Focus on Industrial Needs and Serve Local Economy—
Teaching Design of the “Design Sketch” Course of Clothing in Fujian Province

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Abstract. Clothing fabrics, clothing styles, clothing structure design, material texture re-creation need the innovation and re-creation ability of designers. Design sketch is the "window" of designer's personal style, is a special symbol and form of expression and is the basic approach of modeling and the form aesthetic training. In order to better serve the clothing and textile industry in Fujian Province, in this paper, taking the requirement of the clothing industry development in Fujian Province on the designer's ability as the background, the application and promotion of design sketch in the cultivation of the ability of fashion designers are explored.

Fujian Province is located in the hinterland of the economic zone on the west side of the strait and is known for light industry. Its southern Xiamen, Shishi, Jinjiang, Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, its central Putian, Fuzhou, Changle, its northern Sanming, Nanping and other places have large-scale clothing and textile industry which occupies a pivotal position in the local economy. Textile and clothing industry as the traditional processing industry of advantage in Fujian Province, has now formed a complete range of textile industry system involving the categories of chemical fiber, cotton, clothing, printing and dyeing, knitting, industrial textiles, home textiles and so on. Its textile economy is in the forefront in regional economic ranking. For example, in Shishi and Jinjiang which are the national textile industry leaders, the textile industry has become the pillar industry of local economy; Quanzhou in southern Fujian and Changle in central Fujian have built a relatively complete textile industry chain covering the cotton and chemical fiber, weaving and dyeing, clothing and accessories, etc. They occupy a large proportion in the local economy and have become the key of the local economic development.

Positioning of the “Design Sketch” in Clothing Design

Durer once said, “No man, unless much research has been done to enrich his mind, is doomed to not be able to imagine creating a beautiful picture [1].” Clothing fabrics, clothing styles, clothing structure design, material texture re-creation need the innovation and re-creation ability of designers.

The “design” in the “design sketch” is to plan and process the visual elements to form a regular visual image. Design sketch also is the designer's personal style "window", is a special symbol and form of expression and is the basic approach of modeling and form aesthetic training. For example, Shishi City, as one of China's four major textile fabric markets, in the fabric design, in the face of the current increasingly fierce competition and increasingly critical customers, needs the designers to have the ability to be proficient in the material
texture and strong innovation consciousness to carry out innovation and development on fabrics. This unique sensitive ability and innovation consciousness on the fabric texture need to be developed and practiced in the “design sketch”; underwear enterprises in Jinjiang, in the style design and clothing structure design, need the designers to master the knowledge of body modeling and to combine the body structure with the clothing structure, and this ability also need to be mastered through the practice of design sketch and these expertise is applied in the design; Changle Lace fabric manufacturers require the designers to have a strong ability of image composition and pattern organization. These abilities should be trained and improved in various practices of the “design sketch”. Therefore, the process of the “design sketch” is the process of painting thought, painting analysis and painting knowledge.

The sensitivity of the designer on modeling is cultivated as much as possible through the “design sketch” exercises so as to have more breakthroughs in modeling and design and to provide a solid professional foundation for the professional design to more accurately and vividly express their design thinking and design ideas. In the “design sketch” learning process, the keen observation ability and the ability to be good at capturing the characteristics of things are cultivated and various approaches are used to process the observed materials, which is one of abilities the designer should have.

**Application Approaches of the “Design Sketch” in the Clothing Design Process and Improvement of Design Ability**

In recent years, the "Chinese style" in clothing has once again attracted worldwide attention and designers especially make enough efforts in the design of clothing fabrics. The pattern of Chinese style requires a strong hand-painted ability. Chinese style clothing design needs an interpretation of a new era on the basis of preserving the traditional design.

As the basis of modeling, the “design sketch” focuses on cultivating the analysis, mutation and reorganization ability of the form and the ability to understand the form and make subjective recreation [2]. Through the research of clothing enterprises, we more clearly understand which ability we should have for the job. In recent years, through continuous exploration, a number of the professional design trainings in the “design sketch” are summarized and the application of these professional trainings in the clothing design process can bring a greater improvement for the designer’s design ability. Its application approaches and the improvement of design ability reflect in the following points:

**Cultivate the Unique and Keen Sensitivity in the Design Process through the Study of the Appearance of the Form**

Research objects are selected on your own. First of all, according to personal preferences and interests and unique aesthetic point of view, the items to be expressed are selected (all interested objects around). Then the processing on modeling, composition and other aspects is explored between each other. The specific method is: in the process of design sketch, the existing norms are removed so that the object is directly transformed into a real subjective feeling. The first step is to watch. We should begin to rethink how to watch. The viewing angle should be different from the usual one. The change of viewing angel and method can also to some extent open our innovative thinking. In the process of watching, we completely rely on our eyes to have a deep feeling and understanding on the description object and observe it and feel it from a variety of angles.
How does the object to be described show the form different from the previous color, texture and other aspects in a new look? This selection of the appropriate sketch media and technology according to our own needs requires the designer to have a meticulous view of the parts of the expressed object but also to connect the local expression with the overall design. Such training method can to a large extent cultivate the designer’s understanding and exploration angle of things, greatly exercising the design thinking and observation ability.

The active object selection process can also enhance the unique and keen sensibility on the object. At the same time, it can stimulate and improve the innovation ability in the process of thinking the composition of the image and expressing the aesthetic principle. It is a design consciousness and more importantly, it can simultaneously develop their keen abilities to express things around and painting and writing are used to cause the people’s “surprise” different from the past on some of the original easily overlooked objects. This “expression” is the source of artistic creation and the origin of the design.

