



THE ROLE OF VISUAL LANGUAGE IN CHINA'S NEW ERA: BEYOND CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Xiaoren Chen

College of Art. Zhejiang University of Finance & Economics, Hangzhou, 310018 – China.

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Abstract: In the past few decades, interdisciplinary research has become a trend. Visual language and cultural thinking are two different concepts, each with its own unique research methods and theoretical frameworks. However, researchers are increasingly realizing that combining visual language and cultural thinking can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding and analysis. The significance of this research is to broaden people's understanding of visual language and cultural thinking. Through interdisciplinary exploration, the cultural connotations and meanings behind images can be deeply explored to reveal the differences and commonalities among different cultures, which helps deepen people's awareness of cultural diversity and promote exchanges and understanding among different cultures. It can be used as a resource for social development and it can have a significant impact on economic development, resulting in a new cultural thinking. At the same time, it is also a core factor of technological power. As an element and symbol of soft culture, language can play a role in public diplomacy and participate in cultural thinking and competition. As human society enters the era of Internet media, people's language equipment and language life have made significant progress.

Keywords: Photographic Art. Visual Language. Cultural Thinking.

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Resumo: Nas últimas décadas, a pesquisa interdisciplinar tornou-se uma tendência. A linguagem visual e o pensamento cultural são dois diferentes conceitos, cada um com seus próprios métodos de pesquisa e seus referenciais teóricos. Entretanto, pesquisadores vêm percebendo que combinar a linguagem visual com o pensamento cultural pode oferecer compreensões e análises mais amplas e profundas. O propósito deste trabalho é ampliar o entendimento das pessoas sobre a linguagem visual e o pensamento cultural. Através da exploração interdisciplinar, as conotações e os significados culturais, por trás das imagens, podem ser profundamente examinados, a fim de revelar as diferenças e semelhanças entre as diferentes culturas, o que ajuda a aumentar a conscientização da diversidade cultural e a promover a troca e o entendimento entre as diferentes culturas. Esta pesquisa pode ser usada como um recurso para o desenvolvimento social e ter um impacto significativo no desenvolvimento da economia, resultando em um novo pensamento cultural. Ao mesmo tempo, ela também é um fator central de poder tecnológico. Como um elemento e símbolo de *soft culture*, a linguagem pode desempenhar um papel na diplomacia pública e participar do pensamento cultural e da competição. À medida que a sociedade humana entra na era da mídia da internet, a vida e o equipamento linguístico das pessoas fazem um progresso significativo.

Palavras-chave: Arte Fotográfica. Linguagem Visual. Pensamento Cultural.

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INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the cultural symbols in photography art works, triggering reflections on cultural identity and diversity. It reminds readers of how culture shapes people's understanding and the world's expression, and explores the role of photography in promoting communication and dialogue among different cultures. This kind of thinking has brought a broader perspective to the audience, promoting awareness and respect for cultural diversity. In the 1980s, many developing countries have begun to embark on the path of internationalization, actively participating in global competition in various fields, such as politics, economy and culture. In the new era, visual language has demonstrated its irreplaceable position and research value in an astonishing way. With the rapid development of the computer industry, the application of computer networks has been rapidly popularized, and the speed of information exchange among countries has accelerated. While vigorously promoting their own culture, countries are also eager to absorb other countries' culture. In recent years, with the rapid development of visual language, especially the rise of the Internet,

¹ College of Art. Zhejiang University of Finance & Economics, Hangzhou, 310018 – China. ORCID: https://orcid. org/0009-0003-3859-3390. Email: shippo1220@zufe.edu.cn.

it has provided an effective platform for the interdisciplinary process from visual language to cultural thinking, which has gradually become a common cultural concept.

The visual era of the past was mainly concerned with visual representation and conveying information, emphasizing the visual impact and sensory experience of images. This era pays more attention to surface presentation and visual effects. It has a wide range of applications in the fields of advertising, art and design, but there is relatively little exploration of cultural reflection and connotation.

The "Visual Era from Visual Language to Cultural Thinking" emphasizes the transition from visual language to cultural thinking. It not only pays attention to the visual expression, but also pays more attention to the cultural meaning and connotation behind the image. This era recognizes that images are a kind of cultural symbol, which can convey deep information, such as cultural values, historical background and social problems (Anderson, 1977, p. 17). Therefore, visual works are no longer just visual enjoyment, but also become tools for thinking and understanding culture.

