

The aesthetics of daily life and its artistic reflection under consumer culture— The architectural style of postmodernism as an example

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Abstract: After the grand narrative of postmodernism is dissolved, the architectural style is mainly characterized by pluralism, imagery, ecology, etc. There are more studies on interior design in the academic community, and to a certain extent, the research on outdoor architectural styles is ignored. This paper aims to make up for the shortcomings of the academic community that the outdoor architectural style reflects the aesthetic aspects of daily life through the study of postmodern architectural styles.

1. Consumer culture and its contemporary presentation

(1) The meaning of consumer culture

Consumer culture was first born in Western countries, and the two industrial revolutions accumulated sufficient material foundations to make the West take the lead in shifting from a production society to a consumer society, and consumer culture was born. The rise of mass consumer culture in the 20th century is closely related to Fordism's large-scale industrial production method. This mode of production makes consumers dependent on consumption, and they are unable to regenerate and produce items that meet their needs. In this sense, consumer culture is also a highly technologically advanced postmodernism product.

2. The impact of contemporary consumer culture on environmental art

2.1 Environmental Artistic Motivations Under the Influence of Consumer Culture:

In the book "Consumer Society," Baudrillard points out that postmodernist societies are highly technologically developed. In this society, the technical hierarchy's level and structure determine all the object's social and cultural symbolism. Postmodernism emerged to correct the problems that arose in modernism. Since the 18th century Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the British Industrial Revolution reached their peak, people naively thought they could finally grasp the truth and finally get rid of the confinement of God and religion because technology helped people find the truth.

Postmodernists have criticized the idea that science was regarded as happiness for half a century. The reason is that this concept of "science and happiness" is reflected in art and architecture, and there is a single, patterned, and routine. At this time, the works of art were shaped for the realization of various social purposes, and they were always subordinate to the construction of the planner, which was also a common social phenomenon in modernism - the use of instrumental rationality. Instrumental rationality has indeed promoted the progress of society, and everyone in society has performed their duties and done their work, which has undoubtedly improved the efficiency of social operation. However, man is no longer a "lively" man at this time because what people produce under the service of instrumental reason, as a force of some alien, becomes a stumbling block in people's search for happiness.

People cannot tell which of these things produced under the unified model of technology is a work that condenses their efforts and is a product of mechanical reproduction. Meanwhile, due to the disappearance of the distance between the viewer and the artwork, the "aura" of these artworks has disappeared. It is also what James's theory of culture mentions: the commodification of artworks under

consumer culture (the culture, beauty, and elegance carried in the work of art have disappeared, and the creative production in it follows the logic of business); the disappearance of depth (no longer pursuing ultimate value in the interpretive sense, regardless of the so-called historicism, sublime spirit or centrism, only the pursuit of superficial intuition. Disappearing in the sense of time, the artwork presents more of a sense of space. For example, the clock building in Disneyland is only a medium for people to recall the past) ^[1]

In the field of postmodern urban architecture shifted from rational, efficient, single, unpretentious, and planned architectural styles to mixed, ephemeral, pluralistic, and architectural styles. Postmodernism believed that space should be autonomous, shaped purely from an aesthetic point of view, independent of any important social goals. ^[2]

2.2 Environmental art styles under the influence of consumer culture

1) The content carries a specific culture

Since there are several changes in postmodern architecture, the criteria for defining postmodern works are slightly blurred. Historian Mary McLeod defines the movement as "the desire to make architecture a vehicle for cultural expression." It is seen in James Stirling and Michael Wilford's *The Neue Staatsgalerie* ^[3]. They blended neoclassical elements with a hint of postmodern flare. I will show you an example created by architects James Stirling and Michael Wilford. The building is often touted as a "microcosm of postmodernism," with neoclassical ties to industrial finishes. To maintain the overall frame of the building in harmony with the surroundings, traditional elements such as warm tones and natural textures are used. The postmodern character comes from industrial and neon elements. This mixture forms a groundbreaking structure that can stand with historic buildings while boasting its flare. These works' fusion of new building materials and neoclassicism reflects that postmodernist architecture carries a particular cultural element in content.

