

Research on Abstract Elements in Modern Western Art

Ziran Luo

Arts Institute, Guizhou Normal University, Guiyang, 550001 Guizhou, China

ziiran@outlook.com

Keywords: Abstract element, Fine arts, Western modern art

Abstract: Modern painting is developing in increasingly diverse directions, and research into its formal language and techniques is gradually increasing. "Deconstruction" is common in modern Abstractpainting, and many painters use this technique to enrich the linguistic expression of modern Abstractpainting. The meaning brought by "deconstruction" is unique and worth pondering. For Abstractartists, the basis of their thinking lies in the exploration of the inner and subconscious world, the deconstruction of human self-consciousness and the expression of emotions, and their efforts to create a dreamy, mysterious and transcendent artistic environment. For Abstractpainting, this transcendence lies not only in the transcendence of the language of painting, but also in the questioning and challenging of old institutions. This essay explores the influence of Eastern culture on the creation of Western Abstractartists, the essay's characterisation of re-colour painting, calligraphy, and an in-depth analysis of the Abstractcontent in Western Abstractpainting. The paper provides an exploratory analysis and study of the 'Abstract' elements in modern artworks from three perspectives: the Abstractshape of the work, the analysis of Abstractfactors, and the principles of Abstractmodelling. Using design sketches as clues, this paper explores the 'Abstraction' of modern Western paintings.

1. Introduction

Abstractpainting is a widely existing category of painting. From the birth of Abstractpainting to its development to today, the exploration and spiritual pursuit of figurative painting techniques has never stopped. Contemporary artists are exploring and researching their own forms of artistic expression[1]. Firstly, after the concept of Abstractart was established, an important clue to the development of modern art was that the meaning of Abstraction could be found or hidden or present in all styles of visual art. Secondly, new techniques can be seen in their paintings, such as Tang Yongli's Abstraction; new colours, such as the use of metallic foil by Zhang Daoxi; and new compositions, such as the analytical and recombinant use of gold and sand[2]. In modern recolour painting, painters continue to use re-techniques in their recolour compositions, and deconstruction has become an important creative idea. The complexity and variety of images in Abstractpainting, most of which have metaphorical-symbolic properties, call for a deeper exploration of the social production of the visual elements of images from the perspective of the deconstruction of painting ontology and the interpretation of texts. In particular, the unique visual art form of Abstractpainting also adds to its powerful vitality and appeal[3]. The works always reflect the changes in social times and the expression of the artist's subjective consciousness, traces of his emotions. This is particularly evident in Abstractpainting. While focusing on the study of visual elements, it is important to consider their relationship to the traditional order and context of the times, the philosophical ideas expressed in the paintings, and the anxieties and concerns about society and life. Generally speaking, all kinds of regular or irregular figures that are detached and independent from the living picture can be called Abstractfactors or Abstractpaintings[4]. Abstractfactors originate from the real-life environment, while Abstractpaintings are the product of the author's subjective refinement and generalisation of objective images. Therefore, Abstractfactors, Abstractpainting and real life are still closely related[5]. Here, we will make a new understanding of the "Abstract" factor

in modern sketching from three aspects: Abstractmodelling, analysis of Abstractfactors in works and the principle of Abstractmodelling[6]. However, the theory of empathy was limited in the face of art outside of ancient Greece and the Renaissance, so that the Abstractimpulse emerged to “extract the single thing in the external world from its impermanence and false contingency and make it eternal in an almost Abstractform. In this way, they find a resting place in the passing of phenomena”[7]. Some concretions are more than Abstractions, while some Abstractions are more than figurative things. In figurative painting, the Abstractelement is hidden in the figurative painting, and the Abstractspirit needs to be embodied through the figurative image. Like Baltis, he observes the world through the eyes of a child and interprets figurative painting with a unique vision. His art expresses an indifferent attitude towards real life, reveals the limited spiritual world of human beings and describes the spiritually disharmonious psychological state of people today [8]. As an extremely important art style and genre in modern art, Abstractionist art should be taken seriously in research. For a long time, our intuition and research on Abstractionism has been based on its special pictorial properties and the charm of its visual language. In the process of inquiring into the meaning of Western modern and contemporary art, Western Abstractart thoroughly distinguishes itself from classical art forms that aim to reproduce nature with the composition of special symbolic images, and explores new formal meanings established by the perception of Eastern art from the perspective of Western art, with the appropriate introduction of Eastern philosophy, as well as the borrowing of Chinese painting and calligraphy. The expansion of concepts and forms in contemporary Chinese art-making, then, and the links with international art forms, will guide the study of the possibilities of cutting-edge art trends.

