

## National Style Expression in Chinese Animated Films: A Case Study of ‘Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child’ (Postprint)

**Authors:** An Jing Li Jiaqi

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### Abstract

**【目的】** In recent years, Chinese animated films have demonstrated outstanding performance in global box office revenues, particularly *Ne Zha: The Devil's Child Descends into the Sea* (hereinafter referred to as *Ne Zha 2*), which has achieved unprecedented box office success in the international film scene. As of March 25, 2025, its total box office revenue has exceeded 15 billion yuan, with over 300 million viewers, making it the first film in Chinese cinematic history to surpass 300 million viewers. *Ne Zha 2* has become the highest-grossing animated film and non-English-language film worldwide. The Guofeng expression in Chinese animated films has undoubtedly become the winning formula for Chinese animation. This paper aims to explore how Chinese animated films enhance cultural identity and elevate international influence through Guofeng expression. Using *Ne Zha 2* as a case study, it analyzes how the fusion of traditional cultural elements and modern technology achieves a unique artistic style and narrative expression.

**【方法】** This study employs the case analysis method, focusing on Guofeng expression in character development, visual style, narrative structure, and music and sound effects to dissect how *Ne Zha 2* utilizes traditional Chinese cultural symbols and combines them with modern animation technology to construct a unique cinematic language.

**【结果】** The study finds that *Ne Zha 2* draws upon traditional artistic styles such as Chinese painting, ink wash painting, and fine-brush painting in its visual design, while simultaneously employing new technologies including 3D animation and AI rendering to achieve a fusion of tradition and modernity; in terms of narrative, it adopts Chinese mythology as its theme while embodying contemporary values to enhance resonance with global audiences; in the musical aspect, it integrates ethnic instruments with symphonic scoring to reinforce Guofeng aesthetic values.

**[结论]** This study demonstrates that Guofeng expression has become a crucial innovative pathway for Chinese animated films. Through the combination of cultural inheritance and technological innovation, Chinese animated films not only strengthen cultural identity among domestic audiences but also broaden the possibilities for international dissemination. *Ne Zha 2* provides a successful paradigm for future domestic animation and also confirms the market potential and cultural value of Guofeng animation.

## Full Text

### The National Style Expression in Chinese Animated Films: A Case Study of *Ne Zha 2*

An Jing<sup>1,2</sup>, Li Jiaqi<sup>1\*</sup>

(1. Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau, China 999078; 2. Beijing Television Art Promotion Association, Beijing 100027)

## Abstract

**[Purpose]** In recent years, Chinese animated films have achieved remarkable global box office success, particularly *Ne Zha: The Demon Child's Havoc in the Sea* (hereinafter referred to as *Ne Zha 2*), which has attained unprecedented international box office performance. As of March 25, 2025, its total box office revenue has exceeded 15 billion yuan, with over 300 million viewers, making it the first film in Chinese cinematic history to surpass 300 million viewers. *Ne Zha 2* has become the highest-grossing animated film and non-English language film worldwide. The national style expression in Chinese animated films has undoubtedly become the winning formula for the industry. This paper aims to explore how Chinese animated films enhance cultural identity and elevate international influence through national style expression, using *Ne Zha 2* as a case study to analyze how it achieves a unique artistic style and narrative expression through the fusion of traditional cultural elements and modern technology.

**[Method]** This study employs case analysis methodology, examining *Ne Zha 2*'s national style expression in character design, visual style, narrative structure, and music/sound effects to dissect how the film utilizes traditional Chinese cultural symbols and integrates them with modern animation technology to construct a distinctive cinematic language.

**[Results]** The research reveals that *Ne Zha 2* employs traditional artistic styles such as Chinese painting, ink wash painting, and fine-brush painting in its visual design while utilizing new technologies including 3D animation and AI rendering to achieve a fusion of tradition and modernity. Narratively, the film centers on Chinese mythology while embedding contemporary values to enhance resonance with global audiences. Musically, it blends ethnic instruments with symphonic scoring to reinforce national aesthetic values.

