

Teaching Reflection about Landscape Painting in Oils

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ABSTRACT

For the purpose of landscape paintings in oils with greater vitality, this article mainly argues that students' landscape paintings in oils should be vivid with an artistic conception. Teachers find that students' imitation of photos is unfavorable for the expression of the vividness and artistic conception of landscape paintings in oils. It is suggested that a teacher should enhance students' understanding of the landscape painting, guide students to reduce their dependence on cell phones, develop students' aesthetic consciousness and foster their creativity, and return the landscape painting in oils back to nature in the teaching of the landscape painting in oils.

Keywords: oil painting, landscape painting, teaching, reflection

1. INTRODUCTION

Landscape painting in oils has an important position in the art education system and can develop students' ability to compose a painting, develop their powers of observation, aesthetic tastes, and innovation ability. The difference between a painting and a photo lies in: For a painting, it should be vivid with an artistic conception. If a landscape painting in oils lacks vividness and artistic conception, then it lacks vitality. This may be likened to the "rhythmic vitality" of traditional Chinese paintings. The phrase "rhythmic vitality" originates from the Ancient Painting Review (a book on Chinese painting review written by He XIE between Qi Dynasty and Liang Dynasty during the period of the Southern Dynasties). "Rhythmic vitality" is the soul of a work, so is landscape painting in oils. Without "vividness" and "artistic conception", landscape painting in oils loses its soul, and the courses in landscape painting in oils have no significance! Since a scene gives different people different feel [1-3], it is also different that how the atmosphere and artistic conception are created.

2. A WORK FINISHED BY MEANS OF IMITATING A PHOTO LACKS VIVIDNESS

Vincent van Gogh once said: "The best way to establish it in an invincible position is to imitate nature tirelessly". To imitate nature is meant to paint the "scenery". Nature varies with different geographical conditions, different climates, different weather, different hours or different light, including the changes in light and shade. During the process of landscape painting, one should capture the instantaneous changes in the scenes produced in different geographical conditions, climates, weather, hours, light and so on! During the painting process, you will find the

magical charms of nature would touch you, and arouse your desire to express the charms of nature. At this moment, you express feelings and emotions in the painting, and the painted scenery is vivid. However, if you don't carefully observe and "capture" the instantaneous changes of nature, but mechanically "imitate" the processed photos, your work would sure lack vividness!

2.1. "Painting" by Means of Imitating Photos lacks the Aesthetic Feeling about the Scenery

The teaching of landscape painting in oils is to require the students to go outdoors and experience the aesthetic feeling that nature brings us. And painting is to present the beauty that we discovered in a two-dimensional space. Every painter has different feelings about beauty, and the expressed beauty is also different. Aesthetic feeling is the experience of beauty undergone by the painters, and also the true expression of the beauty and the revelation of the true feelings in their inner world.

There is a great difference between landscape painting in oils and "painting" by means of imitating photos. What the landscape painting in oils portrays is the painter's aesthetic feeling about nature, and the aesthetic feeling can only be experienced when the painter is personally on the scene. With regard to coloring, the cloudy, fine, foggy, rainy or snowy weather and the hour change in a day all play a decisive role in the coloring of landscape painting in oils, and it is a perceptual process that the images of objects impress the human brain. The famous sculptor Rodin once said: "It's not the lack of beauty in life, but the lack of the eyes to find the beauty." We find that when we start painting, we feel the scene is beautiful, but in a certain moment during the painting process, the scene becomes more beautiful and moving than ever before, which requires us to constantly feel the feeling during the process of painting. If the "painting" is done by means of imitating photos during the painting process, it will lack the

perceptual knowledge of nature and the revelation of true feelings, and the work will lack a soul.

