

# BLENDING AND TRANSLATION: RESEARCH ON AND PRACTICE OF LACQUER WERE CREATIVE PRODUCTS

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## Abstract

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The rich historical usage of lacquer in China and the enduring practice of Oriental pottery have converged to pioneer an inventive trajectory for safeguarding traditional crafts. The research aimed to recognize cultural essences in lacquer pottery products, enhance their contemporary design value through systematic data collection on art techniques and interpretation, and to elevate the aesthetics of Chinese teapots. This study delved into the realm of lacquer-pottery creative products, refining creative paths through explorations of various teapot typologies. By dissecting the aesthetics of Chinese teapots and merging them with the prowess of lacquer pottery craftsmanship, this research offered profound insights that propelled the modern evolution of traditional craft design.

The current study employed a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, and the interview was conducted with 30 participants. A comparison of the lacquer pottery cultural creative product design with two similar products validated the feasibility of the teapot cultural creative design. The study found that: 1) accurately incorporating design elements from the aesthetic qualities of lacquer pottery relics into lacquerware products realizes the translation of cultural genes in contemporary times. 2) The innovative combination of lacquerware and pottery craftsmanship alters the design process of creative products and creates innovative lacquer pottery products. 3) The feasibility of the design of the lacquer pottery teaware series of Chinese landscape-themed cultural and creative products is analyzed through the case study of a teapot. This study aims to inspire future designers and contribute to the continuous innovative development of lacquer pottery products.

**Keywords:** Lacquer pottery, Translation, Design evaluation

## Introduction

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The two traditional crafts, lacquer and ceramics, are the link between human beings in passing on history and culture and have a long history in East Asian culture. In the long history of lacquer ceramics, form, structure, selection of materials, and style of craft design have formed a unique phenomenon to promote joint development - "interaction." During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Jizhou kiln porcelain workers added wood leaf applique based on black glaze. They hooked red mother and child flowers, lacking flowers (painted) decorative process of mutual reference (Li, 2020). Fixed vessel patterns style explains the popular forms and diverse geometric decorations of carved lacquer in the Song Dynasty (Lee, 1972). Therefore, the essence of history and the tension of material expression from traditional lacquer and ceramics are carried out to deduce the possibility of interaction between the two crafts. The wisdom of ancient artisans is analyzed in depth to understand the spirit of traditional culture.

Modern lacquer pottery highlights the national cultural heritage by integrating new concepts and illustrates works with unique national, regional, and contemporary characteristics. The rich colors of lacquer ware in the design of home accessories and ceramic decorative techniques bring a unique artistic effect (Jiang, 2016). In Japan, the restoration of porcelain artifacts uses the method of gold repair; bonding makes gold powder decoration added on lacquer, pasting broken porcelain artifacts together to form a unique sense of aesthetics, lacquer attached to the abstract modern art placenta, shaping the natural imagery unique to modern Asia, and lacquer craftsmanship in ceramic restoration to enhance the value of the contemporary art of the ancient porcelain debris (Zhong, 2016). It plays a positive role in passing on the cultural value of the artifacts. Thai Artwork Kammalor Pattern (Lacquerware)

technique of inlaying materials on the work using materials from fish bones, crab shells, and seashells, as well as the Rakuyaki technique (Rakuyaki Art) of mixing ceramic products using the Kim Jee Fusion technique were presented in the form of a mixed-media creation (Pahukan, 2023).

Tea culture is long and rich, and modernizing ancient tea utensils has become a contemporary cultural creative product design. In other words, the market values such lacquer pottery as a unique means of cultural creative design expression. Through the inheritance of traditional culture, creative design, product development, and the tea culture movement, lacquer pottery can play the cultural industry's unique charm and promote the prosperity of the cultural industry (Liu, 2020). Designers try to reflect the elements of tea in tea culture product design to meet the needs of modern life.

