

Exploring the Influence of Western Modern Composition on Image Oil Painting After "The Fine of 1985"

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Abstract—This paper starts with the modern composition of the West. Through the development of Chinese imagery oil painting in China and its influence on Chinese art, this paper explores the influence and development of the post-modern composition on China's image oil painting after "The Fine of 1985". Firstly, it analyzes the historical and cultural background and characteristics of Western modern composition. Secondly, it focuses on the development of modern composition in China, and elaborates on the artistic expressions of Chinese image oil painters influenced by modern composition. Finally, it considers the main reason why Chinese image oil painting is influenced by modern composition. The artists in image oil painting emphasize the creation of artistic charm and artistic conception, the pursuit of a space between similarity and non-likeness, the charm between figurative and abstract, but also the absorption of foreign culture, for example, to absorb the formal sense of constructivism in foreign culture, boldly create artist work based on the unique national aesthetic taste and aesthetic passion, and create an art form inclusive to China, so as to enrich the diversified development of Chinese art, and inject new blood into the healthy development of Chinese contemporary art.

Keywords—*image oil painting; western modern composition; point and line to plane; beauty in form; reflection*

I. INTRODUCTION

Along with the continuous deepening of opening up, cultural exchanges between China and the West have become more frequent, which has made important influence on Chinese oil painting. Chinese artists use Western modern composition as a form of expression to show China's nationality and local cultural spirit. During the period when Russian touring school spread to China in the early 19th century to "The Fine of 1985", the expression of the image oil painting did not have much room for innovation, while the Western modern composition was exceptional, and its influence enriches the expression of image oil painting. What worth attention is that the imagery of oil painting is a special term for Chinese artists to express China's localization spirit and nationalization connotation for the medium of oil painting. Contemporary Chinese artists have a positive and far-reaching influence on the exploration of the form beauty

in modern composition. They have various painting genres and expressions, enriching the art form of oil painting.

Since the 1980s, with the gradual acceleration of reform and opening up, Chinese art has withstood the invasion of foreign cultures and experienced the innovation of cultural and artistic thoughts. Image oil paintings have turned their attention to the exploration of the sense of form of art ontology and have made valuable explorations in painting form and language of expression, which is largely influenced by the form and language of Western modern composition. Some contemporary oil painters have deeply studied the West constructive art, and put the concepts of point and line to plane and expressions of form beauty into their creations, and strive to make breakthrough and development in the form and language of imagery oil painting, which have made China's imagery oil painting not only present the inner spirit of Chinese nationality but also give it the modern meaning of the era.

II. THE MODERN COMPOSITION OF THE WEST

The term "composition" in the modern composition of the West originates from the composition of Russian constructivism and Bauhaus in the early 20th century. Its predecessor was cubism and abstraction. The difference is that cubism is not completely separated from objects in reality, and it just abstracts the object in reality. However, the modern composition of the West has changed the existing aesthetics taste, abandoned the existing realistic elements, and chose to express content through geometric forms, lines, and colors, and pursued the form beauty of the picture rather than the content beauty. The pursuit of Western modern composition is different from the actual depiction of the specific image of the existing cognitive domain, and focuses on revealing the organic connection between the elements in the picture, with the aim of applying the most basic point and line to plane elements in the composition combined with the rules of form beauty to extract and create unique works of art.

Nowadays, the image creation pattern of modern China is diversified, especially in its formal methods. It is this Western modern art concept that extends and broadens the

creative ideas and expressions of imagery oil paintings and enriches the expression of imagery oil paintings.

III. THE INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION OF IMAGERY OIL PAINTING ON THE MODERN COMPOSITION OF THE WEST

A. *The Development of Western Modern Composition in China*

After "The Fine of 1985", the massive invasion of foreign culture is both an opportunity and a challenge for Chinese contemporary art. The design curriculum of Chinese university education is based on three major components, making the Western modern composition deeply rooted in China. In the early twentieth century, books about modern composition were introduced to China, but because the mainstream art in China at that time was to learn Russian touring school, and then the red and bright styles of the later 1950s and 1960s, making Western modern composition fail to make huge impact in the Chinese oil painting industry. It was not until the reform and opening up that China entered a new era in which artists were liberated from the extreme pain of cultural despotism, and artists who were depressed began to look for a spiritual outlet for self-emotional expression. In the various artistic expressions, Chinese imagery oil painting artists chose the point and line to plane and form beauty law in the modern composition to express the works with Chinese nationality and localization spirit.

