



Analysis on the Commercialization of Pop Art

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Abstract. Pop art in the field of contemporary art has become a remarkable art movement with its distinct visual style and unique creative concept. From the late 1950s to the early 1960s, pop art was quickly integrated into popular culture. It reversed the aesthetic concept of traditional art and triggered extensive discussions and reflection. Over time, pop art was incorporated into the cycle of a consumerist society. Starting from the origin, background, and representative figures of pop art, this paper deeply explores the commercialization process of pop art, analyzes the connections and differences between pop art products and pop art, and explains the cause of this phenomenon as well as its cultural influence. It can be concluded that commercialized pop art carries the trend of mass culture and mass consumption, and it is constantly exploring on the road of breaking the tradition. Despite the label of "low art", pop art is still popular in society with its unique style and success, conforming to the trend of the times.

Keywords: Pop Art, Consumerism, Commercialization, Popular Culture.

1 Introduction

Pop art is characterized by its popular appeal in mass media and consumer goods. It transformed the symbols, images, and objects in popular culture into elements of artistic creation, which was closely related to the rapid development of popular culture, scientific and technological progress, and the new attitude of consumerism at that time. Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and other representatives played a pivotal role in the development of pop art^[1,2]. Their works put ordinary objects such as advertising, stars, daily articles, and other ordinary objects on the canvas, giving these objects a new aesthetic meaning, as well as some criticism and satire. The rising demand for materialism and entertainment drives the trend of pop art as a consumer product. However, this trend also faces doubts from some critics, who regard pop art as low art since it is too commercial and lacks profound meaning.

However, the evolution of pop art does not stop in the pure artistic creation field. As consumerism occupies an increasingly important position in society, the symbols and images of pop art are gradually integrated into the commodity market and become a part of commercialization^[3]. Originally rich in rebellious spirit and unique innovation, pop artworks are gradually transformed into prints, household goods, etc. Pop art products not only spread art information but also meet the needs of consumers for

fashion and uniqueness. However, this commercialization has also triggered a series of controversies, including whether it damages the purity of art, whether it reduces the value of art, and so on.

The phenomenon of commercialization of pop art also reveals the public's attitude towards low art to some extent. Although low art was once questioned, with the evolution of social ideas, people love this art form, which is closely related to mass culture. This acceptance also affects people's aesthetic standards and cultural values while shaping their consumption habits and entertainment fun. The commercialization of pop art is not only a change in the field of art but also reflects the change in contemporary society and culture. With the development of mass media and the continuous change of public aesthetic appreciation, pop art has gradually been integrated into the public view. The conflict between art and commercialization is also increasingly obvious, but pop art is perceptual, symbolic, humorous, and full of narrative, and its composition is vivid and dynamic with bright and gorgeous colors, so it is deeply loved by people, especially young people, and also well realizes its commercialization value.

Through an introduction of the origin, representatives, and controversy of pop art, this paper conducts an in-depth analysis of the reasons for the commodification of pop art, thus the relationship between art and commerce and their impacts on society can be better understood. At the same time, the possible development direction of this cultural phenomenon can also be better grasped in the future.

2 Background Information

2.1 The Origin of Pop Art

When it comes to pop art, it must be associated with Dada doctrine. Dada doctrine weakens the skills of painting while going against tradition and even aesthetics. By taking anti-war movements as the background of the times, it presents ironic content through a very absurd form, complains about the absurd reality at that time, and exudes a unique sense of life. Pop art, which originated from the late 1950s to the early 1960s, is an inheritance of Dada doctrine. "In the 1960s, traditional cultural forms, values, and ideology were abandoned by some people, and young people's thoughts, actions, and pursuits of roles were fully displayed. The real world was displayed with the help of popular art. This creative method breaks down the fragmented, localized, and colorful posters, slogans, cartoons, and pictures, and embodying the images in reality ^[4]." It is a subversion of the traditional artistic concept, bringing mass culture, consumerism, and emerging technologies into the category of artistic creation. The birth of pop art is closely linked with the change in society and culture, which marks people's new thinking on aesthetic and artistic expression.

At that time, mass media, such as television and advertising, began to spread widely and became a part of people's lives. The rise of consumerism has driven a strong interest in goods and advertising culture. It prompts artists to incorporate these elements into their creations, and pop art is also a symbol of the prevalence and rising level of consumption in the United States. In addition, advances in technology have also provided artists with more creative tools and media to express their ideas more freely.

2.2 Representative Figures of Pop Art

The pop movement gave birth to many representatives such as Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein. Andy Warhol, with a unique creative style and avant-garde thinking, has profoundly influenced the art world and popular culture. His work is known for its bright colors, repetitive images, and mass culture symbols. Common elements such as consumer goods, celebrities, and stars are incorporated in his work, linking art with commodity production through mass production. Works such as "Marilyn Monroe" show his examination of celebrity culture and popular images.

Roy Lichtenstein is known for his comic-style work, reproducing images from comic books with detailed graphics and saturated colors. His creation is deeply influenced by mass culture and printing media, and traditional art has triggered the thinking of the relationship between art and mass culture.

In general, the unique feature of pop art lies in its bright, bold visual effects and its attention to daily life and mass culture. Artists present advertisements, commodities, celebrities, and other elements in a new way, removing them from daily life and re-processing them, thus giving new meaning and value to these common objects. This style of creation, which is closely associated with popular culture, has attracted wide attention for pop art in the art world.

