



# Hollow Paper-cutting in Womenwear Design

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## Abstract

With the modernization of people's lifestyles, paper-cutting as a traditional form of art appears less and less in life, and the popularity of this traditional art cannot be compared with that of the past. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the traditional Chinese culture represented by paper-cutting, and actively learn and explore new ways to present this traditional craft. The design of this project is based on the re-creation of the basic flat garment structure, focusing on the innovative design of the three-dimensional shape of different linear divisions in the art of paper-cutting in the design of women's clothing, so that the traditional culture can be interpreted in a new way. In this essay, the paper is a practical study of the technique of paper-cutting and flat structure of garments, which creatively combines paper-cutting and traditional flat structure, and studies the application of the technique of "carving" in paper-cutting in garment design and the transformation from two-dimensional to three-dimensional space.

## Keywords

Paper-cutting, Fashion Design, Traditional Culture

## 1. Introduction

With the rise of the "New Chinese" style in the past two years, more and more people are feeling the charm of combining traditional Chinese cultural elements with clothing design (Wang Chenlu, 2021). As one of the valuable intangible cultural heritage of China, paper-cutting represents the attitude and spirit of Chinese people's life. For a long time, the art of paper-cutting has faced the problem of "inheritance" and innovation, with inheritance being in terms of tradition and innovation being in terms of modern paper-cutting (Li Qiang, 2013). As a designer, we have to analyze Chinese traditional culture and combine it with design language to make innovative research, and this innovative way is precisely the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional culture.

## 2. The development and evolution of the art of paper-cutting

### 2.1 The historical background of the art of paper-cutting

The art of Chinese paper-cutting is a vital art created by hundreds of millions of working people in China, and is the most widespread, geographically distinct and strongly characterized (Wang Bomin, 2006). The five paper cut-outs unearthed in 1967 in the ancient tomb of Tulufan, Xinjiang, have been identified by archaeologists as being 1500 years old, and although it is not certain whether they were made in this era, they are the earliest surviving evidence of their age. At the same time, paper cutting is a flat hollow paper art, with shears as a tool, paper as the processing object, so paper cutting is also known as "hinged flowers". In the Tang Dynasty, paper-cutting applique technology is to cut the paper-cutting paste on the glaze of porcelain, into the kiln firing, paper-cutting burned away in the glaze after leaving the original paper-cutting patterns. As can be seen, the previous paper-cutting applique color mostly white pattern.

## 2.2 Expressions and characteristics of the art of paper-cutting

Some paper cuts, not cut, but carved out. Such as Zhejiang fine pattern carved paper, Hebei County, Wei County, point color paper cutting, these works are carved out knife by knife. Carving knife, thin steel sheet special, Hebei Wei County paper carving artists have dozens of hundreds of different shapes in the hands of different uses of the carving knife, there are carving, cutting, chiseling and other creative techniques.

After an in-depth understanding of paper-cutting, the two main methods of creating paper-cutting are yin cutting and yang cutting. In paper-cutting works, scissors and carving knives are usually used to express established shapes and lines through hollowing out on paper, usually in paper-cutting to maintain the fluidity of the lines and the beauty and symbolism of the patterns.

The main forms of expression of hollow paper cutting are the following: hollowing, color cutting, monochrome carving paper and printing paper cutting.

The openwork technique is to leave smooth and slender lines in the graphics with shaded cuts, while the color cuts and monochrome paper cuts are made on monochrome or colored paper with established solid shapes, and the printing and dyeing technique is to dye the paper cuts after they are completed, thus presenting a sense of color halo.

## 3. The application of hollow paper-cutting art in clothing design

### 3.1 Openwork paper-cutting technique on flat structure

The openwork technique is commonly used in the design of women's ready-to-wear and avant-garde garments, and the transformation of fabrics is realized through the processing of fabric perforation and yarn extraction, etc. The processing methods are diverse and the processing concepts are becoming more and more innovative, breaking the dullness of traditional clothing and increasing the layering of traditional clothing (Jin Hong, 2021).

The first characteristic of traditional paper-cutting techniques is transparency, which refers to light transmission, air permeability and transparency (Wang Xu, 2021). In the first stage of the experiment, the author tried three shapes using the same carving method: rectangles, squares, and circles. On the rectangle, the equally cut piece of paper could be extended to three times its length; on the square, the equally cut piece of paper could take a three-dimensional shape by pinching the center part; on the circle, the equally cut piece of paper could take a three-dimensional flower shape by pinching the center part (as shown in Figure 1).

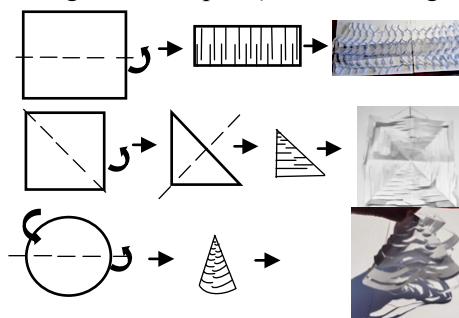


Figure 1. Paper-cutting experiment 1.

### 3.2 Expression forms of paper-cutting art under different cutting methods

In the second phase of the experiment, I tried the three-way cut and four-way cut techniques. The three-way cut can present one flower shape, and the four-way cut can present two flower shapes. In the third stage of the experiment, I tried the front, middle and back cutting techniques to explore the effect of cutting line length on ductility, and after several experiments, I found that the thinner the lines cut, the closer the lines intersected the better the ductility, as shown in Figure 2.

### 3.3 Experiment of partial modeling of different body parts by openwork paper-cutting technique

After trying a variety of cutting experiments, I made a series of modeling experiments on the shoulders, waist and the whole body using the double pattern of cutting experimental samples to lay the foundation for the feasibility of the modeling of this series.

In addition to the aesthetics of the garment itself, the integrity and extensibility of the combination with the hu-

man body is also particularly important when looking for parts suitable for conversion into garments through multiple modeling experiments. For example, in the shoulder silhouette experiment, the natural drape from the shoulder to the neck was strong and the line transition was natural, and the round and square experiments worked well, but the exaggerated shape and the goal of the garment design were not considered. In the waist and overall modeling experiments, extending from the shoulder to the waist or naturally draping to the hem, and the human body fit better, the overall sense of line better, while not affecting the integrity of the overall clothing, the overall look is not abrupt.

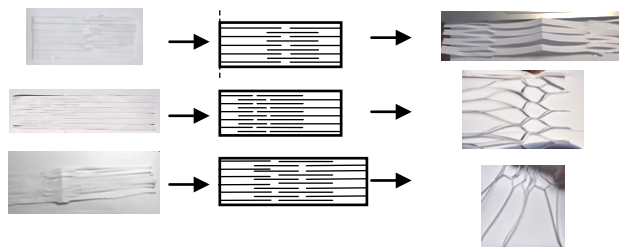


Figure 2. Paper-cutting experiment 2.

## 4. Application creation practice for this collection

### 4.1 Design purpose and ideas

The design of this series starts from the technique of "carving" of hollow paper-cutting, aiming to design new Chinese clothing with traditional cultural elements. The design concept is as follows: establish the theme - design experiment research - determine the silhouette structure - select fabric and color - design summary.

### 4.2 Silhouette, fabric, color

The choice of silhouette is based on the popular trend - New Chinese style as the inspiration, the new Chinese style is a combination of Chinese clothing structure and modern clothing silhouette, the overall volume is moderate, and the overall atmosphere of the new Chinese style is exquisite, simple, and elegant atmosphere. Therefore, the silhouette of this time is mainly H-shaped.

In the choice of fabric, after many experiments with fabric, we finally decided to choose artificial leather because of its special fabric properties, which will not produce excess hairy silk after cutting.

The color of the garment is an essential item. This series is mainly in black and white, supplemented by the beige color of the paper, choosing simple colors to reflect the sense of lines and simplicity of the clothing.

### 4.3 Design details and final line up

In the first set of design, a small V-neck shirt with a pleated skirt, paper cutouts are fixed centrally on the left shoulder, and the right shoulder is fixed on one side to let it dangle naturally. In the second set of design, a small V-neck irregular shirt with a pleated skirt, paper cutouts are fixed in the waist natural drape to the bottom, the left side of the split makes wearing more dynamic. In the third set of design, a black V-neck dress plus irregular paper cutout form of dress, through the contrast of black and white color highlights the sharp lines of paper cutouts. In the fourth set, a long shirt with a small stand-up collar and paper cutouts are fixed on the left shoulder, highlighting the design of the paper cutouts through the contrast of the area. In the fifth set of design, a long-modified dress with cheongsam collar, a small section of paper-cut decoration is fixed on the right waist, presenting the effect of accent through a small section of decoration, as shown in Figure 3.

## 5. Conclusions

Fashion is part of the creative landscape, just like architecture, art, and dance, the output of the work can be felt in its connection to each other. As a designer, responding to this new world and environment by making innovative, practical clothing that meets modern aesthetics is the design goal of the moment. This paper explores the connection and integration of paper-cutting and garment design, combining paper-cutting and garment forms, studying and reading books such as "Chinese Paper-cutting", analyzing existing design cases, studying the practical use of the design language and cultural elements of paper-cutting art, and finally completing the interpretation of garment design language.



**Figure 3. Final-line up.**

The author has been thinking about how to make clothing design with Chinese flavor and in line with Chinese aesthetics since the early stage of the research. How to better apply traditional culture is the original intention of this exploration, has been, Chinese traditional elements in the domestic and foreign clothing design works frequently, but also because of the reasons of cultural dissemination, resulting in part of the people think that Chinese elements are the so-called cheongsam collar, plate buckle, dragon pattern cloud pattern, ink painting, blue and white porcelain, etc., in the end how to take the expression of Chinese culture to a higher level, so that more people feel the Oriental design This is a question that I will continue to explore.

In the process of this design study, after many practical studies, I deeply feel the charm of paper-cutting art, an art form created by many working people, with its many methods, diverse expressions and symbolic diversity. After completing this design, I think further experimentation and examination are needed in terms of fabric and final presentation. Although this design is about the application of traditional culture, I had thought about combining it with the concept of zero waste beforehand, but due to limited conditions, I was unable to continue the research project, and I hope to do deeper research in the sustainable field that I am interested in the future.

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