

On the Planar Language in Modernist Oil Painting

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Abstract: At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Western painting had a revolutionary change, the rise of modernist painting, artistic thinking from the traditional into the modern. The characteristics of traditional painting emphasizing perspective, sketch and light and shadow gradually disappeared, while the planar painting language gradually became popular. This paper analyzes the development of oil painting language and probes into the realistic significance and existing problems of flat oil painting language in contemporary oil painting creation. Only by comprehensively studying the flatness of oil painting language can we better expand the richness of oil painting language.

Keywords: modernism, oil painting, planar language

Introduction

From the beginning of modernist painting, artists began to pay attention to their own emotional expression, and the painting language was liberated from the traditional light and shadow, light and shade, and perspective, and color no longer had to be attached to sketch. Painting gradually moved from three-dimensional to two-dimensional, and the planar painting language gradually surfaced, and began to become an effective language form for modernist painters to express their emotions. With the spread of Western modernist painting, this kind of planar language with modernist spirit also emerged. The artist of China. In the face of a new art form, people tend to focus first on the great change in painting language. Chinese modernist oil painting art is deeply influenced by Western modernism, so it is inevitable to learn or imitate this very distinctive flat oil painting language in painting language. This kind of planar oil painting language with western characteristics is bound to be connected with Chinese native culture. In contemporary times, more and more artists use the flat oil painting language to create, so it is necessary to study the flat oil painting language of modernism, its occurrence, development, various forms of expression, as well as the current development, status quo and problems of this flat oil painting language in a comprehensive analysis.

1. The transformation of oil painting language from traditional to modern

In the 1860s, after realist painting reached its peak, the language of oil painting underwent qualitative changes, and some artists began to look for new norms, showing a plane characteristic different from the traditional oil painting language. In the original painting, the image is expressed in the form of geometry and abstraction, while the rock painting and totem are mostly simple in shape, monotonous in color, and weakened in spatial characteristics, showing flatness. Primitive people's simplistic understanding of things makes them more inclined to use monotonous language. The artistic language expressed in primitive times and modernism painting has a kind of flat characteristics. With the development of society, this "flat" recording method gradually disappeared. After the theocracy of the Middle Ages in Europe, human thought progressed, science was advocated, classical aesthetics was respected again, artists grasped the law of natural

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imitation more accurately, and realistic skills tended to mature. Before Impressionism, artists used perspective, anatomy and other methods to depict the picture, after the rise of modernist painting, new norms were established, the painting language is different from the traditional perspective, and more energy is placed on the spiritual world^[1].

In 1863, Manet created *Lunch on the Grass* (shown as figure 1), after Giorgione's Pastoral Ensemble in the Renaissance, which shows that the flatness of oil painting language has begun to emerge. Although the language is similar to traditional painting, and the flatness is not obvious, why do such works make traditional artists find it difficult to accept? Careful observation can find that these two works show two completely different styles. "Pastoral Ensemble" shows a typical classical beauty in the form of a beautiful, plump nude woman and an "S" shape. The figures depicted in Manet's paintings, however, have a more real feeling. Instead of the delicate brushstrokes and dark brown tones of traditional oil paintings, he used an intense, bright, almost flat color to represent the human scene. Compared with the Pastoral Ensemble, the characters in his works clearly show a flat character. With Impressionism, artists went outside, changed the way they looked, and brought about a series of revolutions that paved the way for the formation of a flat oil painting language. They first transform subject matter into color and shape, ignoring details. Painters pay attention to the overall feeling and make the vision more realistic. These realness will not be reduced by the lack of detail, on the contrary, it will be more natural and conform to people's visual rules. With the rise of Impressionism, the planar language of oil painting became more and more prominent, and the painting language gradually began to transform to the plane^[2].



Figure 1 *Lunch on the Grass*

2. The planar expression of modernist oil painting language

With the continuous development of Western modernism, the planar painting language has been more practiced and explored. Nabi, Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism and other artists reinterpreted colors from different angles, reshaped images, and produced new visual and psychological feelings. Although Eastern modernism initially borrowed from Western modernism, as Chinese modernist oil painting matured, this flat painting language would incorporate local culture rather than simply copy it.

The flatness of western modernist oil painting language is mainly reflected in the two levels of color and modeling. In traditional painting, color is mostly used to depict the texture of the object, build light and shadow and three-dimensional space, and ignore its own emotional expression ability. Since Impressionism, more and more painters have realized the independent expression of color itself. The post-Impressionist painter Van Gogh made an active exploration and experiment on the emotional expression of color. In *The Yellow House of Arles*, Van Gogh uses flat colors to describe the emotions he wants to express. Color gained freedom in the form of flat language, and gradually expanded the scope of expression. Munch is a pioneer of expressionism. In his "The Scream", in the sunset, the body of the character is distorted out of shape, and it is dark, while the blue represents fear and depression, and the sharp contrast of the picture expresses his inner cry. This strong expressive force is rarely seen in traditional oil painting, which expresses and permeates the complex

emotions of the painter in a flat language. Through the flat painting language, color can not only convey emotion, but also symbolize the theme, and can reshape people's understanding and attitude towards space. Modernist artists separated color from painting and strengthened the independence of color^[3].

In modernist painting, many artists give up the perspective structure of the image, and use a flat language to compose the picture. In artistic creation, some beauty is expressed in figurative form, while others are expressed in abstract form. Although Fauvism, Expressionism, and Cubism artists all used a flat artistic language to create, they did not move away from recognizable objects until the arrival of abstraction. The abstract painter completely abandoned the limitations of objective things. Mondrian, for example, used horizontal and vertical lines to organize, and filled with red, yellow, and blue colors. Although Mondrian's painting language is completely flat, it can make people feel the depth of space. Mondrian completely abandoned the subjective emotions of people in painting, and focused on the relationship between the formal language of the picture and space. Pollock's paintings can no longer see the traces of objective objects, and the creator uses the method of free splashing to express people's repressed subconscious. The painting language of various forms of Western modernism makes us feel the powerful creativity and expression of art. The expression of western flat painting language in color, shape and space is refreshing^[4].

