



TECHNIQUE EXPRESSION AND INNOVATION OF METALLIC COLOR IN CHINESE
CONTEMPORARY PAINTING : A CASE STUDY OF CHINESE PAINTING BY CHINESE
ARTIST BETWEEN 1990 TO 2023

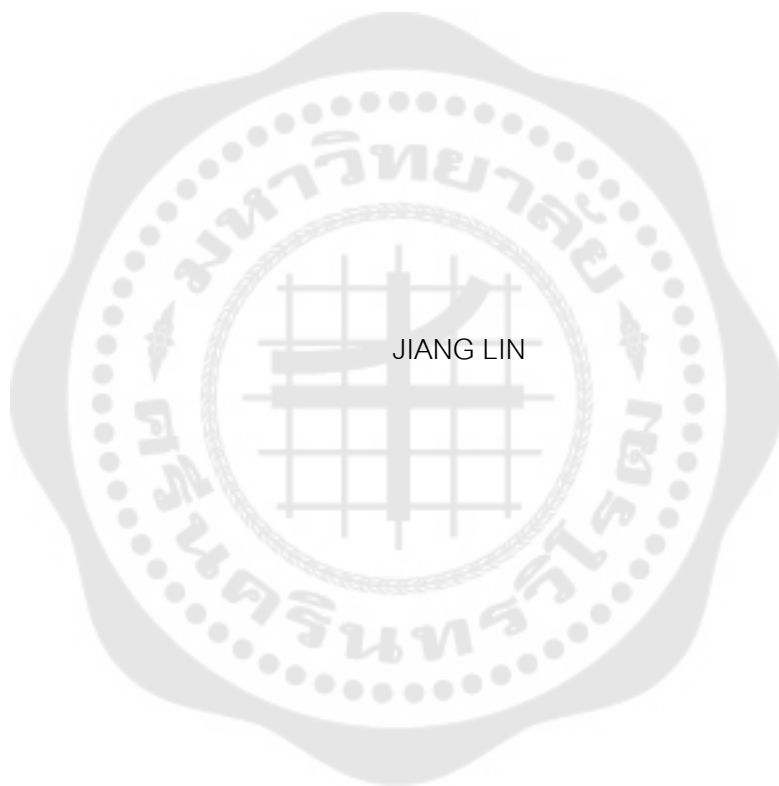
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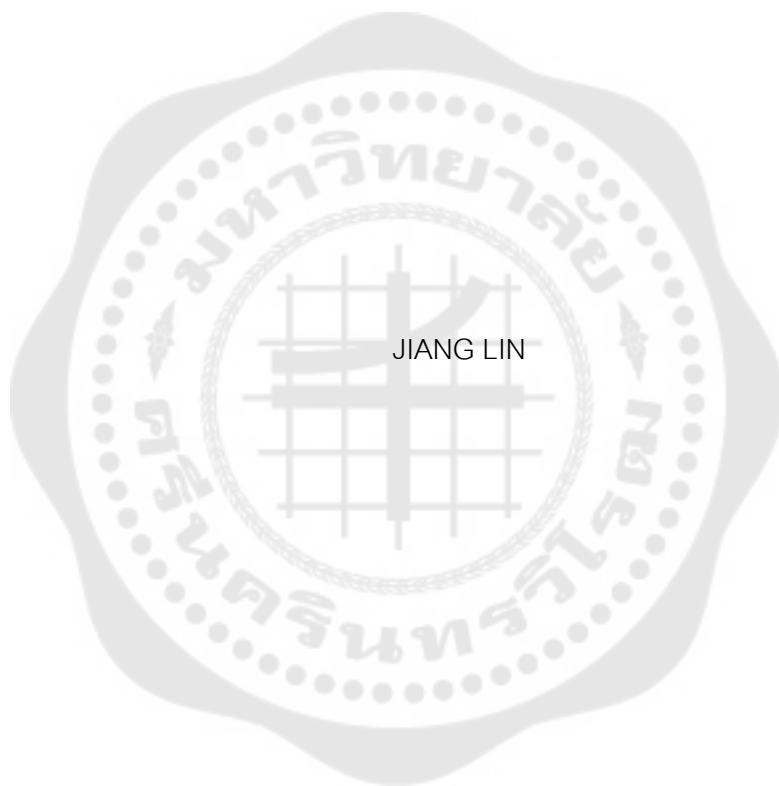


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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of DOCTOR OF ARTS
(D.A. (Arts and Culture Research))

Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University

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BY
JIANG LIN

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the technical expression and innovation of metallic colors in Chinese paintings, as well as the aesthetic interest and cultural connotation presented by the works. By analyzing traditional Chinese paintings that use metallic colors and selected works of four well-known contemporary artists—whose works have been selected, awarded, or collected by art museums—this study explores the background of the creation of the artists' works, their artistic characteristics, ideology, and the reasons for the use of metallic colors in their works. Data were collected through literature analysis and interviews with three artists, four university teachers, one curator, one doctoral student and one university student. The results of the study show that contemporary Chinese artists actively explore the use of metallic colors in their creations, not only as an important part of their works, but also as an artistic language to express the uniqueness of their artworks. The innovation in the use of metallic color in the works is based on the integration of Chinese and foreign painting languages with the unique cultural connotation and aesthetic interest of China.

Keyword : Metallic Color, Chinese Contemporary Painting, Aesthetic Interest, Cultural Connotation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In ancient China, smelting and forging techniques were well developed, and gold leaf has been found in archaeological relics from the Shang Dynasty. In the early times, metallic colors were widely used on artifacts to help them form more delicate styles and to achieve practical and aesthetic effects. With the cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries in ancient times, Buddhism was introduced to China and developed in the Han Dynasty. Metallic colors were used in a large number of Buddhist statues, and there were both full-body and partial gold stickers. Later, the use of metallic colors began to be used in mural painting. During the Tang Dynasty, the technique of using metallic colors in mural paintings was already mature, and later on, the mural paintings of the Yongle Palace and the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple in Beijing developed the technique of using metallic colors. Metallic colors are used together with mineral colors to achieve beautiful artistic effects.

The use of color in Chinese paintings reached a peak in the Tang and Song dynasties, when mineral, vegetable, and metallic colors were used in combination, and the works were colorful but not vulgar. In the Yuan Dynasty, due to the psychology of avoiding the world after the change of dynasties and many other reasons, Chinese painting, which was mainly based on brush and ink, became the mainstream of painting, which gradually emphasized ink and lightened the use of color, and accordingly the use of metallic colors in the picture also gradually decreased.

It is worth further exploring that in ancient times, Japan and China had frequent cultural exchanges, and Japan even sent people to study Chinese culture and art, and the technique of using metallic colors in artworks was also imported into Japan in frequent exchanges, and in the process of absorbing and integrating Chinese art, the colors of gold and silver conformed to the aesthetic demands of Japanese rulers and nobles, and the material technique was constantly developed and combined with the characteristics of Japan's own country to form a unique form of art.

After the reform and opening up, the influence of Western art trends on traditional Chinese painting prompted Chinese painters to re-examine traditional art and seek innovation in their paintings, to look for resources in the traditional language system, and to enrich the means of expression. It was only in the 1980s that some painters began to pay more attention to the materials used in Chinese paintings and to explore the reasons why modern pigments are prone to discoloration and why the metallic and mineral colors of traditional paintings remain lustrous and radiant after thousands of years. In the 1990s, with the rapid development of China's economy and the diversification of culture and art, artists looked for nourishment from traditional murals and folk art, and the colors of Chinese paintings began to show a diversified appearance.

In the 90s, a group of artists who went to Japan to study brought back to China the improved metallic colors and techniques of Japan, and most of them taught in major art schools across the country, which led to the craze of learning metallic colors. Since then, works using metallic and mineral colors have appeared in major art exhibitions in China, which also aroused the enthusiasm of a group of young students. The artists tried to apply these materials and techniques in an appropriate and harmonious way.

Some of the artists were inevitably influenced by Japanese paintings when they first came into contact with metallic colors, and their pictures were overly decorative, or even the traces of production were too obvious(Zhang, 1996). Obviously, the works growing up in the Chinese culture infiltration must be deeply cultivated in the soil of Chinese traditional painting, and the creation background, artistic characteristics, artistic ideology of Chinese traditional painting, and the reasons for the use of metallic colors in the works should be specifically analyzed in order to find out the new ideas and methods that can be combined with the use of metallic colors from the traditional art of painting and to let the Chinese paintings glow with a new life and luster without departing from the traditional roots.

However, after the color-based Chinese painting flowed into the folk painting system, it mainly served for religious painting, and as a painter, there was no one to

make a biography for them(Jiang, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to sort out the history and cultural heritage of metallic color in Chinese painting, as well as its development and changes in different periods, and study the technical expression of metallic color in traditional Chinese painting.

Although metallic color has gradually developed from a picture embellishment to an important material and painting language in Chinese painting, with many users, the number and quality of awards and selections in art exhibitions are improving, and there are many related controversies and discussions; however, due to the fact that it was not valued in ancient times, not many related ancient documents have survived. The modern theoretical literature mostly focuses on the application of techniques and analysis of works, but not much has been done to explore and analyze the oriental aesthetic culture and aesthetic interests embodied in it.

However, how to use metallic colors in Chinese paintings so that the works can reach a balance between inheritance of tradition and innovation is an issue worthy of in-depth study. Therefore, in-depth study of the technical expression and innovation of metallic colors in Chinese paintings, revealing the historical and cultural background of its technical expression, further exploring the cultural connotation and aesthetic characteristics of metallic colors in Chinese paintings, and searching for the cultural lineage of metallic colors in Chinese paintings from the root in order to carry out a better artistic creation can also provide new perspectives and methods for the study of the application of metallic colors in the field of painting.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the technical expression of metallic colors in traditional Chinese painting.
2. To study the technical expression, innovation of metallic colors, aesthetic interest, and cultural connotations in Chinese contemporary painting through the works of four famous artists between 1990 and 2023.

