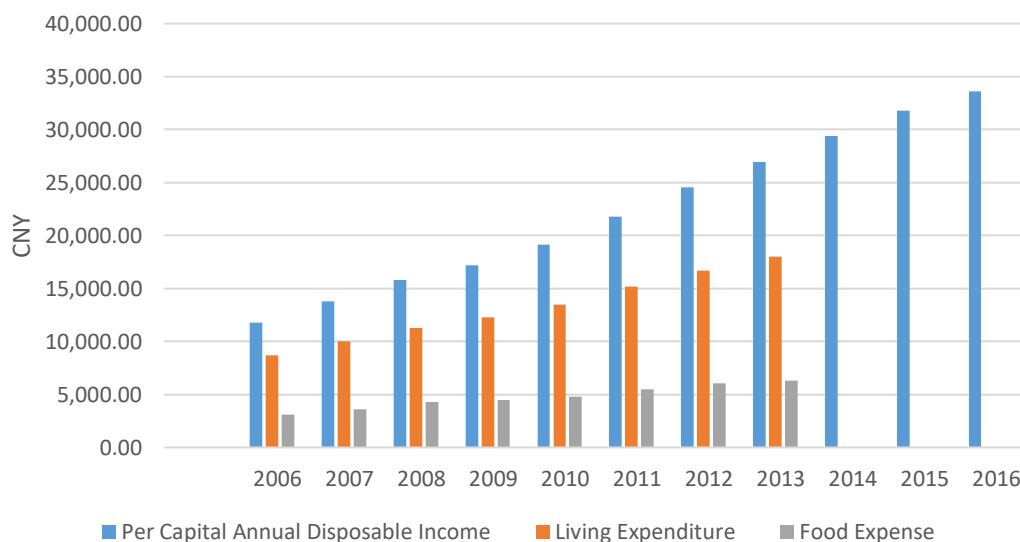


Figure 1.1 Chinese per capita annual income and expenditure - urban household (2006 - 2016). (China Data Online, 2018).

Chinese household products market is mainly blended of Traditional Chinese style, New Chinese style¹, North European Simple style, and European Imperial style (Hu, 2010; Lin & Lian, 2012; Pu, 1996; Ren *et al.*, 2005). Chinese household products market's variety and distinction offers a potential for Canadian aboriginal designed household products. Although research shows that Chinese consumers are value buyers more than price buyers (Bowe, 2008), the lack of exploring Chinese consumers' perception of household product designs increases business risks.

Culture shows the life way of an entire society, it is a blend of human activities and representative symbolic structures (Ho, Lin & Liu, 1996; Leong & Clark, 2003). To understand a specific culture, linguistic, anthropological, and sociological studies should be explored (Lin, 2007). Culture can be divided into three layers, physical or material culture, social or behavioral culture, spiritual or ideal culture (Moalosi, Popovic & Hudson, 2004; Wu, Hsu & Lin, 2004; Lee, 2004; Leong & Clark, 2003). The literature review in this study explored the three culture layers by intergrading the Ming and the Qing dynasties' furniture style, social impacts, carving process as furniture in the Ming & Qing Dynasties affect the modern Chinese furniture preferences the most (Hu, 2010; Li, 2013; Pu, 1996; Pu, 2014; Zhao, 2016).

1.1 Research Objectives

This project examined the opportunities for Canadian aboriginal designers to efficiently build cross-cultural design model and assessed market acceptance with Chinese consumers, Chinese designers and artists in designed household products export market. Through qualitative, individual, open-ended questionnaire surveys at a Chinese home show, consumers in China were

¹ New Chinese style: the combination of traditional Chinese culture and modern fashion elements (Hu, 2010)

surveyed to explore China's acceptance and willingness to buy cross-cultural designed household products. Cross-cultural design factors were assessed by interviewing artists in the home show in Shanghai, China and Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre, China. It was anticipated that by applying academically supported social science interview methods with exploratory market research goals, these surveys would identify how Canadian aboriginal designed products can access the Chinese market. Traditional Chinese design elements and its related culture background, acceptance of cross-cultural household products, and market access were additionally evaluated and synergies identified. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate Chinese culture and consumers and designers/artists' preferences in household products. This can assist Canadian aboriginal designers who wish to design a cross-cultural wood household products marketing strategy.

This objective was achieved by:

1. evaluating the main Chinese design (e.g. style, materials, elements and shapes), and purchasing/selling channels preferred by Chinese consumers through literature review and consumer surveys;
2. evaluating potential Chinese consumer's willingness to adopt a cross-cultural household product design through consumer survey; and,
3. identifying the meaning of the results for the potential development of Canadian aboriginal designers' cross-cultural household wood products.

The author surveyed the perspectives of various consumers at The 22nd China International Furniture Expo in Shanghai by individual face-to-face questionnaire surveys (Appendix I). The

author conducted individual interviews (Appendix I) with designers in Shanghai home show and artists in Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre.

2 Literature Review

To better understand the development of Chinese carving style on furniture, and the influence factors of Chinese consumers' perception of furniture and household items patterns, this part is mainly a review of the development of the Ming & Qing dynasties furniture and Chinese carving. The second part of this section shortly reviews the general Canadian aboriginal design elements to indicate the differences between the two cultural designs.

2.1 The Ming & Qing Dynasties Furniture

Traditional Chinese furniture reached the mature stage in the Ming Dynasty (year 1368 - 1644) and the Qing Dynasty (year 1644 - 1912) after period of constant evolution and development (Lin, 2013; Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). The 'carved decorative patterns' formed a unique style and reached the peak in the Ming and Qing Dynasty (Pu, 2001; Zhang, 2011; Zhao, 2016). The patterns and traditional Chinese icons that derived from the Ming and Qing household products still affects Chinese modern furniture and household product designs (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2001; Zhang, 2011). The Ming and Qing Dynasty carving patterns form an excellent match to the shapes and structures of the household products (Pu, 2001; Pu, 2004). The specific social background and traditional Chinese culture formed the carved decorative patterns on furniture and household items. Due to a variety of influencing factors, such as material sources, social condition, political factors, religious belief, customs, ideology, aesthetic sense and current science and technology, the carved decorative patterns and icons on the Ming furniture and household items are simple and elegant, which show a striking beauty of leaving white space.

Deriving from the Ming style, the Qing style furniture and household items embody miscellaneous elements, which form an exquisite style (Tang & Zeng, 2002; Zhang, 2011).

The patterns on the Ming and Qing style furniture and household items usually contain certain specific ideological references, in animals, plants, patterns of luck, and some geometric patterns. The patterns and icons usually show the meaning of: 1) persuading people to conduct life in a good manner; 2) promoting in young people a sense of respect and filial piety for their parents; 3) promoting in people a sense of care for the young people; 4) promoting in people patriotism and the loyalty toward the emperor; and, 5) pursuing longer life, better fortune, a good luck, a happy and healthy life and connubial love (Tang & Zeng, 2002; Pu, 2001; Pu, 2004). Several icons are common patterns on the Ming and Qing Destiny furniture and household items. For example, flowers, especially plum blossom, orchid, and lotus; and birds, especially mandarin duck, wild goose, and magpie; express the optimistic characteristics and people's pursuit for beautiful things.

Some legendary creatures, such as the dragon, phoenix, the Qilin and other auspicious legendary creatures, express pray for good luck and happiness (Pang, 2003). The dragon is the totem and the symbol of the Chinese nation, and it is also the largest mascot in China. The phoenix is a legendary auspicious bird, which is called the magic bird by ancient Chinese people (Pang, 2003). It is the King of the birds and contains an auspicious meaning of suppressing and shielding from evil. In traditional Chinese culture, the patterns with dragon and phoenix are usually used to express that 'lucky things will come soon'. Qilin is a legendary beast of benevolence. Most of these legendary creatures come from classic Chinese historical stories to

promote righteousness, and build an educational example. In addition, some legendary creatures can express people's yearning for beautiful life and happiness (Pang, 2003).

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the emperors used the carved decorative patterns to serve as not only a technique of expression of decoration, but also an expression of people's emotions. Those patterns highlighted optimistic and prosperous ideology, expression of spirits, and symbolism through philosophical meaning and aesthetic ideal (Pu, 2001; Pang, 2003). For example, artists used bats as carved decorative patterns on Ming and Qing Dynasty furniture and household items. The 'Bat' in Chinese has the same pronunciation as a Chinese characteristic '福', which means 'good fortune', therefore, the bat is deemed as auspicious. Meanwhile, designers and artists in the Ming and Qing Dynasties commonly used flowers, trees, insects, fish and other decorative themes from nature to express respect for nature and, an optimistic and leisure characteristic (Pu, 2001; Pang, 2003).

2.1.1 Materials

International trade in wood increased with the rapid development of land and sea transportation and loosened maritime prohibition in the Ming Dynasty (Tang, 2005). A famous sailor – He Zheng sailed to Southeast Asia seven times and brought a large number of precious timbers, especially Amboyna wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*), Rragrant rosewood (*Dalbergia odorifera*), and African rosewood (*Millettia laurentii*) (Pu, 2004). Most of these timbers are used to provide furniture with popular carved patterns to royal families.

The general population want to emulate the royalty and developed a trade for hardwood with popular carving patterns. People in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, paid particular attention to the selection of materials for furniture carvings. The contemporary carving artists and designers thought that the high-quality hardwood was the prerequisite for the formation of the carved decorative patterns of the furniture. Such materials should have tough texture, thick color, fine and transparent texture. For example, the color of Amboyna wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*) can change from deep black to purple with time (Pu, 2004). It has metallic luster and silk-like texture and hard material and meticulous texture. Therefore, the carving designers and artists thought those characteristics were good for carving. Actually, it is the most refined material for classic furniture, and the artists can even carve decorative patterns on its branches and nodes. For example, the color of Rragrant rosewood (*Dalbergia odorifera*) is brown yellow or brown red. It looks luxury and the material is resistant. It is hard to crack or deform but it is easy to shape and carve (Pu, 2004). Due to such advantages, Amboyna wood (*Pterocarpus indicus*) is also the most superb wood for making furniture (Wang, 2001). These advantages of such hardwoods provide an important guarantee for the exquisite of the carved decorative patterns.

2.1.2 Impacts

2.1.2.1 Impacts of socio-economics

The carved decorative patterns of furniture reveal the joint emphasis on social impact and temporal literature. For instance, the carved decorative patterns on Ming-style furniture were selected from animals and plants and daily objects; the themes of these objects included all kinds of wealth and spiritual sustenance in objects such as pomegranate, gourd, peony, peach, *Ganoderma lucidum*, dragon, phoenix, magpies, bats, deer and fish. Most artists preferred to use

some elegant patterns to show their unique perspective characteristics, and focus on objects, such as cloud, lotus, and flowers. For example, ‘pine, bamboo and plum blossom’ were called ‘three friends to resist cold’ and were therefore used to express resistance. These carved decorative patterns make the furniture unique and demonstrates the harmonious coexistence of Confucianism, Taoism and urban life (Wang, 2001).

During the Qing Dynasty, the increase in carved decorations on furniture escalated because the Qing rulers were nomadic and they had bold personality (Wang, 2001). Many preferred brilliant colors and gorgeous decoration. The complex carved decorations can heighten the furniture style and show the prosperous social condition of the Qing Emperors. Historians refer to these prosperous social conditions during the Qing Dynasty as ‘Kang-Qian¹Flourishing Age’ due to its rapidly developing society and economy. There were many royal gardens and parks built, as well as officially luxury residence. The furniture, especially those with carved patterns, reached a peak during that period. In terms of the carved decorative art, the decoration of Qing Dynasty furniture reached the top of traditional Chinese furniture. The carving craftsmanship is delicate and combined with a variety of technologies, to fully demonstrate the national power and folk customs in the Qing Dynasty. In addition, the use of glasses increased the use of carved decoration on the Qing Dynasty furniture. In the Qing Dynasty, glass windows, glass mirrors and glassware had gradually increased to make interior rooms brighter, and provided opportunities for appreciating the carved decorative patterns. Therefore, the complicated and splendid style became the main style of the carved decorative patterns. The aesthetic interest of the general population is simplicity and complicity circulates and alternates. The carved decoration of Ming-

¹ Kang-Qing: title of the two famous emperors in the Qing Dynasty.

style furniture is mainly simple and elegant. In the Qing Dynasty, the era needed a decorative style became the main style of the carved decorative patterns (Pu, 2004; Wang, 2001).

2.1.2.2 Impacts of philosophy/religion

2.1.2.2.1 Impacts of Confucianism concept

In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Confucianism concept still occupied a dominant philosophy in traditional culture. The core of the Confucianism is integrating heaven and human into one; in other words, it advocates the harmony and unity between nature and mankind. Such intimacy between nature and mankind goes up to a philosophic height, and establishes the conceptual system of ‘the Unity of Heaven and Human’, the embodiment of the spiritual essence of Chinese culture (Lin & Lian, 2012).

While using the carved decorative patterns on furniture and household items, people pursue ‘the Unity of Heaven and Human’ by using natural icons. Craftsmen usually combine natural objects with best wishes of people to pursue the mix and unity between nature and mankind, rationality and emotion, and, material and soul. The resulting natural and simple design concept can be seen from the Ming and Qing Dynasty furniture and household items (Lin & Lian, 2012). In terms of patterns, there are a lot of objects selected from nature, such as flowers, birds, fish, worms and other. For example, bats, sika deer, monsters and magpies are frequently found on the Qing-style furniture and household items due to their similar pronunciations to Chinese characteristics ‘福 (blessing) 禄 (rich) 寿 (longevity) 喜 (happiness)’. In natural scenes, for example, lake, mountain and trees, nature is commonly used to send best wishes.

Confucians treat 'self-cultivation' as the fundamental thought of joining the idea of governing the countryside to peaceful settlement in the countryside. To describe the 'gentleman' character, the Confucian scholars' philosophy created symbols, such as the 'three durable plants' of winter, which are pine, bamboo and plum blossom; and 'the four gentlemen in plants, which are plum blossom, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum. These symbols have been used to express a faithful and pure sentiment by scholars. In addition, both the evergreen pines and the plum blossom in the snow are symbols of the lofty moral characters of 'gentleman'. These rich symbols were carved as a decoration on furniture and general household items, so that literati and Confucian scholars could get enlightenment in the tiniest details of daily life.