2. The Writing Form of Western Abstract Painting

2.1 The Relationship between Western Abstract Painting and Oriental Calligraphy

As early as the early 19th century, Asian ideas of art, culture and religion began to spread to Europe and North America. European artists also tried to integrate existing modern intellectual experiences by understanding the transcendental consciousness in Asian cultures, eliminating purposeful subjective consciousness with transcendental intellectual energy in order to counter European empiricism and utilitarianism[9].” The word 'abstraction' originally meant to abandon the non-essential elements of things and extract the essential ones, as in the description of the world in a calligraphic work, both from reality and abstracted into words. For example, we all know that fruits include apples, pears, peaches, etc. We can think of fruit as the common attributes of apples, pears and peaches, and drop their respective non-essential attributes. This process of extracting essential attributes is what we call the abstraction process. The images in an 'abstract painting' are almost indistinguishable from natural objects [10]. For the artists of “abstract painting”, they no longer pursue the real reproduction of natural objects, but create through the basic elements of painting, such as point, line, surface and space, and express their profound thoughts and feelings with the simple expression of calligraphy, that is, they pursue the reality of the spiritual world. When viewers are confronted with “abstract painting” works, it is difficult to guess the artist's intentions directly from the unrecognisable shapes, but based on the message conveyed, it clearly expresses the awakening of artistic self-awareness and the strong desire to express artistic freedom.

Surreal paintings, Pop paintings express things mostly from the painter's reproduction and transformation of his own visual experience, while at the same time combining naturalism and abstraction, as well as figurative and realistic forms and characteristics of painting. The images in the pictures are mostly combinations of various popular images, both subjectively imagined and ideally created by the creators. The artistic expression is made in a half-real, half-fantasy pictorial language and fits the context of the time. All images hover on the screen between fantasy and reality, separated from concrete images, colours and imaginative compositions. The beauty characteristic of abstract forms is similar to the symbolic character of calligraphic works and the metaphorical communication of messages. Indeed, in classical painting and realistic figurative painting, abstract elements have been used to construct the picture. In realistic works, however, all

abstract elements are not represented as independent forms, but maintain a subsidiary status of primarily representing images of natural subjects. Today, we see abstract elements as aesthetic forms that are independent of shapes and natural objects. They take the calligraphic idea to be recombined or adapted, enhanced and evolved according to aesthetic and emotional needs, thus becoming superior to the realistic environment, a complement to the realistic sketch, a “new form that did not exist originally” that cannot be replaced by natural beauty, i.e. spiritual and emotional beauty. In addition, due to the similarities and differences in the characteristics of different painting materials, which in turn produce new texture effects, expressing the sense of rhythm and rhythm of life, producing a musical picture, becoming a kind of abstract beauty. In short, the use of abstract elements in figurative painting is not intended by the artist to describe the details of life, but to express the artist's subjective perception of life and to reveal the symbolic and metaphorical meaning behind real life.

2.2 Abstract Cognitive Concepts as Constituent Factors and Analysis of Abstract Concepts

The style and concept of abstract art in the West was established in the early 20th century. However, it was Cézanne's work that first saw the emergence of abstract forms in modern art. Cézanne's exploration of the formal elements of painting and the concept of structure also led Western painting to move away from the convention of reproducing natural images. This was followed by a process of figurative transformation through the evolutionary development of Picasso, whose work *The Bull* is shown in Figure 1.

