



THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS AND ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY WESTERN PAINTING

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Abstract: The guiding role of philosophical thinking, in artistic creation and development, is one of the important factors determining the direction of contemporary painting art. Different philosophical perspectives and trends have had a profound impact on the artists' perspectives and creative methods. The characteristics of contemporary Western painting art demonstrate the subversion and alienation of tradition, and highlight individual and ethnic characteristics. The study explores the artistic characteristics and philosophical origins of contemporary Western painting as the main direction, and analyzes the impact of modern aesthetics, art markets and philosophical thinking on Western modern art. This diversity makes contemporary Western painting works more diverse and complex, blending with contemporary society and aesthetic tastes, constantly promoting the development and changes of art.


Keywords: Western painting. Postmodernism. Philosophical concepts. Artistic characteristics. Painting creation. Art Market.

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Resumo: O papel orientador do pensamento filosófico, na criação e desenvolvimento artísticos, é um dos fatores importantes que determinam a direção da arte da pintura contemporânea. Diferentes perspectivas e tendências filosóficas tiveram um impacto profundo nas perspectivas e nos métodos criativos dos artistas. As características da arte contemporânea da pintura ocidental demonstram a subversão e a alienação da tradição e realçam as características individuais e étnicas. O estudo explora as características artísticas e as origens filosóficas da pintura ocidental contemporânea, como direção principal, e analisa o impacto da estética moderna, dos mercados de arte e do pensamento filosófico na arte moderna ocidental. Essa diversidade torna as obras de pintura ocidental contemporânea mais diversificadas e complexas, misturando-se com a sociedade contemporânea e os gostos estéticos, promovendo constantemente o desenvolvimento e as mudanças da arte.

Palavras-chave: Pintura ocidental. Pós-modernismo. Conceitos filosóficos. Características artísticas. Criação de pintura. Mercado de Arte.

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Abstract: The guiding role of philosophical thinking, in artistic creation and development, is one of the important factors determining the direction of contemporary painting art. Different philosophical perspectives and trends have had a profound impact on the artists' perspectives and creative methods. The characteristics of contemporary Western painting art demonstrate the subversion and alienation of tradition, and highlight individual and ethnic characteristics. The study explores the artistic characteristics and philosophical origins of contemporary Western painting as the main direction, and analyzes the impact of modern aesthetics, art markets and philosophical thinking on Western modern art. This diversity makes contemporary Western painting works more diverse and complex, blending with contemporary society and aesthetic tastes, constantly promoting the development and changes of art.

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INTRODUCTION

Painting, as an ancient and rich art form, carries the historical significance of human civilization (Mironova *et al.*, 2020, p. 6269). Since ancient times, painting has not only been a way to express personal emotions and aesthetic concepts, but also a witness to the historical background and cultural heritage. Among them, the development of contemporary Western painting art is remarkable. It continuously integrates various artistic genres and styles, while absorbing influences from different cultural backgrounds. This diversity has enabled contemporary Western painting to have a huge impact worldwide. Modern Western painting art has absorbed the essence of reality from Descartes', Locke's and others' philosophical concepts, thus beginning to pursue the authenticity and similarity of painting. This trend has already bought the foreshadowing in Plato's idealistic views. However, contemporary Western painting aesthetics have begun to shift towards the internal logic and structural relationships of works, so the perspective of modern painting subjectivity has also shifted to the expression of self will and poetry. Impressionism, which originated in the 1860s, was a significant revolution in modern painting. On the basis of naturalism, Monet et al. made light and color independent of their physical attachment to the object, and carried out artistic practice from the visual beauty itself.

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On the basis of the independence of light and color and the freehand brushwork of objects, such as Cézanne and Van Gogh, they modified and created a non-naturalistic element and structure through the visual understanding of the subject, thus allowing abstract consciousness to sprout in art to a certain extent (Dombrowski, 2020, p. 91).