Confucianism also advocates 'benevolence', which is considered as the basic ethics of Confucianism and its highest ethical standards (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). To express the concept by patterns, artists and designers also use some good legendary creatures, for example, Qilin, as mentioned before, has been given a very optimistic characteristic, which includes kindheartedness and justice. On the Ming and Qing Dynasties furniture and household items, Qilin is usually used as a decorative pattern to express good luck, for instance, 'Qilin with a baby' is used to express the hope of having clever and well-mannered children. In terms of the composition and aesthetics of carved decorative patterns, symmetry, solemnity, elegance and conservation are emphasized from the Ming and Qing Dynasties furniture and household items. The patterns reflect the beauty of regularities and stability of the Confucian concept (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004).

2.1.2.2.2 Impacts of the Taoism concept

Taoism is a traditional religion of China. It was founded in the Eastern Han Dynasty (year 25 - 220) and became popular in China's feudal society for a long time. Taoism advocates 'simple nature' and this is shown on most Ming style furniture and household items (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). Simplicity is a true aesthetic using the least patterns to express the richest decorations and going directly to the essence. On the Ming-style furniture and household items, some certain carved decorative patterns are used to highlight the large area of simplicity, which make the furniture show an elegant and long-lasting beauty as a whole (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004; Wang, 2001). Taoism is also permeating the composition of carved decorative patterns of furniture, and the furniture will turn out to be ethereal, elegant, chic, romantic and detached etc. Finally, Taoism pursues better fortune, youthful and immortal ideas and some auspicious patterns are used for many times on different materials and crafts. For example, most Chinese people pursue health and longevity. Therefore, the patterns with the theme of 'longevity' and those what related to the youthful idea arise. Generally, the turtle, crane, pine, cypress, peach, Ganoderma, and paradise flycatcher, and all kinds of 寿¹-shaped textures are used for the composition. Meanwhile, the Taiji diagrams containing the profound Taoist universe view are often carved as a decoration in Ming and Qing Dynasty furniture.

2.1.2.2.3 Impacts of Buddhist concept

Buddhism was introduced into China at late Eastern Han Dynasty, which is inevitably influenced by Confucianism and Taoism concept, especially the mutual penetration of Buddhism and

¹ 寿: A Chinese character meaning life

Taoism concept (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). Many decorations with Buddhist meanings, such as flying apsaras, lotus, and Buddhism flame were used as the decoration patterns on traditional Chinese furniture. Chinese craftsmen continue to try to integrate foreign subjects into the traditional aesthetic concepts (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, almost all stylized Buddhist decorations were interpreted with local culture.

Lotus is used as the basis of cushion for Buddha so that people usually use lotus as the symbol of pursuing nature and elegance. Designers put the lotus with adding twist branches. These patterns are mildly and elegant, which is an aesthetic manifestation of mutual penetration of the Buddhism and Taoism. Buddhism Flame means the light to lead people to a bright future. People in the Ming and Qing Dynasties usually use this element in family Buddhist prayer room, which is not often seen nowadays. Flying Asparas are painted in the murals of Buddhist caves. During the Warring States (5th century BC – 221 BC) even earlier period, paintings in graves was infected by Taoism, showed that people hope the death is not the end of life but lead to immortals. After Buddhism was introduced to China, the concept of immortals was merged with Taoism. With the in-depth development of Buddhism in China, Buddhism's flying and Taoist immortals merged into Flying Asparas in the art field. Now Flying Asparas refers to the artistic image in Mogao Caves in China (Fan & Whitfield, 2010).

2.1.2.3 Impacts of literature and painting aesthetics

In ancient China, scholars and painters were often the wind vane of other artistic forms, reflecting the changes of artistic trends and aesthetic trends (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). The Ming Dynasty scholars pursue an artistic life (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). They promoted an elegant and

refined aesthetic taste and pursued a free and clean heart. People became more creative in the arts and crafts field. During the Ming Dynasty, due to the prosperity and development of the commodity economy, some government officials and bureaucratic landlords and exceedingly wealthy men built luxurious mansions, and gardens and residential houses, leading to opportunities for artists to find the means of expression their art in commerce (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004).

Therefore, many scholars and painters participated directly in the design of furniture and household items; and, construction in gardens and houses. They shared their knowledge in literature, painting and aesthetics so that all of those would affect the formation of carved decorative patterns at that time (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). Naturally their designs affected the public aesthetics (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). Many of the writers, dramatist, poets, painters, collectors, connoisseurs and other well-educated persons in the Ming Dynasty wrote many books and articles on furniture. The Ming Dynasty scholars and dramatists pursued an artistic life and wrote a lot about aesthetics and style on furniture and household items instead of focusing on the shape and size. They pursued elegant so that they advocated the ‘ancient elegant style’ for furniture and household items. Ancient Elegant Style means the combination of ‘simple and unsophisticated’ and ‘beauty and elegant’ (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004). This can be seen from temporal arts and crafts as well as the commodities, gardens and residential houses. For example, the incenses in the Ming Dynasty are simple elegant instead of using complicated carving techniques or designs. The same can be seen in the poetry, painting, drama, architecture, gardens at that time, study of furniture and household items is also an embodiment of the feelings and emotions of the scholars and artists (Zong, 2011).

Traditional Chinese painting focus on the freehand brushwork in particular. The way it observes and depicts the nature deeply affects the composition design of the furniture's carved decorative patterns. In general, traditional Chinese painting does not seek for an objective truth, but emphasizes 'the similarity between the true and the false'. It focuses on the combination of subjectivity and objectivity; and, the tailoring of natural objects according to the needs of expressing emotions. Zong (2011) commented in the Artistic Conception that Chinese painting techniques do not emphasize the description of specific images but prefer to express personality emotion and artistic mood via abstract ink and brushwork. According to the painting form, the illustrations of traditional Chinese paintings did not pursue the preciseness of static perspective composition or the realness of color. Instead preferred the 'flowing viewpoint' across time and space, which showed a broad landscape, especially with mountain, lake or river, and trees. They emphasized refinedness and elegance to highlight the subjective feelings and personality. Because of that, the 'vivid spirit and lively charm' was pursued and the illustrations were filled with a rhythmic beauty. These aesthetic concepts of traditional Chinese paintings were understood and absorbed by craftsmen in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, therefore influencing the style of the carved decorative patterns of the furniture at that time (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004; Zong 2011).

2.1.2.4 Impacts of nature and harmony

Nature is one of the important aesthetic orientations of classical furniture in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Zong, 2011). There are many carved patterns played dominate role at that time, such as landscape, trees, flowers, birds, insects, fish and other auspicious patterns. Harmony is another important aesthetic concept of the classical furniture in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it is

expressed in two ways: one is the emphasis on the combination of furniture and environment, the finished product integrates itself into the environment, environment contributes an atmosphere that can do good to one's mind and soul (Pang, 2003; Pu, 2004; Zong, 2011).

The other one is between furniture and household items and people. Furniture design is people-oriented. The decorations can usually reflect one's characteristics and show the empathy between people and furniture, and affinity to both furniture and mankind. The shapes of the carved decorative patterns on furniture shows the beauty of harmony in structure, proportion, lines, shape and space; and presents the beauty of symmetry, balance and complementarity of Yin and Yang, for example, Illustration 2.1 shows a closet design that is based on the Yin and Yang and show a harmony aesthetic.



Illustration 2.1 Closet design based on Yin and Yang (Photographer: Xuan Jun).

2.1.3 Carving

2.1.3.1 Chinese carving process

Hand carving technology was widely used for furniture decoration in the Ming and Qing dynasties. The commonly used techniques including: line carving, shallow relief, deep relief, openwork carving, and, half-floating-half-openwork carving. The relief includes shallow relief and deep relief (Tan, 2004). The deep relief has a protruding surface with multi-layer overlapped, while shallow relief uses the carving chisel as a pen to create one-layer painting. The openwork carving is to remove all parts except the pattern and make it hollow. Openwork carving creates a semi-real and semi-virtual feeling. It includes two categories: one side carving and two sides carving. Half-floating-half-openwork carving is mainly used at the joint part of the table or chair. The circular carving is often used on the legs of the furniture (Tan, 2004).

Carving process is important in designing wood furniture and household items. Figure 2.1 shows the general carving flow by most Chinese carving artists in China now (Lin & Lian, 2012; Tan, 2004). Most Chinese carving designers and carving artists share similar carving process (Lin & Lian, 2012; Tan, 2004). Carving process is changing from traditional hand carving to hybrid carving that combines traditional hand carving and machine carving (Lin & Lian, 2012; Tan, 2004). Relief generally adopts mechanical tools for initial processing, which equals to take off the blank space by hand carving to create the raw craft. After the initial raw engraving, hand carving is used to highlight the details (Lin & Lian, 2012).

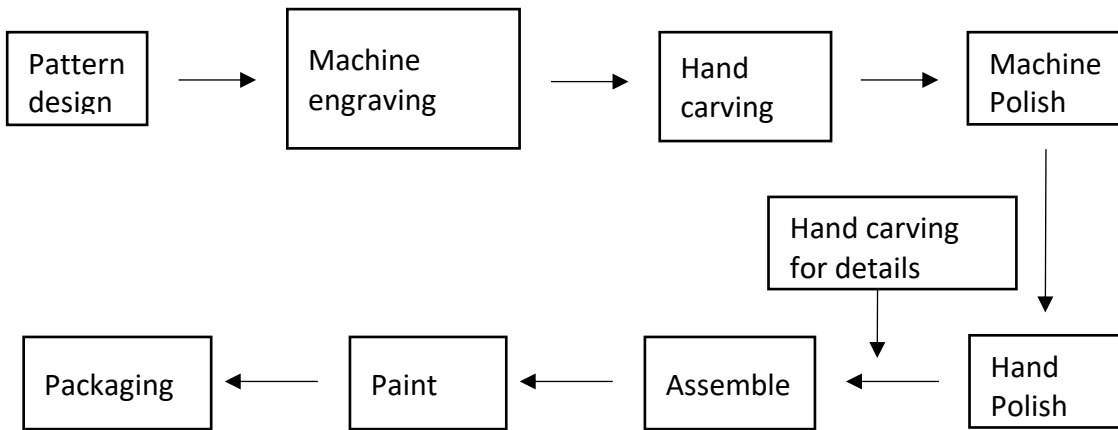


Figure 2.1. General carving flow by Chinese carving artists (Lin & Lian, 2012; Tan, 2004).

(1) Pattern design. Pattern design is the first step of carving furniture and household items process, and it is also the key of deciding the product quality (Tan, 2004). In general, designers and artists design corresponding patterns for different parts of the furniture or household items. They also need to consider the effects of the different parts to the whole furniture or household items. Design methods are generally divided into two types: manual design and computer design (Tan, 2004). For manual design, it is usually finished by experienced and skilled craftsmen with certain painting ability. Most carving artists prefer to use manual design due to convenience (Tan, 2004). They usually use various rulers, pencils or ball-pens to draw. Because of the requirement of high precision, only experienced artists can start the design manually (Tan, 2004).

(2) Machine engraving. Machine engraving is a semi-automatic processing, completed by machines under the control of workers (Tan, 2004). First, the workers paste the pattern drawings to the corresponding position or brush the pattern with a specific color. The color-brushing method is to empty the pattern part on the plastic paper, paste it on the corresponding parts of furniture, then brush it with black paint on the plastic paper. In this way, the pattern part should be stained with color. The advantage of this method is saving drawings and convenient, and the

disadvantage is the drawing is not that clear compared to drawing directly on the material (Tan, 2004). Due to these characteristics, color-brushing method is usually used for simple patterns carving. For the complex patterns, repeated color-brushing is needed. After pasting the patterns, the raw patterns can be finished automatically by carving machine or manually operated by workers. The quality and depth of the engraving are completely under the control of the workers (Tan, 2004).

(3) Hand carving. Hand carving usually focuses on details since carving machine can only provide an outline (Tan, 2004). Hand carving needs carvers to modify the outline and highlight the pattern. According to the requirements of the drawings, carvers create the contour line, remove the space of the pattern, and create the basic form of the images. Manual refining is based on the raw carving to make further fine processing. It is the renovation, enrichment and improvement of the preceding process.

(4) Polishing. Polishing is one of the important links in the making furniture patterns (Tan, 2004). It makes the pattern clear, smooth and perfect. Polishing is divided into manual polishing and mechanical assisted polishing. The tools of manual polishing including steel disc, files and sandpaper. Machine polishing is more efficient than hand polishing. It has been widely used in furniture manufactories for large product polishing and raw polishing (Tan, 2004).

(5) Other process. Furniture should be assembled, painted and polished after polishing. For some patterns that need to draw hair, leaves, stalks, pine needles, flower pattern and water line, a triangular chisel is used to highlight the patterns and then can move to the next step.

All finished furniture parts should be inspected by some experienced masters before moving to the next procedure (Tan, 2004). Most carving patterns are mainly done by hand, so that the inspection is mainly done by visual inspection (Tan, 2004).

Mortise and tenon joint is the most common forms that are used in most wooden furniture in China (Tan, 2004). Usually, the tenon forms a rail on the end of a member generally to insert into a hole cut into the corresponding hole. In the traditional way of producing hardwood furniture, producer will leave a small gap between each components of the final assembly by filling with the glue to increase the steady (Tan, 2004). Traditionally, producers use fish bladder glue to bund the structure because it is natural harmless, sticky and it doesn't destroy the furniture. End-users can easily disassemble the furniture by using hot water to melt the glue. This kind of joints with glue are both simple and strong.

