

Research on Chinese Pastel Painting and Its Techniques

Jiabao Wang

University of Science Malaysia, 11800 USM Penang, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

As a product of the integration of Chinese and Western cultural and artistic development, Chinese pastel painting not only has the delicacy and realism of Western pastel painting, but also has the artistic conception and charm of traditional Chinese painting; This demonstrates the unique aesthetic taste of the Chinese nation. The paper explores Chinese pastel painting, and its techniques, first briefly discussing the meaning and characteristics of Chinese color powder painting; Secondly, starting from three aspects including thick coating method, mixing method, and brush method, the paper explores the techniques and skills of Chinese pastel painting. This is hoped to help people better understand and appreciate this art form, while also providing some references and inspirations for future artistic creation.

KEYWORDS

China; pastel painting; technique

1 Introduction

Pastel painting, as the name suggests, is a form of painting that uses color powder as the main material. It originated in Europe and was introduced to China from Europe in the late 17th to early 18th century. Initially, it was mainly used as one of the painting tools for court painters. [1] At the beginning of the 20th century, with the introduction of Western art education, the pastel painting began to be widely taught in Chinese art schools and gradually became an important form of painting. Entering the 21st century, with the deepening of international cultural exchanges, Chinese pastel painting artists have not only inherited traditional techniques, but also incorporated more modern elements. This makes the artistic expression of pastel painting in China more diverse and colorful.

2 Chinese Pastel Painting

Chinese pastel painting refers to a painting style created on paper or cloth using pastel as the main material. Pastel is a brush made of small colored powders that can be directly applied and overlaid on the image, creating rich layers and delicate texture. [2] Chinese pastel painting is not only a technical attempt, but also a product of the integration of Chinese and Western cultures. It attempts to integrate the artistic conception, spirit, and cultural characteristics of traditional Chinese painting while preserving the original charm of Western pastel painting, and explore a modern art path with Chinese characteristics. Generally speaking, Chinese pastel painting is characterized by rich colors, delicate brushstrokes, diverse and flexible techniques, and a focus on artistic conception and emotional expression.

3 Application of Chinese Pastel Painting Techniques

3.1 Impasto Method

Pastel painting, as a unique form of painting, is loved by many artists for its delicate brushstrokes and rich color expression. However, the art of pastel painting faces some technical challenges in the creative process; One of them is that the pigments cannot be layered and covered after air drying and shaping, which makes the color hierarchy of the picture relatively single. To solve this problem, many creators drew inspiration from the pastel painting technique of French Impressionist master Degas, using impasto to enrich the color hierarchy of the image. The so-called impasto method (also known as multi-layer painting) refers to layering and adding pastel on top of the canvas, and increasing the depth and richness of colors through multiple powder coatings. This method not only presents a more three-dimensional effect in the picture, but also to some extent compensates for the disadvantage of traditional layering and coverage in pastel painting. Degas extensively used this technique in his pastel paintings, creating works with a rich sense of layering and dynamics by continuously stacking pastel. When applying the impasto method to Chinese pastel painting, creators generally need to go through the following three steps:

One is the shaping. Shaping is the first step of applying the impasto method to Chinese pastel painting, with the main goal of ensuring the accuracy of the shape. To achieve this goal, it is recommended to use brown chalk as a shaping tool. The reason behind this is that brown chalk not only provides clear outlines, but also effectively avoids the problems that may arise from using extreme colors such as black and white. In other words, although black chalk can create a strong contrast, its subsequent coloring can easily make the image appear cloudy; Although white chalk can provide bright contrast, the white lines may interfere with the overall visual effect during the subsequent overlay process, unless the creator intentionally pursues a specific artistic style. Therefore, it is recommended to use brown chalk for shaping. When using brown chalk for shaping, the lines drawn should be concise and accurate. You can start with the large form structure and gradually refine it to local details. At this step, efforts should be made to keep the image concise and avoid adding too many details to avoid affecting the subsequent painting process.

The second is coloring. After the shaping is completed, it enters the coloring stage. In this process, artists need to follow certain color matching principles, such as "warm before cold" or "warm before cold", as well as the principle of "deep before light". [3] Objectively speaking, color powder painting has a high coverage ability, but there may be gaps between color powder particles due to its opaque nature. This allows the underlying color to be partially revealed through the upper layer. This unique way of expression provides artists with more creative space; They can create rich and varied visual effects through multiple color combinations while retaining the underlying colors. In addition, when the visual effect is not satisfactory, artists can also adjust it by gently sweeping away excess color powder with a hard bristled oil painting pen. This allows for easy correction and continuation of the artwork to achieve the desired effect.

