

The redesign of Suzhou embroidery patterns based on the perspective of artistic characteristics: application in today's society

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Abstract

This qualitative research delves into the intricate world of Suzhou embroidery, focusing on its historical and cultural evolution, artistic nuances, and contemporary reinterpretation. The study is structured around three primary objectives: firstly, to explore the historical and cultural background shaping Suzhou embroidery and its patterns; secondly, to analyze the artistic attributes of Suzhou embroidery motifs, encompassing technical features, expressive content, modeling methods, color schemes, and compositional elements; and thirdly, to creatively redesign Suzhou embroidery patterns, infusing them with modern relevance while retaining their artistic essence.

The research methodology involves two distinct groups: the first, a comprehensive information research group, focuses on various finished Suzhou embroidery products, particularly those from Zhenhu Street in Suzhou. The second group centers on design analysis, data collection, and satisfaction assessment, involving diverse participants, including embroidery manufacturers,

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shop owners, designers, artisans, cultural enthusiasts, local residents, and tourists in Zhenhu. Purposive sampling was employed to select these groups, with questionnaires as the primary data collection tool.

Key findings reveal that Suzhou embroidery, one of the Four Great Embroideries of China, not only shares common artistic threads with general embroidery art but also boasts a distinctive style born from generations of innovation and adherence to tradition. Celebrated for its rich history, diverse techniques, elegant colors, and exquisite craftsmanship, Suzhou embroidery has adapted to historical shifts, demonstrating remarkable resilience and vitality. The study meticulously examines the technical, expressive, modeling, color, and compositional aspects of Suzhou embroidery, uncovering its artistic characteristics and cultural depth.

The research culminates in the design of ten unique Suzhou embroidery patterns. These patterns were evaluated through satisfaction surveys targeting the groups above. The results indicated a high level of appreciation, with pattern 4 achieving the highest average satisfaction score of 4.5, followed by patterns 9 and 8, scoring 4.12 and 4.02, respectively. Each pattern embodies the artistic traits and traditional cultural significance intrinsic to Suzhou embroidery, highlighting the successful fusion of historical artistry with contemporary design.

Keywords: Redesign, Suzhou embroidery culture, Suzhou embroidery patterns, Artistic characteristics, motifs, floral design

Introduction

As a traditional handicraft product of Suzhou, Suzhou embroidery carries the cultural identity of the people of the Wu region, demonstrating their national style, attitude to the world, ideology, and aesthetic habits. As a traditional handicraft, Suzhou embroidery is both aesthetic and practical, and as

a visual symbol, Suzhou embroidery patterns have a rich connotation and meaning. Secondly, Suzhou embroidery's exquisite craftsmanship and rich and daring stitching techniques are the result of the excellent creativity and aesthetic taste of the traditional artisans of China, and learning from Suzhou embroidery's spirit and style of integration and innovation will be of great benefit to the progress and development of the traditional arts and crafts. It is, therefore, essential to actively study the artistic characteristics of Suzhou embroidery to promote its cultural and artistic value.

Research Objectives

1) to study the history and cultural background of the development of Suzhou embroidery and Suzhou embroidery patterns

2) to analyze the artistic characteristics of Suzhou embroidery motifs (technical characteristics, expressive content, modeling methods, color characteristics, compositional features)

3) To create the redesign of Suzhou embroidery patterns based on the perspective of artistic characteristics: application in today's society

Literature Review

Lu Jing's "A Brief Discussion on the Characteristics and Cultural Connotation of Suzhou Embroidery" (Tian Gong, 2019:41) explains the stitching, colors, the difference between hand-made and machine embroidery, and the cultural connotation of Suzhou embroidery; Fu Hanlu's "On the Integration of Suzhou Embroidery Technique and Modern Jewelry Design" (Tian Gong, 2022:16-17) integrates tradition into life through the integration of Suzhou embroidery art with jewelry and furniture ornaments; Zhang Xiaoying's "An Analysis of the Characteristics of Suzhou Embroidery Art" (Southeast Culture, 2000:77-79) describes the long history of Suzhou embroidery, and then gives a specific

account of Suzhou embroidery through particular works. (Zhang Xiaoying, 2000:77-79) describes the long history of Suzhou embroidery and then uses specific Suzhou embroidery works to illustrate the richness and variety of stitches and subjects and the importance of embroidery thread. (Silk, 2019: 71-76) analyses the influence of geography, humanities, and economy on the artistic characteristics of embroidery by comparing the embroidery of the two places, enriching the perspective of the study of artistic characteristics

