

# Explore The Application of Folk Arts in Wall Painting Art

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyse the inheritance of folk arts in the wall painting art as an example, and to propose the main measure for the application of folk arts in the wall painting art, to allow our country's folk arts to continue the inheritance while enriching the wall painting art form, and to encourage the integrated development of both. Folk arts refers to the art that is inherited and developed among the public. The purpose of folk arts creation is to beautify the environment and enrich the popular culture. Folk arts includes the traditional art forms of various ethnic groups in China and is the embodiment of various art forms. Folk and traditional arts are rooted in and reflective of the cultural life of a community. They encompass the body of expressive culture associated with the fields of folklore and cultural heritage. Tangible folk arts include historic objects which are crafted and used within a traditional community. It applies a qualitative, because of its flexibility in recording observations of elements of folk arts in wall painting. To this day, wall painting still has a large market in Chinese society, and folk arts has gradually developed into the most popular element. Overall, this study will provide an invaluable source of information about folk arts and wall painting. It will benefit wall painting designers, artists, researchers, art students, and scholars interested in studying this theme and traditional elements.*

**Keywords:** Folk arts, Wall painting, Inheritance.



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

As The Times continues to evolve and living standards improve, there is a growing surge of interest and enthusiasm among individuals towards art. In contemporary China, there is increasing recognition and emphasis placed on traditional culture and art by both the government and society at large (Song & Shi, 2022). Folk art, being an integral component of Chinese traditional culture, exerts a beneficial influence on individuals' spiritual realm. The art of wall painting encompasses a diverse range of themes, offering a wealth of content and vibrant colours that are highly regarded by the general public. Art can enhance and embellish our living surroundings (Liu & Meng, 2018; Yi, 2003), while simultaneously serving as a means to express national identity and educate the populace. The integration of folk art into wall painting art is a mutually beneficial process. Firstly, the incorporation of folk art allows for the preservation and continuation of traditional culture and art. Secondly, it facilitates innovation within wall painting art, thereby promoting its comprehensive development while upholding the values of exceptional traditional culture.

Hence, folk art is actively exploring diverse artistic expressions to fulfil the aesthetic demands of contemporary society. One notable similarity between wall painting art and folk art lies in their shared utilisation of a common subject matter (Fan, 2016). The application of folk art's meaning or form to wall painting art presents novel prospects for the advancement of folk art.

## 2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

### 2.1 Folk Arts

Folk art is an enduring cultural phenomenon (R. Zhang & Zhao, 2020) that a nation or social group gradually shapes through long-term engagement in production practises and social interactions and subsequently transmitted across generations. Throughout its formation and evolution, this folk culture has engendered the indigenous population's spiritual tradition and regional identity while also exerting a significant cultural influence and educational role on individuals. The enduring vitality of folk art can be attributed to its origins within the folk community (Zhao & Yang, 2014), its keen observation of everyday life, its deep connection to national culture, and its primary focus on the expression of customs, habits, and the socio-economic conditions of the people. Various art forms in the cultural context of the Chinese nation serve as embodiments of the spirit of harmony, perfection, and auspiciousness (Komarovskaya, 2017).

The analysis of the modelling components in folk art reveals that the dragon and phoenix symbolise the equilibrium between Yin and Yang within the celestial and terrestrial realms. Stone lions (Figure 1) are commonly referred to as sacred creatures, traditionally employed to safeguard residential structures. The term "Peony" carries connotations of prosperity and prestige, while the symbol of the "Lotus" represents purity. The lotus flower exhibits a close association with narratives within the Buddhist tradition, thereby suggesting the existence of a metaphysical domain that transcends the ordinary realm of existence. The depiction of fish symbolises the bountiful yield of agricultural produce, and traditional art forms have historically profoundly conveyed this representation of fish (Figure 2). Furthermore, cattle, sheep, magpies, and cranes serve as prominent folk totem symbols, frequently depicted in various forms of artistic expression.