Since the rise of Impressionism and Cubism, a series of artistic movements and concepts have led the development of the painting industry, pushing concepts, expressions and techniques to new heights (Huang, 2010, p. 140). At present, research on contemporary Western painting has made rapid progress both domestically and internationally. Scholars delve into the philosophical foundation of painting art, exploring its significance and expression forms. At the same time, they also pay attention to the artist's creative motivation, skills and style, attempting to interpret the cultural, social and political metaphors behind the work. Through research on contemporary Western painting, it is possible to better understand the interactive relationship between art and society, revealing artists' responses to contemporary society and human emotions (Wiley, 2006, p. 10). At present, in the field of contemporary Western painting, the philosophical foundation and artistic characteristics together constitute a remarkable research field. The historical significance of painting is not only reflected in the work itself, but also reflects the social trends, cultural changes and aesthetic concepts of an era. By studying the philosophical foundation and artistic characteristics of contemporary Western painting, delving deeper into the creative intentions of artists and interweaving them with social backgrounds, people can better understand the development trajectory of art.

The contribution of the research lies in exploring the characteristics of contemporary Western painting styles and philosophical foundations, and distinguishing the path of Western painting surpassing tradition, thus establishing a connection between the artistic essence and social influence of painting art. The research results have reference value for the innovation and localization of contemporary Chinese painting art.

1 THE POSTMODERNIST CHARACTERISTICS CONTAINED IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN PAINTING

1.1 THE AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PAINTING ART SINCE THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

In 1973, the human society's development trends were clearly categorized by American sociologist Daniel Bell into three stages: pre-industrial society, industrial society and post-industrial society. After the transition from the pre-industrial society to the agricultural one, at the end of the 19th century, Western countries experienced the industrial era and were about to enter the post-industrial society (May, 2020, p. 210). At the same time, science and technology have developed rapidly, which has had an impact on human social lifestyles and ways of thinking. Specifically, the development of camera technology and replication one has

had an impact on people's aesthetic concepts of painting. When art can enter everyone's home through being replicated and photographed, it means that, for most consumers, the method of replicating images through science and technology can replace painting techniques.

German philosopher Benjamin believed that, in the era of mechanical replication, machines gradually replaced isolated copies and art gradually became popular (Oudbashi, 2021). When the demand for painting art is replaced by image technology, it also triggers thinking about the value of art itself. The popularization and democratic development of painting art have moved from a sacred hall to society, entering every household. The disappearance of art needs indicates the popularization and democratic development of painting art, moving from a sacred palace to society and entering everyone's homes. Everyone in society can experience art through photography and replication technology, and more people choose to gain experience from replicas of art, which gradually replaces the previous practice of directly observing art (Daniel, 2018).

The development of mechanical replication technology has had an impact on the art of painting, promoting the renewal of traditional painting in the form of artistic creation. It is precisely the impact of mechanical replication technology that has promoted the renewal of traditional painting in the form of artistic creation. Artists are beginning to combine traditional painting with digital technology, exploring new creative methods and media. The emerging fields of integrated art, installation art and virtual reality have redefined the boundaries of painting. This innovative trend has also led to a series of studies on the impact of mechanical replication on art and the importance of painting art (Newman, 2018, p. 222). This is also a process in which the art of painting moves from singularity to diversity in the process of social development, and the liberation of people's thoughts and aesthetic concepts in turn promotes the diversified development of painting art. The aesthetic changes in painting art, since the industrial era, have laid the audience foundation for the emergence of contemporary painting art.

1.2 THE FORMATION OF “NEW PAINTING” ART

In the development process of traditional painting art, from the Renaissance to the 18th century onwards, numerous different aesthetic concepts and artistic schools emerged. These schools inject vitality and diversity into the art of painting through their unique styles and ways of expression. In modern times, the emergence of photography technology has brought reflection to the art of painting. When character scenes can be truly recorded, the art of painting needs to shift towards the pursuit of the essence of painting. The process of things moving forward is always wave like, and Western painting art has gone through a period of decline and low tide, and now it has regained its vitality. Faced with the crisis of decline in painting, contemporary Western painting has embarked on a new path that differs from

the development direction of traditional painting. Between the 1960s and 1970s, a series of emerging art forms emerged in the art world, bringing new innovation and exploration to contemporary painting. Pop art, minimalist art and conceptual art all became important schools of art during this period. In the late 1970s, the art of painting entered a period of confusion. During this period, due to social, political and cultural changes, the art of painting faces unprecedented challenges and changes.

