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Localized Aesthetic Construction and Contemporary Aesthetic Crisis of Comprehensive Material Painting

Ru Xia

College of Fine Arts, Shangqiu Normal University, Shangqiu, Henan, 476000, China

ABSTRACT
In the contemporary artistic context intertwined with globalization and cultural diversity, comprehensive material painting, with its open material language and innovative expression forms, has become a highly dynamic art category in Chinese contemporary art. Since its introduction into China, this art form has gone through a developmental process from imitation and reference, independent exploration to localized construction, gradually breaking away from the constraints of Western modernist artistic paradigms, taking root in the soil of fine traditional Chinese culture, and constructing an aesthetic system with Chinese cultural characteristics. However, in the process of rapid development, comprehensive material painting is confronted with crises such as vague aesthetic cognition, lack of cultural connotation, prevalence of formalism, and chaotic aesthetic standards. From three dimensions—the return of traditional aesthetic spirit, the innovation of local material language, and the innovation and expansion of aesthetic connotation—this paper sorts out the path of localized aesthetic construction of comprehensive material painting, analyzes its current aesthetic deficiencies and creative dilemmas, and puts forward strategies for reconstructing a localized contemporary aesthetic system. It is hoped that this will help Chinese comprehensive material painting break through development bottlenecks and demonstrate Chinese cultural spirit and aesthetic value in the global artistic pattern.

KEYWORDS
Comprehensive material painting; Localization; Aesthetic construction; Aesthetic crisis; Contemporary art

In the contemporary artistic context intertwined with globalization and cultural diversity, comprehensive material painting, characterized by the openness of its material language and the innovation of its expression forms, has become a highly dynamic art category in Chinese contemporary art. It breaks through the single expression paradigm of traditional painting centered on brush and ink, color, and form, transforms the material itself into a core aesthetic carrier, and realizes the expansion and innovation of painting language. Since its introduction into China, comprehensive material painting has experienced a developmental process from imitation and reference, independent exploration to localized construction, gradually breaking away from the constraints of Western modernist artistic paradigms, taking root in the soil of fine traditional Chinese culture, and exploring its own aesthetic system and value core. However, in the process of rapid development, comprehensive material painting also faces many crises such as vague aesthetic cognition, lack of cultural connotation, and prevalence of formalism. How to construct an aesthetic system with both local spirit and contemporary characteristics and get rid of aesthetic dilemmas has become a core proposition for the development of contemporary Chinese comprehensive material painting.

1 The Path of Localized Construction of Contemporary Aesthetic Cognition in Comprehensive Material Painting

The construction of aesthetic cognition in comprehensive material painting is neither a simple transplantation of Western artistic language nor a mechanical reproduction of traditional painting aesthetics. Instead, in the contemporary cultural context, it takes material language as the link to realize the in-depth integration of traditional aesthetic spirit and contemporary artistic expression, and constructs an aesthetic system with Chinese cultural characteristics and contemporary features. This construction process unfolds in an orderly manner around three dimensions: the return of artistic spirit, the localization of material language, and the innovation of aesthetic connotation.

1.1 The Contemporary Return of Traditional Aesthetic Spirit

After thousands of years of accumulation, traditional Chinese painting aesthetics has formed core aesthetic concepts such as "vivid spirit and rhyme", "empty artistic conception", "harmony between man and nature", and "expressing spirit through form". It emphasizes the expression of spiritual connotation and the creation of emotional artistic conception in artistic creation, rather than mere formal imitation. Since the 20th century, Western modernist and post-modernist artistic trends have poured into China. As an important form of Western modern art, the early development of comprehensive material painting was deeply influenced by abstract expressionism, conceptual art, and formalism. Most works focused on formal experiments and conceptual expression, ignoring the injection of local cultural spirit, and showing the characteristics of aesthetic rootlessness.

