

Exploration on the Decorative Language in Lacquer Painting

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ABSTRACT

In the current context of diversified aesthetic appreciation in painting, various cultural forms have had a great impact on the development of modern Chinese lacquer painting, and the forms of artistic language have also shown diversification. However, it cannot be denied that with the development of the times and the impact of various artistic concepts, the expression of decorative language in modern lacquer painting is becoming weaker and weaker. This article starts with lacquer painting becoming an independent art form, takes the development status of modern Chinese lacquer painting and modern lacquer painting theory as the basis, helps people understand that the development of modern lacquer painting is a diversified expression through the form of decorative language in modern lacquer painting, and deeply explores the artistic direction of modern Chinese lacquer painting.

Keywords: *Modern lacquer painting, Decoration, Art language, Manifestation, Diversification.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early 20th century, the older generation of lacquer artists embarked on a difficult exploration path towards the development of modern lacquer painting in search of a new path for lacquer art. Taking advantage of the spring breeze of the international lacquer art movement, lacquer painting finally appeared as an independent form at the 6th National Art Exhibition in 1984. The formal establishment of lacquer painting not only expanded the expressive power of modern Chinese painting, but also enabled Chinese artists to rediscover tradition and find successful examples of "modern expression" starting from their homeland. For a while, the development of lacquer painting was like mushrooms after rain, and more and more artists joined the lacquer painting family. However, amidst the joy, many problems have also become increasingly apparent. Compared with traditional Chinese painting and oil painting, which have undergone thousands of years of historical sedimentation, modern Chinese lacquer painting is still in its infancy and faces many difficulties in its development. There are endless debates about how to develop modern Chinese lacquer painting in the future. Everyone will focus more on the painting

quality of lacquer painting, and in the process of development, they will subconsciously de-decoratize, making the expression of decorative language in modern lacquer painting weaker and weaker.

Since the establishment of the Lacquer Painting Art Committee in 2001, in order to promote the development of lacquer painting art, the scholars have been thinking about the relationship between decoration and painting. However, until 2022, during the academic seminar on "Characteristics and Development Trends of Chinese Lacquer Painting Art in the New Era" held by the Lacquer Painting Art Committee of the China Artists Association, people were still discussing the issue of lacquer painting style, which precisely indicates that the style of lacquer painting is not obvious. For modern Chinese lacquer painting, the most crucial and crucial task is to understand what the true artistic language charm of lacquer painting is.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF DECORATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LACQUER PAINTING

Decorative style is one of the most common forms of expression in lacquer painting art, which is limited by the materials and craftsmanship of lacquer, as well as influenced by various historical and realistic factors. The decorative language of lacquer painting is a characteristic of lacquer painting. Just like the surnames that everyone has, decorative language is something carried in the blood of lacquer painting.

Lacquer painting itself does not have many forms and styles to refer to in its painting expression language. Therefore, in the early stages of development, the concept of "painting" was not very clear, and the selection of themes and expression techniques did not escape the strong decorative atmosphere. Taking more than 120 lacquer paintings at the 6th National Art Exhibition as an example, these works are almost all based on still life themes, with a preference for decorative elements in style. During this period, lacquerware works tended to be decorative mainly because most of the lacquerware creators at that time were craftsmen in traditional lacquerware design and production factories, and their works had a strong decorative style invisibly. Therefore, for a longer period of time, the aesthetic mainstream of lacquer painting tends to be more towards decorative creation. For a particular type of painting, it is not always a good thing for one style to dominate, but excessive negation and abandonment are also a major mistake. The expression and position of decorative language are inseparable from the material and craftsmanship of lacquer, as well as the historical origins of traditional folk art such as lacquer art. Simply denying and rejecting decorative forms that best reflect the language characteristics of lacquer painting, and instead seeking other forms of expression, is extremely detrimental to the development of contemporary lacquer painting. In a sense, the reason that lacquer art can be passed down from generation to generation without being engulfed by the diversified development of modern art is due to its unique charm.

3. INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF DECORATIVE LANGUAGE IN MODERN LACQUER PAINTING

In the development and innovation process of modern lacquer painting, people cannot blindly pursue short-term effects, but should continuously innovate and practice repeatedly during the development process. The early forms of modern Chinese lacquer painting were mainly small sitting screens and lacquer hanging screens arranged on desks. It developed into the 1920s and 1930s mainly by copying lacquer symbols or painting techniques. In her work "The History of Yangzhou Lacquerware", Chang Bei recorded the lacquer connected screens of the Yangzhou Museum from the late Qing Dynasty to the Minguo period. These screens all use the techniques of Chinese painting to express the content of the picture, or transplant the theme of Chinese painting to the decorative patterns on the surface of lacquerware, integrating traditional painting and lacquerware decoration. Subsequently, with the participation of painters such as Lei Guiyuan, Li Zhiqing, and Shen Fuwen, as well as the promotion of changes in concepts and the environment of the times, the connection between traditional Chinese lacquer art and modern lacquer painting became increasingly close. This period also marked an important turning point in the development of lacquer painting from being attached to traditional lacquer objects to modern lacquer painting.