On the one hand, emerging digital technologies and media are beginning to penetrate the art field, and artists are facing the problem of how to respond to and integrate these new tools and media. The development of this technology not only changes the way painting is created, but also brings a new artistic experience to the audience. On the other hand, social and political changes have also had a profound impact on the art of painting. Artists are beginning to reflect on the social role and mission of art, focusing on issues, such as social ones and identity recognition. These reflections and explorations have led to confusion and uncertainty among some artists, who attempt to find new directions and meanings in their creations. It is also under this trend that the Western painting art community declares that “art is about to come to an end”. American art critic Arthur Danto believes that the semantic expression of “art is about to come to an end” is that the artistic objects, displayed in emerging artistic features, are almost non-existent, but the conceptual nature of artistic works is almost infinite. Arthur Danto believes that this is a common feature of art works during the period of confusion, and artists need to think about new painting paths.

In order to portray the state of European and American painters during a period of confusion, German painter Walter Dahn created “The Painter in Search of 20th Century Images”. In the painting, the artists using a hybrid approach of pop art and conceptual one, it depicts the modern painters’ panic and helplessness in the darkness (Kohn, 2021, p. 96). The art of painting during the period of confusion, including traditional Western culture, is facing the end and trial brought about by mechanical technology. However, just as ‘a blessing in disguise’, even if artists feel uneasy and unable to find direction, it also indicates that artists will introduce new painting expressions to adapt to the market and the times.

Since the 1970s, the European and American painting art community has gradually formed a painting style that is vastly different from traditional painting. During this period, some painters began to abandon traditional painting techniques and structures, and paid more attention to the simplicity, boldness and free expression of their paintings. Part of the reason for the emergence of this emerging painting style is the rebellion against traditional painting forms and constraints. Artists are attempting to break through traditional limitations and pursue more free and direct artistic expressions. They abandoned their excessive focus on the structure and techniques of painting, and instead placed more emphasis on conveying emotions, thoughts and personal experiences. But when this new style first emerged, painting

critics referred to this free expression of painting as “bad painting”, believing that it was a form of graffiti and had no aesthetic significance. With the increasing number of new style painting works in Europe and America, a large number of them have emerged. With the attention of the art criticism community, new style painting has also become increasingly mature. This type of painting, created on a huge canvas, is no longer limited to real objects, with full and strong colors and free composition, becoming a new development direction of Western painting art after the era of confusion.

In European and American countries, these new paintings have been given many titles, such as *Novelle Expressionisme* and *Novelle Fauvres*, which represent the spirit of German expressionism; *Mas-Avntgarde* represents Italy’s avant-garde spirit; *Novelle Figuration Lib* expresses France’s romantic feelings; *New Spirit* embodies Britain’s noble spirit; *C Image*, *New Expression*, *New Figuratio*, *New Wave* and *Figurative Expressionism* embody the spirit of American liberalism. These titles all exhibit obvious regional and group characteristics, which is inappropriate to represent a new painting style. In response, British art theorist Tony Godfrey used the term “new painting” to describe the new style of free expression painting, which was widely used thereafter (Lea, 2018, p. 354). However, contemporary painting art has been influenced by the trauma of world wars and the significant changes brought about by the development of media technology in aesthetic ways, gradually presenting a rich and anti-rational postmodern painting style.

1.3 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY WESTERN PAINTING UNDER THE TREND OF POSTMODERNISM

Since the 1970s and 1980s, postmodern art has focused on exploring the lonely and melancholic personal destinies in history. In opposing the cultural and artistic trend of lacking humanistic care, architectural artists first began to boldly create and develop unique and diverse postmodern architectural schemes. Subsequently, Ling Yun developed rich theories in literary criticism, psychoanalysis, law, education, sociology and political science. “The Language of Postmodern Architecture” in the mid-1970s, which subdivided postmodern style architecture into six styles, reflects the diversity and innovation of postmodern architecture. They challenge traditional architectural forms and structures, expressing the meaning and function of architecture in non-traditional ways. The postmodern architectural style has had a profound impact on the development of the architecture industry and has become an important component of contemporary architectural design. Overall, postmodernism, as a whole, is an expression that combines individual emotions with national history and modern thought. Under the trend of postmodernism, art works pay more attention to the relationship between “content” and “theme”.