Research Questions

1. How do traditional Chinese visual arts and foreign paintings influence the technical expression of metallic colors in Chinese painting?

2. How can metallic color techniques be used innovatively in modern art contexts while maintaining the traditional spirit and cultural characteristics of Chinese painting?

3. How does the use of metallic colors reflect and influence the aesthetic interest and cultural connotation of Chinese painting?

Research Significance

1. Regarding cultural preservation and heritage, the use of metallic colors serves as a complement and evolution of traditional Chinese painting techniques. While metallic hues are less prevalent than ink colors in Chinese painting, they possess distinct worth and significance in creative expression and cultural heritage that warrants attention. The application of metallic hues can enhance the visual impact of the artwork while expanding the color palette in painting, rendering Chinese art more modern. Nonetheless, during the initial phase of the resurgence of color-based Chinese painting, there was a propensity to uncritically pursue novelty in the artworks. This study examines and analyzes the background and rationale for the utilization of metallic hues in Chinese artworks to enhance our comprehension of metallic colors and their methodologies. Examining the cultural significance and aesthetic appeal of metallic hues in Chinese paintings can facilitate the preservation and transmission of traditional Chinese culture.

2. This study examines the application of metallic colors in the works of four artists from 1990 to 2023, investigating their efforts to develop a painting language that reflects contemporary perspectives while maintaining the traditional essence of Chinese art. It offers a compelling case for the modernization and evolution of Chinese painting and presents targeted recommendations for the adaptation and innovation of techniques to better align with the aesthetic preferences of today's audience.

Definition of Terms

Metallic Color: Metallic color refers to a type of Chinese painting color. Literally understand the metallic color is gold, silver, copper and aluminum, etc. after artificial processing and production into foil, powder, clay state, from the form can be metal foil, can also be metal powder, metallic color in addition to the inherent color of the metal,

there are physical means, chemical means to make its color after discoloration of color, including black, blue, purple, etc., a rich and diverse variety of colors, collectively referred to as the color. The development of metallic color marks the development of human production technology.

Chinese Contemporary Painting: Chinese painting, in a broad sense, refers to traditional Chinese paintings, including scroll paintings, murals, New Year's paintings, prints, lacquer paintings, etc. It is one of the rare types of paintings in the world that are named by the name of a country (Kong, 2017). The Chinese contemporary painting described in this article refers to the color-oriented Chinese painting with metallic and mineral colors as the main coloring materials. Through repeated rendering, multiple coloring, and the use of metallic and mineral colors with the power to cover the picture painted by the colorful, strong visual impact of the works.

Innovation: The innovation mentioned in this study refers to the modern expansion of metallic color material techniques and the change of the function of metallic color in the creation of Chinese paintings.

Study in Japan: Some artists went to Japan in the late 80's and early 90's to study the technique of metallic color materials in Japanese colleges and universities, and then returned to China to teach in Chinese universities and gradually be recognized in the mainstream Chinese painting world.

Local Growth: Graduated from a professional art academy in China, a Chinese artist who is good at using metallic color techniques and gradually recognized in the mainstream Chinese painting world.

Scope of the Study

1. Sample selection: The paintings selected in this paper are Chinese paintings in which metallic colors are used in the creation of paintings. The scope of work selection is paintings created in the period of 1990-2023.

2. Selection of four well-known artists who are good at using metallic colors. Categorized by the artists' study experiences studying in Japan and growing up in China, two artists who returned from studying in Japan and two artists who grew up in

China. Criteria for selecting artists: Well-known artists who use metallic colors in their Chinese paintings.

Study in Japan:

Zhang Daoxi, born in 1955 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, was a postgraduate student at the Research Laboratory of Kayama Matazo, Tokyo University of the Arts, from 1990 to 1993; a researcher at Waseda University; and a lecturer of Chinese painting at the Japan-China Friendship Association. Professor at Hubei Institute of Fine Arts. Member of the China Artists Association.

Guo Jiying, born in Nei Mongol in 1959, received his master's degree in modern painting at the Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tama Art University, Japan, 1990-1994, under the supervision of Yasuro Ueno. Associate Professor, Capital Normal University. Member of the China Artists Association.

Local growth:

Yan Haohao graduated from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 2002. She is a member of the China Artists Association and is currently the vice president of Wuhan Painting Academy.

Yang Yang graduated from the School of Chinese Painting of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2011 with a master's degree. She is a member of the China Artists Association and a member of the China Artists Association Comprehensive Material Painting and Artwork Conservation and Restoration Art Committee.

From the works created by the above artists, eight Chinese paintings using metallic colors that have been awarded prizes, selected in Chinese or foreign exhibitions, or collected in art museums and have developed in both form and content are selected for study.

Expected Results

To fill the gaps in the current theoretical research on the application of metallic colors in Chinese painting, and to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for future art creation and teaching.

Study Framework

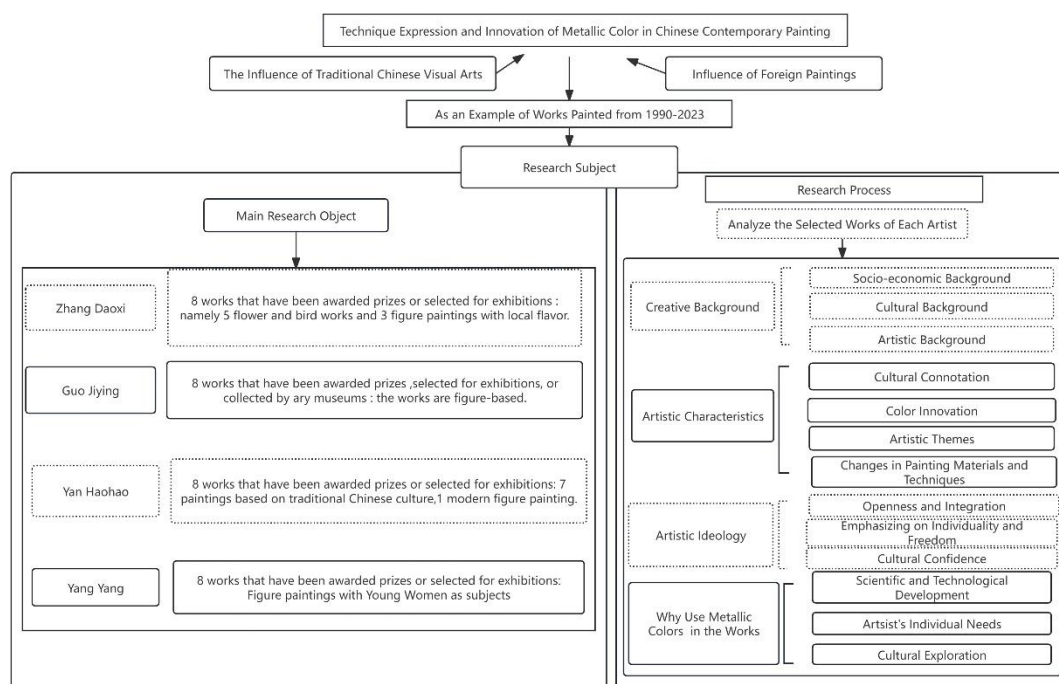


Figure 1 Research Framwork

Source:Designed by the author

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Metallic Color Concept

Metallic, in a broad sense, is not a specific color but a color with a metallic surface luster. That is to say, as long as the color with a metallic luster is a metallic color. Metallic color can refer to both metal materials and metal color.

In ancient times, metallic color mainly referred to gold and silver. According to Tang Hou's "Ancient and Modern Paintings," "Li Si Xun's landscape paintings featured metallic colors, creating a unique artistic style that was widely imitated and passed down in later generations of landscape paintings."(Zhang, 2023) Mi Fu's "History of Painting" records that "Liben's paintings were all colored, and the fine silver was used to make the moonlight color, and the cloth was on the ground."(C.P. Jiang, 2021).

Record in Volume 10 of Deng Chun's "Hua Ji" during the Song Dynasty, "The western sky in India's Nalanda temple monks, many paintings of the Buddha and bodhisattvas, luohan statues, to the western sky cloth for the ... is coated with five colors in the painting, the face of the gold or vermilion for the ground."From this we can see that the use of metallic colors in Tang and Song paintings was quite common, with gold and silver being used in parallel and gold being the main color.(Chen, 2021).

Metallic colors, as documented in 1955 in A Study of the Colors of Chinese Paintings by Yu Fei'an (F. A. Yu, 2019), mainly referred to gold and silver until after 1990, when Chinese artists relearned the techniques of using metallic colors from Japan, and the range of materials used for metallic colors began to be extended. Most scholars agree that metallic colors are mainly made from platinum, gold, silver, copper, and aluminum, which are hammered into very thin metal foils and very fine metal powders(Song, 2021).

The metallic colors studied in this paper are mainly the hues of metallic materials: gold, silver, copper, aluminum, etc., when processed into the materials used for painting.

Material Classification of Metallic Color

Metallic color is divided into two states from the point of view of the type of material: one is foil, which is mainly a very thin sheet of metal hammered by using the extensibility of metal; the other is powder, which is a metal powder made by using metal foil and then processing and grinding it.(C.P Jiang, 2021).

Wang Xiongfei's "Rock Painting Textbook" introduces the metal colors in foil form, including gold foil, silver foil, copper foil, and aluminum foil, and lists the advantages and disadvantages of using these metal foils in painting(Wang, 2011).

Yan Jingliang's "Teaching of Rock Painting Techniques" summarizes 14 types of foils according to the gold content of each metal in the foil and the oxidized form with heating and divides powdered metallic colors into 13 types according to the metal particles contained in the metal powder.(Yan, 2018).