**Train the Re-Creation Ability on the Clothing Fabric through the “Replacement” of the Texture and the “Re-Creation” of the Form**

The texture is used to reflect the style to be formed and is taken as an emotional expression. The personalities of the used texture and the combination of textures of different materials have their own unique aesthetic expression. Different combinations of materials can create accidental or unexpected visual effects. This training has an unexpected effect on the fabric re-creation of Clothing Design. In the fabric manufacturing process, the texture becomes an important part of technical aesthetics.

First of all, we find a variety of materials and objects and use various approaches for rubbing. Rubbing can continue to overlap till the satisfactory results are obtained. Secondly, we use various fabrics with texture effect around and put them in the copy machine for the copy and then we can get the image with the texture. Thirdly, we use a variety of paper for collage. In the process of collage, the composition and coordination between textures are emphasized. Finally, we use various approaches and tools for the re-production of the texture. This learns from John Eaton’s texture re-creation and replacement in the material training, allowing designers to have a better understanding and mastery of the different expression of the texture. Designers can provide the source and basis for their fabric creation through the fabric replacement and texture re-creation.

**Lay a Solid Foundation for the Re-Creation and Re-Performance of the Structure and Form in the Clothing Design through the Structural Understanding of the Form**

We understand a variety of different forms and structures and focus on the arrangement and distribution of combination of various structural lines, contour lines and perspective lines. From the study of the natural form, we train to observe things through the vision of structural analysis. At the same time, the knowledge of human body modeling and human anatomy structure can also be strengthened in the exercise of the “design sketch”. The combination of human body structure and the clothing structure is especially applied to the design of the style and the clothing structure.

We have a common understanding of the structure of things through observing and describing a variety of different structures: the structure of plants—the spiral structure growing in the nature—the constructed method of objects—the clump structure, which is conducive to the aesthetic perception of the composition. This training is of great significance
of reference and innovation for designers on the reform of the clothing structure, because in the clothing design, structural innovation is an important point. The innovation of the clothing structure comes from the designer's flexible use of the structure. Fashion designers design the structure and form which can fuse the human body and the clothing through changing the traditional clothing structure. As in the famous Japanese designer Rei Kawakubo’s design, she was free to "switch" the structure and decoration of clothing and freely converted the boring elements into a confusing fashion. Whether she took the knots and straps as the clothing ornaments or she designed the clothing into a “bulge” or a “bundled sausage”, she could exert the structural elements of clothing to the limit. This clothing design of deconstruction makes us rediscover the “design” hidden outside the high fashion.

**Improve the Modeling and Performance Ability of the Art through the Analysis and Design of the Natural Form**

For the designers, not everyone has the inherent form creation and use ability, but they can enhance this ability through systematic form training. In nature, various forms of beauty are hidden. The observation of the structure of the natural form makes watching become an “active seeking” behavior and eyes are guided by the mind to actively observe[^5]. Analysis of the natural form to a large extent inspires the designers’ design style and performance way. In the clothing design, the coordination and unification of various elements on the clothing style, the proportion of various fabrics and textures, the rhythm required in the design and other aspects can be trained through these training methods.

Through the observation of nature, we choose the interested form, observe and study with the analysis, use the sketch, photography and other ways to record the process of analysis and integrate the decomposed form, the relationship between forms, the texture of objects and the local and overall analysis to make a visual note. Through this training, the designer’s keen perception and refining ability on the form elements can be improved. This ability can also improve the modeling performance of the pure art provided that it is applied to the design[^6]. We choose the natural forms around as the analysis objects and analyze them from inside to outside, such as the corn, peanut, tomato and orange. Through studying their internal and external structures and texture effects, we accumulate design materials for the clothing design.

**Specific Attempts of the Design Sketch in Clothing Design in Fujian Province**

**Use the “Competition” or Project**

For example, in the clothing city in Shishi, Fujian, products are mainly exported to Europe, South America and the Middle East and there are professional fabric market and accessory market, which need to cultivate the clothing talents suitable for the local development, especially the talents in the fabric design and the accessory design. These enterprises often hold a variety of competitions. Through the content of the competition, the “design sketch” is used to show the “change of style” (such as a part of the clothing) for the simulation exercise. According to the "competition" requirements, the design insights with our own personalities are expressed. The changes of these styles are designed and drawn out according to the requirements. The “design sketch” is used to show the clothing fabric and the clothing modeling and design. Unrestrained thinking and expression techniques fully respect the designer's personality and have formed its own characteristic design. Through this selection of “using” the competition or project, starting from the small part, the refined and in-depth
research is carried out and can be well combined with the professional design so that the
design ability is tempered.

Connect with the Local Enterprise

The textile and clothing enterprises in Fujian continue to seek technology updating in order
to better and faster rank into the "high-end" and "new" enterprise. The companies are trying to
take the “quality route under the difference”, which needs to improve the value-added of
products. These developments must be around the "innovation", in particular, competition and
consumption are escalating. We should particularly “divide the market” and take the
"three-dimensional action" from the color, style, fabric and other aspects to have more strong
competitiveness.

Fashion designers in Fujian Province can also apply the product pattern as a small module
of professional design to the usual design exercises according to the needs of enterprises. In
the exercise process, whether it is the pattern design or image painting, a solid hand-painted
ability is needed, which requires focusing on the cultivation of hand-painted ability,
composition ability and expression ability of lines in the teaching process of the “design
sketch”.

Epilogue

“To do a good job, one must first sharpen his tools.” The “design” role of the “design
sketch” in Clothing Design is in ongoing research and exploration. How to better combine
with the actual production of enterprises and to better adapt to the production needs of
clothing enterprises in Fujian Province still need fashion designers to lay the foundation of the
“design sketch”. Starting from the application, we make in-depth study and constantly
improve the hand-painted ability, observation ability, innovative thinking ability and practical
application ability.

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