Overall, the art works of painting that emerged under the postmodern trend no longer have a unified style and are no longer confined to a certain school, but are inclusive and diverse in nature. The postmodern style of painting art works regards the theme image or realistic one as the first element of the screen, which is the main language of the screen expression. Compared to the painting art works in the confused period, it returns to the simplicity of painting. Taking German painter Georges Baselit as an example, his independent artistic ideas and Gothic art emphasize the concept of psychological communication, which views art as the expression of the artist's inner psychology and spiritual will, ignoring its relationship with nature and the external world.

In addition, Georges Baselit also used images to resist abstractionism, which played a huge role in the development of abstract art and concrete painting in Germany. In Italy, ultra-avant-garde art was developed under three ultra-avant-garde painters' leadership, Sandro Chia, Enzo Cucchi and Franeseo Clemente, based on traditional painting in the country (Urban, 2020). The characteristic of ultra-avant-garde painting art lies in its emphasis on depicting the impressions left in the mind, and the insistence that the painting must be created on a traditional easel. This is completely different from the mainstream painting art characteristics at that time. The ultra-avant-garde painting art style draws various characteristic elements from art history, and the harmonious relationship between powerful countries fishing and nature forms a strong contrast to the mainstream "impoverished art" style at that time.

In the United States and France, there is a school of art that is different from the avant-garde movement, known as the "New Image Painting" or the "New Liberal Image". In France, the most profound influence of contemporary painting art is undoubtedly the surrealist school of painting. Represented by Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte, the Surrealist school of painting aims to explore the subconscious realm of dreams, illusions, instincts, etc., advocating for the extraction of "surreal" content from the actual thoughts of the subconscious. Therefore, the work mainly depicts the contradictory phenomena in the subconscious realm, unifying life and death, past and future, reality and illusion, with the characteristics of horror and strangeness. The popular Pop Art, in regions such as Britain and the United States, inherits the Dadaist style of the early 20th century, presenting a distinct and concise contemporary painting art. This art genre often uses popular images in society, such as people and objects in various commercial advertisements, television, comic strips, or dramatic accidental events as its expressive content. The materials used include various plastics, neon lights and luminescent pigments. Representative figures include American figures, such as Laushenberg and Warhol, and British figures, such as Hamilton.

Contemporary Western painting art also presents high political metaphors and social influence. For example, Pop Art has a high degree of political tool attributes and social influence in terms of dissemination. In the 1970s, the portrait of China's founding leader

Mao Zedong and related reports appeared in American media. Andy Warhol, with his keen sense as an artist, sensed that the previously tense Sino-US relations had eased, and boldly created many works based on Mao Zedong's portrait. Mao Zedong's portrait, taken from the media, began to be widely combined with different media to produce different forms of works, providing pre-propaganda for the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in the future. For example, the Cubist movement, centered around Picasso, often reflects the trauma of World War II on the world and the emptiness in people's hearts through the symbols and fragmented images portrayed by Cubism.

Overall, the Western painting art of the 1970s and 1980s showed a trend of diversification and complexity. Artists actively explore and experiment with new art forms and ideas with a free and open attitude, and introduce social, political and cultural issues into the art of painting. These changes have opened up a new path for the development of contemporary painting art, enriching the language and significance of painting. In the development process of contemporary Western painting art, the changes brought about by postmodern trends are a phenomenon worth pondering. The images, in modernism, that have transformed into abstractions and even disappeared directly on the canvas have returned to Western contemporary painting art works under the influence of postmodern trends.