2) A formal breakthrough in the rules

Postmodernist architecture is designed based on particular aesthetic values and principles. In contrast, postmodern architecture was intended to function like modernism. Postmodernism encouraged creativity and deviated from the rigid rules of modern ideals that determined simple, abstract, and simple shapes. As a model of postmodern fragmentation and contradictory ideals, Peter Eisenmann and Richard Trotter designed the Wexner Center for the Arts. In 1989, The Ohio State University commissioned the building to serve the visual and performing arts. Since the United States is a major breeding ground for the postmodernist movement, the SIS Building is one of the most notable examples of postmodern architecture in Europe. By combining various shapes, mediums, and themes, SIS is a formidable and daunting building that is very different from other structures in Britain, helping to define American architecture of this period. ^[3]

The formal complexity of postmodernist architecture also reflects its breakthrough in rules. Complexity can describe all postmodern works, as integrating various colors, textures, shapes, and themes form the framework for these unique architectures. For example, *The Portland Building* in Portland, Oregon, was designed by Michael Graves, was one of the first to rely on traditional materials such as reinforced concrete and fiberglass that embodied a postmodernist style. While many postmodern buildings of the time used glass to embody mysticism, Graves' work employs unique design techniques on each side of the building. ^[3]

3. Environmental art under the influence of consumer culture

3.1 Consumer ecology and environmental art

Here is the best example of China's smart building. The designers wanted to build Pearl River City into a zero-energy building, a building that would achieve energy self-sufficiency. At the beginning of the project, the designers set a high goal—zero energy consumption. For mechanical engineers, building a building that produces more energy than it consumes is their ultimate dream. Architects want to achieve their goals by harnessing sunlight and wind energy, but these two approaches provide only 2/3 of the building's electricity needs. Although Guangzhou ultimately failed to achieve zero emissions

from the building, this is a good encouragement for the further development of energy-saving technologies. As one of the fastest-growing economies globally, China is the world's second-largest energy consumer. China is the world's largest coal producer, with coal-based power generation accounting for 75% of total electricity generation.

China builds a new thermal power plant every week to meet the demand. China has now overtaken the United States to become the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide, but much of its source is not from cars or factories but buildings. The world's buildings consume 40% of the total energy. Pearl River City has abandoned fossil fuels and is stepping towards green development. When completed, Pearl River City will be the world's most energy-efficient skyscraper, which becomes a label that every architect wants to surpass. The building is undoubtedly the most ecologically valuable work of postmodernist architecture.

3.2 Personalization of consumption and environmental art

Compared with the symmetrical beauty of classicism, contemporary aesthetics emphasizes the role of ontology in the aesthetic process, emphasizing human emotions and perceptions. Contemporary Western aesthetic semiotics teaches us that beauty exists in the exchange of matter and self. Cassirer, the representative of the Aesthetic School of Western Semiotics, believes that art is the creation of form and is the creation of symbolized human emotions. Expressionist aesthetician Collingwood believed that the purpose of art is to evoke the corresponding emotions in the reader or viewer.[4]The emphasis on aesthetic individuation in these views is particularly evident in the architectural style of postmodernist societies.

The facade of the two vertical forests in Milan, Italy, is not a common glass curtain wall but is built by a total of 730 trees, 5,000 shrubs, and 11,000 herbs. This global initiative embodies the idea of an urban designer: to reduce pollution in cities. Using these two green apartments as a template, China's Liu Zhou also intends to build a vertical forest city, planning to plant 40,000 trees and add a million plants. The plants are expected to absorb 10,000 tons of carbon dioxide from the air in the future and 57 tons of pollutants, thus producing about 900 tons of oxygen. Such a personalized architectural style impacts the obscurity brought by technology to people's lives to a certain extent and establishes a "world of super-pleasure" for people. People who inhabit such a space can experience the "world of super-sensation" built up by art.