**Figure 1** Stone lion

(Source: <https://www.jiemian.com/article/2433236.html>,  
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**Figure 2** Fish in folk culture

(Source: <https://www.photophoto.cn/sucal/29227822.html>,  
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The graphic structure, utilisation of colour, and depiction of traditional folk art are evident in the artwork. The technique employed in this form of art emphasises a sensibility rooted in folk traditions, prioritising simplicity, naivety, exaggerated imagery, deformation, and arbitrariness (Ghosh, 2020; Zou & Yeo, 2022). These characteristics collectively contribute to the artwork's distinctive charm. Folk art encompasses a diverse range of subject matter, including depictions of male agricultural activities, representations of female figures engaged in rural fishing and hunting, as well as imagery featuring flowers, birds, auspicious clouds, and various animals. These artistic expressions not only capture the

vibrant and dynamic atmosphere of life but also encapsulate the spiritual nourishment that has been transmitted across generations. The perception, demand, and utilisation of colour in folk art are rooted in the innate colour consciousness of individuals and have become an integral part of each nation's distinct understanding of colour (Rekha, 2010). The pursuit and understanding of colour among different ethnic groups have resulted in variations in folk art expression forms, owing to differences in living customs, living environment, religious concepts, and totem worship. Consequently, these variations have given rise to distinct artistic orientations and styles.

Various forms of artistic expression, including paper cutting, clay sculpture, embroidery, cloth paste, batik, and others, offer diverse ways to convey the same subject matter and shape. These different mediums employ distinct processes, resulting in varied aesthetic experiences and enhancing the visual representation of folk art (X. Zhang & Wang, 2022). For instance, one notable example is the traditional art form of folk paper-cutting, which employs symbolic expression techniques characterised by concise shapes and slightly exaggerated elements, often incorporating hollow shapes. This text discusses three forms of traditional folk art: 1) The symbolic representation of good wishes in marriage and harvest by Paper-cutting (Figure 3), 2) The art of folk shadow play (Figure 4), which initially employed paper and later transitioned to animal skins such as donkey, cow, and sheep, utilising decorative modelling language to convey the emotions of joy and sorrow within the human realm, and 3) The art of folk clay sculpture (Figure 5), where skilled artisans and artists employ natural colours and employ exaggerated and dynamic techniques to depict narrative-rich imagery.



**Figure 3** Paper-cutting

(Source: <https://www.rouding.com/chuantongshougong/minjianyishu/48743.html>,  
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**Figure 4** Folk shadow play

(Source: <https://www.zhizuoxi.com/gongyi/minjian/201208/23454.html>,  
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**Figure 5** Folk clay sculpture

(Source: <https://m.jia.com/baike/xartile/360348.html>,  
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## 2.2 Wall Painting Art

Wall painting art, commonly referred to as the artistic practice of painting on walls, typically involves the use of environmentally friendly and quick-drying acrylic paint for production purposes (Roslan & Bakar, 2019). Mural painting can be regarded as one of the earliest manifestations of artistic expression in the annals of human civilization. The earliest form of wall painting art can be observed in the presence of numerous paintings depicting prehistoric civilization on rock walls and cave walls (Rusli & Zali, 2020). In ancient China, religious narratives were employed as the central themes for mural paintings, serving as a means to invoke prayers for tranquilly and harmony. The practice of depicting religious beliefs and daily life on walls gradually transformed into the art form known as wall painting.

During the Tang Dynasty, the emergence of religious practises coincided with the rise of several notable painters, including Yan Liben, Yuchi Yi Monk, and Wu Daozi. These artists were known for their depictions of diverse religious themes on wall surfaces. During this particular era, there was a significant proliferation of Buddhist murals, which played a prominent role in the dissemination of religious imagery. The depiction of religious activities within temple settings further augmented the thematic diversity of wall paintings. The Song and Yuan dynasties in China witnessed a significant flourishing of wall painting art, exemplified by notable examples such as the Dunhuang wall painting and the Shanxi Yongle Palace wall painting (Fan, 2016).

During the period spanning the Song and Yuan dynasties, there was an emergence of folk murals featuring dramatic themes. These murals were primarily used as decorative elements, adorning the walls and building components of temples and stage walls. Following the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there was a growing popularity of murals depicting dramatic themes. This can be attributed to the widespread influence of dramas within the folk community, as well as the fact that many of these murals were created by skilled artisans from the folk sector. Consequently, wall paintings depicting theatrical scenes emerged as a dominant form of folk culture during this period. Following China's attainment of independence, wall painting emerged as a prominent tool employed by the Communist Party of China and the state to disseminate Communist ideologies and impart education to the populace. Notably, this form of artistic expression received substantial backing at the national level during this era (Fan, 2016).

