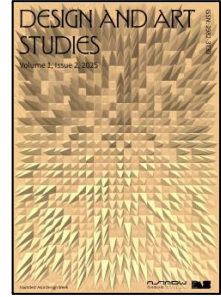




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Case Study / Practice Report

An Oriental Poetic Approach: Core Graphics Creative Thinking and Aesthetic Construction for the 19th Asian Games

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Abstract

This study investigates the creative methodology and conceptual framework underlying the visual identity design of the core graphics for the 19th Asian Games. Employing a case study approach grounded in Oriental aesthetic theory, this paper examines how traditional Chinese cultural elements can be systematically integrated into contemporary sports event branding. The research contributes to the field of visual communication design by proposing a theoretical framework that synthesizes Yi Xiang (意象, imagery), Yi Jing (意境, artistic conception), and Jing Jie (境界, realm) as guiding principles for mega-event visual identity development. Through comparative analysis of international precedents including the Olympic Games visual systems, this study demonstrates how the Hangzhou Asian Games core graphics achieve a harmonious balance between cultural authenticity and global visual communication standards. The findings offer practical implications for designers and event organizers seeking to develop culturally resonant yet internationally accessible visual identity systems for major sporting events.

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Mega sporting events have emerged as powerful platforms for cultural diplomacy and nation branding in the contemporary global landscape (Anholt, 2007; Dinnie, 2015). The visual identity systems deployed at such events serve not merely as aesthetic embellishments but as strategic instruments for communicating cultural values, fostering international recognition, and constructing place-based identities (Knott, Fyall & Jones, 2017). Within this context, the core graphics of the 19th Asian Games (The 19th Asian Games was originally scheduled to be held in 2022 and later postponed to 2023 due to the pandemic; the core graphics design adheres to the original thematic concept) represent a significant case study in the integration of Oriental aesthetic philosophy with contemporary design principles. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of Chinese aesthetics—particularly the concepts of Yi Xiang (imagery), Yi Jing (artistic conception), and Jing Jie (realm)—this study examines how the visual identity system articulates the cultural genetics of Hangzhou while addressing the communicative demands of an international sporting event. The research addresses a gap in the existing literature by providing a practitioner-informed analysis of how traditional Eastern aesthetic concepts can be operationalized within modern corporate visual identity systems.

1. An oriental poetic approach

Orient, in a wider sense refers to the direction in which the sun rises on the earth. However, orient is not only a

historical or geographic concept, but also refers to a natural local root system especially for the Chinese. As a broad cultural concept, the Orient includes multiple levels of countries, ethnicity, and cultural contexts. It is an oriental cultural circle with a collection of design concepts with common characteristics in the East. The exploration of Oriental design draws on creative practices from China (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau), Japan, and Korea..

Oriental aesthetics can be understood as a state of freedom where inner spirituality is not interrupted by the outer world. The Orient practices two types of aesthetic approach: Da Ya (大雅) and Da Su (大俗). The beauty of Da Ya means forgetfulness of self and physical world, which concerns qualities of inner spirituality and simplicity such as imagination, rhythm, Zen (禅), and emptiness. In contrast, Da Su refers to the folk art that has been inherited from generation to generation. The ingenious folk art creates a strong sense of regional identity in creation with shape, colour, decoration, and dynamic forms, which reflect the profound cultural heritage and vibrant creativity of Eastern civilization (Dinnie, 2015).

Poetics is an important concept in Chinese aesthetics, and a perceptual spiritual space that contains endless rhythms of life. Zhuangzi (庄子) stated: 'Heaven and earth have great beauty without talking, four times there are clear laws without discussing, everything is reasonable without saying. The beauty of 'heaven and earth and the principle of all things lie in the fundamental nature of Taoism (道). The core of Zhuangzi's thought is to grasp the essence of beauty, that is, beauty is a high degree of the unification of law and purpose. Oriental poetics thus is considered as the spiritual aesthetic context in line with Hangzhou's expression for Asian Games.

2. The development of core graphics

What is core graphics? The 'core can be understood as the center and the main part; the graphic elements are the shapes or forms of vectors. Graphic elements are the medium for transmitting information and fulfilling the needs of aesthetic considerations. As the 'core graphics', these provide the mutual relationship between all the elements of the Asian Games.

The core graphics were originally known as 'supporting graphics', which are sub and supplementary elements in the Corporate Identity Systems. It is usually associated with logo and standard typefaces for a brand image that within an overall visual hierarchy. As a unique and integrated visual image, core graphics were used for the 26th Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, and were listed as the required elements of the Olympic landscape system design after the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. As the Olympic Games Organizing Committee gradually pays attention to the overall visual image system design, the imagery landscape of the Olympic Games also emphasizes systematic and integration, connecting the originally independent and scattered elements into an organic integration as a whole through a unified visual image. This creates a consistent visual communication in order to disseminate the best effect through various and massive media and information. The role and value of this integration goes beyond the scope of the original core graphics. Therefore, after the presentation of the visual 'panorama of the 28th Athens Olympic Games in 2004, the International Olympic Committee officially changed the name of 'supporting graphics' to 'core graphics'. After then the role and purpose of core graphics in the visual design system have been significantly improved, and increase the value of the event. In short, the core graphics are the sublimation of supporting graphics in the design of a visual identity system, and the scale of its application and the media of communication have become increasingly diverse and multidimensional (Kavaratzis, 2004).

2.1 Comparative case analysis: international precedents

The evolution of visual identity systems in international sporting events provides essential precedents for understanding the design philosophy of the Hangzhou Asian Games. This section presents a comparative analysis of landmark cases that have shaped contemporary practices in mega-event branding (Galeeva, 2016).