2.1.3.2 Commonly used tools in hand carving

The engraving tools can be divided into two main categories. One is to put the chisel hoop on the wood handle while the other is to put the chisel drill part into the wood handle. The first one is strong and can withstand a great force. It usually works together with a wood axe, which provides force to carve rough patterns. The other one is usually used for engraving and trimming. It is more dexterous and convenient to operate. The common types include gouge chisel, flat chisel, butterfly chisel, triangular chisel and so on (Tan, 2004). Each type needs different cutters due to the requirement. According to the complexity of the pattern, the number of used tools is not the same. Most carving masters have a full set of tools generally with forty or fifty tools, and

each of them has separated function. However, for furniture and household items carving, around twenty types of chisel can meet most of the engraving requirements (Tan, 2004).

(1) Flat chisel. This tool is usually used to hit the edge line, fix the straight line, and take off the background (Tan, 2004). It is mainly used to mold the shape of a straight line or the plane pattern (Tan, 2004). It is used at the beginning of carving. The width of the blade varies, and the width of the blade usually no more than four centimeters.

(2) Gouge. The tool is mainly used to shape an arc. It plays different functions while carving different patterns. Based on the roundness, it can be divided into flat gouge and large gouge. Both of them have different specifications and different types.

(3) Butterfly chisel. Butterfly chisel is based on flat chisel, to make one side flat and the other side round (Tan, 2004). Its function is between flat chisel and gouge, and can be used flexible as a flat or circular chisel. It is primarily used to sculpt rounded lines and handle objects that do not need to be smooth. The minimum blade of butterfly chisel is one centimeter (Tan, 2004). Artists usually prepare three to four size chisels for carving.

(4) Warped head chisel. Warped head chisel including flat warped head chisel, round warped head chisel and warped triangular head chisel (Tan, 2004). A flat headed chisel is usually used for deep carving and hollowing. Round headed chisel and triangular headed chisel are generally used for carving with concave and convex patterns at the bottom. Warped head chisel is not common used in furniture carving (Tan, 2004).

(5) Triangular chisel. It is a kind of tool that made of fine grinding of V-shape steel bars. It was invented and started to be used in the late Qing Dynasty (Tan, 2004). Triangular chisel is usually used to carve hair, fur, leaves, flowers and water wave (Tan, 2004). Nowadays, triangular is mainly used to carve the eyes, mouth and other details (Tan, 2004).

2.1.3.3 Types of carving

Line carving is divided into intaglio line carving and relief line carving. The intaglio line carving is also known as plain carving (Tan, 2004). The end of the carving pattern presents a ‘V’ shape. People think these lines are graceful and natural (Tan, 2004). Most traditional carving artists think it is a carving method that replacing the brushwork with chisel, to create a similar effect to traditional Chinese ink and wash painting. A stark contrast is formed between the sunk lines and smooth surface of the furniture, which creates a natural beauty. Carving artists usually design the structure and pattern, which is based on the size of the wood, before the carving (Tan, 2004). Carving artists avoid the full patterns on furniture and emphasize the blank space. It follows the concept of traditional Chinese paintings. Line carving is commonly seen on boxes, cabinet doors, beds, folder screens and other surfaces of furniture and household items (Tan, 2004). Relief line carving is easier to process because both of its convex part and concave part are flat. The edge of relief line carving usually shows a ‘U’ shape edge. Line carving is the basis of traditional Chinese carving and it is commonly used as starting step (Tan, 2004).

Glyph carving can be divided into intaglio glyph carving and relief glyph carving. This technique is to show the Yin-side (intaglio side) and Yang-side (relief side) (Illustration 2.2) on the surface of the furniture or household items along with the contour of the pattern (Tan, 2004). Carving

artists usually carve more patterns on the convex side to rich the basic pattern. Generally, such carving is applied only in the surface of furniture to make just convex and concave shape. This saves time and create simple patterns. The lines of the carved pattern stretch smooth and have a strong sense of rhythm. It usually shows as cloud texture, antique jade texture, rolling pearls and some variants of animal faces to express an auspicious meaning with a simple ancient beauty (Tan, 2004).

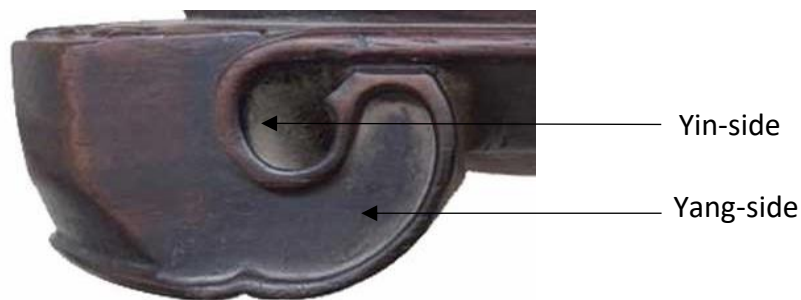


Illustration 2.2. Intaglio glyph carving and relief glyph carving (Photographer: Xuan Jun).

Relief carving creates patterns mainly on the Yang-side. It is a carving technique mainly with lines, supplemented with the surface to show the pattern structure. It is different from line relief carving. The embossed convex has a realistic manner with clear and accurate outlines. According to the different levels and the convex layers, it can be divided into shallow relief and deep relief (also known as high relief). Shallow relief usually has 2 to 5 millimeters deep. The patterns look thin and the composition is precise. Shallow relief carving usually has less overlap and less layers. However, the design still shows a sense of three-dimension due to the precise carving lines. Deep relief carvings usually come with a depth of more than 5 millimeters. Patterns are quite different at each layer. Multiple layers create a strong sense of three-dimension. The

process of relief carving is: roughly cut out the blank space, polish, and detailed carving. Artists usually avoid too many interludes and folding cover in relief carvings.

Openwork carving refers to a carving technique that removes all parts except the main pattern. Usually, artists use saw to make holes and apply with plane carving (Tan, 2004). The open-work carving can generally be divided into single-sided carving and double-sided carving. Openwork carving process mainly includes: drawing, hallowing, cutting out blank space, trimming, detailed carving (Tan, 2004). Openwork carving does not block people's eyesight and provides the feeling of space. Openwork carving is often used on the beds, tables and folder screen.

Circular carving is also known as Three-dimensional circular carving (Tan, 2004). Circular carving pursues giving a feeling of real objects, such as the lion head and the dragon head on the fauteuil. People can enjoy the carving products from different side. The circular carving can enhance the decorative effect of the pattern; and, improve the aesthetic value and artistic value of the target objects (Tan, 2004). However, circular carving is complicated. The model often needs 3D processing. Its basic process is: cutting external shape, cutting out blank space and detailed carving (Tan, 2004). Circular carving now is used on furniture legs more to balance the cost and esthetic.

2.2 Canadian Aboriginal Design Elements

Canadian aboriginal people in British Columbia developed distinctive and sophisticated art styles. The art styles are part of their living culture, and are mainly derived from their way of life. Some certain design elements are readily apparent to the casual observers, such as maritime

people mainly travelled in canoes between their homes through rivers and ocean beaches so that the trout-head element is derived from fish (Duffek, 1983; Holm, 2017; Townsend-Gault, 1994; Jacknis, 2002). Most of the elements took subsistence from the annual runs of salmon and other seafood, berries and other plants, and hunting. Much of their art is created for celebrations (Duffek, 1983; Holm, 2017; Townsend-Gault, 1994; Jacknis, 2002). They use emblematic animal designs to inherit ancestral privileges although not every element can align with a specific animal (Duffek, 1983; Holm, 2017; Holm & Museum, 2014; Jacknis, 2002).

According to Adam (1936), eight leading principles are usually found in Canadian aboriginal designs: (1) most designs are based on stylization instead of realistic; (2) use certain features to deliver the meaning; (3) patterns are usually split into separate parts; (4) most separated parts contain details; (5) two profiles represent one creature; (6) features usually have the characteristic of symmetry; (7) reducing details of the specific creature; and (8) transfer the illogical details into some new symbols. The concept of harmony is an important part in integrating Native culture and art, such as, Killer Whale, Raven, Eagle and Wolf represent four opposite clans, but they share the same rights and keep the balance of the each other (Adam, 1936; Duffek, 1983; Holm, 2017; Townsend-Gault, 1994; Jacknis, 2002). Canadian aboriginal art and designs is diverse from a close realism to nearly complete abstraction, but most are based on the several representative design elements: ‘eyes’, ‘joints’, ‘ears’, and ‘feathers’, which are based on formline, ovoid, U form, split U, and salmon-trout’s-head (Illustration 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5). These elements show the existence of Canadian aboriginal design style (Holm, 2017; Holm & Museum, 2014; Jacknis, 2002).

Formline is the foundation of Canadian aboriginal art style, which dates back more than two thousand years, and reached the peak by the time of European contact in the 1770s (Jacknis, 2002). Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian formed the formline styles from their Native culture and living ways, such as using formlines to show trout head, wolf, raven, whale and so on (Holm, 2017; Holm & Museum, 2014; Jacknis, 2002). The key to formline is to see both the painted black or red forms and unpainted shapes. Formline changes thickness while flowing around corners. Aboriginal artists use the interconnected web of formlines to compose the designs (Holm, 2017; Holm & Museum, 2014; Jacknis, 2002).

The formline design forms two main shapes – ovoid and U-shape (Holm & Museum, 2014). The two elements work with each other to create visual balance. Aboriginal designers focus on the harmony in design flow and movements by using the similar elements (Adam, 1936; Holm, 2017; Holm & Museum, 2014). Ovoids and U-shapes form both positive and negative spaces, where the unpainted areas are referred to negative spaces. The balance between the multi-directional ovoids and uni-directional U-shapes show the harmony combinations of formlines. The opposite of formlines are finelines, which are near to the formlines but thinner. Illustrations 2.3 – 2.5 show the three main design elements.

Although both Chinese aesthetic history and the development of Canadian aboriginal designs show respects to nature, the two types of designs are different in design features. The lack of study on consumers' perception of wood carving patterns on housing items and Chinese consumers acceptance of cross-culture designed household products offers a great potential for Canadian aboriginal designed household products being recognized in Chinese market.

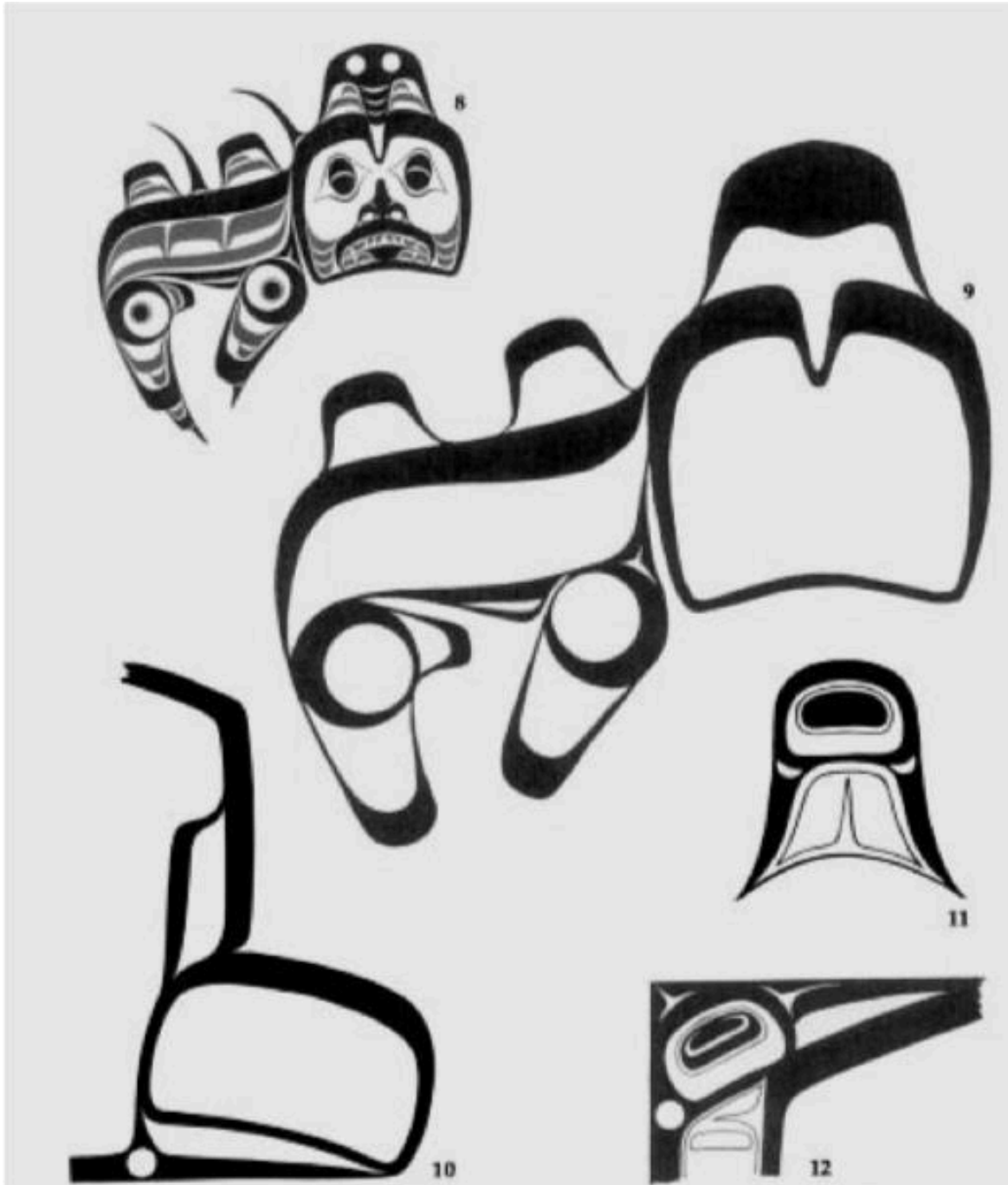


Illustration 2.3. Primary formline (Source: Stewart, 1979. *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*. p. 18.)