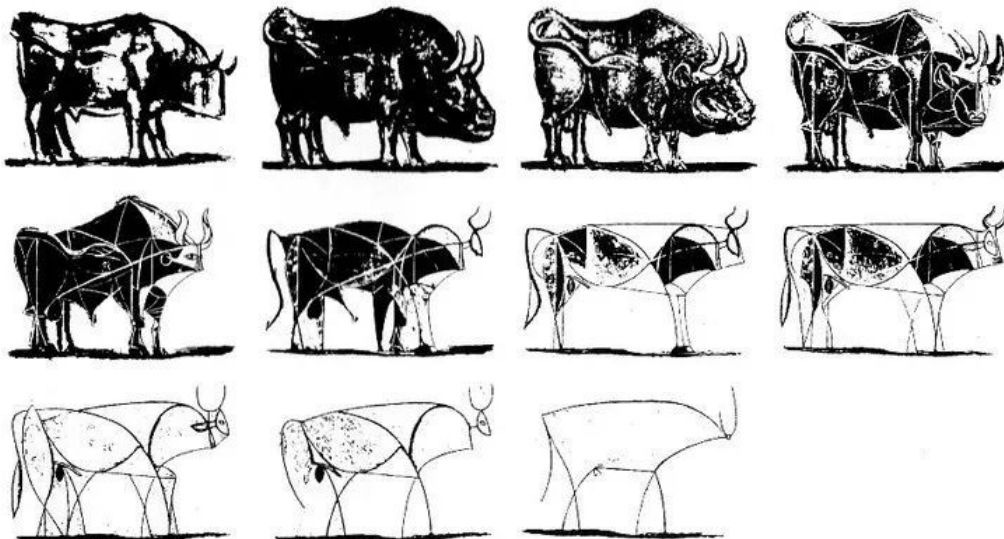


Fig.1 Picasso's the Bull Was Painted during the Period of Transition from 1932 to 1945. the Painting Shows Picasso's 'Abstract Subtraction' Process of Painting the Bull.

Over time, the series also took on different figurative characteristics, but this different look followed a developmental pattern of 'simplification by turns'. As the object of representation, the morphological features of the cow tend to be increasingly simplified, removing the parts that do not represent its characteristics. In the end, only a few lines are used to outline a figure with geometric characteristics, retaining the common features and grandeur of the bull. However, it is clearly not enough to take “the description of the specific pointers and details of micro-concepts in a highly general way and the extraction of common properties of individual things, thus obtaining the establishment of a relatively macro and summative concept” as the criterion for the final establishment of an abstract concept, which clearly has its logical starting point in physical objects and cannot match other abstract works in the face of abstractions that are completely free from figurative forms. Kandinsky, for example, based the emergence of his abstract creations on a misinterpretation of his own work: when he returned to his studio from sketching he discovered upside-down images with a unique abstract aesthetic, which in turn developed into his own work.

The artist must do his best to open up this limitation, to show the inner state of life of things and strip away the deceptive surface features. Abstractionism transcends the pain of reality and the confinement of emotions that have nowhere to be expressed. Therefore this transcendental expression in visual painting artworks inevitably takes on a visual character with anti-realistic elements and becomes a unique look with a pictorial character. If symbolist art is a departure from and a challenge to traditional art, abstract art is a subversion of traditional art, at least in terms of visual elements. It completely disrupts the traditional aesthetic experience of people and allows the viewer to experience the work as if it were deciphered. In these colours and lines, your previous understanding is constantly subverted. On the other hand, abstraction is created based on the reality of the environment. Through changes in image and colour, such an idiosyncratic picture space is created. In this environment, which is different from reality, there are no rules of perspective, no laws of vision. Everything in this environment breaks through the limits of common sense, technical norms and aesthetic requirements, and the elements of time and space are magnified or distorted to become the manifestation of a unique spiritual world. Secondly, when we use line and light to shape forms, we also use the abstract factors in sketching, such as the harmonious use of point, line, surface, form, light, colour and texture, the contrast between strength and weakness in the picture, the depth and simplicity of the carving, the delicacy and roughness of the brushwork, etc. However, we are still in an unconscious state, seeking the chance of modelling and dealing with the relationship between abstract factors, which can easily cause confusion, but It is how we find order in the chaos that is most important. According to the American art historian Arnason: "Abstraction, as a term, is used in art that does not represent nature. The problem is that it is used freely in all art. In these arts, the subject is seen as something added or distorted to emphasise the form or expression. The term is often used loosely in a certain kind of Fauvist and Cubist painting where its abstract character is not prominent, as in Cubist sculpture. However, it cannot be seen directly as abstract."

3. Contemporary Significance and Value of Abstract Painting

3.1 Talking about "Abstraction" in Modern Sketch through Design Sketch

Design sketching is a European and American system of design sketching that emerged from industrial design and modern and post-modern painting in the 20th century. Its main aim is to emphasise visual intuition and to create novel graphics and new visual stimuli. It transcends subject and content, using all or part of it, the intentional depiction of interiors and exteriors, the random or accidental shapes and forms of all visible natural objects as the material and method of creation. Originality is its main idea, so it is multi-layered and multi-channeled in its way of thinking and looking. New images come from the artist's unique thinking and discovery, and the colourful material world provides an inexhaustible supply of creative material and visual information that becomes a pointing abstract work through the creator's processing." Nature is a great designer". When we look at natural objects, nature creates for us countless beautiful figures and colourful colours that deeply stimulate our imagination. As a result, the abstract painting structure appears to be organised or impermanent, symmetrical or asymmetrical, dynamic or static. In colour it shows character, contrast and comprehensiveness. It is perceived by our vision and, when it is expressed, can also be reconstructed after disintegration in a visual appearance that reflects the spiritual allegory of the abstract work.

