Exploration into the Evolution of Arthur Danto's Style Matrix

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Abstract: This paper discusses in depth the "style matrix" theory proposed by Arthur Danto, which analyzes the composition and evolution of artistic style in the framework of logical matrix, and challenges the single definition of the essence of art in the traditional imitation theory. Danto emphasizes that the legitimacy and value of works of art not only depend on their physical properties and visual expression, but also are influenced by the theoretical atmosphere of art and the knowledge of art history, revealing the complex positioning of works of art in a specific social system and cultural context. The style matrix model has been improved, enhanced the historicity and inclusiveness, and provided a powerful tool for the fine classification of art styles and the narrative innovation of art history. Although faced with such controversies as the complexity of predicate logic relations, theoretical arbitrariness and the obscure of artists' intentions, this theory has opened up a new perspective for art history and art research, stimulated in-depth exploration of the relationship between art nature and social culture, and has an important influence on the development of contemporary art theories.

Keywords: Danto; style matrix; style; art theory

1. Two "style matrix" theory proposed

In 1964, Arthur Danto published his landmark article "Art World," which made him famous. He focuses on the invisible properties of art, such as how works of art are named, identified and interpreted in the institutional context of society. Under this theory, the legitimacy of a work of art depends on the atmosphere of art theory and knowledge of art history, not just its physical properties or visual representations. Among other things, Danto mentions an original theory called the "style matrix" (Table 1). Danto sets "representational" art as F and "expressionist" art as G in the form of logic. If in a certain period, people believe that the "representational" art form is the essence of art, then the "+" is added to the F column to confirm, and in the next period, people believe that "expressionist" art (G) can also be art, G column will be added "+", if a work meets the F item but does not meet the G item, If a work is both "expressionist" and "reproductive", then the presentation effect is F "+" G "+". In this way, a contradictory relationship is formed in the matrix, and therefore four artistic styles are formed in the matrix. And the right side of the matrix is always in an open state, waiting for the emergence of a new style, once a new predicate term appears, the style will grow by 2 to the NTH power. "The greater the diversity of art-related preconditions, the more complex the individual members of the art world become. The more people understand the population of the entire art world, the more experience people have with any of their members."[2] And we can see that the last row of the table in the matrix will approach infinite "-".

Table 1. Style Matrix (1964)

F	G
+	+
+	-
-	+
-	-

After completing the construction of the style matrix theory, Danto shifted his research focus to exploring deeper philosophical issues in art, namely the essential transformation of an object's artistic identity in a specific historical and cultural context. In 1986, Danto put forward the highly controversial theory of the end of art in his landmark article "The Deprivation of Art by Philosophy", and the concept of "style matrix" had not been mentioned by him for more than thirty years.

Until 1997, Danto cleverly traced back and referenced the theoretical framework of the "style matrix" in his subsequent work "After the End of Art". Although the style matrix proposed in 1964 was not satisfactory, Danto still maintained a positive attitude towards it. This time Danto further improved the style matrix, increasing the number of predicate items to

three, becoming Stylist, Baroque, and Rococo, arranged in chronological order from left to right. The columns of the matrix increased from four to eight, becoming a more detailed and precise matrix (Table 2). "Every painting can be positioned at a certain point on it, and the more terms we have to deal with, the more accurate the summary of the style of each work in our team. [3]

Table 2. Style Matrix (1997)

	Mannerism	Baroque	Rococo
1	+	+	+
2	+	+	-
3	+	-	+
4	+	-	-
5	-	+	-
6	-	+	-
7	-	-	+
8	-	-	-