### 2.2.1 Traditional Wall Painting Art

In early human societies, murals were employed as totems to document historical events and represent religious beliefs. During this period, the artistic style of human paintings exhibited a rudimentary and uncomplicated nature, with a greater emphasis on functionality and practical significance. During the feudal dynasty, the primitive agricultural practice of slash-and-burn was supplanted by the adoption of iron ploughs and livestock farming. This transition led to notable advancements in the economy and productivity, which in turn facilitated the flourishing of the humanities and arts. Throughout an extended duration in ancient society, a multitude of highly skilled artists emerged, whose artistic creations exerted a profound influence on human aesthetic preferences and endured various mediums such as paper, utensils, and architectural structures for an extended period (Chu, 2000).

The mural painting holds significant prominence within the annals of Western art history. Frescoes are prevalent throughout Europe, adorning various architectural structures such as churches, palaces, and residential dwellings. Frescoes exhibit a higher degree of preservation feasibility compared to easel paintings and book manuscripts. However, the inherent immobility of frescoes poses challenges in safeguarding them against potential risks such as floods, fires, and conflicts. Ancient Western society was characterized by a hierarchical structure in which the Pope and the religious class held positions of authority. As the upper echelon of the social hierarchy, the religious class naturally assumed the role of both formulating and propagating ideology. The majority of murals found in ancient Western buildings predominantly depict religious themes. As the scale of the building increases, the murals become increasingly exquisite and grand. The integration of artistic expressions within religious edifices has successfully fostered a state of transcendental and harmonious coexistence (Y. Zhang, 2009).

Mural art was employed in the architectural planning and execution of ancient Chinese imperial structures as well. In contrast to Western architectural murals, Chinese royal murals primarily serve the imperial power. However, a shared characteristic between the two is their ability to achieve a transcendent harmonious coexistence within the realm of architecture. Temple murals held significant prominence within the realm of civil construction in ancient China. Throughout history, temples under the influence of Buddhism and Taoism featured murals (Chu, 2000) that reflected the teachings of these respective belief systems. The artistic quality of religious murals, in comparison to ordinary residential buildings, was generally superior due to their higher level of intricacy. This distinction can be attributed to the prevailing societal advancements during ancient times.

### **2.2.2 Modern Wall Painting Art**

The term "wall painting" typically encompasses all forms of artwork created on vertical surfaces, including both walls and floors. Based on the provided definition, mural painting is classified as a form of wall painting (Tringham & Rickerby, 2020). However, it is important to note that mural painting should not be entirely equated with wall painting. The practice of mural painting has a rich and extensive historical background, with the themes frequently encompassing religious beliefs and spiritual aspirations. The primary locations encompass grottoes, temples, Taoist temples, churches, and tombs, among others. The aforementioned art form serves as a manifestation of the all-encompassing principles of traditional cosmology, life, and philosophy. The emergence of wall painting as an artistic practice can be attributed to the progression of contemporary society, particularly in response to the influences of graffiti culture and Pop culture that originated in the United States during the 1960s (Apandi, 2018; Asif & Ali, 2019; Cheng, 2023). The form of graffiti under discussion, originating in the lower region of New York City and subsequently proliferating across Asia in a relatively brief period, exhibits a significant correlation with the practice of wall painting (Fan, 2016).

While wall painting and mural painting share a commonality in terms of textual significance, they diverge significantly in terms of temporal context and cultural connotations. To clarify, mural painting can be understood as the conventional or classical manifestation of wall painting, while wall painting can be regarded as the modern iteration of mural painting. From a spiritual standpoint, wall painting possesses a broader range of extensions compared to mural painting, while mural painting exhibits a higher degree of spiritual connotation in comparison to wall painting. In the present article, the term "contemporary mural" is employed to encompass various contemporary forms, thereby establishing a consistent framework for discussing the art of wall painting throughout the subsequent text (Tringham & Rickerby, 2020).

## 2.3 Research Objective and Scope

This research examines the impact of folk arts through representing in the wall painting art, as well as how do folk art and wall art develop together. This research aims to investigate the meaning of using folk arts in the wall painting art.