Heidegger's art opening realm refers to the "super-perceptual world"¹ constructed by art, which is different from the "virtual world" constructed by the current mass media for "ideological control" of people. The "explicit-hidden" dual world² constructed by art can break the limitations of time and space, separating the previously continuous timelines. This fractured time is intended to intersperse memory with emotional time in a linear time. It helps people get out of the quagmire they are in now, reveal the truth under cover of appearances, and get rid of the shackles of experience and habits. This "sense of separation" helps us put aside all our humble distractions and temporarily inhabit the world of art, which can cause readers to think, rather than fall into rebellious emotions. The "defamiliarization" experience brought to us by artworks prolongs our feeling process, and we can wander in the artworks to better reflect on ourselves, purify our emotions, and experience the true meaning of life. In prolonging aesthetic feelings, it is realized that time is not linear and never returns but is endless and eternally reincarnated. It is allowed people to grasp time rather than be controlled by time. In return, it relieves the pressure exerted on people by the present time. In today's postmodern society, such a personality and ecologically friendly building is undoubtedly a habitat for people's dreams.

4. Reflection

¹ The World of Transsensation: A term proposed by Marx on the basis of Hegel and Feuerbach about the principle of sensibility. If we call the perceptual world a physical world in a broad sense, then the supersensory world is a metaphysical world.

² The "explicit-hidden" dual world: The theory of "world dualization" is the theory of traditional Western philosophy on the division of two worlds, that is, the division of the world into two worlds: the "phenomenal world" and the "ontological world". Generally speaking, the "world double" is caused by the "ontology" that is centered on the constituent "concepts". It is essentially a question of "phenomenon" and "essence".

As an art, architecture is always related to the social ideology and social lifestyle of a specific historical period. Changes in ideology and lifestyle must be reflected in the field of architectural creation. There is an important term in psychology called "field." People of different classes, nationalities, occupations, and ages have different psychological needs, so there will be different fields around each of them. Even at the same level, based on experience and the intensity of education, there will be a corresponding field, and the application of this term in psychology to the field of art has formed a so-called "aesthetic field."^[3]

In today's postmodern world, in addition to paying attention to the ecological issues related to architecture, people should also be given aesthetic liberation: the creation, interpretation, and appreciation of individual architecture. Western art focuses on form, and Eastern art focuses on content. If the art of the East and the West can learn from each other, then we will be able to see richer formal changes in the architecture of the East, which is undoubtedly welfare for the citizens of the country in which we live. It is envisaged that a variety of colorful buildings will appear in China's space soon, which will break the previous considerations of architectural practicality and will undoubtedly usher in a new trend of Chinese architectural design.

Furthermore, the aesthetic diversity brought by art can dissolve the convergence of individual values brought about by the "meta-narrative"^[3] and play a good role as a bridge for constructing multiple meanings. As early as Cromwell's Preface, Hugo mentioned the close connection between the characteristics of art and the style of the present era. In the current multicultural era, aesthetic standards are always in the movement of "differentiation." Therefore, the "principle of contrasting beauty and ugliness" proposed by Hugo in the Romantic period still has reference value in today's era. Each of us has our criteria for judging, we are all constructors of our meaning, and we are powerless to judge the aesthetic standards of others, nor do we have the right to give meaning to others. In this way, the aesthetic diversity of art seems to have won us a great right to speak for us to construct our multiple dimensions of meaning. The philosophical interpretation of the "aestheticization of everyday life" by the American philosopher Richard Rorty is the "aestheticization of ethical life" with the lack of meaning as the standard of behavioral value. That is to say, the life of what we call "good" at present is not a life that conforms to a certain moral concept but a life of constant enrichment and innovation. People in this way of life are called "poets of the whole world," "city wanderers who capture the beauty of the moment," or satirists or literary critics. These people virtualize life itself into an art form in the form of a verbal narrative, thus "poetically inhabiting the earth." In this way, everyone is the constructor of discourse, not the object of the discourse construct of others. In the reverie, the micro-narrative flows, and each person can reconstruct the sense of value that belongs to the individual.

Value rationality is what people lack the most but continuously pursue at present. In the realm of the art opening, we look at things in a "no-attitude" attitude^[4], interwoven inside and outside, dissolving the scientific attitude towards things in the past, and in the art world, we explore the meaning base of the current absurd world and illuminate the original world of existence.

5. Summary

Ecological problems in postmodern society and the pursuit of the personal sense of meaning are the author's focus on the depiction in the paper. The author hopes that architecture, as one of the forms of artistic expression, occupies the city's vast space and reflects the changes in social and cultural changes. It can become a major factor in leading social reform soon in the artist's continuous efforts to reconcile science and technology with art and individual social participation in examining the changes in architectural styles.

References

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