

# Study on Sketch Teaching in Design Specialty

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**Abstract**—Sketch teaching has always been an important basic course to design specialty and plays a significant role in the process of training professional talents of design major. Various colleges and universities in China have conducted researches and discussion on teaching research of sketch courses, and there have been plenty of formulations and practices as well, therefore fruitful teaching experiences and and theoretical research results have been accumulated. However, along with the rapid development of design industry and continuously updated design contents and design notions, the teaching of design specialty keeps up with the times, and the research on the content and method of sketch teaching is also in constant exploration. This article, based on the development of design education in China and the state of art of sketch teaching, discusses a number of questions regarding to the sketch teaching in design, with a view to have a positive impact on the national sketch education.

**Keywords**—*design; sketch; teaching*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1950s, there have had many references and practices on the issue of sketching in China. For example, many scholars believed that "the sketch is the mother of all modeling"; they argued to use charcoal or pencil to sketch; they implemented Cheschakov sketch teaching method; they abandoned plaster model; and the painting nude models are forbidden. In the 1960s, there have been "sketch useless theory". In the sketch teaching of design specialty, there have been "design sketches", "image sketches", etc. in recent years. In short, sketch teaching has also gone through a lot of difficulties, and its teaching philosophy and teaching methods have been constantly matured and improved from generation to generation.

## II. OPINIONS ON SKETCH TEACHING

In the past, there was a dispute between the use of "plane" modeling and "line" modeling in the form of sketch. The person who is good at using "plane", emphasizes the light and dark block plane, and thinks that the line does not exist. The person who is good at using "line", emphasizes the thickness and shade of the line, and thinks that this is a national tradition. In fact, the key of sketch teaching lies not only in its expression, but also in cultivating students' modeling ability and concept. Therefore, sketch teaching should cherish the students' keen sensibility training on the visual impression of physical form, and pay attention to

cultivating the expression ability of specific characteristics and specific vividness of physical state.

The key of sketch teaching is to require students to understand the form and structural laws, and to pay attention to the teaching of proportional anatomy and perspective law related to the construction concept. Therefore, in sketch teaching, the following issues should be emphasized:

- The realistic ability and artistic expression in sketch basic training have the same value, which is also the core problem of improving sketch teaching in recent years.
- The teaching emphasizes the simultaneous development of skills and artistic innovation.

The students shouldn't attempt to master the skills before pursuing artistic performance. This is an overall requirement in sketch teaching. However, we don't deny that the students should focus on the training in one aspect in a specific period. In the step-by-step, shallow-to-deep teaching, the principle of artistic innovation runs through the teaching process.

Sketch is the basis of design, and is the most important basic skill for the designer. In a broad sense, sketching is not just about solving modeling problems. At the same time, it is also an important method and means to train designers' design ability and explore their potential. It is also an important way to improve intelligent training and aesthetic ability training. The training of sketching basic skills plays an important role in improving the artistic quality of designers and forming the unique style of design art. The production of an excellent work begins with the conception, and then the performance. If there is no solid sketch foundation, the conception is also difficult to express on the screen.

Sketching is one of the bonds that connect designers – life – design works. The designers take the advantage of the convenience of sketch and croquis (Croquis is the modeling method of the sketch category. There are some differences between them. However, they are same in the principle.) In the life, the designers find, experience, recognize and discover the material. The style and styling characteristics of the design art are firstly reflected in the sketch. As long as the designers keep designing the works, the sketch will always be their partner and guide. It can be seen that the sketch is very important to the designer's entire creative career.

In recent years, due to the development of design education, the design disciplines of various colleges and universities have gradually improved. In addition to the common features of the design disciplines, they also have their own professional characteristics. Therefore, sketch teaching should be combined with the professionalism. Design sketch is a new method of sketch teaching. An important feature of design sketch is to cultivate students' styling ability while inspiring students' imagination and creativity in the form. It requires students to deeply study all aspects of form and space, and then to understand the essential characteristics of the form and various possibilities of development. Based on the various representations of nature, through the observation and expression of the different properties of the form, the purpose of approaching design, creating new forms, and discovering designs is achieved.

The design sketch focuses on three aspects of structure, the light and dark (including texture) and composition, and arranges a series of exercises for students. Each exercise represents different levels of observation requirements and inspiration for imaginary ideas. The task of students is not only to reproduce the objective images, but also to put forward the aesthetic requirements of subjective conception and perception of graphic structure in the working process. The author believes that design sketch is a deeper reference in sketch teaching, and it is the sketch closer to the design art. To master it well, the students must start with the basic sketch. Otherwise, it will become a pillar without the foundation, or the water without the source. Haste makes waste.

### III. SKETCH TEACHING IN DESIGN SPECIALTY SHOULD START WITH THE MOST BASIC STRUCTURE AND SHAPE

In recent years, there is a common phenomenon in the sketch teaching of design specialty, which is the one-sided pursuit of the creativity of sketches, while ignoring the basic research of sketches. The sketch teaching of design specialty should start with the most basic structural rules and understanding of the form. The teachers should tell students that the structure and form are the basis of modeling.

There are two kinds of structures as the essential elements of painting modeling, namely anatomical structure and geometric structure.

The anatomical structure refers to the structural characteristics of the object image and the connection among the components of the object image. As far as the human body is concerned, it is the organizational structure of the human body. The bones, muscles, various organs of human body and the connection characteristics among them, are the human body structure we usually called, namely, human anatomy. The geometric structure is the basic shape of large plane of the image embodied by the anatomical structure. It is generally accustomed to using similar geometric shapes to make the generalization and cognition. It is called geometric structure, which is often called "shape". The shape is the outline and geometry of the image structure. Therefore, the

"strong formal sense" what we usually say in the sketch teaching doesn't just refer to clear structure.