There are stable and non-stable metallic colors. Gold and aluminum are very stable metallic colors that will not rust, discolor, deteriorate, or lose their luster. Silver and copper are non-stable colors, easy to oxidize and change color in the air, and sulfur heating can be in the process of temperature control to form a variety of colors. Therefore, there is a wide variety of materials with metallic colors.

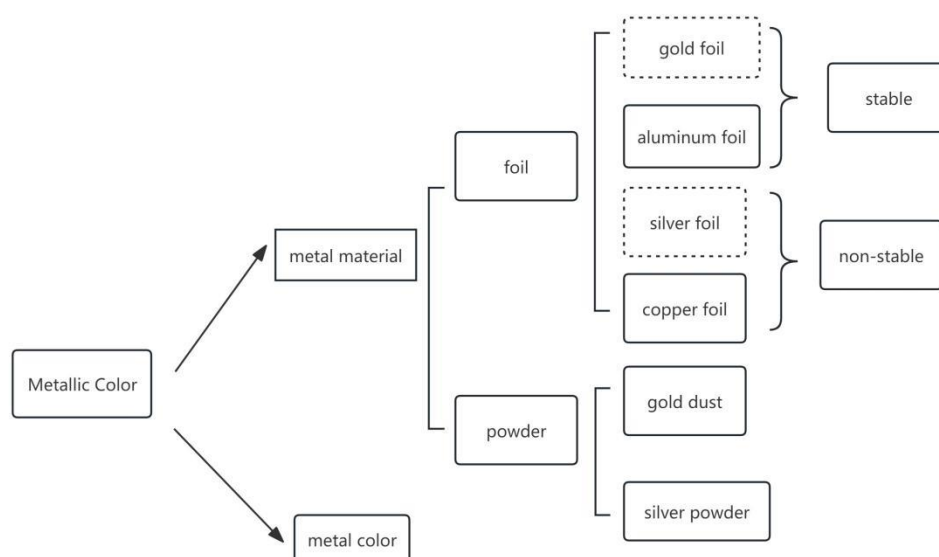


Figure 2 Material Classification of Metallic Color

Source:Designed by the author

The Use of Metallic Colors in Traditional Chinese Visual Arts

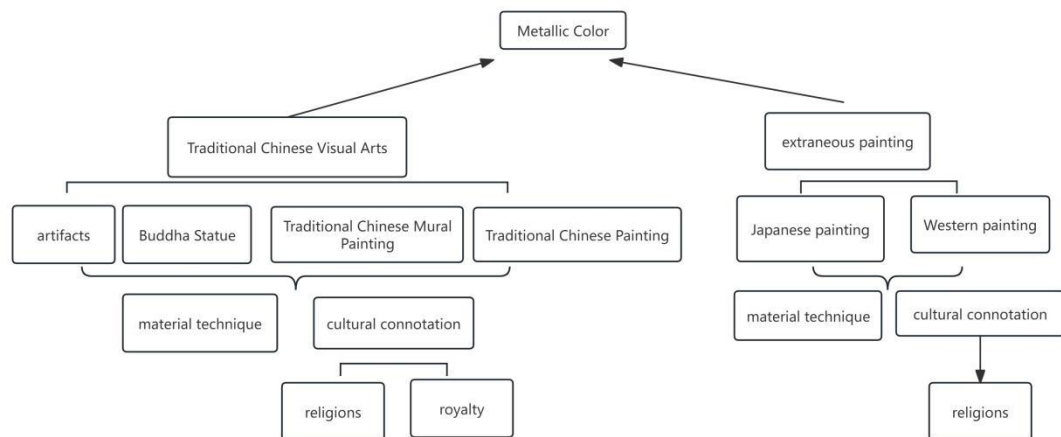


Figure 3 Metallic Colors

Source: Designed by the author

Artifacts

Early Chinese metallic color is mainly manifested in the artifacts, many artifacts are made of metal casting, metal artifacts come with metallic color. Before the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, gold, silver, copper and other metallic materials were collectively known as gold. After the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period there is a specific classification(Li, 2011). "The historical record - Ping Huaishu" said: "gold has three levels, gold for the top, white gold for the middle, red gold for the bottom." Among them, white gold refers to silver, red gold refers to copper, which is a different metal to make the class division(Li, 2016). Ancient people have long been using metal products, service in people's lives, art, metal is an indispensable part of people's daily lives, from people's food and living, artifacts, construction are not without the participation of metal texture of the tools.

China's metal craft began to appear in the beginning was dependent on the bronze, and then gradually towards maturity, independent development, self-contained system and successive generations of inheritance. From simple to complex, metal crafts are constantly innovated in the inheritance, which not only integrate the essence of

metal crafts of various Chinese nationalities, but also borrow the metal craft techniques of ancient foreign countries, and bear the cultural characteristics and marks of the times of different historical periods in China(Li, 2016).

Buddha Statue

After the appearance of gold and silver foil in the Shang Dynasty, until the end of the Han Dynasty, it was only used for the surface decoration of all kinds of artifacts(Wu, 2005). During the two Han dynasties, Buddhism was introduced into our country and developed rapidly, and the rulers combined it with politics to consolidate their rights and got the strong support of the nobles, which greatly promoted the spread of Buddhism, and the construction of Buddhist things was greatly promoted throughout the country, and the statues of Buddha came into being, and the gold foil began to be used in sculpture(Lu, 2019).

As the saying goes, 'People need clothes and clothing, while Buddhas need gold clothing.' The Buddha's 'gold clothing' refers to attaching gold to the Buddha statue. The earliest record of gold pasting on Buddha statues comes from Yang Jiezhong's "Luoyang Qie lan Ji" during the Northern Wei Dynasty, which states that "the stone statues in the White Elephant Palace Temple are covered in gold foil, dazzling the eyes." At the same time, "Luoyang Qie lan Ji" often refers to Buddha statues as "golden statues", specifically referring to those pasted with gold(Wu, 2005).

The article "Where did the gold decoration of Buddhist statues come from? - Exploring the origin of gold decoration on early Chinese Buddhist statues" summarizes the number of representative statues decorated with gold during the period of North and South Dynasties in China, the distribution of the collection of Chinese and foreign places published in Gandhara statues, early Chinese Buddhist statues decorated with gold to the material and process is divided into four categories, to explore the reason why these statues of the Buddha decorated with gold will be born with the root cause of the diversity of the appearance of, that with its source Gandhara statues of the Buddha. Later, with the introduction of Buddhism into China, Buddha statues decorated with gold leaf gradually spread in China. By the 6th century AD, due to the influence of exotic

cultures, the Yecheng area stone statues decorated with gold earlier appeared different from the Gandhara region, from the early statues of Buddha all decorated with gold to localized decoration of gold, presenting the gold body of the Buddha statues containing Chinese cultural characteristics. The article points out that this style and method of gilding was widely spread in Yecheng and Qingzhou in China. The author analyzes and concludes that the decoration of Buddha statues with gold is not only related to the development of craftsmanship and social aesthetic changes, but also to the changes in the development of Buddhism itself. In addition to worshipping and supporting the Buddha, the core demand of the people who decorated the Buddha with gold was mainly to fulfill their own expectations and needs on the physical and spiritual levels.(Li, 2021).

Xia Mingcai's research from the Longxing Temple site unearthed more than 400 of the Northern Wei to the Northern Song Dynasty Buddhist statues, summed up the Buddha, bodhisattva, and flying protector of the Dragon's use of metal color location, and analyzed the use of metal color in the Buddha's artistic characteristics(Xia, 2014).

Liu Peng's research that the use of gold sticker technology of the Buddha, mostly from the hands of the temple craftsmen, the text will be excavated in Qingzhou Longxing Temple Buddha on the gold sticker is divided into three categories, respectively, is the Buddha sticker gold, bodhisattva statues sticker gold, backlight sticker gold, and analysis of these three types of sticker gold part of the different reasons and sticking in different places of the color with the style(Liu, 2013).

It can be seen that the use of metallic colors in Buddha statues is influenced by foreign art, and after the fusion of Chinese and foreign cultures, it gradually develops and forms the way of applying gold with Chinese local characteristics. People apply gold color to Buddha statues to express their extreme admiration for the Buddha and to seek spiritual solace through faith. This form of artistic expression has become a figurative expression of people's spiritual pursuit.

Traditional Chinese Mural Painting

Buddhist art makes extensive use of metallic colors, not only by applying gold leaf to Buddha statues but also by applying this method to ancient Buddhist murals.

The use of metallic colors in ancient murals is a unique artistic imagination in the history of ancient painting art. The use of metallic colors in the mural painting presents the artistic effect of “gold and blue”, giving the viewer a strong visual impact, unconsciously allowing the viewer to be automatically brought into the world of the Buddha's Pure Land, so that people from the bottom of their hearts to give birth to the heart of reverence and worship. In addition to religious beliefs, architectural forms, the story painted in the mural itself, the atmosphere created by the much larger statue-making method, and other colors with the metal color, also in the visual level plays an unnoticeable role in the whole piece of work adds a mysterious temperament that transcends reality.

Gold foil is a common metallic color in traditional mural paintings, and in addition to the ancient technique of applying gold, there are also techniques such as gold tracing, and raised line gilding. Like the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, Shanxi Yongle Palace, Beijing Fahai Temple, and other frescoes in the foil technique are very delicate.

Dunhuang Frescoes

Dunhuang is located in the western part of Gansu Province, China. In 111 B.C., Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty set up four counties in the west of the river, and Dunhuang was one of them, being at the westernmost end of the four counties, and was the gateway to the west during the Western Han Dynasty, and with the prosperity of the Ancient Silk Road, Dunhuang became the town of the cultural exchange between the East and the West. (Zhao, 2016).

