

Artistic Synaesthesia and Cross-Border Theater Design Taking Cirque du Soleil's "KA" Show as an Example

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary theater performances put forward complex and strict requirements for theater design. In this article, it is going to take Cirque du Soleil's "KA" show as an example to analyze the essence of artistic synaesthesia in theater design from the perspective of visual perception psychology, and explores the boundary between industrial technology and artistic creativity, in order to achieve differentiated competition in the cultural tourism industry.

Keywords: art synaesthesia, visual perception psychology, theater design, Cirque du Soleil, "KA" show

I. INTRODUCTION

The circus performance from ancient Roman Colosseum might be a canvas tent, flip acrobatics, magic tamers and amusement for children in the eyes of many Orientals. The Cirque du Soleil, established in Canada, has passed this impression for more than thirty years. The controversial art performance has evolved into the most globally influential entertainment group and drama production company. The extremely creative stage design and the subversion of traditional drama performances not only won Cirque du Soleil numerous awards, but also became a cultural card of Canada. They also made it a successful business cross-border case in the world business management professional textbook "Blue Ocean Strategy". In today's booming tourism and cultural creation, in addition to the use of differentiated business models, it seems that we should study the innovation of performing arts from the perspective of product quality. This article intends to use the Cirque du Soleil's "KA" show as an example to analyze the three aspects of theater design from the perspective of visual perception psychology, that is, what theater design is, for whom, and how to do it, finally tries to provide theoretical reference with a view to human consciousness and audience's cognitive connection.

II. THEATER DESIGN FOR VISUAL PERCEPTION AND SYNESTHESIA: SPACE HAS SPIRIT, LINKING ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES

The origin of drama cannot be clearly defined, but since ancient times human have had the urge and

interest to create drama. As a highly comprehensive art form, the functions of religious ceremonies, narrative exchanges, education and entertainment contained in the drama are accompanied by the process of social civilization. Entering the twentieth century, global political, economic, and cultural turmoil are also deeply reflected in the comprehensive stage art represented by drama. We can see the renaissance of European classic theaters, the experimentation of American avant-garde theater, the spread of Asian and African translations across ethnic and linguistic works, both multi-functional theaters with thousands of seats and small theaters that can only accommodate dozens of people. There are national political dramas as well as popular entertainment dramas. Diversity and eclecticism are the generalization of the complex forms of today's dramas. Everything the drama practitioners do is to bring the drama closer to life.

With the influence of the mass media as film, television and Internet, drama was once humongous, and it seemed more and more difficult to cultivate the appeal to young audiences. It seems that every new media provides more affordable and convenient channels of consumption and contact than drama. However, the two contemporary theater economic ecosystems represented by New York and Las Vegas have confirmed the enduring vitality of theater in the 21st century today. As contemporary theorists have stated, "Drama is a live performance with a cultural mirroring effect," "Human currents flowing back and forth between performers and spectators-laughter in comedy moments and silence in serious moments cannot be produced in other media." This "cultural mirror" function and the existence of "electricity" among people are precisely the core charm of drama-the sense of presence. As a "going" social place, the theater provides people with multiple possibilities to

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escape boring reality, provide entertainment, create aesthetic imagination, and arouse collective sub-consciousness. As the information carrier of the theater's core "sense of presence"-theater space, from the ancient Greek amphitheatre to the ancient Roman amphitheatre, from the classical restricted frame stage to the current island stage, telescopic stage, from the indoor theater to the natural environment Inlaid multifunctional theater, the evolution of the theater is the history of human exploration and revealing the soul.

In the middle of the last century, art psychologist Arnheim put forward the theory of visual perception art on the basis of Gestalt Psychology. He used bottom-up experiments to analyze the structure, direction, shape, etc. of forces in various art forms. Explaining people's psychological expectations of "wholeness" and "balance" and the correlation of brain activity through visual perception, he pointed out that "all consciousness includes thinking, all reasoning includes intuition, and all observations include creation." Inspired by aesthetic and psychological theories, drama researchers have proposed ways to expand the study of drama by comparing the space universe view of the East and the West: artists should follow intuition and emotion, dig out the unrealistic and irrational in life, and thus find a deeper level Essence of life. From the exterior to the interior, from the performance area, the audience area to the mechanical equipment function area, from the visual (space layout, color lighting, clothing props, limb movements, scene scheduling, etc.) design to the auditory (vocal, music, sound, etc.) design, The core of theater design is space design. All static and moving elements in the space are designed to provide a "momentary structure", thereby "building a critical moment for performance events", and ultimately bring the audience into a variety of emotional experiences and a credible world. The theater is not only a space for viewing and performing, but also a cultural symbol of the country and region and a space of human spirit carrying hope, fear, pain, and joy. Although the word "soul" is easily reminiscent of religion, theatre researchers still believe that "space has spirit". Excellent space design can bring sensory attraction and emotional drive. The innovative performances in the space satisfy people's appetite and space. The flow of light and all forms of beauty can also reduce cultural discounts and connect the individual and the collective, spiritual and material.

