

# Analysis of Color and Artistic Conception in Painting Art

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**Abstract:** The charm of painting, as a bright pearl in the treasure house of culture, lies in its visual language constructed through colors and lines, which conveys the artist's unique perception of life and profound emotions. Color, as the most intuitive and expressive language in painting, is not only a simple reproduction of material colors but also a projection of the artist's inner world. Artistic conception, as a core concept in traditional Chinese painting theory, refers to the emotional atmosphere and spiritual mood embedded in paintings. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the interaction between color and mood in painting art, to analyze the techniques of using color in different painting styles and their influence on the creation of mood, and to provide new perspectives and methods for the creation of paintings.

**Keywords:** Painting art; Color; Mood

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## 1. Introduction

Color is a core element in painting art that not only highlights the visual aspect but also carries the artist's deep emotions and thoughts. Excellent works of art often make clever use of color to build a unique mood, leading the viewer into spiritual realms. Color plays an indispensable role in the field of painting, as it not only gives visual impact to the works but also reflects the artist's emotions and thoughts. First-class paintings can always make clever use of color techniques to create a unique emotional atmosphere, leading the viewer into the spiritual space conceived by the artist. This study focuses on the application of color in painting and its connection with the construction of mood, aiming to deeply analyze the influence of color on the expression of emotion and the presentation of mood in the picture, and at the same time, through the analysis of specific cases, to illustrate the specific use of color in different painting styles and genres.

## 2. Overview of color

### 2.1. The basic concept of color

Color is a vast and mysterious field that has attracted countless artists and scholars since ancient times to explore its profound connotations and extensive extensions. It is not only the basic phenomenon of light and

vision but also the medium of communication of emotion, culture, and thinking. Color can evoke profound sensory experience and emotional resonance in human beings, and its role in the art of painting is irreplaceable. The basic concept of color covers the three dimensions of hue, brightness, and saturation, which intertwine to build a rich and colorful world of color.

Hue, like a splendid artist, uses its magic palette to depict the different faces of everything in the world. It is the main basis for people to distinguish between colors, giving colors a distinct personality and soul. The warmth of red, the liveliness of yellow, the serenity of blue, the vitality of green, each hue touches a certain emotion or memory deep in the heart.

Brightness, a projection of luminance, determines the contrast between light and darkness of a color and the effect of light and shadow. The slight difference between deep red and pink, like the alternation of morning and evening in nature, is a delicate dialogue between light and shadow on the canvas. Subtle changes in brightness can add infinite depth and a sense of space to the picture, making it more three-dimensional and vivid.

Saturation, like the soul of color, regulates the degree of saturation and mixing of colors. The line between bright red and dark red reveals the secret behind the color. High saturation colors are as gorgeous as summer wildflowers, while low saturation colors are as deep and restrained as autumn maple forests. The adjustment of color saturation, like a touch of vicissitude or a touch of youth in painting, allows the viewer to get a deep touch of the visual and emotional resonance.

## **2.2. The psychological effect of color**

### **2.2.1. Communication bridge between color and emotion**

Color is not only a visual enjoyment, as it carries a rich psychological meaning and can touch the deepest emotions of the human heart. In the art of painting, the use of color can often evoke a specific emotional response from the audience, building a bridge of emotional resonance between the artwork and the audience <sup>[1]</sup>. For example, the use of warm colors, such as enthusiastic red, warm orange, and lively yellow, gives people a positive feeling, as if the sunshine in the spring, dispels the cold of winter. On the contrary, cold tones such as quiet blue, vibrant green, and mysterious purple, give a person peace and sense, like a tranquil lake under the night sky, so that people's minds are cleansed and relieved.

### **2.2.2. Color collocation: The different sonata of emotions**

The collocation of colors is just like the collision of different notes, which can produce unique harmony and conflict, and further strengthen the emotional expression of the work. The strong contrast between red and green not only creates a sharp visual impact but also psychologically stimulates a kind of power and vitality, which is often used in paintings of festive or celebratory occasions to express excitement and joyful emotions. The combination of blue and white, on the other hand, is like the clouds in the sky and the sea, giving people a sense of serenity and calmness, and this color scheme is often used to depict quiet landscapes or a calm state of mind.

### **2.2.3. Creativity and psychology: The art of color selection**

The choice of colors not only reflects the author's creativity and pursuit of visual art but also is the external projection of the author's inner world. Different artists may have great differences in the way they handle the same color, and what is reflected behind such differences is the artist's personal emotional experience, cultural background, and personal state of mind <sup>[2]</sup>. For example, when dealing with colors, impressionist painters pay attention to the natural flow of colors and changes in light and shadow and express their instantaneous perception of life through changes in colors, and this choice of colors is more inclined to convey a direct and profound emotional experience rather than the norms of color science in the traditional sense.

