

The Dialectics of Technology and Art

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Abstract—In the digital age, the discussion about art works and artistic images is endless. Before a multi-angle discussion, first of all it is necessary to examine changes of the artistic image itself during pre-digital era to digital era from the perspective of ontology, and then can be discussed the rest based on the changes. To this end, this paper combing through the transition from the pre-digital era to the digital age in the historical process, because of the mechanization of production and information age, the carrier of art work has a big change. From the old drama, the painting, the development of the film, the photograph, until the emergence of the Internet art, it totally subverted the traditional form of the art. From the perspective of ontology, it is in this development process that the image of the works of art has changed accordingly, from the correspondence and reflection of reality to the reality itself.

Keywords—metaphor; digital era; art; aesthetics; Walter Benjamin; aura

I. INTRODUCTION

It is widely believed that good works of art always reflect the characteristics and spirit of a certain age. According to the characteristics of Danner's artistic age, the production of artworks cannot be separated from the influence of time, race and environment. Only works of art that combine the characteristics of The Times can be successful.^[1] Therefore, through works of art, people can indirectly observe their own world from another Angle, and look for the hope of life from a more macroscopic perspective. In other words, the public can explore the ideal world through artistic works. Art reflects the time spirit, which means that works of art with their time factors such as economic development level, the concept of cultural development and closely linked. And works of art and these factors can combine with each other and make a difference. Therefore, before discussing contemporary art works, two questions need to be introduced. First, what is the most striking feature of the age of man today? Secondly, what kind of spirit can bring about the most fundamental change in art?

With the wide spread and application of Internet technology in various fields of human life, physical digitization has become one of the most important features of The Times. The word "digit" seems to be regarded by the public as a modern and innovative word. There is no exception in art. Modern cultural and art theories cannot be

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separated from the concept of digitization, and in some ways, it is more deeply connected with the concept of digitization than other subjects in the field of art. Because art pursues innovation and can give the contemporary people the right explanation space. Therefore, when people use the key words of digit to interpret today's culture and art, they hope to get the development and innovation based on the spirit of The Times.

In the field of cultural research, there have been many discussions about the changes in the digital age. Such as virtual space culture, Internet culture, simulation culture and imaginary reality, these discussions also bring many new perspectives to cultural studies. In the narrow sense of art, that is, in the creation of works of art and aesthetics (aesthetic) field, since the late 1980 s, the digital media aesthetics and related media art began to rise gradually. At the same time, since the late 1980s, as in the field of literature, after nearly two decades of vigorous development, the study of classical narratology has gradually come down, and the study of readers' behavior has become increasingly common. In the field of art research, the central thesis also changes from the ontological investigation of "works of art" to the investigation of "aesthesis behavior". However, when people put art in the context of the digital age, if the work is not considered digitalized, it will be changed directly into the aesthetic behavior, and the influence of the digital age on the works will not be fully clarified. To study the art of the digital age, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of the artistic image in the digital age and the difference between the artistic images of the pre-digital age. Only by accurately grasping the ontological features of the artistic image can we discuss the interpretation of art recipients on this basis. Therefore, this paper will analyze the artistic image characteristics of digital media era and its differences with the former digital media era, from the perspective of ontology. Only after in-depth analysis of the change of art image itself can we make a multi-angle discussion on the art of the digital age.

II. THE CHANGE OF ART WORKS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ONTOLOGY

A. No Original Art

In the pre-digital age, it is generally accepted that the existence of artistic works can remain authoritative because of the characteristics of "original". Although reproduction is possible, and even if the copy has been able to do almost

exactly the same thing as the original, the original "Aura" is still a copy that cannot be duplicated in any way, even if it is impossible to tell the truth from the naked eye. But as the appearance of photos and movies, i.e., as the form of original works does not pursue the originality, in the field of art, the pursuit of the original ideology has been fierce criticism of people at that time. ¹ Benjamin has a unique understanding of the authoritativeness of the original works of art. The age of photographs and films, he argues, is the age of technological reproduction, which disintegrates in this era. Photographs and films can be copied in any way according to demand to traditional art works, i.e. original works, so that people who can't get close to the original work can easily access art works. That is, the change in the art of photographs and movies can be called "Reproduction of the artistic image".

Benjamin thinks that the original nature and uniqueness of traditional art works are unique characteristics of artistic image, which is also the function of worship. In other words, art has a cult value. ² However, the value of worship and worship function of art works are brought by the uniqueness and limitation of artistic image. Benjamin believes that photography and film technology have brought great changes to the limitations and uniqueness of such art. That is, through photographs and films, the artistic image can be reproduced endlessly, and finally produced the result of the democratization of artistic image.