The visual form of natural forms will lead us to think, imagine and create. When we look at natural images in a particular way and manipulate them unusually, new visual images emerge, with unusual materials, textures, colours, structures and mysterious images that defy common sense. Unnoticed areas of the image become active and prominent. Similarly, we can approach our images in the same way, consciously examining the various elements in our sketches from different angles, and then we too will discover new opportunities in the underlying graphics. The aim of this is to extract the organic components and features of the original shape, to continually expand, evolve, develop, destroy and reconfigure it so that fresh ideas are liberated from the existing image. It is a

kind of open brainstorming through which our subconscious will be fully exposed and straightforwardly expressed. The perception of form exists not only in the conscious mind, but also in the subconscious and even in the unconscious. If our perception of form remains in a single realm of thought, it is difficult to discover and reveal more of the original core that is more suited to the inner spirit, and it is difficult to find the gene for painting and creation. Abstract expression is in fact the development and exploitation of the subconscious. In training the creator's sense of rhythm, Professor Bauhaus and Mr Ito have students experience dance according to the March cycle, mimicking the rhythm with their bodies so that their thinking and movement go hand in hand to put a sense of rhythm on paper. They also had students write as fast as they could, creating the odd effect of creating a highly rhythmic resemblance and continuity of shapes. These are all ways of using the subconscious mind for abstract creation.

3.2 Writing Connotation in Contemporary Concrete Painting

Modern art seeks to create material through the search for calligraphy, conveying meaning through written strokes loaded with personal emotion. Examples include artists such as Kazuo Shiraga and Yuichi Inoue and Franzkline. In addition, the emergence of abstract painting marks a rejection of classical forms of painting, shifting painting from the reshaping of deep space back to the expression of flat space, committing to the visual purity to re-explore the language of painting and embody the subjectivity of vision. However, the high level of obsession with three-dimensional space in contemporary Chinese figurative painting has, on the one hand, limited the expressive power of painting to a certain extent, and on the other hand, the independence of the material itself tends to become a subordinate to line and colour, becoming a depiction devoid of creativity. In the context of contemporary art, the application of writing also presents a multi-dimensional vision, such as the form of writing, the presentation of brush and ink, and the spiritual connotation of writing. Such as Shang Yang's "Dong Qichang Plan" series, which is called the new representational painting. As shown in Figure 2. Combined with the abstract brushwork and texture of image writing, it creates symbols and diagrams that show the confluence of present and historical time factors.



Fig.2 "Dong Qichang Project-2" by Shang Yang, 2003, Oil Painting, Spray Painting and Acrylic on Paper

Moreover, his creation concept was deeply inspired by the tradition of Chinese literati painting, especially in the Yuan Dynasty, when literati painting applied calligraphy to the field of painting, and the traditional concept of "calligraphy and painting have the same origin" of Chinese painting also showed the internal connection between calligraphy and painting. In a way, the traces of writing are also a reflection of the artist's creative state of mind, painting in the manner of calligraphy. such as "writing carelessly without seeking similarity in shape, and writing with ease in mind". Shangyang aims to embody the writing nature of the inherent creativity of Chinese culture, Through the combination of abstract patterns with the spirit of oriental culture and pictorial forms, it

conveys the individual's renewed search for the relationship between man and nature in the current historical context, as well as the concept of “unity of heaven and man”, which calls for the harmonious coexistence of man and nature.