## Objectives

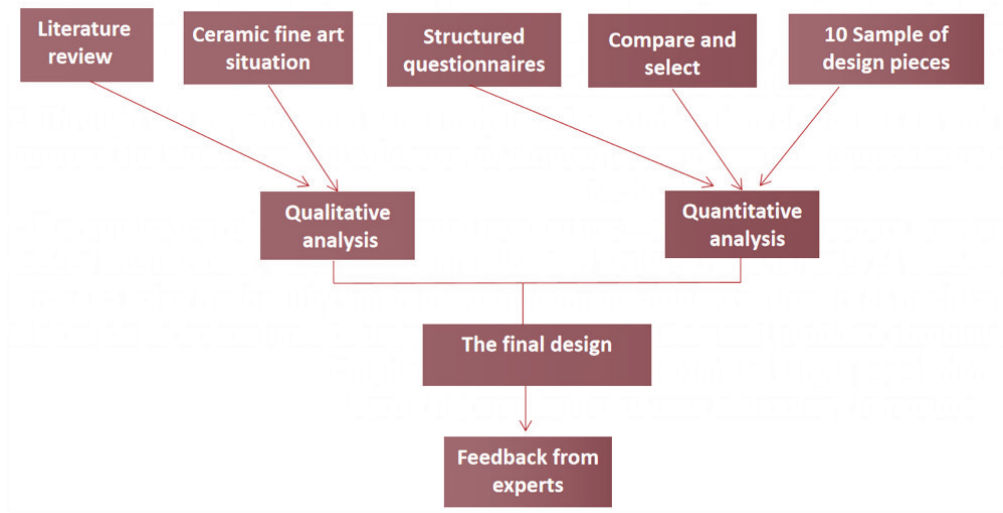
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1. To sort out the cultural essence within the blend of lacquer and pottery, capturing their aesthetic qualities in a contemporary context, emphasizing its design value.
2. To explore the synergy of lacquer and pottery materials and techniques to create pioneering lacquer pottery products by seamlessly merging their design elements.
3. Systematic research on the art of Chinese teapots to enhance the recognition of Chinese tea culture worldwide.

## Methods

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This study combines qualitative and quantitative methods to address the research questions in designing and practicing lacquerware creative products (Fig 1). The specific methods are as follows:



**Figure 1** Research method

## 1. Qualitative research in the literature section.

1.1 Survey in detail of the characteristics of lacquer artifacts based on existing historical materials, particularly focusing on the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), sourced from The Forbidden City Museum of China.

1.2 Analyze the cultural characteristics of the fusion of lacquer and ceramics, with a case study of Qing Dynasty teapots drawn from various academic resources.

1.3 Examine the aesthetic qualities of lacquer and ceramic relics in the contemporary translation of their design value, with data sourced from contemporary art books and design exhibitions, especially those that featured Chinese or Asian art.

## 2. Pre-survey for product design

2.1 Conduct an on-site questionnaire survey at Creative Parks in Nanchang City, Jiangxi Province, with a random sample of people of different ages, educational backgrounds, and occupations. A total of 181 valid questionnaires were collected, including customer information.

2.2 Analyze the feedback from the survey results to identify issues with the product. The data information results were used as a guide for the design program.

### **3. Product design stage of creative analysis**

3.1 Define the product design theme, figure into the aesthetic symbols in the creative product design, and explore the source of creativity.

3.2 Creative product design process, search for modeling elements from Chinese landscape painting graphics, and gradually improve the design scheme.

3.3 10 samples of design pieces. Take the tea set design practice as the sample to study the relevant literature to compare it and carry out the creative design analysis of lacquer pottery products.

### **4. Evaluation and Feedback of Design Expert**

4.1 Convene 30 experimenters, distributed questionnaires, and interviewed 5 industry experts. Additionally, 10 related designers and 15 design students were assigned to evaluate the product design and analyze the data to determine the best design.

4.2 Evaluate the satisfaction of consumers and experts regarding product design. The evaluation mean values of the three design options were organized through statistical experiments using a 5-level scoring satisfaction assessment table.

## **Research Result**

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### **1. Cultural integration of lacquer and ceramics**

The fusion of modern ceramics and the local lacquer culture needed to retain the original decorative lacquer while utilizing the ceramic body's plastic function for innovation and development. This aimed to shape a more

practical type of product and improve the quality of life. The combination of ceramic craft and lacquer craft represented the grafting of aesthetics from different crafts. Lacquer and ceramics were the most original materials of nature. Whether in the process of artistic creation or consumer use, they easily engendered a sense of connection between people.

In art history and symbolism, lacquer ceramics had to carry the same cultural genes. They shared a common language of artistic expression, making their art exhibitions highly valuable for collectors. Lacquer exuded a sense of calmness with its heavy and elegant appearance, while ceramics reflected the simplicity of nature (Table 1).