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New York's Broadway's dramatic development has benefited from the central city's economic radiation. It has many types and attracted much attention. How the Las Vegas hinterland, originally known for its gaming industry, became the world's largest tourist destination for tourists to the United States, the Sun The circus' series of commercial repertoire is indispensable, and its box office revenue even exceeds the total revenue of all theaters on Broadway. For more than 30 years, Cirque du Soleil has won the favor of hundreds of millions of viewers in more than 300 cities on five continents with more than 20 plays. "KA" show, which is the most expensive and combines a variety of elements such as acrobatics, martial arts, gymnastics, dance, musicals, multimedia installations, is an outstanding representative of Cirque du Soleil plays. The MGM Grand Hotel, the performance site of the "KA" show, is not too different from any Las Vegas casino resort in appearance. Even many people initially disdain the commercial performance of the tourist destination, thinking that this is just a crossing consumption. However, the "KA" show's theater was impressive, and after watching it, they were all astonished.

The director of the "KA" show, Robert Lepage, and stage designer Mark Fisher boldly launched the concept of "Abyss", which is intended to shape the feeling of a church-like three-dimensional space and empty the original theater of the MGM hotel. , Renovated, and eventually shaped the entire theater into a performance area. The audience was seated among them, wrapped in mechanical sets and performance equipment surrounded by 180 degrees on three sides. The biggest highlight in the design of the theater space is the main stage in the "Abyss", which is like a ship in the black hole of the universe.

This unprecedented challenge to gravity design made the performance of the actor also a miracle, like a

creature coming out of the scroll. Following the plot transition, the actors will take a micro-step on the vertical deck, and will crawl on the constantly shifting quicksand hills; at this time, they are encountering a sea storm, and then they will enter the desert adventure; the first second was on a glacier cliff Rescue, tumbling and jumping in the forest again for a moment. The seemingly naive and childlike design is actually the designer's passion for life, awe of life and the interpretation of the concept of believing that space has a soul. Space creativity and dance design greatly enhance the dimension and possibility of plot performance. It can be called the perfect combination of theater design and drama performance.

III. THEATRICAL STAGE DESIGN CENTERED ON THE AUDIENCE: THE FLOWER OF THE DESERT EVOKES THE UNIVERSAL EMOTION

For a long time, the relationship between theater architecture and repertoire has been loose, and the performances are mostly restricted by the limitation of theater space or the singleness of the set. The traditional circus gives the impression of a canvas carriage, an elephant clown, and a mobile group where to go and where to go. Cirque du Soleil's creative team has never thought of competing with other peers, but instead locks in the development of differentiation on how to win the attention of the audience and provide an unprecedented artistic syn-aesthesia experience. Therefore, each of the dramas launched strives to restore the audience's status as the focal point of the drama. "Drama is alive. Without an audience, there is no drama. Without an audience, there is no drama production," There is no more "current" of information passing back and forth between the performer and the audience, and the so-called sense of presence and vitality of the drama no longer exist, which is also irreplaceable by radio, film and television and other online media.

Hemingway, a novelist who loved circus performance all his life, once said: "The circus is the only eternal happiness you can buy with money." And achieving this is not easy. Although the circus has a broad base of people in Europe and the United States, the high cost of domesticating beasts, clown stars and touring shows makes the survival of the circus more difficult and the phenomenon of homogenization is becoming more and more serious. Cirque du Soleil has taken a different approach, actively incorporating diverse audio-visual means such as rock music, musicals, modern dance, artistic gymnastics, video installations, and martial arts acrobatics. The founder of Cirque du Soleil Guy Lalibert had predicted in his first live show in Las Vegas, *Mystere*, "I believe our show will let the desert bloom." The Cirque du Soleil not only allowed the drama to take root in the desert, but

also produced extraordinary dazzling flowers, which became the world-renowned drama benchmark.

The core of the "KA" show story is not complicated: a pair of twins traversing hardships and obstacles and finally fulfilling their duties and fulfilling their destiny. This is similar to most of Cirque du Soleil's repertoire. While creating an artistic feast, Cirque du Soleil has always forgotten the stage and performance design centered on the audience. It caters to the appetite of the audience in cross-cultural communication and uses animals. Transforming, de-starring, blurring the rationality of language, strengthening the drama of music, and retaining the narrative motifs that have never changed (families that are thicker than water, loyal love, pure and kind friendship, justice will eventually defeat evil, War brutality and peace, etc.), use weakened stories, strengthened motion design and binary contradictions to drive the emotions of the audience, and finally resonate with universal emotions.