B. *Chinese Imagery Oil Painting Before "The Fine of 1985"*

The time when oil paintings were introduced into China was only a hundred years ago, but it changed the expressions used in traditional Chinese paintings. Like a pair of scissors, it breaks the protective barrier of traditional Chinese painting and enriches the language form of paintings of the first half of the 20th century. The oil painting was first introduced to China by Western missionaries. In the early 20th century, China sent students overseas to study the oil painting art of the West. In the 1950s and 1960s, China highly praised and copied the painting art of the former Soviet Union. China's image oil paintings have become mature till the emergence of "The Fine of 1985" after the reform and opening up when the art world faced changes in concepts and painting forms.

Image oil painting carries the wish of Chinese artists to explore the nationality and localization of oil painting. How to use the expression of oil painting to convey the aesthetic spirit of traditional Chinese is always the pursuit of artists. Of course, there are many masters in the exploration of image oil painting, such as Fengmian Lin, Wuji Zhao and Guanzhong Wu. Their works have changed the traditional Chinese painting styles in the past, and they are different from the realistic expression techniques of the Russian touring school. They convey the traditional Chinese humanistic spirit and freehand feelings, heralding the way for Chinese artists to pursue the imagery of oil painting. The person must be mentioned is Fengmian Lin, one of the earliest advocates of "the fusion of Chinese and Western art" in China. He has had a profound influence on Wu Guanzhong. He dedicated his life to pursue the fusion of

Chinese and Western art, and to express the humanities only belonging to China.

In the early 1980s, the rapid development of the economy and the frequent cultural exchanges between countries make situation of Chinese cultural world unprecedentedly active. Like fish getting into water, artists were trying their best to try various art forms. However, after adoring and learning the excellent paintings of various countries, some artists began to wake up. They started to pay attention to and emphasize the existence of Chinese traditional culture. Oil painting, as a foreign variety, People can't ignore the cultural soil of our nation while learning the oil painting. Since Chinese people are deeply influenced by the thoughts of Laozi, Zhuangzi, and the philosophy of Confucius and Mencius, painting and culture cannot be separated. Just as foreigners cannot show the original taste and flavor of China's Peking Opera when studying it, Chinese people can never convey its national spirits and ideas if they just copy the existing excellent oil paintings in foreign countries. Then the soul of such oil paintings is a pale thing that cannot touch the heart of the masses. It's doomed that our oil paintings cannot be identical to European oil paintings. Therefore, it's indispensable to integrate our own culture and essence to foreign oil paintings while learning the excellent paintings of the West. In fact, when Chinese oil paintings were first learned from the West, there were already a group of painters who made their efforts to create oil paintings with Chinese style and characteristics, which make those artists getting more attention than others. There are many contemporary Chinese image oil painters, such as Guan Liang, Chang Yu, Xue Song, Wu Guanzhong, etc. Despite their differences in painting styles, painting symbols and subjects, they all create unique works with Chinese meaning.

All of these painters have mastered the profound foundations of traditional Chinese art and are immersed in the excellent works of foreign countries. They have in-depth study of both, so they are all very good at creating, and they have done a good job of combing the two. However, China's traditional culture is profound. These artists have different priorities when they grasp it. Therefore, although their works have Chinese cultural features, the screen effects are different. In the process of exploring Chinese oil paintings, the national language should also be explored.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN MODERN COMPOSITION ON IMAGERY OIL PAINTING AFTER "THE FINE OF 1985"

A. *The Transformation of the Form in Image Oil Paintings of Western Modern Composition*

Since the 1980s, with the blending of Chinese and Western cultures, Chinese oil painting has undergone the innovation of cultural and artistic thoughts. Chinese oil painting pursues the exploration of inner spirit, turns its attention to the exploration of the artistic sense of form, and makes valuable exploration in the form and performance language of painting. Such change is largely influenced by the form and language of Western modern composition. Some contemporary Chinese oil painters have studied the

Western art forms and put their ideas into Chinese image oil paintings, striving to make breakthroughs and developments in the language of Chinese oil paintings, making contemporary Chinese image oil paintings full of modern sense.

