The role of research in contemporary art learning and practice--provide a learning and evaluation approach for learners and educators

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Abstract: In recent years, domestic art education has become increasingly mature and internationalized. On the basis of traditional art education, more and more schools and institutions are incorporating more diverse contemporary art education content. This is not only in line with the needs of China's increasingly developing art and design industry, but also more in line with the historical process and laws of art development. However, the diverse contemporary art makes its evaluation system very different from traditional art (painting), which includes installations, images, behaviors, etc. The diversity makes it difficult to unify its evaluation in teaching. As educators, we need to provide an effective method to teach students and evaluate their works. Therefore, research has become an effective method and tool for learning and evaluating contemporary art.

Key words: contemporary art; learning and practice; approach

1 Introduction

Traditional evaluation methods that focus solely on technical skills may not fully capture the essence and value of contemporary art. This calls for the need to develop a learning and evaluation approach that aligns with the characteristics and demands of contemporary art. In this study, we aim to explore the role of research in contemporary art learning and practice, with a focus on providing an effective method for teaching and evaluating students' works.

2 The limitations of the traditional art evaluation system

Traditional art evaluation often revolves around aesthetics and modeling ability, which requires authors to focus on the final presentation effect of the work, that is, to pay attention to the result. Specifically, a part of aesthetics should be reflected in the author's representation of familiar scenes or objects, that is, the "image" to be drawn (done). The other part should be reflected in the author's expression of our human emotions, that is, to enable the audience to empathize with the artist. If one or two points are reached, it is easy to be rated as an excellent work by everyone, otherwise, it is difficult to be called a good work. This approach is undoubtedly the deadliest blow to innovative works and a negation of interesting ideas. Our so-called "traditional" evaluation is simply the transformation of imported goods from old Europe and the Soviet era. This evaluation method is already a very ancient thing, and it no longer has the power to resist new media and display methods.

You should know that it has been 104 years since Duchamp's "Spring" was exhibited, and modern art and design have

entered our Chinese lives for at least 40 years. We won't go into too much detail about the significant changes in world art over the past century. Just say that China has already transitioned from a poor and weak agricultural society to an industrial society, and has begun to move towards a digital society. However, throughout art education, there has not been a synchronous improvement. The reason is that the evaluation system is outdated, and the power of disciplining people has not weakened at all.

3 Explanation and significance of research

Learning about art through research is a great means. It can help learners gradually find the direction they want to create. For educators, checking student research records can effectively understand their learning process, discover their unique aspects, and effectively avoid the risk of plagiarism. This is extremely necessary in today's increasingly standardized academic environment in China.

Research is the abbreviation for investigative research. In the field of art, it refers to the systematic and objective collection of information through various investigation methods, research and analysis, providing theoretical support for the creative content, providing various practical possibilities, and preparing for the final presentation of the work. This approach is the result of years of teaching practice in top art schools in Europe and America, and its sustainability and inspiration are very worthy of reference. Specifically, taking the requirements of the University of the Arts London (2020 QS World University Rankings - Art and Design: Second in the World) as an example, the research is divided into two parts: primary research and secondary research. These two parts correspond to different learning objectives and meanings.

3.1 Primary research

Primary research refers to completely original research conducted by learners. It takes various forms, such as sketches, photography, collages, survey questionnaires, brainstorming (mind maps), and so on. In this section, learners need to showcase their sources of inspiration and a series of expanded content generated based on these sources. For example, a student studying design noticed the beautiful patterns on the body of the seven starred ladybug and took a few photos with his phone. After returning home, he began printing these photos and trying to use "spots" as his source of inspiration. Around these colorful spots, he began to try to create new content through collage and painting, trying various color combinations. He not only found his favorite color scheme, but also got unexpected gains. This series of processes is his primary research.

Another example comes from composer Phineas O'Connell of the 2019 Grammy Awards, whose hit song "Bad Guy" originated from the ticking of the countdown to traffic lights when he crossed the street in Sydney. O'Connor said in an interview, "I immediately recorded that sound and started arranging based on it when I returned to the studio. If you listen carefully, the rhythm of the entire song has the sound of the countdown to traffic lights." This is the purpose of primary research, which can be a source of inspiration for a masterpiece or a cornerstone that runs through it.

The significance of primary research for learners lies in the cultivation of observation and imagination. When they accumulate a certain amount of them, the learners will become more clearer about their topic and research direction. As educators, we can not only have a similar understanding of his creative context, but also discover more potential and possibilities for learners from it [1].

3.2 Secondary research

Secondary research is a supplement based on primary research, which mostly takes the form of theoretical research, artist/designer case analysis, and data collection. In this section, the learner needs to present the relevant information they have found based on the research topic, in order to enrich the content of their work [2].

Taking the student who filmed the seven star ladybug mentioned earlier as an example, after conducting primary

research, he needs to enrich the content of his works. The content here is not only about visual effects, but also requires finding relevant knowledge according to one's own needs. Otherwise, a work created solely based on intuition is thin and difficult to sustain. Finding one or more "handles" as endorsements for a work is essential to make it stand firm and withstand scrutiny. He may study the works of artist Yayoi Kusama and investigate the psychological reactions of people with dense phobia, in order to supplement the content of his works and make them more accessible to a wider audience.

The significance of secondary research for learners lies in the cultivation of logical and self-learning abilities. When their research is sufficiently enriched, they will naturally supplement or criticize their own works. This state can allow him to learn more gradually rather than just staying at the surface effect. For educators, checking secondary research is the best tool to understand student creative content and also a measure of whether a work is excellent. Because in the face of works with different styles and materials, our personal feelings will have the upper hand, and the appearance of individual works will be blinded. Therefore, secondary research can not only help us clarify the author's creative philosophy, but also identify good works and projects for sustainable development [3].

4 Integrating research into art learning and practice

4.1 Sketching books

Sketching books are the most traditional way. From Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci to contemporary fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, the power of sketchbooks has been maximized. We can find how they explore the research topic step by step from their sketchbooks, and their sketchbooks are highly ornamental and valuable. The advantage of a sketchbook is that it can present the primary research section more vividly. When a creator discovers an item or comes up with an idea, a sketchbook with them is the quickest medium to record their current feelings. Moreover, hand-drawn content often has more warmth, and the casual lines and colors are very appealing.

4.2 Tablets

Tablets have become the mainstream tool for obtaining information and entertainment. With the iteration and upgrading of hardware, their ability to process images and paintings has become increasingly powerful, making it highly efficient for conducting research, especially in secondary research (data collection). The large amount of information collected can be easily edited in the tablet app, and different sizes of documents and images can be printed as required, and results can be quickly shared with others, which traditional media cannot achieve.

Another major advantage of conducting research on tablets is that they can save and edit music and videos, which is very helpful for students studying digital media design. Collecting and creating dynamic resources can greatly enhance the richness of research. At present, many foreign universities focus on paperless and digital display of research results, and online teaching in China is also developing rapidly. The trend in the future is to use tablets to draw, collect information, create secondary works, and share results. This method breaks the limitations of time and space, so it can be vigorously promoted in teaching.

5 Conclusion

In the current digital age, new media can further refine and develop research, enabling a variety of research methods and sharing them with everyone. On this basis, the exchange and collision of ideas will continue to advance, resulting in an excellent academic environment.

Conflicts of interest

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

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