

## 閑情雅興

The seeds of aesthetic mood must pervade the very the soil where Jiangsu people live. Guqin, chess, painting, poetry, wine, flowers, and tea, have never been exclusive to gentle literati or refined scholars. Intangible cultural heritage adds pleasure and refined interests to the hustle and bustle of life. Sometimes it is art appreciation, while at other times it is art creation. One could play the guqin for self-cultivation, or become immersed in a beautiful and moving story during a lively performance of Kunqu Opera.

### Kunqu Opera / 昆曲

Kunqu Opera, also called “Kun Opera” and known as the “ancestor of operas”, originated in Kunshan, Suzhou in the 14th century. The 600-year-old Kunqu Opera is like a never-ending drama. The elegant costumes, a melodious flute, a look, a movement, the changes of scenes and of characters, all sing beautiful stories of Jiangsu. The aesthetic mood incisively and vividly reflects the refined interests and elegant literature of the long history of this place.

**NOTE** Kunqu Opera was selected by UNESCO as one of the first representative works of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2001.



### Yangzhou Opera / 揚劇

Yangzhou Opera is one of the traditional local operas in Jiangsu Province. Sung in the Yangzhou dialect, it originates from the folk music, and expresses the joys and sorrows of ordinary people, which is simple, vivid, and close to life. In addition, Yangzhou Opera pays attention to the creation of lively, humorous, and exaggerated techniques, accompanied by light and beautiful music. It is not only standardized and flexible, but also unique and distinguished, suiting both refined and popular tastes.

## 民俗尋根

Many changes have occurred to people's life in the path of long history, but the artworks recording ancient folk customs still show the cultural roots of people. As time goes on forever, people are still trying their best to retain the ancient flavor. The traditional imprint is engraved in people's souls and flows in the blood of every Jiangsu people. A paper-cut posted in the New Year, a lantern in the first lunar month, a sachet worn in front of the chest during the Dragon Boat Festival, and a clay figurine enshrined in the ancestral hall, all make the long-gone memories everlasting and fresh.

### Chinese Paper-cutting / 剪紙

Traced back to the time when paper first appeared, paper-cutting is one of the most traditional folk arts of China. Different from the popular art in other regions of China, traditional paper-cutting in Jiangsu uses customized handmade Chinese art paper (Xuan Zhi). With lines graceful and smooth, and composition exquisite and meticulous, it seeks innovation in techniques. The works are often mounted in frames, which are similar to the frames for freehand Chinese fine brush painting.



In addition, paper-cutting covers a wide range of subjects, from human figures, flowers, insects, and animals, to strange mountains, scenic spots, and historical sites. An entire beautiful world can be created just by a pair of scissors and a piece of paper. For thousands of years, the artists used the knife as their pen and the language of paper to cut out the ever-changing daily stories and show people's deep love for life.

**NOTE** Chinese paper-cut was inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the UNESCO.



### Colored-lantern Making / 燈彩

Qinhuai colored-lantern is an important school of traditional art in China and one of the most representative folk handicraft in the Nanjing area. With the inspiration of daily life, lantern makers use myths and legends, and zodiac animals and historical anecdotes, as their creative themes. Qinhuai colored-lanterns, arising from the Spring Festival and filling people's happy memories of childhood, gives a silent sign that a new year has begun.



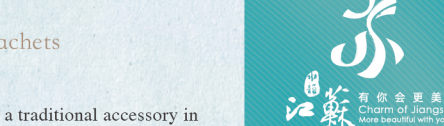
**NOTE** Qinhuai Lantern Festival, the Warmest Lights in the City

Every year during the Spring Festival, Nanjing holds the Qinhuai Lantern Festival. Based on traditional lanterns, the makers cater to the preferences of modern people, making various zodiac lanterns and modern sound-light lanterns. This is the best time of the year to enjoy the lanterns. At this wonderful time of year in the area of Confucius Temple and Laomendong, surrounded with crowds and innumerable lanterns, people will board on the gaily-painted boats despite the cold weather. They see the lights on both sides of Qinhuai River slowly disappearing behind the boat, which reflects another aspect of the Qinhuai River.