The commonly used language design methods, in the research community today, mainly focus on theoretical and performance oriented evaluation. Recently, researchers have been considering more language design methods, including using quantitative and qualitative user studies to study how different designs may affect culture. It is argued that an interdisciplinary approach may be helpful (Karina; Anna-Sara, 2018, p. 46). Cross disciplinary education, based on multicultural education, is effective for students' tolerance values, attitudes and critical thinking abilities. It can be said that interdisciplinary courses, which were developed based on multicultural education, have improved students' critical thinking skills, tolerance values and attitudes (Serkan; Birsel, 2020, p. 43). The theoretical framework of visual analysis combines analytical packaging, social semiotics analysis and Chinese semiotics analysis. Social semiotics theory and Chinese visual design semiotics analysis theory can better understand the social significance of traditional Chinese visual language (Hu, 2019, p. 168).

Visual arts and other forms of communication are crucial to indigenous peoples, but multimodal expressions, such as priority expressions in art, are often poorly understood. How can visual art effectively express cross generational knowledge and understanding to respect visual art, as a language in English, is necessary in order to provide students with fair and culturally appropriate education (Mills; Katherine, 2019, p. 521). Decorative signs are both decorative and communicative, and embody visual culture. All signboards are purposefully applied as decorations for communication, but opening the visual style can reveal hidden meanings and expand communication intent. The application of visual language in signboards can make works both enjoyable and communicative (Goodwin, 2019, p. 119).

In this era, people began to think and explore various cultural phenomena through vision, such as national culture, popular culture, cross-cultural communication, etc. Visual works are no longer just surface decoration, but become a channel to express people's thoughts and opinions (Welsch, 1970, p. 369). In addition, this era also advocates multiple interpretations and critical thinking of images, in order to gain a deep understanding of the cultural messages they present. The advent of the era of image reading marks a shift from written language to visual language, and images and their constituent elements should be a matter of attention.

The thinking patterns and methods of traditional linguistics are not suitable for the study of visual language, as there are many differences between creating and observing images and writing and reading, which require analysis in the context of new visual culture and artistic paradigms. Under the guidance of visual language, culture closely related to iconography, semiotics and art has developed rapidly, and concepts, such as images, symbols, space and structure, which were originally studied in art, have developed rapidly (Mansour, 2020, p. 22).

The "Visual Age from Visual Language to Cultural Thinking" emphasizes the cultural thinking and connotation behind images, and advocates the in-depth interpretation and critical thinking of images. It not only focuses on impact and sensory experience in visual performance, but also pays more attention to the transmission and exploration of culture, which promotes the development of the field of visual art and design (Gnuse, 1989, p. 117). In contemporary times, visual language and written language are two different language forms, which have gradually become a common research method. Therefore, it is a valuable research to deeply explore the interdisciplinary relationship between visual language and cultural thinking.

1 Relationship between anthropology and the thought of photography art

The intervention of anthropology or visual culture in photography is actually based on the "anthropological characteristics" of photography as the carrier. Therefore, what are the "anthropological characteristics" of photography? Scholars' research horizons include classical humanity's both the temporal and spatial dimensions and the ones of modern anthropology, as well as the indigenous communities' and modern society's temporal and spatial dimensions. Therefore, their horizons are also broader than those of modern anthropology. Therefore, the "anthropological characteristic" of photography is essentially a multi-level interactive relationship between technology and people. Therefore, the study of the "anthropological characteristics" of photography is, in fact, a discussion of what a specific "thing" actually means for humans and the society they constitute. Belting believed that the study of images required an anthropological approach that used a cultural perspective to examine the images in people's minds and the images visible to the external naked eye to reconstruct images. Therefore, Belting believed that there was a gradual connection among images, media and the body. He first understood images, then understood the media on which images rely and, then, understood the media itself.

In daily life, in order to achieve the transmission of information, ideas and culture, people must use words to achieve it, and words are only one of the main types. Vision is the most important type of perception, which carries a large amount of information. Therefore, how to use visual language in design becomes very important (Majid, 2021, p. 111).

