



Pioneer Expression of Édouard Manet's Paintings in Paris, France in 1863

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Abstract. Generally speaking, Manet's innovation in technology application and idea transmission in painting performance is understandable. First of all, Manet used Olympia as painting content and the choice of title was his direct feedback on social phenomena. Secondly, Manet did not limit himself to the so-called authoritative traditional painting school. On the contrary, he thought that the significance of painting was not only to accurately depict reality and blindly pursue fame and fortune. Finally, by connecting Manet's works with Japanese Ukiyo-e art, the author once again emphasizes the unique aesthetic of Olympia's so-called "lack of material characteristics". Manet's choices fully show the characteristics of a prostitute's image in terms of social attributes. At the same time, these choices also extended prostitutes to a wide range of female images, which caused a complete ideological impact and reconstruction of the viewers. Therefore, Manet not only revealed his modern artistic perspective in the 19th century but also influenced a series of artists and cultural aesthetics after him.

Keywords: Édouard Manet; Painting; Olympia; Pioneer.

1 Introduction

Manet's Olympia has broken the existing art rules through its new and different art form or even ahead of its time, thus the traditional painting circle has also caused an uproar. Regardless of painting skills or painting ideas, Olympia carries some attempts at Manet's transition from classicism to realism. This paper hopes to discuss Olympia's painting performance in three aspects: documentary nature, planarity and metaphorical symbolism. In the first part, this paper discusses how France laid a documentary background for Manet in social development in the middle and late 19th century when Olympia was created. During this period, social orders were being rebuilt from the inside out. French people made a living in this order, and prostitutes became one of the most important epitomes. However, the class attribute of social order cannot be eliminated by reconstruction. What's more, the extensive, even oppressive, aesthetic orientation and the publication of opinions brought about by it are the fundamental reasons why Olympia is not accepted. In this social background, Olympia's most obvious innovative depiction of nudity and female perspective has become the object of attack. Monet's Olympia thus shows his documentary painting

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performance in the middle and late 19th century in France. Then, this paper discusses the universal influence of photography on painters after its appearance in the mid-19th century, especially how it influenced Manet's depiction of Olympia. Because of the advantages of photography over painting, the direction and content of painting have changed essentially. Manet's painting skills in Olympia show an unprecedented emotional exploration of consciousness. Manet shifted the emphasis of painting to communication with the public consciousness, instead of just showing off his painting skills. Finally, this paper discusses the aesthetic concept of "immateriality" held by Japanese art and points out how to practice it in Olympia as a symbolic representation of Manet's painting.

2 Emergence of French urban life - documentary painting performance

By the 1860s, the theme of prostitutes had become commonplace in the expression of painting themes. At the same time, while prostitutes are developing from the edge of society to the center of the city, the inner voice of the public is full of worries: they worry that in the long run, Paris will be completely equivalent to prostitution. [1] According to the literature records, in 1870, prostitutes without registered status were everywhere in Paris, appearing in cafes, theatres, dance parties, public buildings, railway stations, trains, and the busiest streets and squares in various ways that were not governed. Such universality has become a routine, thus people think that these prostitutes are licensed but just do not follow the rules, and there is nothing they can do about the police's laissez-faire behavior. [1] Since then, prostitution has almost become a shameless and aboveboard means of earning a living. In the 1870s, there were 120,000 prostitutes in Paris alone, and the prostitutes' business had reached all levels in Paris: including a descendant of two noble families, assistant clothing dealers, third-rate actors, etc. [1] Part of the reason for this abuse is the Ottoman transformation plan [2]. The city has changed, and the number of places where prostitutes solicit customers has increased dramatically. As long as they are men who can afford the so-called "sex trade", they will easily develop into a new consumption form of the bourgeoisie.