The third is to use brushwork. In the process of applying impasto method to Chinese pastel painting, the application of brushwork is crucial. It not only determines the final style of the picture, but also directly affects the audience's first impression. In creation, artists can create rich and colorful visual effects by using techniques such as small brushwork, dots, color juxtaposition, and stacking. At the same time, artists can also use their fingers or pen and paper to rub the pastel, enhancing the rich texture and volume of the image, creating a hazy or soft artistic atmosphere. It is worth noting that this rubbing operation is not the end point. Artists can continue to use colored chalk for deeper depictions after finishing the rubbing, further enhancing the expressive and infectious power of the work, enriching the style of the work, and meeting the aesthetic needs of different audiences.

3.2 Mixed Method

In the creation of pastel paintings, the application of mixed techniques is mainly reflected in two aspects: one is to mix different pigments of pastel paintings, and the other is to mix different techniques. These two methods not only enrich the expressive power of pastel painting, but also provide possibilities for the diversification of its artistic style.

One is the mixture of different colored pigments for painting. In the creation of domestic pastel paintings, artists tend to express the characteristics of pastel paintings by mixing different pigments, creating richer and more layered visual effects, such as impasto materials, egg color pigments, oil-based pigments, water-based pigments, etc. These materials have different properties; some are oil-based materials and some are water-based materials. By using special blending techniques to effectively mix these materials, a richer and more layered visual effect can be created. This is beneficial for better expressing the theme and emotions of the work. Among them, pastel materials are usually delicate in texture and easy to spread on paper, while advertising colors are brightly colored and have strong coverage. When these two materials are mixed and used, a delicate texture with strong color contrast can be created. Egg colored pigments, due to their high transparency, can add layers and depth to the image. Chinese pastel painting artists constantly try new blending techniques, striving to achieve the best artistic effect in their final works.

The second is the mixture of different techniques. In addition to the mixing of pigments, the blending of techniques is also a major highlight in the creation of pastel paintings. Some Chinese artists have innovated and comprehensively applied traditional techniques such as layered drawing and dry-wet combination, while also attempting to introduce techniques such as edge painting and plush; This further enriches the artistic expression of pastel painting and enhances the layering of color painting works. Among them, layered drawing is a technique of layering colors layer by layer. By repeatedly stacking different pastel colors, the image can present a rich sense of hierarchy and three dimensionality. However, it should be noted that the layering of each color layer needs to be carefully controlled to ensure a harmonious and unified final effect; This technique is particularly suitable for depicting complex and varied natural landscapes and portraits of people. Dry-wet combination method is a technique that combines dry and wet pigments; Create unique textures and effects by adding moist pigments to dry color powder. This technique is more suitable for depicting natural scenes such as water surfaces and clouds, making the picture more vivid and expressive. The edge wiping technique refers to using a soft tool (such as a cotton swab or soft cloth) to gently wipe the edges or details of the image to achieve a soft transition effect. This method can make the picture more delicate and avoid overly rigid lines. Using wool material is to add a layer of plush texture to the picture, increasing the tactile and visual effects of the image.

3.3 Painting Technique

Pastel painting is a unique and long-standing art form. It is not only a painting technique, but also a carrier of the artist's emotions and creativity. The diversity of pastel painting techniques endows it with infinite possibilities. Even if the same material or pigment is used as the base, the final presentation effect of pastel painting will show significant differences depending on the techniques used by the creator. It is the diversity and uniqueness of this technique that endows each color powder painting with a unique charm.

The history of pastel painting can be traced back to the Renaissance period, when many famous painters had already begun experimenting with using colored chalk for their creations. This painting style not only preserves the richness of oil painting colors, but also has a unique sense of delicacy and softness. [4] During the Renaissance, painters used pastel painting to depict subtle changes in portraits and landscapes, making it an indispensable part of that era. This technique not only gives

the image a sense of hierarchy, but also allows the artist to express personal emotions more freely. It can be said that the charm of pastel painting lies in its unrestricted imagination and expressive techniques of creators. Whether it's delicate finger painting or fine brush sketching, you can find your own place in a pastel painting. Artists can choose different brush techniques according to their needs to create works that have both visual impact and touch people's hearts. Among the many outstanding color painters in China, the color paintings created by Liu Ruquan, Hang Mingshi, and others are particularly eye-catching; They have created many impressive paintings based on their profound understanding and proficient mastery of pastel painting techniques. They not only allow people to feel the richness and diversity of pastel painting as an art form, but also enable them to appreciate the artists' unique insights into the beauty of life and nature.

4 Conclusion

In summary, as an expressive art form, pastel painting is gradually taking root and sprouting in the artistic soil of China. Many artists in our country have continuously explored and innovated, combining the essence of traditional Chinese painting with the techniques of Western pastel painting, creating a series of excellent works with Chinese characteristics. These works not only enrich the forms of expression in contemporary Chinese art, but also contribute new perspectives and ideas to the development of world art. In the future, we have reason to believe that with the addition of more artists and deeper research, Chinese pastel painting will usher in new developments.

About the Author

Jiabao Wang (1994.05-), female, Han People; Jiaozuo, Henan Province; currently pursuing a PhD, University of Science Malaysia; research direction: pastel painting techniques, ancient Chinese art history

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