The Dunhuang Grottoes include the Mogao Grottoes, the Yulin Grottoes, the Eastern Thousand Buddha Caves, the Western Thousand Buddha Caves, and five temples in Subei County. The Mogao Caves, as the main body of Dunhuang, are world-renowned for their painting forms, techniques, and sculptures, which are a fusion of

Chinese and Western nationalities. The Mogao Grottoes have been built by the hard work of many ethnic groups, presenting a wealth of ethnicity(Li, 2011).

Dunhuang mural development can not be separated from the prosperity of Buddhism, the Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties, and the prosperity of Buddhism to promote the development of Buddhist art in China. Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes began to be built in 366 A.D., the rise of religious sites, and the continued development of Dunhuang mural paintings to create good objective conditions.

There are very few records of the use of metallic colors in Dunhuang murals, and the latest research on Dunhuang murals focuses on the digital preservation of Dunhuang murals, the aesthetic characteristics of Dunhuang murals, the study of the characteristics of murals in various periods, the study of Dunhuang murals feeders, the study of Dunhuang murals' images, compositions, and colors, etc., and some of the research papers on Dunhuang murals have records of the use of metallic colors.

Li Jianzhen's master's thesis, "Chinese paintings of metal materials expressivity research" examines the reasons for the changes in the shapes of the figures in Dunhuang murals and suggests that the use of metallic colors in Dunhuang murals began in the early Tang Dynasty, when the technique of "beating gold foil" was created(Li, 2011).

The article "The producing area of Hecuba Juno application of pigmenton Dunhuang Grottoes art"(Wang, 2003), through the source of Dunhuang fresco pigment, chemical composition, application, and production technology research,, the pigments used in Dunhuang Grottoes are divided into three types: inorganic pigments, organic pigments, and non-pigmented substances. The researcher analyzed eighteen kinds of pigments according to historical documents and modern scientific and technological exploration and research and came to the conclusion that the three sources of mineral pigments used in Dunhuang mural paintings are as follows: one is the minerals of the local area near Dunhuang, which are made through certain physical processing; the other is the finished or semi-finished products transported from the mainland of the Central Plains; and the third one is the pigments that originated from

the ancient “Western Regions”. The text of the metal color has a more detailed record, revealing the metal color used in various dynasties, Dunhuang mural changes in characteristics, and evidence that most of the gold foil is the court reward or from the mainland to buy. From this study, we know that the prosperity of Dunhuang murals cannot be separated from the exchange and fusion of Chinese and foreign cultures in ancient times.

Pan Wenxun's study (Pan, 2010), which analyzes the use of color in Tang and pre-Tang Dunhuang murals from the perspective of how they were interpreted by art creators and painters. The researcher from the four aspects of the discussion, respectively: first, through the combining, analysis of Dunhuang mural paintings of the content of the Tang and before the Dunhuang murals of the evolution of the reasons for the evolution of the artistic style of the mural paintings; the second is to analyze the Tang and Tang and the pre-Tang Mogao Grottoes mural paintings of different periods of the characteristics of the color, to summarize the characteristics of color in traditional Chinese painting, and to identify the characteristics of color. Second, to analyze the color characteristics of Mogao Grottoes frescoes in different periods before Tang and Tang to summarize the characteristics and aesthetic approach of color in traditional Chinese painting; third, to analyze the reasons for the discoloration of the current status of the frescoes and the emergence of moist colors after the precipitation of time with the Oriental aesthetic; fourth, to analyze the influence of Mogao Grottoes frescoes on modern painting and art. These in-depth analyses for this paper to analyze the art of thought provide a retrospective reference. Her paper does not specifically go into the study of metallic colors alone, in which the reason for the current state of the mural paintings mentions that the place where the gold foil was pasted in the picture was dug up by the descendants, further illustrating the preciousness of the gold foil.

By analyzing the artistic style of Dunhuang murals, the thesis “The Study on the Decorative Language of the Dunhuang Murals” (J. J. Liu, 2007) discusses the decorative language in Dunhuang murals from four aspects and digs out why Dunhuang murals have this decorative language from the three aspects of the aesthetic concept of

both form and spirit, the philosophical root of the unity of mankind, and the harmony of the beauty of the interlacing of time and space. Although the text does not specifically analyze the decorative nature of metallic colors in Dunhuang murals, the analysis of the emergence of decorative language in Dunhuang murals provides a reference for the author's later analysis of why metallic colors are used in the works.

Frescoes in Yongle Palace

The frescoes of Yongle Palace are the most important group of Taoist frescoes, which reflect the highest achievement of Yuan Dynasty fresco art. Sanqing Hall is the main hall of Yongle Palace, and “Chao Yuan Tu” is located in Sanqing Hall, the four walls and fan walls on both sides of the frescoes. There are many figures in the painting, but they are sparse, echoing each other, and there are variations in unity. (Yu, 2022)

The article “The artistic value of the murals of the Yongle Palace” (Meng, 2009) through the scale of Yongle Palace murals, vivid lines, and color analysis reveals the relationship between mural art, architectural art, and religious art; analysis of the content of the murals and the connotation of the reflection of the Chinese culture in the Yuan Dynasty in the political, economic, cultural, artistic, and other ideas and concepts. The text reveals the highest doctrine of Taoism, “All things return to the origin”, based on the main hall of the Yongle Palace. The text is a large analysis of the value of the Yongle Palace murals, but still from the strengthening of the picture of the primary and secondary relationships, creating a rhythmic change in the picture, enhancing the visual impact of the picture of the three aspects of the analysis of the role of color (including metallic colors) in the Yongle Palace murals.

The article “Composure and solemnity, harmony and mellowness of danqing—the decorative nature of the color of Yongle Palace murals” (L. S. Liu, 2007) points out the historical status of Yongle Palace murals in religious art and argues that the color system of the Yongle Palace influenced the artistic creation at that time and in later generations. The article first explores the historical origin of the decorative culture of heavy color, summarizes the characteristics of decorative color by analyzing the

“sketch color” and “decorative color,” and argues that the Yongle Palace mural paintings are typical of decorative color, which is not bound by the inherent color, environmental color, and light color, but is based on the subjective emotion and process technology. The principle of color application is to generalize the complex and varied objects into flat color blocks of various sizes, to divide the modeling with lines, and to express the intriguing contents and color effects of the picture by cleverly applying artistic treatments such as rhyme, sparseness, and rhythm. There is not much analysis of metallic colors, but in the specific interpretation of “Chao Yuan Tu” local objects, there is a brief overview of the use of metallic colors in the picture of the location and principles of use.

The thesis “The color art of Yongle Palace mural paintings” (Cheng, 2013) takes “Chaoyuan Tu” in Yongle Palace mural paintings as an example and from the three aspects of the analysis of the color language characteristics of the “Chao Yuan Tu”; technique focuses on the analysis of the “Chao Yuan Tu” of the richly colored outline-and-fill technique and raised line gilding, pointing out that raised line gilding assists the richly colored outline-and-fill technique so that the mural achieves brilliant artistic effect; from the establishment of the main and secondary color order, clever use of metallic colors and other small areas of color to achieve simple and simple color effect, the same kind of color in different places to different size and repeat the three aspects of how to make the “Chao Yuan Tu” picture color harmony.

“Chinese Traditional Painting Color and Mural of Yongle Temple” (Lu, 2005) analyzes the use of metallic color in ‘Chao Yuan Tu’ from the psychology of color and points out that the use of metallic color in the mural paintings of Yongle Palace is to reflect the gorgeousness and nobleness, to highlight the divinity of the revered people in the mural paintings, and to symbolize the sacred and glorious spiritual image.

“Research on the Scientific Theories in the mural painting in Yongle Temple” (Xu, 2008) from the perspective of science and technology, through the use of perspective, proportion, and optical projection in the wall paintings of Yongle Palace, the scientific connotation of Yongle Palace wall paintings is refined, and it is pointed out

that before the emergence of scientific theories on painting in the West, Chinese painters formed a set of theories on space, form, and proportion in line with the overall picture by observing nature with their eyes and recognizing the mind.

These studies have analyzed the lines, colors, and composition of the Yongle Palace murals from different perspectives, some of which have analyzed the relationship between “raised line gilding” and “richly colored outline-and-fill technique” in the Yongle Palace murals, and others have studied the reasons for the use of metallic colors in the Yongle Palace murals from the perspective of color psychology. There are also studies from the perspective of color psychology to study the reasons for the use of metallic colors in the murals of Yongle Palace. These studies did not make an in-depth analysis of the cultural connotation of the use of metallic colors in the murals of Yongle Palace. However, these existing studies help the author to sort out the techniques, layout, and principles of using metallic colors in the murals of Yongle Palace.

Fahai Temple Mural Painting

“Analysis of the artistic characteristics of the Fahai Temple raised line gilding”(Wu, 2015) analyzes the background of the establishment of the Fahai Temple, that is, the frescoes of the Fahai Temple established in the early Ming Dynasty, in the early stage of the establishment of the Ming Dynasty imperial power, the rulers, in order to establish their authority, in order to carry out strict control in all aspects, including the art of painting, mainly for the service of the ruling class. As a royal temple, the Fahai Temple was supervised by the royal family, and the murals were painted by the palace painters, thus demonstrating the aesthetic interests of the royal family. The Ming Dynasty was established after a long war with the northern peoples, and in the process of resistance, culture and art were not immune to each other but also took the initiative to absorb and integrate each other's culture and art. For these reasons, the Fahai Temple murals increased the proportion of the use of metallic colors, metallic colors from the original form of dots and lines to assist the rhythm of the picture to now become one of the means of controlling the rhythm of the picture, presenting a gorgeous but not losing the royal order and solemnity of the temperament. The article also analyzed the pattern

style and line style of the leaching powder and gold sticker of the Fahai Temple, respectively, which provides a more detailed reference for this article to analyze the artistic background and artistic characteristics of the metallic color.

