

# Texture and Emotional Expression of Modern Ceramic Art

Zibo Lin<sup>1</sup>, Man Dou<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>*Xiamen Academy of Arts and Design, Fuzhou University, Xiamen, Fujian, China*

*\*Man Dou.Email:447797496@qq.com*

## ABSTRACT

Modern ceramic art came into being in the 1950s, and then it became the mainstream of ceramic art. Modern ceramic art is a whole new ceramic art style that breaks the tradition. In the creation of modern ceramic art, decorative ceramics with texture as the main decorative technique plays a very important role. The rich texture-making methods and clay bodies make the texture types abundant and changeable. The variety of textures brings infinite space for artists' creation and imagination. The artists express emotion through ceramic works, and the proper use of texture can fully reflect the artists' aspirations and personal characteristics.

**Keywords:** *modern ceramic art; ceramic texture; emotional expression*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern ceramic art originated in the 1950s and gradually became the mainstream of ceramic art. The appearance of modern ceramic art is a whole new ceramic art style that breaks the tradition. This kind of style is richer in both aesthetic and spiritual aspects. Modern ceramic art pays more attention to expressing the artists' styles. In the selected succession of tradition, it pays more attention to the expression of ideas and the thoughts and emotions of artists. In the appreciation of beauty, rather than adhering to a fixed aesthetic standard and spiritual connotation, modern ceramic art gets rid of the excessive pursuit of exquisite craftwork in the past, turns to be more open and freer, and embraces diversity.

In the form of expression, modern ceramic art can be divided into modeling ceramics, decorative ceramics based on texture decoration, painted ceramics, and mounting ceramics. In fact, mounting ceramic art is more inclined to the category of installation art. The external aesthetic characteristics of modeling ceramics are mainly presented by the performance, proportion, and outline of the overall modeling of ceramic works. Texture decorative ceramics is to modify the works based on modeling, which is mainly appreciated and felt through a sense of sight and touch. Texture has deliberately arranged predictability, but it also has the randomness of

being less predictable and unpredictable. Proper texture filling can often sublimate the whole work. Proper texture filling not only is the expression of the connotation of the work, but also makes the whole work look harmonious and aesthetic. On the contrary, inappropriate texture decoration will break the overall harmony and beauty of the works, destroy the original context, and make it feel like painting a snake with feet.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 2. TEXTURE APPEARANCE IN MODERN CERAMIC ART

How to utilize the texture in ceramic art depends on the creators' design thoughts, aesthetic consciousness, and technical techniques, as well as the control of the whole work. What we usually call texture is generally presented in the obvious position on the surface of ceramic works. Different textures will show different artistic effects. Appropriate texture decoration can sublimate the form of expression of the works and highlight the creators' ideas and emotions to the extreme. The modern ceramic texture is different from traditional ceramic texture, which mostly has traces to follow or comes from nature and life. Modern ceramic art is based on this, but it also has great randomness and occasionality.

### 2.1 Categories of Texture

The texture commonly used in modern ceramic art

can be divided into manual texture, glaze texture, and random texture. Among them, manual texture includes brooding texture, natural texture, and fiber texture.

### *2.1.1 Manual Texture*

Manual texture includes brooding texture, natural texture, and fiber texture. Brooding texture refers to the texture directly formed on the clay body according to the strength and direction of the hands during the process of pulling the clay body from the soil. The brooding texture is generally regular and harmonious. It gives people a smooth and comfortable feeling visually and will not appear to be out of order. The exquisite clay body pulling skills can create many texture effects that cannot be achieved by hand. Point-line-surface manual texture can make various styles of works according to the needs of creation. It can be elegant or exquisite. The more exquisite it is, the more it can reflect the creators' superb skills and great endurance. Therefore, it is easy to see a person's character and style of behavior from the process of pottery making. [2] Natural texture refers to the unique texture made by using the existing things in nature as a tool for texture making, or the texture made by imitating the things in nature. The comparatively common fiber texture is fabric fiber texture.

### *2.1.2 Glaze texture*

The burning effects of glaze are affected by many-sided factors, so the effects are always changeable. In modern ceramic art, the requirements for the burning effects of glaze are not so strict. Artists prefer the unexpected effects after burning the glaze, and they have a high degree of appreciation and acceptance of the randomness of the glaze of changing color. Glaze of changing color has flexible aesthetic characteristics and artistic feelings. For example, the comparatively common phenomenon of glaze crawling, the unexpected phenomenon of glaze crawling, may bring surprises to the artists' creations. Meanwhile, using the flowability of glaze to make different texture effects is also a common technique of expression. The effects and the emotional sustenance of creators are different even when the same glaze is used in different burning methods, and this is where the fascination of the ever-changing ceramics exists in.