Case 1: Mexico City 1968 Olympics

The 1968 Mexico City Olympics (International Olympic Committee, n.d.) marked the birth of comprehensive Olympic visual identity systems. This was the first Games to implement an Olympic Identity Programme that unified all visual elements—from emblems and pictograms to wayfinding signage—into a coherent design language. The visual system ingeniously integrated Op Art aesthetics with traditional Huichol folk art patterns, demonstrating how indigenous cultural motifs could be abstracted and systematized for modern visual communication. The logo design, which expanded the five Olympic rings into the numerals '68,' created a seamless fusion of Olympic symbolism with local identity. The pictogram system, inspired by pre-Hispanic glyphs, established paradigms for cross-cultural visual communication that transcend linguistic barriers—a challenge similarly addressed in the Hangzhou Asian Games through the integration of Eastern aesthetic philosophy (Barke, 2010; Flaherty, 2014).

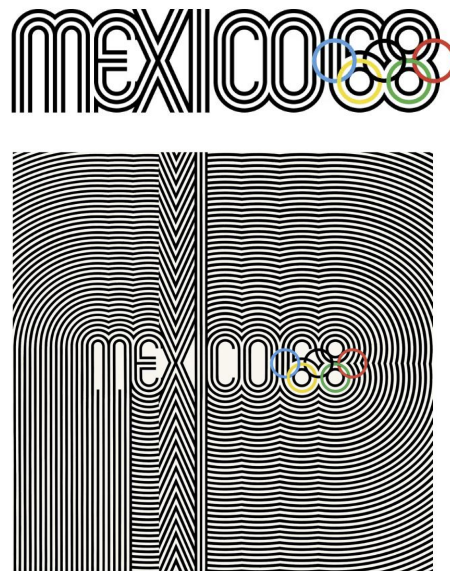


Figure 1. Olympic logo, Lance Wyman with Eduardo Terrazas, designers, 1968 (International Olympic Committee, n.d.-a)

Case 2: Beijing 2008 Olympics

The Beijing 2008 Olympics presented the most directly relevant precedent for the Hangzhou Asian Games, demonstrating how traditional Chinese cultural elements can be integrated into contemporary sports event branding. The "Chinese Seal·Dancing Beijing" emblem combines the traditional Chinese seal (印章, yin zhang) with calligraphic expression, creating a figure that resembles both an athlete in motion and the Chinese character "Jing" (京, capital) (Wu, 2018). This emblematic approach demonstrates how abstract cultural symbols can embody multiple layers of meaning simultaneously—selected from 1,985 submissions, the design integrated 篆刻艺术 (seal engraving art) with 五行学说 (Five Elements theory), where red symbolizes fire, vitality and celebration (Sun, 2022) (as shown in Figure 2).

The pictogram system, termed "the beauty of seal characters" (篆书之美), drew inspiration from oracle bone inscriptions (甲骨文) and bronze vessel inscriptions (金文). The 35 sport pictograms adopted 篆字结构 (seal script structure), combining 象形意趣 (pictographic aesthetic) with simplified modern graphics, reinforcing cultural authenticity while maintaining international legibility (Wu, 2018). However, the design generated controversy—critics argued the emblem lacked sufficient 力度 (strength), representing tension between "Chinese design" and mere "design using Chinese elements" (Zhu, 2023). This case demonstrates the feasibility and complexity of translating abstract Eastern cultural concepts—Yi Xiang (意象), Yi Jing (意境), and Jing Jie (境界)—into systematic visual applications.



Figure 2. Beijing 2008 "Dancing Beijing" Emblem and Seal-Inspired Pictogram System (International Olympic Committee, n.d.-b)

Case 3: Jakarta-Palembang 2018 Asian Games

The 2018 Jakarta-Palembang Asian Games presented a significant precedent within the Asian Games context. Designer Jefferson Edri transformed an aerial view of the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium—a national landmark built for the 1962 Asian Games—into an abstracted logo through radial grid systems, creating dynamic radiating paths with the sun emblem at the center, expressing the theme "Energy of Asia" (Paramayuga & Tanrere, 2020). Notably, this logo underwent significant revision from an initial design featuring a cendrawasih bird, responding to public criticism that the original appeared outdated (Marulak, 2018) (as shown in Figure 3).

The identity adopted a modular design approach, fragmenting the logo's 41 geometric segments—curved forms, triangular shapes, circles, and radiating patterns—for systematic reuse across pictograms, city beautification installations, and supergraphics (Paramayuga & Tanrere, 2020). The system incorporated Indonesia's multicultural diversity through three mascots embodying "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity): Bhin Bhin (cendrawasih bird) wore Asmat patterns from Papua, Atung (Bawean deer) displayed Betawi tumpal-patterned sarong, and Kaka (Javan rhinoceros) featured Palembang floral motifs (Saniscara, 2020). This approach demonstrated how architectural heritage and national symbolism could serve as foundations for contemporary event branding—a methodology echoed in Hangzhou's integration of West Lake landscapes and Jiangnan (江南) cultural elements.

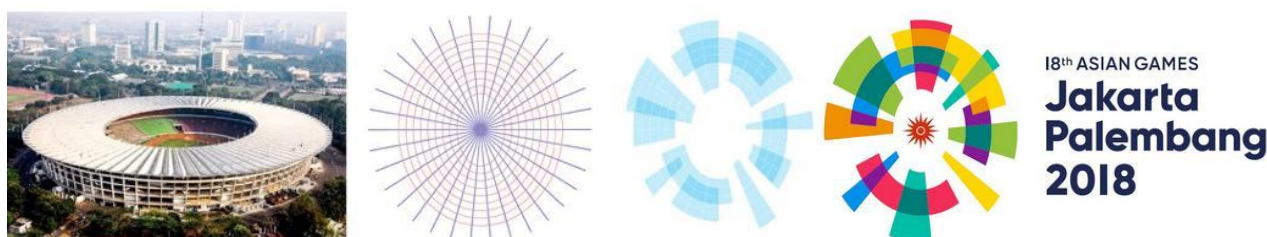


Figure 3. Design Process and Adopted Logo of the 2018 Asian Games (International Olympic Committee, n.d.-c)

Case 4: Paris 2024 Olympics

The Paris 2024 Olympics represents the latest evolution in Olympic visual identity systems. The emblem combines three iconic symbols—the gold medal, the Olympic flame, and the face of Marianne (the personification of the French Republic)—into a unified design. Designer Sylvain Boyer created the first Olympic emblem to serve both the Olympic and Paralympic Games, reflecting contemporary values of inclusivity and embodying the motto "Games Wide Open" (Qiao, 2024) (as shown in Figure 4).