**[Conclusion]** This study demonstrates that national style expression has become a crucial innovative pathway for Chinese animated films. Through the combination of cultural inheritance and technological innovation, Chinese animated films have not only strengthened cultural identity among domestic audiences but also broadened possibilities for international dissemination. *Ne Zha 2* provides a successful model for future domestic animation and confirms the market potential and cultural value of national style animation.

**Keywords:** Chinese animated films; national style expression; *Ne Zha: The Demon Child's Havoc in the Sea*; cultural symbols; global communication

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The national style expression in Chinese animated films can be traced back to the mid-20th century, which nurtured the uniquely Chinese “art film” school. In the 1960s, the Shanghai Animation Film Studio created classics such as *Havoc in Heaven*, which integrated fine arts and opera elements, and *The Nine-Colored Deer*, which adopted Dunhuang mural styles, establishing the aesthetic foundation for national style animation. However, under the influence of globalization, domestic animation gradually converged with overseas styles, diluting its ethnic characteristics. Since the 21st century, supported by national cultural policies and market demand, national style animation has been revitalized. *Monkey King: Hero Is Back* (2015) sparked a domestic animation boom, making “national style” and “national trend” industry trends that promote the integration of traditional cultural elements with modern narratives. *Ne Zha: The Demon Child's Birth* (2019) set a new record with 5.035 billion yuan in revenue, becoming a new benchmark for national style animation. The 2025 release of *Ne Zha: The Demon Child's Havoc in the Sea* (hereinafter *Ne Zha 2*) further achieved over one billion dollars in global revenue, reaching the pinnacle of Chinese animation’s national style exploration. Its success not only demonstrates the enormous international influence of Chinese animated films but also showcases the unlimited potential of national style expression in Chinese animation.

## 1. Character Design and National Style Expression

Character design constitutes one of the core aspects of national style expression in Chinese animated films. *Ne Zha 2* thoroughly excavates traditional Chinese mythological elements in its character design and creatively transforms them through modern aesthetics, endowing classic characters with new vitality.

### 1.1 The Integration of Modern Aesthetics and Traditional Style

Nezha, as a household name in Chinese mythology, has always symbolized rebelliousness and heroic spirit, carrying special cultural significance. However, audiences from different eras have varying aesthetic expectations and value anticipations for heroes. *Ne Zha 2* continues and strengthens the rebellious spirit embodied by Nezha while incorporating modern society’s emphasis on individual liberation and self-identity. In character visualization, the film boldly breaks

away from Nezha's traditional dignified and handsome appearance, creating a new Nezha with a morally ambiguous "demon child" temperament. The image of Nezha with dark circles under his eyes, disheveled hair buns, and a mischievous yet defiant smile has left a deep impression on audiences. This bold modification of a classic image and unconventional character creation has endowed Nezha with unprecedented vitality. Although this character redesign initially sparked controversy, audiences have embraced this highly individualistic new interpretation with remarkable acceptance, generating widespread resonance. This new version of Nezha preserves the traditional heroic spirit while aligning more closely with contemporary audience aesthetics and emotional experiences.

Meanwhile, the film reconstructs a rich array of supporting characters with distinctive Eastern aesthetic features, painting a colorful mythological panorama and successfully creating a series of vivid figures, each endowed with traditional cultural symbolism while resonating with modern audience emotions. The antagonist Shen Gongbao is no longer the one-dimensional villain from *Investiture of the Gods* but is given richer psychological depth and emotional motivation. His story reflects social prejudice and identity struggles, presenting a more profound character arc than traditional mythology. The film skillfully uses the experiences of the Shen family (Shen Gongbao and his relatives) to reflect the unjust fate of "being born a demon," conveying sympathy for the weak and criticism of prejudice. This character transformation elevates Shen Gongbao from a negative symbol in traditional culture to a flesh-and-blood, empathetic figure, demonstrating the creators' creative transformation of traditional elements. This deep characterization of a traditional villain reflects the progress and breakthrough in domestic animation character development.