People often associate the concept of visual language with their living environment. People instinctively use vision to organize information, while visual thinking is derived from a form, color and positional relationship, not involving symbols and sounds. Visual language has emerged since the era of Bauhaus, when its students are constantly studying the psychology of vision and also studying some basic principles in visual art. An article by Moholy Nagy on vision is also known as a pioneering theory that systematizes visual theory. Professor David Cohen further explored how visual elements can be transmitted through vision, gradually enabling people to understand the visual mechanism of graphics and colors. In 1944, he published the book *Visual Language*, laying a solid foundation for the development of visual culture (Emily; Michelle, 2020, p. 339).

Visual language refers to language symbols or images that can be seen with the eyes and directly reflect certain characteristics of a certain thing (Emily; Michelle, 2020, p. 341). Line, color and light elements constitute visual symbols, and the manifestations of visual symbols can be divided into static and dynamic manifestations. The static form of expression is usually advertising, painting, sculpture, while the dynamic form of expression is film, photography, television, and so on.

2 EXPRESSION OF VISUAL LANGUAGE IN PHOTOGRAPHY ART

2.1 VISUAL LANGUAGE

(1) VISUAL LANGUAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography has its own visual language characteristics, precisely because photography is a direct visual expression art, and this expression method is undoubtedly determined by its unique material characteristics (Slota, 2018, p. 357). Photographers want to make their works have the characteristics of artistic language, mainly by mobilizing various material materials (photographic equipment, photosensitive chemical materials) and technical means of photography. When the shutter is pressed, it is difficult to change the structure and layout of the work. Therefore, the use of materials makes photography have a different language form from other arts in the process of creation - immediacy. At the moment of shooting, a point in time of a moving objective object is intercepted, which is an abstraction of the logical structure of the causal series of things. The audience can freely retrace and reexpand the compressed object.

At the same time, in the captured space, the image of the object and its surrounding environment are recorded using a lens. This visual language, based on time and space, has a more accurate aesthetic characteristic than painting art - documentary (Hartford, 2022, p. 209). Documentary visual language is expressed in two ways. One is to utilize the flexible fast, and accurate recording capabilities of photography to express the language of news. The second is to provide a technical support for the technical language of science, by utilizing the precise reduction of object forms inherent in photography, such as *Reagan assasination* and *The Founding Ceremony*, which were shot by Chen Zhengqing. *Antarctic Lily* is a plant sample taken at the Great Wall Station, in Antarctica. All of which are documentary themes.

As a visual art, photography is determined by its own visual expression. In visual art, both the creator and the object being appreciated must rely on the power of vision to master it (Sutanto, 2022, p. 82). In psychology, vision refers to the overall response, caused by an objective object, acting on a person's senses. It is a process of extracting relevant information from a world where stimuli converge. Therefore, whether it is photography or painting, it is necessary to use shapes, lights, colors, dots, lines and surfaces, as the various visual units of the field of view in the second dimensional space, and to form human visual sensations, on this plane, in the third dimensional space. Through the body's shape, words that can evoke emotional resonance can be extracted from aesthetic objects, thereby achieving the empathy effect of aesthetics.

(2) Establishment of interdisciplinary visual language: relationship and background

The characteristics of visual language have great similarities with its semantics. The designers' and viewers' views of the same visual language are different, and the critics' and designers' views are also different. Visual language is the collision between the concepts represented by these perspectives. Therefore, the visual language of design is affected by this, and the meaning of the same design can vary greatly from different perspectives. This is related to the language environment in which they are speaking, such as the time, place, and the characters' background, as well as the contextual relationship in which they communicate with others.

For example, the word "white" has various meanings. "Snow White" represents purity and kindness, while "an inexperienced youth" represents a weak scholar. Another example is "fry cuttlefish". People often say, "Last night, your mother cooked a delicious dish!" This word is usually used to describe seafood, because, only in a certain context, people can understand the true meaning of this word and communicate well. In the process of expression, it is necessary to effectively integrate visual resources according to specific language situations and corresponding conditions, so as to achieve image and accurate expression.