The accompanying visual system drew inspiration from Art Deco heritage and Parisian cobblestones (pavés), employing modular square grids infinitely recombined across applications (Jin & Wang, 2025). The 62 pictograms featured symmetric arrangements of sports equipment rendered as "badges of honor" to emphasize each sport's intrinsic value (Li & Cheng, 2024), prioritizing emotional connection over wayfinding functionality. The introduction of a comprehensive pink wayfinding system unified the fragmented color palette, demonstrating strategic adaptation in implementation (Jin & Wang, 2025). This evolution toward flexible, scalable visual systems provides context for understanding how the Hangzhou Asian Games core graphics adapt Oriental aesthetic philosophy to contemporary multi-platform communication requirements.

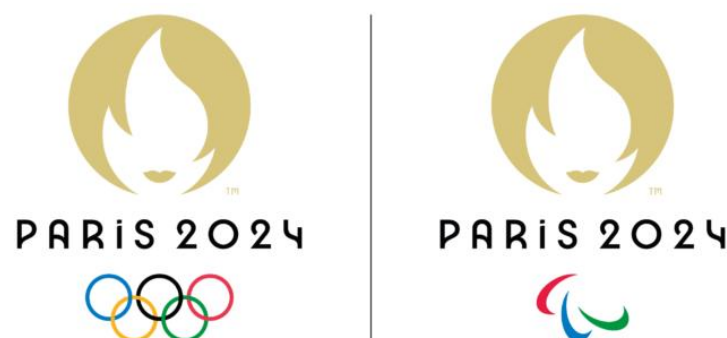


Figure 4. Paris 2024 Olympics Unified Emblem (International Olympic Committee, n.d.-d)

2.3 Design challenges and integrative requirements of the core graphics system

The design of core graphics of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou 2022 is extremely challenging. The interpretation of its visual image is an important part of the imagery landscape. It requires the designers to integrate the concept and spirit of the Asian Games and the cultural connotation of the host city (Brown et al., 2016), and apply creative concept and unique perspective to refine, describe and sublimate the theme. It is necessary to associate the dissemination of graphic elements represented by the Asian Games logo, standard fonts, mascots, sports icons, etc., and to actively coordinate the relationship between these elements and closely connect them. It is also necessary to study the role and connotation of the core visual elements from the creative conception and expression form of the overall visual image system, and consider the harmony and unity (Cheng & Zhang, 2025) of the core graphic design components and its application extensibly. Through identifying the combination specifications, providing design combinations for the application systems, and expressing the ultimate concept of the Hangzhou Asian Games, it enables the design integration of the overall visual power, immersed in the daily life of Hangzhou. By doing so, it allows the world to seamlessly appreciate the unique cultural charm and spiritual vitality of China—and of Hangzhou in particular (Figure 5 and Figure 6).



Figure 5. Emblem of 19th Asian Games 'Tides Surging' Design: Yuan Youmin



Figure 6. Combination Application of the 19th Asian Games Core Graphic 'Meeting the World' (润泽, Run Ze) and the Emblem Design: Cheng Zhaohui

3. Conceptualization and visualization

The core graphic design is a process of transferring the visual image to identity design, which is based on the premise of conveying and interpreting the concept. For example, one of the most famous poems describing the West Lake (西湖) is written by Su Shi (苏轼) in the Song (宋) Dynasty.

Drinking on the West Lake, Drizzling After Sunshine

The lake's bright ripples please the eye in sunny weather;
The mountains' hues are charming even when wrapped in rain.
To Xizi (西子) I liken West Lake in her beauty;
Light makeup or heavy—she is lovely all the same.

饮湖上初晴后雨二首·其二

[宋] 苏轼

水光潋滟晴方好，
山色空蒙雨亦奇。
欲把西湖比西子，
淡妆浓抹总相宜。

The poem illustrates a typical and vivid image of the West Lake in Hangzhou through colour and emotions. How might we translate this text through graphic elements?

The integration of the core graphics comes from the theme of ‘Meeting the World’ (润泽, Run Ze). This theme is the soul of the Asian Games in Hangzhou’s oriental poetics context. With its cultural connotation and unique perspective, this theme interprets the aesthetics of Yi Xiang, Yi Jing, and Jing Jie, and links their connotations with the Asian Games theme slogan ‘Heart to heart, @future’ and becomes the core value of integrating the Asian Games communication system.

3.1 The Inspiration of Core Graphics— Xiang (象) of Yi Xiang (意象)

‘Xiang’ is understood as an emotional and artistic representation of all things in the universe. It is not limited to simulating the appearance of external objects, but focuses more on expressing the inherent characteristics or charm of things. I interpreted ‘Xiang of Yi Xiang’ as ‘image of imagery’ including two ‘images’ that are related to each other but different by nature: one is a concrete object, which refers to the media leading to infinite artistic connotation; the other is the creation of connotation, which is concrete behind the image as infinite, profound, charm and realm.

Hangzhou is a city with not only the quality of oriental charm, elegance and quiet, but also has a different kind of splendour, both intellectual and technological future oriented. ‘The Hangzhou Asian Games’ aesthetics sources come from history, landscape, lifestyle, intelligence and spirit of the people (as shown in Figure 7). From this, it provides the visual elements for the core graphics: lines, cloud, silk. The overlaps of lines represent the integration of nature and humanity which portray a landscape by dots, lines and surfaces in water colour; a cloud of internet symbolizes the perspective of Hangzhou as an intelligent city; and silk retraces a long history of the city, connected to the world hand in hand. Combining landscape, cloud, and silk, it turns into a fluent, meaningful and rhythmic oriental poetic image of Hangzhou.

