

The Symbiosis Exploration of Figurative Form and Abstract

Mi Tang*

Yangtze Normal University, Chongqing 408100, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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Abstract: Nowadays, contemporary oil painting creation has entered the stage of multi-integration. The traditional research paradigm of binary opposition and boundary separation between concreteness and abstraction in the past can no longer meet the needs of innovative iteration of oil painting language. In most existing studies, the realistic modeling logic or purely abstract formal laws are explained separately, and the symbiotic mechanism of their coexistence and embedment has not been systematically sorted out. At present, a large number of creative practices have already broken the boundary between the two styles, and completed the collaborative expression of concrete object carriers and abstract formal elements in the same visual plane. Based on the symbiotic relationship as the core research perspective, this paper combs through the theoretical origin and aesthetic characteristics of their symbiosis. It refines the creative path from four dimensions: visual framework of the picture, artistic conception creation, media application, and narrative expression. Combined with typical Chinese and foreign oil paintings, this paper clarifies the complementary logic of concrete bearing narrative and abstract emotion, and proves that their symbiosis is not a superficial form splicing, but an organic unity of visual order and spiritual connotation, which can broaden the expression boundary of contemporary oil paintings and provide targeted theoretical and practical reference for creators.

Keywords: Oil painting creation; Figurative form; Abstract elements; Symbiosis; Visual language

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1. Introduction

In the process of oil painting for hundreds of years, concrete representation and abstract expression have long been regarded as two independent creative paths that are irrelevant. With the continuous updating of the concept of contemporary artistic creation, the single creative mode of pure realism or pure abstraction exposes obvious limitations of expression: realistic works are easy to weaken their spiritual tension because of excessive description of details, and pure abstract works are difficult to establish a stable emotional connection with ordinary viewers, and the integration of concreteness and abstraction has become the mainstream creative direction at present. The underlying logic of their symbiosis is hidden in the Chinese

and Western aesthetic traditions: Western classical oil paintings have their own abstract aesthetic feeling in the form of lines and color blocks, and China's traditional freehand brushwork concept of "similarity and dissimilarity" also provides mature philosophical support for the compatibility of form and meaning. This paper jumps out of the judgment idea of binary opposition, combs the inherent logic and aesthetic characteristics of their symbiosis, and forms a theoretical and practical framework with reference.

2. The theoretical basis and aesthetic connotation of the symbiosis of concrete form and abstract elements in oil painting

2.1. Theoretical origin of the symbiotic relationship between them

The symbiosis of oil painting concreteness and abstraction is not an artificial skill of contemporary creators, but a dual attribute of oil painting media, which connects the Eastern and Western painting systems and traditional aesthetic logic in series.

Although Western classical oil paintings focus on concrete representation, they never deny the independent aesthetic value of abstract forms: in Leonardo da Vinci's modeling discussion, it is clear that lines, light and shade, and color blocks have independent visual rhythm, and the blurred background of classical portraits and the rhythm of clothes pleats are all hidden abstract elements attached to concrete objects. Impressionism completely untied the subordinate orientation of color, and no longer required color to serve only the reproduced images. Cold and warm color blocks and brush strokes directly became emotional outlets. The trees and starry sky in Van Gogh's works were only narrative carriers, and the abstract order built by flowing lines and strong contrasting color blocks was the core of the spiritual expression of the picture.

Oriental philosophy provides a mature theoretical base for this kind of symbiosis: Zhouyi advocates relying on concrete objects to convey feelings, without sticking to the details of complete re-enactment, moderately refining, leaving blank and freehand brushwork to naturally open up the connection channel between realistic modeling and abstract artistic conception. In recent years, domestic creators have explored the path of Chinese and Western integration, implanted the traditional freehand thinking into oil painting creation, and on the premise of retaining the complete image shape, generated random textures by scraping, overlapping, and splashing colors, and built symbiotic creation logic adapted to the local context. The concept of "critical vision" in modern visual theory also proves that both pure concreteness and pure abstraction are extreme expressions, and their coexistence and embedding is the normal state of complete output of painting language^[1].