“A Study on the Image Function of the Murals of Fahai Temple in the Ming Dynasty”(Liu, 2022) focuses on analyzing the flux of the images of the Water-Moon Goddess of Mercy through the study of the contents of the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple, revealing the transformation of the connotation of the images of the Water-Moon Goddess of Mercy.

“Research about mural of Fahai temple in Ming dynasty and artistic characteristics”(Dong, 2011) summarizes the artistic characteristics of the mural painting at Fahai Temple by comparing and analyzing the differences between the East and the West in terms of the expression of ideas, the production process, and the painting techniques; analyzes the artistic cultivation of the court painters from the content of the mural paintings of the characters, their looks, costumes, and other images; and briefly analyzes the use of metallic colors in the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple in relation to the application of metal products in people's lives.

“The mural paintings of Fahai Temple in Beijing under the spatial perspective ”(Zhao, 2023)analyze the mural paintings of Fahai Temple from the spatial perspective, pointing out that the mural paintings of Fahai Temple are intertwined with two different types of space: one is the virtual mural space, and the other is the real temple space. Analyzing the reasons why the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple can easily immerse people in the space of Buddhist art from the interior light, compositional forms, and walking routes of people unique to the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple. Then further analyze the reason why such an immersive space should be created.

The Fahai Temple mural specifically for the study of metallic colors is relatively small. About the Fahai Temple mural color study, a lot. “The Application of Color Expression Techniques in Practice in Fresco of Fahai Temple”(Yuan, 2023) proposes that the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple absorbed the ‘five-color theory’ in the theory of Chinese painting in the use of color, which gives rich cultural connotation to

the use of color in the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple; analyzes three reasons for the decorative nature of the colors of the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple. The three reasons for the decorative nature of the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple are the rhythm of the color, the decorative meaning of the color plane composition, and the use of decorative materials. In the use of decorative materials, a brief analysis of the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple in the depiction of gold and leaching powder gold paste technique.

“A Comparative Study on the Styles of Baroque Painting and Frescoes of Fahai Temple”(T. Z. Yu, 2019) around the Fahai Temple frescoes and Western Baroque paintings for the comparison of artistic style, respectively, from the composition, statues, colors, and metaphors to compare the two aesthetic similarities and differences; from the spirit of humanism and craftsmanship to compare the two internal spiritual temperaments. By comparing the similarities and differences between the two, the paper tries to find a new development direction for the integration of Chinese and foreign countries and artistic innovation.

These studies are conducive to the author's deep understanding of the Yongle Palace murals from different perspectives and to analyzing the background of the use of metallic colors in the Yongle Palace murals, artistic characteristics.

Traditional Chinese Painting

The Use of Metallic Colors in Color-Based Chinese Figure Paintings

It is mentioned in the “The Practice And Research of The Gold Leaf Sticking Technique In Chinese Heavy Color Painting”(Chen, 2022) that although metal foils were used a lot in ancient Chinese frescoes, unlike frescoes, ancient paintings were generally presented on silk, such as the “Character Dragon and Phoenix Painting on Palm” and “Character Dragon Painting on Palm” of the Warring States period, which were all created on silk, with very few metal foils appearing. Metal foil appears. There are two main reasons for this: in ancient times, the adhesive used to put on metal foils caused some damage to the paper and silk, and the foils were easy to fall off, leading to unsatisfactory results. There are a few works where foil is used, but it is applied to the bottom surface of the picture to decorate the costumes and ornaments of the characters

in order to emphasize the key characters and deepen the cultural connotation of the work.

Although there is no special work on the use of metallic colors in traditional Chinese heavy-colored figure paintings, most of the research on ancient heavy-colored figure paintings focuses on the study of the color of heavy-colored paintings, the study of images, the combing of history, and case studies. However, from these studies, we can sort out that the use of metallic colors in traditional Chinese heavy-colored figure paintings mainly focuses on two aspects, namely: court painters serving the royal aristocracy used metallic colors to reflect the importance of power and status in the ancient society, as well as the use of metallic colors in the works of art to express the glorification and commemoration of the status of the honored; modern painters combine the literati paintings with folk arts and crafts, combining brush and ink after subjective treatment by literati with decorative color elements to create art, reflecting the aesthetic needs of the civic class of the society at that time, which emphasized the balance between great vulgarity and great elegance.

The former was mainly concentrated in the Tang Dynasty, mainly because the cultural policies of the Tang Dynasty provided an open and diversified environment for the artistic creation of paintings, especially in the portrayal and depiction of female figures. During this period, the life and entertainment scenes of aristocratic ladies became important subjects for paintings. The paintings of ladies of the Tang Dynasty not only showed the living conditions and social status of women at that time but also reflected the aesthetic concepts of female beauty in the society at that time. Among them, the use of metallic colors adds a unique sense of magnificence and three-dimensionality to the paintings of ladies, which makes the picture look more graceful and luxurious.

“A Study on the Practice of the Artistic Technique of ‘Court Ladies Adorned by Floral Ornament’ in Contemporary Meticulous Figure Painting”(J. Yang, 2022) is analyzed mainly through the composition, modeling, coloring, appearance, and content of the picture. The study concluded that the jewelry outlined in gold worn by the

ladies was originally a typical costume for noble ladies. The artist only expressed this part in metallic colors in a realistic way.

The thesis “Analysis Performance and Application of in Color in Traditional Chinese Painting From “wearing Ladies””(S. N. Zhang, 2012) analyzes the characteristics of the use of color in Tang Dynasty paintings of ladies with hairpins as an example.. It explores the role of decorative color in painting from the deep level and finally summarizes the principles of color application in traditional Chinese painting from yin and yang, five elements, etiquette, respect and inferiority, applying colors according to the category, and combining color and ink. The use of metallic colors in painting is proposed because Tang Dynasty ladies' paintings like to use contrasting colors, so metallic colors are needed to be used in the form of dots or lines interspersed in the picture.

“On the formal and spiritual beauty of traditional meticulous figure painting—take meticulous figure paintings from the Qin and Han dynasties to the Sui and Tang dynasties for example ”(Yuan, 2015) dynasties to the Sui and Tang dynasties, for example “By exploring the aesthetic origins of the beauty of form and spirit in traditional meticulous figure painting, it analyzes what influences the theoretical system of the beauty of form and spirit in meticulous figure painting has been subjected to and how it has been formed. Then it analyzes how traditional figure painting uses lines and colors directly visible on the screen to express the beauty of form; finally, it expresses the aesthetic changes of traditional figure painting through the works of representative painters of various dynasties. The article does not talk about the use of metallic color, but metallic color is a product of the backdrop of Chinese art and culture, and an in-depth analysis of the beauty of form and spirit in traditional brush painting is conducive to the author's in-depth understanding of the use of metallic color in the cultural and artistic context. The text mentions that the use of color in the Tang Dynasty was brilliant and colorful due to the fact that the Great Tang was politically powerful and expansive, and culturally opulent in its own right, which provides better supporting material for understanding why metallic colors were used in traditional Chinese paintings.

The latter is manifested in the late Qing Dynasty in the form of Ren Bonian, whose work demonstrates an outstanding achievement in color and form. His works break the pattern of traditional use of color by combining the color application techniques of traditional brush painting and ink painting while absorbing Western watercolor painting methods and the color characteristics of Chinese folk art.

“Artistic Analysis of Ren Bonian's Group of Immortals Celebrating Longevity”(Yan, 2024) analyzes the artistic characteristics of ‘Group of Immortals Celebrating Longevity’ from the perspective of layout, modeling, line, and color. In the analysis of color, through the comparison between Chen Hongshou and Ren Bonian, it is pointed out that the use of color is a subjective generalization of real objects, and the use of color shows the harmony of color and the contrast between warm and cold colors. This analysis points out that the artist used the golden background in order to strengthen the decorative and rhythmic sense of the picture; the cultural connotation of the use of metallic colors is that although there is a big gap between gold and real life, it is in line with the auspicious symbolism of the theme of “wishing for longevity.”The study pointed out a relationship between the use of metallic colors in paintings and people's desire for a better life but did not analyze it in depth.

The Use of Metallic Colors in Traditional Chinese Jinbi Landscapes

Jinbi landscape painting is a unique form of ancient Chinese landscape painting; the picture pigments are mainly used with very bright stone green, stone green, and gold powder, forming a kind of golden, rich, and magnificent picture effect. Jinbi landscape painting, in the use of metallic colors, the majority of gold dust, usually with metallic colors outlining the mountains and rocks, pavilions and pavilions, water patterns, and so on.

The book “Li Sixun”(Shao, 1980) starts from the social background of Li Sixun and the change of officialdom due to political reasons, analyzes the composition, modeling, technique, and collectors' comments of his representative works, and summarizes his artistic thoughts; compares the richness and splendor embodied in his works to the “richness and nobility” thought pursued by the aristocrats during the period

of war and chaos in the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties; and points out the great contribution made by Li Sixun and his sons to the gold and blue landscape coloring.

The book “Song and Yuan Blue-and-Green Landscape Painting and Mishi Yunshan”(Shan, 2004) through the analysis of the Song Dynasty, the famous Blue-and-Green Landscape Painting of A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains, rivers and mountains in autumn colors, WanSongJinQueTu aesthetic style difference, and with Li Sixun father and son of Golden and Blue-Green Landscape Painting comparison, pointed out that Li Sixun school of paintings are mostly boundaries of paintings of palaces, aristocrats, a true portrayal of the life, reflecting the reality of the palace, and the works of the Song Dynasty, more concerned about the natural life, through the nature of the observed with brush and ink, color to create a realm.