"With the conscious awakening of Chinese contemporary art, comprehensive material painting has gradually

embarked on the path of returning to traditional aesthetic spirit. Artists have deeply realized that the innovation of any art form cannot be separated from the nourishment of traditional culture, and artistic creation divorced from the foundation of local culture will eventually degenerate into an empty formal game". Hegel proposed that "beauty is the sensuous presentation of reason". The material beauty of comprehensive material painting is not a simple presentation of physical properties, but a sensuous externalization of the artist's aesthetic concepts, cultural cognition, and spiritual pursuit. Contemporary comprehensive material painting artists integrate traditional aesthetic spirit into material creation, and interpret the aesthetic pursuit of "vivid spirit and rhyme" and create an ethereal and distant Oriental artistic conception through the texture, quality, and form of materials.

This return is not retroconservative, but a contemporary transformation of traditional aesthetic spirit. Artists are no longer limited to the brush and ink conventions of traditional painting, but take comprehensive materials as the medium, integrate the spirit of "freehand brushwork", the pursuit of "artistic conception", and the beauty of "harmony" into creation, allowing material language to carry Oriental philosophical thoughts and cultural feelings. Works are no longer imitations of Western formal language, but take local culture as the core, realizing the transformation from "formal imitation" to "spiritual expression", and laying a solid cultural foundation for the contemporary aesthetic cognition of comprehensive material painting.

1.2 The Innovative Application of Local Material Language

Materials are the core aesthetic carrier of comprehensive material painting, and the selection and application of materials directly determine the aesthetic characteristics and cultural attributes of works. Traditional painting regards materials as auxiliary tools for modeling and color, while comprehensive material painting endows materials with independent aesthetic value, making the material itself the core of artistic expression. In the process of localized aesthetic construction, the excavation and innovative application of local material language have become a key link.

Early Chinese comprehensive material painting mainly used Western painting materials such as oil paint, acrylic, metal, and plastic. The material language showed obvious Western characteristics and lacked local cultural recognition. With the in-depth exploration of localization, artists have turned their attention to unique traditional materials in China. Local materials such as rice paper, ink, bark paper, silk, linen, summer cloth, ramie, ceramics, and wood have been widely used in the creation of comprehensive material painting. These materials carry profound historical and cultural heritage and have inherent Oriental aesthetic characteristics. The warmth of rice paper, the mistiness of ink, the simplicity of linen, and the thickness of summer cloth are themselves material carriers of traditional Chinese aesthetics.

Artists deeply explore the unique attributes of local materials, break the boundaries of traditional material use, and endow materials with new visual forms and aesthetic connotations through various techniques such as collage, stacking, dipping, burning, and weaving. Local materials are no longer auxiliary carriers of traditional painting, but transformed into artistic language with independent aesthetic value, combined with contemporary artistic concepts, forming an aesthetic form with both traditional texture and contemporary flavor. The localized transformation of material language not only enriches the visual expression form of comprehensive material painting, but also endows works with distinct local cultural symbols, becoming a core feature distinguishing Chinese comprehensive material painting from Western comprehensive material painting.

1.3 The Innovation and Expansion of Aesthetic Connotation

The localized aesthetic construction of Chinese comprehensive material painting has always kept pace with the times. On the basis of inheriting traditional aesthetic spirit, it constantly innovates aesthetic connotation and highlights the contemporary value of contemporary art. The creation of contemporary Chinese comprehensive material painting should not only carry cultural traditions, but also respond to contemporary propositions and express the spiritual demands, emotional experiences, and cultural identity of contemporary people.

Contemporary comprehensive material painting breaks through the aesthetic limitations of traditional painting, integrates various art forms such as easel painting, sculpture, installation, and image with open material language, and realizes the cross-border integration of artistic language. Its aesthetic connotation is no longer limited to the traditional "creation of artistic conception" and "interest of brush and ink", but expanded to the diversified expression of contemporary life, social changes, ecological environment, and cultural identity. Artists take materials as the medium, integrate personal life experience, national cultural memory, and contemporary spiritual features into works, making comprehensive material painting a visual carrier of contemporary social culture.