Scope of Research

This research is qualitative. That was conducted within the following scope:

Population and Sample Group

The population and samples used in this research are divided into two groups:

(1) the information research group of the Suzhou embroidery pattern patterns, i.e., for all types of finished Suzhou embroidery patterns, mainly for all kinds of finished Suzhou embroidery products in Zhenhu Street, Suzhou

(2) the design analysis data and satisfaction assessment group for embroidery manufacturers, embroidery product shop owners, sales workers of embroidery, embroidery designers, embroidery maids, Suzhou embroidery culture enthusiasts, Zhenhu locals, and tourists.

Area: The town of Zhenhu in Suzhou

Research Methodology

This research conducts the methodology Research follows by;

1) Research the history of Suzhou embroidery craftsmanship in the town of Zhenhu, Suzhou, and conduct market research on Zhenhu

2) Research the materials, tools, and processes required to produce Suzhou embroidery artwork. This process used the documentary analysis method.

- 3) Research and collation of typical patterns and symbolism of Suzhou embroidery. This process used the inductive method of information.
- 4) Drafting concepts and developing design principles
- 5) Extracting typical patterns and classic colors and redesigning them
- 6) Applying the redesigned embroidery motifs to the objects
- 7) Market questionnaire and market analysis of the reapplied works in Suzhou embroidery
- 8) Selection of suitable redesigned products

Research Framework

Within this research framework, the main object of study is redesigning Suzhou embroidery patterns based on the perspective of artistic characteristics and their application in today's society. The framework of the research is shown below.

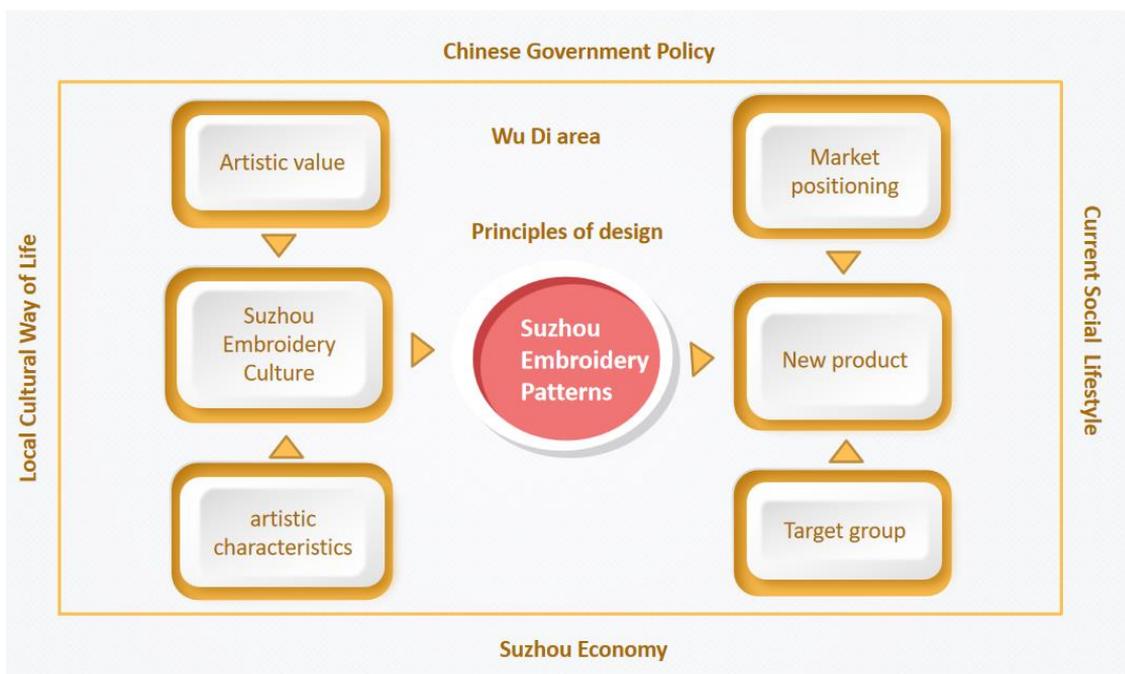


Figure 1 Research Framework

Definitions of Specific Terms

Redesign is a way to recreate something familiar and present it differently to achieve another presentation and value.

