

# Research on the Design Aesthetic Characteristics of Chinese Digital Virtual Products in the 21st Century

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**Abstract:** *The advancement of digital technologies profoundly impacts design art, particularly in virtual product design, where new expressions and effects, unattainable through traditional methods, emerge. Digitalization supports designers by freeing their creativity and enabling the embodiment of artistic pursuits. This transformation affects all stages of artistic creation, from concepts to expression, facilitated by the integration of digital technologies. The interactivity of digital virtual design promotes personalized, humane aesthetics through user participation. In the context of China's development, the animation industry's growth necessitates a unique cultural approach. Successful films like "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" integrate Chinese elements and philosophy, reflecting traditional culture and values. This film exemplifies the fusion of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, presenting the idea of fate and the unity of characters in accordance with destiny. Martial arts scenes, rivers, lakes, and dynamic fights showcase innovative audio-visual effects. Despite some design flaws, the film's innovations and desire for innovation mark a significant step in the evolution of Chinese animation art, providing new creative opportunities and inspiring future projects. The film's cultural depth, blending traditional elements with modern trends, appeals to a broad audience, solidifying China's position in the global animation industry and showcasing its potential for innovation and cultural contribution.*

**Keywords:** Visual Design, Film, Digital Products, China, 21st Century.

## 1. Introduction

The development of digital technologies directly affects the progress in the field of design art, and digital technologies are widely used in the creation of virtual product designs. Many effects and expressions inaccessible by traditional methods of creativity and design are becoming available thanks to the development of digitalization. This provides technical support for designers and artists, freeing up their creative thinking and allowing them to embody their artistic pursuits and ideals to a certain extent. The impact of digitalization encompasses the entire process of artistic creation, including concepts, methods, means and expression. Various integrations and interactions of digital technologies allow virtual product design to exhibit new characteristics and aesthetic qualities (Han Jianghong, 2023).

The designer of digital virtual products acts as the main architect of the product and the first aesthetic subject. His influence on product design, research and development is undeniably important (Huang Shenghong, 2023). Personal ideals, creative aspirations and preferences of the designer are directly reflected in the product. Knowledge, aesthetic taste, logic of thinking, artistic achievements and other aspects of the designer are symbolically or metaphorically visible in his works. The chief designer needs to accurately convey his design concepts, transforming the content of the design, such as rhythm, virtual reality and other elements, into an emotionally saturated context. At the same time, it is important to create a sense of immersion for viewers and users, secondary aesthetic subjects, so that they can associate and perceive the product. Due to the expansion of information associated with the advent of the Internet, new directions have appeared in marginal areas of design. Modern users, in a certain sense, can also be considered as design participants, interacting with products, and their perception can influence

the design. The chief designer remains the key figure determining the direction of design, and should strive to combine technology and art, meeting the needs of communication, interaction and emotions.

At the stage of traditional man-made design, designers are limited by materials and processes, which can limit creativity. However, digital technologies provide designers with more opportunities for expression, freeing up their creative thinking.

In digital virtual design, they can reproduce natural objects or create virtual objects, achieving harmony and consistency in expression. The design of digital virtual products covers a variety of forms, from the "materialization" of concepts to the "reification" of real objects in the digital world. Updating software and hardware requires designers to quickly master new methods of self-expression and solving changing tasks. The design content of digital virtual products covers a wide range, from mass data to advanced edge product design topics. Designers can use free resources and general information on the Internet for creativity by mastering information processing methods and software. The special interactivity of digital virtual design allows the audience and users to participate in the process. Subjects and objects can jointly create integral works, while aesthetics becomes more personalized and humane (Jiasheng Jin, 2021). Such changes in design reflect not only technological progress, but also the evolution of designers' interaction with the public and users in the digital age, which can be traced in the context of China's development.