From a structural perspective, tight structures are easily regarded as structural planes, while loose structures are easily regarded as bottom layers. In this case, whether the boundary is convex or concave depends on which part of the boundary the observer believes. Arnheim believed that, in his creative process, surrealists have exploited this phenomenon to enable people to judge only through their daily life experiences. In human vision, different conceptual contrasts have been formed between "graphics" and "background", resulting in a series of different visual language symbols. In all designs, there is such a contrast relationship, which is the two most basic levels that constitute a screen, and the visual language of each level, such as dots, lines, faces, colors, should maintain a corresponding harmonious relationship.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF VISUAL LANGUAGE IN PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

(1) INTUITIVENESS

Photography is the art of expressing objective things in an intuitive way. Through photography, the object, to be represented, can be represented in a visual manner, in an intuitive and vivid manner. Relevant research shows that, when an article narrates the same content as a picture, 90% of people can directly accept the visual effects of the image. Such visual language effects can give people an intuitive feeling that they can see clearly at a glance, and can give them a clear understanding of the functions, effects and related information of an artistic work in a very short time. Therefore, in the art of photography, visual language is an intuitive language.

(2) UNIVERSALITY

Images are the necessary basis for establishing human visual experience and interpreting visual language, combining them in the same geographical and social environment, and giving humans nearly the same visual experience. Therefore, the public can effectively interpret the region in which they are located, thereby giving them two basic characteristics of universality (Tugba; Nil, 2018, p. 372). Visual visibility is vast, and whether it is beautiful, ugly, or exaggerated, it can be reflected by visual visibility. The understanding

in their works, which also includes various artistic forms.

(3) AUTHENTICITY

Compared to traditional written symbols, visual symbols are an imaginative symbolic language that carries image information carriers that are closer to the authenticity of objects, and have richer and more vivid ways of transmitting visual language information (Jill; Mignone; Diana, 2022, p. 511). Photographers no longer aim at documenting reality. After breaking away from the burden of realism, they began to seek a more artistic visual language. This language refers to the fact that photographers take a certain degree of social reality as the basis, take objectively existing people, objects and environments, as fictional materials, and reorganize them according to the rules of artistic reality, turning them into things and scenes that did not originally exist to shoot.

(Conkie, 2016, p. 135). Therefore, photographers try to express their feelings, in a bold way,

For example, if it is only a picture reflecting ocean ships, it cannot reflect aesthetics, but adding the roaring and tumbling wind and cloud reflects the spirit of human struggle against nature, and also elevates the visual language to a higher level. The imaginative expression of photography is limited by physical objects, not like painting. Artists can use the characteristics of painting to create visual images, similar to phenomena in life, through observation, experience, summary, imagination and the use of pens, ink and pigments. Photographers can not only use visual language to express real life, but also reflect past life.

(4) Polysemy and openness

The popularity of computers, the Internet, television and movies has brought a wider space for the dissemination of visual language, which makes the dissemination of visual language no longer limited to the use of planar patterns. It can be better integrated into non-linear media, such as television, movies and computer networks, so that its dissemination is not constrained by time and space (Sang-Min; Young-Gab, 2023, p. 365). The polysemy of visual language is reflected in the fact that people's understanding of a visual symbol is different due to the differences in their life experiences, even if they share the same cultural theme, compared to those that can be understood, but cannot be expressed. Compared with traditional written language expressions, interdisciplinary visual communication forms can effectively convey information when there are great differences among countries and cultures

(Hamza, 2019, p. 1689). Visual language uses pictures and images, as information carriers, and even abstract ones can fully reflect people's subjective emotions.

2.3 COMMUNICATION PROCESS

(1) MATHEMATICS AND DESIGN

In the process of human exploration and research on the quantity, structure, shape, change and spatial form of natural things, mathematics is a science that is based on human abstract thinking and logical reasoning, and uses methods, such as calculation, measurement and counting, to explain the mathematical relationships of related things and their spatial form. Its characteristics are abstract, extensive and unified. In addition to being aesthetic and creative, it is more important to have mathematical thinking in visual design. Mathematics is the cornerstone of the development of modern technology, and it plays a pivotal role in modern design.

For example, the generation of graphics adopts mathematical methods, and the significance of the "golden section" can be seen in the pyramids of Egypt, flowers in nature and animal forms. Another example is the curves in mathematics. If they are combined together, they form a planar and square visual effect. The electrocardiographic curve, drawn from digital graphics, shows uncertainty and complexity that people cannot grasp, and artists create it as a form of image expression. Topology is a branch of geometry, which mainly studies the points and lines in objects and the relationship between them. In his book "Gallery", the famous Dutch painter Escher used topological theory to show the change of the spatial shape of a substance on two planes. This layout can effectively alleviate urban traffic congestion, achieve balanced regional development and effectively solve the planning problem of residential areas.