2.2. The core aesthetic connotation of their symbiosis

The core logic of symbiotic aesthetics is complementary checks and balances, two-way achievement, and there is no antagonistic relationship between one side and the other: the concrete form first covers the basic recognition attribute of the picture, completing the basic function of narrative anchoring and pulling in the distance of the viewer's empathy, while the abstract elements jump out of the limitation of the repetition of objects and images, and assume the role of setting off emotions, lifting artistic conception and polishing the rhythm of exclusive forms. Figurative images help ordinary viewers quickly grasp the creative theme and directly lower the understanding threshold of purely abstract works; Abstraction sifts out the redundant fine details in realistic description, breaks the sense of rigidity in copying reality, digs into the spiritual core under the surface image, and leaves a wider space for the creators to express their emotions.

The combination of the two expressions can produce a balanced texture of reality and reality: the

figurative oil painting without abstract deployment can easily become a meaningless replica of the real scene, with dull pictures and thin visual rhythm; The abstract creation completely divorced from the concrete carrier has no realistic support, and the spiritual output is easy to be vague and empty. The symbiosis mode just neutralizes the shortcomings of the two kinds of creation, embeds abstract languages such as color blocks, lines, textures and deconstruction modeling on the basis of recognizable objects, and finally realizes the coordination and unity of form, meaning and reality, which is also the unique aesthetic characteristic of contemporary oil painting that is different from traditional realism and modern pure abstract creation ^[2].

3. Practical path of symbiosis between concrete form and abstract elements in oil painting creation

3.1. The layered construction of virtual and real vision

The actual painting and drafting stage is completely in line with the landing logic of “building the core skeleton → laying the secondary level → global calibration and fine-tuning.”

The first step is to outline the basic framework of concrete objects in the drafting process: first, determine the core expression object closely following the creative topic, whether it is a figure, a still life or a landscape theme, first accurately determine the external outline and the internal body structure, directly nail down the visual center of the whole painting, and lay a solid foundation by solid realistic modeling to ensure that the recognition of the core visual subject is sufficient, and the subsequent superposition of abstract elements will not disturb the focus logic of the picture at all.

Enter the second step after finalizing the concrete outline of the main body, and implant the abstract visual design along the established composition framework: comb the spatial arrangement of the whole painting with the idea of geometric segmentation, coordinate the background and corner areas with scattered lines, cold and warm color blocks, and the level difference between light and dark, and bring out the natural dynamic rhythm by inserting lines and contrasting color blocks, so as to abstract the non-core expression areas such as distant view, interlining and sky.

In the last step, the proportion of reality and reality in the whole painting is uniformly calibrated: the realistic details of the core image are completely preserved, the depiction accuracy of the secondary image is actively compressed, the blank space of the picture is filled with abstract color blocks and random lines, and the balance between density and movement is smoothed, and the whole visual order is completed. In still life creation, the objects, fruits, and vegetables are molded first, and then the background is reconstructed by painting color blocks and extending lines. In landscape creation, the outline of mountains, rivers, and plants is locked, and then the water and sky are paved with loose texture, all of which are the actual landing of this step-by-step logic ^[3].

3.2. The shaping of the inner spirit of oil painting

The depth description of the picture follows the third-order practical path of “keynote anchoring-layered emotion-artistic conception integration.”

The first stage relies on figurative modeling to anchor the basic emotional tone: to complete the fine shaping of figurative carriers such as the five senses and limbs, regional scenes, natural scenery, etc., to convey the core creative theme through the arrangement logic and morphological characteristics between objects and images, and to build an entity narrative support bearing subjective emotional output ^[4].