Suzhou embroidery is an embroidery pattern using the Suzhou embroidery stitch in the Wu region, with Suzhou's human and artistic characteristics.

Artistic characteristics in this text refer to studying Suzhou embroidery motifs' symbolic, aesthetic, and subjective aspects. In this article, Figurative refers to the degree to which the concrete and vivid elements of Suzhou embroidery achieve a certain social consciousness, a social tendency. Aestheticists are interested in reason and emotion, the subjective and objective perceptions of embroidery. Subjectivity refers to the embroidery's role, status, and identity in its development. This article relates to the technical characteristics, expressive content, modeling methods, color, and compositional characteristics of Suzhou embroidery patterns.

Research Results

this research, the results can be summarized according to the research objectives in 3 items as follows:

Research Objective No. 1 The history and cultural background of the development of Suzhou embroidery and Suzhou embroidery patterns

The history of Suzhou embroidery

Research Objective No. 2 The artistic characteristics of Suzhou embroidery motifs (technical characteristics, expressive content, modeling methods, color characteristics, compositional features)

Research Objective No. 3 The Redesign of Suzhou Embroidery patterns based on the Perspective of artistic Characteristics: application in Today's Society

Technical characteristics

wide variety of stitches

The production of Suzhou embroidery works reflects a variety of needlework; it is the application of this wide variety of needlework, the achievement of its works more exquisite and loved by everyone; it also promotes the development of Suzhou embroidery culture. Suzhou embroidery is very rich in needlework. Shen Shou summarised eighteen types of needlework in his "Xue Northeastern Embroidery Compendium." Later on, after continuous summarization and development, he formed nine categories of flat embroidery, striped embroidery, point embroidery, braided embroidery, net embroidery, yarn embroidery, messy embroidery, variant embroidery, and auxiliary stitches, with a total of more than forty types of needlework.

Needlework is the method and form of organizing embroidery threads through embroidery needles, an essential part of Suzhou embroidery and the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the ancient sages engaged in Suzhou embroidery. Each needle has a unique visual effect due to its specific rules of line organization. Therefore, needlework has become an essential part of the artistic charm of Suzhou embroidery. For example, when embroidering, it is emphasized that the use of flat needles to connect the front and back of the needle evenly in batches, the direction of the silk threads remains unchanged, the stitches are neat, and the lines form a straightforward and even hierarchy, which can show the effect of color haloing and rich decoration. Suzhou embroidery emphasizes silk lining in the embroidery process, referring to the direction of the arrangement of embroidery threads. Embroidery mainly relies on the line to express the artistic effect; the use of natural silk thread embroidery works of luster and painting dyes can not be compared to the

different directions of the line will form an entirely different luster effect, so the process of embroidery need to be constantly adjusted in the direction of the needle to change the effect of the embroidery, which for the expression of the object's twists and turns, concave and convex, the yin and yang to the back plays a vital role.

Expressive Content

Deep and varied subject matter

Regarding content, most traditional Suzhou embroidery subjects originate from life. They are highly personal, an expression of the thoughts, feelings, and aesthetics of the people of Wu, reflecting the cultural style and artistic achievements of the historical era in which the creator worked. In ancient China, women often used embroidery to express their thoughts and emotions. Lotus bags, fans, and incense pouches were all used to express their feelings.

Suzhou embroidery has a wide variety of subjects, generally divided into six categories: plants, animals, pavilions and pavilions, characters, and geometric patterns; plant motifs are the most common Suzhou embroidery subjects, with flowers and plants making up the vast majority, of which lotus, peony, peony, bamboo, orchids, and peach blossoms are widely used; the use of tree motifs is more exotic and gives a sense of freshness; butterflies, dragonflies, tigers, elephants, and Animals such as butterflies, dragonflies, tigers, elephants and bats, birds such as cranes, swallows and peacocks, and fish all belong to the animal category, in addition to animal motifs from myths and legends, such as phoenixes, dragons and unicorns, which usually have an excellent blessing and auspicious meaning. The landscape category is dominated by landscape paintings, which are mainly painted with the calligraphy and painting works of famous painters, and the effect of their brushwork is reproduced through embroidery to express the ink and water meaning of Chinese painting; figure

subjects are mostly artistic paintings, and using the work directly in embroidery is an expression of appreciation of famous paintings; abstract motifs also include classical patterns, geometric lines, curves, graffiti, etc. An excellent Suzhou embroidery often achieves an artistic effect that cannot be achieved by painting, enhancing the creative impact of the original painting and making the embroidery and painting perfectly unified.