## 1.2 The Application of Traditional Cultural Elements in Character Imagery

The film strengthens the cultural depth of characters through the application of traditional symbols in character imagery. Nezha's classic magical weapons—the Qiankun Ring, Hun Tian Ling, and Wind Fire Wheels—are retained, enhancing cultural identification visually. Furthermore, the film incorporates rich traditional Chinese costume elements and status symbols into the armor and clothing designed for different characters. Character 造型设计 follows a "three-layer logic": first, highlighting the biological prototype characteristics of characters, such as retaining octopus and shark forms for the demon clan; second, endowing identity-specific attire, such as armor for demon warriors and plain cloth for civilians; third, enhancing realism through environmental integration, such as the rusted armor and tattered clothing of underwater demon clans. Additionally, the film enriches its character roster, constructing a comprehensive Eastern mythological system. Most impressively, the West Sea Dragon King Ao Run is established as a female character—graceful, mysterious, resourceful, and no less combat-effective than male characters, expanding gender dimensions.

The North Sea Dragon King Ao Shun appears as a sinister figure covered in blades, forming a contrast with positive characters. These modifications endow traditional characters with greater depth, making mythological figures more contemporary and dramatically compelling.

## 2. The Exploration of National Style in Visual Design and Animation Technology

Chinese animation developed a unique ink wash animation style during the 1950s-1980s, producing works such as *Where is Mama* and *Feeling from Mountain and Water*. However, this style gradually declined due to production costs and technological limitations. In recent years, CG technology has facilitated the revival of national style animation, with films like *White Snake: The Origin*, *The Legend of Hei*, and *Ne Zha 1* drawing on fine-brush painting, ink wash, and landscape painting traditions to rejuvenate national style animation. *Ne Zha 2* presents a strong Eastern aesthetic conception, acclaimed as a “visual feast of national style aesthetics.” The production team integrated traditional artistic styles with modern 3D animation technology throughout scene design, color application, and special effects, building upon the previous work’s style and pushing domestic animation expression to new heights.

### 2.1 *Ne Zha 2*’s Borrowing from Traditional Chinese Painting Styles

The film extensively borrows from traditional Chinese painting styles to create fantastical and magnificent mythological scenes. Most notably, it employs the artistic conception of “ink wash painting”: when depicting scenes such as the East Sea Dragon Palace, it creates fantastical visual effects reminiscent of splashed-ink landscapes. The production team developed a specialized “dynamic ink wash rendering engine,” successfully integrating the unique diffusion and flow effects of traditional ink wash painting into 3D animation scenes. In a crucial scene at the East Sea Dragon Palace, surging seawater and clouds appear in ink brushstroke forms, with variations in ink density simulating the power and rhythm of water currents, like a flowing ink wash scroll. This technological innovation makes audiences feel as if they are immersed in the wonderland depicted in classical Chinese painting, skillfully combining Eastern aesthetic appeal with digital effects. Notably, the film’s special effects team achieved the fusion of ink wash imagery and modern animation technology through AI algorithms and self-developed rendering technology, allowing the fluidity of traditional brushstrokes to flow across the screen. This breakthrough fully embodies the concept of technology serving cultural expression: computer algorithms precisely simulate the diffusion of ink on paper, which is then embedded into three-dimensional fluid special effects to create a unique “ink wash special effects” visual experience. *Ne Zha 2*’s digital application of ink wash style both pays tribute to and develops the tradition of 20th-century “Chinese ink wash animation,” establishing a new benchmark for the integration of domestic animation technology and aesthetics.

In addition to ink wash elements, the film incorporates traditional artistic elements such as Dunhuang murals and Western Region painting styles. The Kunlun fairyland and Chentang Pass draw on Chinese architecture, sculpture, and landscape painting styles, emphasizing warm-cool contrasts that align with the “unity of heaven and humanity” concept. Character costumes also reference fine-brush painting and opera facial makeup designs, with the Dragon Palace fairyland featuring rich color layers and flowing celestial garments, manifesting a unique national style aesthetic that immerses audiences in an Eastern fantasy world.