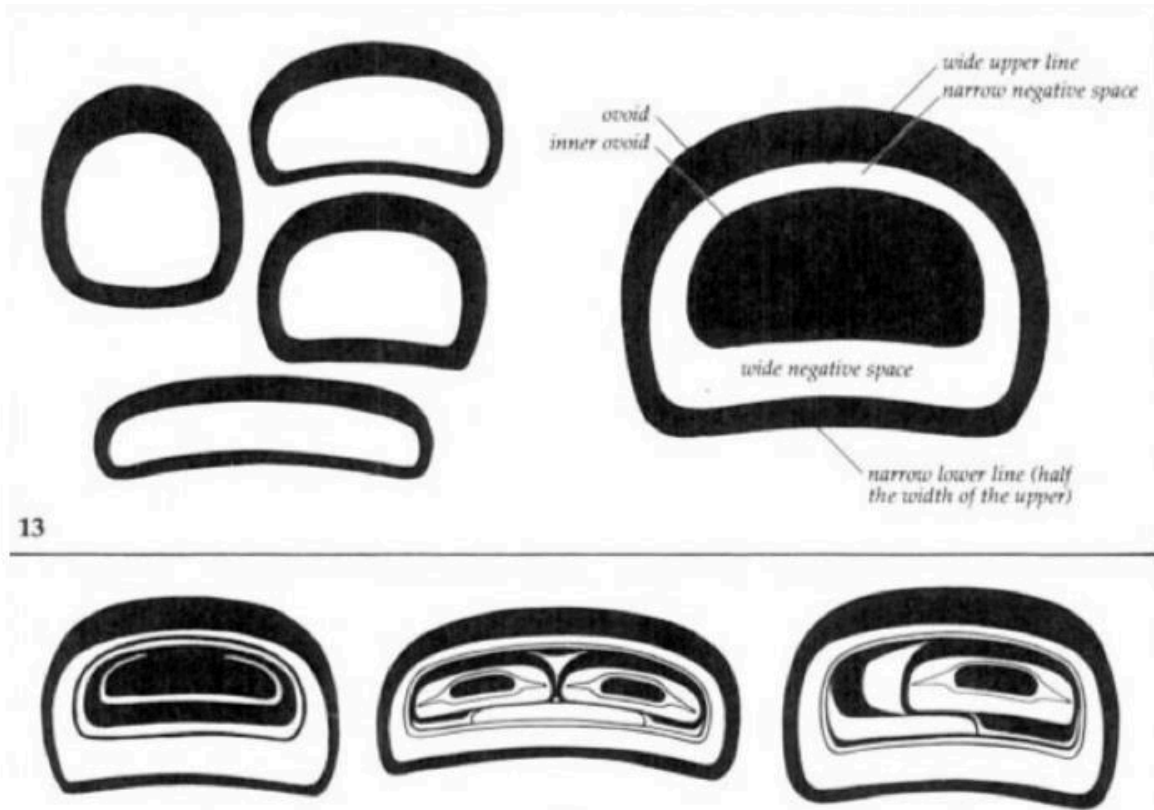


Illustration 2.4. Ovoid (Source: Stewart, 1979. *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*.

p. 21.)

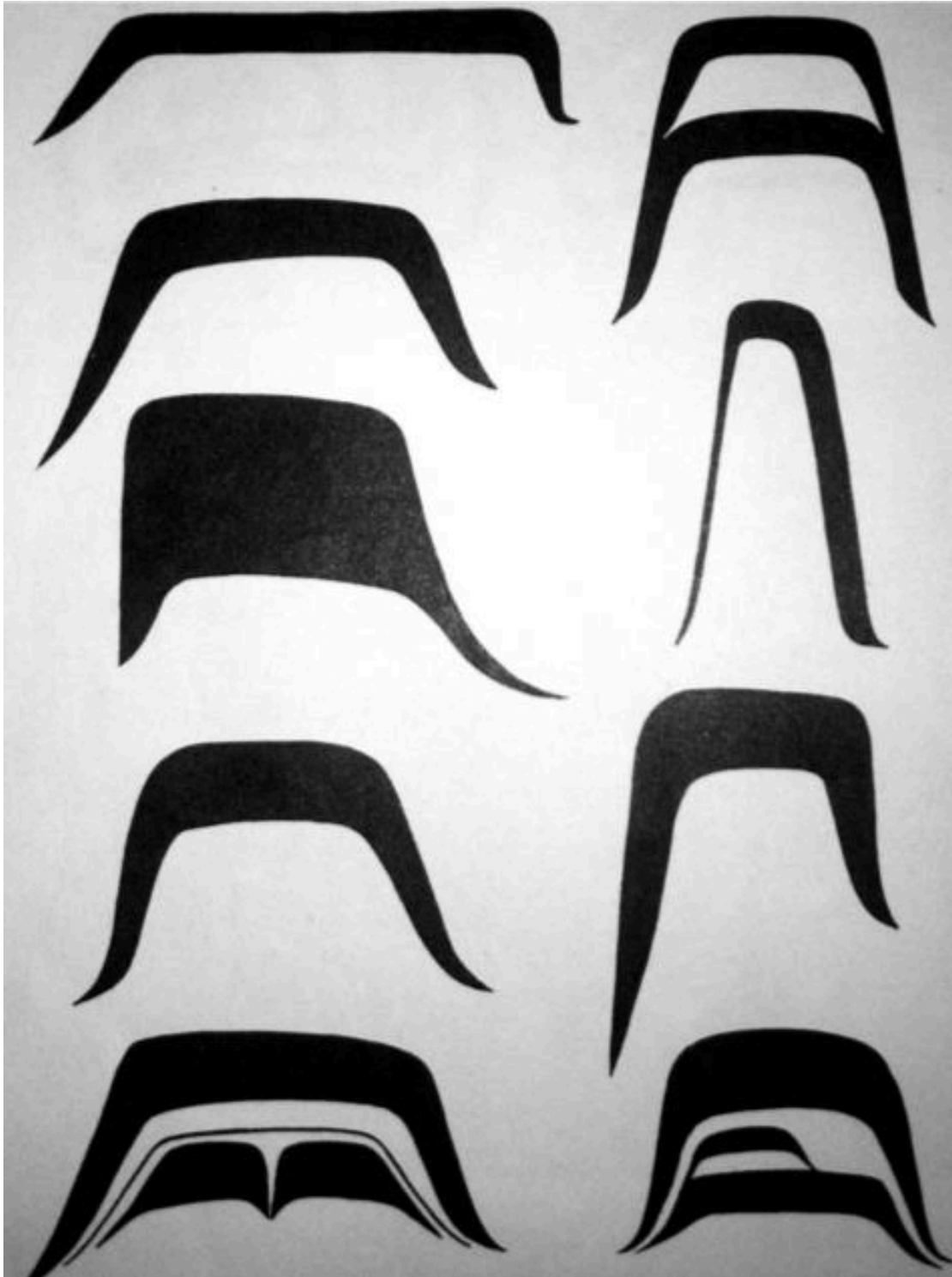


Illustration 2.5. U-Form (Source: Stewart, 1979. *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*. p. 22.)

2.3 Cultural Appropriation

Some people might argue that the study in cross-cultural design on household products could be involved in cultural appropriation, which has been a controversial topic over a long period of time. According to Young (2010), cultural appropriation could be defined as a single individual or another cultural group adopts, encroaches, and plagiarizes the phenomenon of copying a culture without permission. The purpose of this study is to provide the aboriginal designers with some descriptive information regarding the traditional Chinese culture elements rather than normative statement about the implementation of cross-cultural design on household products. It was shown in this study that there is a potential in cross-culture design on household products, but it would be the choice of aboriginal designers to determine if they should launch the production of these items. In addition, when the consumer surveys and interviews were conducted, the participants and interviewees were well aware of the objectives of this study. By responding to the consumer surveys and interviews with extremely helpful information, it was obvious that the Chinese consumers and designers/artists were open to the concept of cross-culture designed household products. Hence, the author believes that this study is not cultural appropriation

3 Research Methods

This section mainly describes the research methods that were employed to achieve the research objective. Section 3.1 presents the research ethics that approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Section 3.2 describes the reasons of choosing the survey site. Section 3.3 discusses survey design for consumer survey and designer and artist interview. Section 3.4 presents descriptive data analysis.

3.1 Research Ethics

The University of British Columbia requires approval by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) for all research that involves human participants before initial contact with any potential participants. Researchers should complete the Course on Research Ethics (CORE) which tests that researchers are aware and will adhere to the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS 2). For this research, initial contact, consent forms, research proposal, questionnaire and interview guide are request for ethics approval. The Ethics Certificate number of this research is H15-01031.

3.2 Survey Site

The first survey site was the 22nd China International Furniture Expo in Shanghai, China. The 22nd China International Furniture Expo covered the exhibition themes of the upstream and downstream industries of furniture such as Home Furniture, Office Show, Homedecor and Hometextiles, Outdoor, Leisure, Machinery and Raw Materials. Furthermore, this home show included international brand, contemporary furniture, upholstery furniture, European classical

furniture, Chinese classical furniture, mattress, table and chair, outdoor furniture, children's furniture, office furniture and design of designers in order to provide exhibitors and buyers with broader showcasing space and brand development. Potential buyers and designers were reached at the home show.

The second survey site was Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre, which is located in the 'Capital of Chinese Woodcarving' - Dongyang, Zhejiang Province, China. The woodcarving city center covers a construction area of 410,000 m² (DCWC, 2016). After its upgrade in 2009, Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre has become the biggest wholesale market of wooden crafts and woodcarving furniture, especially those what made by rosewood. In 2011, the turnover reached 11.8 billion Chinese Yuan (DCWC, 2016). The center recruited ten master level carving artists and more than five hundred trainees. The survey population was defined as master-level artists who focus on carving household items that include Chinese culture elements.



Figure 3.1. Location of Shanghai and Dongyang in Zhejiang Province (Google Maps).

3.3 Methodology

Primary data collection on the Chinese designed household products markets was conducted in an exploratory manner. Exploratory research is the study of identifying a market opportunity with the aim of: (1) diagnosing a situation, (2) screening alternatives, and (3) discovering new ideas (Zikmund, 1997). There were three reasons for selecting an exploratory method: (1) lack of information on preferences and views of Chinese consumers of Chinese traditional household items and relative design elements, (2) the broad scope of the research covering preference of designed household items and traditional Chinese design elements, and (3) limited time and budget. The research objective defined in Introduction were addressed by connecting with the choice of an exploratory research design for collecting data, and the sample frames, the survey methods, questionnaire design, and interview script design. This study was separated into two main parts: one is consumer questionnaire survey, and the other is individual interview over designer and artists focus group. The sample frame, survey methods and questionnaire design was discussed in more detail for each of the two surveys in section 3.3.1 and section 3.3.2. This research provided qualitative data as most exploratory research studies did so that the results does not provide conclusive evidence. Although quantitative data was collected, the limitations of the findings are discussed in the conclusion.

3.3.1 Survey of consumers at a home show in China

3.3.1.1 Recruitment

Once approved by BREB, a recruitment letter was sent to the The 22nd China International Furniture Expo arrangers. All potential participants (consumers in the home show) received a

recruitment letter (about one page in the advertisement book) via home show advertisement book at the entrance of the home show. The advertisement book included information of all participants who rent a booth in the show. Consumers who was interested in this study can walk around the researcher's home show booth and ask for more information.

3.3.1.2 Survey design

This study was based on a sample of Chinese consumers who would like to buy cross-culture designed residential products, including furniture and small residential items and household items. This study also surveyed Chinese consumers' willingness of buying limited designed residential products which is provided with designers' promise card.

There are three basic sampling procedures in qualitative research: convenience, snowballing and purposive (Kolb, 2008). Convenience sampling was chosen in this study because it is useful when potential participants may not be eager to be involved in the research. This method chose participants based on their willingness of attendance. The surveyor asked the consumers who was around the booth in the home show about their willingness of participating in this survey. Consumers with willingness of participation was provided with a questionnaire. Participants was asked of nine questions followed by the attached questionnaire in Appendix I. Keywords of the answers were written down by the surveyors.

Questionnaire survey was chosen over consumers. Interviewer-administered questionnaire survey was employed due to the Chinese consumers' little knowing of household products design process and may have variable ideas to the questions. Leading by researcher is the most

effective way for complex questions, because it is easier to provide means of clarification of questions, give further information about the products, and motivate participant to complete (Kolb, 2008). Interviewer-administered questionnaire survey was also used to lower biases between different participants' understanding of the questions or their difficulty verbalizing (Kolb, 2008).

Usually we are unable to obtain answers from all of the units in a sample while some people may refuse to participate in the research (Gray & Guppy, 2008). Only four out of every five people we hoped to include in the survey maybe willing to participant (Gray & Guppy, 2008). The number of preferred respondents was 500 so that the initial sample frame was 625 with an 80 percent completion rate. Each survey took about ten to fifteen minutes to finish. Four more surveyors were hired to help with conducting the survey and were training before the home show.

This questionnaire survey focused on two topics: (1) attributes of preferred designed household products, and, (2) Chinese consumers' preferred selling channels. The questionnaire was developed in Chinese and then translated in English to communicate with the research committee. The revised questions then translated back into Chinese and then re-translated into English in order to assure the accuracy of the translation.

Culture is the background that formed by a group of people and is the most essential element that affects people's decisions of their living status (Kolb, 2008). Chinese consumers are from a different ethnic group compared with Canadian aboriginal culture. For exploring Chinese

consumers' perception of cross-culture designs, open-ended questions give participants the freedom to ask for details and share stories during the survey (Kolb, 2008). Each survey began with open-ended questions that were more general, so that participants can feel more relax. This allowed for a smooth and comfortable conversation to flourish.

3.3.2 Interviews of designers and artists in China

3.3.2.1 Recruitment

Once approved by BREB, a recruitment letter was sent to the home show arrangers. Potential interviewees contacted from the home show generally held roles as interior designers, furniture designers and household items designers. All thirty potential participants at the home show received a recruitment letter (about one page in the guide book) via home show guide book when home show participants arranged the booth at the home show. Participants was invited to have an interview and to explore Canadian aboriginal designs by visiting the booth at the home show. Interviews were scheduled with thirty individuals between September 8th and September 11th, 2016. This sample size is deemed appropriate as the literature states that 15 to 20 interviews are usually required to achieve data saturation for themes in qualitative studies (Samure & Given, 2008).