**Table 1** Comparison of lacquer and ceramic features

	Lacquer	Ceramics
Cultural history	It has a long history in East Asia and was widely used in courts, nobles, and temples.	With a long history across the globe, each region has its unique ceramic traditions and styles.
Artistic status	The production process was more complicated, required superb skills, and was regarded as high-level art.	Widely recognized as a high art form, ceramic art was more widely used among different social classes due to the relative popularity of its materials and production processes.
Cultural symbol	Cultural symbols had unique meanings and values in East Asian culture and were often regarded as symbols of power, wealth, and happiness.	As a utensil and ornament for daily use, it was often associated with life, aesthetics, and traditional customs.


	Lacquer	Ceramics
Decoration and function	The decoration was often based on exquisite ornamentation, painting, and carving, emphasizing artistic expression and decorative value.	Decoration could be in spray paint, carving, or engraving. However, it also focused more on the shape and performance of the material, as well as its practicality.
Display and collection	Due to the rarity and complexity of its craftsmanship, it was often used as an essential object in museums, art exhibitions, and private collections.	It is widely displayed and collected in museums and art exhibitions. However, due to its relatively popular nature, ceramic works are also more easily used by people in their daily lives and collections.






During the Qing Dynasty, due to the upper class's admiration for Zisha teapot craftsmanship, lacquer was primarily based on the Zisha style. Elaborate and ornate lacquer application was a hallmark of this era (Table 2). Lacquer pottery teapots, both round and square in shape, were meticulously crafted, resulting in exquisite and gorgeous designs that heightened their decorative appeal. Surface decorations featured colored fish, lingzhi, bats, and jade chimes, forming intricate three-dimensional patterns. These motifs conveyed the Chinese symbol of “Lucky Celebration,” expressing people’s wishes for prosperity. Additionally, they evoked the beauty of nature.

Qing Dynasty teapots were adorned with meticulously crafted traditional motif elements, with skilled artisans painstakingly painting vibrant colors and intricate details. Decorations typically included auspicious motifs, landscapes, or calligraphy. In contrast, ceramics were characterized by relief carvings, carvings, or appliqués.



**Table 2** Comparison of characteristics of lacquered pottery teapots in the Qing Dynasty

Name	Legend	Description
Teakettle		The purple mud square pot featured a square handle, square flow, and black paint throughout the body. On all four sides, there were gold-colored accents along with red-painted patterns of butterflies, peonies, bamboo, chrysanthemums, and mountain stones.
Landscape pattern square pot		Purple sand and gold were used for painting the exit lid and kiosk button. A thick purple sand inner tube was painted with black paint on the outside to depict a landscape with gold accents. Most of the cover has since come off.
Three friends pot		The entire pot was decorated with black paint and partial red paint. It had a square pot body, oblique shoulder, and high neck, along with an inlaid lid featuring bamboo joints as the flow, prunes as the handle, and the pot buttons designed as pine branches and needles, conveying the message of "three friends."
Teapot with melon ridge		The cover and abdomen were painted with a green space featuring a gold pastel lotus bat mixed treasure pattern. The entire body was primarily gold in color, adorned with interspersed red, yellow, blue, and other colors, creating a magnificent appearance.

Name	Legend	Description
Black paint painted gold chrysanthemum pot.		The pot had an oblate belly, short curved flow, circular stalk, and circular foot. The cover arch was decorated with pearl buttons painted with a gold chrysanthemum pattern. The pattern was slightly convex and conveyed a full three-dimensional sense.
A pure red dragon pattern purple sand fetal teapot		Delicately cut out the Taotie pattern as decoration. The pot was exquisitely made and richly decorated.
Carved red landscape figure holding pot		The purple pot was painted with a black paint base and then had a dozen layers of red paint applied. The interior and the bottom of the purple pot displayed delicate textures.
Purple clay carved lacquer round pot		The drum belly, bundled neck, round ear handle, and bottom ring foot together gave a sense of elegance and luxury.
Purple red lotus grain tea kettle		The cover featured a lotus button and a ring decorated with a Kui dragon abductor. The flow and handle were in the mouth lion swallowing elephant nose style, adorned with a rolled grass flower pattern. Both the upper and lower sections were decorated with Kui dragon abducted son.

Indeed, the harmonious interaction between the ceramic body and the lacquer decoration in Qing Dynasty teapots exemplifies the era's penchant for merging diverse media to craft aesthetically pleasing and functional

artworks. When scrutinizing Qing Dynasty teapots, it becomes paramount to acknowledge and deeply appreciate the artistic concord achieved through the fusion of lacquer and ceramics. Grasping the effective integration of lacquerware cultural symbols, production techniques, and cultural connotations is significant in reflecting contemporary translation's value.

