

Bridging the East-West Divide: Unraveling Convergent Aesthetic Values Between China and Europe in Design and Art Through Expert Perspectives

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Abstract

This research investigates the aesthetic commonalities between the East and West in art and design. It discloses fundamental similarities by employing expert interviews and thematic analysis with blue-and-white porcelain (BWP) as an exemplar. The findings reveal that, notwithstanding historical disparities, both traditions share values in aesthetic philosophy, symbolic representation, and form-function integration, with BWP serving as a paradigmatic cultural bridge. This study advances cross-cultural aesthetic comprehension and underlines its significance in fostering innovation.

Keywords: Design and Art, Cross-Cultural Aesthetics, Interview Research, Blue-and-White Porcelain

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Introduction

In the expansive realm of aesthetic research, the relationship between Eastern and Western aesthetics has invariably held a central and crucial position. Ye Lang, in the prefatory remarks of *"Outline of the History of Chinese Aesthetics"* (2005), unequivocally states that the integration of Chinese and Western aesthetics constitutes an essential foundation for the construction of an internationalised and comprehensive aesthetic discipline, as well as for the formulation of a scientifically rigorous modern aesthetic system. This assertion underlines the profound and far-reaching significance of delving into the latent intersections and dynamic interactions that bridge these two aesthetic traditions.

Simultaneously, the burgeoning field of social aesthetics (Olcese & Savage, 2015) offers an illuminating and novel vantage point. It accentuates the complex and intertwined nature of aesthetics with sociality, positing that aesthetics extends beyond the boundaries of individual aesthetic experiences and is deeply enmeshed in the continuous reproduction processes of society and culture. This further bolsters the urgent need to explore the fusion and symbiotic interaction of Chinese and Western aesthetics within the overarching context of globalisation. Given its profound implications for the refinement and advancement of the aesthetic discipline and the multifaceted development and sustainable reproduction of social and cultural landscapes, it becomes imperative to meticulously unearth the latent commonalities and efficacious integration mechanisms that permeate diverse strata. Such an endeavour holds the potential to unlock a plethora of innovative breakthroughs in cross-cultural aesthetic research and practice, thereby endowing it with truly transformative significance.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that pronounced differences between Eastern and Western aesthetics have persisted over time. Bernard Bosanquet, a distinguished British philosopher and aesthetician, articulated this perspective in his seminal work, *"A History of Aesthetics"* (1892, p. xii). Foreseeing potential criticism due to the omission of Eastern aesthetic concepts, especially those from China and Japan, he defended by stating that the aesthetic consciousness of the East was markedly different and couldn't be integrated into the cohesive historical account of Western aesthetics. While the era's context doubtless influenced his viewpoint, it reveals the paucity of meaningful cross-cultural exchanges during the initial phases of intellectual interaction between the two traditions.

Zhu Guangqian, a pioneer of modern Chinese aesthetics who had sojourned and studied in Europe, further expounded on this dichotomy. In his *"Psychology of Literature and Art"* (1982), he contended that Chinese aesthetics is deeply rooted in the organic unity between humanity and nature, manifesting through the prioritisation of intuitive experience and the cultivation of 'Yi jing' (artistic conception). This concept epitomises a transcendent state wherein emotion and nature coalesce in a seamless and ethereal union, embodying the Chinese philosophical ideal of "the unity of heaven and humanity" (tian ren he yi), characterised by holistic and integrative thinking, as well as the immediate and intuitive apprehension of aesthetic experience. In stark contrast, Western aesthetics has been historically steered and moulded by a rationalist tradition that places preponderant emphasis on the systematic study and meticulous analysis of form and structure. It employs rigorous logical methodologies to delineate and define beauty by constructing organised frameworks and rule-based systems, as exemplified by the development of classical aesthetics theories and the evolution of various art forms predicated on geometric and proportional principles.

Zong Baihua, another luminary in the Chinese aesthetic pantheon, further embellished and deepened the concept of "Yi jing" in his work *"Meixue Manbu [Strolling in Aesthetics]"* (2019, pp. 131 - 168). He described it as a state of harmonious transcendence that dissolves dualities such as subjectivity versus objectivity or emotion versus environment, forging a holistic and unified aesthetic realm. This stands in sharp relief to the Western predilection for representational fidelity, the privileging of individual perspectives, the pursuit of material precision, and the fixation on stable symbolic meanings. These contrasting features lucidly illustrate each tradition's distinct aesthetic predilections and conceptual underpinnings.

