

# *The Spatial Expression of "New Meticulous" Figure Painting*

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**Abstract:** Influenced by many aspects, artists at the beginning of this century have made extensive changes in the treatment of the composition, especially when dealing with spatial expression. This paper takes the "New Meticulous Figure Painting", which belongs to the category of "New Meticulous Painting", as the research object. From the perspective of spatial expression, through the analysis of representative figures and classic works, this paper focuses on the spatial expression elements in the new meticulous figure painting, and refines its overall presentation on the visual screen, trying to help understand the artistic creation techniques, concepts and connotation expressions of the "New Meticulous Painting" artists.

## **1. Introduction**

In this paper, the main purpose is to analyze the painting space expression and multiple picture forms in the "New Meticulous Figure Painting", and discuss the following three aspects: the concept of "New Meticulous Figure Painting" and painting space, the general presentation form of space expression, the detailed picture composition analysis, and the inspiration for practitioners creation. Through the image analysis and aesthetic interpretation of the classic works of "New Meticulous Figure Painting", this paper summarizes the aesthetic value, creative inspiration and contemporary significance of its spatial performance composition.

## **2. Brief Introduction of "New Meticulous Painting" Figure Painting**

The "New Meticulous Painting" is a creative experiment of traditional meticulous painting by a group of innovative young artists. At the beginning of this century, a group of cutting-edge painters called "New Meticulous Figure Painting" with Nanjing as the center set off wave in the painting world in the form of exhibitions, which was in a new breakthrough stage. It can be summarized as a new phenomenon of meticulous painting in the contemporary development. As scholar Hang Chunxiao said: "The experience of traditional Chinese painting in the past has been difficult to directly relate to today's survival experience. Today's survival experience has been cut off from nature, and we are living in an artificial world and an unnatural survival opportunity. At this time, 'New Meticulous Painting' is no longer a process of simply painting several painters to be a faction, but should become a breakthrough of Chinese painting itself. "[1]

The representative artists of "New Meticulous Figure Painting" are Xu Lei, Hang Chunhui, Gao Xi, Zhang Jian, Xu Hualing, etc. They are committed to creating works of art that not only have the essence of Chinese traditional art, but also contain the artist's unique conceptual thinking and aesthetic needs of the times. On the basis of traditional meticulous painting, adding perspective, light and shadow, color and other elements different from Chinese traditional painting is the common feature of his works. The novelty of "New Meticulous Figure Painting" is reflected in the following aspects: first, the change in creative concept, advocating "Concept First" and "Non-reappearance"; Second, the change in visual picture presentation, with "Surreal Atmosphere", "Gray Tone", "Weakened Lines" and "Rich Modern Urban Elements"; Third, the change of work expression, using metaphor and borrowing collage of cultural symbols from the East and the West.

### **3. Brief Introduction of Painting Space**

Painting space is a form of painting art means and the core of painting works. Natural space is objective and authentic. Compared with other plastic arts and natural spaces, painting space is a purely subjective virtual experience recognized by visual means, which is immaterial. It is just an artificial illusion of imaginary space that exists in the form of plane two-dimensional space and can only be perceived by vision. Shao Luoyang interprets the sense of space as "The visual sense formed by the relationship between objects in the picture and their surroundings environment. Based on the perspective principle, it shows the relationship between up and down positions, distances, front and back levels, left and right intervals and reality, so that people can get a deep sense of space in plane painting" [2]. In the process of painting, the spatial expression of painting materials in the picture is usually considered as three-dimensional immaterial existence, so we also think that painting space is the ideal embodiment of natural space. If a painter wants to convey a painting space full of thoughts, feelings and aesthetic ideals, it is necessary to process, summarize, collage and cut the natural space, so as to fulfill the painter's subjective will and aesthetic requirements for his works.

It is worth noting that the so-called spatial relationship of painting space can be produced by the interaction between two-dimensional picture and nature, and can also be understood as the concrete embodiment of the artist's internal demands.

### **4. The Characteristic Form of "New Meticulous Painting" Figure Painting Space Expression**

The changing forms of "New Meticulous Figure Painting" in the presentation of visual pictures in painting space are "Surreal Atmosphere", "Gray Tone", "Weakened Lines" and "Rich Modern Urban Elements".

#### **4.1. Surreal Atmosphere**

The innovation of mainstream meticulous painting in the last century is to integrate western classical painting ideas and elements on the basis of retaining the traditional meticulous form, in which natural colors, composition and light and shadow are the main ones. From today's point of view, we can find that the once realistic atmosphere has been gradually replaced by surrealism. Surrealism is also very popular among younger "New Meticulous Figure Painting" painters, thus gaining a very important position in the field of new meticulous painting.

For example, Zhang Jian's modeling and composition form combined and absorbed the painting ideas of Italian Renaissance artists Botticelli and Francisco on the basis of Chinese traditional figure painting in the Ming Dynasty. Especially in the scene processing, the elements commonly used in Renaissance art mode and the image elements selected by subjective aesthetic preference are

adopted, such as palm trees, fences, swimming pools, telephone poles and so on. This form of composition puts the viewer in an illusory dream that transcends time and space, resulting in a mysterious and distant hazy feeling. In *The Secret of Xiren* (Figure 1), he placed palm trees, Taihu rocks and telephone poles with personal symbols behind the main body of the picture, and placed "Xiren" in the visual center of the picture to contrast the characteristics of the main characters and create outstanding visual effects. It is also because palm trees, Taihu rocks and other elements in the picture that should not appear at the same time in the conventional atmosphere are gathered together, which gives the picture a surreal fictional space. The protagonist is holding a handkerchief with a Korean pine flowers lightly, and his expression is illusory, which seems to contain some worries and bring an illusion to the picture.

