



# The Music Image in the Image — On the Visual Representation of the Music Image in the Painting Exhibition of Qiu Xiaofei

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**Abstract:** Qiu Xiaofei, an artist, is one of the most popular artists among the post-70 generation of Chinese contemporary painting. You can see from his painting creation, the subject matter of painting works and the working way of creation all start from the artistic concept similar to image text. When artists explain their paintings, the capriciousness of painting creation and the lyricism presented in the works are inseparable from the artist's infatuation with music. In this paper, from the perspective of imagology, through the analysis of the artist Qiu Xiaofei's painting creation of music images in the exhibition, it can be seen that his image text is closely related to music when transformed into visual images, and the concept of "empathy" behind the transformation of the painting form of the artist is elaborated.

**Keywords:** Qiu Xiaofei, painting, image text, music image

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## Introduction

In the long history of the development of human art, music and visual art are closely connected. People express their sincere emotions through singing, playing music, dancing and painting, thus promoting the evolution and development of art and forming an important content of the historical and cultural heritage of human civilization. Since the 1950s, the pictorial phenomenon has been flooding our society, and the function of images has subtly influenced the creation of contemporary artists. As top priority of contemporary art is on explicit cultural pertinence, most artists have a strong purpose to use specific images to tell some social problems. This kind of image narrative mode accords with the traditional painting focusing on the theme, culture and field of the work narrative mode.

However, the images in the contemporary art context have their own logical context relations, and the use of the text behind different images for artistic creation makes the works to enjoy the characteristics of the times and concepts. It is interesting that, from the context of contemporary art, the music in the image fails to enjoy the conceptual attribute of "time art" or "auditory art" in the traditional sense, but is reflected in the artist's works as a material or a "field".

In this exhibition of Qiu Xiaofei's paintings, we can see that the advancement of artistic creation depends on the artist's in-depth understanding of himself. The artist's thinking on the images and texts behind his works can be described with ingeniousness, various styles of music or some sound were adopted to stimulate the inspiration of artistic creation so as to excavate the inner image symbols. In this paper, the mechanism of the creation of music image is initially described, and the relationship between the artist's painting language and the creation of music is analyzed from the perspective of image science, so as to express the aesthetic thinking of the concept of empathy in artistic creation.

## 1. Synesthesia in musical images

The musical image is the criterion and symbol that decides the artistic value of musical works. Some people think that the musical image is embodied in the "modeling" or "description" of music, while others think that the essence of musical image lies in its "expression" or "analogy", and the "synesthesia" in the reproduction process of musical image plays an important role in music creation and appreciation. It is not only a basic ability in the aesthetic psychological structure of perception ability, imagination ability and understanding ability, but also it is obviously different from the traditional concept of "synesthesia".

The concept of "synesthesia" has been mentioned by scholars for a long time, but it has not been systematically discussed and its meaning is vague. In general, the pictures that people say they see when listening to music are actually not clear images completed by painting means. There is a great difference between the "synesthesia" image aroused by music and the visual image directly acquired by vision. The latter is obtained by conduction from the retina to the cerebral cortex, while the former is the connection and integration between the auditory and visual areas of the brain.

Qiu Xiaofei, an artist, often listens to a variety of music to create his paintings, including Chinese music, Western classical music, free jazz, and sound art. Just as the artist said in the exhibition, when he listens to various kinds of music, he

actually only gets different sounds in the music, which will stimulate his hearing and make the artist enter into an illusion, thus producing a kind of collateral reaction in his paintings.

Qiu Xiaofei, an artist, uses music as a tool in his creation, and this way of working brings nourishment to his paintings. Just like synesthesia in music, synesthesia is coined, which takes a certain kind of feeling as the medium and evokes some internal schema accumulated in the heart through positive psychological suggestion and association. It is characterized by transient transience, the way and ability to achieve the mutual connection between various senses, and thus obtaining another kind of more vague and non-intuitive sense image.

The first theme of this exhibition is the abstract painting series of artist Qiu Xiaofei. Under the stimulation of music background, this series of works, stimulated at the musical background, is presented in a way similar to automatism, but the artist works with self-drafted texts. In his paintings, he would have a prior concept of all kinds of objects, and then gradually blur this concept with biological instinct in the process of painting.

He believed that the charm of painting lay in the state that could not be described in words and words, thus causing auditory memory. Artists is prone to associate music with painting as a result that music should be listened to in a tranquil environment with ears open, while painting can be appreciated with open eyes, both of which perceive things within the limits of their respective functions. The exhibition presents a rich picture of the turning of painting creation. The painting style with great tension has attracted the curiosity of scholars, critics and collectors at home and abroad about the narrative logic behind the turning of his works at each stage.

## 2. The appearance of image rhetoric in painting

Michel put forward a concept of "image linguistics" in his "Image Theory", that is, images can be expressed and applied with a set of grammar in the sense of linguistics. In the experiment of contemporary painting, in addition to the image grammar in the single image picture, the continuous repetition and change of the image, the Mosaic of the image, the juxtaposition of the image and so on is a syntactic sense of the combined image grammar, the experiment of contemporary painting observation and narrative; The experiment of introducing images from art history into painting is a grammar experiment in another sense in the context of art history or painting history.

This kind of image experiment using the context of text is similar to the emergence of synesthesia in music image. Qiu Xiaofei, an artist, uses different image texts to carry out various painting experiments, thus opening up the channel between painting and image to expand the boundaries of painting.