modeling methods

1 Simplify

mainly refers to simplifying the pattern, removing the pattern's too cumbersome decorative details, to achieve more in line with the modern sense of simplicity and generosity. However, the combination of simplification referred to in this paper is to retain the basic skeleton of the pattern, simplify the original complexity of the level, ensure the smoothness and integrity of the contour, the pattern for a certain amount of deformation and abstraction, to retain its traditional cultural connotations and meanings remain unchanged, thus highlighting the effect of the pattern of the focus of the local modeling.

2 Increase the elements:

Choose the typical elements on the original pattern to re-combine to form a new figure. Suzhou embroidery commonly uses geometric patterns such as the ten thousand character pattern, back to the pattern, thunder pattern, water wave pattern, etc., to carry out the increase in elements; the growth in elements makes the graphics into a new graphic, which may be used to strengthen the characteristics of the allegory is supported to make the main body more prominent, the thinking of the more clear, so that the form is more suitable for the content of the requirements; may also be weakened by the part of the pattern caused by some of the parts of the omissible.

3 Decomposition and conversion

the graphic treatment of ethnicity to create, by decomposition and transformation into a new form. Using various forms of decomposition methods of ethnic graphics for refinement to create a new ethnic graphic element, and then in various forms, the components of these ethnic graphics into the new visual production, forming new graphic elements.

color characteristics, compositional features

Fresh and light-colored character

In many works of folk art, the work creates a perfect artistic effect through a clever combination of form and color. Form and color are essential tools in works of folk art. Suzhou embroidery has its characteristics in its choice of color. Traditional Suzhou embroidery art appreciation works are primarily imitations of paintings, permeated with the spiritual connotations of literary writers, with an elegant artistic taste and relatively muted and elegant colors. Traditional Suzhou embroidery, whether for practical decoration or artistic appreciation, uses flat embroidery as the primary method of embroidery, with relatively simple color expression. Simple means that each color is used in a regular patchwork according to the shape of the picture, expressing the shape of the dots, lines, and surface patterns, matching each other to form its embroidery style.

The emergence of messy needle embroidery has opened up a broader scope for color expression in Suzhou embroidery. The color layers of sloppy needle embroidery are much richer than those of traditional embroidery. Due to the sheen of the threads, the texture of the embroidery lines is chaotic and orderly, and when the light and angle of the embroidery change, its visual effect also changes subtly. The visual variation of the empty blends gives rise to a more colorful artistic expression than oil painting, forming a color style unique to the art of Suzhou embroidery.

Suzhou embroidery is very rich in color. The naked eye can distinguish about a dozen colors, broken into over a hundred. The colors of silk used in Suzhou embroidery are well over a hundred if not thousands. Moreover, to make Suzhou embroidery works full of color and harmonious, each color line has multiple layers of color in different shades. This richness of color provides the basis for the graphic presentation of Suzhou embroidery. It makes Suzhou embroidery expressive, harmonious, and delicate, with natural transitions and a more peaceful and realistic look. The beautiful and elegant nature of Suzhou embroidery makes it so that, even with such a wealth of color, magnificent colors are not usually chosen as the main or base color. Even when large blocks of vibrant color are to be shown due to the needs of the work, embroidery artists will avoid the tackiness resulting from overly flamboyant colors by adjusting the stitching and color (Zhang Xiaoying, 2000:79-79). Suzhou embroidery uses fresh, light, subtle, and harmonious colors, pursuing slight variations in the colors used and focusing on a pleasant transition of colors, from light to dark or deep to light, with a gentle gradation process, thus creating a natural and vivid visual effect.



Figure 2 Gradation to create a natural and vivid visual effect.