China's art, including Chinese painting and Chinese calligraphy, derives from a long history of cultural accumulation, and the interest in its writing is at the heart of calligraphy. The variation of calligraphic styles is founded on the aesthetic pursuits and taste of the calligraphic artist. Calligraphic works are to the layman some beautiful words and symbols, and the expressive nature of calligraphy itself is its beauty. At the same time, the art of calligraphy in different periods was disturbed by the circumstances and aesthetic followings of the times. However, in contrast to Western painting, especially abstract painting, the art of calligraphy and painting in China is not controlled by the form of the picture (mainly the 'intentional form'). This is because before the emergence of Western abstract painting, its painting tradition had a major emphasis on reduction and reproduction, and in particular the development of perspective as a long-term role for realistic painting. The requirement to achieve maximum visual expression on a flat surface while still strictly following the rules of calligraphic form was not enough to carry the demands of the new dimension. Thus, mixed media painting emerged, where the material was no longer an appendage to the technique and its independent expressive power was more widely recognised. As far as the use of materials in contemporary easel painting is concerned, Pierre Sourage is one of the leaders of the material school. A leader of the material school and a non-formalist painter, his work cannot be bypassed in any way. Pierre Sourage's use of materials is a reflection of his work. His use of materials reflects the full play of the materiality of things, his focus on the materials themselves, and thus the dissolution of the meaning of the work. The pure nature of the material is brought to the fore. It is true that the emancipation of the material of painting eliminates the illusion that art itself enhances the sublimity of the subject and the uniqueness of art itself, as well as the illusion of creating illusions on the screen to channel divinity. Art is no longer the creation of illusions and phantasms. Achieving multidimensional creation. Eastern culture has a broad and profound connotation. Whether it is the abstract expressionist painters Franzkline or Pierre Soulages, Tapiés, or the artists of the East. All of them were influenced by Eastern thought to create their own art. For contemporary Chinese artists, it is important that they fully understand and discern the strengths of Eastern cultural resources and how to apply them to their own work. For example, Chinese culture emphasises the combination of natural elements with words. In addition, we can also think in terms of the inherent relationship between the energy flow of our own bodies and the universe, which may create a new possibility for painting. It would also have extraordinary significance and value for contemporary Chinese art, especially abstract painting.

4. Conclusions

In the context of globalisation, calligraphy has also become a shared resource between Eastern and Western cultures. For contemporary Chinese art, although writing is a better way to reflect the independent character of the subject, it is undoubtedly of great importance to contemporary art creation as a form of artistic expression. Through the overall understanding and research of abstract painting, it is found that there are many omissions and understandings of related knowledge by previous generations. It is evident that the study of a particular type of art or work requires an extremely in-depth understanding and study of the relevant knowledge. Abstract painting not only has a novel and rich composition of images, but also the presence of an unpredictable spiritual element. In the Chinese cultural context, calligraphy is at the heart of writing, an activity that regulates the body's breathing and circulation of energy, and is of great significance to abstract creation. In the 20th century, the most typical way in which Western abstract painting has sought creative support from Eastern cultures is through the inspiration of writing, which has achieved a high degree of unity with painting. Explore the modern discovery of orthodox and unorthodox artistic expression objects, grasp the typification and formatting of modern schools and masters' language and style, and find inspiration and ideas from them.

References

- [1] Zhou G. Missionaries' impact on the formation of modern art in Zimbabwe[J]. a case study of Cyrene and Serima art works. 2017.56(12):1-3.
- [2] Song B. The Application of Traditional Cultural Elements in Modern Ceramic Art Design[J]. Clausius Scientific Press, 2021(3):4-8.
- [3] Zhang Y. Modern Art Design System Based on the Deep Learning Algorithm[J]. Journal of Interconnection Networks, 2022, 22(Supp05):6-10.
- [4] Hao J, Xue W. Study on the Application of Mongolian Cultural Elements in Mascot Design[J]. Architectural development research, 2021, 5(2):5-8.
- [5] Xue J, Architecture S O, University S. The Application of Abstract Mindset in Modern Architecture Design[J]. Urbanism and Architecture, 2019,65(35):12-16.
- [6] Singh S. The Politics of Aesthetics of Tara Books' The London Jungle Book by Bhajju Shyam[J]. International Research in Children's Literature, 2022, 15(1):66-78.
- [7] Liu B. On the Absorption and Application of Folk Art Elements in Modern Art Design[J]. 2019,612(10):20.
- [8] Correl M. Montana Modernist: Redefining Western Art [J]. Montana State University, 2019,51(52):6-13.
- [9] Yamamura M. ART 3700: The politics of display, the method of non-western art [J]. 2021,62(023):8-14
- [10] Kruger E A. The identity of Western art music students in higher education institutions in South Africa: a narrative method [J]. University of Pretoria, 2019,33(20):13-19.
- [11] Zhang Yu. Research on the Development Trend of Western Art History Based on Big Data Technology [J]. Journal of Physics: a series of conferences. Published, 2020,1648 (4):6-11.