## **2. Case Analysis of Teapot Creativity**

### **2.1 Cultural Connotation**

Lacquerware creative products adhere to traditional Chinese creative concepts, extract core elements from culture, and introduce modern design concepts into the creative design of traditional arts and crafts to convey a specific culture's value to create products that meet the lifestyle of modern people.

### **2.2 Design Orientation**

According to previous studies on consumers of cultural and creative products, this consumer group is positioned as middle-aged between 35-50 years old. This group has specific consumption ability, high acceptance of new things, excitement to trends, and pursues personalization. Combined with the preliminary research, the design style was determined.

### **2.3 Design Idea**

Confucius said: "A benevolent man enjoys the mountains; a wise man enjoys the water." While respecting the natural beauty of the natural environment, pursuing a painting outside the painting is a traditional Chinese cultural approach to artistic creation and the aesthetic of "unity of heaven and man." For example, in "A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains," a painting of Wang Ximeng from the Song Dynasty (Fig. 2), the tops of the mountains are first colored in lime green and then in ochre. The whole picture is majestic and delicate. It is considered a lime green landscape painting masterpiece. In

the design of the teapot's shape, the undulating curves of the mountains are imitated. The lid is designed as a teardrop, combining the rugged steadiness of the mountains and rocks with the functionality of the teapot. At the same time, it conveys the steadiness of the artistic mood of the mountains and presenting the spirituality of the flow of water in Chinese landscapes.



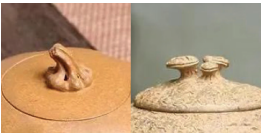




**Figure 2** “A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains” of Wang Ximeng

## 2.4 Modelling Design

The teapot lid's appearance and design affected the overall aesthetics of the entire teapot. All teapot parts were harmonized to achieve a balanced aesthetic in the overall design. As an essential part of the pot, the lid was often overlooked. Although the knob was small, it played the role of ‘drawing the eye’ and was rich in changes, making it a crucial part of the teapot design.

**Table 3** Types of the Lids in a Teapot

Category	Legend	Feature
Spherical button		Buttons, bead-shaped ornaments, flat hats, and column shapes often took the form of reducing or inverting the pot body.
Bridge button		The structure resembled an arch bridge and included cylindrical and square strips and sinews.
Melon handle button		Flower plastic was a commonly used button type, such as pumpkin handles, watermelon handles, and gourd designs with branches and leaves, creating lively shapes.
Animal knob		It was derived from the printing button. There are lions, tigers, dragons, and fish. Realistic, abstract deformation, imitation of ancient techniques, and the main body can be unified and coordinated.
Tree stump-shaped button		Stump-shaped knobs are made from the shape of plants or melons, such as plum piles, bamboo roots, and grapes.

Lids include spherical knobs, bridge-shaped knobs, melon handle knobs, animal knobs, and stump-shaped knobs in various shapes and styles. Different lines will present different aesthetics; the rounded lines of the pot lid shape present a smooth feeling. Sharp lines on the shape of the lid present a sharp geometric aesthetic. The oval shape of the lid presents a rounded

feeling, while the square shape is more stable than the rounded one. Lids play a crucial role in teapot styling, directly affecting the overall aesthetic value of the teapot (Table 3).

The design of the teapot knob adds natural modeling elements to the shape of the teapot. The teapot presents the delicate beauty of the landscape, reminiscent of the scenery in traditional Chinese landscape paintings. The undulating lines of waves or mountain peaks are used through carving or mold-making to give the teapot lid the movement and variation of a landscape scene (Figure 3). The decorative colors of the teapot are based on the characteristics of the mountains and rocks in “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains,” choosing natural shades of green and brown. The natural colors of the landscape are presented. Such color selection can enhance the connection between the teapot and the landscape and create a harmonious and natural atmosphere.



**Figure 3** Modeling design and production process of pot lid, made by the author Ash heap Paint piles of ash Secondary stacking Metal powder Molding

## 2.5 Work Effect

The shape of the teapot extracts the symbols of Chinese landscape elements. When combined with the color of the teapot material, the design is reconstructed, the connotation is transformed, and it is skillfully integrated into the artistic context of the Chinese landscape (Fig. 4). The various juxtapositions,



overlaps, and flows during the production process fill the final graphic effect with many contingencies, making the teapot itself a work of art that conveys the beauty of the landscape. At the same time, this design also allows the user to feel the artistic mood of the landscape during the tea-tasting process so that the cultural elements can be better integrated with the product and the experience of tea culture can be enhanced.