The book “A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains: Huizong's Palace Blue-and-Green Landscape Painting and Rivers and Mountains”(Wang, 2018) from the picture content, painting style, and cultural connotations of Thousands of Miles of Rivers and Mountains and analyzes how, on the basis of reviving the Golden and Blue-Green Landscape Painting of the Tang Dynasty, it integrates the color and ink techniques of the Northern Song Dynasty and expands the expressive power of the picture's richness of color; it also explores Thousands of Miles of Rivers and Mountains from the spatial imagery of being able to walk, look, swim, and live in the world, and gives the flat picture a dynamic and poetic space. The author also explores the conceptual differences between Golden and Blue-Green Landscape Painting and Blue-and-Green Landscape Painting through historical documents and proposes that the role played by gold in landscape painting, if not properly applied, will lead to picture vulgarization. Although metallic colors are only occasionally mentioned in the analysis of works, from here we can see that the reason why metallic colors are not used in large quantities in the picture is not only that the material itself is expensive, but also that the creation of the painting's mood, the excessive use of which will diminish the natural atmosphere.

The rise and popularity of Golden and Blue-Green Landscape Painting reflect the culture and artistic aesthetics of a specific historical period in ancient times. During the Tang Dynasty and the Song Dynasty after it, the society was relatively stable, the economy was prosperous, and people pursued a higher level of spiritual enjoyment and aesthetic ideals, and the opulence of Golden and Blue-Green Landscape Painting was in line with the cultural pursuits and aesthetic interests of this period.

The Cultural Connotation of Metallic Colors in Traditional Chinese Visual Arts

Religion

Buddhism:

Most of the theoretical literature on Buddhism focuses on the study of Buddhist cultural sources, integration with China, sects, teachings, and statues. There are fewer analyses devoted to the study of Buddhist colors, especially the study of Buddhist metallic colors alone, and usually the colors of gold are taken as one of the points of study when other contents are studied. But combing the theoretical literature related to Buddhist culture helps to better understand the teachings and purposes of Buddhism, which is of great help to the study of Buddhist color.

The book “Buddhist Culture with Chinese Characteristics”(Hong, 2018) attributes the source of Buddhism in India to the fact that after Buddhism came to China, it gradually formed the Buddhist culture with Chinese characteristics by colliding and fusing with various Chinese cultures, and it analyzes the great influence of Buddhism in various art categories, such as literature, painting, music, calligraphy, and so on; it also analyzes the relationship between Buddhism and Chinese folk beliefs and customs, as well as the development and characteristics of Buddhism in Tibet. Finally, it summarizes the four characteristics of Chinese Buddhism: the concept of equality with compassion, the cultural spirit of harmony, the humanistic spirit of salvation, and the simple and easy-to-execute way of practice; and the three characteristics of the Chinese Buddhist faith and culture: the theory of reincarnation and retribution, the worship of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and the liberation of the mind.

The book “Buddhism and Chinese Culture”(Tang, 2016) analyzes in detail the integration and conflict between Buddhism and Chinese Confucianism and

Taoism after the introduction of Buddhism to China and the philosophical problems of various Buddhist sects after Buddhist China and analyzes in depth the reasons why China can coexist with Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

The Study of “Western Xia Tibetan Buddhism in the Perspective of Cultural Identity”(Cui, 2021) studies how Western Xia absorbed Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist art and its influence on later generations from the perspective of cultural identity.

The thesis “A Study on the Origins and Forms of Mongolian Tibetan Buddhist Painting”(Zhang, 2024) analyzes the relationship between the art of painting and Buddhism from the perspective of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolian.

The thesis “The Laws and Applications in the Language of Buddhist Art”(E, 2016) analyzes the linguistic characteristics of Buddhist art from the intuitively visible Buddhist shapes, colors, and art materials and summarizes the significance of the use of Buddhist colors from three aspects: the psychology of colors, the symbolism of colors, and the cultural connotations of colors. The three reasons for the use of gold in Buddhist art are analyzed from the psychological point of view: first, it is a symbol of affluence and stability; second, it is believed that gold is the color belonging to the sun, and it is a color that will be loved by the Buddhist world; and third, it is the symbolic nature of the eternal and unchanging color of gold.

“A Study of the Color Concept in the Buddhist Scriptures in Jin Dynasties”(Cao, 2018) combs through the expressions of color in the Buddhist scriptures of the two Jin dynasties and digs out from them how the Buddhist color was born from the Buddhist concept. It points out that the expression of Buddhist color changes according to the different Buddhist sects and Buddhist scriptures. It is pointed out that gold is special in the Buddhist color teachings, and it is considered that gold is Buddha, symbolizing the eternal existence of the Buddha's teachings. Analyzed the reasons for the preference for gold color expressions in Buddhist scriptures and gold color in statues.

That is to say, the gold color, due to its own physical characteristics, i.e., the characteristic of eternal, unchanging color and the metallic luster similar to that of the sun, makes the people who respect Buddhism and believe in Buddhism have a certain obsession with the use of gold color. Although Buddhism is characterized by the pursuit of equality, and no matter what color a statue of Buddha employs to face the world, it is the same for Buddha, but the world's differentiated mind empowers the Buddha to use gold, which has scarcity and eternity, to decorate.

Taoism:

The book “Studies on Taoist Metaphysics”(Zheng, 2018) analyzes the ideological concepts of morality, aesthetics, and realm under the Taoist system from multiple dimensions and explores the core theories of Taoism, concepts such as existence and nothingness, and how the Taoist ideology has been expressed by ancient artists using the language of brush and ink through paintings and drawings.

The book “Chinese Color Matching—New Application of Traditional Colors”(Xian, 2018) talks about Chinese colors from the perspective of practical application, analyzes the Chinese concept of color from a philosophical point of view, points out the pursuit of the Taoist concept of color, and analyzes the relationship between Taoist thought and literati painting.

The book “Chinese Jade Aesthetics”(Liao, 2023) analyzes the Ru Shi Dao color concept in Chinese culture and art from the perspective of cultural fusion, which is different from and independent of each other, each focusing on the development and growth. It points out the worship of black color in Taoism.

The article “On the Taoist concept of color”(Wang, 2006) puts forward its own opinion on the “five colors make people blind” in the Taoist philosophical thought from a critical point of view and then analyzes the concepts of emptiness, nothingness, black, and white under the Taoist thought system.

The article “Confucian and Taoist Color Concepts”(Huang, 2001) analyzes the differences between Taoist color concepts and Confucian color concepts

in terms of negative and positive aspects and points out the relationship between Taoist aesthetics and the aesthetics of color in Chinese painting art.

The thesis “The Research on Traditional Landscape Aesthetics under the Influence of Taoist Aesthetic Theories”(Liang, 2010) thoroughly studies the relationship between Taoist thought and traditional Chinese landscape painting and analyzes how Taoist thought influences landscape painting and is reflected in the picture from the perspectives of aesthetic ideals, aesthetic creation, and aesthetic feeling.

The research “The Use and Expression of Gold in the Traditional Blue-Green Landscape Paintings”(Zhang, 2017) finds out the origin of gold from the textual records about the three Taoist immortal mountains, Kunlun and Haishan, showing the relationship between gold and the Taoist immortal mountains; then analyzes the pictorial connotation of the word “mountain,” the symbols of eternal life, and the elements related to gold in the decorative visual patterns related to mountains on the ancient Chinese artifacts through the literature; analyzes the relationship between gold and the Taoist immortal mountains with the examples of ancient landscape paintings; and puts forward the insights of the artists who use gold to paint the mountains and landscapes.

Taoism advocates the beauty of nature and opposes flashy colors. Most of the literature on Taoism is related to Taoist culture, the relationship between Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, and the aesthetic characteristics of Taoism, while the articles on Taoist colors usually analyze the discussions related to black and ink under the aesthetic care of Taoism. Only a very small number of articles have explored the Taoist ideology embodied in the use of gold in Chinese landscape painting, providing a reference for this study, while subsequent studies have focused on the relationship between metallic colors and Taoism to the understanding of picture space and the relationship between presence and absence.

Royalty

The book "Traditional Chinese Architectural Technology and Art"(Liang, 2018) compares the Chinese city of Beijing and Chinese painting art with Western architecture and painting, suggests that the architectural layout of the city of Beijing is similar to the art form of hand scrolls in Chinese painting art and that the color of gold is a symbol of magnificence and solemnity in the Forbidden City, argues that the ancient royal aristocrats were very good at using architectural layout and color to serve them, pointing out the political significance of the layout and color in architectural art. From an aesthetic point of view, the use of metallic colors in the building is to make the gold and other colors in the building, together with the natural blue sky, white clouds, and sunshine, echo, constituting a sense of beauty of the colors in the space, and increase the dynamism of the building and the interest.

The book "Chinese Clothing History"(Hua, 2018) mentioned the Ming Dynasty, the status of women in the Imperial City, color, and pattern according to the husband's corresponding official rank, which has strict rules. The queen's phoenix crown is to see the most gold and silver crown. In order to distinguish themselves from the colors used by royalty, commoner women were not allowed to use metallic colors and other exclusive royal colors.

The thesis "A Study on Color and Pigments Composition of the Polychrome Paintings (Caihua) of Jingfu Palace in the Forbidden City"(Song, 2017)Through modern technology means of Jingfu Palace color painting in-depth study, it is pointed out that the amount of gold used in the late Qing Dynasty is determined from high to low, in which the low grade does not use the gold; the records of the color of the Qing Dynasty are very detailed, and there are more than a dozen kinds of records of the metallic color series in the Qing Dynasty, and the techniques used are the raised line gilding, gold tracing, and silver tracing.