1) Abstracting the work according to the component of point and line to plane and making layout

In the composition design, whether it is a figurative form or an abstract form, it can be abstracted into the formal language of point and line to plane. The composition is to deal with the relationship of point and line to plane in the picture. Points can present in many forms, such as flowers, birds, fish, insects, or the head of a person in a crowd, a lighthouse in the sea, or a miniature of building house. The point has a close relationship with the surrounding layout, usually refers to the smaller form, which is the most active element in the picture, and can activate the spatial atmosphere of the picture. However the improper handling can create messy picture. The line is the moving trajectory of the point and is the most expressive visual element. Different shapes of lines give people different visual feelings. The straight lines are simple and clear, the curves are soft and beautiful, the fold lines are thrilling and varied, the horizontal lines are flat and stable, and the vertical lines are full of speed. The enclosure of line or the gathering of points can produce a plane, and the plane has a large sense of volume in the picture, and has a sense of visual fullness. The square plane is regular and stable, and the free plane is easy-going and simple. Points, lines, and planes are the basic elements of composition, and can also be used as basic elements of painting.

The image oil painting influenced by the modern composition of the West restores the expression content to the visual meaning of the basic elements, extracts the painting from the content, strengthens the visual beauty of the composition, and transmits the meaning of the painting together with the content, instead of subordinating to content. Contemporary image oil painters use Western oil painting as a carrier to express the language of painting in a form of composition and convey a form of Chinese meaning. Wu Guanzhong is proficient in creating pictures with points, lines to plane among contemporary oil painters. For example, the work "Broadcast" created by him in 2001 is composed of points evenly distributed in the picture with faint differences in size and depth. There is no specific image, just like the starry sky full of stars. The sound sounds like some big and small pearls hit the jade plate, reflecting the painting beauty in the movement. Similar to the beauty of the flowers in the sky, the beauty effect of the sky and the flying flowers is painted. This kind of beauty is born from the spread and expansion of the big and small points behind which lurking painter's impulse to create. Wu Guanzhong is pretty good at extracting lines of different emotions from different objects, accurately conveying the emotions he wants to express, and giving life to the lines. "Building Songs" created by Wu Guanzhong in 2000 is composed of straight lines and diagonal lines, leaving the viewers with infinite imagination. The world-famous "Songzhuang" creates the inner spirit of

Jiangnan through the composition of planes with a few strokes.

2) Applying the formal beauty language to the creation of contemporary Chinese imagery oil paintings

Beauty is the ultimate pursuit of all forms of art, and only the form of beauty can show the content of beauty. Formal beauty law refers to the pursuit of the form beauty of things, which can be divided into three parts: symmetry and equilibrium, contrast and unity, rhythm and rhythm. Symmetry and balance mainly refer to the processing of objects in the painting and the proportion of color and space. The second is contrast and unity, such as contrast between dynamic and static, dense and loose, straight line and curve line, and contrast in size, color brightness and gray scale. The unification means contrast and the harmony to realize the co-existence of objects in the picture. The last is rhythm. Generally speaking, the rhythm of the picture can be fully expressed when the requirements for contrast and unity, and symmetry and balance are satisfied. However, there are not many artists who can satisfy these three points. Wu Guanzhong is one of the most outstanding one. He has his own unique understanding and feeling for form beauty, extracts the beauty of objective objects, and creates atmosphere and sense of rhythm in pictures with black and white blocks. For example, his "Jiangnan Water Town" captures many of its black compositions, and is composed of black and white gray blocks around the building. The picture is completely flat, and only the black and white, and the size of the area are considered. The patchwork is obvious, and the apparent form of the US law is clearly expressed, striving for the form beauty of the structure.

The famous contemporary painter Wu Guanzhong combines the geometric and color composition of specific things with the traditional Chinese artistic spirit and aesthetic taste in the Western modern composition, trying to show the cultural characteristics belonging to China through oil painting. Wu Guanzhong's works draw on the form beauty in the modern Western composition, the form of the pen, every point, every line, and every piece of plane is created by the layout of the painter. The picture is given rhythm dynamic, simple and rich in the characteristics of the times. Wu Guanzhong pays attention to the composition layout of the picture. The picture is full of constitutive relations, and the form of figuration is simplified and abstracted into basic elements. Through careful creation, it presents a refreshing work.

3) Performance of texture expression in imagery oil painting creation

Texture refers to the use of various techniques and materials to express the texture features of the surface of objects in the picture, that is, to present smooth, rough or use other non-brush tools to represent objects, which are means of forming a painting language, conveying a special kind of feeling language. The use of texture in the performance of painting can enrich the viewer's psychological feelings about the painting. The artistic beauty of the object is also the artistic effect pursued by the painting. With the development of modern science and technology, the form of expression

has gradually enriched, bringing a variety of new forms of texture expression. Tang Yongli believes that texture is a natural language, and creators can harness it in its application, strengthen it, and turn it into an individual language. Bai Yuping is a contemporary image oil painter, and his unique brush texture is his most obvious feature. In general, as regards to texture to display the picture, painters will use stacked pigments to create a sense of texture, while Bai Yuping uses brushstrokes to reveal the texture, which is very unique. Taking his work "Snow Area" as an example, Bai Yuping scraped out a steep mountain rock that was barely outside the soil layer with a scraper. From a distance, there was not much joy and tear, which not only gave the viewer a pleasing visual experience, but also made the messy rocks simple and clear with tools such as scrapers. He shows an eternal artistic conception and a pursuit of quietness and harmony by combining with minimal visual symbols to extract the essence of objects in nature.