2.2. The Students Who Imitate Photos Lack the Desire of Painting from the Scenery

Henri Matisse (1869 - 1954), a famous French painter, sculptor, printmaker, the founder and one of the main representatives of fauvism, whose representative works include *Luxury*, *Calm and Voluptuousness*, *the Joy of Life*, *the Open Window*, *Woman with a Hat*, etc., once said: "The artists need to start creation with eyes. To see in itself is a creative behavior and needs some kinds of efforts. Everything in our daily life is more or less distorted by the acquired habit, which may be more obvious in our century. Film advertising and magazines offer us a large quantity of on-the-spot images for our eyes, and their effects are the same as that of prejudice on the soul." The meaning is that we must do paintings through observing the scenes, and the painters' souls can be stimulated in the process of observation [4-5]. Because the moods of painters are different, and the backgrounds of their life are different, so even the same scene produces different effects on different painters, and the aesthetic feelings are of course different! Therefore, a good landscape painting in oils is the result of continuous creation through observing the scene by the painter in the process of painting.

So, students must learn to observe nature, enjoy nature, and understand nature through personal experience, thereby producing landscape paintings in oils expressive of vividness and different artistic conceptions.

3. A WORK FINISHED BY MEANS OF IMITATING A PHOTO LACKS ARTISTIC CONCEPTION

Artistic conception is the soul of landscape paintings. It is expressed by means of composition, colors, the touch of the brush or color layers. A landscape painting in oils should first deal with composition, point of sight, perspective, light, hues of lightness, warm and cool tones of colors before creating the atmosphere and artistic conception. Painting by means of imitating photos has serious limitations when expressing the artistic conception of the work, which is reflected in the following aspects.

3.1. Limitations of Conception and Composition

"Composition" is described as the "creation of a situation" by Kaizhi GU, the "arrangement of positions" by He XIE, and the "essentials of a painting" by Yanyuan ZHANG. This indicates the importance of composition of a painting. It represents the overall consideration of the intended painting effect. Composition is to arrange the positions of

objects in a picture, and put the results of conception in the painting, which is the essential step in landscape painting in oils. It is the transformation between the scenery and the language of oil paintings, and the transformation between objective things and subjective feelings. Natural scenes are complex, majestic and grand. The position of the horizon line is to be first considered in composition. High or low horizon line will lead to different mood and artistic conception. Take "The Sower" painted by Millet as an example. The high, slanted horizon line displays the mental state of the sower, and also shows the sympathy of the painter for the situation of laboring people.

And the painter also used his own subjective imagination to adopt or discard according to the artistic conception of the painting, and made the picture more exciting and moving. The painter discarded and adjusted the scenes that were disorderly and not favorable for the expression of the painting, and kept the scenes that were favorable for the painting. And the scenes can also be "moved" - to combine together the scenes not belonging to a picture according to the need of composition. But the photos on a cell phone remain unchanged, which cannot be processed and imagined in people's minds. When "imitating" a photo, the composition has its limitations. It lacks pre-imagination about the complexity of the work, and may distract and limit the thought of painters. So, when composing the painting, we should throw aside our cell phones and photos, and paint the scenes according to our own composition and conception.

3.2. Limitations of the Expression of Artistic Conception of Colors

3.2.1. The opportunities to instantaneously capture colors are limited

Color is indispensable for expressing the artistic conception of landscape paintings in oils. In the process of landscape painting, the colors of the scenery are constantly changing, and not exactly the same in each period. Landscape painting needs to capture the most beautiful period to express the feeling for colors. Only when the scenes touch the painter can the painting touch other people. If the scenes cannot touch the painter, the painting won't be able to touch other people too. For example: The Sower shows the scene before it becomes dark in the evening. The dark colors express the confusion and heavy mood of the sower. The aesthetician Yizhe DENG once said: "What does a painter express in the painting? Presumably the images in his mind" Before composition, the painter should anticipate the desired effect intended for his painting, and imagine the artistic conception to be achieved, including the imagination of colors. But if the painter doesn't look up and observe the scene, and just look at a photo, the scene will lack imagination, the color will lack imagination, and the artistic conception to be

expressed will lack imagination. Thus, the painting will lack the expression of the artistic conception.