## 2. Development of Design Aesthetics of Chinese Digital Virtual Products

The development of diversity and inclusivity on the Internet

has greatly facilitated the creation of artistic design, leading to the transformation of the medium of existence and the medium of design. Instead of a single linear model, they now demonstrate a trend towards cross-border integration and the use of multimedia. Digital virtual design is not limited to materiality, but strives for digitalization and virtualization, providing new opportunities for expansion beyond material life, such as spiritual relaxation and communication, thereby achieving spiritual aesthetic pleasure. The design aesthetics of Chinese digital virtual products is under active development and innovation. Chinese companies not only strive for functional efficiency, but also create visually attractive, creative and culturally appropriate products. Several key areas of development of this aesthetics can be distinguished:

Many Chinese digital products seek to incorporate traditional elements of Chinese culture into their design. This includes the use of symbols, colors and patterns based on historical and cultural traditions, which adds a unique and local character to the products.

Minimalism and functionality play an important role in modern Chinese digital product design. Many products adhere to the principles of minimalism, presenting concise forms, clean lines and intuitive interfaces. This creates an aesthetic that corresponds to modern trends, where simplicity and practicality merge into a single whole. The futuristic look is another aspect of Chinese digital product design. Some products are focused on creating visually appealing, futuristic images (Jin & S. A. et al., 2023). Modern technologies, animated elements and high-tech forms are used here, which gives the products a modern and innovative look. Innovative color schemes are also becoming a prominent feature of Chinese digital design. Designers are experimenting with color schemes, sometimes including traditional Chinese colors such as red and gold. This not only gives the products character, but also corresponds to cultural associations, making them expressive on the world market. In a digital environment, the aesthetics of virtual product design is undergoing changes from perception to perception and from aesthetic intuition to aesthetic integration. The aesthetic method, in this context, refers to the methods and means of feeling, evaluating and creating beauty. With the development of digitization, the requirements of compliance with developing technologies and the needs of society make their own adjustments to the aesthetics of the design of virtual products.

Each person has their own unique standards for defining beauty, and the perception of aesthetics varies from person to person. The evaluation of beauty depends significantly on personal feelings, and often too much attention is paid to empiricism and stereotypes, which makes it impossible to establish a single standard for the definition of beauty. Much of the aesthetics of art and design in the traditional sense requires distance. The concept of "Distance creates beauty" reflects the idea that a certain distance is required for the full perception of beauty. The aesthetic experience gained in the course of aesthetic life is limited by the subjective aesthetic will of the individual. People perceive the world with their senses, the predominant of which is visual perception. Seeing through one's own eyes is the first step in observing and feeling the world. In this regard, it is important to pay

attention to visual aesthetics when developing new products in order to attract the attention of customers and leave a deep impression. The development of digital media has led to a change in the way beauty is perceived, shifting the emphasis from simple sensory perception to perception. In the initial periods, people focused on visual impressions of films and virtual products. However, perception has now become more complex and involves the coordination of various sensory organs and body systems.

Thus, the Chinese perception of beauty and aesthetics is undergoing changes under the influence of digital technologies, giving new aspects to visual perception and the creation of digital products.

Currently, there is a certain distance between users and digital products. With the development of science, technology and multimedia technologies, image and sound technologies began to combine, forming the audiovisual art of "sound and image in one". However, this remains a single way of perception. With the development of digital and virtual technologies, technologies are combined, providing viewers with a full range of immersive experiences. In the development of digital virtual products, it is important to take into account the perception and experience of the user, capture perceptual information such as time, space and orientation, and connect the audience with the product through autonomous participation and natural interaction.

Aesthetic intuition is the process of aesthetic perception in a state of intuition (Jin & S. A. et al., 2023). It combines immediate aesthetic information with an aesthetic image stored in memory. This process is also known as "aesthetic intuitive understanding". Aesthetic intuition is the perception of a product through aesthetic associations and imagination, comparing and combining the image in front of you with the image in memory based on the aesthetic feelings and understanding of the individual. It emphasizes the thinking abilities and personal feelings of the individual, depending on aesthetic experience and knowledge. Aesthetic unity, which differs from aesthetic intuition, is a more macro - understanding of aesthetics. This is a more advanced form that not only captures the external representations of things and the macroform, but also combines various objects into an organic whole, making the perceptual content emotional and conceptual. In the context of Chinese aesthetics and the development of digital technologies, these concepts acquire new aspects and have an impact on the visual perception and creation of digital products.