3. The enlightenment of the planar language in modernist oil painting to contemporary oil painting creation

Modern art masters have given us many inspirations from different angles, the most prominent of which is the exploration of the planarization of space expression and color expression. In terms of spatial expression, modernism compresses the three-dimensional space into a piece of paper and restores the essence of the picture to a plane. Modernist artists express their feelings at the expense of space. The decorative patterns in Matisse's works play a role in strengthening the composition, flattening the space and making the picture more vivid and interesting, and different patterns have different symbolic meanings. In thinking about space, modern artists, inspired by modernist artists, are not bound by the three-dimensional world, and they begin to extract the formal beauty from the object, but also express something completely different from the West through the theme unique to China. Wang Huaqing uses "black and white" in Chinese painting to express the traditional spirit. In his works such as *Da Ming Style* (shown as Figure 2) and *Tiangong Kai Yi*, he treats the three-dimensional space flatly and creatively transforms the composition elements of traditional Chinese art. Simple black, white and gray do not simply express a traditional aesthetic, and the painter weakens perspective. To make it look more like a paper cut. Such a design makes the whole painting full of interest. Both in terms of concept and form, Wang Huaqing has integrated the tradition into a form. The formal beauty of modernism is integrated with the symbolic meaning of Chinese tradition, giving the traditional culture a modernity^[5].

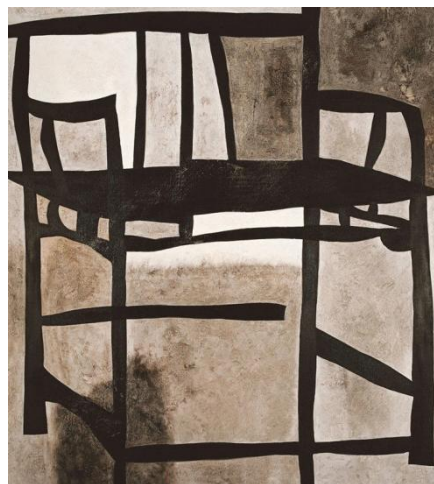


Figure 2 *Da Ming Style*

The exploration of Western modernist painting liberated the traditional view of painting and discovered the independent significance of color as a painting language. Impressionism liberated color, and Van Gogh was the first to explore the inner emotion and spirit of color. Fauvism and Munch further promoted the independence of color, so that it is not bound by objective objects. Later, color was scientifically studied to develop its own properties. Pollock expressed the subconscious feeling with random drops, and the picture was completely subjective and improvisational, completing a flat space in which vision could travel freely. Modernist painting liberated color, studied the implication and symbolic role of color, and made color express emotion. This kind of application has a great influence on Eastern art. Traditional Chinese art language is based on black and white, and rarely involves color. However, the use of color in modernist painting had a great impact on the creation of Chinese oil painting. For example, Gu Liming, as a representative of the use of folk art forms, drew inspiration from the abandoned editions of Yangjiabu woodcut New Year pictures. He integrated the artistic language of modernism and used graphic art forms, decorative colors and traditional cultural symbols to create. However, while the traditional New Year pictures have strong color contrast, festive and lively, Gu Liming's works do not appear in the high purity of the color, giving the work a more solemn and calm feeling. In terms of color and space processing, Chinese artists combine tradition and life, draw on the experience of predecessors, and integrate the language and emotion of flat painting to show unique ideas^[6].

4. Realistic significance and consideration of planar language in modernist oil painting

The current life is full of images, commercial posters, packaging, trademarks, posters and other graphic art influence painting. The prosperity of visual culture has a great impact on contemporary people's aesthetic perception, and people have adapted to simple and clear visual forms. This quick, simple aesthetic form is to meet the needs of the current era of picture reading, artists pay attention to the sense of form to bring visual aesthetic enjoyment. Planar painting language has a strong sense of form, and it can construct things subjectively according to its own ideas and convey information more directly^[7]. The innovative concept and the aesthetic taste of The Times can better meet the visual needs of this era.

The planar painting language commonly used in oil painting is in line with traditional Chinese aesthetic customs and can provide reference factors for oil painting creation. Contemporary oil painting focuses on innovation, freehand oil painting integrates local culture, pays attention to the combination of content and form, and lyrically answers the meaning between similarity and unsimilarity. Chinese image oil painting pays attention to the form beauty and spirit expression, captures the charm of image in the plane language, and reflects the local characteristics.

The development of art form language is closely related to the aesthetic value of art, and the aesthetic orientation determines the form of painting language. Artistic language will lose its vitality if it is separated from life and culture for the sake of form. If we ignore the emotion contained in the color, it is just a simple visual stimulation, and the work without internal thinking can not stand the test of time. The problem of planar painting language is that it can not be simply based on scientific and rational analysis, but should explore the beauty and emotional connotation, and dig deep into the language form and spiritual connotation. Planar painting language can not be reduced to showy skills, but should be a means to explore beauty and refine emotion. Art is inseparable from emotion and life, and cannot be separated from nature. Any form of painting is inseparable from the traditional foundation, if we abandon the basic quality, study the shape and color, it is difficult to create their own painting language space. The masters of modernist painting all started from the tradition, and both the development of their own ideas and changes came from the tradition. It is not advisable to blindly deny the tradition and take the flat painting language as an opportunistic tool.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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