This innovation of aesthetic connotation not only adheres to the local cultural position, but also has a global perspective. In the context of globalization, comprehensive material painting constructs the cultural identity of Chinese contemporary art with localized aesthetic expression, breaks the monopoly of Western artistic discourse, and realizes the external communication of local aesthetic culture. The aesthetic cognition of contemporary comprehensive material painting is no longer a closed local tradition, but an organic integration of tradition and contemporary, local and global, forming an inclusive, innovative, and contemporary aesthetic system.

2 Aesthetic Deficiencies and Creative Crises of Contemporary Chinese Comprehensive Material Painting

Although comprehensive material painting has achieved remarkable results in localized aesthetic construction, in the process of rapid development, affected by multiple factors such as the dominance of international modern artistic language, the utilitarian orientation of the market, and the cognitive deviation of artists, there are still many aesthetic deficiencies and creative crises, which seriously restrict the improvement of its artistic quality and long-term development.

2.1 Vague Local Cultural Identity Under the Dominance of International Artistic Concepts

Influenced by contemporary modernist and post-modernist art for a long time, some Chinese comprehensive material painting artists have fallen into an aesthetic misunderstanding, blindly benchmarking international artistic forms and standards, and taking Western artistic paradigms as the only aesthetic criteria. This artistic mentality leads to their creation ignoring local cultural traditions, blindly imitating Western formal languages such as abstract expressionism, conceptual art, and minimalism, and works showing obvious Westernized characteristics.

Such works lack a local cultural core and are only simple reproductions and element stacking of Western schemas, concepts, and techniques. Although they seem to have an "international" appearance, they are actually empty, lacking the spiritual depth of Western art and losing the aesthetic characteristics of local culture. In terms of aesthetic cognition, they one-sidedly deny the traditional Chinese painting aesthetic system, cut off the cultural connection between tradition and contemporary, leading to vague cultural identity of works and loss of the spiritual root of local art. This Westernized aesthetic cognition makes comprehensive material painting fall into the dilemma of "following and imitating", and it is difficult to form an independent local art system with aesthetic value.

2.2 Prevalence of Formalism Leading to the Misunderstanding of "Materials for Materials' Sake"

Comprehensive material painting takes material beauty as its core aesthetic feature. The use of materials should serve the expression of the theme of the work and the creation of aesthetic artistic conception, realizing the organic unity of materiality and painterliness, form and connotation. However, in actual creation, some artists fall into the misunderstanding of formalism, overpursuing the novelty, complexity, and visual impact of materials, taking material stacking as the core of creation, and falling into the creative dilemma of "materials for materials' sake".

Such works ignore the expression of painterliness, weaken the basic painting elements such as color, composition, and artistic conception, blindly pursue the physical beauty of materials, and blindly stack and splice a variety of materials, resulting in messy works lacking aesthetic order. Materials become tools for showing skills, rather than carriers of emotion and spirit, and works lose the due aesthetic quality and spiritual connotation of art. At the same time, overemphasizing materiality seriously weakens the essential attribute of painting, making comprehensive material painting reduced to a "material display" of materials, rather than a "spiritual expression" of art. This formalist creative tendency deviates from the aesthetic essence of comprehensive material painting, leading to shallow aesthetic levels of works and difficulty in arousing emotional resonance and spiritual thinking of viewers.

2.3 Lack of Cultural Connotation Leading to Empty Aesthetic Spirit

The core value of art lies in the expression of spiritual connotation and cultural heritage. Artistic creation lacking cultural support will eventually degenerate into empty visual symbols. Some contemporary Chinese comprehensive material painting works have serious problems of lack of cultural connotation. Artists blindly pursue formal innovation and conceptual novelty, ignoring the excavation of national culture, contemporary spirit, and personal emotions, resulting in works with empty spirit and weak connotation.