Aesthetic changes in the design of virtual products in a digital environment are an inevitable trend, which is a process that design development must go through. In the digital age, computers and the Internet are becoming more common, and digital virtual products are gradually attracting public attention. The design of virtual products is closely related to the technical parameters of digitization. In this digital environment, the subjects of aesthetic activity can actively participate in communication, interact with the online world and learn about it through the Internet and multimedia, while receiving instant aesthetic satisfaction.

Technological innovations inevitably lead to changes in

creative methods, and the development of digital virtual design is closely linked to the rapid development of digital technologies. With the development of technology, people are increasingly accepting digital and electronic products, which leads to the emergence of many alternatives to traditional design. Examples are sculptures created using 3D printing and digital inkjet printing. The expression of design and creative methods become bolder and more active.

In terms of skills, computer software and hardware are becoming more and more suitable for the expression of design, providing ample opportunities for artistic creativity. The development of design today is no longer limited to traditional binary attributes. Bold, open, diverse and inclusive design forms and methods continue to expand the field of design, making virtual, metaphorical, exaggerated and personalized elements important features of future design work.

During the period of traditional man-made design, functional characteristics based on the material basis of design work and novelty in aesthetics have always existed in combination. However, with the advent of digital virtual design, which differs from traditional design in content, medium, form and methods, new requirements for aesthetic standards and forms arise. In the new era, people are striving for instant spiritual entertainment and aesthetic experience, as well as individual entertainment and self-development. The demands for aesthetic experience grow when faced with the digital virtual design of the new age, which generates new aspects of sensual attractiveness and the desire for rationality.

Of course, digital technologies provide their own unique advantages. However, in the global, diverse and ecological context of design, designers should pay attention to the search for the deep meaning and significance of digital virtual design. Design, like other aspects of human culture, should strive for something more meaningful than just satisfying functional needs. Its purpose is not only to provide practical utility, but also to have its own unique meaning and heritage. Design should bring not only physical and mental satisfaction, but also contribute to reflexive growth, awareness of historical mission and a sense of social responsibility. Despite the fact that technological progress gives form and content to design, symbolic meaning and social value should not be lost in impersonal interests. In the new era of digital virtual design, it is important to build an aesthetic orientation and paradigm on traditional aesthetic values. The key question in this context is how best to organize a new aesthetic system and properly direct the development of digital virtual design.

Thus, the general trend indicates the desire of Chinese designers to integrate traditional cultural elements with innovative and modern concepts, creating unique and aesthetically attractive digital virtual products. One of the important trends in the design of Chinese digital products is the integration of traditional elements of Chinese culture. This trend is expressed in the use of symbols, colors and patterns based on historical and cultural traditions, which gives the products a unique and localized character. In modern conditions, Chinese digital products are also distinguished by the principles of minimalism and functionality. The design of the products strives for concise forms, clean lines and an intuitive interface, in line with current trends in this field.

Some products focus on creating visually appealing, futuristic images by experimenting with innovative color schemes, including the use of traditional Chinese colors. This approach allows products to stand out in the global market (Jin et al., 2024). The design of digital virtual products in China is becoming more diverse, including various forms of products. This reflects changes in aesthetic preferences and orientation towards individualization in modern Chinese society.

### 3. Design Characteristics of Storm Rider Clash of the Evils

The animated film "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" is currently considered an outstanding representative of the high level of animation art in mainland China. The work acts as a model for the design of Chinese animated films of the new era, being a pioneer and a source of inspiration for professional designers in this field.

"Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" is an adaptation of the famous comic book "Wind and Clouds" by Hong Kong artist Ma Wing-shin. The process of making the film took five years and included the use of both two-dimensional and three-dimensional production technologies. Despite the strong commercial component, the film continues to enjoy high prestige in mainland China. One of the key characteristics of the film is its outstanding design model, which serves as a shining example for modern Chinese animated works. "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" plays an important role as a pioneer setting new standards in animation design, and serves as an important source of inspiration for the creative animation design community in China. Character design in animated films is closely related to forms and costumes (Xie et al., 2023), giving designers the opportunity to create in accordance with the requirements of the storyline. It is a unique, independent design based on the needs of the script, including artistic elements to highlight or exaggerate character traits, create aesthetic, humorous, mysterious character traits.

Costume design in animated films combines popular animation elements to emphasize the appearance of the character and convey to the audience a metaphor of the external meaning of the character. In "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils", this aspect of the design is distinguished by Chinese features, matching the characteristics of the characters and at the same time having an international impact. The main characters of the film are distinguished by clarity, strong physique and Chinese style, which is an important design element. Despite the lack of a clear stylistic positioning, character modeling shows a variety of characteristics, especially in Nie Feng. These differences are key to conveying the characters' characters and emotional experiences.

Costumes also play an essential role in the design of characters, emphasizing their individuality and putting symbolic meaning into the image. For example, Nie Feng's Chinese dress emphasizes his tenderness and elegance, while Bu Jingyun's cloak expresses a rebellious character. These styles and costumes in "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" correspond to the plot and effectively express the theme of the film. Creativity and the charm of the environment are key

elements for creating home animated characters (Xue et al., 2023). "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" provides inspiration for innovation in this field and demonstrates attractive aspects of character design, fitting into the context of the Chinese animation era.

Through the regular movements and expressions of the characters in "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils", the inner world of the characters is transmitted, creating a relaxed and natural visual experience for the audience. This experience, which does not require deep reflection, represents the greatest advantage of visual perception. Personalized expressions and movements of the characters should be natural, smooth and, to a certain extent, exaggerated, which is typical for many classic animated images. The design of the facial expression in the film demonstrates a high degree of attractiveness. For example, Nie Feng's facial expression changes during his obsession completely convey his distorted psychological states. The second dream, where he saves Nie Feng, is also an expressive moment, emphasizing the emotional states of the characters. The actions in "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" are characterized by individuality and intensity. Swinging swords and jumping are central to the design of the action. The characters exhibit characteristic actions that are quickly recognizable by the audience, providing a quick understanding of the plot. This approach allows the use of animated characters to convey and simulate human expressions and action characteristics, representing an important stage in the development of animation design.

Thus, the design of expressions and actions in "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" testifies to bold and innovative steps in Chinese animation that go beyond the traditional limitations of "expression hardening". This approach not only highlights the evolution of the visual language of Chinese animation, but also becomes an important source of inspiration for future developments in the field of animation design.

The design of the actions in "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" is a high-quality animation experience, not inferior to many Japanese and European animated blockbusters. The production of the film included the use of the movements of martial artists such as Bruce Lee, Yuen Wu-Ping and Donnie Yen, giving the details uniqueness and realism. Special attention was paid to manual storyboarding, which added authenticity to martial arts, and also created impressive scenes of combat duels (Yao et al., 2023). The film focuses on martial arts, where each movement is designed using elements of light kung fu, kicks and boxing skills. These movements emphasize grace and strength, creating a visual perception comparable to the movements of wind and clouds. However, despite the splendor of the production, the fighting scenes also carry deep symbolic meanings, reflecting the temperament of Hong Kong martial arts films of the 1980s.

The weapons and instruments in the film, such as magic swords and pianos, are unique designs integrated into martial arts, which adds a fantasy element to the atmosphere. It also highlights not only technological advances in animation creation, but also the national identity of Chinese martial arts. "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" not only demonstrates impressive technical capabilities in the field of animation, but also successfully embodies the audience's dream of martial

arts, combining advanced technologies and national cultural specifics.