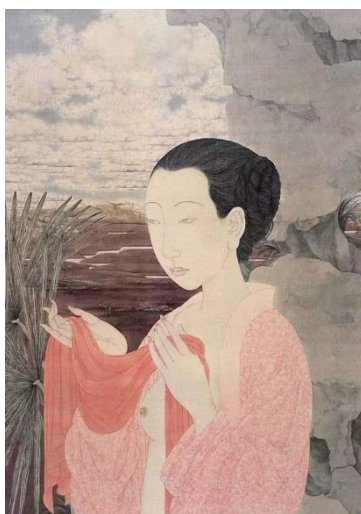


Figure 1: The Secret of Xiren.

#### 4.2. Gray Tone

Contemporary new meticulous painters still show the color characteristics of "Gray Tone" when using cold and warm tones to adjust the picture. The chaotic and gloomy visual feeling presented by the gray tone can amplify the subjective feelings placed by the artist and make the viewer feel the delicate expression of emotions in the works of art, which is particularly profound at the moment when "New Meticulous Figure Painting" prevails. Because of artists's sensitive artistic nerves, it is easier to resonate with specific emotions and present them in works through gray tones. When Xu Hualing's *"Zhi Jian II"* (Figure 2) depicts graceful young women's pictures, the delicate and soft skin color can reveal that she intends to add a light blue tones to the scarlet color of her skin to echo the whole, so that some warm tones will not break the harmonious feeling of the picture. Careful observation shows that the red color of the characters' arms and legs seem to be different. In order to describe the characteristics of lace skirt, the author subjectively intends to give more main colors to the thighs and crotch of the characters. Thus, coupled with the blue lace skirt, the feeling of the characters' clothes will be vividly displayed. This painting is also unique in the expression of hue. It is not difficult to find that the author always pays attention to the blue-gray tone of the whole picture in the use of light and shadow colors, thus maintaining the harmony of the whole picture.



Figure 2: Zhi Jian II .

### 4.3. Weakened Lines

As one of the elements of the picture, line has always been the most essential existence of Chinese painting language, and it is also the most essential feature of Chinese painting different from western painting. In the new meticulous figure painting, the painter often weaken lines. In the production line processing, Xu Hualing has formed her own characteristics. In order to show the graceful figure of young women, she abandoned the traditional methods of sketching and coloring, and tried to blur the edge lines of objects with a "boneless" painting. Her description of objects mostly started with colored pens, deliberately reducing the expressive force of lines, adding light and shadow effects, replacing lines with surfaces, and pursuing a picture effect similar to western painting. In this picture effect, subtle control of light and shadow effects was used to maintain the overall balance of the picture. Such as *Synthesis 8* (Figure 3). The weakening lines commonly used by new meticulous painters are obviously related to the fact that western sketches use faces as modeling means instead of lines to describe objects. For the rising contemporary painters in China, lines have been separated from the close relationship with verve and the literati. While the line elements in the new meticulous painting lack writing in the traditional literati paintings in China, from the perspective of western paintings, they greatly enhance the sense of modeling and expressive force.



Figure 3: Synthesis 8.

### 4.4. Rich Modern Urban Elements

In the art atmosphere of this generation in the middle and late 1970s, more modern elements appeared. Not only that, due to the uniform absorption of Chinese and Western cultures by this generation of artists, the cultural barriers between China and the West in their hearts have been

gradually broken, prompting them to pay more attention to the space of expressing subjective feelings in the process of artistic creation, and finally embody them in many of their works, from which they can really feel the full flavor of life. In Xu Hualing's *"Fragrance"* (Figure 4), the girl in the picture is wearing a tulle lace skirt, and her right hand is arranging her hair close to her neck. The blue tattoo on the back of her neck is faintly exposed behind the lace tulle dress, which exudes a strong flavor of modern elements and conveys a rebellious and mysterious image of a girl. The star pattern on the sleeve are also a popular decorative pattern in modern times. Pale yellow hair and modern fashion clothes all show distinct characteristics of the times in the picture. From Xu Hualing's female perspective, the delicate thoughts of girls vividly convey the whispers of contemporary women. These works with urban elements are different from the realistic depictions to convey emotions, but give viewers a close-up real feeling.



Figure 4: Fragrance.

## 5. Conclusions

The essence of painting art is the visual presentation behavior centered on "expression". The basic requirement of spatial expression in painting is that the constructed space includes both formal language and content expression. The concept of space is an important topic among the various factors that make up a picture, and we can also understand it as a general carrier.

This paper first interprets the "Painting Space" in the concept of space in the "New Meticulous Figure Painting" category. This paper further analyzes the characteristic expression of "New Meticulous Painting" figure painting, and deconstructs the painting language form of spatial expression in the visual picture of concrete works to the greatest extent. In this way, we can not only understand the diversity of Chinese figure painting in the context of "New Meticulous Figure Painting", but also allow practitioners to get as many ideas as possible when creating.

## References

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