The thesis "Research on Color Design with the Aesthetics of Postmodernism Design of the Guiding System in Public Space"(Jiang, 2013) analyzes the architecture, costumes, and artifacts of the royal family in the Tang Dynasty, Ming Dynasty, and Qing

Dynasty, respectively; summarizes the color application system of the Chinese royal family; and points out that the metallic colors in the Tang Dynasty's architecture and costumes are used in the form of embellishments, and the metallic colors of the Ming Dynasty's royal family are used more, and analyzes the reasons for this.

Royal aristocrats are keen on gold color because it is related to gold color and scarcity and is a symbol of wealth and power. Through the strict hierarchy, standardize the use of color to achieve the purpose of stabilizing the royal power. Although most of the metal color reflects the cultural connotation of the royal aristocracy in architecture, clothing, and artifacts, the painting of this record is relatively small but can be seen from other forms of art in the royal aristocracy to use the origin of the metal color and embodiment of the aesthetic interest, which is conducive to the in-depth analysis of the article later.

The Use of Metallic Colors in Japanese Painting

In the third century B.C., metal tools were introduced to Japan from China via Korea, improving Japanese farming techniques. The earliest direct contact between Japan and China was recorded in the Book of the Later Han Dynasty (Hou Han Shu. Dong Yi Chuan); the time of the introduction of Buddhism to Japan is not particularly clear, but the earliest relevant record is in 384 by the Eastern Jin Dynasty monks through the Baekje; due to the ruler's great admiration for Buddhism, they built a lot of temples and pagodas, which in turn contributed to the development of the Buddhist fine arts. (Ye, 2021)

Since gold was favored by the rulers and aristocrats of the time, metallic colors were greatly developed in Japanese painting. During the Azuchi-Momoyama period, "gold" was the most beautiful color, and the economy exploited large quantities of metal deposits; culturally, gold was used to decorate the exterior of buildings, the inside of buildings was decorated with gold for screen paintings, and gold utensils were used in daily life in order to show off their wealth and power. Kanō Eitoku was commissioned by the ruler of the country to create a style of painting that used gold as the base for the paintings and used rich colors to satisfy the ruler's needs, using gold as the base for the

paintings and gold leaf for the objects, making the paintings extremely gorgeous. Tawaraya Sōtatsu also had some achievements in the use of metallic colors. He drew nourishment from Japanese literature and created works based on the story contents of the literature, also using gold as the background, dealing with the characters in a concise manner, and combining ink and strong colors in his paintings in an attempt to express the spirit of Japanese paintings on the basis of learning from Chinese paintings. The subsequent artist who was very accomplished in the use of metallic colors was Ogata Kōrin. Combining the decorative nature of the Kano school and the painterly nature of Tawaraya Sotatsu, the artist brought the decorative art to its fullest extent, forming a painting style with unique characteristics.(Ye, 2021)

The book “The Transformation of Chinese Idealist Painting to Japan:Notes on the Early Phase(1661-1799)”(Xu, 2017) explores how Chinese literati painting, after Japan had learned Chinese brush and ink techniques, was gradually internalized by the Japanese from learning, copying, and absorbing them into a painting art that conformed to the characteristics of their own people, from the point of view of ink painting. There is a reference to gold leaf in the article, which points out the requirements for the use of brush and ink for painting on gold leaf.

The book “History of Japanese Art”(Xu, 2019) introduces the characteristics of representative sculptures, architecture, paintings, and other art forms of each dynasty from ancient times to the present and analyzes from a comparative perspective the aesthetic tendencies and unique color characteristics that Japan developed while learning from Chinese culture and art.

The book “History of Japanese Culture”(Saburō, 2018) analyzes the development process of various aspects of Japanese culture and analyzing how Japanese culture was imported from China to learn about Chinese culture such as Buddhism, architecture, painting, food, etc., and, from a dialectical point of view, explains how to integrate with the Japanese culture in the process of learning Chinese and other foreign cultures. The article mentions the underlying reasons and characteristics of the Momoyama period's reverence for gilded architecture and

paintings; it places Ogata Kōrin's gilded paintings in the category of arts and crafts, analyzes the lineage of artistic influence and stylistic characteristics of the work., and discusses the reasons why his works have taken their place in the history of paintings from the political and economic perspectives.

These studies are related to the use of metallic colors in the art of Japanese painting, and although there are not many pages, one can see the reasons for the pursuit of the use of such rich colors in Japanese painting.

Most of these studies analyze the development and changes in Japanese culture, such as architecture, Buddhism, and painting, and explore the political and economic reasons for the formation of these cultures; many other analyses focus on China's influence on Japan; and a number of essays focus on the deeper reasons for the adept use of metallic colors in Japanese painting. Still others explore the influence of the art of Japanese painting on China.

Through analyzing the development of modern Japanese painting in the form of picture and material, and based on the current development of Chinese heavy color painting and cultural context, the paper "The Changes of Modern Japanese Painting on the Development of Contemporary Chinese Brushwork Heavy Color Paintings"(Zhang, 2005) discusses the influence of modern Japanese painting on the art of Chinese painting, and points out that the study of Japanese painting is not to follow the path of Japanese painting, but to learn how Japanese painting can maintain its national characteristics in the process of learning foreign culture. and pointed out that the study of Japanese painting is not to follow the path of Japanese painting, but to learn how Japanese painting can maintain its national identity in the process of learning foreign cultures.

The Use of Metallic Colors in Western Painting

In the early years of Western art, especially in medieval and Byzantine art, gold was used in the form of mosaic tiles for the decoration of Byzantine-style buildings and as a painter's pigment for fresco painting in Gothic architecture. The use of the metallic color in these places symbolized divinity and holiness. Its brilliance was seen as a

symbol of God's light, reflecting the splendor and eternity of heaven. The use of gold emphasized the religious themes and spiritual values of art, adding to the mystical and ritualistic feel of the artwork. In the Renaissance, Baroque period, and modern art, metallic colors were used to enhance the beauty of the works, creating gorgeous and splendid visual effects, reflecting the aesthetic pursuits and creativity of the artists.

The real integration of metallic colors into the art of painting can be traced back to Gustav Klimt, an important representative of the Austrian Vienna Secession in the 19th century. He lived in an era when he inherited the European tradition of realism on the basis of the further development of the aesthetic values of the nation on the integration of other forms of painting art, showing a high degree of artistic integration. While emphasizing the artistry of his works, the artist paid attention to the observation and reflection on real life, as well as the exploration and expression of the inner world of the characters, so that the paintings are exquisite and gorgeous but also have symbolic meanings.(Y. F. Li, 2017)

The book "Vienna at the End of the Century: Freud, Klimt, Schoenberg, and the Birth of Modernism"(Schorske, 2022) analyzes the reasons for the change of Klimt's painting style from the psychological point of view based on Klimt's upbringing, the background of his time, and the political background, pointing out that the reason for his extensive use of metallic colors is his psychological longing to return to his past life .The extensive use of metallic colors in his paintings is not only to express decorative art but also to convey symbols through metallic colors.

The book "Painting. Master Gustav Klimt."(Feng, 2019) analyzes Klimt's works in terms of subject matter, picture content, and use of color, and mentions that 'The Kiss,' a work that uses a lot of metallic colors, was influenced by medieval art and Japanese ukiyo-e.

Metallic color in Klimt's works is basically in the form of planarization, such as in "The Kiss." The painter uses color to divide the picture space, highlighting the main character, the structural relationship on the character's clothes, and the relationship between light and darkness through the gold and silver and a small number of other

colors in the picture area of the number of patterns in the style of the performance, the use of metallic color to the ultimate performance. This creates a simple yet complex effect in the picture and also conveys the vivid emotions of the characters to the viewer.

The use of metallic colors in Western paintings is not only for material luxury and visual beauty, but they also often carry deeper symbolic meanings, expressing the spiritual pursuit of life, death, eternity, and transcending the material world. The use of gold and silver can represent different themes and emotions, thus building a bridge between the material and the spiritual.

Reasons for Taking 1990 as the Starting Point for the Study

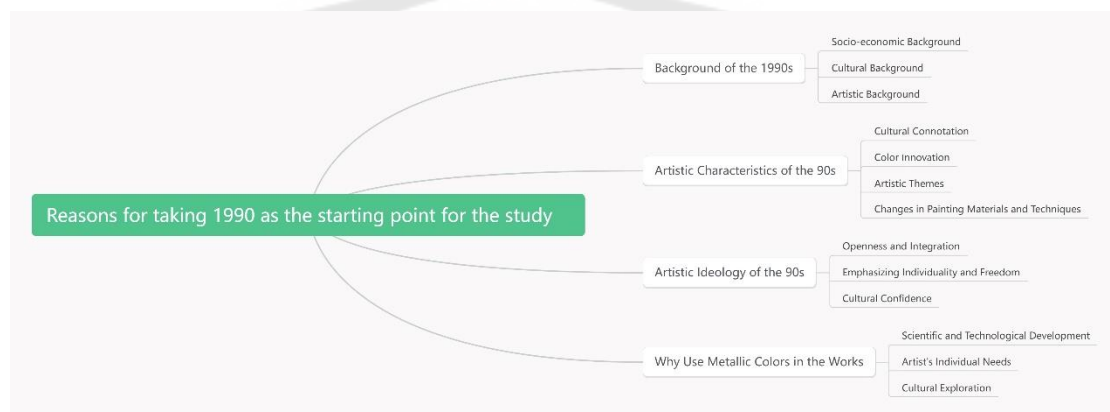


Figure 4 Reasons for Taking 1990 as the Starting Point for the Study

Source:Designed by the author

Background of the 1990s

Socio-economic background,in December 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of China began to implement the policy of internal reform and opening up to the outside world(Lin, 2016). The massive expansion of urban construction and the rapid development of economic construction put an end to the decades of political, economic, cultural, and artistic closure and gradually opened up the entire social form. The field of consciousness was relatively free, and China's history entered into a brand-new period(Cheng, 2023). 1990 was a stage of rapid socio-economic development after the reform and opening up, with the increase in private art

museums, museums, galleries, auction houses, critics, and collectors, and the corresponding structure of the art system also underwent fundamental changes, giving Chinese painting creation more space and possibilities for independent development, all of which greatly contributed to the development of art and culture. The development of the economy promoted the change of materials; Chinese painters began to focus on the research and development of metallic colors and actively introduced Japanese pigment production technology.