## 2.2 The Fusion of 3D Animation Technology and National Style Aesthetics

In terms of animation technology and visual effects, *Ne Zha 2* has reached a new peak for domestic animated films. The production spanned five years and involved over 4,000 animation professionals—far exceeding the previous work’s 1,600. The film contains more than 2,400 shots, nearly 1,900 of which feature special effects. This massive production effort aims to present more grand scenes and stunning audiovisual experiences. Through relentless effort, the film’s visual effects team achieved multiple technological breakthroughs. For instance, in a fantastical sequence depicting the “Jade Void Treasury,” special effects artists created a flowing river composed of 100,000 small fish to create a dream-like atmosphere—a mere 3-second shot that took a year and a half to produce. These swimming fish appear like ink dots, winding into rivers through the space of the Jade Void Palace, symbolizing the flow of life and time. Another example is the climactic “Great Flood Battle” scene, involving hundreds of millions of characters and particle effects. To portray the spectacular scene of pouring floodwaters and countless demon beasts, the team referenced the movement patterns of bird flocks and used swarm algorithms to create a surging, dynamic “flood” effect. Astonishingly, every demon beast appearing on screen underwent independent 3D modeling—even the thousands of background demons have their own motion trajectories and lighting changes. This meticulous production enables the film to achieve international advanced standards in detail presentation for large-scale scenes.

## 2.3 Cultural Symbolism in Color and Scene Design

The film’s treatment of color and lighting also reflects cultural symbolism and aesthetic considerations. *Ne Zha 2* employs vivid colors with strong yet harmonious contrasts. Scenes related to the protagonist Nezha predominantly use warm red and gold tones—for example, when Nezha releases his power, his body erupts in blazing flames, symbolizing fiery vitality and indomitable fighting spirit. Conversely, dragon clan and ocean scenes use deep blue and cyan as primary tones, such as the dark blue waters of the East Sea Dragon Palace and the surrounding azure waves and black clouds when the Dragon King appears, conveying a mysterious and majestic authority. This strong warm-cool

contrast between red and blue not only creates visual impact but also reflects the elemental conflict of “water and fire overcoming each other” in traditional Five Elements theory, hinting at the opposition of character fates.

The film’s cinematography and artistic style also demonstrate borrowing from traditional Chinese drama and martial arts aesthetics. Characters’ movements and techniques in action scenes incorporate the kinetic aesthetics of Chinese martial arts: Nezha’s spear techniques bear traces of Shaolin or Nezha spear forms, his flying kicks resemble heroes in Chinese martial arts films, and Shen Gongbao’s whip-wielding scenes evoke the whip techniques of martial male roles in Chinese opera. In camera work, certain segments employ a “freeze-frame appearance” effect similar to Peking Opera stages: when characters execute special moves or emotional outbursts, the camera suddenly holds for a moment while the background transforms into specific patterns (such as ink wash flames or lightning motifs), like light curtains on a stage, highlighting emotional tension. This treatment endows the film with dramatic aesthetic tension, guiding audience emotions toward the aesthetic experience of traditional opera.

*Ne Zha 2*’s exploration of national style visual expression is embodied not only in static artistic design but also throughout dynamic narrative rhythm and audiovisual atmosphere. The film’s overall visual pace is brisk and varied, presenting multiple completely different settings—including heavenly palaces, immortal islands, undersea realms, and towns—within its 144-minute runtime. Despite the diverse scenes, the artistic style consistently revolves around the theme of “Eastern fantasy,” maintaining unified cultural tonality throughout. At the production level, the film’s national style character design and IMAX-level special effects achieve industrial standards, with the modernization of traditional elements winning recognition from domestic and overseas audiences. *Ne Zha 2* has, through unprecedented technological investment and artistic innovation, forged traditional Chinese aesthetic spirit into modern animation imagery, creating stunning audiovisual spectacles that have earned widespread acclaim.