With the efforts of the older generation of artists, by the 1950s and 1960s, the development of lacquer art had shifted from practical objects to modern lacquer painting with a focus on aesthetics. In the context of the times, integrating lacquer art with decorative styles has become a unanimous choice for everyone. In the 1970s and 1980s, lacquer paintings represented by "Water Splashing Festival" emerged in art exhibitions, gaining dual recognition for the theme and decoration of lacquer painting. The impact of decorative language greatly influenced the painting style of lacquer painting, sparking a wave of lacquer painting creation. At the same time, some colleges and universities have also begun to combine lacquer art with frescoes, opening the way for lacquer painting to decorate public spaces. However, due to the excessive emphasis on decoration in some works, many people confuse lacquer painting with decorative painting. Artists have always been committed to treating lacquer painting as a form of art that is independent of the forest of art. Some lacquer

painters believe that decorative style lacquer paintings occupy too much space for the development of lacquer painting. Therefore, as time goes on, some lacquer artists subconsciously reject the decorative nature of lacquer painting and move towards a de-decorative development.

In the context of de-decoration, lacquer painting has conducted research on the issue of painting quality, and the language of lacquer painting has been expanded. However, at the same time, there has also been the "other painting types" appearance. Lacquer painting should have its own unique way of expression, and cannot go against the development of lacquer painting. Instead, it should focus on expressing things it cannot express, but to maximize its advantages and showcase the charm that other painting types do not possess. From a long-term perspective, lacquer painting artists can fully utilize the advantages of lacquer painting and explore various styles and styles. It is worth congratulating that in recent years, more lacquer painting artists have explored and tried various forms and styles of expression at lacquer painting exhibitions, and the Chinese lacquer painting industry is gradually developing towards diversification. In addition to decorative styles, other styles also have a considerable number of creators, such as realistic and abstract styles, and a large number of excellent lacquer paintings have been produced. The continuous growth of the modern lacquer painting creative team and the expansion of its artistic language will undoubtedly promote the prosperity of contemporary lacquer painting. Modern lacquer painting, which integrates modern spirit and aesthetic consciousness, will also break the shackles of tradition, seek a balance between modern life and art, occupy a place in today's increasingly diversified artistic creation, and achieve a leap from quantity to quality.^[2]

4. DECORATIVE LANGUAGE IN LACQUER PAINTING DOES NOT REPRESENT DECORATIVE PAINTING

The definition of "decoration" actually goes beyond its own meaning. It can be said to have spirituality and abstraction, as well as expressiveness and realism. Decorative lacquer painting is a matter of style, a manifestation of decorative elements, a means and expression method that can form different levels of images, abstract images, realistic images, and even convey emotions through concrete representation. It not

only emphasizes the formal beauty and decorative nature of painting, but also places greater emphasis on the thoughts, emotions, and unique personalities of lacquer painters. In decorative language, lacquer painters express their emotions, explore the rich connotations of humanity, and have a profound and unique feeling towards that era, which makes their works unique.

As a pure form of painting, lacquer painting's decorative style is only a part of its development process and does not represent decorative painting. If confused, it can easily lead to theoretical confusion and loss of direction. Some decorative lacquer paintings have the problem of being detached from life during creation, decorating for the sake of decoration, losing the pursuit of decorative language, or using the flat composition of colors and patterns to replace decorative language, losing the basic characteristics of painting; Or it may be that during the creative process, the issue of decorative language "degree" is not grasped, and excessive emphasis is placed on the formal composition of decorative beauty, resulting in the loss of the essential purpose of creation. Each period has its own unique and distinctive artistic style. Modern art has both a modern style and a unique spiritual connotation, embodying the unique cultural characteristics of modern times.

5. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF DECORATIVE LANGUAGE IN LACQUER PAINTING CREATION

At the beginning of the independence of lacquer painting, there was still a large gap in the combination of techniques and painting language that needed to be filled in practice. In the 1920s, Mr. Li Zhiqing based himself on tradition, crossed to Fusang in the east, and finally integrated and analyzed traditional lacquer art techniques. He completed a systematic process model textbook, laying the foundation for creating the decorative language of Chinese lacquer painting art; Mr. Qiao Shiguang has made outstanding contributions to the development of modern Chinese lacquer painting, perfectly integrating traditional lacquer techniques and modern painting language in his works, and expanding the expression of decorative styles in modern Chinese lacquer painting. The core expression of lacquer painting lies in its own materials, techniques, and special visual language, which is different from decorative patterns as attachments and other forms of painting. Nowadays,

lacquer painting decoration has many forms of language expression, not limited to exaggerated flat shapes. The combination of material language and painting should be the content we need to deeply express and explore. In the trend of increasingly clear development prospects, lacquer painting artists are constantly interpreting the decorative style of lacquer painting in a new way, endowing them with new souls with unique insights.