After the figuration of the subject is finished, it enters the second stage, and the adaptive abstract technique is applied to complete the emotional contrast in different regions: based on the preset overall spiritual orientation, the marginal blank space and background area of the picture are processed, and if it is necessary to put out warm emotional expression, it can be realized by thick piles of pigments and fragmented staggered strokes; If you want to create a quiet and poetic atmosphere, you can choose the methods of low saturation color blooming and blurring the boundary, and supplement the delicate and hidden emotional dimension that the figurative realistic system cannot carry through differentiated abstraction.

In the final stage, the harmony and unification of the virtual and real atmosphere of the whole picture are completed: the core narrative anchor point of the work is built with concrete modeling, and the coverage ratio and force of the abstract texture in different regions are dynamically calibrated, so that the abstract emotional expression naturally attaches to the concrete carrier to extend and penetrate, and the closed-loop construction of the overall spiritual artistic conception of the picture is completed layer by layer ^[5].

3.3. The differentiation of multi-media materials

The practical application of oil painting materials is promoted by three progressive processes of “functional division-domain modeling-auxiliary material empowerment,” and the process intensity is flexibly adjusted by anchoring the actual and false expression weight of the picture throughout the process, instead of applying a unified material application standard.

The first step is to clearly define the functional area of the canvas: based on the visual weight of the picture, combined with the narrative core anchored in the previous composition, the canvas is divided into three types of blocks: the core subject expression area, the secondary image setting-off area, and the background atmosphere blank area. Different blocks are matched with different material processing logic in advance, and the applicable boundary between realistic figurative modeling and experimental abstract texture is clearly defined from the source to avoid expression conflict between the two languages.

The second step is to create targeted materials in different regions: select the fine tin tube oil painting pigment with moderate coverage in the core main body area, and polish it layer by layer, and then cover the next layer after the oil painting is completely dried, so as to finely output concrete details to ensure the completeness of the recognition of the object outline and structure; In the setting-off areas such as the edge and background of the picture, nonstandard methods such as excessive turpentine diluted pigment splashing, scraper dipping thick pigment stacking, and clean gauze pressing and erasing are used to artificially generate random abstract visual effects such as irregular color blocks without preset feeling, concave-convex texture, blurred diffusion afterimage ^[6].

In the last step, comprehensive auxiliary materials are superimposed to enhance the abstract texture: light auxiliary materials such as toner and fine sand are mixed and sprinkled in the non-core foil area, and a mottled and rough special material layer is generated by relying on the viscosity of semi-dry pigment, and a complementary tension is formed by the abstract effect of natural overflow of material properties and the regular figurative modeling in the core area, and a complete picture of virtual and real symbiosis is finally landed by relying on the material process.

3.4. The construction of multiple narrative spaces

In the final adjustment stage of oil painting pictures, the landing logic is advanced along the path of “core narrative completion-abstract translation of secondary materials-blank boundary calibration,” and the whole

process is closely related to the preset narrative expression target calibration details in the initial stage of creation, so as to avoid invalid changes deviating from the theme in the adjustment process.

The first step is to give priority to the fine polishing of the core concrete narrative image: the characters and scene subjects corresponding to the main line of the story should be supported in detail, and small-scale concrete details such as micro-expressions and personal accessories should be supplemented according to the identity characteristics of the characters, and the complete narrative context should be clearly explained to ensure that the viewer can anchor the story core of the picture at first sight, and the basic framework bearing the narrative function should be firmly tied first.

The second step is to abstract and simplify the non-core picture area: actively cut off unnecessary realistic redundant details in the foreground and edge environment, disassemble scattered objects in corners into geometric lines and flat painted blocks, weaken the straightforward concrete narrative expression by means of boundary rubbing, morphological deconstruction and geometric refining, and leave enough aesthetic margin by abstract processing.

The last step is to adjust the proportion between the narrative content of the whole picture and the blank space: repeatedly debugging the area weight of the concrete narrative plate and the abstract blank space will not make the story convey fuzzy deviation, but also expand the multi-dimensional interpretation possibility of the work by using the elastic space left by the abstraction, and finally build the narrative aesthetic level of the picture ^[7].

