

DESIGN REPORT - YÜN TEA 茗願茶

Premium Tea Gift Collection Design



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Chinese zodiac characters and bilingual
brand identity design for this project

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INTRODUCTION

“Identity” is the major theme for defining this project. During the initial research, the relationship between personal identity and cultural traditions has been thoroughly considered, as well as any idea that evokes the characteristic of Anglo-Chinese cultural background before the handover of Hong Kong.

Chinese Zodiac, known as “Sheng Xiao - 生肖”, is based on a twelve-year cycle, each year in that cycle related to an animal sign. These signs are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. It is calculated according to Chinese lunar calendar. There has been a relationship between human and the 12 zodiacal animals. It is believed that the years represented by the animals affect the characters of people in the same way like the western astrology signs.

Chinese Horoscope (Fortune-telling based on Chinese Zodiac) is very common in Chinese community, it is a yearly or even monthly predictions of career, wealth, love and health, as well as showing one’s lucky elements - numbers, colours, flowers, directions, lunar months, etc. Although it is not really "scientific", it's however claimed to be quite accurate and reliable, just based on the wisdom and statistical results accumulated over hundreds or even thousands of years from our ancestors.

The topic is related to the “identity” theme and would be an interesting concept to work with. According to the further research, tea culture is very popular with both British and Chinese people, it’s intriguing to mix with the zodiac concept and create a premium tea gift set, for which the creativity could be unleashed to develop some exquisite packaging. During this project, the discipline of infographic and packaging design have been explored; focusing on typographic manipulation and presentation of information as a visual communication tool.



Teapot-shaped premium tea packaging design for this project

OBJECTIVE

It's intended to create a premium tea gift collection with the concept of Chinese zodiac and horoscopes, that helps promoting this cultural tradition to the worldwide people through an innovative approach and contemporary tone of voice. This will demonstrate the professionalism and confidence as a practitioner, that shows the creative skills throughout the project development. It will also be worth considering different methods of experimentation, such as using different materials and new creative techniques.

The ritual of tea drinking with cross-over of two cultures could provide a wealth of research areas, it will also be enlightening to explore the concept of "orientalism" and "semiotics" as a way to interpret the infographic and packaging design, though it is important that the theme of "Identity" is considered and applied throughout the stages of the design process.

This project aims to create the vector illustration of 12 zodiac characters, the infographic design of zodiac profile, as well as the packaging design of tea gift collection - 3 box sets of different zodiac identities to show the work as a cohesive set. Major items included in the gift pack are listed as follows:

- (a) Flower-tea bags with corresponding "lucky flower" of that zodiac as the ingredient.
- (b) Brochure of corresponding zodiac infographic.
- (c) QR code printed on the tea bag tag, which is linked up with the "horoscope" website dedicatedly designed for the purpose of presenting the "monthly luck prediction".



Individual flower-tea bag packaging design for this project

RESEARCH

Target Audience

The major target audience should be those people who are fond of tea culture. They are concerning more about the aspect of tea arts. They always care about the way tea is made and consumed, as well as the aesthetics surrounding tea drinking, it includes aspects of tea brewing, tea arts and ceremony, society, history, health, ethics, education, and media issues.

Most of them are well-educated, living in urban areas worldwide and with middle class income level. They are interested in all tea ceremonies and rituals that are understood and practised to foster harmony in humanity, promote harmony with nature, discipline the mind, quiet the heart, and attain the purity of enlightenment. The target audience will be attracted by any decent packaging design, as well as the cultural mixture of eastern and western tea arts with the concept of Chinese zodiac and horoscope.

Visit to the Museum

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, which is a branch museum of Hong Kong Museum of Art, located centrally in Hong Kong Park. It is a place for collecting, studying and displaying tea ware and holding regular presentation or demonstration lectures to promote Chinese tea drinking culture.

During the visit, a lot of valuable information and a wealth of inspiration from the exhibits has been gained. The material is relevant and has facilitated the brainstorming process.



A collection of museum pamphlets



12 cups in wucui enamels representing the "Flowers of the Months"



Lacquer tea caddy – Qing dynasty, early 19th century



A variety of "zisha" tea cups



Ritual of Gongfu Tea



Utensils for tea ceremony



Lu Yu: The Classic of Tea

DEVELOPMENT

Imagery

"Willow pattern" is a distinctive and elaborate chinoiserie pattern used on ceramic kitchen/housewares. It became popular at the end of the 18th century in England when, in its standard form, it was developed by English ceramic artists combining and adapting motifs inspired by fashionable hand-painted blue-and-white wares imported from China.

Wikipedia. (2016) *Willow pattern*. [Online] Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willow_pattern

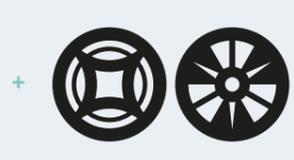
The visual style of willow pattern (western) with the Chinese papercutting zodiac character (eastern) has been successfully combined, that created a unique pattern which is based on the reference from the researched image, with some visual elements that are related to tea and zodiac lucky flower.



Classic willow pattern



Tea leaf and Hot steam (connotation of tea)



Ancient Chinese coin and Windmill (symbol of good fortune)



Zodiac Lucky flower



This intricate pattern has been further combined with the zodiac characters so as to create a more unique set of twelve zodiac identities.



Chinoiserie Willow pattern design with the connotation of tea and zodiac lucky flower

DEVELOPMENT

Bilingual Brand Identity

To explicitly reflect the Anglo-Chinese tea culture in this premium set, as well as catering for the contemporary relevance of development trend for multilingual design, a bilingual brand identity has been developed for this project. The idea of this minimal and sophisticated form of Chinese typography is actually inspired by the ancient Chinese character and the traditional letter strokes has been translated into a more contemporary typographic design.



Bilingual brand identity of "Yùn Tea"

OUTCOME

The outcomes from this project with the theme of "Identity" are informed and inspired by the research into British chinoiserie willow pattern and the traditional Chinese culture of zodiac horoscope, as well as contemporary and innovative use of layouts and typography. Throughout the development process, semiotics has been used to build designs and incorporate brand identity, which aims to establish contact with, as well as appeal to, the target audience.

Furthermore, the visual language forms a representation of the "Yùn Tea" as a new premium tea brand with a sophisticated mix of eastern and western arts and cultures, which will be understood and appreciated by the target audience. The project aim of designing a premium tea packaging with the concept of Chinese zodiac identity is eventually well-resolved.



Infographic brochure design for this project



Leaf-shaped tea bag tag that links up the specific horoscope webpage for the purpose of presenting the "monthly luck prediction"



Alternative approach of teapot packaging (Wooden box with laser engraving)