In the actual design process, designers design network nodes in accordance with the relationship between buildings and structures, as well as among various layers. Fractal geometry is a new geometric method, proposed by Bernova Mandelbrot, which mainly studies irregular geometric shapes. Objects, in nature, are self-similarity. For example, leaves and their veins are self-similarity. An artistic figure, obtained by mathematically coloring an enlarged area, is called fractal art. Fractal art has broad application prospects in industrial prints, printing and dyeing prints, packaging prints and other aspects. Without mathematics, there can be no art, such as the Louvre, where people can see exquisite details in close proximity and constantly changing visual beauty in the distance.

The modernity of visual language is not just a form of expression, but an artistic value rooted in Chinese art culture, which contains many factors, such as the norms, habits and elements of artistic language (Hindelang, 2021, p. 675). Questioning and discussing language, that is, discussing art itself, can better understand and master the characteristics and norms of art. Therefore, the exploration of visual language is not only related to the expression of modern art, but also directly related to human existence, and the most important culture and art. During the design process, systematic and orderly research and practice of language can provide students with a complete and profound understanding of visual language, enabling them to personalize their expression in artistic creation, and achieving a perfect combination of artistic, cultural and spiritual connotations (Ampera, 2021, p. 111). It can be started from the following aspects.

Art language and media can be organically combined. For example, line language has been incorporated into sketch and sketching courses on the basis of modeling. The attributes and functions of lines have been gradually explained, and students are encouraged to practice purposefully. This is combined with extracurricular reading activities to provide students with a deeper understanding of the attributes, functions and aesthetic logic of line language in artistic expression. Combined with the visual principles of art, it has been analyzed from a psychological perspective. The horizontal line originates from the horizon and sea in people's daily visual experience, giving people a sense of tranquility and gentleness. The straight line originates from trees and churches, giving people a lofty and positive feeling.

At the same time, combining with many classic works in the history of art, the function and aesthetic characteristics of line are analyzed. For example, in the late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty, Chen Hongshou portrayed "Yuan" and "Gu", as portraits, to express "Yi" people's nostalgia (Burkus, 2019, p. 96). Russian artist Chagall, taking *Birthday* as an example, used gentle wavy lines to explain happiness and warmth (Burkus, 2019, p. 99). It is possible to combine color language with media, such as watercolors and oil paintings, to study their characteristics and aesthetic characteristics, and divide them into different themes for artistic expression, based on their tonality. Visual language requires a large amount of media material, which can be combined with comprehensive materials. When analyzing its characteristics and creative techniques, it can also be analyzed from examples in art history.

For example, Ernst is an artist who is good at using muscle language, and he obtained a poetic artistic form by using replication (Stengel, 1987, p. 223). From the perspective of artistic language, students are required to learn the foundation of modeling, rather than simply teaching in the way of sketch modeling. This not only is conducive to improving students' artistic creation ability, but also can stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in artistic expression.

3 Impact of anthropological photography artistic thoughts

Photography can produce images that are comparable to human visual accuracy. Photography uses extremely simple techniques to simulate human visual mechanisms with high quality, and can solidify visual images in the lens. Photography is a technology that allows people to present everything they see in a visual way. The meaning of photographic images, unlike language, is to transform the objective world into sound or text symbols, but to directly store and transmit information using real visual images. Photography can make up for the shortcomings of traditional cultural symbols in terms of both image field quality and quantity. The significance of its cultural symbolic significance is that the involvement of image symbols makes them present more authentic and objective image content on cultural media.

The ability of cultural carriers to express and convey visual images has been enhanced. In the industrialized society's context and of modern technology, photography has established a system of image symbols with modern significance. Modern image and communication technologies, based on photography, and photography-based movies and television have broken the situation of only using words as the sole cultural carrier for thousands of years, creating a new cultural model suitable for the contemporary society's development. Photography, movies and television provide people with a technical guarantee, as well as an audiovisual environment, that is, photographic images are a major carrier of information storage and exchange, not text.