**Figure 4** Teapot finished design

### 3. Evaluation and Analysis of Creative Product Satisfaction Evaluation

The design piece (Figure 4) met its targeted consumers. Statistical analysis was conducted on the survey results on factors affecting consumer purchases. The sample size was 181, and a 5-level scale was used for evaluation (1 represented the minimum degree, while 5 represented the maximum degree). A larger score indicated a greater degree. The questionnaire data were sorted out and statistically recorded into SPSS software for analysis. The sorting results are as follows.

**Table 4** Factors affecting buyers

Number	Title	Average	Standard deviation	Variance
1	Product quality	3.92	1.41	1.28
2	Style refinement	4.21	0.92	0.83

Number	Title	Average	Standard deviation	Variance
3	Historical and cultural elements	4.05	0.99	0.97
4	Collection value	3.58	1.27	1.61
5	Product practicality	3.46	1.28	1.62
6	Product interestingness	3.35	1.32	1.54
7	Portability	3.62	1.24	1.71

According to the survey results of consumers (Table 4): 1) In the design of lacquer teapot products, the precise positioning of the product style refinement was the most concerned information for consumers. 2) The combination of historical and cultural elements of the lacquer teapot was the most interesting aspect to consumers. It indicated that in the development of lacquer pottery products, it was necessary to pay attention to the cultural connotation of the product. It was possible to choose different levels of the product, combined with the corresponding carriers, and innovate in establishing the cultural brand.

#### 4. Evaluation of Product

This questionnaire evaluation consisted of data analysis of 30 experimenters, including 5 experts, 10 designers, and 15 design students, to determine the best design solutions for lacquerware cultural creative products. The final teapots involved 3 design options, including Material culture, Behavioral culture, and Spiritual culture. Experimenters were evaluated based on the average of the four options regarding artistry, functionality, continuity, and innovativeness.






**Table 5** Evaluation elements of lacquerware creative products

		Artistry	Functionality	Continuity	Innovativeness
Material culture	Molding	3.26	4.42	4.12	3.96
	Color	3.58	3.88	4.14	4.21
	Tattoo	3.61	3.87	3.12	3.45
	Material	4.11	3.58	3.38	3.43
	Texture	3.64	3.46	3.54	3.39
Behavioral culture	Production process	3.45	3.98	3.91	3.81
	Feature	3.36	3.52	3.21	3.63
	User experience	3.65	4.12	3.85	4.27
	Product safety	3.11	3.92	3.28	3.16
Spiritual culture	Cultural connotation	4.15	4.21	4.05	4.26
	Brand value	3.46	4.05	3.58	4.63
	Emotional experience	3.65	3.58	3.23	3.46

The tea set products incorporated elements of the unique traditional landscape of China. It was material culture, harmonious in shape, color, pattern, material, and texture. The design creativity of the pattern was in line with the design intent, indicating that the material texture was essential for the visual presentation of the shape. From the data of the behavioral culture, production process, feature, user experience, and product safety, it was concluded that the pot's comfortable artistry was high. The overall shape and the stability of the craft structure were reasonable, in which the touch of the cover knob was characteristic. Consumers considered the degree of novelty in purchasing the essential product. The result of the spiritual level was that

the cultural connotation was greater than the emotional experience and brand value. The product conveyed the spiritual connotation of the art of Chinese landscape and nature and stimulated emotional identification with the excellent culture. Consumers experienced the charm of traditional Chinese culture while using the product (Table 5).

**Table 6** Evaluation of design works (drawn by the author) evaluative dimension  
Average score of the design proposal

Assessment items	Types 1	Types 2	Types 3
			
Artistry	4.31	3.53	3.74
Functionality	4.18	3.74	4.02
Continuity	4.06	4.01	3.56
Innovativeness	4.14	3.96	3.75

In table 6, the design works had 3 types. Types 1 was a hand-carved teapot inspired by natural landscapes, evoking a sense of cultural history by combining traditional lacquerware's earthy and natural tones, creating a unique design with visual appeal. Types 2 was a teapot in the traditional art style with an oval shape and a unique gradient green color added to the pot. The design adhered to the traditional craftsmanship and artistic skill of lacquer pottery. Types 3 was a teapot made of high-quality ceramic material with a localized lacquer coating process, which enhanced the glossy and smooth surface of the teapot. The design effectively enhanced the ceramic art value.