The images in the animated film "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" attract attention with their exquisite beauty and harmonious combination of action with the Chinese landscape. The film successfully integrates real and fabulous elements, creating an atmosphere rich in emotions, tenderness and grace. The heroic poses of the characters of Nie Feng and Bu Jingyun standing on the top of the mountain not only embody the grandeur and sublimity of Chinese landscapes, but also embody a thoughtful and fabulous aesthetic, similar to the beautiful figure of landscape painting. In the battle between Wu Ming and Ao Jue at the top of the mountain, the film uses the lake as a dramatic element. The battle scenes are accompanied by the melodious sound of the piano, creating a visually and sonically impressive picture. Even in moments of mortal combat, the viewer is transported to the shores of the lake, where the waves and sounds of water become a metaphor for sharpened intentions and tension.

"Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" also includes purely aesthetic scenes depicting beauties in vintage costumes, illuminated by flashlights, and a small boat floating on a Chinese landscape. These colorful and tender moments balance the brutal fight scenes and give the film a deep aesthetic layer. Scenes inspired by Chinese landscape painting add authenticity to the film, reflecting the beauty of cultural heritage (Zhang & Chen, 2020). Overall, "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" successfully combines dynamic action with beautiful graphics, creating a unique cinematic work that will undoubtedly contribute to the innovation of Chinese animation design.

The animated film "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" is an adaptation of the famous comic book, which itself already has a fantastic atmosphere. The film's design aims to highlight a unique fantasy world inherited from the source material. Chinese animation design traditionally lacked the element of "fantasy", and in this film the designers sought to correct this shortcoming.

In the final scenes of the film, where Bu Jingyun, Zi Ning and other characters go to Penglai Island, a unique two-dimensional effect is noticeable, which gives the audience an aesthetic pleasure similar to the feeling of Chinese ink painting. This fantastic world, accessible only in the Chinese animation context, creates a sense of something fabulous and emphasizes the aesthetics of comics. Nie Feng, who is under the influence of the Qilin Demon, is an even stranger image that adds fantasy elements to the film. The style of "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" may differ from American commercial cartoons and works by Hayao Miyazaki, but it also shares a common feature — the creation of a unique fantasy world. The characteristic features of the characters, changes in perspective and details of the setting give the opportunity to look into the window of the fantasy world, adding fantasy elements to the appearance of the characters. Elements such as Bu Jingyun's special physique and the numerology of the Clay Bodhisattva reveal a wealth of imagination. The film is a martial arts epic with many characters, leaving space for the imagination of the audience. The animated film "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" has rich

storylines, full of vitality and brilliant dots. Even though the film may be immature, its energy and appeal are felt everywhere. The structural layout of the plot includes elements such as characters, thoughts, goals, contradictions, turn, climax and enlightenment. This basic layout provides the transmission of the vicissitudes of a strong plot with a vivid story.

Color plays a significant and legendary role in the film, giving it a unique look. The structure can be tightly distributed to ensure concentration and tension. An important part of the structure is a logical and convincing ending that reflects the character of the character and reveals the theme of the work. The storylines of "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" include various twists, such as the transformation of Nie Feng into a demon, the separation of Feng and Yun after the battle, the loss of Bu Jingyun's memory and her submission to Zi Ning, as well as Feng's thirst for revenge and his becoming a demon again. These complex plots form a large structure that requires careful separation and design of each part of the story. Emotional impact and turning points in the plot are also important elements. With their help, the power of history is emphasized. The detailed design and attention to detail, including "love", add appeal to the story. Bright details, charming characters and a wonderful plot create a full-fledged and mature work with deep meaning. The plot basis of "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" focuses on heroism, reflecting the experience of the characters and a group of martial arts heroes. Despite the clear basis, the plot can get a little confused due to the hints based on the base frame. However, the principles of frame construction used in the story are of interest to other animation story designers.

#### 4. Conclusion

As the animation industry becomes increasingly important in the development of the national economy, the progress of animation art design in China in the face of fierce competition requires a unique cultural approach. Compared to the rich animation industry in Europe and the USA, as well as in Japan with its outstanding animation design and craftsmen, the cultural atmosphere of China is a unique advantage.