2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF CONTEMPORARY WESTERN PAINTING

2.1 THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT ON WESTERN ART EXPRESSION

In the 20th century, philosophers proposed many new ideas and theories that changed people's understanding of the real world, knowledge, truth and human existence. These philosophical ideas have had significant inspiration and influence on the artists' creation and artistic expression (Rakowski, 2019, p. 229). On the one hand, the influence of existentialism on Western artistic expression is particularly significant. Existentialist philosophy emphasizes the individuals' existence and free will, focusing on human attempts and efforts to understand their own existence and reactions to the world. Artists are inspired by existential ideas and pursue the expression of individual inner experiences, uniqueness and existential dilemmas. They have created many works that focus on human existence, expressing their thoughts on topics, such as life, death, freedom, loneliness and meaning (Simmons, 2018, p. 229).

On the other hand, structuralism and postmodernism have also had a profound impact on artistic expression. Structuralist philosophy emphasizes the importance of structure and language, believing that meaning is constructed through the organization and relationships of symbols and symbol systems. This idea has driven artists to experiment and

innovate in artistic language, symbols and visual structures. Postmodern philosophy questions and challenges the rationality and authenticity of modern thinking, emphasizing the diversity of various concepts and perspectives. Under the influence of postmodernism, artists place different concepts and meanings in the same work, exploring multiple interpretations and visual complexity (Kudi, 2018, p. 139).

In addition, Edmund Husserl's phenomenological ideas, Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, and many other philosophers' ideas have all had an impact on artistic expression. These ideas have influenced artists' creative methods, aesthetic values and expectations for the audience. Artists begin to explore non-traditional artistic media, forms and concepts, and showcase their observations, criticisms and imaginations of the real world through artistic works. For phenomenology, Husserl emphasized the experience presented by things themselves, which meant for artists to delve deeper into and present the authenticity of things. They began to attempt to capture and convey the moments and details of life through meticulous observation and depiction, in order to demonstrate the life's authenticity and richness. Foucault's theory of power and knowledge reveals the close connection between knowledge and power, and reminds people of how power subtly permeates daily life and thinking. This has inspired many artists to think deeply and criticize the social structure, power mechanisms, and the production and dissemination of knowledge. Their works are filled with doubts about power, social systems and historical narratives, challenging the audience's existing concepts and cognition.

Freud's psychology had a profound impact on the creation of surrealism, prompting surrealist painters to pay more attention to exploring and analyzing their own subconscious and dreams in artistic practice. Through the creation of a mysterious atmosphere in dreams, they guided the release of people's spiritual world in the process of artistic creation. For example, exploring the various artistic expressions and means of consumer culture on consumer goods, Pop Art examines the artistic characteristics under consumerism and, ultimately, clarifies the significance of incorporating consumer goods into paintings. In the process of creation, painters carefully observe common consumer goods in daily life, search for suitable painting language, and use realistic techniques and different forms of expression to make concrete objects more tangible, reflecting their own thinking and exploration of art under consumer culture.

In addition, under the criticism of consumerism and the inheritance of Stoic philosophical thought, the minimalist art school was born. It pursues the essence of things, finding their core by removing unnecessary things. It emphasizes simplifying life, reducing dependence on material possessions, and pursuing unnecessary things to achieve inner peace and satisfaction. The minimalist design philosophy also reflects the understanding of "less is more", pursuing a simple, lightweight, pure and practical lifestyle. It emphasizes

functionality, minimizes processing and uses the original texture of the object as a selling point, emphasizing the practicality and simplicity of the artwork. This concept is not only reflected in art and design, but also runs through philosophical thinking, reflecting people's unique understanding and pursuit of life.

Furthermore, art criticism also has an impact on the philosophical foundation and artistic characteristics of painting. Art criticism focuses on the surface form of a work, such as composition, color, lines, etc., and delves into the meaning and value behind these elements. Through such analysis, art criticism helps audiences and artists better understand the emotions, themes and ideas expressed in paintings, thereby influencing the philosophical foundation of painting. For example, art critics may point out the emotional states, expressed by the painter through specific colors and compositions, or explore the philosophical concepts behind the painting by analyzing the symbolic elements of the image. This in-depth analysis and explanation make the philosophical connotation of the painting clearer, and also provide direction for the painter to improve their creation. Meanwhile, the philosophical trends of the 20th century were not limited to the theories already mentioned. Throughout the century, ideas, such as deconstructionism, feminist philosophy and postcolonialism, have influenced the development of art to varying degrees. Artists are increasingly inclined towards diverse and cross-cultural creative techniques, placing greater emphasis on critical thinking in social, cultural and political contexts, all of which reflect the profound influence of 20th century philosophical ideas on the art world.