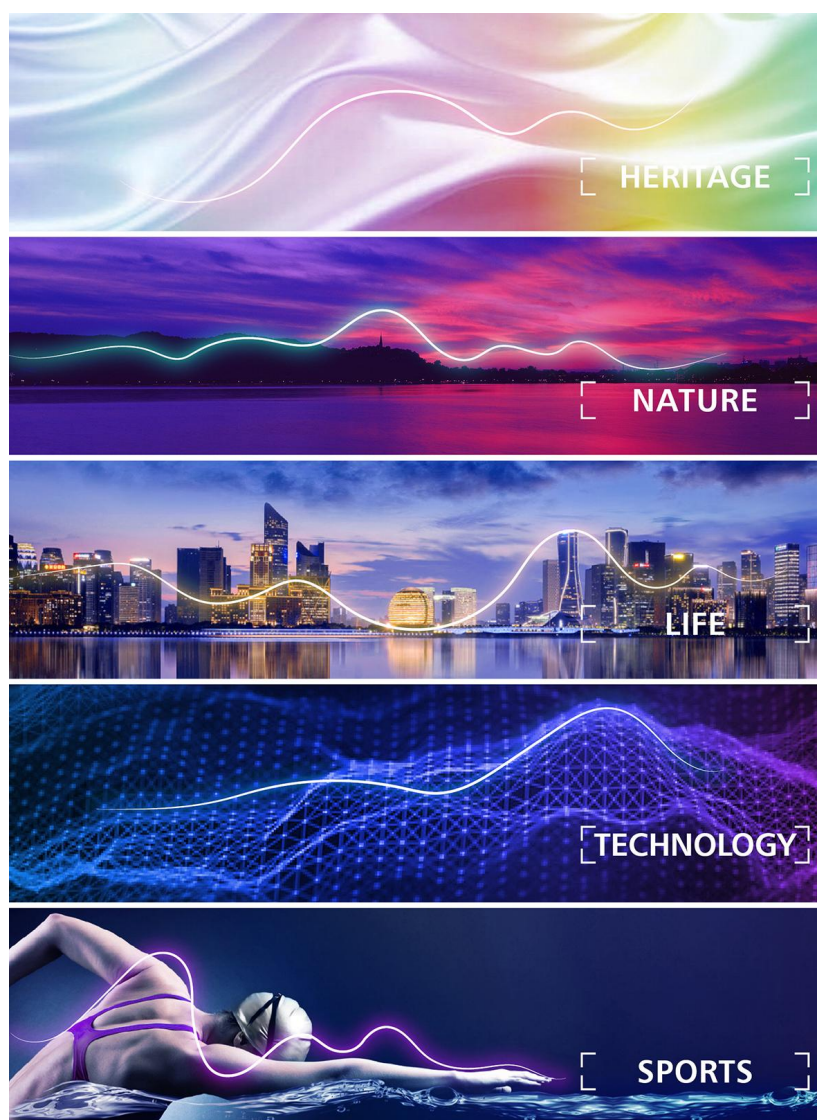


Figure 7. Inspiration of Core Graphics Design: Cheng Zhaohui

3.2 The Creative Presentation — Xuan (玄) of Yi Jing (意境)

As an aesthetic form, 'Xuan' is a kind of enveloping and cohesive sense of beauty and quietness, and it is a kind of 'beauty of the mysterious'. It is a high-level generalization of Oriental aesthetic tastes that belong only to the East, such as elegance, subtlety, etherealness, and profoundness. The core graphic elements can be summarized as:

(1) The colourfulness of lakes, canal and rivers.

The quiet and peaceful landscape with watercolor smudges creates the visual texture and rich layers of the water. Between the tangible and the intangible, it demonstrates a spiritual beauty of Hangzhou Asian Games. The use of watercolor or layering, creates a rich visual texture and a transparent effect, rendering the beauty of nature and harmony, enriching the vividness and expressiveness of the core graphics, and embodying traditional Chinese culture and art.

(2) Jiangnan culture (江南文化) in connection with the past and future.

The Jiangnan culture originated from Liangzhu (良渚) in Hangzhou, which lights up the fire of civilization in early history. The use of digital pixel dot forms the digital cloud, creating a dense contrast with the 'white space', conveying the virtual link of the organic and intelligent network cloud, highlighting the diverse and openness in image the context of new era, as well as implying the slogan of 'Heart to heart, @Future'.

(3) Silk as elegant rhyme, the five senses as harmonious, oriental poetics.

The dynamic rhythm of the lines expresses the silky elegance and flexible characteristic, explaining the humanistic and sports spirit of the Asian Games, and shows the aesthetics, sports vitality and grand ceremony atmosphere of Hangzhou Asian Games.

The six colour themes of water blue, rainbow purple, sun red, laurel yellow, lake and mountain green, and ink white are applied in all creative designs, or part or whole, which seems to be static and dynamic, and appears holographically. Hangzhou is such a place where is considered as a paradise in China since ancient times(as shown in Figure 8).