### 3. Application of color in painting art

#### 3.1. Color and emotional expression

Every artist's understanding and use of color are as unique as their fingerprints. They are like alchemists in front of the palette, melting their own experience, cultural immersion, and emotional waves into a splash of color. Through the prism of color, the viewer can peer into the texture of the artist's soul and feel the inner stirrings that belong to the creator. Impressionist painters' pursuit of light and color is like the sun-chasing Kuafu, who tried to capture the fleeting beauty. The water lilies under Monet's pen show fantastic colors in the changing light and shadow, just like the colorful dream floating on the water's surface. The characters in Renoir's paintings show healthy redness of skin under the sunlight, overflowing with the radiance of vitality. These colors are not simple imitations of reality, but the artists' love and admiration for nature and life, and their inner world's response to beautiful things.

However, colors are not just the representatives of pleasure, they can also be the outlet for the artist's deepest darkness and struggles. In the painting titled "The Man in Tears" (**Figure 1**), there is bold use of high-contrast reds and blues, as if two evenly matched forces are clashing and fighting on the canvas, creating a sense of suffocating tension. The inhuman appearance and empty eyes of the characters in the paintings add a touch of strange and unreal colors to the tense atmosphere as if they are spirits from another world, lost in the labyrinth of reality.

The brightly colored costumes and exaggerated expressions of the characters form a strong contrast with the sadness of the characters in the painting, as the gorgeous robes could not cover up the many holes in their hearts. In an almost playfully cruel way, the pain and loneliness of the characters are nakedly displayed in front of the viewer, as if silently saying "Even in a busy and noisy world, one may still be trapped in the quagmire of loneliness and sadness in one's heart." The inner reflection that "sometimes, the external world or my outward glamour tends to hide my true heart and feelings. If I could unravel my exterior, my inner vulnerability would be revealed. We should pay more attention to our true selves and the inner world" is expressed. The painting also reveals the dilemma that prevails in the hearts of modern people, that is, in the pursuit of the material and external world of glamour, we gradually lose ourselves and drift away from our true inner selves.

In "The Man with Tears," the contrasts and conflicts of colors bring out the inner conflicts and struggles of the characters, triggering the viewers to think about and explore their own inner world. While enjoying the painting, the viewer seems to have a spiritual dialogue, empathizing with the characters in the painting, and then reflecting on his or her own role in real life, as well as his or her deepest emotional needs. The charm of the art of painting lies in its ability to transcend the barriers of language and go straight to the heart. Color, on the other hand, is the sharpest carving knife in the hands of the artist, and the gentlest brush, outlining their inner world to the fullest. Each color is a fragment of the artist's soul, piecing together their unique understanding of the world and life. The viewer only needs to stop and stare, listen with all his heart, to feel the monologue from the depths of the artist's heart, which will trigger resonance and enlightenment.



**Figure 1.** The Man in Tears

#### 3.2. Color and space shaping

In artistic creation, the use of color can directly affect the viewer's perception of the space in the picture, and through clever color contrasts and harmonies, artists can create a sense of space that is both real and transcendent. In this section, the paper will discuss in depth how colors can create a three-dimensional, richly layered spatial effect on a flat canvas, and the impact of this effect on the mood of the painting <sup>[3]</sup>.

Artists, like magicians, cleverly use the contrast between warm and cool colors and changes in light and

darkness to create a three-dimensional sense of space on a two-dimensional plane, giving depth and layers to the picture and making the viewer feel as if he or she is in the real scene of the picture.

For example, in one of the paintings depicting the theme of “cultural preservation” (**Figure 2**), the picture is divided into two worlds. The upper half of the picture is a symbol of modern civilization with skyscrapers, spaceships, and mechanical installations, with cold metallic colors and technological blues as the main tones, which show the prosperity and coldness of modern civilization. In the lower part, there are dilapidated drum towers and unattended ancient buildings, revealing the heaviness and vicissitudes of history in the black-and-white outlined tones. The strong contrast of black and white is used to contrast the prosperity of modern civilization with the decay of ancient civilization, to warn people that, in the pursuit of modernization, do not forget history and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the black and white colors are used as the base to condense this cultural cautionary tale into a purer visual symbol. Breaking away from the traditional way of viewing, this work can be viewed from the front or upside down, as if it were a Möbius loop, suggesting the cycle of time and civilization. In the center of the picture, the modern giant wheel hangs high in the sky, its black and white structure is like a set of futuristic architectural silhouettes, full of power and at the same time a metaphor for some kind of oppression of modern civilization; while at the bottom of the picture, the ruins of the ancient drum tower reveal a kind of silent desolation in the black and white and grey tones. The strong contrast between black and white juxtaposes the strength of modern civilization with the decline of ancient civilization, triggering the viewer to think deeply about cultural inheritance, “is the prosperity of modern civilization at the expense of traditional culture? Have we lost our spiritual foundation while pursuing material progress?” This black-and-white painting, like a silent black-and-white film, triggers the viewer’s deepest resonance with its strong visual impact and profound cultural implication. It reminds people that the glory of modern civilization is built on the foundation of past civilization and that without the past, there is no present or future. It is our common responsibility to protect our cultural heritage and pass on our cultural genes.



