

# Research on the art education of Lijiang River landscape painting of Yang Taiyang

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**Abstract:** Yang Taiyang cultivated talents during the crisis period of Chinese painting, and in the face of the problem of denying the value of art education brought about by the depression of Chinese painting, he made an answer, that is strengthening the development of Guangxi art with "local consciousness", which exerts a major impact on the Guangxi art world. Since the sixties, his art education has unique personal characteristics, highlighting the local consciousness and traditional culture of the nation. At present, in the research of Yang Taiyang's education, more analysis is based on watercolor and oil painting education. In view of the uniqueness of Yang Taiyang's Lijiang River art education, a detailed and systematic theoretical study of his Lijiang River landscape painting is carried out. This paper focuses on education method, collates interview data of people related to Yang Taiyang, and conducts relatively clear outline through comprehensive analysis methods, summarizing the characteristics of the art education of landscape painting with Yang Taiyang's education as the theme, so as to illustrate the profound connotation of his Lijiang River theme education creation concept and aesthetic thought.

**Key words:** Lijiang River landscape painting; Yang Taiyang; the education of art

## 1 Introduction

Yang Taiyang (1909-2009), a famous artist, was an important pioneer, flag bearer and leader of the Lijiang River painting school. Born in Guilin, he learned to write and paint at the age of five, engaged in art activities for more than 90 years, and engaged in art education for more than 70 years. He has successively served as a professor and academic director of South China Institute of Arts, President of Guangxi Arts College. His Lijiang River themed landscape paintings have a unique artistic style and high artistic value, and his artistic attainments have been highly concerned and appreciated by the art and literary circles. From 1937 to 2009, Yang Taiyang created a lot of Lijiang River themed landscape paintings, forming different artistic characteristics, which can better reflect the changes in his art education [1].



Figure 1. Yang Taiyang created *The Charm of Lijiang Mist* in Guangzhou in 1983

## 2 The prototype of art teaching system for local culture

Under the background of "New Chinese painting", Yang Taiyang's teaching system for local culture began to take

shape. He attempted to find a breakthrough in the internal contradiction between China and the West, requiring the preservation of points, lines, colors of landscape painting rich in cultural heritage, while also combining his own understanding of the principles of Western art. Under his own conscious awareness of the Lijiang River culture, he insisted on and developed his own ideas of local culture teaching. In the process of his teaching, he was well aware of the importance of principles of landscape paintings [2]. On the one hand, he mastered the general techniques and brushwork of traditional landscape paintings, and internalized them into traditional painting language. On the other hand, he put forward a new perspective of writing expression, realizing the change in artistic attainments.

Yang Taiyang has set up his own local culture teaching system, which stabilizes and develops new perspectives on local culture teaching. By introducing the Lijiang River theme into the "new Chinese painting" landscape painting style and expressing the spirit of the new era, Yang Taiyang's paintings showed a great sense of national responsibility and patriotic enthusiasm, breaking through the inherent laws of traditional landscape paintings. At the same time, the compatibility of pen and watercolor has realized the internalization of the integration of Chinese and Western painting, which further promoted the modern transformation of landscape painting. 80 years ago was a favorable opportunity for Yang Taiyang. This artistic storm was to light the teaching lamp for him and helped him to open the path of pedagogical exploration. In the course of Yang Taiyang's exploration, he chose to study Western painting from a young age. In August 1938, Yang Taiyang returned to Guilin, where "the rivers are like the green belt and the mountains are like jade lilies", he expressed the wishes of the people of Guilin and the simple life of the people in his teaching. During this period, he created many Chinese paintings. It can be proved that Yang Taiyang had begun teaching activities in an earlier period.

### **3 Analysis of Yang Taiyang's painting education**

From the beginning of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, the artistic language of Yang Taiyang's river landscape paintings was undergoing a huge transformation from tradition to modernity. His artworks have changed from ancient methods to modern "learning nature". Yang Taiyang went deep into the art education of Lijiang River painting around 1960. During this period, with the principle of giving practice to ideas, he urged himself to put forward requirements for a standardized and systematic style of education and established "Lijiang River Painting School". The art circle has two views on the formation of Yang Taiyang's Lijiang River landscape painting education: First, introducing western realistic techniques to transform Chinese painting education; second, endeavoring to maintain the spirit of traditional painting education and advocating the internal adjustment of traditional painting. As landscape painting was influenced by Western techniques during that period, which hindered the development of traditional freehand brushwork, he made reasonable use of the "unique" natural conditions of his hometown, and started from his own local culture to form a poetic landscape painting of the Lijiang River, changing the stagnant situation of landscape painting [3].

