

From World Expo to CIIE: The image of Shanghai in City Publicity Film

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Keywords: City publicity film, City image, World Expo, CIIE.

Abstract. By analyzing the publicity film of Shanghai, this paper takes the publicity films of Shanghai used during the World Expo and China International Import Expo (CIIE) as the research samples, compares their respective effect on presenting and building the city image of Shanghai. On this basis, the paper studies the communication significance and strategy of these videos to explore how to better present the city's image through videos. Moreover, in light of the internal urban design logic of Shanghai, this study aims to provide a valuable reference for building and promoting the image of Shanghai.

1. Introduction

The 2010 Shanghai World Expo opens a window for China to present herself in front of the world and also a bridge for the world to learn more about China. The theme of "Better City, Better Life" proposed by the Shanghai World Expo is known worldwide. As an advertisement for the World Expo, the Expo promotional video is of great significance. In 2018, Shanghai held another international event: China International Import Expo, which is the most important city event held in Shanghai in the second decade of the new century. In less than ten years from 2010 to 2018, World Expo and CIIE, the two world-class events, are held in the same city, which is rare to see in the history of urban development in China and even in the world at large. This embodies the strength of Shanghai and highlights Shanghai's development goal of accelerating the construction of a remarkable global city and a socialist modern international metropolis with the world influence.

The city publicity film refers to a TV feature film highlighting the theme of the city brand while showing the city's soft and hardware image after applying art processing, sorting and combination, on-site commentary and post-production techniques such as lights, shadows and music within a certain period of time[1]. This study takes representative city publicity films used during the Expo and CIIE as the research samples to explore how the city publicity film helps to construct Shanghai's city image and reflect the inner logic of its urban development.

2. Literature review

In 1961, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* authored by Lewis Mumford, an urban theorist, laid the foundation for urban theories and extended urban study beyond the perspectives of urban planning. In recent years, with the acceleration of China's urbanization in the transition period, there has been more and deeper research on cities in China. In addition to architecture-based research, scholars began to focusing more on culture, communication media, audience, and means of communication, and some of them started to conduct integrated research from the perspective of urban and media.

American scholar Kevin Lynch first proposed the concept of city image, pointing out that the city image refers to the overall image of a city formed during its economic, cultural, ecological development, and also a comprehensive evaluation of the inner strength, external vitality and the future development prospects of the city made by the public[2]. As for the research in this respect, video is an important means. Sun Wei of Fudan University pointed out that "video, as a communication mediator of mediation, is not only a method and a tool in the sense of epistemology,

but also a way of existence in the ontological sense." [3] . As an important carrier of city image promotion, the city publicity film vividly displayed the image of the city. What kind of Shanghai's city symbol is presented using the urban landscape selected in the video, thereby defining and constructing its city image? This is also a kind of mediation practice in the city promotion using city publicity film as the medium. As for Shanghai, the representative city of China's modern metropolis and the birthplace of Chinese film, its image is more closely correlated to the video. Therefore, the Shanghai city publicity film has also become an important measure for studying the image of Shanghai city and the promotion of city image.

At present, the research on city publicity film is mainly carried out at the following levels: 1) Content analysis from the perspective of creation; 2) Decoding the image elements so as to deconstruct the meaning of symbols; 3) Exploring the impact of city publicity film on urban brand building from the perspective of dissemination function

This study compares representative city publicity films used during the Expo and CIIE in terms of their presentation and construction of Shanghai's city image. On the basis of that, this paper conducts study on the meaning and strategy of communication so as to explore how city publicity film can better display the city image, and then provides reasonable suggestions for the construction and promotion of Shanghai's city image with the internal logic of Shanghai's urban development taking into account.

3. Interpretation of Our City, Our Expo

Before the Shanghai World Expo is held, Shanghai released a number of city publicity films. Among them, *Our City, Our Expo* comprehensively displays the Expo and Shanghai city. Therefore, this paper takes this video as the case for analysis.

"*Our City, Our Expo*", lasting 5 minutes and 3 seconds, is divided into three parts: City of Dynamics, Welcome the World Expo, and the City of the World Expo. It is a comprehensive visual construction of Shanghai city and the World Expo. After a brief review of the historic moments of Shanghai's successful bid to host the Expo, the landmark building of the Oriental Pearl took the lead accompanied by dynamic music and the rising sun. Then, local landmarks of Wanguo Building Complex at both sides of the Huangpu River are presented one after another. After that, roller skating teenagers, foreign tourists, and people in the morning run, doing martial arts, kicking, and cycling are presented quickly, followed by airports, subway stations, ports and other busy transportation links. These shots in the first chapter aim to show the dynamic and vitality of the Shanghai city.