Overall, the expression of Western art is not only influenced by ancient Greek philosophy, but also deeply influenced by modern philosophical trends. These philosophical ideas influence the artists' aesthetic and creative concepts, thereby influencing the expression and content of art. From ancient Greece's rational thinking to the irrationalism of modern philosophy, the changes in philosophical thought are directly reflected in the style and themes of artistic works, thus forming a unique expression and style of Western art.

2.2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAINTING ART MARKET

Although the art market is a complex economic system, philosophical thinking plays an important role in the operation behind it in terms of market concepts, behavior and evaluation. On the one hand, aesthetic philosophy has an impact on the development of the painting art market. Aesthetic philosophy explores the essence, value, and judgment criteria of beauty and art. This ideology has influenced the selection, collection and trading of artworks in the art market. Market participants will evaluate the value and attractiveness of artworks based on their aesthetic evaluations of their appearance, creative techniques, themes and concepts. Aesthetic philosophy also promotes the formation of art evaluation standards and auction pricing mechanisms in the art market. On the other hand, aesthetic philosophy

explores the purpose and significance of art, providing a way to understand and interpret it. This idea has a significant impact on the display, promotion and marketing of artworks in the market. Market participants will use aesthetic concepts and artistic theories to interpret the connotation and expression of artworks, and increase their attractiveness and cognitive value through artistic narrative and thinking behind creation.

At the same time, behavior and transactions in the art market are also considered by ethical philosophy. Ethical philosophy studies moral values and behavioral norms, which have a certain guiding effect on the behavior of market participants (Battersby, 2018, p. 13). For example, in art transactions, the values of integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect for others are the foundation for building trust and long-term cooperative relationships. Ethical principles provide a moral framework for behavior and transactions in the market, promoting the healthy development of the art market. Finally, the speculative and critical thinking of philosophy has also had a positive impact on the development of the art market. Philosophical thinking cultivates the ability to think deeply, evaluate, and criticize art and market phenomena. The art market requires market participants to have the ability to independently think and make judgments on artworks, market trends and related issues. The philosophical way of thinking can help market participants better understand the operational mechanisms, challenges and opportunities of the art market, and make wise decisions.

Economic philosophy, especially the thinking about supply and demand, market selection and competition, also plays a crucial role in the construction and operation of the art market. Economic philosophy guides the art market to understand and evaluate the value of art from an open and competitive perspective. The price of artworks is no longer just a reflection of the material and time costs of creating them, but a complex expression of the market demand, artistic value and social status of artworks. Under the guidance of economic philosophy, participants in the art market began to attach importance to market research, market strategies and risk management. Furthermore, the theories of political philosophy, especially the concepts of power, freedom and social justice, are also reflected in the art market. The formation of the market position, sales strategy, and artists' public influence and of artworks is often related to the balance, competition and redistribution of power. At the same time, political philosophy provides moral and political guidance on social justice, fair trade and the redistribution of cultural resources, which promotes transparency and fairness in the art market.

Finally, the ideas of environmental philosophy, including reflections on nature, place and environmental responsibility, have also begun to gain an important position in the art market. Environmental issues have sparked profound thinking about the Earth's future and human survival, which directly affects the choice of artistic creation and collection. The art market has begun to place greater emphasis on and appreciate art works and artists who

focus on environmental issues and advocate environmental protection concepts. Therefore, the seemingly rational and functionally dominant art market is actually the scene of the intersection and collision of diverse philosophical ideas. Various philosophical ideas, such as aesthetics, ethics, economy, politics and environment, not only deeply shape the operation and development of the art market, but also in turn shape the way people understand and appreciate art.

In a negative sense, influenced by Western Marxist thought, contemporary Western painting art often presents a catering state with Pop Art as the main feature in the art market. After the introduction of aesthetic values, centered on “desire” and “fetishism” in the art market, contemporary painting art tends to promote hedonism and sensory pleasure through visual stimulation. The transformation of information acquisition methods, in the art market, has also led to a change in painting thinking patterns and logic, presenting an image commodity model.