A recruitment letter (Appendix I) was sent to the arrangers at Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre for passing the messages to the artists. Potential interviewees contacted from Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre generally held role as carving masters. They not only focus on furniture and household items design, but also focus on artwork for exhibition and auction items. Interviews were scheduled with ten individuals between September 14th to September 21st, 2016.

3.3.2.2 Interview design

This study was based on a sample of designers who design furniture and household items, and artists who are carving masters. The interview site was the designer's booth at 22nd China International Furniture Expo in Shanghai, China and Dongyang Woodcarvings City Centre. There were thirty designers who focus on designed cross-culture household items at the home show and ten master-level artists who focus on limited carving household items at Dongyang Woodcarvings City Centre.

This interview focused on three topics: (1) design recommendations for cross-culture household products, (2) perception of purchasing/selling channels, and, (3) opinions on Chinese market acceptance. The individual interviews were followed by an interview script (Appendix I). Individual interview was chosen over this focus group. Although focus groups have gained a lot of traction in exploratory research, the comparative advantages/disadvantages of this method discouraged its use in this study. For example, focus groups may be cost effective and time saving, but are most effective with groups of 8-12 members and when participants are strangers (Fern, 1982). Moreover, issues with dominant participants controlling or leading the conversation can lead to peer pressure or biased information processing (Kaplowitz & Hoehn, 2001). Individual interviews on the other hand have been reported to generate 30-40% more ideas, that are of higher and more detailed-orientated quality (Fern, 1982).

There are three main types of qualitative interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Semi-structured interview was chosen for this research due to the balance of a systematic way of asking predetermined questions and topics, giving interviewer the

freedom to reorganize questions, rewording while asking questions, and using probes for clarification when answers are unclear or could be elaborated (Berg, 2007). Semi-structured interview is usually based on interviewer-administered conversations (Berg, 2007). Participants are sometimes careless in redefining or restating questions, or in probing for additional information, then different respondents will be responding to slightly, or perhaps even vastly, different questions due to the flexibility of self-administered (Berg, 2007). Semi-structured individual interview was chosen in this study as followed by the attached interview script (Appendix I).

3.4 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative statistics was used for the Chinese consumers perception data to determine frequency, central tendency and dispersion by looking at the responses alone. Responses was inputted into a spreadsheet with using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cross tabulation was used to analyze if certain demographic groups behave differently from others. Central tendency such as: mean, median, mode; and, dispersion, such as: range, variance, and standard deviation was provided by need. The quantitative data in designers/artists' part is mainly used to tell the reliability of interviewees.

3.5. Qualitative statistics analysis

Since interviews were audio recorded, each interview was first transcribed verbatim. This was performed by using NVivo 10, which is a qualitative data software program that can code the interview for theme. After coding each interview, themes were identified by frequency by which

all participants made reference to a certain idea. Instead of duplicating in the tally of references to that theme, one reference was given per participant per idea once the idea repeated by a single participant. Thematic trends were noticed and relative frequencies were calculated.

4 Results

This section summarizes the quantitative results derived from the questionnaire surveys. Section 4.1 presents the research results of Chinese consumers' preferred elements, material and purchasing/selling channels, and reveals potential Chinese consumers' willingness to adopt a cross-cultural designed household products. Section 4.2 presents both quantitative and qualitative results of designer and artists' interviews.

4.1 Consumer Survey Results

4.1.1 Sampling frame

The researcher received a 97.44% response rate of the 625 contact consumers that surveyors were reached to ask for willingness of attendance. However, only 407 respondents finished the questionnaire.

4.1.2 Chinese culture elements, material & purchasing/selling channels

The section is to examine the most popular Chinese designed elements that Chinese consumers prefer to buy on furniture and household items, their preferred material and preferred purchasing/selling channels. Figure 4.1 showed that most consumers prefer to have cloud-shape elements on furniture and household items. The respondents were further asked what material they prefer to have for purchasing general furniture, 42% of the responses would like to buy wooden furniture with traditional Chinese design elements on (Figure 4.2). Comparison of common Canadian aboriginal design elements and Chinese design elements will be discussed.

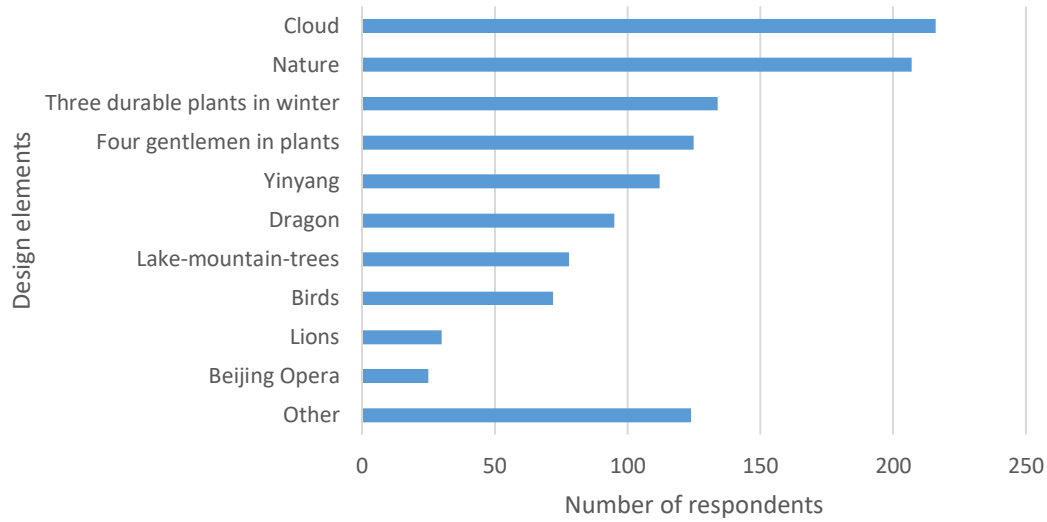


Figure 4.1. Major Chinese design elements by consumers' preferences

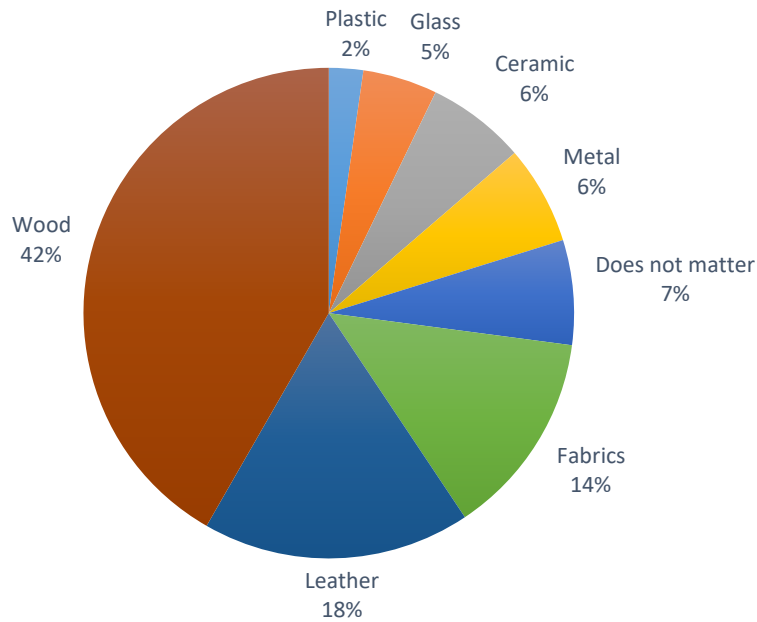


Figure 4.2. Preferred material for designed furniture and household items

When asked whether they would prefer purchasing household items from online website, multi-brand retail, home show, single brand retail, art gallery, auction house, or does not matter what place, only six respondents chose auction house. The majority respondents chose online website

and multi-brand retail to selling furniture and household items (Table 4.1). A low number of responses indicates that market entry can be difficult for Canadian aboriginal suppliers. Chinese consumers at this home show considered design, material and practicability more than other elements while purchasing household items (Table 4.2).

Table 4.1. Consumer preferred purchasing/selling channel

Purchasing/selling Channel	Number of responses	Percentage
Online website	268	65.8%
Multi-brand retail	230	56.5%
Home show	195	47.9%
Single brand retail	103	25.3%
Art gallery	31	7.6%
All places	21	5.2%
Auction house	6	1.5%

(Number of respondents: 407)

Table 4.2. Consumer purchasing preferences in household items

Considered elements while purchasing household items	Number of responses	Percentage
Design	317	77.9%
Materials	313	76.9%
Practicability	293	72.0%
Brand	202	49.6%
After sale	89	21.9%
Story	39	9.6%
Designer	26	6.4%

(Number of respondents: 407)

4.1.3 Consumers' willingness to cross-cultural style

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of participants prefer to buy New Chinese style (Appendix II) furniture and household items, and least consumers prefer to buy European imperial style or other styles. This indicates that have highly acceptability of cross-culture designed household items.

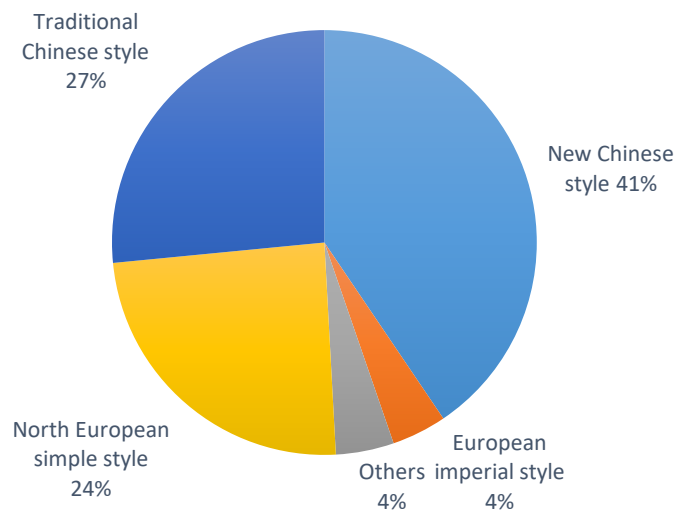


Figure 4.3. Proportion of Chinese preferred design style.

Participants were asked about their perception of style while purchasing furniture and household items. There were obvious trends that the percentage of Traditional Chinese Style was increasing by increasing of age while the percentage of choosing North European simple style was decreasing by increasing of age (Table 4.3). Age 31-45 are the dominant consumer group surveyed.

Figure 4.4 shows that about 40% participants in each age group preferred to buy New Chinese Style furniture and household items, nearly three quarters of participants preferred a cross

cultural style. Since the researcher only surveyed one consumer over age 60 so that figure 4.4 treats this as exemption.

Table 4.3. Number of respondents of preferred design style by age group

Style	Age				
	18 – 25	26 – 30	31 - 45	46 - 60	Above 60
New Chinese style	12	28	91	33	1
European imperial style	3	0	9	5	0
North European simple style	14	26	51	8	0
Traditional Chinese style	2	4	62	40	0
Others	1	6	10	1	0
Total	32	64	223	87	1

(Number of respondents: 407)

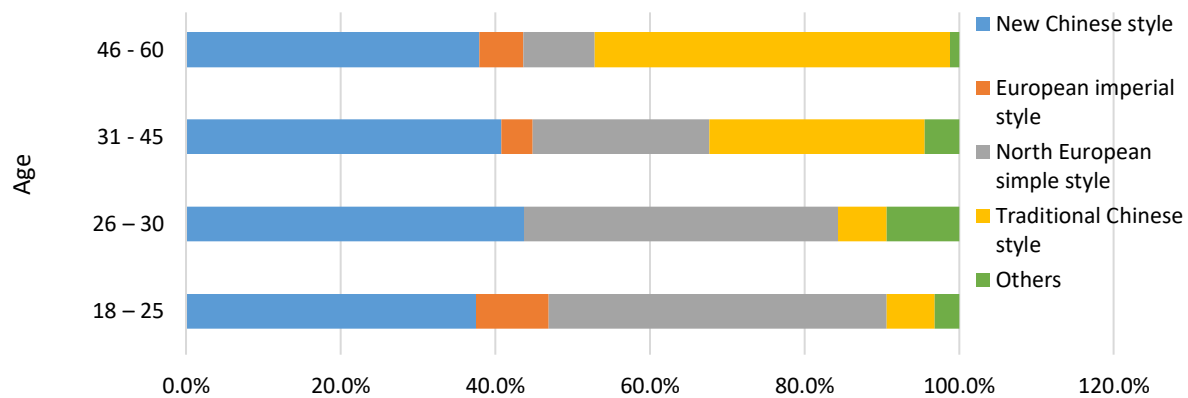


Figure 4.4. Proportion of preferred furniture style by age group

To determine Chinese consumers attitudes towards limited furniture and household items, respondents were asked to rank their responses along a five-point scale from strongly interested to not interested at all. The Likert scale was chosen to give participants freedom to measure the

relative intensity of different statements by using standardized response categories (Babbie, 2010). Scores were calculated by assigning weights 1 to not interested at all, 2 to not interested, 3 to neutral, 4 to mildly interested, and 5 to strongly interested.

Figure 4.5 illustrates the level of interested furniture and household items with Canadian aboriginal design for four categories. The respondents are neutral with Canadian aboriginal designs on door and cabinets, while the respondents are interested in small household items with those designs on. There are no large differences in the responses for window frame and moulding, and tables, sofa, and bed.

This figure only shows what products to focus on in developing a strategy. Duration of product life cycle also influences preferences.