5.1 Reconstructing Decorative Images of Imagery

The creation of modern Chinese lacquer painting is essentially a passive combination and absorption of traditional Chinese lacquer techniques and decorative painting patterns and colors. The concept of modern art has shifted people's understanding of lacquer art from the material and cultural fields to the spiritual and cultural fields. In the process of artistic creation, this concept helps to consciously transform unconscious craft language into aesthetically meaningful spiritual language, and introduce the connotation of lacquer painting into a spiritual level different from traditional lacquer craft techniques, thus achieving the reconstruction of aesthetic consciousness in the ideal state. The artistic images in painting ultimately come from natural images, which are the aesthetic expressions of creators in secondary creation based on their understanding and extraction of natural things, possessing a unique beauty of imagery. The characters in Fan Xiao's works not only integrate the characteristics of traditional Chinese painting and folk New Year paintings in terms of form, but also have a certain decorative style. In "Feipeng Xingzi · Fanhuajin", the unique character images are vividly combined with the patterns in the painting, borrowing the decorative style of traditional Chinese murals and reinterpreting the image of ancient paintings from a modern perspective; In terms of the technical expression of lacquer art, it draws inspiration from the popular technique of inlaying mother-in-law in the Song and Yuan dynasties, seamlessly combining the gorgeous luster of mother-in-law materials with the density and interest of layout, so as to better express the original idea.

5.2 Decorative Composition with a Unique Perspective

The decorative aspect in lacquer paintings is not only reflected in the reconstructed form, but also in the application of picture composition. No matter

what form of painting is used or what painting materials are used, composition is very important and also the key to ensuring the complete expression of the entire painting. When creating composition, it is necessary to consider not only the connotation and transmission method of the work, but also to better adapt to the form of lacquer painting.^[9] Planarization, regularity, and orderliness are the main characteristics of lacquer painting composition. In addition to pure decorative composition such as level up and vertical composition, the form of composition also includes sensory composition, such as inspiration based semi abstract composition. Wang Heju's "Gulangyu" is a typical layered composition, with houses at the foot of the mountain and trees in the distance, and a view of sailboats on the sea in the distance. With a myriad of atmospheres in mind, the beautiful scenery of the river and mountains is fully displayed, breaking the limitations of perspective. Houses and trees overlap without appearing crowded, and sailboats and houses complement each other. The main and secondary rhythms of the picture are appropriate, and the advantages of layered composition are fully utilized. Tang Qunwei's "Whispering in the Bamboo Grove" uses personalized language to interpret the artistic conception of the picture, expresses emotions from a unique perspective, and aligns with the decorative context of modern lacquer painting, making it reflect the unique artistic charm of lacquer painting at the decorative level. Although planarization is the main feature of lacquer painting decorative composition, it does not mean that the composition in lacquer painting decorative language must conform to the characteristics of planarization. Breaking the concept of time and space in composition, not limited by conventional conventions, is also a commonly used technique in lacquer painting composition. Wang Jing's "Walking with Dreams" breaks free from the constraints of objective natural logic on composition, combining images that do not conform to natural concepts, depicting the continuity of time and space, and expanding the scope of space.

5.3 Decorative Color That Conveys Emotions Through Color

The decorative nature of lacquer painting is also reflected in its color. The application of decorative colors in lacquer painting is not limited by objective colors, breaking the constraints of space in the picture. It can even make various expressions

for the needs of the picture and composition. In lacquer painting creation, the simplicity of color, the contrast of color blocks, and the fun of planarization are very important. Zheng Liwei's "Dragging the Net" divides a painting into two parts: black and red. The contrast between vermilion and pitch black is used to subjectively summarize the color of the painting. The pitch black represents the depth of the sea, while vermilion symbolizes the bright and brilliant fish. The stability of pitch black highlights the liveliness of vermilion, creating an extraordinary and unconventional conception, yet cleverly showcasing the artistic personality of lacquer painting. The strong contrast between colors and surfaces in the picture creates a decorative effect, and the melody of the fish movement is also highly decorative. The action of the fisherwoman pulling the net is also a slightly Zen inspired stroke in the work. Liang Yuan showcased the distinctive feature of decorative art in terms of color extraction. "Building Block Fragments" uses subjective forms and colors to construct the context, with large blocks of green and red contrasting to create a unique visual effect. Huang Siqu's "Wen" uses large areas of red and black color blocks to express the fun and artistic conception of the picture in a flat form.

6. CONCLUSION

Breaking free from lacquer art and becoming an independent painting art with decorative style as the mainstream style is a necessary path for the historical development of lacquer painting, and it is also a choice made by Chinese lacquer painters after a century of Western learning impact. In the current context of diversified aesthetic appreciation in painting, various cultural forms have had a great impact on the development of modern Chinese lacquer painting. Forcibly inheriting in a closed state cannot truly unleash its charm. If lacquer painting wants to establish its own language system, decorative language is indispensable, and the decorative language of modern lacquer painting art is a painting language endowed by the new era, different from previous decorative arts. Exploring the changes and development of decorative lacquer painting, promoting the establishment of modern language in lacquer painting, and constructing a diversified development of modern lacquer painting are the urgent tasks for the development of lacquer painting.

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