### Chinese Sachets / 香包

The sachet is a traditional accessory in ancient China. According to historical records, both men and women in ancient China wore a sachet when they went out. The Mazhuang sachet has always adhered to the most ancient production techniques, and enjoys both ornamental and practical values, with simple modeling and beautiful patterns. The sachets are often filled with Chinese herbs, whose different characteristics give rise to various functions such as mosquito repellent, moisture prevention, cold prevention, tranquil sleep.



### Clay Figurine / 泥人

The Huishan clay figurine originated from the ancestral temple of Huishan in Wuxi. For hundreds of years, these figurines have been rich and varied in image, but the Da A Fu, which is an innocent, cute, and childlike doll, is still the people's favorite. Dressed in a coat with five-blessings, it looks dignified but adorable. The craftsmanship closely follows the theme of the Chinese character “Fu”, giving the chubby and smiling Da A Fu unique charm. These clay figurines are kept in the homes of ordinary people, who believe them to bring good luck and happiness.



### Guqin (the plucked instrument) / 古琴

During the development of Guqin (Chinese zither), many schools were derived, most of which originated in Jiangsu, such as the Jinling Guqin School in Nanjing, the Wumen School in Suzhou, the Guangling School in Yangzhou, or the Mei'an School in Nantong. Guqin is not only played as music, but is also meditation, personal cultivation, and emotional communication between close friends, making it a symbol of Oriental culture.



**NOTE** Guqin and its music was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO (originally proclaimed in 2003).



### Huai Opera / 淮劇

Huai Opera, also known as Jianghuai Opera, has a history of more than 200 years. It was developed in Shanghai in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, where it was performed in the teahouses, and later became entertainment on theater stages. The singing style of Huai Opera originates from folk music and manual workers, and its martial arts such as splits, handstands, and oolong wringing are fabulous and unique. Modern Huai Opera has not only won many awards, but also been performed in Europe, showcasing the artistic charm of Jiangsu on the international stage.



# CHARM OF JIANGSU'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

## 水韻非遺



ENGLISH

江蘇省文化和旅遊廳  
JIANGSU PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM



Jiangsu is made by its water, which has given the region its birth and prosperity. Small rivers swirling around the ancestors' lives have woven an incomparable and vibrant network on the plain, and nurtured people's wisdom and elegant spirit. A galaxy of art gathers here, with a mixture of heroic, vigorous, gentle, and delicate styles, altogether composing a gorgeous picture of intangible cultural heritage.

From this cultural heritage, people can explore the fun of the old lifestyles in the contemporary daily life. With the profound meaning of Suzhou embroidery and Yunjin brocade, to the simple but elegant blue calico, people have never ceased in their pursuit of beauty. A fancy dress is not only about the superficial impression, but also the connotation of humanistic spirit. Apart from adorning themselves, people also decorate the space of life. A piece of jade carving, lacquer ware, or a sand-fired teapot can be found in the corner of the study, or other elegant implements decorate a desk. After a meal and wine, people fill their leisure time with all kinds of aesthetic interests. They play the zither, listen to music and watch the opera, and these pursuits are not exclusive to gentle literati or refined scholars. With one look, one action, and one story, the style of Jiangsu for thousands of years is attentively described.

The brilliant intangible cultural heritage allows people to access the romance of riverside strolling, as well as the spirit of integrity and openness. The heritage is not far away or mysterious. It exists in everyone's daily living, even in their meals, and reflects the vibrant and prosperous life of Jiangsu people.