However, despite the conspicuous and significant differences between Eastern and Western aesthetic traditions, extant literature has regrettably fallen short in exploring whether there exists a certain cross-cultural aesthetic commonality. Most extant studies have focused predominantly on comparing the peculiarities of the two aesthetic systems yet notably neglected targeted exploration of their potential commonalities. In contemporary globalisation, cultural interaction and integration have become dominant and irreversible trends across various fields, with the design domain being a particularly prominent example. From the aesthetic contours of product designs to the nuances of visual languages, from design styles to the application of colour palettes, myriad design works now unabashedly embrace aesthetic elements from disparate cultures. This burgeoning phenomenon thus prompts the crucial question of how to reveal and meticulously examine, through a cross-cultural lens optimally, the shared values and latent synergies between Eastern and Western aesthetics and design practices. This pursuit undoubtedly warrants further in-depth research.

Furthermore, to substantiate or elaborate on the potential commonality between Eastern and Western aesthetics, the incorporation of specific design cases proves advantageous. The globally renowned blue-and-white porcelain (BWP) is a prime exemplar of the confluence of Eastern and Western aesthetic sensitivities. While prior investigations have shed some light on its allure, the intricate aesthetic underpinnings that permit it to surmount cultural barriers remain only partially fathomed. A comprehensive understanding of how such design forms can robustly facilitate cross-cultural aesthetic exchange remains elusive. Consequently, gaps and prospects for further refinement pervade this domain.

Building on these insights, this study formulates the following pivotal research inquiries:

1. Do Eastern and Western aesthetics in art and design share a foundational commonality, which could give rise to meaningful dialogue and interaction between the two aesthetic systems?
2. Can the blue-and-white design of porcelain serve as a typical and effective example to bridge Eastern and Western aesthetics, further deepening cross-cultural aesthetic exchange?

To address these questions, this research employs the expert interview method. Through in-depth discussions, it delves into experts' insights and professional verdicts regarding the topic. Expert interviews excel in amalgamating viewpoints from diverse disciplines, supplying multi-dimensional perspectives and spurring the discovery of overlooked academic matters via open-ended exchanges. Their professional acumen and critical insights erect a sturdy analytical framework for the study, proving especially crucial when grappling with intricate cross-cultural phenomena.

Study Method

This study employed expert interviews to collect data.

I. Expert Backgrounds

Four experts with profound academic backgrounds and significant influence in their respective fields were invited to participate in a group interview lasting approximately two and a half hours. These experts have accumulated extensive experience in studying Eastern and Western aesthetics and related design disciplines, providing diverse perspectives and professional insights for the analysis central to this research. The specific details of the experts are as follows:

1. **Professor of Aesthetics and Art:** With a long-term focus on Western aesthetics, this expert has recently expanded their academic interests to include comparative studies between Eastern and Western aesthetics, publishing numerous widely recognised academic works.
2. **Professor of Visual Communication Design:** Specialising in modern design theory and practice, this expert focuses on integrating Eastern and Western aesthetic elements and the dynamic expression of visual culture in the context of globalisation.
3. **Professor of Urban Landscape Design:** This expert's research focuses on applying Eastern aesthetic principles in modern urban design, particularly to the adaptability and transformation of Chinese and Japanese aesthetic concepts in a globalised social environment.
4. **Professor of Ceramic Art:** Specialising in traditional Eastern ceramic craftsmanship, this expert has systematically researched the historical legacy of BWP and its evolving techniques and practices.

By bringing together these experts from complementary disciplines, we aimed to explore cross-cultural aesthetic values comprehensively. Their combined knowledge and experience would help to address the research questions more effectively and build a more robust analytical framework.

II. Expert Interview Process

This study employs a group interview method to explore the commonalities between Eastern and Western aesthetic values and the aesthetic characteristics and cultural significance of BWP design. The interview is designed as a free-form discussion centred around the following two core themes:

1. **The Commonalities of Eastern and Western Aesthetic Values**
 - An exploration of the differences and shared aspects within Eastern and Western design aesthetics;
 - Experts' core understanding of "beauty" (aesthetics) and its cultural connotations;
 - The reinterpretation and realisation of traditional art's value in modern design.
2. **The Aesthetic Characteristics and Cultural Role of BWP**
 - The core aesthetic features and cultural value of BWP;
 - The symbolic meaning of blue-and-white patterns in historical and contemporary contexts and their function in the creative reinvention of cultural symbols.