As for Olympia (1863) itself, it is regarded as derived from the themes of naked bathers before Manet, such as *The Picnic* (1862-1863), *The Surprised Nymph* (1861), etc., while Olympia is regarded as a pronoun of vulgar prostitutes [3], which is displayed by Manet in the most direct and naked way. [4] The artist borrowed Venus in works of Tiziano Vecellio (1490-1576) and *The Nude Maja* (1797-1800) by Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and some photos of Japanese geisha as themes, giving this work a double meaning. [5] However, from another point of view, the emotional appeal in the works of *Venus of Urbino* (1538) has not been shown in Olympia. So far, the sacred and secular, noble and humble, history and modern and other angles are echoed in Manet's pictures at the same time. Manet's short and realistic lines outline only the appearance of human women, not the appearance of women in people's eyes or hearts. Combining the artist's still life with the characters, the main character's face is

flat and stiff; her hair did not cover her tough face; her skin is pale and lacking in sensuality; her body has no curve and three-dimensional sense; her hand was placed on her vulva without any disguise or shame. These numerous visually contradictory and disturbing elements seem to imply that Manet is only depicting an object rather than a real woman, and the sheets in the picture become the tablecloth of the substrate in this group of still-life paintings. [6] Scholars all agree that there are both reality and myth in Olympia. Although the character in the picture comes from real life, she is also a goddess in mythology. When this nude painting was exhibited in the salon, it shocked the audience at that time, because it could be recognized as a commoner and an obscene prostitute, and Manet told the audience about the city of Paris and its social situation through his painting language.

3 Emergence of photography - flat painting performance

After Daguerre Photography [7] appeared in 1839, artists had to think about the difference between art and photography. The simplification but strong expression of reality in photography is a surreal form that is close to reality but alienated from it. The emotional expression it brings is no longer a simple portrayal, but an ideological collision and equivalent transformation. However, in the time and space of the times and technological leap, the public usually appreciates traditional things uncritically but criticizes the truly innovative things with disgust. [8] Therefore, the real reality in the second half of the 19th century is that from the initially limited portrait shooting to the painter's choice of painting themes, it showed a completely different state from that before photography appeared.

Paris, France, as the European art center in the 19th century, took academic neo-classicism as its standard style in this period and held official exhibitions regularly every year. At this time, most academic exhibitors accepted the idea of a virtual three-dimensional visual illusion space established on the plane by using perspective, light and shade, light and shadow and human anatomy since the Renaissance, emphasizing Raphael-style idealized aesthetic schema. At the same time, the traditional classical oil painting and Tampere painting techniques are accepted in the expressive language, the colors are relatively soft and the painting style is rigorous and delicate. However, Manet's paintings, as a maverick in this period, revealed a tendency of flattening different from that of the academic school. As mentioned earlier, great changes will bring about the replacement of artistic skills, which will inevitably affect the artistic creation itself, and may eventually change the artistic concept itself in the most fascinating way. [8] Perhaps it was the emergence of photography that pushed Édouard Manet (1832) to bring the masses to their ideology and let them talk with their ideology in the constantly opposing painting language.

Manet adopted the rectangular spatial composition and theme of classical painting in Olympia (1863). This is borrowed from The Clothed Maja (1798) by Francisco Goya (1746) and Venus of Urbino (1538) by (Tiziano Vecelli, 1490). [8] In the whole work, the artist did not give the picture an obvious three-dimensional sense of depth. Half of the gild gilt near the middle of the picture divides the picture into two parts.

The frivolous naked woman facing the audience was nearly flattened under the light source, and the white skin color and soft white cushions, sheets and long towels formed bright colors in the foreground, which were in sharp contrast with the dark background. There was no soft transition in the middle, but a black maid and a girl were painted in a strong contrast. This nearly closed space and almost nonexistent depth of field locked the audience's eyes on Olympia exposed to bright light. Based on Goya and Tiziano, Manet chose to eliminate the linear perspective and the light above, and instead extended the picture horizontally, revealing the intimate desire of naked women to the public. Through its strong contrast between light and dark and no transition at all, it reminds the public that "in an image, it is always necessary to look for the brightest and darkest ones, and other parts will be solved naturally without too much trouble." [9] Such expressive language is influenced by Japanese Ukiyo-e prints. Manet abandoned the traditional way of using side light, and let the front light shine directly on the main character, thus reducing and weakening the sensitive changes of the picture, and also inhibiting the sense of spatial depth and the sense of the figure's volume. Specifically, those dark lines around the heel, breasts and palms are almost the only contours; The left nipple of the prostitute interrupts the line of the left arm; The thigh and knee bones are flat ... [10] These unusual sketch-like depictions can hardly see the projection, and the silhouette-like flattening effect becomes the instantaneous impression of real vision to some extent, and the color blocks and brush strokes become meaningful forms. On the other hand, the bright flowers on the side of Moran's head, the black ribbon around her neck and the gold bracelet on her right hand are all pulling people's attention—reminding them of their cold and bold face, bare chest and left hand that is unashamedly placed in privacy.