杭州亚运会核心图形 Core Graphics of Asian Games Hangzhou 2022

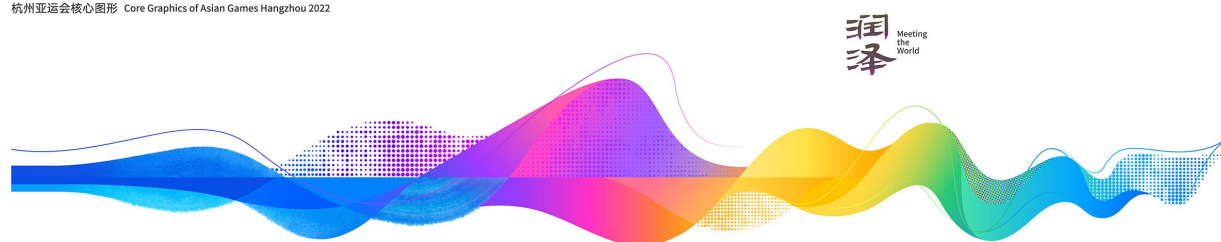


Figure 8. Standard Combination of Core Graphics and Theme Design: Cheng Zhaohui

3.3 The Visualization — He (和) of Jing Jie (境界)

'He' is a view of the universe that is consistent with the harmony between man and nature in traditional Chinese culture. 'Jing' is the 'environment' born outside of the image by compounding and accumulating thousands of 'images' beyond the limits of time and space. It is the multidimensional 'presentation' after visual creativity. The core graphics create a realm 'outside the image', which requires the enlightenment or association of the physical image to achieve the real 'creation'.

The core graphics is like a river that originated in the distant past and rushes towards the future. It is a long river of life where human beings have multiplied and created civilization for thousands of years; it is also like a river from 'secret' to 'liberation'. The silk ribbons flicked in the wind like water, dancing and flying gently, gently brushing the face, moisturizing the landscape. The long historical context and profound culture immersed in Hangzhou for thousands of years reflects the cultural heritage of Eastern civilization and the simple and inherent oriental aesthetic.

The core graphics of the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022 follow the concept of 'Heart-to-Heart, @Future', showing the Chinese people's enthusiasm for welcoming the world and embracing the future, reflecting the vitality and passion of the Asian Games, and adopting modern techniques to express Hangzhou's long historical and cultural characteristics. The construction of the core graphics of the Asian Games is based on the following considerations: (1) the basic values of the Asian Games as the main factor (2) the cultural characteristics of the host country and the host

city as the design origin (3) in line with the Chinese culture ‘the unity of nature and man, the harmony between man and the earth, nature as the way, and harmony with the landscape’. The core graphics is perfectly associated with the harmony of the traditional Chinese aesthetic spirit: Confucianism (儒家)s mountains and waters, Tao (道家)s ease and freedom, Zens ethereal and profound. Using the oriental language and aesthetic sense to describe the emptiness and etherealness of a colorful Asian world.

The core graphics embodies the essence and universal values of the Asian Games, and the common aspiration of mankind for a better future, which is also the highest state of ‘Meeting the World’ (润泽, Run Ze). This inherent logic of thought has injected strong vitality into the core graphics, which is a combination of landscapes, waters, and clouds. It has laid a base of connotation for its application in the entire design system. The interpretation and dissemination of the Image of the Asian Games provide a convincing explanation. In order to enrich the visual of the core graphics, I specially designed the core graphics in ‘point color’ effect, which produces a ‘dot matrix’ visual perception, allowing countless pixels to be integrated in the vision, enhancing the color and passionate emotion (as shown in Figure 9).

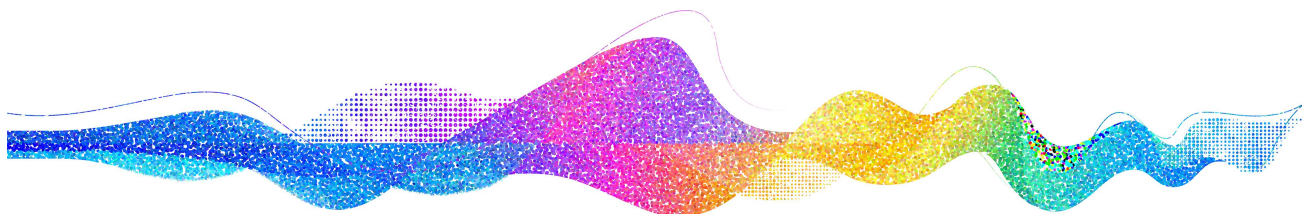


Figure 9. Pointed Presentation of Core Graphics Design: Cheng Zhaohui

4. Aesthetic construction of visual identity

The Image of the Asian Games is a comprehensive manifestation of the culture of the Asian Games and the host city. A successful Asian Games is shaped not only by the grand opening and closing ceremonies, world-class stadium facilities (Herstein & Berger, 2013), standard and professional competition organization, and orderly and smooth operation of the stadiums, but also from the ‘Hangzhou Asian Games Image’. It plays a positive role in promoting the image of the country and the city (Kavaratzis, 2004). The ‘Hangzhou Asian Games Image’ with the oriental wisdom is not only to create a culturally intelligent urban space and a fashionable and dynamic arena, a grand and gorgeous, peaceful and joyful atmosphere, but also a multi-angle, multi-dimensional, multi-layered dissemination of Chinese culture, shaping the national image. Therefore, the massive design scale, complicated design structure, systematic operation mechanism and management of the ‘Asian Games Image’ determine its importance in the construction of the entire Asian Games cultural system.

The design approach adopted for the Hangzhou Asian Games reflects broader trends in contemporary mega-event visual identity development. The International Olympic Committee’s 2022 comprehensive brand evolution—the first systematic identity overhaul since 1896—established new paradigms for multi-platform visual coherence. This global initiative introduced three custom typefaces (Olympic Headline, Olympic Sans, and Olympic Serif) and graphic patterns inspired by athletic fields of play, demonstrating the industry-wide shift toward flexible, scalable visual systems (International Olympic Committee, 2022). The Hangzhou Asian Games core graphics align with these contemporary standards while distinguishing themselves through the integration of Oriental aesthetic philosophy and Jiangnan cultural elements.