4. The deep influence of the symbiosis of concrete form and abstract elements on the development of contemporary oil painting

4.1. Innovating the ontology language of oil painting and breaking through the traditional creative mode

In the previous research context of oil painting creation, the creative path was often artificially divided into two mutually exclusive systems: realism and abstraction. Most creators have long been anchored in the practice of a single path, and it is easy to fall into the solidification dilemma of homogenization of visual language expression. The paradigm of concrete and abstract in symbiotic creation breaks down the traditional barrier between the two systems, deeply embeds the three expression dimensions of realistic modeling accuracy, abstract form tension, and composite material texture, and expands the expression threshold of oil painting ontology language. Creators do not have to make an exclusive choice between the two systems, but can dynamically adjust the proportion of the two elements according to their creative demands, taking into account the ideographic certainty of realistic modeling and the emotional appeal of abstract forms, eliminating the shackles of expression brought by a single creative paradigm, and providing new possibilities for the pluralistic evolution of oil painting visual language ^[8].

4.2. To integrate public aesthetic cognition and create a fault in the spread of refined and popular art

Pure abstract oil painting has stripped off the reference of real objects and images, and it is difficult for ordinary viewers to capture the ideographic core of the creator, which directly opens the cognitive gap between avant-garde creation and mass aesthetics; Traditional realistic oil painting is too obsessed with the accurate reproduction of objects, and it is difficult to match the upgraded aesthetic expectation of

the audience for ingenious form and blank spirit. The works of concrete abstract symbiosis first set up the cognitive steps that are easy for the public to understand with the concrete reality carrier with high recognition, and then pressed the threshold of interpretation to the minimum, and then relied on the nested abstract vocabulary to carry the aesthetic appeal of contemporary people's preference for atmosphere, which can give consideration to both popular communication and artistic professionalism. This kind of work can sink into the aesthetic vision of the general public to complete the transmission of artistic connotation, but also keep the vanguard attribute of modern art, fill in the previous aesthetic fault of refined and popular circles, and help oil paintings achieve a wider range of public communication ^[9].

4.3. Improve the creator's thinking and promote diversified innovation in the oil painting industry

Many oil painting creators have long been trapped in the dilemma of partial creative language: either they are obsessed with the accuracy of realistic modeling and completely let go of the tension shaping at the formal level of the picture; or they stack abstract symbols blindly, and the whole work cannot even find the most basic narrative point. This idea of symbiotic creation can guide the creator to polish the basic skills of figurative modeling and control the abstract form simultaneously, and build a more comprehensive and complete visual creation logic. In repeated practice, the creator gropes for the balance scale between object image reproduction and subjective emotional expression, and slowly precipitates his own recognition style. When more and more practitioners go deep into the path of symbiosis of form and meaning, the overall creative ecology of the oil painting circle will naturally expand, and works with different themes and different expression dimensions will grow synchronously, continuously injecting fresh innovation power into the whole field ^[10].

5. Conclusion

The whole progress of oil painting art is accompanied by the blending and iteration of visual expression techniques. The symbiosis of concreteness and abstraction is not a new concept artificially packaged, but a new creative form that oil painting language grows along its own development logic. He directly broke the old cognition of the default two types of expression paths in the industry. This paper combs through the theoretical context and core aesthetic characteristics of this symbiotic paradigm. This paper summarizes the creative path from four practical dimensions: picture layout, emotional transmission, media adaptation, and narrative dimension upgrading, and dismantles its multiple gains in innovating the expression boundary of oil paintings, breaking through the aesthetic barriers of elegance and vulgarity, and supplementing the comprehensive creative thinking of creators.

The concreteness holds the realistic anchor point for the picture, and the abstraction opens up enough space for the spiritual extension of the work. The two are by no means the rigid splicing of modeling and form, but the deep integration of vision, emotion, and cultural expression. This idea can continuously explore the expression potential of oil painting media, help contemporary oil painting to jump out of the solidified routine, undertake the traditional context to complete language innovation, and provide a feasible new direction for subsequent creation.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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