2. The interpretation of transformation

Although Danto modified the style matrix in the second two times, the style predication as the core form of the matrix did not change. The style predication in the Art World is based on logical terms such as antithesis, contradiction and opposite. These terms are widely used in logic, philosophy and related disciplines to describe different types of relationships between concepts, propositions or statements. Danto's association with style predication undoubtedly gives the early style predication features such as rigor and systematization to a certain extent. "I shall now speak of pairs of predicate relating to each other as" opposites, "and acknowledge at once the ambiguities of this archaic term." [2] But as Danto said, the introduction of theoretical terms as logic and other disciplines into the category of art is bound to be accompanied by certain incompatibility. By making the stylistic predicate G "representational" and F "expressionist", Danto established a matrix of styles whose rows determine the existing styles. A careful analysis of the concepts and meanings of the two examples of style predication cited by Danto, namely "is representational" and "is expressionist", it is not difficult to find that there is indeed a non-negligible ambiguity between the predication and predication in the conceptual logic level. "Representational" and "representational" belong to the broad terms of the same dimension and category, "representational" and "expressionist" belong to the narrow terms of the same dimension and category. The relationship between "expressive" and "expressionistic" is that they both involve the question of expression. Taking "expressive" and "expressionism" as examples, the relationship between the two types of terms can be more clearly distinguished: the concept of "expressive" includes "expressionist" to a certain extent. "Expressive" is a broader term that includes the ability or behavior to express emotions, ideas, or visual experiences in a work of art. Expressionist refers specifically to an artistic style or movement that emphasizes the direct and exaggerated expression of emotions in order to reveal deeper emotional or social truths. Generalized terms include narrow terms, and the mixed use of generalized style predicates and narrow style predicates will not only destroy the internal logic system of the existing style matrix, but also inevitably lead to the existence of two style predicates after the continuous increase of style predicates, thus causing some styles to fail to find appropriate positions in the style matrix.

In order to avoid the problems caused by different dimensions or different categories of style predicates, the style predicates on the first row should be unified in the same dimension and category. Again, "representational" and "expressionism" are examples. Plan one is to change "expressionist" into "expressive", so that "expressive" and "representational" are both in the broad category, and the nature of the more extensive and universal art concept, which is very similar to the five pairs of style concepts proposed by Wolflin: linear and painterly, flat and deep, closed and open. "We do not have to accept the crude concept of the binary opposite (the concept of five pairs)" [4]. it can be seen that from the subjective level, he thinks that it is not appropriate to use this kind of binary opposition style concept as a style predicate, which will cause the absence of some important styles in the matrix. Option two is to replace "representational" with "representational", so that "expressionist" and "representational" are both in a narrow category and belong to more specific and specific artistic schools. Obviously, Danto is more inclined towards this option. Therefore, in the second-generation style matrix proposed in "The Conclusion of Art", style predicates such as "Mannerism", "Baroque", and "Rococo" are used.

In the original style matrix, Danto did not realize the importance of historicity to the style matrix. For Danto, this is one

of the key concerns of the style Matrix, which, even though it exhibits a great sensitivity to history, potentially ignores the dynamic evolution of art history. But in the second-generation style matrix, he obviously realized this and made changes to it, which can be seen from the style predicate, the most basic component of the style matrix. The style predicate of the early age mixed the style features of the broad formal with the style schools of the narrow historical, so that the style matrix of the early age could not be arranged in an orderly manner, and then the problem of historical neglect criticized by scholars such as Carroll appeared. In 1995, Carroll proposed in Danto, Style and Intention that style matrix has backward causality, conflict with artist's intention, neglect of the uniqueness of works, and doubts about the relationship between new works of art and tradition. He believes that these problems not only affect the effectiveness of the style matrix as an art analysis tool, but also have a negative impact on the public's understanding of the nature and value of works of art. Danto read this piece of serious criticism recently made by Noel Carroll. A thorough recognition of the style matrix, "although it has produced a considerable amount of philosophical aesthetics, the style matrix from the beginning is latent inertia, or quite severe inertia." [5] Taking this opportunity, finally in 1997, in the ninth chapter of the Monochrome Painting Museum in "After the End of Art", the monochrome painting was renamed for the previous conclusion on the nature of art because of ignorance, and at the same time, in response to the problems raised by Carroll, the creation of a more mature second-generation style matrix. The internal style predicate changes the problem of mixing the style features of the generalized formal with the narrow historical style schools, and also improves the depth and breadth of the external use and reading methods and begins to pay attention to the uniqueness and complexity of the works of art themselves. The second generation style matrix selects three stylistic predicates for specific historical periods - Mannerism in the mid-to-late 16th century, Baroque in the late 16th to early 18th century, and Rococo in the early to late 18th century. These style predicates are arranged from left to right in the matrix, and their order strictly follows their historical development. Thus, the construction of the second-generation style matrix is essentially a structure based on historical development, in which each style predicate represents a style school or group in a particular historical period.