4 Concern for Ukiyo-e - metaphorical symbolic painting performance

In the first half of the 17th century, East Asian arts and crafts, mainly China porcelain, gradually appeared in European paintings, thus promoting East Asian art to attract more attention in Europe. In 1853, the United States forced Japanese ports to open to the outside world for trade with Europe and the United States through war, followed by Japanese handicrafts appearing in department stores on the streets, even at the Paris World Expo. By the middle of the 19th century, Japanese printmaking gradually became the focus of the art world. The different cultures of the east and the west and the painting media have inspired the artists in Paris. [11] On the other hand, the appearance and popularity of photography in the 19th century also made painting lose its function of transmitting information gradually, thus promoting painting to have new meaning in its painting context. At this time, Japanese art is regarded as the same as ancient Greek art, as it is all about the realism of beauty-it has no imagination and dreams. As an artist of Paris Impressionism, Manet began to combine the aim of East Asian art with the idea of modernization put forward at that time. Through his historical paintings, which had a very high status before the rebellion, he showed his simplicity and so-called "beauty without physical characteristics" [11]. This kind of

white space art from East Asia emphasizes the weakening of depth of field, the abandonment of light sources, and the emphasis on color and overall picture effect.

Specifically, in *Olympia*, Manet deliberately placed the background and the black maid in the shadow of the picture, not only to highlight the shape and color of the foreground character but also to help the picture composition achieve a new visual effect. Manet's move made the three-dimensional viewpoint of the whole picture have no place to stop, thus highlighting the center of the picture and creating a sense of "lack of physical properties". [11] Secondly, this painting treatment without perspective and shadow effect makes *Olympia* itself the brightest spot in the picture-not a light receiver. As a result of this performance, the naked body of *Olympia* is no longer a naked body to be watched, but a visual effect and visual impact to actively display itself. At the best visual center, Manet adopted another method that is highly representative of the East Asian painting-flat painting technique, that is, instead of showing all the dimensions of color, he gave up the middle tone, making the large color form its outline. This kind of use greatly removes the external feeling that viewers rely on when viewing paintings. [11] On the other hand, Manet also ignored the exquisite details in traditional oil paintings by controlling the effect of East Asian art, and instead put his depiction center on the feeling of the vitality of the whole picture. [11] Therefore, under the simplified processing technique, the viewer will find that the relationship between the characters in *Olympia* is unusually clear. Not only does the protagonist's facial contour capture the audience's attention, but also the color tone of the picture is adjusted to a perfect visual effect under the treatment of the artist. *Olympia*, a painting that combines oriental expression, has caused the traditional social viewing angle to be at a loss from these aspects, thus arousing the anger of traditional academic workers.

5 Conclusion

Generally speaking, Manet's painting art was a cultural turning point in the 19th century. There is nothing wrong with the innovation of technology application and the innovation of idea transmission brought by his painting performance. On these aspects, this paper discusses how Manet reflected on the middle and late 19th century by observing his works. First of all, Manet used *Olympia* as painting content and the choice of title was his direct feedback on social phenomena. The naked women and the female perspective brought by *Olympia* all lead to the fact that the number of prostitutes is increasing rapidly, that is, the fact that women, especially prostitutes, are regarded as objects of visual enjoyment, and the fact that society instinctively contradicts and criticizes these realities. Secondly, Manet did not limit himself to the so-called authoritative traditional painting school. On the contrary, he thought that the significance of painting was not only to accurately depict reality and blindly pursue fame and fortune. Therefore, from Manet's works, we can see that he did not adopt the typical three-dimensional composition and female body modeling with a sense of lines and flesh, but instead presented his unique observation perspective through the bold flattening of the sense of space and the abandonment of traditional female char-

acteristics. Finally, by connecting Manet's works with Japanese Ukiyo-e art, the author once again emphasizes the unique aesthetic of Olympia's so-called "lack of material characteristics". Manet's choices fully show the characteristics of a prostitute's image in terms of social attributes. At the same time, these choices also extended prostitutes to a wide range of female images, which caused a complete ideological impact and reconstruction of the viewers. Therefore, Manet not only revealed his modern artistic perspective in the 19th century [12] but also influenced a series of artists and cultural aesthetics after him.

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