The Image of the Asian Games is established on the operation and management of the Asian Games brand management system. With the goal of shaping the brand image of the Hangzhou Asian Games, it is a relatively large and complex design system that includes planning, design, and project management to formulate a complete, unique, and systematic design strategy that shows the cultural characteristics of the host country and the host city. The design of the Image of the Asian Games, on the one hand, follows the cultural spirit and development rules of the Hangzhou Asian Games. On the other hand, it must create a good identity formation for the market development and the image construction of the host city. Therefore, the Asian Games image system has the characteristics of complexity from the design theme, content, form to the structure of the entire system, application specifications and management model. The mutual restriction and coordination among various factors determine the effectiveness and appearance of the entire design system. The systematic integration of each key element is to enhance the overall communication effect and more effectively control the overall image, landscape, culture and visual presentation of the Hangzhou Asian Games.

The Image of the Asian Games presents a dynamic evolution with the development of the Olympic movement. At different stages of the development of the Asian Games, the content and form, function and role, value and meaning contained in the ‘Asian Games Image Landscape’ are constantly developing, which reflects the design ideations, design

methods and design concepts under different historical backgrounds. Currently, the ‘Asian Games Image Landscape’ consists of a series of elements including the logo, standard fonts, slogans, secondary logos, mascots, sports icons, colour systems, and other core graphics. The composition of the application is combined with the relationship of the multi-dimensional communication media. This composition is designed to create a unique, holistic, and overall ‘harmonious’ design system for the Asian Games. These independent imagery elements must be connected and achieved through a ‘linker’ to form an integrated series of graphic presentations, which shapes and disseminate an imagery landscape more focused and powerful. The core graphics as a ‘linker’ plays an important role to promote the development of the related cultural activities, and cultural creative industries, allowing Asian Games imagery landscape aesthetics can be obtained in different levels and perspectives in a massive system.

The ‘Hangzhou Asian Games Image’ is mainly used in the systems such as the cityscape, stadium, and the product. The cityscape includes urban public landscapes, such as light boxes, fences, road flags, etc.; the stadium includes the image of venues inside and outside the stadium; the product includes various magazines and publications, as well as official and commercial licensed product development and other related fields. Numerous elements have their own independent usage in specifications and applications, and there are also application specifications that are linked to each other in a specific combination. On the different planning levels, elements are coordinate and associate with each other, with the overall consistency and coordination, showing the unique Jiangnan culture and landscape of Hangzhou, and jointly shape an overall cultural and visual image of the Asian Games.

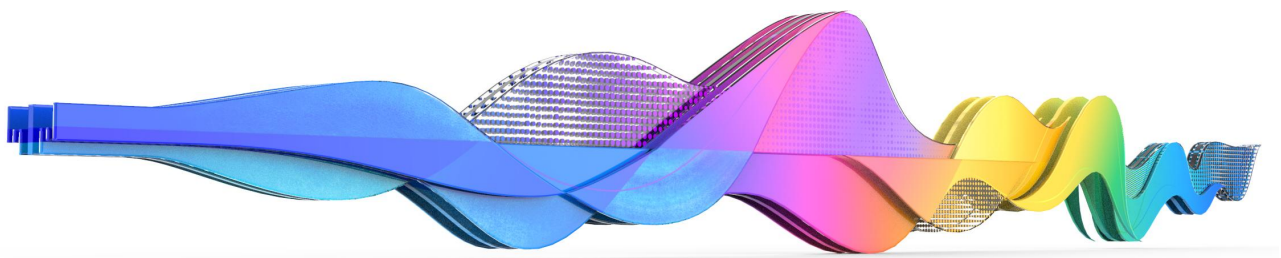


Figure 10. Application of Core Graphics for Outdoor Installations Design: Cheng Zhaohui

4.1 Full view and full colour scheme

The ‘full view and full colour scheme’ of the core graphics is the overall appearance of the Asian Games image aesthetics, reflecting the vitality and dynamic movement, and is a panoramic view of the Asian Games culture and environment intertwined with rich elements. This system is not only connecting all the visual elements into a whole, but also provides a basic framework for graphic and colour composition for the development and application of the design. Most of the design of Asian Games design projects are derived from this system, or part of it, or extended application. As the ‘full view and full colour scheme’ core graphics has visual power and flexibility in application, a panoramic view is created in such a way to demonstrate the oriental poetic interpretation and aesthetic characteristics.

The core graphics of the ‘full view and full colour scheme’ contain Hangzhou's natural and cultural elements, combined with six thematic colours with rich connotations, to show the historical and contemporary Hangzhou urban context formed in a long historical development. As the main colour of the Hangzhou Asian Games, rainbow purple enhances the rhythm of the era of the glow of the sun. The water blue reflects the spirit of the future technology, the lake and mountain green reflect the poetic nature of the ecologically lush in Hangzhou city, and the laurel yellow symbolizes the Chinese meaning of reunion, sunny red symbolizes the vitality of the Asian Games with passion, and the ink white symbolizes the oriental wisdom in the realm of philosophy. The core graphics and colours form a complementary semantic meaning. In the extensive urban design, for example, four main colour systems and corresponding graphics are mainly considered: water blue, rainbow purple, laurel yellow, and lake and mountain green, pursuing a relationship between the game, city and people. From an Orient aesthetic perspective, it provides a thinking about ‘harmony’. Implementing and promoting the core graphics in the major areas of the city and the competition establishes a specific visual impression of the Asian Games in the public. This is a multi-level panoramic presentation of the culture of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, creates a new paradigm for the Asian Games, and the forging and tempering of the Asian Games spirit in the context of the new era.

4.2 Scenario linkage of deconstruction

The Image of the Asian Games is a visual system. The core graphics can be cropped through the lines of the traditional Chinese ‘rice character grid (米字格)’. The rice grid system is flexible that can be cropped into various graphic shapes with different scale. The cropped elements are able to combine with main visual elements such as logos, sports icons, mascots, slogans, etc. in 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 1:5, 1:6, 1:8, 2:3, 4:7 and other different ratios by using horizontal or vertical cutting. As the panorama has rich elements, the cropped graphics not only present various shapes,

but also the variety of adaptations, which gives a unified and diversified visual impression. In order to ensure that the basic units are closely related, it requires a guideline that defines each element must associate with certain colour and graphics. The colour of core graphics includes full-colour, two-colour, and mono colour schemes, and classified into standard packages according to colours and proportions for practical implementation.