### *2.1.3 Random Texture*

Random texture refers to the texture produced accidentally in the creation of ceramics, and it is characterized by occasionality and uniqueness. There are two situations leading to the occurrence of random texture. The first is purely accidental, which is an aesthetic texture produced by some accidents in the

production process. The second is a random texture produced by human subjectivity. [3]

## *2.2 Formation of Texture*

The texture is mainly made by hand or by molding. Manufacturing methods for each kind of texture are different. The brooding texture is the texture directly formed on the clay body by changing the force and direction of the hand in the process of pulling the clay body. Take the knife jumping technique and technique of stranding clay body as an example. The knife jumping technique was first discovered unintentionally in trimming greenware. It shows a special state relationship between the cutting tool and the clay body in trimming greenware, and it forms different textures on the surface of the clay body. In the process of trimming greenware, the trimming tool is tangent to the clay body at a certain angle and strength. The strength and resistance of the trimming tool are generated by the rotation of the rotary table, resulting in a rapid and orderly jump, so that the blade can carve the clay body intermittently and regularly. The changes in texture density, depth, and arrangement of the knife jumping depend on the changes in the speed of the rotary table, cutting strength, cutting direction, and shape of the clay body. The technique of stranding a clay body is to mix and knead two or more soil colors in a certain proportion, and then pull the clay body. When the clay body is half dry, the creator carries on the process of trimming greenware until the twisted grain of the soil appears, and then repairs the lines and grains according to the artistic effects required, or uses the rolled mud pieces to splice and shape to produce geometric works. As the kneading methods of the stranding mud are diverse, the texture effects are also infinitely variable. The point-line-surface manual texture here refers to the pure manual texture made entirely by hand and simple tools without the help of any machine. This kind of texture is usually formed by graving, carving, binding, poking, and drawing on the clay body directly with tools, which forms concave-convex decoration to create the composition effect of points, lines, and surfaces, or printed directly by tools with patterns on the surface, or made into the ideal shape and pattern by pressing, rubbing, kneading, pinching and so on. And also, it can be molded. According to the needs, batch printing clay body after molding the comparatively complex texture and the texture of printing clay body is arranged to present a neat and symmetrical visual effect. Natural texture refers to the unique texture formed by imprinting existing things in nature on the surface of the clay body or the texture formed by imitating things in nature. The common texture of the former is stone texture. After cleaning the stone with the concave-convex surface, the creator gently presses it on the semi-dry clay body surface to form the same texture as the stone surface. There is

also a common plant texture. The creator uses some flowers, plants, and leaves with obvious concave-convex lines to stick to the surface of the clay body when the clay body is still soft and then gently presses to make the clay body closely fit the plant to produce the ideal texture effect. This creative technique is often found in pots, plates, and other utensils. The latter commonly includes plant line texture, water ripple texture, rock texture, etc. There are two common types of fiber texture. One is similar to the above natural texture making method; that is, relatively rough and fiber products with grains, such as cotton cloth, towel, etc., are used to press on the clay body or rolled mud pieces, and rolling pins can also be used to make more uniform printing. Another method is to immerse the thinner fiber products in the adjusted mud and then take them out. When they are half dry, they can be modeled according to the needs, and then they can be burned when they are completely dry. However, this process is extremely difficult and has a high probability of burning failure, which requires very professional and experienced people to complete. The burning effect of glaze texture is related to many factors, such as glaze characteristics, kiln types, time, temperature, glaze thickness, glaze technique, soil, and other factors. Some special glazes possess instability in the burning process, so the glaze texture is always changing. The appearance of the random texture is purely accidental. For example, sagging, cracking, glaze crawling, or the aesthetic texture caused by some accidents in the manufacturing process led to random texture. There are also random textures made through human subjectivity, like textures formed by squeezing, pressing, and kneading mud pieces.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **3. APPLICATIONS AND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF TEXTURE**

The application of texture in the creation of modern ceramic art is very extensive. The artists express their own aesthetic feelings and voice their inner emotions and wish through texture performance. The audiences appreciate and perceive the content that the artists want to convey through the external characteristics of the artistic works. In modern ceramic art, with texture decoration as the main performance, people will spontaneously pay more attention to the observation of texture. Different textures make people engender different visual aesthetic feelings and emotional experiences. The texture is often attached to a carrier, so the texture performance is not a simple texture form, but related to and affected by various factors. In ceramic art design, texture performance has a close relationship with clay, model of clay body, color, glaze, etc.

#### **3.1 Emotional Expressions of Different Types of Texture**

The texture possesses rich artistic expressions in diverse circumstances, which mainly depends on how creators make full use of it. Different uses can make creators express emotions more in place and appropriately. For the problem of how to utilize texture, the creators' subjectivity, judgment, aesthetics, views, and understanding of different textures are very important. The usage and understanding of texture are strongly personal. <sup>[ 5 ]</sup>For example, the work of Japanese contemporary ceramic artist Harumi Nakashima (Figure 1) mainly uses the combination of glaze texture and clay body's morphological changes to express her feelings. Her works encourage drawing forms from nature and abstracting more pure artistic images. Through the combination with the decoration of wave point texture, the work forms a strong personal symbol. It is like a series of blown bubbles. The color and arrangement of the wave points show a kind of morbidity, anxiety, and dread. Meanwhile, the creation time coincides with the rapid economic recession in Japan in the middle and late 1990s, and the work also symbolizes the serious economic foam in Japan.



