



To Explore the Similarities and Differences of Chinese and Western Modern and Contemporary Art Theories

Yuanting Jiang

Shaanxi Normal University, Shaanxi, China

1230538273@qq.com

Abstract. This paper discusses the similarities and differences between Chinese and western modern and contemporary art theories, including definitions, viewpoints and ideas. By comparing the similarities and differences between modern and contemporary Chinese and Western art theories, we can deepen the understanding of artistic concepts under different cultural backgrounds. Artistic exchange and cooperation between China and the West are of great significance, but they also face challenges such as language, cultural differences and power inequality. By strengthening the dialogue and cooperation, the goal of artistic cross-cultural exchange can be realized.

Keywords: Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theory; similarity; difference.

1 Introduction

Art is a language spanning time and space. It plays an important role in the east or west, modern or ancient. Art theory covers a wide range of fields, from the overview and definitions to the historical context and developments behind it. There are similarities and differences between Chinese and western art theories, and the cultural background and values behind them have also triggered many discussions. Whether in the participation of audience roles, the expression of creation, or the connection between art, society and politics, are all important aspects of art theory discussion. The freedom and innovation of art challenge the boundary between tradition and modernity, while the communication and cooperation between China and the West bring new meaning and complementarity. In this diverse world, art provides us with a space to think and understand, but also brings us unprecedented challenges.

2 Background and overview of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

2.1 Definition and scope of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

2.1.1. Definition.

Objectivism: Western modern and contemporary art theory emphasizes the objective analysis and interpretation of artistic works, and emphasizes the study of form, technology and expression mode. Art is seen as an independent existence, relatively independent from the social and political background, valuing the artist's originality and individual expression[1].

Postmodernism: Postmodernism in the western theory of modern and contemporary art emphasizes against the norms and fixed framework of traditional art, and emphasizes diversity, fragmentation and free creation. Art is regarded as a game of language and symbols, whose meaning is multiple and fluid and requires the participation and interpretation of the audience.

Cultural criticism: Some modern and contemporary art theories focus on the criticism of social, political and cultural phenomena, focusing on the relationship between art and power, identity, gender, race and class. Art is seen as a means of resistance and alienation that can challenge traditional authority and the norms of mainstream culture.

Subjective reproduction: Chinese modern and contemporary art theories emphasize more on the subjective creation and personal experience of artists, and pay attention to emotion, expression and individual existence[2]. Art is regarded as a reflection and reproduction of the inner world, in the pursuit of the comprehensive experience of truth, goodness and beauty.

2..1.2 Scope.

The scope of Chinese and western modern and contemporary art includes the artistic creation of various forms and ways of expression. In the West, modern art covers genres from impressionism and expressionism in the late 19th century to the 20th century, and the diversity and experiment of postmodernism and contemporary art. In China, modern and contemporary art involves the innovation of traditional culture and the reflection of contemporary society, from traditional Chinese painting, oil painting and sculpture to installation art, performance art and new media art and other forms of practice[3]. Both Chinese and western modern and contemporary art pays attention to the relationship between art and society, politics, culture and individual experience, as well as the exploration and challenge of artistic language, aesthetic concepts and innovative forms. These arts pursue uniqueness, innovation and aesthetic values, and aim to arouse the audience's thinking and emotional resonance and cultural dialogue.

2.2 Historical background and development of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art

2.2.1. Historical background and development of Western modern and contemporary art.

Pre-modern art: In the 19th century, European art experienced the development of schools such as romanticism, Impressionism and symbolism. These movements broke the traditional rules and expressions of art and opened the pioneers of modern art.

Modernism: At the beginning of the 20th century, the rise of the modernist art movement, including cubism, expressionism, abstract art, etc., promoted the complete subversion of traditional art forms and concepts, emphasizing the purity of form and individual expression[4].

Postmodernism: In the late 20th century, the criticism and reflection of postmodernism on modernism rose up. Postmodernist art emphasizes diversity, fragmentation and free creation, breaks through the boundaries and norms of art, and pays attention to the interaction between art and society, politics and culture.

2.2.2. Historical background and development of Chinese modern and contemporary art.

New Culture Movement: At the beginning of the 20th century, China's new culture movement advocated modernization and democratic thought, criticized and reflected on Chinese traditional culture and art forms, and promoted the absorption and reference of western modern art.

Cultural Revolution: In the 1960s and 1970s, China experienced the Cultural Revolution, where art was strictly restricted and examined, traditional art forms were suppressed, and folk art and underground art became the main ways of expression[5].

Opening up and reform: Since 1978, China has implemented the policy of reform and opening up, and the art field has gradually opened up, and the trend of modern and contemporary art at home and abroad began to enter China, which has had a profound impact on Chinese art.