The interview design strictly adheres to these two principal themes: (1) summarising the commonalities between Eastern and Western aesthetic values and (2) exploring the aesthetic characteristics of BWP and its value dissemination in a cross-cultural context. This framework ensures logical coherence while enabling experts to engage in open and unrestricted discussion.

III. Methods for Processing Interview Data

This study employed the Thematic Analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse the interview data systematically. Thematic Analysis is a pattern- and meaning-oriented analytical method that facilitates precise alignment between the interview content and the research objectives. The data analysis in this study comprises the following six stages:

1. Transcription and Familiarisation with the Data

The interview recordings were transcribed into text and repeatedly reviewed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the context and the nuanced perspectives. This process allowed us to discern the layered meanings in the experts' views, forming a solid foundation for subsequent coding and thematic analysis.

2. Generating Initial Codes

Open coding was conducted on the textual data based on the two core research directions: the "commonalities in aesthetic values between Chinese and Western cultures" and the "cultural and aesthetic dimensions of blue and white porcelain design". During the coding process, particular attention was paid to aligning with the research objectives by extracting relevant content from paragraphs, sentences, and key terms, ensuring that the initial codes comprehensively covered all critical information in the interview content.

- Example:

From the theme "commonalities in aesthetic values between Chinese and Western cultures", the following initial codes were derived:

- Social and spiritual dimensions of beauty: "Beauty is both subjective and intricately connected with social and spiritual dimensions."

3. Searching for Preliminary Themes

The initial codes were categorised, and potential themes were identified and integrated by examining the relationships between the codes. Codes with similar or complementary meanings were grouped to form preliminary themes, constructing a rudimentary thematic framework.

- Example:

Theme: Aesthetic Philosophy

- Categorised Codes:

- The rational, analytical stance of Western aesthetics (corresponding to the code "rational analysis of symbols, expression, and meaning")
- The emphasis on nature, Zen, and intuition in Eastern aesthetics (corresponding to the code "natural harmony, intuition, and Zen philosophy")

4. Reviewing and Refining the Themes

The preliminary themes were reviewed and revised to ensure that each theme had clear boundaries, internal consistency, and logical coherence. Overlaps or redundancies between themes were identified and resolved during this stage, and incomplete themes

were further refined and integrated, enhancing the depth and accuracy of the thematic analysis.

5. Defining and Naming the Themes

Themes were defined and named based on analysing their underlying meanings. The names of the themes were chosen to accurately reflect their core semantic meanings and supporting data while delineating each theme's scope.

6. Synthesising Results

Tables 1 and 2 present the core findings from the interview data analysis and theme extraction stages. These key results directly inform the development of the specific research conclusions for 'Results (II) Theoretical Framework Development and Case Analysis.'

Results

I. Results of the Interview Data Analysis

Through systematic coding and inductive analysis of the interview data from four experts, this study identified two core thematic categories, focusing on 'Commonalities in Eastern and Western Aesthetic Values' (see Table 1) and 'The Cultural and Aesthetic Dimensions of BWP Design' (see Table 2). These themes spotlight key issues in cross-cultural aesthetic research and offer profound insights into the cultural significance and value of BWP as an art form in both traditional and contemporary contexts.

Table 1 encapsulates ten themes across cross-cultural aesthetics, the relationship between tradition and modernity, and the interaction between nature and art. It analyses the key issues of commonalities and differences in aesthetic philosophies and design approaches in Eastern and Western contexts.

Table 2 presents six themes, exploring aspects such as cultural symbolism, characteristics of materials and craftsmanship, and visual aesthetics. It examines the historical legacy of BWP in the context of Sino-Western cultural exchange and its unique value in modern society.