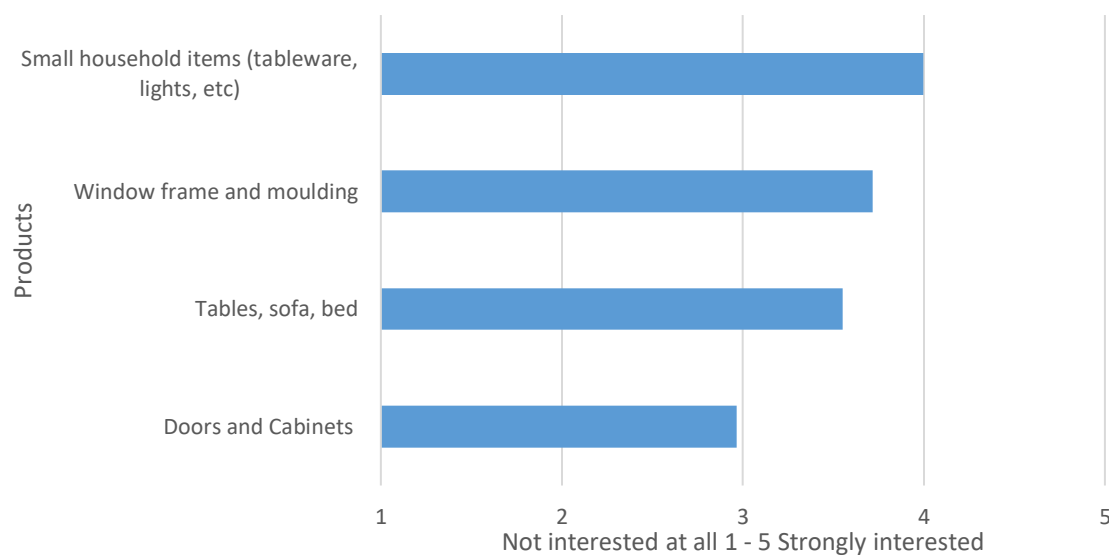


Figure 4.5. Preferences for different designed household products.

4.2 Designers and Artists Interview Results

4.2.1 Sampling frame

The researcher received a 75% response rate of the 40 contact letters that were sent inviting Chinese designers at the home show and carving artists at Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre to participate in this research. The response rate of designers at the home show was 76.7%, and the response rate of artists at Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre was 80%. The researcher was able to schedule and complete interviews with twenty designers at the home show and two artists at Dongyang Woodcarving City Centre.

4.2.2 Quantitative results

Over three-quarters of the respondents concentrated on New Chinese style furniture design, as Figure 4.6 shows. Only one out of the twenty-two designers and artists concentrated on European Imperial Style Furniture. Although only two artists and one designer focused on Traditional carving designs, they had over twenty years' experience on Traditional carving designs (Figure 4.7).

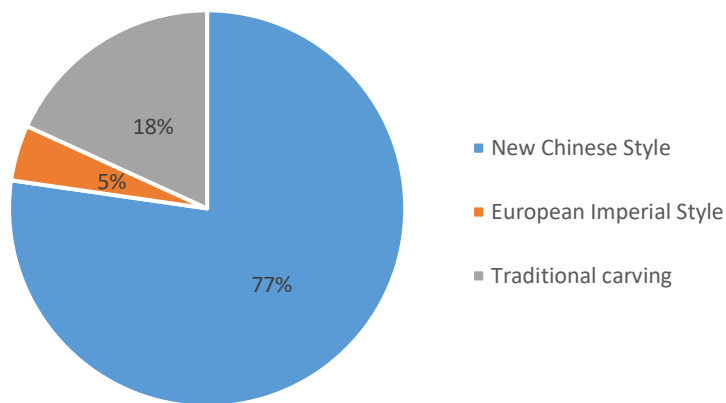


Figure 4.6. Designers/artists' current style.

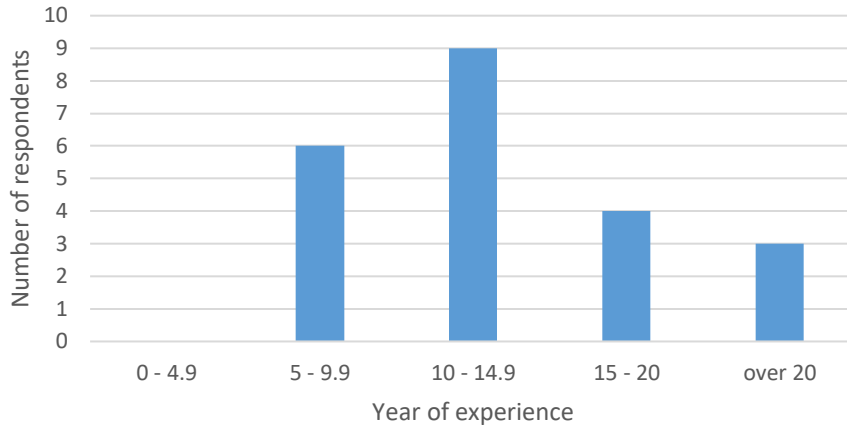


Figure 4.7. Year of design experience

The most widely used design element was Taoism elements, followed by cloud element and the ‘three durable plants of winter’ (Figure 4.8). Figure 4.9 shows Chinese designers and artists’ preferred purchasing/selling channels. Most designers choose Alibaba-Taobao, an online market under Alibaba, to reach consumers; while the two artists chose Local Red Wood Centre as their main selling channel.

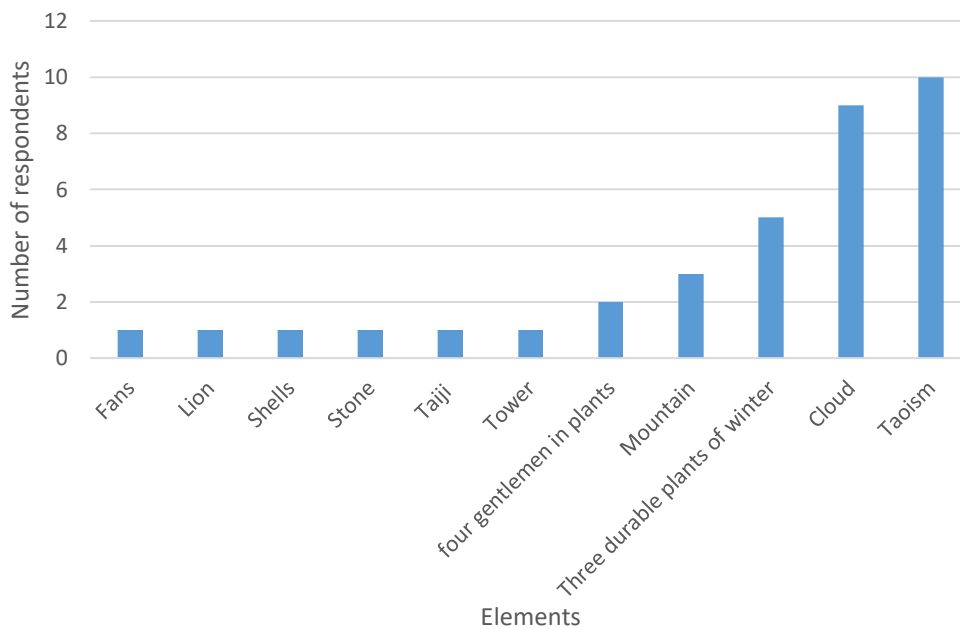


Figure 4.8. Designers/artists’ preferred elements.

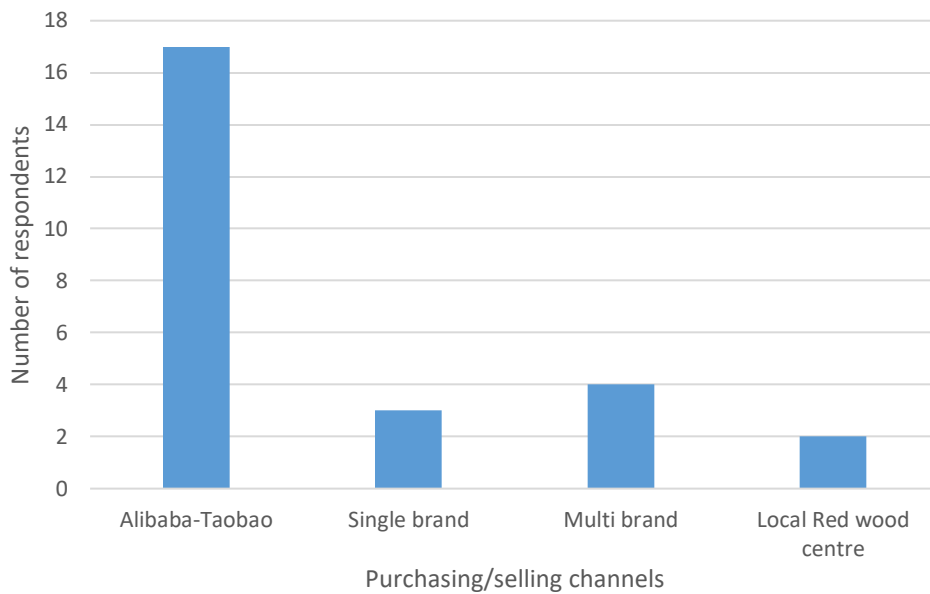


Figure 4.9. Preferred purchasing/selling channels.

4.2.3 Qualitative results

4.2.3.1 Chinese market acceptance

Preceding the interviews, 68% of the designers and artists had 5-15 years design experience, and another 32% stated that they had over 15 years design experience. All of them don't familiar with Canadian aboriginal culture and designs. After the designers and artists were shown Canadian aboriginal designs, they were asked to share their first impression of Chinese market acceptance of Canadian aboriginal designs. This question revealed that 64% of designers and artists held positive attitude, while the other 36% were neutral. However, their attitudes changed when asked about subsequent questions.

For instance, when designers and artists were asked to discuss the types of furniture and household items that would have higher acceptance, approximately 90% participants held a negative attitude if such design colors are used on furniture that occupies large visual spaces. In this case, designers and artists responded with greater frequency that most Chinese consumers don't buy colorful large furniture. "If designers want to keep colorful designs for commodities, small household items like textiles would be great.", one designer commented, "at least from our market experiences, more and more young and middle-age people would like to buy New Chinese Style furniture, which combines both traditional Chinese furniture style and simple European style. They prefer simple color but with some small patterns."

4.2.3.2 Household product designs

Furthermore, when asked to discuss the design elements on Canadian aboriginal designs, all participants mentioned that most Chinese people may not prefer raven element in their living place. One participant comment: "I'm not sure about young people nowadays, but most people with purchasing power may not buy products with raven element. Cross-cultural designers may not know what their target consumers like, but they must know what their target consumers don't like."

There were 21 of 22 interviewed designers mentioned that Taoism affects their designs at least once in their interviews. Nonetheless, it was striking that approximately 82% participants recommended Cloud elements as an entry of cross-culture furniture and household items designs, and 22% participants emphasized that basic Canadian aboriginal design elements and cloud element 'achieve the same result by different ways'.

“In the conventional way, I follow the Ming and Qing Dynasty furniture design style by using a lot of nature elements. [...] In recent 5 – 8 years, consumers with purchasing power prefer some simple styles. Maybe because most Chinese people learn Taoism at early age, New Chinese Style became the most popular style. You can see that I still keep several elements, especially cloud element, in the corner of the table, but no longer provide full complicated patterns for large furniture. [...] The shape of Cloud is flexible and can represent Chinese culture concept. It will be a great if cross-culture designers can look through most recent furniture designs with cloud elements on, then they will have a first understanding of popular cross-culture design furniture in China.”

Lastly, although all designers and artists mentioned that they don't want to change their designs by consumers preferences, 82% participants indicated they need to follow the changes of common aesthetics if they want to sell their designs as commodities.

4.2.3.3 Purchasing/selling channels

When asked about selling channels, all interviewed designers and artists mentioned Alibaba-Taobao at least once. Approximately 77% participants recommended Alibaba-Taobao as selling channel for small business, while the two artists recommended the other ways.

The two artists took a more reputational stance. One participant was concerned about how people would invite him to design wood carving furniture. “We spent a lot of years to build up our reputation, we don't want consumers treat us like a cheap Taobao product. My design should be

unique and cannot be easily copied. [...] Taobao is truly a good way to start a business in China, but I have steady clients and I don't create products, I create art crafts.”

Most designers chose Alibaba-Taobao as its convenience of reaching consumers, “I don't need to pay for a store, and I can easily talk with my consumers. People can read through the website to know the price, material, size, design concept and so on. They can even ask me directly through Taobao to know some details. This is also a good way to expand business, I had several experiences that the consumers asked me for interior design after talking about a single item on the website.” All designers mentioned that it would be hard to protect copy rights, especially when they sell their products on the website because others can easily get all the information. “We can definitely report this on Taobao, but it takes a lot of time to search. But I still choose Taobao because we can provide promise card, and improve after sale service. [...] Generally, the advantages of Alibaba-Taobao are much more than the disadvantages.”

5 Discussion

This section mainly interprets key findings in three parts: (1) attitudes and perceptions of Chinese market acceptance of cross-cultural designed household products; (2) comments on design elements; and, (3) perceptions of purchasing/selling channel. Interesting findings that contribute to the existing knowledge on cross-cultural designed household products are also presented.

5.1 Attitudes and Perceptions of Chinese Market Acceptance

It is not surprising that no interviewed participants showed negative attitude for their first impression towards Chinese market acceptance of Canadian aboriginal designs. According to the quantitative results on designers and artists' focused style, most of them treat their designs as cross-cultural designs. One interviewee commented, "All designs would be accepted by people, the difference is one people or one-hundred people." Another interviewee mentioned that if Canadian aboriginal designers want to sell commodities instead of art crafts in China, designs should be followed by types of furniture. This could explain the changes of responses received between 'first impression' and the subsequent questions about Chinese market acceptance of Canadian aboriginal designs.