The cropped core graphics can be applied in linked piece by piece depending on different circumstances. In specific landscape scenes, it can be combined with the gradient colours of the main color system to complement each other. In various scenes in the cityscape, such as subway light boxes, posters and other applications, the main background colours are water blue, rainbow purple, laurel yellow and lake and mountain green. In order to communicate clear messages and orderly visual experience, it should consider the relationship of forms, the contrast of images and colour, and the hierarchy of visual literacy. When the core graphics are applied to the stadium, it should be cropped according to the event category, classification of colour system and corresponding core graphics. The design combined with the theme colour gradient applied to the inside and outside of the stadium. The core graphics and colour forms a gentle visual transition in each arena, which is different from the application in the cityscape.

4.3 Dynamic exploration

The Image of the Asian Games has the characteristics of integrated communication. In a context of international cross-cultural communication, it requires a complex environment, diverse media, multi-level and multi-perspectives, as well as the instant reaction, which constitute a complicated image system of the Asian Games. The design system thus must be scalable, flexible and accessible. At the same time, with the emergence of new technologies and new materials, as well as cooperation and crossover, the application of the Asian Games image has gradually developed into a two-dimensional visual design, to three-dimensional product development, landscape display design, and spatial information-oriented design. The core graphics integrate with graphics, images, and interactive media, creating a comprehensive and multi-dimensional design system. That is a composite, interdisciplinary, and systematic large-scale design project. With the trend from the 'image-reading' to the 'screen-reading', the Asian Games image system has added new diversified and multi-dimensional applications, which greatly enriched its scalability (Cheng, 2025). The dynamic design adopts pixel flow technology—silk and cloud elements flow synchronously with screen scrolling on subway displays, and color gradients respond to user interactions on WeChat, enhancing immersive visual experience.

In order to be more flexible in the presentation of public art, publications, product and moving image, I implement the core graphics with 'dotted' effects, tending to present in a dynamic way which is suitable for various media such as public transportation displays, WeChat, and website. In different media platforms it immerses the visual experience, enhances the narrative of visual communication, blending virtual and reality into one, and build a unique Asian Games aesthetics of Hangzhou (Cheng & Zhang, 2025). The narrative creates a stylish, sophisticated, flexible and diverse contemporary Hangzhou aesthetic conception, facilitates the common cognition of aesthetics, which attracts the attention of the world (as shown in Figure 11-15).



Figure 11. Application of Core Graphics for Outdoor Installations Design: Cheng Zhaohui

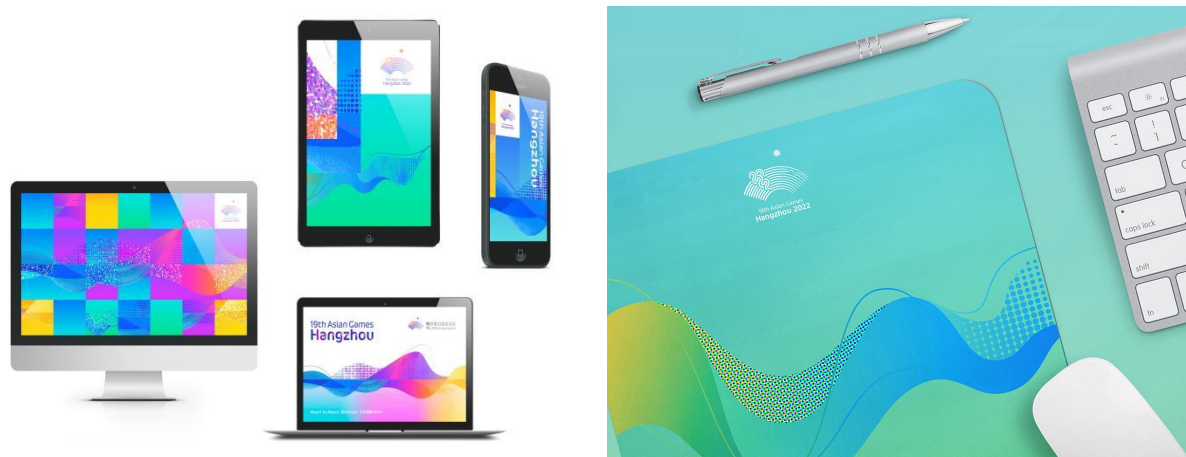


Figure 12. Application of Core Graphics for Official Website, Social Media, and Stationeries Design: Cheng Zhaohui