In the process, the ideology surrounding the original concept of art began to unravel. The technological developments brought by the industrial revolution have also brought about great changes in the field of art. The representative of this change is the disintegration of the original ideology represented by the photographs and films, and the unique fading of the artistic image. Benjamin had asserted that the original halo had faded from the beginning of the act of copying art works. Since then the works of art will be circulated in the form of reproductions, constantly exposed to the public, being contacted and explored by the masses. But the reality is not what Benjamin foresaw. The more frequently people are exposed to artistic replicas; the more eager they are to see the original works of art. Such a desire is called the halo of illusion (German: Schein aura).²

During the development of replication technology, Benjamin pointed out the original sexual problems of art works. While In the digital age, people have been unable to put the problem of artistic image of the digital age under the framework of Benjamin's theory, because "object", the key in

¹ To give art authority writers and works of art of the original to thoroughly criticize and mock started with French artist Duchamp in Andy Warhol a. peaked in Warhol's works.

² Although digital media images are generally not original, that doesn't mean they don't want to be original. Human life is unique, and life cannot be regressive. When we regret and despair in life, we accept that life cannot be regress to the unique, the origin. Life cannot be exchanged, replaced and repeated, reproduced. So people are obsessed with uniqueness and the origin. The only thing comes from here, belonging to the individual, the things that I have, and I refuse to share. So the original nature of the attack in the art world, that is, halo, is still active in other areas. From the faded halo of art, it is popular in daily life. In our daily consumption life, commodity worship (commodity fetishism) has evolved to a certain stage, which is the halo of the commodity world

Benjamin's theory disappears. That is, there is no artistic image of the object. In other words, there has been no artistic image of halo since the day of birth. The artistic image of the digital age does not pursue the halo, which is not to say that the image of art imitates too many similar objects and cannot distinguish the problems of multiple objects. But the object itself does not exist; only the artistic image itself exists. Artistic image is no longer points to one or some specific objects. So the fundamental problem of art -- the essence and the reproduction of the problem, becomes a minor issue in the digital age. From a traditional point of view, the artistic image is a phenomenon (German: Erscheinung). So the art of the phenomenon should correspond to one or more realities or objects. Because of this, the artistic image which has the essence as the premise of existence is considered to be the secondary thing that attaches, or is parasitic on the ontology. Therefore, from the point of view of changing the fetus, the artistic image is merely image, which cannot exist as the essence.

But in the digital age, images are no longer seen in the traditional faces. "On the surface and inside, the tension between the imaginary and the truth no longer exists."³ The artistic image and the organic relationship between the essence and the reality are no longer so tight, and the image can be free to deform and appear. And its every appearance always brings new phenomenon, which itself becomes an essence. In this regard, Welch (w. Welsch) divided the ontology of the digital age into the theory of traditional and daily ontology, which was also called "the ontology of computer world". Welch made the following comment on the elimination of the rigid boundary between the phenomena and the nature of daily existence: "It has become a complete nature, and there is no other existence. There is only a confrontation between existence and nonexistence. To delete something, just press the key on the keyboard, and something will die instantly. There is no aging here, but all the latest, with the original freshness. The world is sophisticated and extremely frivolous. This is indeed a fascinating world."⁴

In the age of reproduction technology, apart from Benjamin, Baudrillard is put forward from traditional to digital media era of the original problem and artistic image. If art images reflect reality or reproduce and imitate reality in traditional art, Mimesis is the primary condition for image formation. Now, in the name of the art image, it hides or changes the truth in the name of deformation, pushing it to the extreme is "the disappearance of reality". That is, an artistic image that has nothing to do with the fact, which is what Baudrillard calls "Simulation". Simulation is a feature of the production process of digital media era. The artistic image of the digital media era is not "the simulation of the object or entity of the symbol," but the fact that "there is no original, no entity." That is, the simulation is about making things more factual than facts. In other words, "Hyper reality" has ascended to the stage of human history. Supertruth obscures the boundary between fact and artistic image. In turn, "the debate between the real and the artistic images becomes obsolete" and the image begins to dominate reality. In this process, the center of the reproduction and the

root of the object is also promoted from the Mimesis of the imitative object to the artistic image that has no object to begin to manufacture the realistic simulation. Here you can see a fundamental change in the art theory.^[5]

B. From Copying Art to Artistic Transformation (Transformation)

In the digital age, when there is no need for the original art form, there are many changes in the form of art. Among them, from "the reproduction of art" to "the transformation of art" is the most important change.

As mentioned above, in the pre-digital era, the premise of the reproduction of artistic image is the existence of the original. In the process of reproduction of the artistic image, the original ideology is preserved with each duplication; and the search for the original has not changed with the copying behavior. But in the age of digital media, when art is no longer a problem of the original, even copying is not an impediment to the nature of transmission, and replicas can be done with the original. According to Benjamin's theory, the real halo begins to decline, which is the moment when large-scale mechanical reproduction mode occurs. The original with the original imitation and reproduction, the center of the art problem in the digital age is not the single problem of the reproduction of the artistic image, but the infinite production of the artistic image and the problem of the infinite transformation. The art appreciators of the digital age are no longer enamored of a copy of the original. They are more in pursuit of the artistic image of the free metamorphosis. People in daily life can also be deeply appreciated. The simulation and imitation of the Internet is so, that they have a very different artistic image or reality, and they can't even tell what shape the original actually is. In other words, the digital revolution makes the world of artistic images both regulated and manipulated. Entering the digital age, the artistic image can be defined as "the artistic image of digit". Generally speaking, digital art image is the artistic image of "production through computer technology, processing, storage, correction, transmission". In daily life, the digital art image that the public can experience is very frequent. The simplest example is to take a photo of a document in a photo studio, and the image will be distorted according to the digital image processing. Not only that, but the film producers who pay more and more attention to the effect of the film will also use the digital art image processing means to make the production. There are also TV dramas, advertisements, online games and so on. There is no original art form, or every time it appears in the original image, which is not fear of transformation. In other words, such deformation is the precondition for the existence of digital art.

