



An Analysis of the Influence of Ancient Chinese Frescoes on Modern Traditional Chinese Realistic Painting

Wei Zhao

Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, Zhejiang, China

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Abstract: Ancient Chinese fresco painting has a long history and is one of the important art forms of traditional Chinese painting. As a traditional genre of painting in China, traditional Chinese realistic painting has always adhered to the spirit of the times. This paper examines the relationship between ancient Chinese fresco painting and modern Chinese realistic painting, summarising the artistic characteristics of ancient Chinese fresco painting from three perspectives: composition, materials, technique and style, and exploring the inheritance and development of modern Chinese realistic painting on ancient Chinese fresco painting.

Keywords: fresco, brush painting, influence

As the earliest form of painting in China, traditional Chinese realistic painting is unique, from the early single line outline to the modern unique new Chinese realistic painting. It is no longer bound by traditional methods and styles, but draws from oil painting, printmaking, watercolour and other painting arts, and absorbs Western stylistic concepts to form a new style with unique characteristics.

Throughout the style and status quo of modern Chinese realistic painting, there are several characteristics: firstly, the traditional outline and rendering is the main focus, with the incorporation of Western sketching elements, and the realistic and idealised treatment of the figure, which explores the poetic beauty contained therein; secondly, the traditional elements of ancient Chinese cave paintings and folk paintings are drawn upon to strengthen the expressive and realistic nature of Chinese realistic painting; thirdly, the richness of colour, the sense of volume and the The third is the emphasis on the richness of colour, the sense of volume and the compositional meaning of the picture, in pursuit of the impact of visual effects. Although there are differences in the styles and techniques of modern Chinese realistic painters, they have generally borrowed a large number of elements from ancient frescoes to incorporate into their images, inheriting and developing them. Ancient frescoes in China are mostly palace frescoes, tomb frescoes, murals and religious walls, with Dunhuang frescoes, Qiuci frescoes and Yongle Palace frescoes being the most representative. Through the study of ancient frescoes, it is easy to find that most of the pigments used in modern Chinese realistic painting have been inherited from ancient fresco composition, pigments, techniques and painting styles.

1. Inheritance of fresco composition

Xie He, a theorist of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, once put forward the famous "six methods" of "management of position" in "Ancient Paintings". Since ancient times, the composition of a picture has been particularly important. Traditional frescoes are often painted in the form of a scattered perspective, with the main figures usually painted in the centre of the picture and the secondary figures painted on either side, thus enhancing the sense of weight and highlighting the theme of the picture. For example, the large frescoes of Taoist gods and goddesses painted in the Chunyang Hall of the Yongle Palace in Shanxi adopt the traditional scattered-dot composition, with the main Taoist gods and goddesses painted in the more obvious positions on the wall and the numbers on each side standing at the golden point, making the whole picture more solemn and rigorous in composition and highlighting the sense of solemnity that religion brings to its followers. Secondly, the secondary figures are drawn on either side of the main figure, and because of the large number of figures depicted, the figures are drawn in a more elaborate superimposed relationship, and this superimposed relationship pulls the picture apart from the real and the imaginary, enhancing the sense of hierarchy. The composition alone separates the main and secondary relationships in the picture, and lays a solid foundation for the subsequent painting.

This method of composition has been inherited and widely used in Chinese realistic painting. Among them are *Lady with a Hairpin and a Flower* and *Pounding Practice* from the Tang Dynasty. On the basis of the traditional techniques inherited, the painting has developed into a new look, drawing on the Western concept of compositionism to give the picture

a decorative and creative flavour. The scattered composition method is still used, it still contains a uniquely Chinese aesthetic, expressing the inner charm of the 'unity of heaven and man'. This is what traditional fresco composition brings to us, and is a unique feature of Oriental painting.

2. The inheritance of colour techniques in fresco painting

The use of pigments in traditional Chinese painting began early on, with early frescoes using a single, brighter, more pure colour, which suited the needs of early religious frescoes. As painting techniques evolved, so did the range of pigments, and the basic colors used in ancient frescoes have been passed on to modern realistic painting and have been better applied to the creation of modern realistic painting. "The concept of colour in traditional Chinese painting is based on the philosophical concept of the five elements, that is, green (wood) in the east, symbolising spring; red (fire) in the south, symbolising summer; white (gold) in the west, symbolising autumn; black (water) in the north, symbolising winter; and yellow (earth) in the middle, symbolising the four seasons, this is the saying of the five colors." Early ancient frescoes mainly used mineral and plant-based colors, mainly monochrome, with fewer inter-colors.