**Figure 2.** Ancient and Modern World

In art creation, the use of color can directly affect the viewer’s perception of the space in the picture. Through clever color contrasts and harmonies, artists can create a sense of space that is both real and beyond

reality. For example, when expressing the depth of space, artists often use the principle of color perspective. Nearby scenes are brightly colored and highly saturated, while distant scenes are grey and less saturated, and through this color change, the picture shows a clear sense of spatial hierarchy. In addition, the contrasting use of warm and cool colors can also create a sense of space. Generally, warm colors give people a sense of forwardness and proximity, while cool colors give people a sense of backwardness and distance. By placing warm-colored objects in the foreground and cool-colored objects in the background, the artist can create a back-and-forth relationship in space. However, in the above black-and-white work, instead of using color perspective, composition and contrast of light and dark are cleverly used to create a sense of space. The modern city towers over the clouds and occupies most of the space in the picture, while the ancient buildings are low and dilapidated, squeezed in the bottom of the picture. Through this contrast in size and spatial arrangement, the picture shows a clear sense of oppression and tension and also suggests the impact of modern civilization on traditional culture.

## 4. Color and artistic conception

### 4.1. Connotation of mood

Artistic conception is a unique aesthetic category in Chinese culture, it is not the objective existence of the scene, but the sublimation of subjective perception. It is an artistic realm formed by the fusion of emotion and scene, virtuality and reality, sensibility and rationality. The artist incorporates their own emotions into the works through elements such as scenery, atmosphere, and images, guiding the viewers to resonate in the process of appreciating the works and then realizing the deep meaning contained in the works<sup>[4]</sup>. The creation of artistic conception is not a simple accumulation of scenery but requires the artist to have a profound understanding of nature, society, and life. It often transcends specific time and space, pointing to a more universal and eternal spiritual pursuit.

### 4.2. Color and mood creation

Color is one of the most influencing elements in visual art, which can directly affect human senses and trigger different psychological associations and emotional resonance. This characteristic of color is used as an important means to build the mood. The clever use of light and dark, warm and cold, saturation, contrast, and other aspects of color can render the atmosphere, accentuate the mood, and deepen the theme, thus creating an intriguing mood atmosphere and guiding the viewer to enter the art world created by me.

For example, in the work shown in **Figure 3**, high-contrast cold and warm tones are used to introduce the viewer to an emotional world full of tension. In the picture, the expression on the figure's face is intriguing, seemingly happy or sad, triggering the viewer's infinite reverie. The two hands reaching out seem to be sending a sincere invitation to the viewers, inviting them to enter a dream world full of infinite possibilities and beauty. Instead of choosing bright and vivid colors to depict the beauty of the dream world, softer and warmer tones are chosen to add a touch of warmth and mystery to the image. In contrast, the real world is shrouded in cold blue tones, hinting at the depressing and helpless nature of real life. Through this strong color contrast, the painting tries to evoke the viewer's deepest desire for freedom and happiness, so that the viewer can temporarily forget about the troubles of real life and obtain a moment of relaxation and solace of the soul while enjoying the work.

This painting is not just a depiction of a dream world, but also my concern and thinking about the spiritual plight of modern people. In today's society, with fierce competition and enormous pressure, people often get lost in the quagmire of reality and find it difficult to find a place for their souls to live. Through this work, it is hoped to open a window to the spiritual world for the viewers, so that they can feel the charm of art in the symphony of colors and find the innocence and dreams deep in their hearts.



**Figure 3.** Invitation

## 5. Conclusion

Color is an important and indispensable part of the art of painting, which not only gives visual beauty to the picture but also carries the artist's rich emotions and profound thoughts. Through the clever use of color, the artist can create a unique atmosphere and lead the viewer into the spiritual world constructed by the artist. The reason why all the great artists in history are great is not only because they have feelings, or because they can use color tones to express their emotions and the high skill of expressing the mood, but also because the emotions they express are positive, noble and sincere<sup>[5]</sup>. When appreciating paintings, we should not only pay attention to the content and form of the picture but also feel the emotion and mood conveyed by the colors, to truly appreciate the charm of the art of painting.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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