The research scope of this study has two aspects: 1) the scope of folk art is limited to Chinese folk art; 2) The scope of wall painting art refers to the modern wall painting art mentioned in Section 2.2.2.

## 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study utilises a descriptive methodology. This approach is employed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the phenomena or specific attributes of an individual, situation, or collective entity. The main aim is to understand a given problem and provide an account of the current situation or condition. The present study also utilises a qualitative research approach, thereby incorporating various forms of data such as interview transcripts, field data recordings, images, personal papers, and additional notes. Qualitative research commonly utilises methodologies such as interviews, observations, analysis of existing written materials, and direct observations. This is employed to comprehend the fundamental rationale, perspectives, and intentions.

## 5 RESEARCH FINDING

### 5.1 The Visual Representation of Folk Art Within the Realm Of Wall Painting.

Wall painting art serves as a platform for the advancement of folk art, facilitating its integration into a more conducive environment, thereby enhancing its ability to cater to the needs of contemporary society. In addition, it is worth noting that folk art serves as a means of transmitting cultural elements that contribute to the development of wall painting art. The two entities undergo a continuous process of development characterised by mutual tolerance, mutual promotion, and mutual restriction (X. Zhang & Wang, 2022). Hence, folk art has experienced a resurgence, giving rise to an art form that aligns with the contemporary cultural milieu, thereby enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the modern living space. Additionally, it serves as a means of preserving and safeguarding the traditions of folk art.

#### 5.1.1 Farmer Paintings

The political standing of farmers has experienced significant transformations in the emerging society. Farmers who have undergone cultural education demonstrate a newfound inclination towards artistic expression, particularly through the medium of painting. They actively engage in the process of modelling and creation, guided by their aesthetic sensibilities. By preserving the inherent qualities of farmers, they effectively depict rural life through a distinctive artistic vocabulary. This particular genre of emotive artwork can resonate deeply with the viewers (Figure 6).



**Figure 6** Farmer painting

(Source: [http://qh.news.cn/2023-01/24/c\\_1129303594.htm](http://qh.news.cn/2023-01/24/c_1129303594.htm),  
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The subject matter encompasses the representation of ancient folk customs, legends, and mythic narratives, as well as the depiction of rural life during a specific era and the portrayal of an optimistic vision for the future. The artistic style exhibits a combination of aesthetic beauty and euphemistic qualities, while also displaying rough, bold, and rustic characteristics. The composition transcends spatial and temporal constraints, allowing for freedom from natural reality in terms of colour. Furthermore, the form of the artwork is not confined by conventional proportions. The form exhibits simplicity, exaggeration, deformation, and an abundance of decorative elements, resulting in the creation of a virtual reality that embodies the distinct local style (Fan, 2016).

The artistic proficiency of farmer paintings may not match that of other genres, yet farmers possess a wealth of rural life experiences and emotional depth (Yi, 2003; Zhao & Yang, 2014). Additionally, they inherently inherit the genes of folk art traditions, resulting in their works emanating a vibrant vitality. The incorporation of peasant painting into the realm of wall painting significantly reduces the psychological gap between this artistic medium and the farming community, thereby fostering a sense of approachability and inclusivity within the art of wall painting. The art form known as farmer painting serves as a means for farmers to convey their inherent emotions and offers insight into their interpretation of contemporary rural existence and regional awareness. The incorporation of farmer painting into rural wall painting serves to enhance the artistic expression of the latter, while also providing a means to depict the contemporary farmers' inner world.

### 5.1.2 Chinese Ink Painting

Chinese painting, alternatively referred to as ink painting (Figure 7), is widely recognised as a prominent artistic medium. Chinese painting encompasses the cognitive and interpretive perspectives of ancient individuals towards nature, society, and their corresponding political, cultural, religious, moral, and philosophical dimensions, thereby serving as a vessel for content and artistic expression. Chinese painting can be categorised into three distinct genres: figure painting, landscape painting, and the integration of man and nature. Figure painting captures the intricate dynamics between individuals and society, as well as the interplay among individuals themselves. On the other hand, landscape painting delves into the profound connection between humanity and the natural world, seamlessly blending the two entities. Flower-and-bird paintings exemplify the symbiotic relationship between various forms of life and human beings within the natural environment, thereby illustrating a state of harmonious coexistence. The incorporation of Chinese painting techniques into cultural wall painting aims to facilitate the public's gradual assimilation of social concepts such as reverence for the elderly and compassion for the young, fostering good neighbourly relations, environmental stewardship, and the promotion of harmonious cohabitation between humanity and the natural world (Tringham & Rickerby, 2020).