The second chapter is the most narrative part in this video. Starting with the establishment of the Shanghai World Expo Coordination Bureau on October 30, 2003, the chapter shows the construction of the Expo Park, the demolition of the old residential areas and the people moving to the new residence as a presentation of the contributions that Shanghai and its people have made to the World Expo. The second chapter is also space-related. The demolition of old houses and the construction of new ones, along with other urban changes, are the examples of spatial development that enable the audience to learn about the evolution and reconstruction of Shanghai in the process of China's urban development.

The last chapter shows a lot of urban night scenes and a variety of people smiling at the moment of celebration. The joyful moment in daily life are intertwined with the brightly-lit city night view with groups of fast-forward scenes, thereby creating a sense of speed, which indicates the rapid development of Shanghai and the change of city image.

4. Analysis of the four chapters of Shanghai's city image used in CIIE

In 2018, on the eve of the first CIIE, the Information Office of Shanghai Municipal Government launched a city publicity film with four chapters, namely, Beauty, Humanism, Vigor and Opportunity, to show the different views of Shanghai. Each chapter lasts for 1 minute and 30 seconds. The video uses four independent narratives to show a three-dimensional Shanghai, which is different from the previous macro expression.

The chapter of Beauty focuses on the scenery, but does not pursue the technical expressions using aerial photography and stop-motion. The chapter starts from the blue sky and white clouds, and uses the toughness of architectural lines to contrast with the softness of nature. The diverse elements of East and West and the vivid faces coexist in the video. The lens captures the unique beauty and temperament of the city in Shanghai through the changes of the light and shadow projected on the building.

The chapter of Humanism focuses on cultural life and activities. From tea, embroidery, qipao, traditional opera to symphony performances, from the Building of Two Dragons to the Bell Tower of the Wanguo Building Complex, from different cultures to world-class events held in Shanghai, this chapter presents Shanghai as a stage with great passion and glory.

The chapter of Vigor is relatively down-to-earth. The dynamic image constructs an energetic city with new forms of industry and great convenience of shopping, and describes Shanghai as a leisure capital with quantities of cuisines to taste, various goods to buy, and wonderful places to visit.

The chapter of Opportunity touches upon Shanghai's international trade, industrial manufacturing, and technological innovation. The aerial photography is interspersed with close-ups so as to show the growing potential of Shanghai with global resources and great opportunities.

5. Conclusion: Changes in the image orientation and concept of Shanghai

5.1 Technology and Innovation

World Expo and CIIE are respectively held during the two stages of development of Shanghai's city image (from the construction of the center of economy, finance, shipping, and trade to the construction of an excellent global city featuring innovation, ecology and humanity) [4]. The chapter of Opportunity in CIIE video is intended to highlight the image of Shanghai in the field of technological development and innovation in the aspects of textual meaning and lens connotation. This precisely matches the change of image orientation of Shanghai, showing that Shanghai is shifting from a city supported by financial trade services to a city driven by innovation and technology.

5.2 Openness and inclusiveness

Openness, as Shanghai's greatest advantages and one of the core logics of its urban development, is a highlight in both the videos of World Expo and CIIE. As one of the most succinct methods of spatial expression, urban buildings showing the characteristics of the city, including the Bund, the Oriental Pearl Tower, the Wanguo Building Complex, the Lujiazui Building Complex, and these landmark buildings on both banks of the Huangpu River are mentioned repeatedly in the videos. However, it is worth noting that the CIIE video also presents the new buildings such as Guangfulin Ruins Park, Shanghai Disneyland and National Convention and Exhibition Center, which makes the city publicity film more diverse and enables the world to see the new spatial expansion of Shanghai from Expo to CIIE.

Since the reform and opening-up in 1978, Shanghai's urban development process has fully reflected the spirit of "Inclusiveness, Excellence, Wisdom, and Modesty". As the pathfinder and pioneer of the first global city in China, Shanghai is focusing on the construction of a global city of excellence. In October 2019, on the 30th-day countdown of the Second CIIE, the Shanghai Municipal Government Press Office launched a new city publicity film called Shanghai: City of Constant Innovation, which shows the greater openness, innovation, and inclusiveness of Shanghai.

Acknowledgment

This research was financially supported by the Research Fund Project of China National Institute for SCO International Exchange and Judicial Cooperation (Grant NO.18SHJD031) and the Youth Research Fund Project of Shanghai University of Political Science and Law (Grant NO.2019XQN20).

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