3 THE ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY WESTERN PAINTING

3.1 THE ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS CONTAINED IN THE CONCEPT OF PAINTING

The first artistic characteristic, inherent in the concept of painting, is the subversion of conventions. Contemporary art dares to re-examine history and reality, break traditional thinking or image conventions and create new meaningful perspectives. For example, British artist Julian Oppe often changes the proportion of objects in his works, creating situations with inverted dimensions to stimulate the viewer’s thinking (Lida, 2020). After German artist Georg Bartlett fled from East Germany to West Germany, he was not welcomed by both sides at the same time. Due to his experience of the failure and division of the German Third Reich, his art completely rejected any ideology, narrative and symbolism.

The second characteristic is anti-aestheticism. Contemporary art has re-examined the traditional understanding of beauty in traditional classical painting. The artist showcases his exploration of the depths of his soul and creates works that evoke contemplation among viewers. For example, British artist Jenny Saville used traditional oil painting techniques to depict huge and sturdy female images, breaking the traditional perception of female beauty and triggering viewers to criticize and rethink beauty. American artist Eric Fisher’s works reveal the psychological causes of many social problems in North American culture, and his images are direct and dramatic, bringing mythical metaphors to viewers (Zhang, 2018). The concept of painting plays an important role in contemporary art, inspiring the viewer’s thinking, breaking conventional beliefs, and guiding people to re-examine beauty and reality with a critical eye. Through the artist’s understanding and application of painting concepts,

contemporary painting presents a wealth of technology and imagination, allowing viewers to experience extraordinary beauty and challenges in their artistic works.

The third characteristic is to highlight national consciousness and national spirit. Taking German modern neoexpressionist artists as an example, Joseph Beuys reinterpreted the knowledge and science of Renaissance art and included many issues related to modern highly materialistic civilization in his works, such as environmental issues and reflections on modern education and bureaucratic systems. Basilitz was influenced by Kant's philosophy of artistic self-discipline and extensively utilized the psychological communication methods of Gothic art in his paintings. These characteristics stem from the integration of local culture and daily life (Colla, 2022).

Italy holds a unique position in the history of painting art. Having experienced the influence of numerous historical factors, it has long been influenced by contemporary art trends in the United States. Ultra-avant-garde artists draw on the techniques of expressionism, adopt a wide range of borrowed ideas, and reselect and integrate various styles and techniques to construct their own painting styles. They are not limited by any limitations and follow their imagination and intuition (Vaccoud, 2019, p. 49). Under the influence of modern philosophical thought, these artists emphasize the issue of independence in their works. This concept views art as an expression of the artist's inner psychology and spiritual will, ignoring its relationship with nature and the external world. These artists have all suffered from political or war trauma, so we rarely see clear political positions in their works. But they focus on exploring traditional art styles and cultural content, hoping to draw inspiration from them and produce new expressive arts (Al-Bahloly, 2018).

3.2 TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT BRINGS ABOUT CHANGES IN PAINTING TECHNIQUES

The application of modern technology also plays an important role in contemporary Western painting. Artists use computers, digital technology and other modern technological tools, combined with traditional painting techniques, to create a brand new visual experience. For example, American artist Jeff Koons used a wide range of materials, media and images to gather the audience's attention and expand their horizons. The detailed and textured surface requirements in his works slow down the audience's gaze (Hyman, 2022, p. 319). Overall, contemporary Western painting art utilizes various techniques, including appropriation and blending, imaging, material combinations and the use of modern technology, enabling artists to create unique works of art that present rich and diverse visual experiences and forms of expression. This is also one of the important characteristics of contemporary painting art.

Misappropriation and blending are common techniques in painting, which involve borrowing and combining different elements, images, or styles from different works of art

to create new works. Such paintings often involve referencing and recreating history and culture. For example, Spanish artist Manolo Valdes used the appropriation of classical art images as the main technique to deconstruct and reassemble the images in classical artists' representative works, such as Rubens, Velasquez, Rivera, Matisse, etc., in order to stimulate the audience's rethinking of familiar images. Italian artist Sandro Chia and American artist David Sali, on the other hand, use a mixture of multiple styles to blend various art styles from art history in the same picture, forming a unique artistic charm.