**Figure 7** Chinese ink painting

(Source: The researcher drew it, Copyright Consent: Permissible to Publish)

### 5.1.3 Caricature

Caricature is a form of artistic expression that involves the utilisation of techniques such as exaggeration, metaphor, symbolism, and other methods to convey the author's perception and stance towards specific subjects. It is a genre of romantic painting that encompasses elements of irony and

humour, often employing both direct and indirect means of communication. The primary distinction between this particular artwork and others resides in its distinctive approach to conception and expression, its artistic attributes of irony and humour, and its societal functions about cognition, education, and aesthetics (Roslan & Bakar, 2019). The incorporation of this painting style into the realm of wall painting art (Figure 8) can be attributed to its popularity among rural communities, who have developed a deep affection for comics. This inclusion serves to enhance the overall appeal and pleasure derived from the artworks.



**Figure 8** Caricature

(Source: <https://www.yj-dec.com/m/view.php?aid=647>,  
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#### 5.1.4 Slogan

A slogan (Figure 9) refers to a concise textual expression commonly used in propaganda. Slogans possess not only the attributes of precise and succinct official document style but also exhibit the qualities of stringent and stimulating political discourse style (Chu, 2000). These entities possess the ability to stimulate individuals intellectually and evoke emotional responses. To promote social education, slogans assume a significant role in shaping individuals' social conduct by influencing the dissemination of social public opinion and culture. Moreover, they serve as indicators of the level of social civilization to some extent. The slogan represents the prevailing mode of expression within rural wall painting art, characterised by its simplicity, clarity, and accessibility. The dissemination of crucial information within a nation is frequently facilitated by its active involvement.



**Figure 9** Slogan

(Source: [https://blog.csdn.net/weixin\\_43539230/article/details/110282081](https://blog.csdn.net/weixin_43539230/article/details/110282081),  
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## 5.2 The Materials and Media Used in Wall Painting Art

The field of wall painting has witnessed the integration of numerous novel painting materials as a result of ongoing advancements in science and technology. The primary materials employed in early wall painting in China encompass gouache and paint, with the former exhibiting a notable susceptibility to water solubility. Despite the initial vibrancy of the paint colour, it is accompanied by the drawback of subsequent discolouration following the application. Contemporary wall painting predominantly employs acrylic pigment due to its notable attributes. Acrylic offers a wide range of vibrant gouache colours, as well as a luminous and vivid paint colour. Moreover, its ease of blending enables the creation of multi-layered paintings. Additionally, once dried, acrylic paint is impervious to water, resistant to



colour alteration, and does not exhibit cracking or flaking tendencies. Simultaneously, acrylic paint is both cost-effective and readily accessible, rendering it highly favoured among artists specialising in wall paintings as a novel artistic medium (Fan, 2016; Yi, 2003; Y. Zhang, 2009).

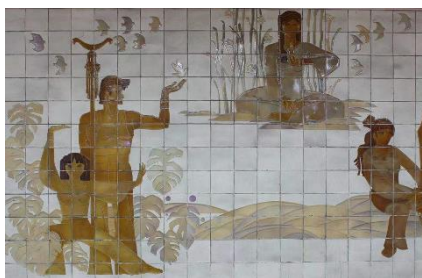
Spray painting technology is extensively employed in contemporary wall painting practices. The wall painting utilises spray painting technology to achieve a thorough and uniform dilution of the painting pigment. This is accomplished by employing a specialised spray pen to apply multiple layers of paint. Spray painting exhibits a vibrant colour palette, boasts a diverse range of production techniques, offers cost-effectiveness, and facilitates a short production cycle. The utilisation of spray paint not only facilitates the advancement of various wall painting materials but also facilitates the intermingling and amalgamation of said materials. It offers increased opportunities for the creation of contemporary artistic works.