Table 1: Identifying Commonalities Between Eastern and Western Aesthetic Values

Theme	Sub-themes	Expert Opinion Summary
Aesthetic Philosophy	Aesthetics transcend cultural boundaries; Eastern and Western philosophies each have distinct emphases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Western aesthetics emphasise rational analysis of symbols, expression, and meaning, while Eastern aesthetics place greater importance on natural harmony, intuition, and Zen philosophy. - Eastern art simplifies complex ideas, whereas Western art focuses on critical interpretation. - Beauty is both subjective and closely tied to social and spiritual dimensions.
Expression and Symbolism	Emphasis on the expression of emotions and intentions, using symbolism to convey philosophy and feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both traditions employ symbolism to present profound meanings, communicating emotions such as awe towards nature. - Western art places more emphasis on individual perspectives and social change, while Eastern art seeks the integration of humanity and nature. - Symbolism gains new interpretations in philosophical reflections on traditional and modern forms of art.
The Beauty of Nature	Mutual reverence for natural beauty, expressed through distinct approaches that convey deep awe and integration with nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Western garden design features geometric symmetry and rational planning, while Eastern gardens focus on harmonious coexistence with nature. - For instance, Chinese and Japanese gardens aim to create "Yijing" (artistic conception), whereas Western gardens emphasise physical functionality. - Both traditions reflect a shared pursuit of nature and organic elements in architecture and design.
Form and Function	Beauty lies in the perfect fusion of form and meaning, balancing functionality with emotional expression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beauty is not just about aesthetic form but also intrinsic emotions and cultural structures. - Aesthetics must consider historical and cultural contexts, and works embody the artist's experiences and creativity.
Fusion of Tradition and Modernity	The spirit of tradition is innovatively interpreted through modern design, preserving cultural uniqueness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional crafts (e.g., ceramics, bronze) are revitalised through modern techniques and functionality, retaining cultural identity in a globalised world. - Traditional symbolic language is integrated into modern design, balancing cultural depth with contemporary applications (e.g., urban space design). - New technologies breathe life into traditional crafts while avoiding superficiality.
Education and Modes of Thinking	Alignment in goals between Eastern and Western design education, with distinct strengths in approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Western design education highlights industrialisation and scientific methods (e.g., Bauhaus rational principles), while Eastern education values craftsmanship and holistic expression. - Chinese design promotes "seeking harmony amidst diversity," combining functionality and innovation in areas like packaging design. - Respect for materials and craftsmanship facilitates aesthetic consensus and interdisciplinary collaboration in fields such as ceramics.
Contemporary Design Innovation	Innovative applications of traditional elements enhance cultural depth and modern functionality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In graphic design, infusing traditional Chinese colour systems or symbolic language generates distinctive visual effects. - For instance, abstract art methodologies pave the way for the expression of colour and emotion in modern art. - Innovation requires merging the essence of tradition with modern technologies to meet market demands and the aesthetic needs of modern life.
Spirit and Symbolic Meaning	The elevation of beauty transcends physical forms, relating to morality, religion, and spirituality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aesthetics are deeply connected to spirituality, moral values and religious beliefs. - In ceramics, both Eastern and Western cultures unite the functional aspects of materials with a pursuit of spiritual ideals, conveying complex cultural meanings.
Globalisation and Cross-cultural Integration	Exploring new forms and concepts through the integration of Eastern and Western design philosophies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The blend of Eastern "emptiness" and Western spatial arrangements creates balance and innovation. - The Bauhaus spirit becomes a focal point of cross-cultural convergence, with both traditions pursuing the shared goal of design serving society.
Artistic Conception and Contrast of Void and Reality	The combination of Eastern "Yijing" (artistic conception) and Western functional scene design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The "yijing" of Chinese gardens sparks deep reflections on abstraction and reality in the field of design. - Environmental design incorporates Western methods while adhering to traditional principles of artistic conception.