3. Limitations of matrix

Danto discusses the use of logical terms. In The Art World, Danto analyzes with logic and explains the old terms of "predicate term", "establishment term", "contradiction term" and "opposite term" : "Contradictory prefixes are not opposites, because one of their opposites in each pair must apply to every object in the universe, and none of a set of opposites need apply to some object in the universe. One of the proposed items must apply to it."[6]Although this sentence is obscure, the general meaning is that the predicate term of contradiction refers to a pair of mutually negative propositions, and a pair of contradictory terms can only produce two results. In traditional logic, a pair item is sometimes described as a case where it cannot be true at the same time, but it can be false at the same time, which means that there is a third possibility, but this does not affect its use in the style matrix. Finally, the opposite term refers to two concepts with opposite properties in the same category, both of which may be false for some objects in the universe, that is, the opposite term can have up to three results.

According to the style predicate F given by Danto, he considers -f to be its antithesis, so there can only be "+" and "-" in F itself. Of course, when the new style predicate G is introduced to combine with the original predicate F, a matrix structure containing four possibilities should be formed theoretically. But the key problem here is that Danto's theoretical framework seems to ignore the complex logical relationships between multiple predicates. He paid more attention to the relationship of a single predicate itself, but did not discuss the possible interaction and restrictive relationship of multiple predicates. If we continue to add art-related style predicates in accordance with the extensibility principle proposed by Danto, and integrate factors such as contradictory terms, opposite terms and opposite terms into the matrix, then as long as any pair of predicates in the matrix constitute opposing, contradictory or opposite relations, they cannot be true at the same time (represented by "+"). Therefore, Danto's assumption that the style matrix increases by 2n ratio is difficult to hold in practice. Logically, at least, the pace of growth in the number of styles does not show a simple exponential growth pattern, as Danto expected, because the new predicates are constrained and affected by the logical relations between the existing predicates, and this is also true in the second-generation matrix, and this logical relationship exists between styles.

In addition, Danto's admiration and emphasis on style may, to some extent, obscure the initiative and creativity of the artist's intention in the creation process. In the absence of the artist, the meaning of art will also deviate from its intended meaning. Carroll is also aware of this problem, and in his article Danto, Style, and Intention, he points out the problem of Danto's style matrix: "Indian dance cannot possess the attributes of postmodern ordinariness because its composers lack the necessary postmodern ideas and theories." [7]For the original style matrix, it is obvious that a crucial factor - "history" - has been ignored in its construction process. The emergence and development of art is always closely connected with a specific historical background and cultural context, and style, as a form of expression of art, is also unable to escape the influence

of history. However, the original matrix in the induction and classification of art style, but did not fully consider this point. With the passage of time, those existing works of art will inevitably be re-interpreted by future generations according to different aesthetic standards and artistic concepts, and affixed with new "style labels". This phenomenon is undoubtedly a great absurdity for artists and the society at that time. Because these new labels often do not truly reflect the original meaning and value of artworks, but more reflect the subjective assumptions and prejudices of later generations. In response to this criticism, Danto admits that "for all the historical sensitivity of the stylistic matrix, it implies an ahistorical view of art - of which I, of all people, should be wary". [8] This is also the reason for the emergence of the second generation style matrix. Compared with the first generation matrix, the second generation matrix pays more attention to historicity in the choice of style predicates, and takes the historical style schools as the basis of classification. Such improvement enables users to grasp the style and connotation of artworks more accurately on the premise of having a certain knowledge of art history, and avoid the situation of putting the cart before the horse.

4. Conclusion

Arthur Danto's "Style matrix" theory, as a profound reflection and innovation of traditional art theory, effectively analyzes the composition and evolution process of art style by introducing logical matrix model. This theory not only challenges the single definition of the essence of art in imitation theory, but also reveals the complex positioning and value evaluation mechanism of artworks in a specific social system and cultural context. Although the proposal of style matrix has gone through the logic ambiguity and the limitation of external application in the initial stage, its historicity and inclusiveness have been significantly enhanced by Danto's continuous improvement. The matrix model not only provides a visual framework for the fine classification of artistic styles, but also promotes the innovation of the narrative mode of art history, from counter-narrative to grand narrative, and deepens the understanding of the intrinsic value of artworks and the overall context of art history.

Danto's contribution not only lies in the construction of the theory itself, but also in the deep exploration of the core issues such as the essence of art and the relationship between art and society and culture, which provides valuable enlightenment for the development and practice of contemporary art theory.

Acknowledgments

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