In the development of modern and contemporary art in China and the West, artists actively explore and innovate, break through traditional art forms and concepts, reflect on social, political and identity issues, as well as the continuous challenges to the language, aesthetic concepts and technology of art. These developments and changes have promoted the continuous evolution and diversity of modern and contemporary art.

3 The main views and thoughts of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

3.1 Understanding of the definition and purpose of art in Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art

In the West, the definition and purpose of modern and contemporary art emphasize the originality and individual expression of works of art. Art is seen as an independent existence, relatively independent from the social and political background. Artists are regarded as creators and expressions, triggering the audience's thinking, emotional and aesthetic experience of the work through the visual, auditory or other perceptual ways of art[6]. The purpose of art is to stimulate imagination, explore emotions, convey ideas, challenge traditional ideas, and resonate with the audience.

In China, the definition and purpose of art in modern and contemporary art place more emphasis on inner experience and emotional expression. Art is regarded as a reflection and reproduction of the inner world. Artists pursue the comprehensive experience of truth, goodness and beauty, and convey their emotions, mood and thoughts through artistic works. The purpose of art is to express individual emotions and opinions, seek the emotional resonance between art and the audience, and pursue the in-depth exploration and understanding of the inner world[7].

3.2 Views of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art on the role and participation of the audience

In western modern and contemporary art, audiences are seen as active participants in the reconciliation of art works. The artist hopes that the audience can give more meaning and value to the work through the perception, thinking and interpretation of the work[8]. The audience's subjective experience and interpretation have an important influence on the meaning of the work of art. The meaning of art not only exists in the work itself, but also includes the process of interaction between the audience and the work. The artist encourages the audience to actively participate and think about the concepts, emotions and social issues behind the work, so that the art work establishes a dialogue and interactive relationship between the audience and the artist.

In Chinese modern and contemporary art, the audience is also regarded as one of the important participants in the art works. The artist hopes that the audience can participate in the emotions and themes expressed by the art work through the perception and emotional resonance of the work. The experience and feeling of the audience are part of the meaning of the art work, which also reflects the symbiotic relationship between the audience and the work[9]. The artist encourages the audience to accept and understand the work with an open mind, and to explore the cultural, historical and emotional connotations behind the work.

3.3 Exploration of creation and expression in Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art

In western modern and contemporary art, artists actively explore and challenge the traditional art forms and techniques. They try new materials, media and technologies, such as photography, sculpture, installation art, performance art and new media art, to break through the traditional ways of expression and creative boundaries. Through bold experiments and innovations, artists create a rich and diverse work of art to demonstrate their unique views and aesthetic experience of reality, society, individual identity, and human existence. With the help of postmodernism trend of thought, artists break the boundaries and norms of art, pay attention to the interaction between art and society, politics and culture, and have dialogue and collision between art and other disciplines and fields.

In Chinese modern and contemporary art, artists also actively explore and innovate the forms and expressions of art. They draw lessons from the experience and skills of western modern art, but also integrate the thinking of traditional Chinese culture and philosophy. Artists explore various themes such as individual identity, social issues, historical memories, and cultural heritage through different media such as painting, oil painting, sculpture, and issues installation art, and new media art. Through the innovation of ideas, materials and technologies, as well as the redeconstruction and reconstruction of traditional art forms, they express their thinking and observation of social change, human destiny and the inner world of individuals.

4 Similarity between Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

4.1 The affirmation of artistic freedom and innovation by Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

Both in the Chinese and western art theories, the freedom and innovation of art are emphasized. Art is regarded as a field of freedom of expression and creation, and the artist should have the power of independent choice and the freedom of creation. Art theory holds that only in a free environment can artists give full play to their personal imagination and creativity to create unique, novel, and even breakthrough works. Art theory also emphasizes the importance of innovation[10]. Artists are encouraged to explore new ways of expression, media and techniques in creation, as well as breaking through traditional art forms and ideas. Through innovation, artists can bring fresh visual and conceptual experience, and bring unusual feelings and thinking to the audience. Innovative works of art can also promote the progress and development of the art field, opening up new possibilities for artistic creation.

4.2 Discussion on the correlation between art and society and politics in Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

In the modern and contemporary art theories of China and the West, the correlation between art and society and politics is emphasized. Art is regarded as an interactive way of expression with social and political background, and artists explore and present social phenomena, political issues and power relations through their works.

Art theory holds that works of art can be a reflection and criticism of social problems and political reality. Artists express their individual or group concerns about social injustice, inequality or oppression through art works, speak out for social issues, and attract public attention and discussion. Artists can also use the power of art to bring political issues into the public eye and call for social change and political reform. Moreover, art theory suggests that works of art can be a catalyst for social and political change. Through the expression and creation of art, the artist can stimulate the audience's thinking and emotional resonance, and encourage the public to think and act on the problem. Works of art have unique abilities to spread social awareness and values, which can trigger social reflection and change.