Art education comes from life and requires artists to experience life and dig out creative materials to provide inspiration for future creation. *Farmhouse* was created in 1937 by Yang Taiyang, who was working in Pingle at the time of creation, and was inspired by the folk customs of the time. Yang Taiyang was deeply impressed by the artwork and expressed his admiration. In the foreground of the picture, the creation of art can happen at any time and anywhere. He took his sketchbook and went to the Lijiang River to record his creative ideas. In the sketchbook, there were many sketches of the Lijiang River landscape manuscripts (Figure 2). The sketchbook was divided into two parts, one part was a close-up, the other part was a large scene of the sketch. The close-up was mainly sketching humanistic fun, and the part of the big scene was used to depict macroscopic creative thinking drafts. Nature has always attracted artists to create infinitely. The artistic life of Yang Taiyang, the observation of nature and self-personality ran through the entire process, which is enough to show that imitating nature is an important proposition in his artistic creation.

"Reading ten thousand books, and traveling ten thousand miles", stationed in a natural valley to experience a painting style different from "immersing oneself in life", even the scenery and objects in contact are changing over the years in the same area. For the landscape of the same area, artists constantly produce new artistic language and symbols as available resources. When we talk about the theory of "deep life" today, we focus on understanding, experiencing and perceiving life from the relationship between art and expression.

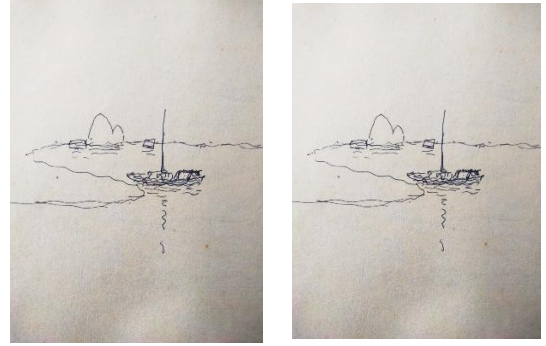


Figure 2. Yang Sun sketch writing

The elements produced by "learning from nature" will be more humanistic. In 1961: "A few years ago, some people have already painted cars, trains, tractors and so on into landscapes." However, it seems that the works at that time were just copying some new images, which could be seen at a glance that the poetic and pictorial meaning was a little insufficient.

"Learning from nature" is the most important way to learn landscape painting. In the 1960s of the 20th century, the painters were made to explore modern education. Yang Taiyang took his students to sketch, and they talked happily about his ideas of creation while sketching. Teachers were more like friends with students, and the conversation between them stimulated the continuous creation and art education. The artist's sketching is even more inspired. As the primary material for creation, sketch works are accumulated and summarized by painters to ultimately create excellent works of art. In *Yang Taiyang's Art Collection*, it is found that in the process of working in the countryside, Yang Taiyang would talk with the local old farmers and understand the local living conditions. In this comfortable conversation, it nourished the infinite creative inspiration within. Yang Taiyang advocated that artists should go into the natural countryside and explore the regional culture. In his essay *Go To the Countryside to have a Look*, Yang Taiyang lamented the beautiful scenery of Xinning and the peace brought to him by the simple and honest farmers.

"This rich material should really be studied, and an effort should be made to observe the mystery of the 'thickness' and the eternal 'truth' that lurks in the Chinese spirit [1]."

Art originates from life and is reflected in Yang Taiyang's paintings of the Lijiang River. Since returning to his hometown in the 1960s, Yang Taiyang and his students have always adhered to the idea of combining sketching with tradition, and constantly explored the cultural heritage of the Lijiang River landscape. He left a large number of life painting sketches and works of the Lijiang River, which have become the driving force for future generations to continue to seek the beauty of the Lijiang River. Yang Taiyang's sketching works include both watercolor and traditional Chinese paintings, but the habit of sketching has always been maintained [4]. As an important part of the creation of Lijiang River, the painting of the Lijiang River conveys the artist's attachment to the scenery of Lijiang River and the innovative path between teaching activities.

#### 4 Conclusion

At present, this study mainly focuses on the art education of Yang Taiyang. The introduction part expounds the current research status in this regard, and also analyzes the artistic activities and characteristics of Yang Taiyang's Lijiang River landscape painting. It has certain reference value for the creation of contemporary landscape painting of Lijiang River theme. During the research and study period, although there were field investigations, literature, interviews, and other materials available, there were still some shortcomings in the research on Yang Taiyang's Lijiang River landscape painting techniques, and continuous improvement is needed.

### **Conflicts of interest**

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

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