### 3. Narrative Structure and Cultural Values

Beyond its national style aesthetics at the visual level, *Ne Zha 2* skillfully achieves the fusion of traditional culture and modern values in its narrative structure and thematic conception.

#### 3.1 Traditional Narrative Patterns and Modern Adaptation

The film creatively rearranges classic plot points, replacing the traditional self-sacrifice 桥段 with a “heart mantra,” extending Nezha’s struggle from the level of fate to the modern theme of individual growth and awakening. This adaptation not only avoids the tragic overtones of extreme filial piety, making it more acceptable to modern audiences (especially youth and children), but also aligning better with contemporary family values. Additionally, the film adds original storylines such as the Kunlun Mountain immortality examination and

the Chentang Pass defense battle, enriching the narrative and satisfying audience expectations for multi-threaded storytelling. Through this multi-layered, well-paced structure, the film not only portrays Nezha's personal growth but also presents a group portrait of advancing heroes.

### 3.2 The Integration of Cultural Values

The film deeply excavates and promotes values esteemed in traditional Chinese culture while incorporating contemporary ideological connotations, forming rich thematic layers. The spirit of resisting fate and self-struggle runs throughout, with Nezha's journey from "Demon Pill" to hero reflecting the heroic spirit of "fighting against heaven" in traditional culture. The film not only embodies this spirit but elevates it in *Ne Zha 2* to "fighting for all beings" against powerful evil forces, manifesting the great righteousness and national sentiment in traditional Chinese culture, endowing Nezha's heroic image with deeper significance.

The strengthening of family and friendship themes represents a major highlight. The film downplays the father-son conflict from the original work, transforming Li Jing from an authoritarian father to a deeply caring parent, while Nezha's mother, Lady Yin, demonstrates selfless maternal love. Nezha's growth becomes not only personal struggle but a journey supported by family, making the story's tone warmer. The relationship between Nezha and Ao Bing shifts from antagonism to cooperation, symbolizing reconciliation and trust between different ethnic groups. The joint combat of young heroes including Nezha, Ao Bing, and Yang Jian, along with Shen Gongbao's eventual awakening, bridges the distance between mythology and reality: audiences can feel the value of friendship and unity rather than merely witnessing superhuman divine power contests.

### 3.3 Narrative and Audience Emotional Resonance

In terms of narrative rhythm and style, the film maintains a tight structure with dense action scenes, interspersed with comedic elements and warm moments, allowing emotional tension to ebb and flow in accordance with modern film audience preferences. For example, the comic relief from Taiyi Zhenren and Nezha's playful childish remarks alleviate tense plot pressure. This comedic color not only meets the entertainment demands of modern commercial animation but also aligns with the humorous style common in Chinese folk tales, making the film suitable for all ages and providing both entertainment and education. The narrative also creates pathos and moving moments at key junctures, such as Nezha's suffering under the heart-piercing mantra, the anxious protection by parent audiences, and the final hero's return, all successfully generating emotional resonance. The film achieves a balance between tradition and modernity in narrative style: it possesses both the epic quality and educational significance of Chinese mythological stories and the fast-paced rhythm and emotional diversity of modern genre films.

*Ne Zha 2* successfully achieves national style expression in narrative structure and thematic conception. Through bold innovation of traditional mythological stories, it endows ancient legends with new vitality and contemporary connotations. This narrative strategy of blending ancient and modern not only generates broad emotional resonance but also demonstrates to the world the timeless vitality and universal significance of Chinese culture.

## 4. National Style Expression in Music and Sound Effects

Music and sound effects constitute important components of animated film narrative. *Ne Zha 2* skillfully integrates ethnic music with modern scoring techniques, creating inherent Chinese style and epic orchestration.