People's aesthetic tastes change with the times. They have strong characteristics of the times, but they are also influenced by traditional culture (Tang, 2005). As the results show above, most surveyed Chinese consumers prefer to choose New Chinese Style, which is the combination of traditional Chinese culture and modern fashion elements (Hu, 2010). Most Chinese consumers

enjoy the comfort, practicality and beauty of the sense of era. At the same time, they need to meet their personality and psychological needs for novelty, beauty and difference with a certain cultural connotation. To this end, more and more people are pursuing for interesting furnishings with humanistic features. As the environmental protection, ecological, green and sustainable development thought setting roots in people's heart, people began to advocate a simple furniture style with modest decoration, namely simple structure, succinct modelling, pure surface and reasonable decoration. By doing so, it aims to win with simplicity, lead the complicated factors with simplicity, and show the richness in simplicity and elegance in purity. As illustrations 5.1 to 5.7 in Appendix II show, reasonable decoration can beautify furniture and at the same time, makes the furniture have more cultural connotation and social value. This is a special style adopted by furniture of modern designs. Through the recognition of the carved decorative images, the understanding of the symbolic patterns and symbols, and the recalling of the forms of historical factors, people may generate a deep resonance, which will further satisfy their requirement for beauty and pleasure (Ma, 2003 & Tang, 2005). The aesthetic concept of Chinese consumers is the unity of traditional concept and modern concept, and it is the fusion of traditional culture and modern concept. Chinese consumers preference of New Chinese style also indicates Chinese consumers' high acceptance of cross-culture designs.

Designers and artists in this study showed that Chinese consumers may not be attracted by some Canadian aboriginal features or color matching, which presents high consistency with consumer results. Although most Chinese consumers in this study showed high acceptance of cross-cultural designed household items, they may need to consider more about the specific design features.

5.2 Comments on Household Product Designs

Participants who responded to the questionnaires and the interview reported high consistency of preferred designed elements. It shows that most Chinese consumers in this study prefer cloud elements more than other elements on household items. Designers and artists recommended cloud elements not only because its historical reasons, but also the similarities with Canadian aboriginal design elements.

Although most Canadian aboriginal designers don't show clouds in their designs, cloud structure can be found with the combination of formlines, finelines, U-shape and ovoids. Chinese designers use the curve at the end of the shape to express the concept of cloud. The combination of formlines and finelines in Canadian aboriginal designs usually form a shape with thinner curve end, which is similar as the cloud shape. Chinese designers prefer to keep the cloud end as a circle, which represents satisfactory. Canadian aboriginal designers may need to think about positive meaning of life while designing cross-culture furniture and household items.

Most of Canadian aboriginal designs focus on salmon, killer whale, raven, eagle, wolf and other wildlife, while Chinese designs prefer to use natural scenery elements, such as, mountain, stream, cloud, terraced fields (Appendix II) and so on. Traditional Chinese furniture and household items designs use fish element often as the meaning of abundance. However, it's different from Canadian aboriginal salmon designs. Traditional Chinese designs focus more on details and align with realism while Canadian aboriginal designers usually use ovoids to fill in the stomach part. Realism styled fish is not usually used on furniture and household items nowadays, fish element

designs can be found in a simple shape on some New Chinese style furniture and small household items.

Some of the consumers at the home show also mentioned several animals that they prefer to have on household products such as dragon, birds, and lions. However, the interviewed designers/artists indicated that the carvings of dragon and lions on traditional Chinese wooden furniture are often found to be vivid and elaborate, which is different from Canadian aboriginal design concept - stylization. Some of the birds are recommended, such as Black-naped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*), Eagles, Eurasian magpie (*Pica pica*), Mandarin duck (*Aix galericulata*), Red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*) and so on. Although most birds are welcome in Chinese culture, raven is the one which may bring bad luck in Chinese mythology. Canadian aboriginal designers may consider using appropriate bird elements in household products for Chinese market.

5.3 Perception of Purchasing/selling Channels

Alibaba's consumer-to-consumer portal Alibaba-Taobao features nearly a billion products and is one of the twenty most-visited websites globally. It is free to apply for an online store on Alibaba-Taobao. In 2017, Alibaba-Taobao needs about CAD\$193 customer deposits to start and around CAD\$900 per year to maintain. The cost is CAD\$28,847 deposit and CAD\$11,538 per year to maintain. Details of the cost in 2018 with Canadian Dollar to Chinese Yuan currency of 1:5.3 show in Table 5.1. Alibaba's T-mall, a business-to-consumer platform offers online store for companies. To start with T-mall, all the products must pass the quality testing through China National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (CNAS) or China Metrology

Accreditation (CMA). International quality testing can be accepted. The details and exact cost should depend on the year contract.

Canadian aboriginal designers may consider Alibaba-Taobao as a cost-effective way to reach Chinese consumers. Alibaba-Taobao website accounted for over 60% of the parcels delivered in China by March 2013, and 80% of the nation's online sales by September 2014. Figure 5.1 shows the number of active buyers across Alibaba's online shopping properties from the second half year of 2012 to the first half year of 2017. It shows a gradual increase of online buyers through time.

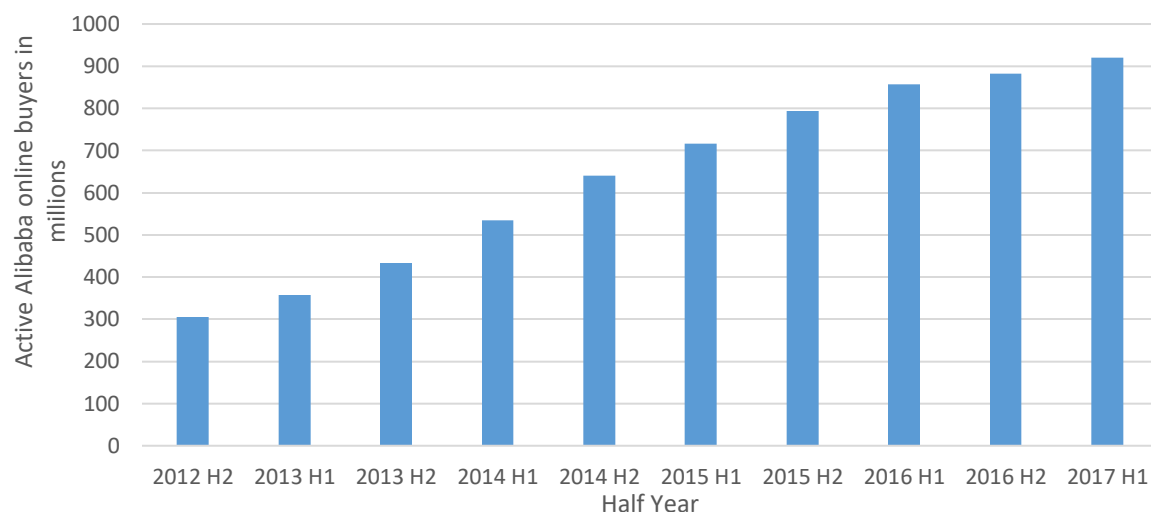


Figure 5.1. Number of active buyers across Alibaba's online shopping properties from the second half 2012 to the first half 2017 (Alibaba, 2017)

Approximately 23% of the interviewed designers and artists mentioned that collaborating the online shop with Chinese designers or artists' online shop would be an asset as Canadian aboriginal designed household products are not matured in Chinese market. One designer mentioned that "Alibaba-Taobao provides an evaluation systems for customers. Some customers

searching for high-evaluated shops. Connecting the online shop with Chinese designers' online shop first can save time and money for accumulating good evaluations.”

Table 5.1. Detailed costs for starting an online store on Alibaba-Taobao (Alibaba, 2018).

Items	Costs (CAD\$)	Explanations
Application fee	Free	
Customer deposit	193	Must pay, can get back after closing the online shop
More customer service deposit (e.g. warranty)	580/each service	Priority shows on the website while customer searching, can get back after closing the online shop
Website template	12/month	Free template is provided; fancy template can attract customers
Data analysis	33/year	To have a better business plan
Promotion	24/year	To buy website promotion tools
Website decoration	116/year	The website can be beautified by coding, otherwise need to buy template

Chinese consumers in this study showed high preference on using Alibaba-Taobao to buy household items, including large furniture. Consumers considered Alibaba-Taobao as a better way to buy products due to its convenience on exploring products' details, talking with customer services or designers directly, delivering, and easy contacted after-sale services. Although surveyed Chinese consumers in this study were at the home show, they showed an attitude that they just looked around the home show and would like to buy in Alibaba-Taobao for comparing different attributes.

Most Chinese designers recommended Alibaba-Taobao because it is convenient to reach most Chinese consumers without location limitations. Designers can explain the designs and interpret

the distinctiveness of the design directly to consumers. However, its convenience on searching may increase the risks of copyright infringement.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined the cross-cultural designed household product market in China with a focus on Chinese consumers, designers and artists at The 22nd China International Furniture Expo in Shanghai and Dongyang Woodcarving Centre. Results are based on questionnaire interviews of 407 consumers at Shanghai home show, and 22 exploratory interviews with designers and artists at Shanghai home show and Dongyang Woodcarving Centre. Although Chinese consumers' aesthetics were changing in the last two decades, they had high acceptance of cross-cultural furniture and household items in the long-term.

Drawing from the results and the connections to the literature, three key findings related to opportunities for Canadian aboriginal designed household products in Chinese market was revealed.

- Cross-cultural design has more opportunities than original Canadian aboriginal designs in Chinese household items market.
- Middle-aged and middle-high income consumers would be target consumers.
- Alibaba-Taobao online store is the preferred purchasing/selling channel.

Although both Chinese consumers and designers showed that Taoism concept permeates their choosing of household items, they agreed that cloud elements were the best start to understand Chinese design culture. Nature elements also show higher acceptance in this study, however, one certain feature – raven was mentioned by most interviewed designers and artists as non-attractive feature for most Chinese consumers.

The target consumers age structure is age 26 - 45, moderately priced Canadian aboriginal designed furniture may have good opportunities. Because consumers at this age have higher acceptance of foreign culture, but most of them are both price-based and value-based consumers. Although consumers over age 45 may pay more for household products, they focus on unique designs along with material more, such solid wood (especially Chinese Red wood) with traditional Chinese carving patterns.

Alibaba-Taobao online store is efficient for aboriginal designers to start small business and to reach most potential Chinese consumers. It lowers the risks and costs to start business in a specific location. However, as its convenience of reading products information, it may increase the risks of protecting ownership.

6.1 Recommendations for Canadian aboriginal designers

- Canadian aboriginal designers, who are interested in cross-cultural designs, may need to learn about the meaning of different Chinese design features, especially some nature elements and cloud elements. Some of Chinese artists provide Chinese furniture design lectures for foreigners.
- Canadian aboriginal designers may have to be cautious about the selection of certain design features such as raven, as they may be less attractive to Chinese consumers due to the difference in these two cultures.

- Household product designs that combines Chinese design features with Canadian aboriginal design features should be promoted in order to facilitate the acceptance of Canadian aboriginal designed household products by Chinese household product market.
- Registering on-line shops in Alibaba-Taobao is the most efficient way to start small business in China. Canadian aboriginal designers or aboriginal trained sales representatives need to be the sale service of the online shop because (1) Canadian aboriginal designers know better about their own culture and can express that clearly to consumers, (2) consumers may have higher confidence on the products, and (3) increasing employment opportunities.
- In order to promote the online shop, it might be beneficial to collaborate the shop with other Chinese designer's shop, which already has established reputation.

7 Study Limitations and Future Directions

7.1 Study Limitations

Although this study does incorporate traditional exploratory research methods used in marketing, it was exploratory because the samples are small, non-random and cannot be used to infer onto the entire population. Since the survey only collected exploratory and qualitative data, interpretation of the results is judgmental and it cannot have the reliability and objectivity of quantitative research. The samples selection was based on the subjective judgement of the researcher so that this research met non-probability sampling and convenience sampling. Due to the lack of statistical analysis techniques for these samplings, it is impossible to provide comprehensive conclusions neither comparison of respondents' socio-demographic information.

During the questionnaire research at the home show, the researcher hired four enumerators and each enumerator sought respondents at different sections at the home show so that the explanations might varies and the physical surroundings might influence the respondents.

The consumers survey was based on data from the only one home show of one city in China so that the results may different in other parts of China. In addition, the posters of Canadian aboriginal designs were limited and only authorized from one museum so that the results cannot drawing any conclusions about Chinese consumers' attitudes to all Canadian aboriginal designs.

7.2 Future Directions

This research mainly focused on conceptual model, which includes culture objects and design elements from the perspectives of Chinese designers and consumers. Quantitative patterns research could be conducted to assess the development and use of each popular design elements since this study used adjectives other than building database of Chinese traditional furniture patterns. Perception and attitude towards Canadian aboriginal designs could have further detailed survey as well as the interaction with consumers, such as the attitudes towards telling a story.

The primary data collection was done in an exploratory and qualitative manner because of time and budget limitation. Specific questions would be applied with a larger sample size across more cities in China. The comparison on design features of Traditional Chinese style designs and New Chinese style designs could be done with a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses. This research only surveyed Chinese consumers, designers and artists, future study could focus on manufactures in China.

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Appendices

Appendix A Recruitment Letter, Consent Form, and Questionnaire

a. Survey of Consumers

Chinese consumers' perception of Cross-culture designed household products Recruitment Letter

Dear Consumers:

My name is Xuan (Joris) Jun, a Master student in Science from the Forestry at the University of British Columbia. We would like to invite you to come and enjoy a culture and vision journey at Canadian Aboriginal designed products booth, which would provide you a general understanding of Canadian Aboriginal culture and designed products. This is a market research project, which will examine the opportunities for the Ulkatcho First Nation to efficiently build their forest products value chain by exploring their role in the designed export market to China.

Please notice that your participant is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the survey or not. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be provided a questionnaire with consent form as cover letter during the home show. Once you finish this questionnaire, you could give it back to the researcher at Canadian Aboriginal designed products booth.