*The human nature of loving beauty constantly elevates the art of costume decoration to a new height, which makes various costumes adapt to different occasions and meet varied needs instead of only covering the body. Exquisite craftsmanship, weaving and embroidery, and pursuit of beauty, after all, are the expression of people's emotions, vividly illustrating the creativity and vitality contained in traditional culture and reflecting the wisdom of life in Jiangsu people.*

### Yunjin Brocade / 雲錦

Among the ancient Chinese silk fabrics, the brocade represents the highest technical level, and the noblest brocade is Yunjin. The name "Yunjin" dates back to the Qing Dynasty in China. Named for its delicate weaving techniques and its broad range of brilliant and beautiful colors and patterns, the brocades are as gorgeous as clouds in the sky. The weaving technique of Yunjin is high complexity, and cannot be replaced by machines even today. Therefore, Nanjing Yunjin is also known as "an inch of brocade is valued as an inch of gold".



**NOTE** Craftsmanship of Nanjing Yunjin brocade was inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the UNESCO.



### Suzhou Embroidery / 蘇繡

Originating in Wujiang area, Suzhou embroidery is the most famous traditional Chinese embroidery. Embroidery hoops and frames spread out the silk, and silver needles dance in the hand of embroiderers, revealing a great deal of magnificent embroidery work, and displaying beautiful patterns in gorgeous colors. With the passage of time and constant changes and development, Suzhou embroidery has formed an independent artistic style in stitch, color, pattern and other aspects. To some extent, it is comparable to the art of traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy.



### Blue Calico / 藍印花布

As early as the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Chinese people had established bluegrass dyeing. The deep blue and pure white, although not as colorful as brocade, are simple and unadorned, best fitting the gentle and quiet temperament of Jiangnan women. The profound cultural implication implied by the numerous patterns, such as the auspicious dragon and phoenix, or the longevity of the pine and crane, reflects traditional Chinese culture and artistic connotation.

## 器物雅玩 / 雅玩

*Jiangsu has been a secluded pool of culture since ancient times. Elegance immerses people in the ethereal spirit of poetry, and the aesthetics of life fills every corner of the living space. Jade carvings, lacquers, and teapots and other utensils are always associated with subtle human feelings and clear artistic concepts. Intangible cultural heritage decorates people's lives and makes every ordinary day varied and graceful.*

### Jade Carving / 玉雕

The navigation of the Grand Canal developed jade carving in Jiangsu to its heyday. The cleverness of this carving in Jiangsu lies in the combination of painting and carving. The knife is like a pen, and different jade materials are cut into jagged rocks or withered yellow leaves through the skillful hands and imagination of jade craftsmen.



### Lacquer Ware / 漆器

With a history of more than 2,400 years, lacquer ware has a rich variety of colors and traditional techniques. It is not only complicated in the production process, but also contains profound humanistic connotations. Among them, the lacquer crafts made by the technique of using little conch produce gorgeous colors and prominent layers. Under the sunlight, the shell's sheen changes with the light. In recent years, the styles and themes of lacquer ware have been constantly updated. While maintaining the beauty, they are also more in line with the needs of modern people, which are both novel and more practical.



### Wooden Movable-type Printing / 雕版印刷

More than 1,300 years ago, wooden movable-type printing was invented in China. This ancient, purely manual technique is preserved only in Jiangsu. Wooden movable-type printing is an art form that integrates many skills including calligraphy and seal cutting. The carving knife is called "fist knife". This is because holding the knife is like clenching a fist, and the knife should be moved along the wood block without interruption or intrusion into the space of other characters. A nostalgic state of mind is created by reading sheets from this printing technique by craftsmen of today.

**NOTE** Wooden movable-type printing of China was inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the UNESCO.



### Sand-fired Pot / 紫砂

Chinese people have had an appetite for tea since ancient times, and they also pay great attention to the utensils used to make tea. The sand-fired pot does not lose the true flavor of the tea, but will retain the color, aroma and taste for a long time. The sand-fired pot from Yixing in Jiangsu is the most outstanding. The more porous structure of the local clay can absorb the flavor of the tea and have a certain modifying effect.



While drinking tea with the pot makers, the literati of all dynasties would write poems and paint teapots, giving full play to their imagination and creativity, so that each teapot has its own uniqueness. A delicate sand-fired teapot, both practical and artistic, combines the color and taste of tea, allowing people to experience the ancient style of tea drinking.



# 水韻非遺 CHARM OF JIANGSU'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE