

Digital painting technology enables animated films to better present elements of traditional Chinese culture and promote the inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional culture.

High-quality animation works attract more audiences and increase box office revenue. With the advancement of technology, the optimal allocation of resources and the reduction of costs have been achieved, and more production companies are able to enter the market, forming a diversified competitive landscape.

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CINEMATIC CULTURAL DIALOGUES: ZHANG YIMOU AND STEVEN SPIELBERG

Li Peining,

master's student, VSU named after P.M. Masherov, Vitebsk, Republic of Belarus

Scientific adviser – Medvetskiy A.V., PhD in Art History, associate professor

As a carrier of cultural expression, cinema profoundly reflects the divergent cultural identities between China and the West. This study compares films by Zhang Yimou and Steven Spielberg to analyze their differential encoding of cultural symbols through narrative themes, visual styles, and sociopolitical contexts. Zhang Yimou's (Zhang's) works are rooted in Confucian traditions. By leveraging symbolic colors (for example, the red metaphor that symbolizes the power structure in the film *Hero*) and collective memory, he constructs cultural identity [1, 3]. In contrast, Spielberg's films are anchored in Western Enlightenment values, transmitting Judeo-Christian ethics through individual heroism and universal humanism (e.g., the religious portrayal of redemption in *Schindler's List*) [2,4]. The global success of both directors highlights tensions between cultural specificity and cross-cultural appeal, while also reflecting the impact of creative environments – the contrasting censorship mechanisms of China's "main melody" cinema versus Hollywood's market-driven model – shaping distinct narrative strategies [5].

The purpose of the scientific article is to analyze the differences between films by Zhang Yimou and Steven Spielberg.

The research objectives focus on: analyzing how the two directors encode cultural symbols through cinematic language; exploring pathways to balance local traditions with global audience demands; evaluating how policy frameworks (e.g., censorship and commercialization) both constrain and facilitate creative freedom and cultural expression.

Material and Methods. This research employs a comprehensive analytical framework to examine the cultural encoding strategies of Zhang Yimou and Steven Spielberg. Selected films include *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), *E.T.* (1982), and *The Great Wall* (2016), which represent pivotal works reflecting their respective cultural contexts and directorial visions. Theoretical foundations are drawn from cultural semiotics [1] to decode symbolic systems embedded in cinematic elements, and auteur theory [2] to trace consistent thematic and stylistic signatures across their oeuvres.

Methodologically, the study conducts semiotic analysis of visual motifs – such as the symbolic use of red in Zhang's films as a metaphor for power dynamics and cultural identity,

and Spielberg's recurring "God light" technique to evoke transcendence in humanistic narratives. Historical contextualization situates films like *To Live* (1994) within post-Tiananmen sociopolitical discourses in China [5], while comparative readings of cross-cultural collaborations like *The Great Wall* (2016) reveal tensions between Sinocentric and Hollywood-driven creative logics. This triangulation of textual analysis, theoretical interpretation, and historical situatedness aims to uncover how cultural symbols are strategically deployed to construct and negotiate national identities in global cinema.

Results and their Discussion. This research is likely to yield significant results regarding the cultural and thematic elements in the works of Zhang Yimou and Steven Spielberg. Zhang Yimou's *House of Flying Daggers* (2004) is expected to showcase Taoist harmony. This is achieved through the use of water imagery, which symbolizes the fluidity and balance central to Taoist thought, and calligraphic choreography, which represents the artistry and discipline associated with this philosophy [3].

On the other hand, Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) is anticipated to present technology as a powerful metaphor for American optimism. The film depicts technology as a force that enables humanity to reach for the stars and engage with the unknown, embodying the nation's belief in progress and innovation [2].

However, the cross – cultural collaboration *The Great Wall* (2016) is likely to highlight the tensions between global and local elements. The film has already faced criticism for what some see as cultural compromise. In an effort to appeal to international audiences, it may have diluted certain aspects of Chinese culture, while also struggling to fully integrate Western narrative styles [5]. Overall, these findings are expected to offer valuable insights into how these two directors navigate cultural differences and global expectations in their filmmaking.

Conclusion. Zhang Yimou and Steven Spielberg's creative practices vividly illustrate the dialectic between cultural specificity and global appeal. While Zhang constructs cultural identity through Confucian philosophical symbols and national aesthetics such as the red metaphor in *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) – Spielberg's works propagate Western values via individualistic heroism and universal humanism, as seen in *Schindler's List* (1993). Their global success underscores how cultural symbols can transcend borders when embedded in emotionally resonant narratives, yet also highlights tensions between preserving indigenous traditions and pandering to international markets, as exemplified by the cultural hybridity of *The Great Wall* (2016).

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CHARACTERISTICS OF COURT PORTRAITS OF EMPERORS THROUGHOUT THE AGES

Li Ziqian,

master's student, VSU named after P.M. Masharov, Vitebsk, Republic of Belarus
Academic supervisor – Lollini A.D., PhD in Art History, Head of the Fine Arts Department

This thesis focuses on the court portrait works of emperors in European history, aiming to comprehensively sort out their development context and deeply analyze the specific evolutionary characteristics. The court portraits of European emperors are not only artistic creations but also visual records of politics, culture, and society. They carry the spirit of the