

In China today, our intangible cultural heritage is facing the danger of being lost forever. This heritage condenses the wisdom of our ancestors, and has been passed down through the years. As a lover of traditional and ethnic culture, I accidentally learned the story of Guangxi Zhuang's strips-of-silk-made ball in the news.

In the past, it was only known that strips-of-silk-made ball was used for marriage. Girls from a rich family would choose a lucky day to throw strips-of-silk-made ball to recruit their husbands. The man who caught the strips-of-silk-made ball could marry with the girl after completing three tasks. After consulting news and documentaries, stories from the Zhuang nationality, film and television materials from the 1970s to the 1980s and many books, I was surprised to discover that the strips-of-silk-made ball was actually an ancient bronze cold weapon—Feituo.





Since the area where the Zhuang is located did not have access to the outside world at the earlier time, men had to row bamboo rafts along the river to hunt for food. But there were many beasts that they could encounter. At that time, people would bring this weapon to defend against wild beasts. As time went by, the Zhuang people developed better weapons, so they no longer used Feituo. In order to bless husbands on their travels, the woman in the family made a scented sachet and hung it on her husband's clothes. The style of the sachet has gradually become colorful, and eventually evolved into a strips-of-silk-made ball to symbolize this beautiful meaning. During the festival, the Zhuang people will decorate the strips-of-silk-made balls in the house and give it to the younger generation as a blessing. In addition, when Zhuang men pursue girls, they also love to give strips-of-silk-made balls to girls as a pledge of love.





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A strips-of-silk-made ball is usually made into 12 petals, with red, black, and green as the base. The upper four petals must be birds, and the lower four must be wild animals. Later, it was made into 24 petals, with more colors, and even the embroidery method became different. The most used embroidery method is pile embroidery.





The non-genetic inheritor of this tradition, Grandma Zhao, does not have dazzling eyes or deaf ears . One of her favorite things to do in her 90-year-old age is to embroider strips-of-silk-made ball. She always sits with her needle and thread by the window to embroider them. It is hard to believe that the colorful strips-of-silk-made ball came from the hands of an old man in his nineties. In this town, there are many elderly people like Grandma Zhao making the balls. This made me think, as a young person in this era, that I have do something for the non-genetic inheritance of strips-of-silk-made ball.





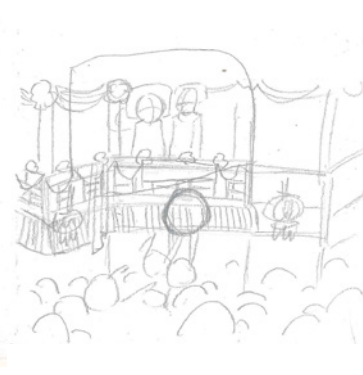
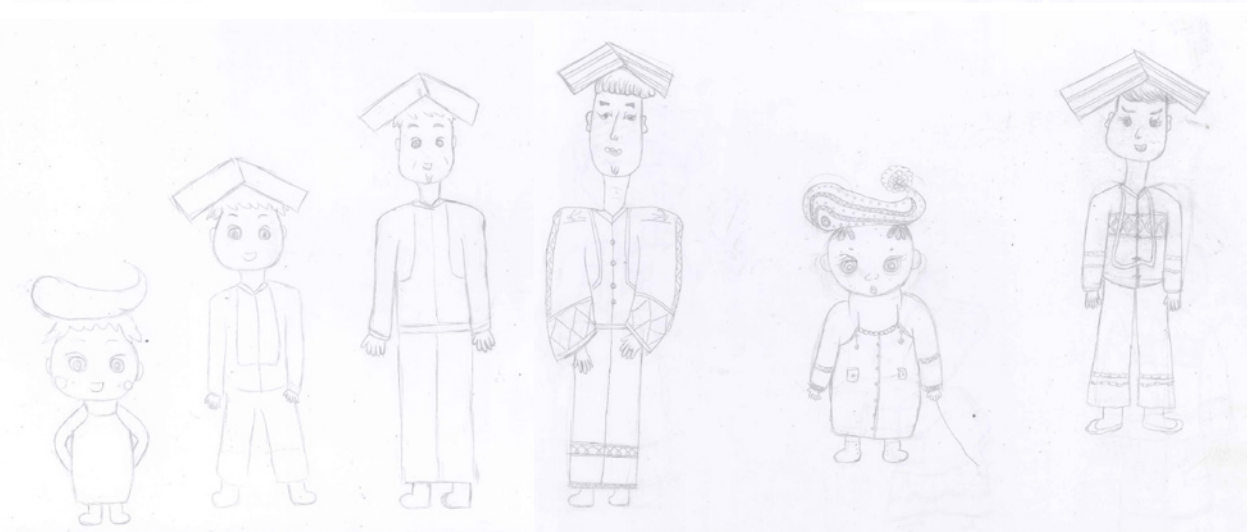
As a result, I created this set of illustration projects composed of 6 paintings to record the story of strips-of-silk-made ball's past and present lives. It is regarded as a personal experiment and practice for inheriting an intangible cultural heritage. I hope that more people can understand strips-of-silk-made ball more intuitively through these pictures and hope that more people can start to like and pick up the traditional and ethnic culture through the small point of strips-of-silk-made ball.

All set- except for the 2 questions above.





Sketches & Character design





Reference & Color test