5 Differences between Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

5.1 Differences in the cultural background and values of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art concepts

In Western culture, art is considered as an independent field, the pursuit of individual creativity and freedom of expression. Artists are given high social status, and their works are seen as independent creations, emphasizing personal emotions and aesthetic experiences. Western art emphasizes individualism and freedom, and pursues innovation and breaks through the traditional expression methods. In the Chinese cultural background, art is regarded as a traditional way of expression, with the responsibility of inheriting and continuing the history and culture. Chinese artistic concepts emphasize the respect and dignity of tradition, and artists are regarded as inheritors and guardians. Chinese art emphasizes harmony, balance and nature, and emphasizes the inheritance and development of traditional skills and aesthetic standards.

In terms of values, there are also differences between Chinese and western modern and contemporary art. Western art pays more attention to individual expression and freedom, and emphasizes individual rights and individual independence. While Chinese art emphasizes social harmony, the interests of the family and the country, and pays attention to the collective values and sense of responsibility.

5.2 Chinese and western modern and modern art attitudes towards tradition and modernity

In western art, modern art is often regarded as being opposite to traditional art, pursuing originality and breaking down from the past. Western artists often try to break the

shackles of tradition and seek new ways of expression and forms. They tend to break through the limitations of traditional art and pursue innovation, individuality and rebellion. In Chinese art tradition, tradition and modernity are not completely opposite relations. Chinese artists usually tend to integrate traditional elements and concepts into modern art, and combine traditional techniques and aesthetics with contemporary art. They pay attention to the inheritance and development of tradition, and believe that traditional art is the foundation and essence of Chinese culture.

6 Complementation and exchange of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

6.1 Mutual influence and reference of Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

The Chinese and western modern and contemporary art theories mutually influence and learn from each other. In the context of globalization, the communication and interaction between Chinese and western artists and scholars are increasingly frequent, and their respective art theories are gradually evolved and developed in the process of mutual absorption and reference[11].

On the one hand, western modern and contemporary art has exerted a positive influence on Chinese art. Western artistic concepts and theories bring new ideas and creative methods to Chinese artists. For example, western conceptual art and performance art have exerted an important influence on the development of Chinese contemporary art. Chinese artists have begun to try to combine traditional art with conceptual art to create unique art forms and languages.

On the other hand, Chinese traditional art also has a certain influence on western modern and contemporary art. The aesthetic concepts, techniques and philosophical thoughts of Chinese traditional art have been paid wide attention and reference in western art. For example, the composition, brush strokes and techniques of expression of traditional Chinese painting have exerted a certain influence on Western painting. At the same time, Chinese philosophical thoughts and cultural values also provide new inspiration and thinking direction for western artists.

6.2 Significance and challenges of the exchange and cooperation between Chinese and Western modern and contemporary art theories

First of all, communication and cooperation can promote the innovation and development of art. The collision of different cultural backgrounds and artistic theories can stimulate new thinking and creativity, and bring new ways of expression and forms to art. The cooperation between Chinese and Western artists can integrate different artistic concepts and technologies to create more innovative and unique works. Secondly, communication and cooperation can promote intercultural understanding and communication. As a language, art can transcend the boundaries of language and culture

and become a bridge between different cultures. Through exchanges and cooperation, Chinese and Western artists can understand and respect each other's cultural background and artistic concepts, and promote cultural diversity and equal dialogue.

However, the exchange and cooperation of modern and contemporary art theories in China and the West also face some challenges. The first is the barrier to linguistic and cultural differences. There are language and cultural differences between Chinese and Western artists, and there may be difficulties in understanding and communication. Moreover, art theories and critical standards differ in different cultural backgrounds, leading to conceptual conflicts and cognitive barriers in cooperation. The second is the inequality of power and resources. Due to historical and economic differences, western artists and theorists often dominate the exchange and cooperation between modern and contemporary art, while the voices of Chinese artists and theorists may be suppressed or marginalized. Therefore, the equal and fair cooperation mechanism and system construction is very important.

7 Conclusion

Art, as a language spanning time and space, continuously brings us opportunities for beauty, thinking, and understanding. The mutual influence and exchange between Chinese and Western art theories have promoted the innovation and development of art. Through the exploration of the correlation between art and society, culture and politics, we can better understand and appreciate the differences and commonalities between different cultures. In this diverse world, art provides us with a unique perspective, helping us to transcend boundaries, expand our thinking, and opening up new possibilities for future artistic creation and theoretical exploration.

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