MOONCAKE PACKAGING DESIGN

AN EXPLORATION OF MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL SYMBOLISM AND MINIMALIST DESIGN

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master in Design at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

JINYAN CUI / 2019
Abstract

In this Master of Design thesis project, I explore the excessive packaging of Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival mooncakes and the positive impact of minimalist design on the current packaging trends. In particular, I explore how minimalist design can be subtly applied to mooncake gift-box packaging so as to reflect the traditional values associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival while also offering today’s young Chinese a new approach to this symbolic packaging. I explain, through my design exploration of the legends and customs associated with this ancient and notable festival as well as the visual symbolism, colors, materials, and forms used in mooncake packaging, how this new approach draws inspiration from Japanese minimalist design and traditional Chinese motifs. Through this packaging design exploration, I hope to offer an alternative that maintains the integrity of this festival and its ancient customs.

Key words: Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, minimalist design, mooncake packaging.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to: my supervisors, Doctor Caroline Campbell and Lee Jensen, for their responsible attitude to work, thoughtful guidance, and sincere advice in regard to my design work and thesis; the library staff for their help with my academic writing; and my peers for their encouragement.

I would like to thank my friends, Miyuu Wang, Meng Yuan, Danjing Lin, Tamia Zhang and Syamim Shari, who always kindly gave me some suggestions on packaging design. In addition, I am particularly grateful to my family members, especially my parents, Guangxu Cui and Bin Zhong, for their support and love.

Finally, I give thanks for every challenge and opportunity in my life.
Table of contents

04  Introduction
    Research questions

06  Literature review
    The status and impact of excessive mooncake packaging
    History and background of the Mid-Autumn Festival

22  Methods
    Design process first stage
    Symbolic meaning of Chinese motifs
    Design process second stage
    An inspiration from Japanese minimalist design

36  Case study analysis of Kenya Hara’s designs
    Design process third stage
    Final design stage

51  Conclusion

53  List of figures

57  References