B. The Creation Experience of Western Modern Composition of Rich Imagery Oil Painting

In the early twentieth century, Lin Fengmian devoted his life to exploring the fusion of Chinese traditional culture and Western oil painting. Then the Chinese oil painting style was always based on the realistic style of the Russian touring school, and later slowly became creations for politics. Such paintings are characterized by "red, light, and bright", and then slowly transfer the creative point to the expression of nationalization and localization, and call it imagery oil painting, which has been used since then. When Chinese artists encounter innovation bottlenecks, modern composition is introduced into China, which makes artists discover that the form beauty in modern composition can be well combined with imagery oil painting, that is, without abandoning localization and nationalization, it can bring viewers different visual experience.

V. LIMITATIONS OF WESTERN MODERN COMPOSITION IN CHINA

Although Western modern composition has made great contributions to the creation of Chinese artists, it also inevitably has its own drawbacks. In the process of Chinese art development, the Western modern composition exposes its own weaknesses and limitations:

The composition pursued in the modern composition of the West is too rational, not like the Taoist nature in traditional Chinese painting, and it even denies the influence of the spirit of art, and makes its painting to the other extreme. Art is not in a fixed framework, and in essence it is an open study. In the long history of artistic development, only by continuously learning, creating works with spiritual connotations and unique styles, can the artists obtain their own value and career development. The neat group and long-term stereotype can be changed, too.

Western modernization abstracts the image of the object and breaks it up and reconstructs it, leading to a sense of distance between the effect of the formal language in the painting and the viewers, and deep psychological gap. This

makes it difficult for the viewers to resonate with the painting.

Western modern composition originally had a perfect understanding of the structure and a solid skill in composition, in order to break people's deep-rooted impression of the concrete representation of things, and boldly transform the performance of objects to break the imagery of things in art. The meaning of the creation of the modern Western composition is to create an artistic expression that transcends the art of realism. However, judging from the development of modern Western composition in recent years, its creation focuses on the single use of points, lines to plane, ignoring the basic skills training and deep understanding of the modern composition of the West. Such creation has become more and more opportunistic. The reason is that they do not have solid aesthetic skills and the basis of painting. Therefore, they both can't produce excellent realistic oil paintings and can't create their own language of painting symbols. So they take the form of "retrofit" for oil painting, creating image oil painting by adopting the points, lines to plane in Western modernity and the law of form beauty. However, the more one tries to hide, the more one is exposed. Their works expose their shortcomings, and convey no form of beauty and no cultural connotation.

There is another bizarre phenomenon in the Chinese art world, that is, there is only superficial cognition of the modern composition of the West, and little is known about its spiritual connotation, so that they only completely copied western creation. Without deep research, it is difficult to create a unique painting language symbol in one's painting process, which is at best a copy. This is a very serious problem, and we urgently need to think deeply about it and reflect on it.

VI. REFLECTIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN MODERN COMPOSITION ON CHINESE IMAGERY OIL PAINTING AFTER "THE FINE OF 1985"

A. The Main Reason for the Influence of Western Modern Composition on Chinese Imagery Oil Painting After "The Fine of 1985"

After "The Fine of 1985", various foreign cultures were introduced into China, and various Western art schools began to enter China and have an influence, including Western modern art. Its law of form beauty, artistic language and spiritual connotation make it special among the many artistic schools of Western modernism. Although the modern composition of the West was introduced to China as early as the early 20th century, it did not have an impact on painting. After "The Fine of 1985", its compositional concept echoed the cultural mentality to make reform in China at that time, and the Chinese oil painter began the initial practice of the integration between Western modern composition and Chinese intentional oil painting. The main reasons for the influence of Western modern composition on Chinese painting are as follows:

