

The Influence of Chinese Contemporary Cultural Environment on Printmaking Expression

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Abstract: With the development of the economy and society, social and material life has greatly enriched, and people's spiritual and cultural needs are also growing. As a form of expression of traditional culture, printmaking has undergone historical changes, integrated into the current connotation of the times, and reflected different artistic characteristics. In this diversified environment, Chinese printmaking artists have been impacted, and digital technology and modern printing technology have also promoted the transformation of printmaking art. Based on this, this paper analyzes and studies the influence of the Chinese contemporary cultural environment on the expression form of printmaking, examines the impact of global integration on the development of printmaking, explores the fusion of publishing painting techniques and contemporary culture, and analyzes the changes in printmaking formal language under the contemporary cultural environment for reference.

Keywords: Contemporary cultural environment; Printmaking expression form; Spiritual and cultural needs

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1. Introduction

Printmaking originated from the need for image reproduction, and after a long historical development, it has become an important category in the field of art. Towards the end of the Republic of China, Chinese printmaking underwent significant changes, displaying characteristics of diversification. Within the contemporary cultural environment, the aesthetic value and standards of Chinese printmaking continue to evolve. Hence, there is a need to emphasize innovation and reform to integrate contemporary and traditional thoughts, thereby advancing the development of printmaking art.

2. The impact of global integration on the development of printmaking

Global integration facilitates the broader dissemination of China's traditional culture, fosters convenient cultural communication, promotes enhanced cultural exchange, and broadens artists' horizons. Foreign ideas and concepts also permeate domestically, influencing emerging printmaking technologies and significantly shaping

contemporary printmaking. These ideas and concepts directly influence artists' creative processes. Against the backdrop of new ideas and technological impacts, evaluating the intrinsic value of contemporary printmaking becomes a pressing concern for Chinese contemporary printmakers ^[1].

Each year, numerous printmaking exhibitions, ranging from displays of elementary school students' artistic works to those of international masters, take place both domestically and internationally. These widely attended exhibitions profoundly impact printmaking creation. Notably, these large-scale exhibitions significantly influence the development of local printmaking in China, inspiring printmakers to cultivate innovative creative ideas and facilitating artistic exchanges ^[2].

3. The expression form of contemporary printmaking

As an independent form of artistic expression, the process of printmaking entails not only a general transition from figurative to abstract but also involves the depiction and manipulation of various materials, thereby showcasing its unique artistic beauty and cultural characteristics. In traditional printmaking, the term "plate" encompasses various expression forms such as flat, concave, convex, and intaglio. With the advent and advancement of new media, digital plates, jute plates, pre-sensitized (PS) plates, and ceramic plates have emerged successively, altering not only the presentation format of traditional printmaking art but also expanding the fundamental concept of a "plate." Consequently, this broadens the avenue for printmaking artists to convey their emotions and artistic pursuits ^[3].

From a technical standpoint, printmaking technology and formal language are continually evolving towards modernization, diversification, and integration, particularly under the amalgamation of traditional cultural characteristics and modern artistic language, leading to the emergence of a vibrant printmaking style. Artistically, printmaking skills primarily involve grasping the aesthetic properties of materials, enabling viewers with the capacity for thought and reflection to comprehend the essence of art ^[4]. Thus, technology holds significant importance in printmaking creation. Conceptually, printmaking art can be categorized into expressive techniques and visual language. Expressive techniques entail methods that integrate the creator's spiritual core, thoughts, and emotions into artistic works, while visual language encompasses technique expressions characterized by the creator's personal or stylistic traits. The visual symbols of printmaking art encapsulate the spiritual core, thoughts, and emotions of the works. The synergy between the two is the essence and crux of printmaking ^[5]. With the enhancement and optimization of contemporary printmaking's expression techniques and material media, its expression form and language have garnered new technical support, thereby experiencing profound influence from contemporary thought and cultural environment. This influence manifests in two aspects. Firstly, contemporary printmaking integrates contemporary culture and technology, especially with the advent of digital technology, which significantly enhances the convenience and modern visual effects of printmaking. Secondly, it embraces and integrates various creative means, enhancing the diversity and openness of contemporary printmaking, and gradually trending towards greater integration ^[6].

Moreover, from the perspective of content expression, contemporary printmaking incorporates the value orientation, aesthetic psychology, and humanistic concerns of printmaking artists in the new era. While traditional printmaking exhibits high realism, contemporary printmaking further imbues individual concepts and unique emotions onto traditional realism, intensifying sensory stimulation. For instance, Zhou Jirong's "Beijing" depicts the living conditions and environmental characteristics of old Beijing through elements such as Beijing's layout, traditional courtyard houses, city walls, and old Beijing residents. By blending traditional and contemporary content, as well as realistic elements with the work's character, it achieves a highly expressive portrayal ^[7].

4. The integration of printmaking techniques and contemporary culture

The relationship between printmaking's artistry and technology is inherently unequal, yet sophisticated technology can enhance the artistic expression and value of a work. Artistic expression is typically conveyed through the visual form at a material level, with consideration given to the expression of ideas and technical presentation during the production process. If art is solely discussed in terms of technology, the resulting works may lack appreciation value ^[8].

4.1. Innovative changes in printmaking materials

In the current era, the artistic materials and media used in printmaking have undergone significant changes. Influenced by contemporary creative ideas and concepts, printmakers' innovative use of materials and media imbues printmaking with fresh characteristics. The material media used in printmaking, in terms of both visual and tactile aspects, including the texture of the paper and the imagery presented, evoke various sensations and psychological effects. Through the combined effects of visual and psychological stimuli, viewers can develop an intuitive understanding of the work, resulting in a unique aesthetic experience. In the creation of printmaking, printmakers must employ creative thinking to analyze and ensure that the art of printmaking is vividly expressed ^[9].