**Figure 1** Harumi Nakashima's work

Italian sculptor Andrea Salvatori makes use of 3D printing technology to create ceramic 3D printing combined with manual ceramic art, trying to convey the artist's thoughts and feelings of breaking the convention and breaching the imprisonment by destroying and squeezing the regular lines generated by 3D printing (Figure 2).



**Figure 2** Andrea Salvatori's work

Another example is the work of American artist Jonathan Mess (Figure 3). He kept on collecting discarded ceramic materials and then formed a new art form from the recycled discarded materials. The ceramic surface is a variety of independent materials with thick texture and glaze color, as well as cracks and irritability. These random fragments with different textures are intentionally combined together, which is not only a unique creative technique, but also an artist's thinking on the death and regeneration of life. The collected ceramic fragments that have no connection are closely connected through the hands of artists, which give birth to the new artistic life.



**Figure 3** Jonathan Mess's work

### ***3.2 Applications and Emotional Expressions of Different Material and Quality of Texture***

The main materials of ceramics are clay and petunse. For quality, the density of the clay is lower than that of the petunse. The hardness of the petunse is higher after burning. Clay can be divided into coarse clay and fine clay. Coarse clay is rough with particles, while fine pottery is fine and smooth. Coarse clay has a simple and unsophisticated quality, with characteristics of returning to the ultimate source and the taste of recovering original simplicity and great art concealing itself. Coarse ceramic art in Japanese modern ceramic art retains the romantic charm and appreciation of the beauty of traditional ceramic art. Integrating aesthetics of Zen into the creation of coarse ceramics improves the coarse ceramics' spiritual realm and cultural connotation, and is calmer and has the artistic conception of Zen in terms of emotional expression. In Western countries, the coarse ceramic art form makes more varied, the innovative design is more abundant, the personalization is more obvious, and the expression of artists' emotions is richer and more enthusiastic. The quality of the petunse is fine and smooth. The higher the quality of petunse, the better the texture and the higher the permeability. Petunse gives people a very advanced and pure aesthetic feeling, and it is greatly popular in the creation of modern ceramic art.

The works created with white petunse are frosted under the circumstances of burning without glaze. People can feel the fine texture and particles of the soil by touching with hands, and this tactile impression makes people feel cooler and nobler. Meanwhile, the quality of works burned with glaze is like jade. It feels smooth, mild, and warm.

### ***3.3 Applications and Emotional Expressions of Different Colors of Texture***

With the development and improvement of techniques, the colors and texture of ceramic art are more and more abundant. Appropriate applications of color on texture can enrich and sublimate the language of works. The colors are varied by burning in different kilns and at different temperatures, and the texture effects will also change. The changeable glaze colors give people a feeling of beauty and lead people to infinite reverie. For example, modern ceramic artworks of Japanese ceramic artist Ryuji Iwasaki form a highly personal artistic style through applications of color on texture. Taking "seeing the poetry" as his creative idea, he creates ceramic works with visible Oriental poetry. His works are concise and esthetical, containing modern aesthetic elements of nature and environment, which embodies the artist's love and respect for life and nature.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

With the development of the times and the improvement of technology and techniques, the manifestation of modern ceramic art is more abundant. The works pay more attention to the presentation of spirits and emotions and the artists' expression of personal style. Texture decoration, as one of the main creative techniques of modern ceramic art, is widely used in modern ceramic art. It is a kind of texture expression integrating vision and touch, and is very important for artists to lead off their emotions and express their views and values. Through applications of texture, the artists can construct an artistic conception of works and create unique artistic language. Fully mastering and applying texture is also helpful in forming the artists' style, which is a great method for ceramic artists to present and express themselves.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Liu C.A., J. (2018) A Study on the Expressive Language of Clay in Modern Ceramics. Nanjing University of the Arts, Nanjing.
- [2] Xiao Y. Q. (2001) Ceramic materials and texture changes. *J.China Ceramics*, 4: 45-47.
- [3] Liu X., Zhang, W.B., Yu B. C. (2005)"Accidental" overflows the artistic charm in modern pottery. *J.China Ceramics*.

- [4] Pang Y.S., J. (2020) On the Emotional expression of Ceramic Structure in Ceramic Creation. Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, Tianjin.
- [5] Zhu K. P. (2011) On the Role and Application of Color in Ceramic Art Structure. *J.China Ceramics*, 4: 66-68.
- [6] Bai M., J. (2003) Another thing to say is pottery. Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, Shijiazhuang.