Suzhou embroidery is rich in form, with different shapes representing different symbolic meanings. Most of the auspicious motifs in Suzhou embroidery are symbolic, embodying good meanings using borrowings, harmonies, metaphors, and pictograms. For example, the bamboo, orchid, and cicada represent the noble, virtuous, indifferent, upright, and unyielding character of the literati; the bat, longevity character, and longevity peach are used to pray for longevity and well-being; the peony represents wealth and success, nobility and elegance, prosperity and happiness; the lotus represents purity, freshness and elegance, and the unpretentiousness of life. , freshness and elegance, unconventional and holy elegance; the butterfly represents sweet love and marriage; the phoenix and dragon represent authority and dignity, auspicious symbols of light, happiness, and freedom (Gaja, 2014: 40).

The auspicious motifs on folk embroidery patterns are thus a second form of language, a concrete manifestation of the symbolic culture of traditional

Chinese folklore. They can reflect a more profound cultural connotation than verbal expression. These motifs carry the customs and culture of the region and the local people and express people's expectations for the future and the pursuit of a better life.



Figure 3 Examples of shapes and motifs of Suzhou embroidery

Research Objective No. 3 To create the redesign of Suzhou embroidery patterns based on the perspective of artistic characteristics: application in today's society.

This paper focuses on the secondary design of Suzhou embroidery pattern motifs and examines the secondary design by exploring the artistic characteristics of Suzhou embroidery pattern motifs. Through the study of Suzhou embroidery motifs, the research on the attributes of Suzhou embroidery motifs, their expressions, modeling methods, colors, and compositions, the research is used to extract materials that can be used for a redesign. The design is based on the analysis of the shape and characteristics of Suzhou embroidery and the fieldwork questionnaire.

By extracting, deforming, and combining the elements of typical Suzhou embroidery patterns, the patterns of Suzhou embroidery are effectively fused with the symbolism of the subject matter to make new patterns and form new symbolism and styles, Suzhou embroidery patterns, whether used on silk scarves, pillows or picture frames, match the environment and set off a distinctive aesthetic and cultural flavor that works well in today's society.