For comparing design strategies, Types 1 (produced in 2022) was a creative and cultural fusion of lacquer and ceramics, a new expression of lacquer and ceramic art. Types 2 (produced in 2000) was designed to be a decorative process based on traditional lacquer art. Types 3 (produced in 2010) was designed to decorate ceramics with lacquer in the vision of fine art.

Based on a questionnaire with experts, the evaluation effect of design picture 1 was significantly higher than the other two pictures. It indicated that the design scheme of the Chinese landscape-themed lacquer pottery tea set cultural and creative products produced in this study could embody the traditional Chinese cultural factors in the four main dimensions of artistry, functionality, continuity, and innovativeness. The feasibility of this study was verified (Table 6).

## Discussion

1) When discussing the beauty of a pot, studies have often focused on the shape of the pot itself and the need to pay attention to the connotation of cultural subjects. Handicraft products inherited traditional humanistic decoration, emphasizing a more natural material aesthetic taste. The unity of humanity was an essential idea in traditional Chinese philosophy, emphasizing the harmonious relationship between man and nature. Teapot aesthetics often pursued simple and natural design. Teapots were usually appropriately embellished and strived for simplicity and naturalness to show the texture of the teapot material, reflecting natural beauty. Qing Dynasty teapots were primarily crafted from ceramics, occasionally adorned with lacquerware for decorative purposes, such as handles, spouts, or lids. These teapots were renowned for their intricate traditional motifs, intricate craftsmanship, and a strong emphasis on cultural symbolism. In contrast, modern landscape teapots

embraced a contemporary approach. They integrated elements from the natural world into their designs while retaining a sense of traditional dignity. These teapots reflected current artistic trends and prioritized both functionality and aesthetics to cater to the preferences of modern tastes. Qing Dynasty teapots carried a profound historical and cultural tradition, celebrated for their meticulous craftsmanship. On the other hand, contemporary landscape teapots featured designs that aligned with contemporary aesthetics, incorporating various artistic elements to accommodate diverse tastes and lifestyles.

2) The success of the teapot design depended on the reasonable combination of these elements, each of which affected the user experience of the teapot, so all factors needed to be taken into account in the design process. The shape of the teapot was one of the most basic design elements. Designers used smooth line designs, entirely incorporating the traditional round, square, and irregular shapes found in nature's elements into innovative teapot designs. These natural forms became sources of inspiration for designers, leading to novel teapot design concepts. Through the questionnaire survey and interview analysis, the feasibility of Chinese landscape-themed lacquer teapot creative product design was demonstrated, and a feasible research path was also provided for the contemporary application of traditional creations.

3) The innovation of teapot products needed to retain excellent traditional craftsmanship and strengthen the interactivity, cultural integration, and memory reinforcement of creative products. Concerning spiritual culture, cultural connotation, and brand value, the emotional experience conveyed specific emotions, cultural connotations, and values. Cultural connotations were fundamental to creative products. During the usage of cultural products, consumers underwent a subtle learning process in which they felt the culture. This process met the diverse needs of consumers and stimulated their desire to make a purchase. The combination of lacquer and ceramics retained the

original decorative nature of lacquer while increasing the practicality of lacquerware, making pottery and porcelain-fired lacquerware more widely applicable in daily life. This approach also reduced the production costs of lacquerware and expanded its audience.

## Implication and Further Research

### 1. Implication

The innovative fusion of lacquer and pottery gives rise to a novel cultural and creative craft product. This creation serves as a bridge, connecting the rich cultural essence of Qing Dynasty lacquer with contemporary design. It entails immersing oneself in the historical significance of Qing Dynasty lacquer, understanding its distinctive characteristics, and creatively reinterpreting these attributes for modern design. This interdisciplinary research approach enhances our knowledge and ensures the enduring legacy and relevance of traditional craftsmanship in today's world.

### 2. Further Research

2.1 Interdisciplinary cooperation needs to be further increased. Researchers can simulate the effect of creation by computer to facilitate the adjustment and create more practical teapot products that meet the market demand.

2.2 There is a need to strengthen further research on evaluating market product information. The research is conducted by evaluating the satisfaction analysis of consumer groups and experts on product design to understand consumer perception, satisfaction, and emotional connection to the product and the specific design elements used in lacquer pottery creative products to reveal the value of cultural connotation.

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