Sketch teaching of design specialty should start with anatomical structure and shape structure. It is irrelevant for the object of depiction to be still life or portrait. The key is to study the structure and shape of the object when painting the image, enhancing the feelings and the ability to express objects. Generally speaking, the anatomical structure emphasizes the structural content and basic principles of the image, and the geometric structure highlights the overall generalization of the image and the characteristics of the subject space. Different from the knowledge and science of anatomical structure, there has personal consciousness of the painter in geometric structure. Secondly, in sketch teaching, sketch cannot be regarded as a monochrome painting with black and white layers, light and shadow, and virtual reality effect, which attracts students' attention to the superficial phenomenon of copying objects. It is also impossible to regard the sketch as merely capturing the shape and structure in isolation, indiscriminately dividing the plane, and taking the structural form as the purpose of performance, thus losing the vivid and rich artistic value of the image. Therefore, drawing sketches should be based on structural shapes, but not for shape structures.

To enter a deeper level of sketch learning, it is necessary to cultivate students' aesthetic ability. Sketch works should pursue certain artistry, and should have individual expressions and styles. It is not a simple mechanical depiction of nature. It is both the foundation of design art and the concrete expression of design art.

### IV. SKETCH LEARNING METHOD OF DESIGN SPECIALTY

In sketch teaching, students should be instructed to master the correct observation method, and the correct observation method determines the correct design expression. The formation of correct observation methods is the result of the artist's artistic accomplishment, the accumulation of artistic practice experience and the fusion of skills. It is the result of life's inspiration to designers and the thinking of designers. In the teaching, students should understand that they can't solve the problems by certain methods, but must start with comprehensive improvement of cultural literacy and artistic quality. In the process of learning the sketch, students should master the following observation methods:

#### A. Changing Partial Observation to Global Observation

It is necessary to comprehensively observe the image of the object, and to form a holistic concept of the object in the brain. That is to say, the overall observation is equivalent to the ideas and conceptions, and the ideas and conceptions can be used to actively and creatively treat the objects and correctly handle the relationship between the partial and overall. Otherwise, if you have the glance at the object, and make the painting, the object becomes a sacred idol. You passively make the copy, and partially patch the picture, thus losing the overall sense of the picture. In addition, when drawing a sketch, the students must first grasp the method of analyzing and expressing the shape structure. That is to say,

when observing the object image, any complex shape can be summarized into the simplest geometry. This method of first summing up the complex shape into a geometric body, and then restoring it should be the main method of shape structural analysis and expression. Also, it is a good way to train students to change the partial observation to the whole observation.

#### *B. Observing the Shape Structure Instead of Observing the Light and Dark, and the Light and Shadow*

This is not to say that we can't use the light and dark to express the objects in the sketch. It is only required that the designers can't treat the light and dark changes as the essential elements of the image in the sketch. And the changes of the light and shade are determined by the shape structure. The light and dark belong to the surface effect, and its brilliance can only be manifested in expressing the structure and shape. For a long time, sketch teaching overemphasizes the change of light and shade, the black and white levels, and takes the virtual and reality as the essence of the space. These wrong opinions make sketch training stay on the surface.

In the sketch modeling, the daub of light and shade levels should be weakened appropriately, so as to give play to the role of structure and form, discard the superficial effect of the reality and emptiness, and find the essential space and form. Then, the image will be firm, positive and profound. At the same time, it also lays a solid modeling foundation for professional training. Without structure, there is no image. Without shape perspective, there is no subject of image and sense of space. Light and dark levels, the virtual and reality are the means to serve the main body.

#### *C. Sketch Should Be Based on Stereoscopic Observation*

The characteristics of stereoscopic observation are to summarize the object with the concept of geometric shape, and to construct a three-dimensional image and picture. The object's spatial position is used to understand the object image and the depth of the picture, and the perspective changes of the shape is used to define the volume of the space. The three-dimensional and spatial senses of the image and picture are mainly not based on what method is used, but on the understanding of the structure of the object and the essence of the shape. The method of line drawing can express a very three-dimensional image and a deep spatial effect. The incorrect facet method and the light and dark representation method can still make the picture flat. Without the correct understanding of the shape structure, it is difficult to produce a real spatial effect even if the relationship between reality and reality is better.

Stereoscopic observation is three-dimensional. It requires that the designers must have a comprehensive understanding of the front, back, left and right, internal structure and external features of the object, and create a three-dimensional concept of the object in the mind, and then perform it.

#### *D. Observing and Understanding the Individual Characteristics of an Object with Its General Characteristics as the Standard*

People are different from each other, and people have different feelings about objects. Therefore, the objects represented on the screen should also have their own personality characteristics. Observing and discovering the personality characteristics of the object and giving it a strong performance are the basic requirements of the design art. In order to discover the personality characteristics of the object, we must first understand the common law of the image, and then find out the different personalities based on the common law. However, we can't take the standard of common law as the performance purposes when painting. In class, there is often such a situation. After the model is set, the students first mark the standard proportion of the model on the paper, as if drawing the coordinates of the map, do not first find the personality characteristics of the object with the common law as the criterion. Therefore, the image characteristics in the sketching work are the same, and it is impossible to display the sensitivity and enthusiasm that should have when creating the artistic image.

### V. CONCLUSION

Sketch is an indispensable form of art creation. Learning sketch must go through a set of planned and connected steps. The teachers should use a variety of different skills to give play to students' observation ability, practical ability and the ability to use new ideas creatively. No matter it is an artist engaged in art design, painting or sculpture, the ability to observe, distinguish and connect with the real world is similar. Therefore, in the sketch teaching, we cannot advocate using a single, rigid method to learn the sketch. The teachers should let the students master the correct observation method, and give full play to the students' artistic imagination and artistic expression ability.

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