Table 2: Cultural and Aesthetic Interpretations of BWP Design

Theme	Sub-themes	Summary of Expert Opinions
Cultural Symbolism and Meaning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Colours and cultural symbolism Patterns and historical emotions Taoist and Buddhist aesthetic implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The blue-and-white porcelain colours carry profound cultural symbolism, reflecting Chinese history and culture. * The patterns are visually appealing and express the emotions and social consciousness of ancient craftsmen. * The elements of Taoism and Buddhism within the designs give the porcelain a unique aesthetic significance in East Asian culture.
Cultural Exchange Between East and West	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Trade and technological exchange Reinterpretation of patterns across cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Blue-and-white porcelain entered Europe via maritime trade, becoming highly favoured among the upper class. * The cobalt blue pigment originated from Persia, symbolising the importance of technological exchanges between East and West. * Its forms and patterns show mutual cultural influence, representing a symbol of cultural exchange. * Traditional Chinese designs were reinterpreted in the West, demonstrating lasting cultural impact.
Technical and Material Characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> High-temperature cobalt blue technique Rarity and economic impact of cobalt Influence of Islamic culture in design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The underglaze cobalt blue technique at high temperatures enabled the seamless combination of blue designs with white porcelain glaze. * In the past, the high cost of cobalt pigment limited its accessibility and linked it to the socio-economic conditions of the time. * Islamic culture had a noticeable impact on the design of blue-and-white porcelain, especially in the use of colour, showcasing intercultural technical evolution.
Education and Transmission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Connection between tradition and modernity Historical context and emotional expression Cross-cultural aesthetic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * In research and teaching, blue-and-white porcelain illustrates the blend of Chinese craftsmanship and modern design. * Teaching about blue-and-white porcelain highlights its historical and cultural significance, helping students understand its symbolic meaning and emotional expression. * Blue-and-white porcelain serves as a focal case study in cross-cultural aesthetic education, aiding students in balancing tradition and innovation in modern design.
Aesthetic Features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Symbol of elegance in East and West Visual harmony and cultural significance Universal appeal of colours and patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The simplicity and elegance of blue-and-white porcelain appeal to audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds, making it a symbol of elegance and refinement. * The contrast of blue and white reflects visual harmony while carrying deep cultural meaning. * The design of its colours and patterns possesses universal appeal, transcending cultural boundaries to become a cornerstone of global aesthetics.
Social Status and Identity Symbolism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Aesthetic preference of royalty and commoners Material cost and social distinction Art objectification in Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The use of blue on porcelain appealed to both the refined tastes of royalty and, at a broader level, symbolised the people's aesthetic preferences. * The high cost of cobalt pigment historically rendered blue-and-white porcelain a symbol of particular status and identity. * Introduced via maritime trade, blue-and-white porcelain became a highly desired art object among European elites, further highlighting its significance in social status and cultural identity.

Table 1 delves into the core commonalities and distinctions of Eastern and Western aesthetic values. The four contributors' interdisciplinary expertise evidences significant consensus on themes like "The Beauty of Nature," "Form and Function," and "Fusion of Tradition and Modernity". For example, in the "Beauty of Nature" theme, all experts emphasized the shared reverence for nature and its artistic representation in both aesthetic traditions. Similarly, they acknowledged certain cultural and emotional aspects within "Form and Function". Yet, in "Globalisation and Cross-Cultural Integration," notable divergence arose, influenced by their respective professional contexts. The urban landscape design professor stressed the macro-level impact of cultural fusion on spatial design, while the ceramics arts professor analyzed the role of traditional symbols within a globalized framework from a craft and material culture perspective. Despite agreement on fundamental themes such as "The Beauty of Nature" and "Fusion of Tradition and Modernity", disciplinary outlooks led to different ways of interpreting and implementing these ideas.

In Table 2, the four experts share substantial common ground, especially concerning the cultural symbolism and universal aesthetic allure of BWP design. They unanimously affirm that its colours and patterns mirror Chinese history, emotions, and social consciousness and embody the philosophical influences of Daoism and Buddhism, endowing the porcelain with profound cultural significance. Moreover, they all concur on its crucial role in facilitating East-West cultural exchange. Likewise, they highlight its simplicity, elegance, and harmonious blue-white colour scheme as universally appealing aesthetic features transcending cultural boundaries. However, notable differences surface in their assessments of BWP's education and transmission: the urban landscape design professor regards BWP as a key reference for blending tradition and modernity in public aesthetics, whereas the ceramics arts professor primarily views it to preserve craftsmanship traditions. These variations, stemming from their distinct professional backgrounds and disciplinary priorities, enrich the comprehensive understanding of BWP design.

II. Theoretical Framework Development and Case Analysis

Differences in Aesthetic Principles Between Eastern and Western Thought

When juxtaposed with the well-established theoretical insights from the literature review, the findings of our expert interviews (as evidenced in Table 1) not only corroborate but also further illuminate the long-standing nature of these philosophical differences.