The pigments used at the beginning were home-grown lead powder yellow and imported garcinia. Later the colors began to increase, with mineral colors such as lime, stone green, vermilion fat and earthy yellow, which gave the murals a heavy, intense effect and provided a sense of infinite space, and have been used ever since. When introduced to realistic painting, these colors had a major impact on the colour of the painting, which is divided into light and heavy colors depending on what is being painted. Light colors are elegant and plain, while heavy colors are elegant and flamboyant. The two styles of painting show an inheritance of ancient fresco colouring techniques and a major step forward on this basis. The emergence of the new realistic painting, and the integration of Western decorative and compositionist colouring concepts on top of the traditional colouring techniques, incorporating some innovative techniques of production, has further expanded the coloring approach of realistic painting, achieving new creative reforms and breakthroughs.

3. The inheritance of modelling techniques

In terms of modelling techniques, frescoes are usually painted with traditional white outlines, and this method is perfectly inherited and carried forward in gongbi painting. The Ming dynasty's Zou Dezhong's *Painting Matters* contains a list of eighteen ancient and modern painting techniques, the 'eighteen depictions' of traditional painting, all of which are derived from traditional frescoes. The traditional frescoes are outlined in the form of white strokes, including the nail-head and rat-tail strokes, the iron line strokes and the orchid leaf strokes, which are elegant, long and rhythmic lines that show the unique charm of traditional Chinese painting. Worker's brush figure painting emphasises the elements of sparseness, interlacement and rhythm of the lines to emphasise the rhythm of the picture. He Jiaying, a contemporary brush painter, has made a new attempt in brush painting, inheriting the traditional brush painting technique and incorporating Western perspective on top of it, achieving a new breakthrough in traditional painting. The young painter Luo Hanlei, on the other hand, took tradition as his foundation and creatively invented a new method of drawing, the 'cold smoke drawing', which was different from the 'eighteen drawings' and opened up new possibilities for the development of line.

In terms of colouring techniques, ancient frescoes were often painted using flat, divided and overpainted colors, with the artist creating a base colour before starting to paint, and using a flat colouring method where brush marks are not visible when making the base or painting parts of the picture. The second is the overlay, which is a more complex method, using different shades of the same hue to apply the colour separately, through layers of overlay, to obtain a clear and three-dimensional effect of the colour scale, so that the effect is light and elegant, which is distinctly different from the traditional frescoes with their heavy colouring. The third is the technique of gilding, mainly gold painting, gilding, gilding and so on. These staining techniques have been used by later generations, and to this day, many painters still base their work on flat painting, divided staining and overpainting, which is evident in the inheritance of ancient frescoes. Modern Chinese realistic painting, in contrast to ancient frescoes, is bright and varied in colour, using flat paint or haloing to create a strong colour contrast, giving a good visual effect and making up for the lack of color in ancient frescoes. The modern painters of Chinese realistic painting have also adopted the colors of folk painting to sublimate their works, using the contrast of colors to give a striking effect.

4. Summary

Ancient Chinese frescoes have had a profound influence on modern Chinese realistic painting, not only as a powerful foundation stone, but also as a way to broaden the artistic path of modern artists. And with the discovery of contemporary art, the impact of Western modern art has led to great changes in traditional Chinese art, and it is all the more important for the

younger generation of painters to be bold and creative, to keep exploring and discovering in depth. For artists, they use their own eyes to discover the beauty of objects in nature, from which they find inspiration to create, and then act on their own creations, so that the viewer and themselves reach an intellectual and emotional resonance. The artist then paints a wonderful picture of his or her own imagination, embodying the artist's own imagination and imaginative power. In addition, ancient frescoes influence the imagination and creativity of both the artist and the viewer. Many artists have the habit of copying and studying in places with many fresco relics, such as Dunhuang, Shanxi and Beijing, and in the process of copying they continue to draw nutrients from the traditional frescoes and receive a lot of inspiration and inspiration, which they then apply to their own creations, making them rich and connotative. When we face ancient wall paintings, whether we see them as museum exhibits or living cultural resources is a different concept. If we treat ancient frescoes as a resource to be utilized, it must be an inexhaustible source." Chinese brush painting still has a vitality in modern times, and with the interweaving of many art schools and art styles, it is all the more necessary for us to draw on the strengths of tradition and draw nutrients from it to come out with a new Chinese realistic painting path of our own.

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