### 5.3 The Integration of Conventional and Contemporary Elements in The Wall Painting Art

The increasing popularity of wall painting, as documented by The Times, has led to its emergence in a novel form, thereby charting a fresh trajectory for the advancement of folk art. Individuals opt for the artistic medium of mural painting, wherein there exists no imposed limitation on its thematic content, thereby affording a conducive environment for the expression and preservation of folk art (Asif & Ali, 2019). The primary target demographic for wall paintings in tube stations is the general populace, and the physical setting in which they are situated is also a communal environment, necessitating a substantial quantity of wall paintings inspired by folk art. The wall painting titled "Four Great Inventions" (Figure 10) at Jianguomen Station of Beijing Metro Line 2 primarily portrays the four significant innovations of ancient China, namely paper, printing, gunpowder, and compass. Similarly, the painting "Huaxia Xiongfeng"(Figure 11) on the wall of Dongshix Station of Beijing Metro predominantly illustrates the depictions of Chinese historical figures engaging in the practice of martial arts.



**Figure 10** Four Great Inventions



**Figure 11** Huaxia Xiongfeng

(Source: <https://news.bjd.com.cn/2021/08/11/149127.shtml>,  
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The preservation of our national culture not only effectively sustains the ecological equilibrium but also avoids undue replication of foreign artistic expressions (Chu, 2000; Roslan & Bakar, 2019). Consequently, the inclusion of wall painting offered a novel trajectory for the advancement of folk art, facilitating its reintegration within the realm of the broader populace. Not only can tube wall paintings provide support for the development of folk art, but large public spaces as well (Asif & Ali, 2019). Various public spaces, including airports, rural cultural centres, hotels, shopping malls, and similar

venues, offer opportunities for the growth and promotion of folk art. In rural regions of China, wall painting has been employed as a means of embellishing the local environment (Figure 12). Similarly, in certain hotels, proprietors opt for wall painting as a means of achieving a distinct decorative effect, deviating from the conventional style. Furthermore, wall painting is also selected as a decorative element in shopping malls (Figure 13), to enhance the overall ambience of the space. Simultaneously, certain modest public establishments, such as hotels (Figure 14) and schools (Figure 15), will also allocate designated areas to accommodate folk art in the form of wall paintings.



**Figure 12** Rural regions of China  
(Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/371556554>,  
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**Figure 13** Shopping malls  
(Source: <https://www.yj-dec.com/m/view.php?aid=658>,  
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**Figure 14** Hotels  
(Source: <http://www.fsys66.com/fwfw.asp>, Copyright Consent: Permissible to Publish)



**Figure 15** Schools  
(Source: <http://www.qianghuibang.com/detail/226.html>,  
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## 6 CONCLUSION

The advancement of the economic system and the enhancement of living standards have led to the evolution of wall painting as an art form, aiming to cater to the spiritual and cultural demands of individuals within the contemporary social milieu. Hence, there is a growing demand for a substantial quantity of wall paintings in numerous public spaces, serving as a means to adorn these areas and potentially embodying the essence of folk art. Given the current creative context, the utilisation of folk art in the realm of wall painting aligns seamlessly with the evolving demands of contemporary society. By integrating contemporary aesthetic principles and drawing inspiration from traditional folk culture, the process of refining and implementing folk art has the potential to enhance the artistic expression of modern wall painting. Consequently, this revitalization can propel folk art into the forefront of Chinese painting, presenting it with a renewed and contemporary appearance. By enhancing individuals' aesthetic and intellectual development, this phenomenon simultaneously contributes to the advancement of China's national culture.

The advancement of wall painting art ought to be grounded in the realm of public culture, while actively distancing itself from the inclinations towards utilitarianism and commercialization. Let us examine the issue of "nationality" in the context of artistic production. To effectively preserve and propagate national culture, artists must possess a rational consciousness and a strong sense of self-confidence. The utilisation of folk art in the realm of wall painting is anticipated to enhance the distinct national attributes in terms of visual representation and symbolic meaning. Consequently, individuals are expected to develop a greater affinity towards the art form of wall painting. This, in turn, will have a constructive impact on the preservation and advancement of folk art.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author corresponds for the presentation and writing up this research paper. The second and third authors are contributing in collecting literatures for this research paper and data needed to write this research paper fully. And the fourth author contributing in the registration progress for this research paper and work on the methodology.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest declared for this paper.

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