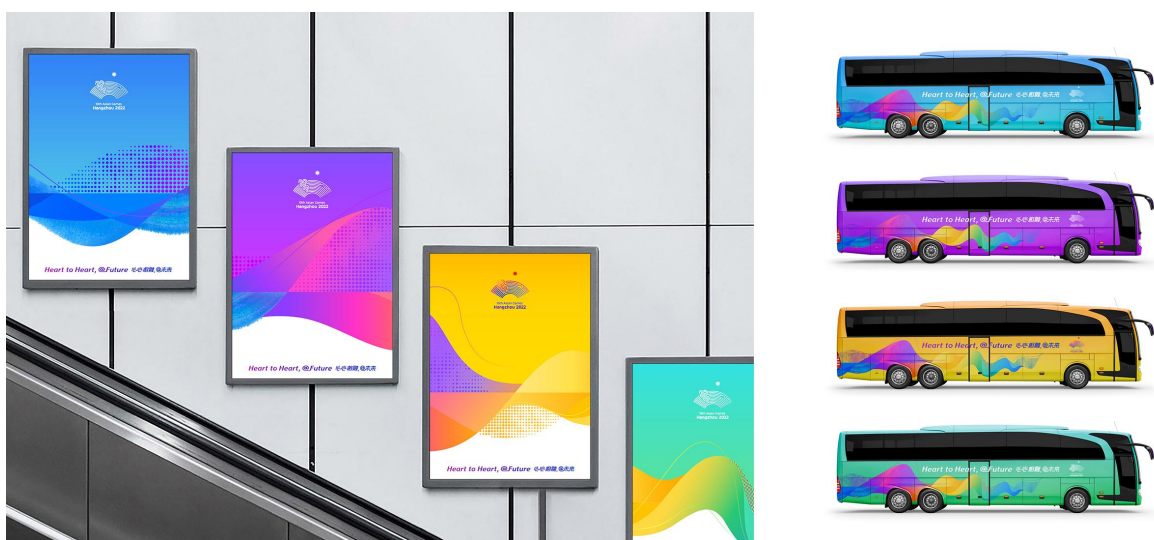


Figure 13. Application of Core Graphics for Subway Posters and Transportation Design: Cheng Zhaohui

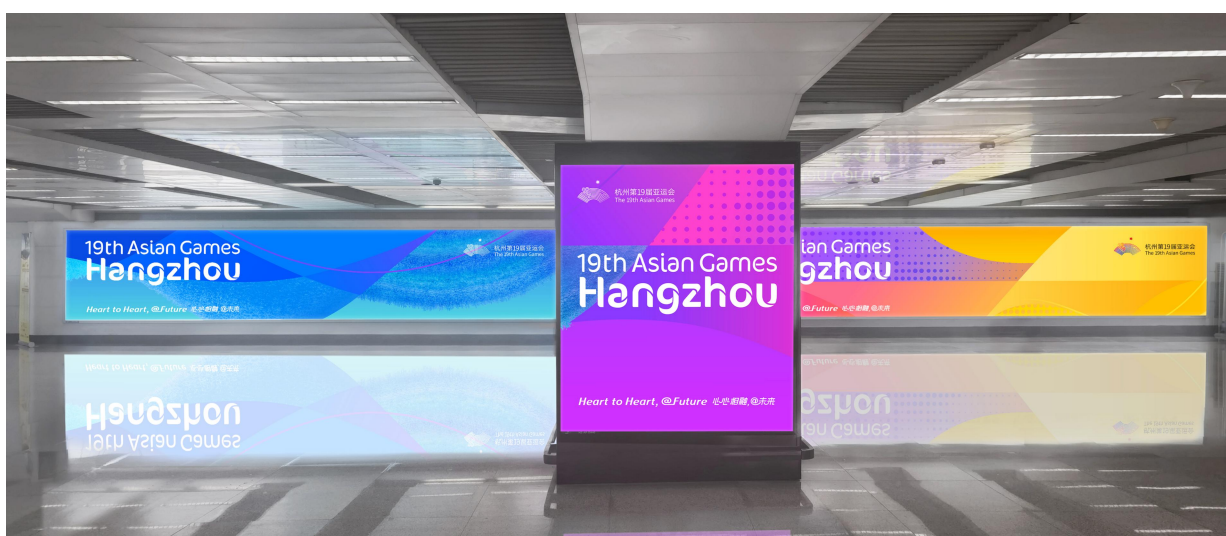


Figure 14. Application of Core Graphics in Light Box at Airport Design: Cheng Zhaohui



Figure 15. Application of Core Graphics in Banner at Airport Design: Cheng Zhaohui

5. Summary

This study has examined the creative methodology and aesthetic framework underlying the core graphics design for the 19th Asian Games, demonstrating how traditional Chinese cultural concepts can be systematically translated into contemporary visual identity systems for mega sporting events.

The research contributes to the field of visual communication design in three principal dimensions. First, it establishes a theoretical framework grounded in Oriental aesthetic philosophy—specifically the concepts of Yi Xiang (意象, imagery), Yi Jing (意境, artistic conception), and Jing Jie (境界, realm)—as guiding principles for mega-event visual identity development. This framework offers an alternative to Western-centric design methodologies that have dominated Olympic and Asian Games branding since Mexico 1968 (Traganou, 2009). Second, through comparative analysis with international precedents including Mexico 1968, Beijing 2008, Jakarta 2018, and Paris 2024, this study identifies key strategies for balancing cultural authenticity with global visual communication standards—a challenge increasingly relevant as host cities seek to differentiate their Games while maintaining international legibility. Third, the practical implementation of the ‘Meeting the World’ (润泽, Run Ze) theme demonstrates that abstract Eastern aesthetic concepts can be operationalized into scalable, multi-platform visual systems that function effectively across diverse media environments, from urban landscapes to digital interfaces.

The Hangzhou Asian Games core graphics exemplify the harmonious integration of Jiangnan (江南) cultural heritage with contemporary design requirements. By synthesizing elements of landscape, cloud imagery, and silk motifs into a cohesive visual language, the design achieves what Chinese aesthetics terms "He" (和, harmony)—the unity of nature and humanity that transcends mere visual appeal to embody deeper cultural values (Zhang et al., 2023).

However, this study acknowledges certain limitations. As a practitioner-informed case analysis, the findings are context-specific to the Hangzhou Asian Games and may require adaptation for other cultural and geographical contexts. Future research might examine audience reception and cross-cultural interpretation of Oriental aesthetic elements in sports event branding, or investigate the long-term legacy effects of culturally grounded visual identity systems on host city image and tourism development (Brown et al., 2016).

In conclusion, the visual identity system of the Hangzhou Asian Games represents not merely an aesthetic achievement but a strategic instrument for cultural diplomacy—contributing to the construction of place-based identity while fostering international understanding through the universal language of design.

List of Abbreviations

Data Availability Statement

Data generated during this study are included in this published article.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Author's Contributions

Conceptualization: C.Z.; Methodology: C.Z.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: C.Z.; Writing—Review & Editing: C.Z.; Visualization: C.Z. C.Z. has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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