### 4.1 The Embodiment of Traditional Musical Elements

The film's overall musical style presents a characteristic of "East-West fusion." On one hand, it incorporates Hollywood-style symphonic scoring to heighten grand scenes and momentum; on the other hand, it extensively adds traditional opera instrumental music and local ethnic music elements, ensuring the film retains Chinese cultural spirit within an international atmosphere. The film features the Dong ethnic chorus—a treasure of Chinese minority music—which uses its ethereal, unaccompanied vocal tones to create a sacred atmosphere, imbuing Nezha's rebirth with ritualistic significance. At the film's climactic finale when Nezha battles demons, the soaring suona (a double-reed horn) intertwines with symphonic orchestration, with the suona's passionate and stirring timbre accentuating Nezha's heroic spirit. This fusion not only embodies heroic grandeur but also generates emotional resonance, demonstrating that ethnic music can fulfill dramatic narrative functions in modern cinema.

### 4.2 The Fusion of Modern Scoring and Traditional Musical Styles

The film's score incorporates opera music elements to enhance the rhythm and intensity of action scenes. Fight sequences occasionally feature percussion interludes from Peking Opera martial scenes (known as "percussion accompaniment" in Peking Opera), which provide powerful rhythmic support for action scenes, adding impact to combat movements and forming high coordination with visual rhythm. This application of opera percussion not only enhances the viewing experience of action scenes but also promotes traditional Chinese dramatic martial aesthetics, immersing audiences in familiar ethnic rhythms. In terms of modern musical elements, some scores integrate electronic sound effects and Western musical styles. Electronic synthesizer timbres enhance the sense of futurism when displaying techniques or high-tech elements, while Baroque-style harmonies added to certain character theme music create layered character images. The combination of tradition and modernity makes the film's music both culturally resonant and accessible to global audiences.

### 4.3 The Role of Music in Emotional Expression and Cultural Transmission

The film skillfully employs ethnic instruments such as the pipa, xiao, Mongolian throat singing, and Tibetan horse-head fiddle for different characters and concepts to enhance character development and emotional expression. For instance, the pipa's resounding timbre is used in war scenes to heighten historical gravity; the xiao's melodious and lingering tones suit farewell or contemplation scenes, expressing characters' inner loneliness; Mongolian throat singing's deep resonance intensifies the mysterious atmosphere of divine and demonic scenes, presenting transcendent dimensions to fairylands and demon realms. This application of diverse ethnic music enriches the film's sonic layers while showcasing the breadth and depth of Chinese musical culture.

### 4.4 Modern Innovation of Traditional Music

The music of *Ne Zha 2* not only conveys emotion but also fulfills the mission of cultural transmission. Through the deep integration of different ethnic musical elements with modern music, the film presents the richness of Chinese culture at the auditory level, revitalizing traditional music in the context of modern animated films. *Ne Zha 2*'s outstanding musical performance validates through practice that ethnic music is not only suitable for historical films but can also enhance narrative expression in high-tech modern animated films through innovative application. Overall, the film's music and sound design create a strong ethnic atmosphere and emotional resonance, making significant contributions to its national style expression. Music not only successfully shapes emotion but also transmits culture, allowing audiences to directly experience the beauty and power of Chinese tradition through melody and timbre. The modern application of ethnic music in animated films not only enhances artistic appeal but also provides valuable reference for future national style animation music innovation.

## 5. Future Trends and Challenges for National Style in Chinese Animated Films

The unprecedented success of *Ne Zha 2* confirms the enormous potential of national style animation, but the future still faces serious challenges. How to expand the global market and cultural output while maintaining Chinese cultural characteristics, achieving a balance between artistic and commercial value, remains an important issue for Chinese domestic animation.

In recent years, Chinese animated films have gradually expanded their influence in the global market. *Ne Zha 2* has become the first non-Hollywood animated film to exceed one billion dollars in global revenue, demonstrating that works with Chinese cultural elements can also gain overseas recognition. However, to truly break into international markets and balance cultural differences, enabling Chinese stories to achieve global consensus, continuous breakthroughs in content creation are needed while exploring the internationalization of visual

expression to reduce language barriers through visual narrative. Additionally, expanding overseas distribution channels, strengthening promotional strategies, and utilizing social media dissemination will enhance the international image and overseas visibility of domestic animation.