1) *Objective factors: the exhaustion in originality facing imagery oil painting:* From today's perspective, the modern composition of the West has become a "past" history. It not only has an important impact on Western art, but also has a major impact on Chinese art. In the process of creation, Chinese artists pursue the form beauty of the modern composition of the West. They no longer rely on the depiction of natural mountains and rivers and sincerely use oil painting to reflect the localization and nationalization of China, but pursue eye-catching and gorgeous picture, which to a certain extent violates the initial intention of the imagery of oil painting. And this indicates the exhaustion of "originality" then, which coincides with the period of "The Fine of 1985". Although the Chinese art world absorbs various forms of foreign art, its subject matter and techniques are similar, most of which are pop art and the lifestyles of people in consuming age. At this time, after the transformation of China's art education model into three major components, the Western modern composition is deeply rooted in China, just as the "form beauty" of Western modern composition is in line with the "freehand" of oil painting imagery. The modern composition of the West thus has a profound impact on Chinese painting, especially in oil painting thanks to the combination of various internal factors and the external environment.

2) *Subjective factors: the pursuit of form beauty by Chinese artists:* In the 1990s, due to the combination of reform and opening up and "The Fine of 1985", the modern composition of the West has received extensive attention, and artists have also turned their attention to the modern composition of the West. The reasons for their interest are as follows: First, the visual effect of Western modern composition is different from the traditional expression of Chinese image oil paintings. Second, Chinese artists are very interested in the sense of composition and new forms of art embodied in the modern Western composition, which are extremely attractive to Chinese artists. Third, the "form beauty" in Western modern composition painting has a certain degree of similarity with the "freehand" in Chinese traditional painting. And in the then circumstances, in the view of Chinese artists, the form of beauty in the modern composition of the West gives the Chinese people a different visual appeal.

B. *The Enlightenment of the Combination of Chinese and Western Cultures on the Creation of Chinese Contemporary Oil Paintings*

What mentioned above is a brief analysis of the influence of western modern composition on image oil painting after "The Fine of 1985", introduce the composition of point, line to plane in modern composition, the influence of form beauty law and texture on image oil painting in details, and analyze the dilemma of image oil painting after "The Fine of 1985" and its causes, and further think about how to develop the way of Chinese contemporary art.

Chinese oil painting started late and the road to learning is still very long. While responding to the challenges of the Western art and painting, Chinese painters should neither blindly adopt the western art nor totally abandon it. They should learn from each other's strengths, take the essence and discard the dregs. The form beauty in the modern Western composition is not only consistent with the traditional Chinese painting in terms of artistic conception and aesthetic principles, but also similar to the modern Western composition in the concept of modeling. Furthermore, only by profoundly understanding the core connotation of Chinese art can Chinese painters create a masterpiece with the spirit and temperament of Chinese traditional culture.

Whether it is drawing on the realistic painting techniques of the Russian touring school or the composition and form beauty of the Western modern composition, it can be effectively used. However, it is not easy to understand it in a real sense. The current understanding for the West is superficial, leading to harm on both sides. They have not only failed to master the Western language of painting but discarded local culture and local art. Therefore, the author believes that as an artist, the empty talk that art belongs to the whole world and belongs to the nation is unacceptable. On the one hand, artists cannot abandon Chinese traditional culture, on the other hand, they should meet the demands of contemporary world, study hard and strengthen their artistic accomplishments. Wu Guanzhong is worthy of learning by many contemporary artists in this respect. He is not only familiar with the techniques and nationalization features of traditional Chinese ink painting, but also proficient in applying the Western oil paintings. He devoted his life to the exploration of image oil painting, and focused on the integration of Chinese and Western art and culture. His works can truly reflect his own language symbols and personality, and can establish a channel of communication with the viewers from the heart, conveying the sense of the times and a sense of culture. In addition, there is still a phenomenon of blindly intimating in China. Due to the popularity of one thing, a large number of artists will choose to use this as an inspiration for new creations. The expressions of painting will also be imitated, and the style will be the same and without innovation. All in all, if Chinese art wants to develop in the long run, it is necessary for artists to create their own painting language symbols and enrich the expression of Chinese art with their original intentions and deep study.

VII. CONCLUSION

What mentioned above is a brief analysis of the influence of western modern composition on image oil painting after "The Fine of 1985", introduce the composition of point, line to plane in modern composition, the influence of form beauty law and texture on image oil painting in details, and analyze the dilemma of image oil painting after "The Fine of 1985" and its causes, and further think about how to develop the way of Chinese contemporary art. The form beauty in the modern Western composition is not only consistent with the traditional Chinese painting in terms of artistic conception and aesthetic principles, but also similar to the modern

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