The experts have highlighted that Western aesthetics is firmly grounded in the rational analysis and deconstruction of symbols, structure, and meaning. This approach gives prominence to critical interpretation and in-depth formal analysis. In contrast, Eastern aesthetics highly value simplicity, fluid and intuitive understanding, and natural harmony, drawing substantially from Zen philosophy and the time-honoured Chinese thought traditions. For example, in garden design, Western gardens, characterised by geometric precision and well-ordered layouts, can be seen as a manifestation of humans' attempt to exert control over nature. On the other hand, Eastern gardens deliberately avoid rigid symmetry and instead aim to create a harmonious coexistence with the natural surroundings, thereby reflecting the profound integration of humanity with the environment.

Spirituality and symbolism serve as another crucial point of divergence, a theme consistently emphasised in the existing literature and the data obtained from the experts. In Western traditions, aesthetics is often anchored in external ideals such as moral, social, or individual values, with symbolism used as a means of explicit expression and transformation. Conversely, Eastern traditions integrate symbolism into a more metaphysical realm of abstraction, exploring the idea of transcendence through the interaction between the void and reality. Zong Baihua's "Yi jing" concept effectively encapsulates this abstract nature, dissolving the opposing dualities and evoking a state of existential harmony, which contrasts sharply with Western art's more structured, figurative, and often literal use of symbolism.

A similarly nuanced disparity emerges in the interpretations of materiality and functionality. Western design, influenced by the industrial heritage and rationalist modes of thinking, often tries to balance practical function and conceptual symbolism. However, Eastern design philosophies view material forms as channels for metaphysical resonance and the expression of deep-seated emotions. Instead of giving primacy to utilitarian concerns, Eastern approaches focus on eliciting spiritual and intuitive depth, mirroring the integrative ethos that Zhu Guangqian identified in traditional Chinese aesthetics. Moreover, the differences in

educational paradigms further accentuate this contrast: Western design education typically centres around industrial principles and scientific methodologies (such as the influential Bauhaus movement), while Eastern traditions advocate for craftsmanship and the all-around cultivation of artistic expression.

Although these differences highlight the significant disparities in aesthetic philosophies and methodologies, it is essential to note that they also converge in their shared pursuit of beauty as a universal value. Despite their contrasting approaches, both traditions strive to articulate the profound essence of beauty and its intrinsic connection to human experience. This shared aspiration provides a fertile ground for cross-cultural dialogue and the potential for mutual enrichment and innovation. By acknowledging these differences and commonalities, we can better understand the complex and multi-faceted nature of aesthetic traditions in the East and West and pave the way for more in-depth cross-cultural aesthetic research and exchange.

An Analysis of Aesthetic Commonalities Between Eastern and Western Art and Design

Scholar Gu Mingdong (2021), through a comparative analysis of the aesthetic theories of the Chinese traditional aesthetic thinker Liu Xie (刘勰) and the German aesthetician Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, noted that despite their differing cultural backgrounds and historical contexts, both exhibit remarkable similarities in core themes such as artistic creation, sources of inspiration, and the relationship between nature and art. These cross-cultural commonalities provide a theoretical foundation for dialogue between Eastern and Western aesthetic thought. Incorporating Table 1's expert interview data further disclosed the homogeneity of cross-cultural aesthetic values and their dialogic potential, facilitating global design aesthetic integration.

The primary shared principle lies in the core dimensions of aesthetic philosophy, wherein both Eastern and Western traditions acknowledge the subjectivity of beauty and its connection to social and spiritual dimensions. The expert interviews confirmed this perspective: whether in the Eastern notion of "the unity of heaven and humanity" or the Western emphasis on intentionality and purpose in meaning-making, beauty is regarded as surpassing mere sensory pleasure, imbued instead with profound cultural and spiritual significance. Moreover, from the theoretical perspectives of Liu Xie and Schelling, both demonstrate a striking convergence in their discussions of artistic inspiration and nature's unconsciousness. Liu Xie's notion of "literature and art as products of nature" parallels Schelling's emphasis on art as the unconscious creation of nature. This connection highlights the shared foundational relationship between nature and human aesthetic creativity.