The artist Qiu Xiaofei's painting practice always takes the ontological thinking of painting as the basis of formal practice. Since 2003, Qiu Xiaofei has been looking for a vacancy in painting as a material plane. In his creation, he uses a variety of painting paths to explore the temporal theme of objects between painting, image and consciousness and expand to the formal expression of consciousness hidden behind it. In his artistic creation, Qiu Xiaofei often uses image-based thinking to find a scalable path in painting. The combination of different image grammars expands the function of painting media and makes the boundaries of painting have infinite possibilities in the artist's creation.

Qiu Xiaofei, as one of the Chinese artists born in the 1970s, has gained new understanding and views on the way to expand the boundaries of painting through his multiple painting practices and innovative ideas in painting. This solo exhibition presents the artist's narrative turn in painting from the perspective of image narrative. However, this exhibition is not a presentation of the final result, but an analysis and exposition of the image grammatical structure of painting narrative in the exhibition works.

The second series in the exhibition is the painting experiment conducted by the artist Qiu Xiaofei using a variety of media. This kind of painting experiment is an image-like way of working, which borrows text to think about an image grammar formed by the painting ontology language on the image. The artist's work "Female Thief" reflects a painter in the Period of the Republic of China to rewrite the western theme of the painting in the Eastern way, the picture with the atmosphere of mysticism. As religion was introduced into China, this painter of the Republic of China became interested in western mythological themes and formed an avant-garde way to question or transform the problems existing in China.

After the founding of the New China, the Soviet School entered China, and the European culture was changed in China. As a result, the works lost the sense of mystery in the context of that time, so that in the course of history, the sense of mystery was replaced by another thing. The artist as a growth under the background of socialist realism, put produce the meaning of the painting in the course of history to consider, to make painting with certain factors in the process of the social history of the mystery of this kind of thinking mode for reflection transformation, then this text processing image creation and painting of the relationship between thinking logic. The artist believes that the mystery in the work blurs the boundaries of some dualism between East and West, including the relationship between myth and man. The artist continues to write this

mystery through the work and transforms it into something relevant to today

### 3. The aesthetic significance of the concept of empathy

The theory of empathy is one of the most influential schools in western modern aesthetics and the most representative theory in psychological aesthetics. In his book *Space Aesthetics*, German psychologist and aesthetician Lipps gave a comprehensive exposition of the transference theory. He believed that human aesthetic feeling is a kind of psychological illusion, an illusion to see oneself in objective things, so the basic reason of aesthetic feeling lies in "empathy". The so-called "empathy", is our emotions "shot" on things to make emotional attributes, which is our people's feeling, emotion and will, displacement into outside our things, make originally not life things seemed to have feelings, thoughts, emotion, will and activity, produce I the same realm. In the west, the modeling of music is more contained in the aesthetic problem of the performance characteristics of music, and empathy is the sublimation of music works in the audience's thinking and the realization of aesthetic significance. In the process of artist Qiu Xiaofei's creation, he transferred his personal will, consciousness, imagination and emotion to the space of our existence through painting, which also has a certain aesthetic significance.

Qiu Xiaofei's series of paintings are not only getting rid of a traditional painting narrative, but also getting rid of a habitual narrative tradition in visual logic. Usually artists want to create paintings in a strange way or means, a painting form that is different from visual inertia and aesthetic fatigue to get close to the reality of the fantasy in the mind. Bao Dong, a well-known contemporary art critic in China, once used "suspension" to describe the creation method of qiu Xiaofei, an artist. A new painting experiment was carried out by suspending the artist's old painting experience with an image-like text prepared in advance.

This kind of painting behavior coincides with "displacement" and "empathy". In fact, at the initial stage of the artist's painting creation, Qiu Xiaofei's original intention was to make the painting more intuitive, and to make people feel something different between the structure and logical structure so as to show different narrative through the organization of some shapes, structures, colors, traces and images. This kind of narration is different from writing literary narration and visual purely abstract formal works, and it does not make painting a tool to present a result, but on the premise of continuous discovery, so that the process of painting becomes a process of continuous discovery.

The last series of works in the exhibition show the aesthetic significance of the artist Qiu Xiaofei's exploration of the boundary of painting in the concept of "displacement". After the circulation of the artist as a biological human medium, the image-like text is finally transmitted through painting. This complex creation method integrates the suspended concept of image text, the circulation of biological cavity, the formal characteristics of painting media and the field environment of exhibition space, as well as the degree of content received by different audiences, all of which constitute the generation of a new painting work.

The work "In front of the mountains and behind the mountains" constructs the language and form of painting towards the direction of speculative painting by means of a dialectical relationship between painting and image language. Just as the subject-object relationship in aesthetic empathy is the fusion of object and I, and the result of aesthetic empathy is the complete freedom of human beings, artists transfer their spirit and will through empathy in the creation process of their works. As well as the form structure in the painting work, the effect of the media material and the control degree of the picture shows the artist's good artistic restraint and superb painting skills.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Qiu Xiaofei's painting exhibition presents the connection between the artist's painting creation and music. From the generation mechanism of the concept of musical synesthesia, it can be seen that music and the medium is closely related to the artist's painting work habits. Thus, it affects the chemical reactions of hearing, memory and vision in the process of painting creation. Qiu Xiaofei's painting creation is inseparable from the era in which he grew up. The influence of images on painting profoundly affects the thinking logic of the artist's creation process, as well as the formation mechanism of the work results, and the artist's aesthetic thinking was expressed through the role of empathy.

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