In other words, with the support of photography, movies and television, people can obtain, store and disseminate information not only through text, but, more importantly, through photographic images, using photos, movies, television, video tapes and optical discs. Under the conditions of modern technology, photography has transformed images from text into an important cultural carrier, and promoted the transformation of cultural media from textual narration to image expression, thereby changing the development trajectory of culture.

4 DISCLOSURE

4.1 CONNOTATION OF VISUAL LANGUAGE IN PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

Visual language is a method of communication, based on the diverse and multifaceted effects of lines, shapes, colors, light and other images of objects, to stimulate people's eyes. In photography, visual language refers to a communication method that integrates the comprehensive effects of light, composition and color, produced by photography, with people's emotional communication. It integrates new visual forms with the artistic effects that photography aims to express, thereby stimulating public interest and achieving information exchange and dissemination. Human beings are emotional animals. Only by adding the

human beings' emotional color to the foundation of photography, the true artistic effect of the work can be better displayed, and the emotions of the work and the characters' ones can be perfectly combined, so that the photography work has more artistic connotation and people, who appreciate it, can resonate with it. This is the true meaning of visual language in photography art.

4.2 ROLE OF VISUAL LANGUAGE IN PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

In the art of photography, the function of visual language is very obvious, that is, it is used to convey important artistic messages, so that more people can feel the emotions of photos. Making full use of photography art can display relevant information to the vast majority of consumers, thereby truly exerting the function of guiding consumption and stimulating demand. At the same time, its image language can also convey the basic characteristics of products, corporate culture and business philosophy to the public in a timely manner. Nowadays, in an increasingly common situation in the information age, the vast amount of information is overwhelming. Therefore, using visual language can more effectively convey important information to the audience in a simple, clear and intuitive manner. At the same time, in the art of photography, through means, such as screen colors, style settings and lighting design, it can bring visual impact to the audience, giving it a refreshing feeling, and quickly capturing the public's attention.

The textual language perspective belongs to the thinkers' and critics' perspective. It has the characteristics of planning and evaluation. It is an indispensable perspective for analyzing and summarizing design works (Alayrac, 2022, p. 23716). For designers, with literary and artistic interests in design essays, it can also help tap into design creativity (Farley, 2019, p. 109). Bauhaus used a humanistic and poetic brushwork, and in its paintings, it used a large amount of enthusiastic visual correspondence, which further demonstrated the role of its literary ideas in its creative work. Humans have a habit of creating symbols, which is to unconsciously transform a thing or a character into a symbol, thereby generating a special psychological meaning. A German designer named Tong Tranburg designed works based on photos, which turned real photos into abstraction objects through combination and reorganization, and filled with various metaphors (Bath; Jemma, 2021, p. 74). Both language rhetoric and image rhetoric utilize the human symbolic system and have the function of conveying information. It is executed by the rhetorician, and there is an overall transmission process and transmission context. The true meaning of image rhetoric is to achieve the best transmission effect through the best visual combination. Any rhetorical device can find its traces in visual communication. Visual communication works use images, movies, or stage facilities to create rhetorical effects. Other rhetorical devices, such as parallelism, exaggeration and metonymy, are widely used in visual communication design (Hoekstra, 2019, p. 35)

CONCLUSIONS

This article took visual language, from an interdisciplinary perspective, as the research object, explored the theoretical basis of visual language and launched a study of visual language from this perspective. Although scholars, artists and designers have different cognitive styles, explore the world in different ways and in different fields, and express their works in different ways, they have the same essence. The expanding social role of language inevitably promotes the deeper integration of linguistics and other social sciences, such as sociology and political science. The complexity of the modern society's development has led to a high degree of comprehensiveness and integrity in all important issues.

Whether it is the discovery of problems or the resolution of them, it is no longer a task that can be accomplished by a single discipline (Ma, 2020, p. 127). Interdisciplinary visual language can be a bridge of communication between different cultures. It can effectively bridge language barriers and promote a better understanding of each other's ideas, values and cultural characteristics among people around the world. Visual language, from an interdisciplinary perspective, is a way of expression that combines vision and language to convey information, ideas and emotions through the combination of images, symbols, words and other elements. It integrates the theories and methods of visual arts, psychology, linguistics, computer science and other disciplines, and it has broad application prospects.

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