Technological innovation is also key to future breakthrough development in animated films. *Ne Zha 2* has already achieved breakthroughs in AI-assisted ink wash effect rendering, and future applications of new technologies such as VR, real-time rendering, and simulation in animated films are inevitable trends. Developing proprietary animation production models, such as intelligent ink wash rendering systems and large-scale character layout simulation, will facilitate the digital expression of national style aesthetics. The application of technological innovation to content will upgrade the expressive power of animation art, endowing traditional culture with new dimensions of modern representation.

Regarding the balance between cultural inheritance and commercialization, creators must still deeply understand traditional culture rather than simply piling up symbols. Excellent animated film works should consider the deep integration of traditional culture and modern audience needs. Through personalized character development and in-depth IP development, national style animation IPs can achieve more diversified commercial development. For example, *Ne Zha 2*'s collaboration with POPMART to launch figurines and blind boxes has been highly popular. Future possibilities include expanding into Nezha-themed games, derivatives, theme parks, and other diversified forms to expand the market value of Chinese animation IPs. However, quality content should remain the foundation during commercialization to ensure the long-term vitality of works.

Theme expansion and innovation remain central to the development of Chinese national style animated films. Currently, national style animation concentrates heavily on mythological and classical themes, such as the *Monkey King* series, *White Snake* series, and *Ne Zha* series. Although these works are popular in the market, long-term reliance on classic traditional IPs is not a sustainable strategy. Future national style animation needs to broaden its thematic scope, such as deeply exploring ancient texts like *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, *Investiture of the Gods*, and *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, while attempting to combine traditional elements with modern settings to create entirely new stories. Additionally, original stories represent a direction for national style animation development—as long as they incorporate Chinese aesthetics and values, they can equally showcase national style charm.

The path of national style in Chinese animated films is feasible yet challenging. Domestic animation possesses both a huge local market and powerful cultural resources, while also facing challenges of international competition and market support. Only by maintaining cultural confidence alongside technological innovation, respecting tradition while daring to break through, can Chinese animation establish a firm foothold in the global animation market. The success of *Ne Zha 2* confirms that modern expressions of Chinese stories can move global audiences. In the future, Chinese animation should continue exploring the

combination of national style aesthetics and modern technology to create more internationally influential excellent works, allowing Chinese culture to shine on the global stage.

*Ne Zha 2*'s phenomenal global success has undoubtedly injected strong confidence into domestic animation creators to explore boldly. Centered on national style expression in Chinese animated films, it has organically integrated traditional Chinese cultural elements into modern animation creation, forming a unique national style and aesthetic system in character imagery, visual design, narrative structure, and animation scoring. These efforts have not only won broad resonance and support from domestic audiences but also gained attention and acclaim internationally. However, we should also clearly recognize that the path of national style in Chinese animated films remains under development. Future creators must continue to balance multiple relationships between art and commerce, tradition and modernity, local and overseas perspectives. On one hand, they must uphold love and respect for excellent Chinese culture, deeply excavate its spiritual connotations, and avoid superficial symbolic collage; on the other hand, they must continuously innovate storytelling methods, adapt to changing aesthetic trends, absorb beneficial international experience with an open and inclusive mindset, and produce more outstanding animated film works.

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**Author Biographies:**

An Jing (1983—), female, Beijing, Master's student at the School of Humanities and Arts, Macau University of Science and Technology, Deputy Director of the Research Department at Beijing Television Art Promotion Association. Research interests: interactive media art, film and television art, gaming, interactive art and AIGC, future narrative and interactive design.

Li Jiaqi (1989—), male, Macau, Professor and doctoral supervisor at the School of Humanities and Arts, Macau University of Science and Technology, Digital Media Program. Research interests: fundamental theories of game studies, anime and gaming-related subculture research, AIGC and digital media applications.

(Executive Editor: Li Jing)

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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