Secondly, both Eastern and Western traditions emphasise symbolic expression, using metaphor and symbolism to convey complex emotions and profound cultural meanings. Evidence from the expert interviews shows that this shared emphasis manifests in the symbolic representation of modern and traditional art forms. Contemporary design, for instance, imbues traditional symbols with new interpretations through philosophical reflection. Examples include the Zen-inspired aesthetic of the East and the abstraction-rooted aesthetics of the West, both striving to express deeper intellectual connotations through material and form. Similarly, Liu Xie's concept of "shen li" (spiritual logic) and Schelling's notion of the "eternal idea" exhibit striking concordance: both regard artistic symbols as symbolic instruments transcending material existence, aiming to articulate the essence of the cosmos or the core of cultural values. Such an understanding underscores that artistic

symbols possess an intuitive material significance and function as mediums for communicating cultural spirit and universal principles.

Lastly, there is further convergence in design's principle of unifying form and function. Experts pointed out that whether it is the Eastern emphasis on the organic integration of emotion and cultural structure or the Western exploration of the practical roles of symbols through formal analysis, design aesthetics in both traditions pursue harmony amidst the tension between tradition and modernity. This alignment is intricately linked to the shared aesthetic pursuit of "nature" in both traditions. Liu Xie's naturalistic view in *The Literary Mind* and the *Carving of Dragons* (Wenxin Diaolong) and Schelling's scientific understanding of nature's creative force underscore the notion that art is rooted in the essence of nature. This advances the commonality between Eastern and Western design traditions and lays a conceptual foundation for collaborative design practices in globalisation.

BWP is a Case of Cross-Cultural Aesthetic Convergence

Based on the data from expert interviews (Table 2) and the comprehensively integrated research findings, BWP represents an exemplary case that illustrates the commonalities between Eastern and Western aesthetics. This conclusion is in line with the established theoretical framework.

In the context of the core dimension of aesthetic philosophy, according to Table 2, the expert insights reveal that the high value and wide-ranging appeal of BWP are closely related to the perception of beauty's subjectivity and its social and spiritual connotations. In European markets, consumers acknowledged BWP because of its refined craftsmanship and the profound cultural and spiritual essence it embodied, which parallels the Western focus on intentionality and purpose within the realm of meaning-making. Concurrently, in Asian markets such as China, its standing as a representative of traditional porcelain art was also linked to the Eastern concept of "the unity of heaven and humanity", further corroborating the shared recognition of the multi-faceted significance of beauty.

Regarding artistic inspiration and nature's unconsciousness, in accordance with the data presented in Table 2, the origin and development of the cobalt blue pigment in BWP can be regarded as an instance of the underlying technological exchange that resonates with the theoretical convergence proposed by Liu Xie and Schelling. The manner in which this pigment was incorporated into the Chinese high-temperature underglaze techniques, along with its precise heat treatment procedure, may have been affected by certain unconscious elements within traditional craftsmanship, analogous to the concept of art being a product of nature or an unconscious creation. This technological progression has significantly contributed to the distinctive aesthetic qualities of BWP, thereby underlining the shared fundamental relationship between nature and human aesthetic creativity.

In the domain of symbolic expression, Table 2 indicates that the diverse design elements within BWP, ranging from the cobalt blue pigment originating from Persia to the incorporated Islamic and traditional Chinese Taoist and Buddhist aesthetics, are explicit demonstrations of the common emphasis placed on utilising symbols to communicate intricate emotions and profound cultural connotations. The varying interpretations and combinations of these elements in BWP, as manifested in the market response, mirror the reality that both Eastern and Western traditions perceive artistic symbols as means to express

the quintessence of cultural values, much like Liu Xie's "shen li" (spiritual logic) and Schelling's "eternal idea".

From the standpoint of integrating form and function, as per Table 2, the triumph of BWP across different markets can be ascribed to its capacity to strike a balance between traditional and modern elements. In European high-end art auctions, the soaring price of BWP signified its highly esteemed status as a premier cultural artefact, thereby exemplifying the harmonious fusion of form (its aesthetic allure) and function (its significance as a cultural symbol). In Chinese cultural markets, its pricing approach, which laid emphasis on historical and artistic value, also attested to the organic synthesis of emotion and cultural fabric, in accordance with the Eastern focus on the unity of form and function.