To succeed in a competitive environment, China must skillfully use the experience of animation design from other countries, such as Europe, the United States, Japan and South Korea, in order to create works that combine the appeal of traditional Chinese culture and unique features of Chinese identity. The film "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" successfully integrates Chinese elements and origins into its plots, reflecting the vivid ideological system of Chinese martial arts. He also emphasizes the unification of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. For example, the film expresses a strong idea of "fate", and Buddhism is represented through the image of a Clay Bodhisattva who predicts the fate of the character.

The symbolism of wind and stone connected by blood, as well as the image of mutual reinforcement and restraint of the two characters in the film, emphasize the predestination and importance of observing the path of fate. These elements are deeply rooted in the cultural and philosophical aspects of China. China has the potential to take its place in the global

animation industry, standing out due to its unique cultural taste and introducing elements of traditional Chinese culture into animated works. In the movie "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils", a powerful Umin technique is highlighted, which consists in the fact that the energy of the sword retains its shape, and the sound of the piano and waves of water become an unusual type of weapon. These elements interact, complementing and restraining each other, which reflects the influence of Taoist ideas. The main character, going to the paradise island of Penglai, also symbolizes the spirit of Taoist thought. The film features the ideology of Confucianism through the heroic behavior of Umin and Fengshi, who take responsibility for the world. This moment becomes the embodiment of Confucian values. Thanks to the free adaptation in the film, you can also notice the presence of the cultural atmosphere of modern people. An example is the competition scene between Duanlang and Umin, in which the phrase sounds: "The weak eat the strong, the stronger win, the stronger win. It was given." This phrase emphasizes the spirit of Chinese culture and enriches the atmosphere of the film. Animated films serve as an excellent means of demonstrating the potential of creating animation in China. They undoubtedly bring new ideas and inspiration for future domestic animation projects, contributing to the development and dissemination of cultural aspects in the world of animation.

"Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" represents a deviation from the previous models of animation design in the domestic context. The film stands out for its unique features in the plot, character design, cultural background and scene design, striving to overcome previous standards characterized by singularity and conservatism. Unlike previous animated films, "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" aims for a breakthrough, trying to overcome the limitations of previous animated action designs. The film offers viewers exciting martial arts scenes with swords, rivers and lakes, as well as impressive audiovisual effects.

Despite the presence of some design flaws, the innovations of "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" are definitely noticeable and point to a new path in the future of animation art, inspiring future Chinese animation projects.

Thus, the design characteristics of "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" not only reflected the desire for innovation in the Chinese animation industry, but also provided unique elements that can inspire future projects and enrich the cultural heritage of China in the context of animation art. Despite the presence of some design flaws, the design features of "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" turn out to be key in creating an amazing visual experience and introducing innovations to the animation art of China.

The film notes the desire to overcome previous standards, manifested in various aspects: from the plot and character design to the cultural background and the design of scenes. "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" successfully presents stunning martial arts scenes that include rivers, lakes and dynamic fights, and also brings new audio-visual effects to the animation.

Due to its innovativeness and desire for innovation, the film

becomes an important stage in the development of animation art in China, providing new opportunities for future creative approaches and inspiring subsequent projects in the domestic animation industry. These design characteristics are important for understanding how "Storm Rider Clash of the Evils" differs from previous Chinese animated films and what innovative elements it brings to the industry. Despite some design flaws, these innovations can become a starting point for the future development of domestic animation design.

One of the key characteristics of the film is the desire to break through and move away from previous stereotypes. This is evident in bold animation techniques, pronounced martial arts scenes and unique character designs. The starting point for creating new storylines and characters in the context of Chinese culture becomes an important step towards a wider audience and strengthening the position of the Chinese animation industry on the world stage. The cultural atmosphere created by the film is a unique combination of traditional Chinese elements and modern trends. The integration of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism into the plot and images adds depth and complexity, which makes the film interesting for both Chinese and global audiences.

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