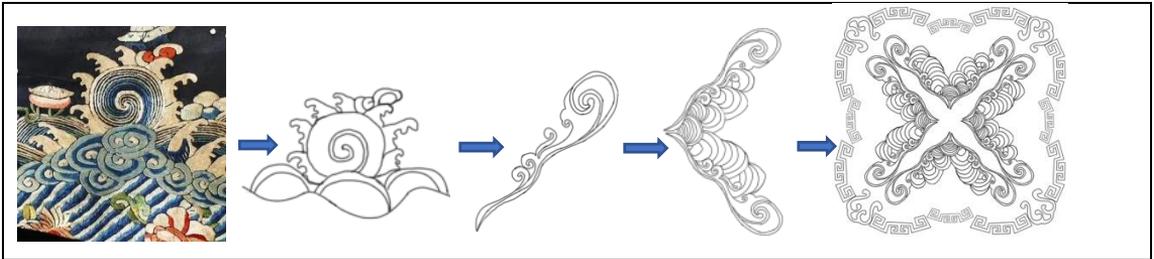


Figure 4 Design Process

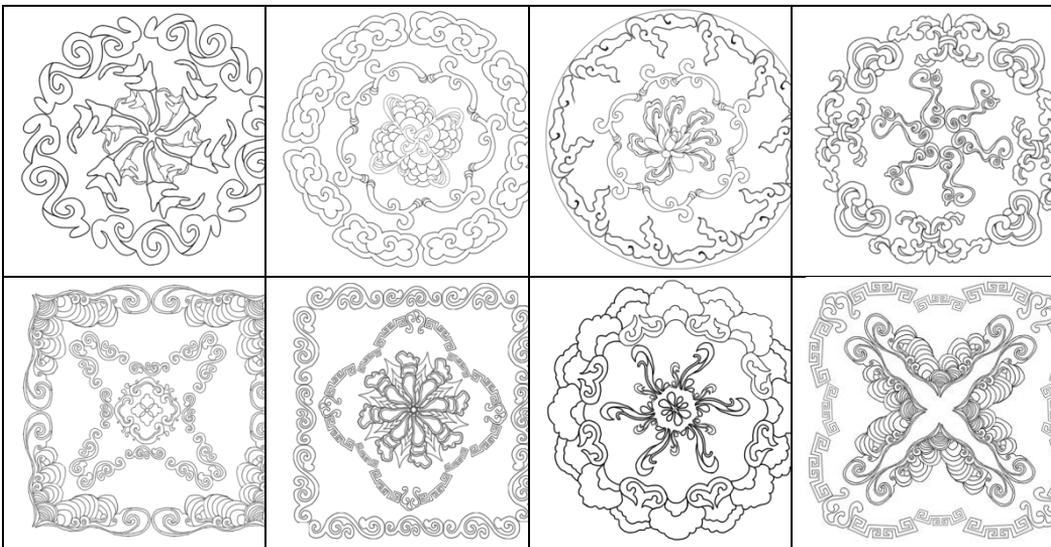


Figure 5 Pattern stitch



Figure 6 Application of Suzhou Embroidery Patterns

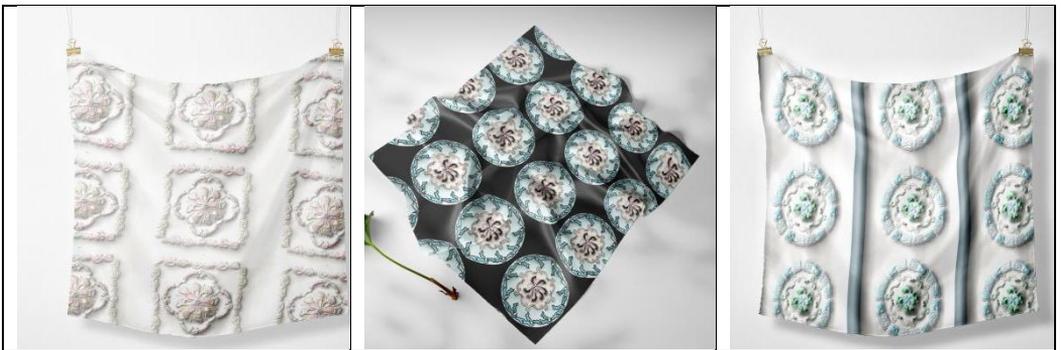


Figure 7 Application of Suzhou Embroidery Patterns



Figure 8 Environmental rendering results



Figure 9 Environmental rendering results

Discussion

This paper focuses on the artistic characteristics of Suzhou embroidery in terms of its color, subject matter, and embroidery characteristics. The Wu culture has influenced the art of Suzhou embroidery throughout its long history. It has naturally incorporated the characteristics of the culture, eventually giving birth to a style of 'refinement, delicacy, elegance, and cleanliness,' the artistic beauty of which is reflected in the stitching techniques, embroidery work, and subject matter. In addition, Suzhou embroidery patterns contain a wealth of social and cultural information and national aesthetic sentiments, and the artistic values and cultural connotations they embody are worth experiencing and exploring.

Research recommendations

Recommendations for academics

This article focuses on the graphic patterns of Suzhou embroidery, but the richness of the subject matter is not perfect. Compared to other types of minority embroidery, not much research has been done on Suzhou embroidery patterns, especially on the color aspects of Suzhou embroidery, which have rarely been studied in great depth but mostly in short, superficial analyses. In addition, the author's research has revealed that the study of color in realistic embroidery of figures is an area in which few scholars have ventured, and it is hoped that some scholars will explore this area in the future.

Recommendations for local government and local people

For the business operators of embroidery, there is a lack of certain funds in the medium- and long-term investment in redevelopment beyond the investment in maintaining the operation of orders. The government should increase its financial investment in embroidery enterprises, especially in research and development and innovation, to help promote the local art and

embroidery industry. An excellent way to do this would be for the government education department to offer specialized courses related to Suzhou embroidery in colleges or vocational and technical institutes. Universities should use their modern teaching resources and teams of scholars to produce unique teaching materials and teaching videos on Suzhou embroidery. Master embroiderers with profound theoretical knowledge and exquisite skills should be hired to teach students the skills and creative courses in Suzhou embroidery.

For local people, Suzhou embroidery is a regional cultural treasure, and it is hoped that more local people will join in creating Suzhou embroidery art or engage in Suzhou embroidery-related industries. Local Suzhou embroidery workers who create Suzhou embroidery works must be conscious of not infringing others' copyrights. On the other hand, they need to make more and more original works themselves. For sellers of Suzhou embroidery products, it is essential to resist shoddy, not to mention substandard, products to leave a good impression of the city and a good sense of Suzhou embroidery experience for buyers and visitors.

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