Furthermore, BWP is a physical artefact of cultural exchange and a symbol of shared aesthetic values. Its historical progression, commencing from its production in China and proceeding to its reinterpretation within European markets, exhibits the reciprocal exchange of artistic inspiration and cultural significance. As noted by experts (Table 2), the porcelain's designs transcended their original purpose, becoming objects of social distinction and artistic admiration in Europe, where traditional Chinese patterns were adapted to local tastes. This recontextualisation aligns with Gu Mingdong's analysis of cross-cultural artistic philosophies, underlining the universality of symbolic representation and aesthetic aspiration. Eastern and Western designs, although moulded by distinct cultural narratives, converge in their mutual dependence on nature and artistic intuition as sources of inspiration, as exemplified by figures such as Liu Xie and Schelling, who stressed art's inherent connection to natural creation. BWP bridges these diverse traditions through its materials, patterns, and symbolic resonance, presenting a persuasive case study of how intercultural aesthetic philosophies can converge to yield artefacts that surpass cultural boundaries. This capacity to harmonise Eastern and Western artistic principles contributes to laying a specific foundation for the theoretical exploration of design traditions. It adds to the significance of this case in the in-depth study of cross-cultural aesthetics and provides some support for the research on intercultural aesthetic philosophies. However, further investigations are essential to evaluate its role and influence comprehensively.

Discussion

The selection of four experts from complementary disciplines proved instrumental in conducting a comprehensive exploration of cross-cultural aesthetic values. Each expert brought a unique yet interlinked perspective: the Professor of Aesthetics and Art elucidated Western traditions and Eastern philosophies; the Professor of Visual Communication Design spotlighted the interaction of Eastern and Western visual languages in contemporary design; the Professor of Urban Landscape Design probed the application of Eastern aesthetic principles in spatial design; and the Professor of Ceramic Art furnished specialized insights into BWP as a cultural synthesis artefact. This methodological strategy enabled a multifaceted analysis, spanning philosophical, historical, and practical aspects of aesthetic convergence.

Nevertheless, this expert selection methodology had its drawbacks. Limiting the panel to four experts constricted the breadth of viewpoints. Incorporating a more extensive and diverse range of specialists from other fields could have unearthed additional insights and subtleties. Moreover, the limited availability of Western scholarship in comparative aesthetics

compelled a heavier reliance on Chinese sources, augmenting the study's depth regarding Eastern traditions but potentially creating an imbalance in cultural representation.

Notwithstanding these challenges, this research made specific contributions to cross-cultural aesthetics. It unearthed fundamental values shared by Eastern and Western aesthetic traditions, challenging the entrenched perception of divergence. Shared tenets such as harmony, metaphorical symbolism, and integrating beauty's spiritual and social dimensions laid the groundwork for productive dialogue. BWP emerged as a prime example of aesthetic synthesis, amalgamating Persian materials, Chinese craftsmanship, and Western artistic reception. This artefact illustrated the confluence of transcultural forces, technological innovation, and symbolic meanings across traditions. Consequently, the study redirected scholarly attention from divergence to integration, recasting cross-cultural aesthetics as a catalyst for innovation in art and design. Additionally, the findings underlined the pivotal role of leveraging shared aesthetic foundations in nurturing creativity in a globalized milieu.

The study tackled the research questions through a thematic and interdisciplinary investigative methodology. In response to the first question—identifying commonalities in Eastern and Western aesthetics—the research validated the existence of specific shared values. These findings substantiated the viability of fostering mutual dialogue between the two traditions, rooted in shared aspirations. Regarding the second question, the research established that BWP epitomizes aesthetic convergence, demonstrating how transcultural interactions have moulded enduring design legacies. These findings proffered a novel theoretical scaffolding for advancing cross-cultural creativity and dialogue, positioning aesthetic synthesis as a central motif in contemporary art and design discourse.

Conclusion

This study has successfully identified crucial theoretical commonalities in integrating Eastern and Western aesthetics through blue-and-white porcelain. However, its scope was limited by the restricted expert selection and disciplinary focus. Future research should address these limitations by including a wider array of experts, such as anthropologists, sociologists, and art historians, to better examine aesthetics' cultural and social foundations.

Further, exploring other art forms—such as textiles, architecture, and graphic arts—can deepen understanding of how diverse cultural techniques and designs embody and integrate aesthetics. Such comparative and longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into the evolution of aesthetic values amidst globalisation, fostering cross-cultural innovation in art and design. Strengthening both theoretical contributions and practical applications, such research would enrich cross-cultural understanding in the interconnected global cultural landscape.

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