As the fourth on-site performance of Cirque du Soleil, "KA" show brought out the illusion of space and the hallucinations brought by the audience first. Unlike the single stage used in previous performances, three lifting stages and a cantilever platform were built during the "KA" show. Actors can walk on it, and the scene can be placed on it. It stretches out and "floats" over the performance area. By making a telescopic stage, space can also be reserved for flight performances in other scenes. From the perspective of the audience, the "abyss" in the center of the stage is lower than where they sit, which gives the illusion that the actor may fall into a black hole and disappear without a trace. Because there is no frame limitation, the audience can see the grid top, which also extends the height of the theater visually. Various mechanical devices can stretch the space above the auditorium. "KA" show's theater building, this performance has become more spectacular.

IV. CROSS-MEDIA THEATRE PERFORMANCE DESIGN BRIDGING EASTERN AND WESTERN AESTHETIC IMAGINATION: INTERACTION, PACKAGE, IMMERSION, COGNITION

The enlightenment brought by "KA" show: drama is the arrangement and combination of space stage form, drama is also the precise creation of human movement. As a comprehensive art, drama has expanded its audio-visual design extension. Drama is not a static design, but a dynamic combination. The opening performance of the "KA" show unconsciously unfolded. The front row of men (also one of the actors) was dragged onto the stage by the actors of the opening dance because of the flash photography. They were thrown into the "abyss". When the audience is puzzled, the dazzling stunt performances have swept your eyes. Because the

"KA" show is the largest stage space, most changing scenes, and the most complex performances of Cirque du Soleil's resident performances in Las Vegas. We may be able to find ways to bridge the aesthetic imagination of the East and the West behind the listening elements by combing the cross-border writing of its technology and art:

A. *Space modeling*

The illusion of perspective of the main stage of the "Abyss", the hydraulic 360-degree rotating "deck", the retractable cantilever platform with actors performing on three sides of the theater, etc., create a strong sense of visual wrapping and immersion.

B. *Light and shadow scheduling*

The main theme of darkness is supplemented by more than 2500 fixed lights, 300 moving lights and more than 250 flame special effects. The flashing fire on the periphery of the theater echoes the bright colors of the central stage, which is thousands of years old. The recollection of the pre-primitive sacrificial activities is also a tribute to the classical amphitheatre, and the memories of crossing the ancient and modern are reconstructed;

C. *Musical design*

There are African dance, Brazilian war drums, flower tune female voice, oriental bamboo flute, Japanese fighting, national instrumental music and electronic soundtrack; religious songs and heavy metal rock, the orchestra live interpretation, each scene has a match theme music and character plot music, relying on the most emotionally influential music to achieve non-verbal narrative and promote the effect of the plot;

D. *Surround sound*

There are nearly 2,000 seats in the theater, each of which has a two-channel stereo sound hidden under the pillow, ensuring that all corners of the theater can enjoy the same quality of auditory information. The important but neglected link;

E. *Taohua Dao*

More than 80 acrobats from all over the world performed the wonderful "KA" show together. *Taohua Dao* absorbed elements from African primitive tribes, puppet shows, Chinese Peking Opera masks, and Japanese Bushido, which promoted humorous and conflicting moments of conflict more obvious;

F. *Action design*

There are vertical running, hanging, fighting on the stage, somersault on the runner, skipping rope, chasing, moving and fighting on the sliding sand table and deck.

There are single acrobatics and solo dances, and there are also groups arranged in a scattered manner;

G. *Visual installation*

The multi-media "deck" stage in "Abyss" is made of special materials, with film-like special effect projections, sometimes showing the metal's rigidity and heaviness, and sometimes light like ink painting scrolls. When the actor takes the water-like Lingbo micro-steps, the touch points of every footprint will bloom like ink, beautiful and beautiful.

V. CONCLUSION

In the era of artificial intelligence, technology is presenting an increasingly interactive and immersive experience and field for the world. How drama can maintain its vitality in the media's iterative upgrade and huge change, maybe we can learn from the successful experience of Cirque du Soleil over the past 30 years. An excellent theater design is not only about visual presentation but also auditory imagination. It can not only construct the spectacle of dance movement, but also satisfy the overall appeal of the audience's sensory perception, thus evoking psychological resonance and universal emotion. The duality of the West, the joys and sorrows and the golden mean and deepness of the East can be seen in the "KA" show. Through the blurring of the historical and geographical boundaries, the consciousness of the protagonist is weakened, and the characters are strengthened in the non-verbal space and time. Construct emotional guidance through action performances, achieve high acceptance stage and performance design that blends artistic perception, bridges aesthetic imagination, and promotes cross-border flow.

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