3.2.2. Light perception is limited

"Light" helps to express the artistic conception. The existence of "light" in a work will create a more prominent theme and a more profound atmosphere of artistic conception. For example: In "The Sower", the light behind the hill contrasts more sharply with the mood of the sower, and creates more artistic conception and atmosphere in the evening. And in landscape painting, "light" is sometimes produced instantaneously. Because the painter is distracted by photos, and observes the scenery less, he naturally cannot grasp the instantaneous light perception, cannot acquire an understanding about the relationship between light perception and the theme, and as a result has more difficulty in blending with the artistic conception. Only through constantly experiencing the real-life scenes and pursuing the desired artistic conception and atmosphere can a painting achieves the envisioned artistic conception and the anticipated final effect.

4. TEACHERS SHOULD PROPERLY GUIDE STUDENTS WHEN TEACHING LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN OILS

4.1. Guiding the Students to Reduce the Reliance on Cell Phones

Because cell phone software and the auxiliary functions of cell phones can adjust the colors, light and shade of a photo, and can cut and reorganize the elements of a picture, more and more students resort to trickery utilizing the functions and software of cell phones, for which a relatively complete oil painting work can be easily finished in the process of landscape painting. Because of students' improper understanding of landscape painting in oils, and their not very high aesthetic consciousness, poor composition ability and a shaky grasp of tones, the cell phone becomes their "savior"! Even a teacher brings his students out to do some painting, the students still "imitate" photos in the outdoors, and use the auxiliary functions of cell phones to make up for their defects in professional foundation [6]. In the teaching of landscape painting, a teacher should bring his students outdoors to paint as much as possible when the condition allows. When the students "paint" by means of imitating photos during the process of landscape painting in oils, the teacher should guide the them to put aside their cell phones and observe the scenes, and instruct the students how to achieve composition, how to observe the scenes, and how to grasp the light, and so on.

4.2. Guide the Students in the Understanding of Landscape Painting in Oils

In the teaching process of landscape painting in oils, a teacher should properly guide the students to understand landscape painting in oils and let them realize that landscape painting in oils occupies an important place in the art curriculum in colleges and universities. Landscape painting in oils needs to develop students' ability in painting arrangement, observation ability, and the ability in instantaneously grasping colors, in the process of which to experience the aesthetic feeling of nature. Through conceiving "composition", "colors" and "light", let students portray a landscape in oils as vivid and artistic. Through comparing photos with the scenes and landscape paintings, let students realize the difference between photos and scenes, touch their inner hearts using the vividness of paintings, and let them realize the importance of landscape painting in oils and the defects of "painting" by means of cell phones.

4.3. Guide the Students to Improve Their Aesthetic Consciousness and Aesthetic Judgment

During the process of teaching, teachers should constantly improve students' aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic judgment, which should run through the whole teaching of oil painting landscape.

1. The students make mutual comments about their works. Through making mutual comments between students, the merits and defects of students can be discovered. Learn from the merits and make up for the defects. Moreover, when repeatedly reviewing their own works in the third person, they will be rewarded in a different way.
2. Teachers demonstrate painting. While demonstrating, the teacher may analyze the scene, explain his own understanding and beauty-appreciation of the scene. Thus, the vividness and artistic conception can reach the expected effect [7]. Through the understanding and feeling of the described scene, students can compose paintings in a better way, and produce landscape paintings in oils full of life.
3. Improve students' aesthetic judgment through appreciating and analyzing the landscape paintings in oils by masters, and conduct analysis of the vividness and artistic conception of paintings. Teachers guide students to learn by analogy, and ultimately students can conceive, compose paintings and finish a work independently.

5. CONCLUSION

During the process of landscape painting in oils, the students who "paint" by means of imitating photos may result in the lack of vividness and artistic conception in their landscape paintings in oils, and make their landscape paintings in oils lose soul and vitality! So, when teaching landscape paintings in oils, teachers should properly guide students to enhance their understanding of landscape painting. While developing students' aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic judgment, teachers should guide them to put aside their cell phones, and return the landscape painting in oils back to nature. Through personally experiencing nature and understanding nature, students can produce vivid and artistic landscape paintings in oils, whose landscape paintings in oils will have more vitality.

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