Please feel free to let the researcher know if you have any questions. If you have questions after the survey, please contact the research team listed in the following:

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Christopher Gaston
Department of Wood Science
Forest Sciences Centre 4615

2424 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4
Canada
Work phone: 1 604-827-1417

Researcher:
Xuan (Joris) Jun
Graduate student
Forest Sciences Centre 2310

2424 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4
Canada
Work phone: 1 604-827-1417

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Xuan (Joris) Jun

Chinese consumers' perception of Cross-culture designed household products

Letter of Consent

We would like to invite you to participate in this research, which aims to explore: (1) attributes preferred of residential limited designed products, and, (2) the perception of quality of residential limited designed products.

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are the consumer in this home show. It indicates that you would like to buy the products in the home show. **The individual questionnaire interview will take you approximately 5 – 7 minutes. You will be asked for general information that related to your current living status and your perception of residential limited designed products.** Please feel free to let the researcher know if you have any questions. If you have questions after the survey, please contact the research team listed in the following:

Principle Investigator
Dr. Christopher Gaston
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Canada
Work phone: 1 604-827-1417

Researcher:
Xuan (Joris) Jun
Graduate student
Forest Sciences Centre 2310
2424 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4
Canada
Phone: 1 778-859-5027

Questionnaire Topics:

- General information about your living status (e.g. location and job)
- Your perception on limited designed products
- Consideration of buying imported limited designed products

The findings derived here are expected to support the establishment of an export market for the Canadian Aboriginal cross-culture designs and will provide the basis of the researcher's MSc thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this research any time you wish or skip any questions you don't feel comfortable answering, without penalty. You will **NOT** be asked to provide any private information and all responses are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Your participation involves no risk whatsoever. Some of the questions we ask might upset you, however, you could skip the question since this is an anonymous interview. Please let the researcher know if you have any concerns. This study is not directly beneficial to any participants. However, your honest response will be of value for this project. Please note that you must be 18 years or older in order to complete this questionnaire.

No personal information on participants will be released in any published written data analysis. All the information in the questionnaire will be coded and kept confidentially after this survey with using Analysis ToolPak (an Excel add-in) and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). We encourage all participants to refrain from disclosing the contents of the discussion outside of the focus group; however, we cannot control what other participants do with the information discussed. Only researchers involved in this project (listed below) have access to the survey data. All the data will be kept on encrypted hard drive with password protected and will be destroyed after five full years.

If you don't want to be in the survey, it would be greatly appreciated if you could contact us and let us know during this home show. Again, your information will remain confidential with us.

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study (UBC Research Ethics Certificate H15-01031-A002), contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

I have read and understood the above, and I agree to participate in the study. If the questionnaire is completed, it will be assumed that consent has been given. Please check the following box if you would like to continue with the survey ☐

Thank you for your precious time and support!

Chinese consumers' perception of Canadian aboriginal designed products

Dear consumers, your participation is voluntary and your data are anonymous and confidential. All the original information would only be used for research and would be kept confidentially. Thanks for your cooperation.

1. Why do you want to attend this Home Show?

Probe: Preferred products; whether you are a consumer or not, interested in limited designs or not

2. Follow-up: How likely is it that you would buy limited designs from the following sources, assuming they all are readily available from your local store or contractor?

Home show
Online website
Single brand retail
Multi-brand retail
Art gallery
Auction house

3. What do you think of the designed products in this Home Show?

Probe: Attitudes toward different types of designed products

4. What are the three main elements that you would primarily consider while buying furniture?

Scales: Materials, design, story, designer, brand, quality, after-sale

5. What are the first three characteristics that come to your mind when you think of Chinese designs?

6. Have you heard about Canadian Aboriginal culture before?

7. What is the first word that come to your mind after exploring the photos of Canadian Aboriginal designed products?

8. What materials would you prefer to buy?

Scales: wood, glass, stone

9. We would like to know your attitudes toward limited designed products

	Do you agree or disagree that:	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
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9.1	Stories behind the design are more important than the design itself.					
9.2	Limited designed products are made to last					
9.3	Limited designed products should be made by traditional technology (i.e. by hand)					
9.4	Limited designed products should be unique					

10. We would like to ask few questions about you.

10.1 How old are you?

☐ 18 – 25 ☐ 26 – 30 ☐ 31 - 45 ☐ 46 - 60 ☐ Above 60

10.2 What is your gender? ☐ Female ☐ Male

10.3 What region of China do you come from?

10.4 What is your annual income?

- ☐ below ¥ 35,000
- ☐ ¥ 35,000 to 49,999
- ☐ ¥ 50,000 to 64,999
- ☐ ¥ 65,000 to 79,999
- ☐ ¥ 80,000 to 94,999
- ☐ ¥ 95,000 to 114,999
- ☐ ¥ 115, 000 to 129,999
- ☐ above ¥ 130,000

b. Designers and artists interview

Canadian Aboriginal designed products - Artist Recruitment Letter

Dear Artist:

My name is Xuan (Joris) Jun, a Master student in Science from the Forestry at the University of British Columbia. I would like to invite you to have an interview about your opinions toward residential designed products.

Aboriginal culture plays an essential role in Canada, and Canadian Aboriginal designs express their spirit and main culture and stories. Canadian Aboriginal artists seek to engage in cross-culture design industry and look for Chinese culture fusion. This research aims to provide them reference for designing cross-culture designed products. We would like to ask for your professional opinions towards designs. Please notice that your participant is completely voluntary and no harm to you. This interview will take 10 – 15 mins and will be recorded. All the responds will be coded and can only be accessed by the researcher. A consent form will be provided and be quickly explained at the very beginning of the interview. You could withdraw at any time you want. You will be asked to provide your signature after the interview for information use agreement.

We would greatly appreciate you taking the time to share your knowledge on these ideas. We understand that you and your organization are quite busy and thank you for your participation.

If you would like to confirm your willingness to participate, or have any questions or comments regarding this research study, please contact the researcher - Xuan Jun:

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Christopher Gaston
Department of Wood Science
Forest Sciences Centre 4615

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Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4
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Work phone: 1 604-827-1417

Researcher:
Xuan (Joris) Jun
Graduate student
Forest Sciences Centre 2310

2424 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4
Canada
Work phone: 86 18904301675

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Xuan (Joris) Jun

Chinese artists' perception of Canadian aboriginal designed products Consent Form

Overview of Study Team:

This research falls within the Mitacs project, funded by Yun Ka Whu'ten Development (YKWD) of behalf of the Ulkatcho First Nation, and is under the responsibility of the Principal Investigator, Dr. Christopher Gaston, professor with the department of Wood Science at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and researcher Xuan (Joris) Jun, an MSc student with the Department of Forest Resources Management at UBC. This research is part of MS. Jun's graduate thesis project, which will be accessible to the public upon submission.

Principle Investigator

Dr. Christopher Gaston

Department of Wood Science
Forest Sciences Centre 4615
2424 Main Mall
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Canada
Work phone: 1 604-827-1417

Researcher

Xuan (Joris) Jun

Graduate student
Forest Sciences Centre 2310
2424 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4
Canada
Phone: 1 778-859-5027

Objectives of this Study

The objectives of this study are: (1) explore attributes supplied of residential limited designed products, and, (2) explore the opportunities of the Chinese market for Canadian Aboriginal artists.

Role of the Participant

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are the artist who concerns on residential limited designed products (residential limited designed products: general residential products, including: furniture and small residential items, and housing decoration items. Residential limited designed product means that all of these residential products will be limited items and be provided with designers' promise card.) and you own a booth in this home show exhibition and Carving City Center. If you agree to take part in this study, your participation will consist of answering several questions orally. This study will be based on an individual interview. It is expected that the interview will take approximately 10 – 15 minutes of your time. With your permission, your interview will be audio recorded. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Interview Topics:

- General information about your design process
- Your perception on the use of Chinese culture elements
- Consideration of promoting your design
- Your concern about the current designed products market

The findings derived here are expected to support the Canadian Aboriginal cross-culture designs, and will provide the basis of the researcher's MSc thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

Voluntary Participation and Opting Out

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this research any time you wish or skip any questions you don't feel comfortable answering, without penalty. We do not think that there is anything in this study that could harm you. You will not be exposed to any physical, cultural, social or psychological risks. Your responses will be codified and your identity kept confidential on all published findings. Your shared opinions and attitudes will be generalized with those collected from other interviews. We encourage all participants to refrain from disclosing the contents of the discussion outside of the interview; however, we cannot control what other participants do with the information discussed. This study is not directly beneficial to any participants. However, your honest response will be of value for this project. Please note that you must be 18 years or older in order to complete this questionnaire.

Confidentiality and Data Management

All information gathered will be confidential. The following measures will be taken to assure confidentiality:

- Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study;
- Audio recordings of the interview will be stored safely on an encrypted, password protected external hard drive and be only used and stored safely on a CWL password protected computer or locked filing cabinet, in an alarmed office at UBC; Only Ms Jun and Dr Gaston will have access to these document;
- Information in audio recordings will be coded and kept confidentially with using NVivo 10 (a qualitative data analysis tool) after this interview;
- Audio recordings and consent forms will be kept on file with the Principal Investigator (Dr Christopher Gaston) within the UBC for 5 years, and will be thereafter destroyed;
- Only global and depersonalized information and analysis results will be published;
- The results may be published in scientific journals and/or on the project website.

Contact for information about the Study

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research or your involvement, please contact one of the study leaders. The names and contact information are listed at the top of the first page of this form.

Complaints or Criticisms

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study (UBC Research Ethics Certificate H15-01031-A002), contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Participant Consent and Signature Page

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact to you. Your signature below indicated that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records, and that you consent to participate in this study.

I, the undersigned _____ grant freely to participate in the research project entitled “Exploratory market assessment of Canadian Aboriginal Designs preference by Chinese consumers and artists”. I give permission to have my interview audio recorded. I am aware that the audio recording will only be used as a data collection tool, and my identity will be kept confidential in all published data. I am aware that my audio recordings will be safely and securely stored at the University of British Columbia for five years; after which Dr Christopher Gaston will destroy them. I am aware that through the analysis process of this project, only Ms Xuan (Joris) Jun and Dr Christopher Gaston will have access to my recordings.

Participant Signature

Date: _____

We plan to publish results around September 2017. If you desire to receive a summary, please include your email address:

I, the interviewer, have explained the goals and the nature of the project to the participant. I have answered all questions to the best of my knowledge and I have verified the participant understands.

Co-Investigator/MSc student signature

Date: _____

Your collaboration is extremely important to this research and we thank you for your participation.

Thank you for your precious time and support!

Chinese artists' perception of designed products – Interview script

1. Could you please tell me briefly about your experience in designing?

Probe: Region; age; interests; duration

2. What types of designs do you represent now and what is your role?

Probe: Modern or traditional; Master level or junior level

3. What elements or icons do you usually include in your designs?

Follow-up: why do you choose these elements or icons for your designs?

4. What is your most famous design?

Follow-up: is there any story behind this design?

5. What is your designing process?

Probe: Considered elements for designing.

Follow-up: why do you think these elements are important?

6. How do you usually protect the ownership of your designs?

Follow-up: how do you promote your designs?

7. What sources do you usually use to sell your designs?

8. Have you heard about Canadian Aboriginal culture before? If yes, from what source?

9. Is there any opportunity for you to cooperate with Canadian Aboriginal designers?

10. What challenges do you perceive in selling cross-culture designs in Chinese market?

Probe: Modern culture and traditional Chinese culture; Canadian Aboriginal culture and traditional Chinese culture.

Appendix B Design elements from designers' results

All illustrations in Appendix II got the consent of image use, and all photos were taken by the author - Xuan Jun.

Cloud-shape is widely used as a kind of carved decoration on the Ming- and Qing-style furniture and household items (Lin & Lian, 2012). The composition of such combined patterns is deemed as auspicious definition in the ancient times. Therefore, it is one of the welcomed decorative themes in all dynasties for both royal families and the plain citizens (Hu, 2005; Xu, 2000). It is a pattern with an auspicious motif, standing for being promoted to a higher position and the hope of everything going well. There are a variety of changes in the forms, which mainly include the curling cloud, Ruyi cloud, the circulating cloud, the complete cloud and the flowing cloud. It usually appears together with patterns such as dragon and bats. Cloud shape is widely used on the corner of the Ming and Qing style wooden table or tea table, and the Ming and Qing style wooden chairs. Cloud shape has been used by Chinese designers, not only as corner decoration, but also the basic shape of the whole design.

All illustrations in Appendix II got the consent of image use, and all photos in Appendix II were taken by the author - Xuan Jun.



Illustration 5.1. Bats and cloud elements on Chinese traditional carving closet.



Illustration 5.2. Cloud elements on a tea table

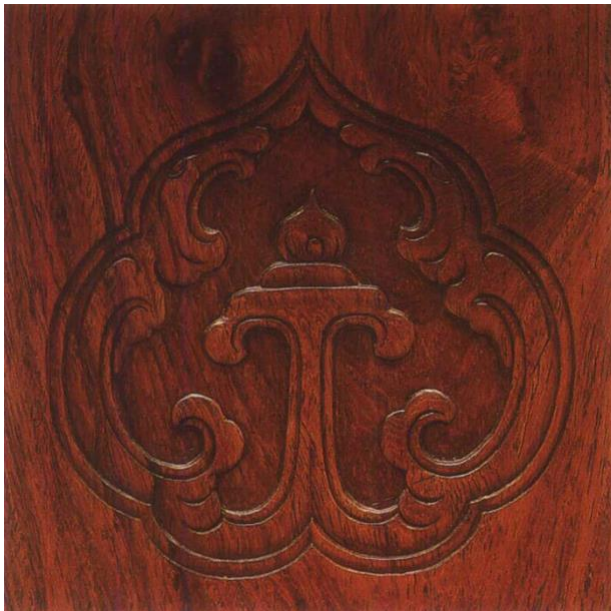


Illustration 5.3. Cloud elements on the Ming and Qing style wooden chair.



Illustration 5.4. Tea table design based on terraced fields.

The Ming and Qing Dynasty style handles.

Embossed lacquer orchid on a wardrobe.



Illustration 5.5. One example of New Chinese style wardrobe.

Cloud element design.



Illustration 5.6. One example of New Chinese style tea table.



Illustration 5.7. New Chinese style sofa by using mountain elements.