2.3 Criticism and Controversy over Pop Art

Some critics regard pop art as low art, believing that it is too commercial and deviates from the essence and connotation of art. This view stems in part from concerns about the commercialization of pop art, arguing that commercialization will undermine the uniqueness and creativity of art. Richard Hamilton once defined pop art as "universal (designed for the masses), short (short-term), unforgettable, cheap, mass-produced, young, flashy, sexy, deceptive, charming, and big enterprise ^[5]." However, some people believe that the commercial element of pop art is an innovation that can inject new vitality into the art and attract more young people to pay attention to the art field. The commercialization of pop art has gradually become a trend, and it is well adapted to the wave of consumerism. It pays more attention to commercialization and market demand, emphasizing fashion and personal preferences of consumers.

Commercial pop art products often face market changes and commercial interest considerations, so there may be greater changes and adjustments. In contrast, pop artworks are often more stable because they are closely related to the artist's creative philosophy and style.

To sum up, the connections and differences between pop art goods and pop artworks show the interaction between art and business, as well as the similarities and differences in terms of communication and creativity. This phenomenon has also triggered discussions about the balance between art and commerce as well as the influence of a consumerist society on the value of art.

3 Reasons for the Commodification of Pop Art

3.1 Characteristics of the Pop Art Itself

Pop art not only sees its work as a work of art, an ideology but also a form of production, a consumer product. Art, in addition to the inner voice of the artist, is also a reflection of the social reality. Like a mirror, it emits the art and culture of current society. By making use of artistic creativity and inspiration to inject nutrients into fashion design and put on colorful clothes for goods to attract customers, the business aims to obtain more economic benefits^[6]. Because of the duality of the attribute of artworks, art consumption also has the duality.

First of all, "pop design aims to break the formalism and indifference in modernist design, strive to eliminate the technical rationality and stylized style in design, and open up a popular, entertaining, and commercial design style so that all kinds of daily trifles and commercial content can be used or designed^[7]. "Pop art is popular, and obviously, its name evolved from popularity. Different from abstract expressionism, an artist of pop art does not regard the rule of form as the only criterion and a direct objective. However, his or her works still inherit a lot of form factors, whose essence is the pondering of the form after surpassing the shackles of the form^[8].

Secondly, it is also a kind of material consumption that can make the appreciation subject enjoy the art through commodity exchange. Since the middle of the 20th century, with the prevalence of the Industrial Revolution and the dominance of the United States at that time, the society filled with traditional mass culture has gradually changed into a more diversified and consumerist social model. The application of pop elements in commodities is also a natural extension, which not only gives commodities the appearance of art but also blurs the boundary between the public and art. This connection enables people to participate in the dissemination and appreciation of art to some extent while buying goods.

"The emergence of pop art makes people's spiritual consumption more like fast food consumption. The consumption symbol not only determines the public's dissatisfaction with the post-war mechanical indifference but also the satisfaction and excitement with material consumption, reflecting the desire of human beings for the special meaning behind the characters^[9]." People's aesthetic concepts and values are constantly changing, and so are their acceptance and appreciation of art. With a focus on mass culture and consumer goods, pop art coincides with the change in social concepts and has consequently gained more attention and recognition.

3.2 The Evolution of Public Attitudes and Cultural Influence

With the rise of materialistic ideas, people began to pursue more material enjoyment and entertainment experiences. The emergence of pop art products meets people's needs to express their personality and experience fashion, making art a way of combining with consumption.

The recognition and acceptance of low art affects the evolution of culture to some extent. It highlights the importance of popular culture and popular elements, allowing

the traditional elegant art world to move closer to popular culture. This cultural influence not only changes people's cognition of art but also affects the consumption concept and lifestyle. The establishment of diversified aesthetic standards can promote the communication and integration between art and mass culture.

The commodification of pop art transforms the art from an elegant, distant existence to a part closely related to everyday life. Besides, the commercialization of pop art has narrowed the distance between the artists and the audience to a certain extent, making it easier for the audience to participate in and understand the art. This kind of interaction and participation helps to expand the audience of art, promote the popularization and inheritance of culture, and enhance the cooperation and innovation between art and business circles.

"Artists' choice of artistic territory gradually expands, and they expand their artistic creation through more ways and channels, such as subway and street graffiti, commodity packaging and decoration, and environmental art creation. Therefore, in the late 1980s, artworks were gradually combined with commerce, and since then, art design entered the fashion field and slowly embarked on the road of commercialization. At the same time, various art forms were also conveyed to more viewers ^[10]." This is a mutually beneficial process.

3.3 The Current Situation of the Public Life

"Different from the huge interval of traditional media, the Internet integrates text, graphics, sound, video and other factors, which breaks through the interval and closure of traditional media, and improves the frequency and performance of information dissemination ^[8]." Nowadays, due to the development of the network, fragmented and fast food information is presented to the public, and the fast pace of life pushes people to think quickly. They may want to see beautiful things that are easy for them to recognize, understand, and appreciate. The pop design presents beautiful visual effects through copying and collage, which satisfies the fast pace of public aesthetics and public recognition to a certain extent.

4 Conclusion

The commercialization of pop art shows the integration and interaction between art, commerce, and society. It reveals the complex relationship between art and commerce as well as their influence on aesthetic concepts and culture. Whether it is the change in people's consumption concept or the development of modern media, pop art is a new process of art modernization that shows a pattern of contemporary culture. It has successfully captured the public and broken the gap between the public and advanced art. Everyone can appreciate art and even bring art home, which is also the inevitable result of the development of modern society.

In the future, art will have more integration and communication with commodities and society. It will no longer be something born only for artists, carrying the emotions of the artists themselves. It will display these emotions and things in front of the public

in a simpler way so as to adapt to public psychology. Although art today has a certain barrier because it is in essence private, it will have more cultural influence, just like the successful case of pop art. Similarly, it will also affect more and more groups, achieve a better integration effect, and bring to the public the spirit and connotation that the creators themselves intend to convey to people.

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