C. From the Stillness of the Artistic Image to the Movement of Artistic Image

This paper briefly discusses the relationship between artistic image and reality from the perspective of ontology. The focus of the investigation is that in the digital age, there is no self-distortion of the artistic image of the imitated object. And from its relationship with the real world, the

image occupies the primary and central position in the relationship between the artistic image and the reality. This distortion of artistic image leads to another important issue in the digital media age, which is that for the recipient of artistic image, it is not the static image that emerges from the "complete state", but the existence of a "state" based on the constant motion change. It is based on this that there is a fundamental change in the way the artistic image exists.

According to the art theorist of digital media, p. Weibel, the traditional aesthetic concept of "Ontologie des Bildes" presupposes that the traditional aesthetic concept is based on the image of a still art, which cannot be used to explain the artistic image of the digital age. According to Weibel, the traditional concept of art emphasizes the existence of static existence, while the concept of digital art is based on a comprehensive concept of changing state. In the article "Transformation in the Tech - Aesthetics", he said: "The aesthetic idea of "reading popular over the past two centuries, is still as the prerequisite of the artistic image ontology (German: Statisches Seinbegriff), the existence of such concept has violated the transcendental nature of artistic image, which is the rhythm and immaterial, and ignores the shape of time. The artistic system of rhythm exists in the form of time, which is the form of media art. Media art is not a concept of static existence, but the premise of the concept of rhythm (interaction)."^[6]

According to Weibel, traditional aesthetics were born in the media, so it would not be possible to assess modern digital media art based on this kind of aesthetic benchmark. To this, he asked: "How does a static aesthetics work in the art of movement?" So why traditional aesthetics is the stillness of the aesthetics, and why it cannot be applied to change as the premise of modern digital media aesthetics? The traditional aesthetics is based on the aesthetics of static objects and real objects. It is the traditional concept of modeling art as the center, and the concept of time as a secondary property. After Lessing created the "Laocoon", the art of modeling was defined in the form of space art. Sculpture, and the modeling art that hangs on the wall to be appreciated is the space art. In contrast, art works mainly reflect the concept of time in art, namely, music, drama, film, etc., which puts forward new artistic forms. The combination of modeling art and timeliness produces the concept of "mobile artistic image". Unlike the static art image in traditional art, after the emergence of the film, the flow of artistic image has been accepted by the public. The flow of artistic image interacts with each other in the space of illusion, and the combination between image and image, images and other images elements, such as music, create a new art appreciation way.

One of the most common art carriers in modern digital media is "Moving Image", or video. Because of the digital media, the public can easily touch and experience video. The development of the media brings active video production and reception activities. The artistic image of this kind of rhythm is the free deformation of the traditional artistic image, so the traditional aesthetic concept can't grasp the changes in the image of modern art. For this, Weibel suggested that researchers should produce new aesthetic concepts and

research categories. There is a fundamental premise of Weibel's position, which is to value and classify the image of art works changing under the new artistic carrier. People have learned about the relativity of aesthetics through the history of aesthetics, and the concept of aesthetics in history is not an invariable fixed concept, but a comprehensive definition of the positions and explanations of the researchers. This is not only the concept of aesthetics itself, but also the concept of objects around aesthetics, such as beauty, art, etc. Welch has made the following statement on the relativity of such aesthetics: "the aesthetics of collation and evaluation have no end. Every time there is a new task, one about appreciation, once about the work of beauty, one about the work of nature, once about the work of art, one about the work of perception, once about the work of judgment, and once about the work of knowledge. And the changeable meaning "aesthetic," means the perception, the art, the imaginary, the poetic, the illusion, the game, the unfettered, etc." In today's society defined as the digital age, the mainstream of aesthetic research is still art and works of art, and the way of acceptance of beauty. Now in the process of aesthetics, it is a kind of art that relies on digital media as a medium, as well as the derivation around the art. And based on the above argument, people can make a statement about the essence of the art of the present, and the core of the digital aesthetics in the process can be called the artistic image aesthetics of the rhythm.

III. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of ontology, this paper discusses the changing characteristics of the artistic image itself in the digital age, the first problem to be solved by studying the art of digital age. And according to the ontology of the arts, it's based on the relationship between the art and the real relationship, the art image and the way that the artistic image has changed in the digital age. In the digital age, the artistic image of the unimitated object deforms itself and freed from its network of reality. In the relationship between artistic image and reality, image occupies the primary position. And the artistic image is also transformed from the static art image into the artistic state of rhythm. In the digital age, the study of art has to be different from tradition, and it should be reevaluated and organized by the artistic work that has changed in the new art form. The core of the digital age aesthetics is the aesthetic of rhythmic artistic image.

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