4.2. The application of digital new media in printmaking

In the 20th century, humanity entered the digital age, marking a new phase in social and industrial development characterized by digitalization. Digital technology not only impacts daily life but also influences the development of modern and contemporary art. The emergence of digital printmaking poses a new challenge to the overall development of printmaking. Digital technology disrupts conventional ideas and necessitates continuous adjustments to technical means and artistic concepts to enrich the cultural significance of printmaking. Contemporary printmakers must infuse new vitality into printmaking based on the evolving characteristics of the times ^[10].

5. The evolution of printmaking formal language under the contemporary cultural environment

5.1. The unique formal beauty of Chinese contemporary prints

Art is derived from life, and life serves as its wellspring. If a print is divorced from real-life experiences, it may lack the depth of human experience. Even with superb expressive qualities, a work devoid of life's essence struggles to embody true artistic expression. Formal beauty is an aesthetic consideration; a work lacking in beauty, despite its form, may struggle to be recognized as art and capture attention. The realm of Chinese contemporary printmaking art possesses its distinct characteristics. To appreciate the unique beauty of Chinese contemporary prints, one must understand the essence of Chinese printmaking art and infuse the concept of "Tao" into printmaking to create truly distinctive works ^[11].

5.2. The conceptual framework in contemporary printmakers' works

Contemporary printmaking art encapsulates the ethos of contemporary art, directly influencing the creativity and innovative evolution of printmakers. Contemporary art exists within an era of information hybridity, marked by disorder yet open to free development. Consequently, the ideas expressed by contemporary printmakers are more dynamic, and their artworks exhibit greater freedom compared to traditional works. Moreover, a printmaker's artistic and cultural background directly influences the presentation of their works. Contemporary

printmaking demands a higher cultural sophistication to establish resonance with the contemporary era and produce works of innovative merit. As traditional concepts intertwine with contemporary culture, printmakers' subjective awareness intensifies, leading to the creation of artworks imbued with unique value through their interactions with external inspiration ^[12].

5.3. The significance and constraints of the contemporary cultural environment on printmaking development

The contemporary cultural environment has both positive and limiting aspects on printmaking's development.

5.3.1. The significance of the contemporary cultural environment on printmaking

The perception of the printmaker holds significant value in the creation of printmaking art, reflecting the characteristics of a particular historical period. This is attributed to the theoretical framework and media utilized in printmaking, enabling vivid expression of ideas and fostering the advancement of printmaking art. China's aesthetic philosophy, rich with the unity of nature and humanity, carries invaluable relevance for contemporary printmaking. Over millennia, the essence of Chinese culture, steeped in traditional aesthetic principles, embodies distinctive national characteristics. Printmakers should actively engage with accumulated knowledge, digesting and incorporating it thoughtfully while innovating within the contemporary milieu. Yet, amid the evolving landscape of traditional aesthetics, reconciling traditional requirements with external cultural influences poses a pressing concern for today's printmakers ^[13].

5.3.2. Limitations of the contemporary cultural environment on printmaking

Several limitations impede contemporary printmaking: Firstly, amidst the rapid evolution of contemporary society, some printmaking works lack alignment with the era's artistic ethos, failing to reflect contemporary ideas. Secondly, neglecting the finer details and emotional depth in the creation process hampers the essence of printmaking artworks. Third, compared to other disciplines, printmaking education in art colleges lags, resulting in fewer independent artistic endeavors and waning public interest. Lastly, technical constraints and expressive forms hinder the deep exploration of printmaking artistry. Unlike traditional painting, printmaking necessitates proficiency in both artistic and printing techniques, challenging its development. Consequently, fostering novel printmaking ideologies, elucidating its contemporary spiritual core, and contextualizing cultural concepts are pivotal endeavors ^[14].

5.4. Expansion and diversification of printmaking forms within the contemporary cultural environment

Amidst the backdrop of modern society, marked by rapid scientific and technological advancements and deepening cultural exchanges, printmaking art undergoes a transformative phase reflective of the zeitgeist. Leveraging contemporary science and technology, printmakers propel the development of innovative technical means, ushering in a reformulation of printmaking art. Within this new era, Chinese contemporary printmaking transcends the confines of cultural norms, empowering printmakers to express their emotional perspectives and ideas without inhibition ^[15].

The expansion and evolution of Chinese contemporary printmaking necessitates adherence to the discipline's intrinsic values and unique forms as guiding principles. In the contemporary era, drawing from diverse art forms becomes imperative to establish the core of contemporary printmaking. This approach enriches the expressive potential and humanistic essence of contemporary printmaking, aligning it harmoniously with the spirit of the times. In the creative process, it's essential not only to incorporate superficial elements but also

to construct a spiritual hierarchy system, employing cultural elements to convey Chinese cultural concepts. By infusing traditional Chinese culture and constructing a layered spiritual framework, printmaking can articulate the profound essence of Chinese culture, presenting its spiritual core authentically. Chinese contemporary culture exerts a multifaceted influence on printmaking expression, encompassing various levels of information. Thus, within the current social milieu, it's imperative to cultivate a contemporary cultural and artistic identity rooted in our unique developmental perspective, positioning ourselves firmly within the global cultural landscape.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of Chinese contemporary culture on printmaking expression exhibits contemporary characteristics and encompasses a broader spectrum of content. To foster the advancement of contemporary printmaking, it is imperative to enhance innovative exploration. Influenced by contemporary art, printmakers' creative endeavors transcend their traditional artistic paradigms, focusing more on how printmaking forms and artistic expressions can adapt to the trend of diversified expression. The evolution of the times necessitates a fusion of old and new elements to align with the developmental ethos of the new era.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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