Image processing is one of the common techniques in contemporary Western art. Artists use photography or other imaging techniques, as well as post-processing programs, to introduce real-world image elements into their paintings, creating visually striking effects. This technique allows artists to select, edit and reassemble elements from images to create new artistic expressions. In addition, material combination is also a new feature, presented by contemporary painting art, under the influence of technological changes. Material combination is a method of combining different materials together, allowing artists to create more textures, layers and visual effects in their works. By combining different materials, artists can present richer and more diverse forms of expression in their paintings. For example, in his work "Typography", American pop artist Rosenborg used rams, car tires and collage painted chassis as materials to present abstract painting strokes. Through varying degrees of material combination, Pop artists express a rebellion against modernism and reject the modernist consciousness of "self-worship and contempt for popular culture". This type of integrated material art is also known as the material form language of contemporary art.

3.3 THE ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS REFLECTED IN THE PAINTING CONTENT

Firstly, contemporary Western painting art exhibits diverse artistic features in terms of painting content. Due to the wide range of styles and schools in contemporary painting art, it is difficult to classify it into a single characteristic. However, some artistic features, commonly found in contemporary Western painting, can be mentioned. Firstly, the diversity of themes and content is a prominent feature of contemporary painting. Contemporary artists have increased their freedom and openness in artistic expression, covering a wide range of topics from personal experiences to social and political issues. Artists are no longer limited to traditional themes and expressions, but use painting to explore and present the contemporary society's diversity and complexity. Secondly, the use of multimedia and technology is also very common in contemporary painting art. Artists use different media and techniques, such as digital painting, installation art and image projection, to explore the boundaries of painting and expand its forms of expression. Such experiments and innovations have enriched the language of painting and the audience's perceptual experience.

Secondly, the spirit of reflection and criticism is also reflected in contemporary painting. Artists criticize and reflect on social, cultural, political and environmental issues through their paintings. They attempt to stimulate the audience's thinking on contemporary issues, challenge traditional concepts and authorities, and explore the possibilities of interaction between art and society. In addition, individual experience and emotional expression are also some of the characteristics of contemporary painting. Artists explore an individual's inner world, emotional state and identity through painting. They use factors, such as color, shape and brushstrokes, to express their unique perspectives and emotional experiences, thereby establishing emotional resonance and dialogue with the audience (Dekker, 2018).

Overall, the era environment is not only the background for artistic creation and appreciation, but also the platform for interaction and dialogue between art and society. Art, as a form of cultural expression, is constrained by the times and can also influence and change society through innovation and breakthroughs. Art plays an important role in the changes of the times, while also being shaped and constrained by the environment of the times.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary Western painting art is understood as a reexamination of the history of Western painting. Nowadays, contemporary Western painting art is based on innovation in traditional painting techniques. Philosophical thinking plays a decisive role in the process of artistic creation and development, and many different philosophical concepts lead to different artistic directions and schools. Artists' focus on history and ethnicity, depiction of the inner world and response to market demand are all reflected in their artistic characteristics. Overall, contemporary Western painting art has absorbed artistic methods, such as Impressionism and Classicism, that have a profound foundation and diverse expressive styles from the past, combined with the burst of information in the current context of technological development, and gained rich inspiration from a large amount of data information and technological changes. This diversity reflects the various influences and environmental factors that artists are influenced by during the creative process, making contemporary Western painting works more diverse and complex, and blending with contemporary society and aesthetic tastes. In future research, specific works of Western contemporary painting art can be analyzed through case studies to explore the social and political metaphors of different arts. At the same time, the specific influence of different philosophical concepts on painting art can also be used as future research content in the creation and educational practices related to Western painting art theory, applying specific art theories to future art education and artistic creation time. For example, comparing the creative themes, stylistic expressions, composition forms and other characteristics of Western Pop Art with Chinese traditional gongbi painting provides theoretical support for the internationalization practice of Chinese traditional painting art.

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