Such works neither inherit the traditional aesthetic spirit nor respond to the demands of contemporary life. They are only simple formal experiments and conceptual games, lacking cultural depth and ideological depth. Under the impact of global culture, some artists lose their cultural direction, abandon their local cultural identity, and blindly pursue Western artistic concepts, leading to works losing their national spiritual core and showing the characteristics of "rootlessness". Such works have trendy forms but confused spirit and empty inner world, which can neither reflect local cultural confidence nor have the due spiritual power of contemporary art. The lack of cultural connotation makes it difficult for comprehensive material painting to undertake the artistic mission of cultural inheritance and spiritual guidance, and fall into a crisis of aesthetic spirit.

2.4 Chaotic Aesthetic Standards and Uneven Artistic Quality

As an emerging art category, comprehensive material painting has not yet formed a unified, mature, and localized aesthetic evaluation standard. In the process of creation and evaluation, either Western artistic standards are taken as the criterion, or traditional painting standards are taken as the reference, or only the novelty of materials is taken as the evaluation basis, leading to chaotic aesthetic standards and uneven artistic quality.

Some works attract attention by virtue of the novelty of materials and the gimmick of forms, while works that truly have local spirit, cultural connotation, and artistic innovation do not receive the due recognition. The lack of aesthetic standards makes the creation of comprehensive material painting fall into a state of disorder. Some artists abandon their artistic pursuit to cater to the market and traffic, creating vulgar and homogeneous works, which seriously affects the artistic reputation and development ecology of comprehensive material painting. The chaotic aesthetic standards are difficult to guide artists to carry out in-depth creation, and also restrict the improvement of the localized aesthetic system of comprehensive material painting.

3 Reconstructing the Contemporary Aesthetic System of Comprehensive Material Painting

To solve the aesthetic crisis of contemporary Chinese comprehensive material painting and construct a mature, improved, and localized contemporary aesthetic system, artists, theorists, and critics need to work together, adhere to the cultural position, return to the essence of art, and realize the organic unity of formal innovation and connotation expression, local tradition and contemporary spirit.

Adhere to the local cultural position and consolidate the foundation of aesthetic culture. Artists should abandon the Western-centric aesthetic misunderstanding, deeply explore fine traditional Chinese culture and traditional aesthetic spirit, integrate local cultural genes into material creation, guide aesthetic creation with cultural confidence, and make comprehensive material painting an important carrier for the inheritance and innovation of local culture. Only by taking root in the cultural soil can works have lasting vitality and unique aesthetic recognition.

Return to the essence of art and balance materiality and painterliness. "Correctly handle the relationship between materials and themes, form and connotation, make materials serve spiritual expression, abandon formalism and material stacking, pay attention to the creation of painterliness, artistic conception, and aesthetic order, and realize the harmonious unity of material beauty and artistic connotation". Materials are the medium of expression rather than the purpose, and the core of painting is always the transmission of emotion and spirit.

Strengthen the expression of cultural connotation and inject contemporary spirit. Artistic creation should take root in contemporary life, integrate personal life experience, national cultural memory, and contemporary spiritual demands, so that works have both cultural thickness, ideological depth, and emotional warmth, get rid of the creative dilemma of empty spirit, and highlight the spiritual power of contemporary art. Based on the times and facing the present, comprehensive material painting can truly become an art form reflecting contemporary Chinese culture and spirit.

4 Conclusion

As an important part of Chinese contemporary art, the localized aesthetic construction and the aesthetic crisis faced by comprehensive material painting are a microcosm of the development of contemporary Chinese art. True comprehensive material painting art is not a simple stacking of materials, nor a blind imitation of Western language, but an organic integration of materials, culture, and spirit, with local materials as the carrier, traditional aesthetics as the foundation, and contemporary spirit as the core. In the global artistic pattern, only by adhering to cultural subjectivity, promoting the contemporary transformation of traditional aesthetic spirit, innovating local material language, and expanding contemporary aesthetic connotation can Chinese comprehensive material painting break through development bottlenecks, demonstrate unique aesthetic value and cultural significance, become an important force for Chinese contemporary art to go global, and voice a distinct and firm Chinese voice on the world art stage.

About the Author

Ru Xia, Master's degree holder, Lecturer; Research interests: Composite material painting and oil painting.

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