Cultural background, the 1980s produced a boom in the introduction of important translations of Western culture, aesthetics, and art theories. Western philosophy, aesthetic thought, and modern art theory had a great influence on art theory at that time. Western modern art and postmodern art were introduced to emancipate the mind. In such a situation, there were some simple imitations of foreign cultures and some one-sided denials of traditions, but it contributed to a certain extent to the activeness of academics and increased the opportunities to understand the world; in the field of art creation, this boom was mainly reflected in the fact that there were more exhibitions related to foreign countries, in which the introduction of the Western Impressionist colors and Japanese paintings at that time had a significant impact on the development of contemporary Chinese painting.(Li, 2012b)

Art background, the rise of the “85” trend, and under the impact of Western modernism, some people criticized that “Chinese painting has reached the end of the road,” which aroused people's concern about the future fate of Chinese painting and their desire for Chinese painting to change and seek for new changes. At the beginning of 1989, the Modern Chinese Art Exhibition raised the question of where Chinese modern art should go from here, which led to the change of ink and color and the introduction of Western Impressionist color into China at that time, as well as the rapid development of Japanese modern paintings, prompting some people to look at the revival of Chinese painting materials. In the 1980s, there were three types of consciousness, one of blind acceptance and simple emulation of foreign cultures, one of conservatism, and another that did not think that tradition was worthless or that all

foreign cultures could be accepted; in the 1990s, a consensus was reached that it is necessary to learn from foreign cultures as well as to return to tradition, and artists began to explore innovative paths from traditional cultural resources from a prudent perspective, committing themselves to the idea that Chinese painting presents a pictorial outlook that can satisfy the aesthetic needs of contemporary people. Color—as a long-term absence in Chinese painting is increasingly being paid attention to, and metallic color as an important carrier of color in Chinese painting is also becoming more and more noticeable. (Ye, 2009).

Artistic Characteristics of the 90s

Cultural connotation: the Chinese paintings of the 1990s are rooted in Chinese cultural soil, and the works are integrated with traditional Chinese cultural elements and philosophical reflections. Color innovation: the colors of Chinese paintings are no longer confined to light and elegant tones and are rich in colors, colorful but not vulgar. Color innovation is mainly learned from these three aspects: learning Western color knowledge, color language influenced by Western impressionism and later color expression, learning from Japanese material technique language, and drawing from Chinese art heritage and folk paintings; art themes are depoliticized, emphasizing individualized experience, including life experience, color experience, and technical experience; and painting materials and techniques change. The innovation of tools and materials breaks down the conceptual barriers of ink painting and leads to changes in creative techniques, visual effects, and aesthetic interests, and Chinese painting, which is mainly based on color, completes a change in the concept of technical language creation with the help of material innovation. (A. L. Zhang, 2012)

Artistic Ideology of the 90s

Openness and integration ,Chinese painting in the 1990s absorbs foreign cultures, combines with Chinese traditional aesthetics, and actively explores and experiments to create works with both Chinese cultural characteristics and modern art styles; artworks emphasize individuality and freedom, and the diversified fusion of composition, modeling, color, materials, and techniques emphasizes the personal

emotional experience and aesthetic concepts, and the color-based Chinese paintings emphasize the use of color and color expression: The language is rich, the techniques are varied, the painting tools are extended, and the expressive power is strengthened; focus on the production, the concept changes, and the individuality flaunts; from meticulousness to freehand expression, from the single to the multiple. Focusing on the beauty of materials; realizing the transcendence of language ; cultural self-confidence; attaching importance to traditional Chinese art; attaching importance to the art of mural painting; only in the period of cultural prosperity of the Sheng Shi period will the traditional form of paintings based on color setting be valued and developed, and nowadays, China's cultural renaissance is regarded as the sign of the new Sheng Shi period, which has provided fertile soil for the return of the Chinese paintings based on color setting. The revival of color-based Chinese painting is not just a simple copy of traditional techniques but an innovation and development based on a deep understanding and absorption of the essence of tradition to meet modern aesthetic and expression needs. The development of Chinese painting is not only embodied in the innovation of materials and techniques, but more importantly, in how to inherit and utilize the traditional cultural connotation of Chinese painting to convey the deep cultural heritage and the spirit of the times. The current reconstruction and practice of the language of Chinese painting, which is mainly based on color, emphasizes the improvement of artistic form and expression and does not only stop at the level of material innovation but also points to the promotion and development of traditional Chinese aesthetics through artistic innovation.(Ye, 2009).

Reasons for the Use of Metallic Colors in Chinese Paintings in the 1990s

The first reason is the development of Chinese science and technology. Japanese pigments were imported into China, which provided product samples for the improvement of the production technology of Chinese painting pigments. Actively introducing the production technology of Japanese pigments, the domestic pigment factories began to imitate and produce or develop new varieties of pigments, and there was also a group of people searching for the lost technology of pigment production in

the country, and they kept on experimenting and developing the rich variety of colors. These explorations broadened the way of expression of the paintings and let the These explorations broadened the way of expression of paintings, made the color of the picture present a more tense visual experience, and provided strong support for the revival of the color language of Chinese paintings. (A. L. Zhang, 2012)

The second reason is the personalized demand of artists. At that time, the color of Chinese paintings was single, which couldn't satisfy the needs of the picture, and some people tried to combine the watercolors and the oil colors with Chinese paintings, but it was difficult to meet the requirements of their own hearts. The metallic and mineral colors were once the essence of Chinese painting, and artists looked overseas to introduce innovations. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, artists went to Japan to study, but this period was mainly a spontaneous act by private individuals or individuals, and some of them were sent to study in Japan, but they were not recognized by the official government or the mainstream painting circles, and Zhang Daoxi and Guo Jiyi were among the group of researchers who went to Japan to study. At the end of the twentieth century, the situation reversed. In 1998, China's Ministry of Culture took the lead in introducing the study of Japanese painting and officially invited Professor Jiang Caiping, a highly influential figure in the Chinese heavy color painting world, to host the "First Higher Seminar on Heavy Color Painting," which started a trend of official cultural power sponsoring and supporting the study of Japanese painting materials and techniques, and the Ministry of Culture held five Higher Seminars on Heavy Color Painting in the next two years. The participants were: teachers from local art colleges and universities, stalwarts of related art institutions, who carried out teaching and practice activities of heavy color painting materials and techniques in their respective units after they finished their studies, which promoted the growth of a large number of new forces engaged in color-based Chinese painting, drove the enthusiasm of the local learning of heavy color painting, and facilitated more people's understanding of heavy color painting materials and techniques, and the metallic colors began to be used nationwide. The artists' exploration and experimentation of materials and techniques

made the paintings with metallic colors have a strong visual impact and a more modern sense, which made them more attractive in the exhibitions in modern venues.(A. L. Zhang, 2012)

The third reason is cultural exploration. Chinese traditional mural painting is the product of early Chinese and foreign cultural fusion and development, with a very visual charm and colorful and diversified nature. It is the traditional Chinese art that uses more metallic colors. After thousands of years, the mottled beauty of the frescoes in their present form is a source of artistic discovery for artists. The exploration of the theme of the new era is conducive to the continuous emergence of wonderful works in line with the characteristics of the times in order to meet the needs of a diversified and colorful modern society. For the development of Chinese painting, the use of metallic colors is conducive to the promotion of innovative development of the color expression of Chinese paintings, so how to broaden the language of contemporary paintings in order to meet the requirements of the theme of the new era is a problem that every artist must face.

Studies Related to the Use of Metallic Colors in Painting

Theoretical research on the use of metallic colors in painting abroad has focused mainly on the study of material techniques, and not many studies of deeper analysis have been accessed so far.

The book "Gothic (1140-1500 Medieval Visual Art)"(Toman, 2013) in the form of illustrations and texts introduced the Gothic art in architecture, religious rituals required objects, paintings, and other works in a large number of metal colors, but not too much analysis of the cultural connotation of the use of metallic colors in Gothic art.

The book "The Elements of Drawing: Line, Color, Light, and Shade"(Ruskin, 2013) conveys praise for Gothic art and suggests a basic training method for learning Gothic painting, i.e., painting the background with gold color in each exercise, thus enhancing the decorative nature of the picture and making the work imaginative. In the process of analyzing the case works, mention the way gold is used in the works, pointing out the infinite possibilities of gold in paintings.

The book “The Materials of the Artist”(Doerner, 2006) describes in detail how to do the preliminary steps before applying the gold base to make the gold shine; it also describes in detail the way of applying metallic colors indoors and outdoors and how to appraise the authenticity of the gold leaf, and it also emphasizes that the application of the gold should be completed before the formal painting of the object, and it mentions the way of applying the gold color and the techniques of the Gothic paintings.

The book “Phaidon Focus: Anselm Kiefer”(Biro, 2014) is a case study that starts from the artist's personal experience to reveal the artistic process and the reasons behind the artist's transition from being questioned to being gradually recognized. The book analyzes how the artist explores various social issues in his time through his works and mentions the use of metallic colors in his works and the reasons for this when analyzing specific works.

There is one main ancient Chinese literature on metallic colors: “Tian Gong Kai Wu”(Song, 2023) which introduces in detail the mining and smelting of gold and silver, suggests the origins of various metals, analyzes the reasons for the grades of metallic colors, and briefly describes the process of making gold foil.

Modern Monographs on the Study of Metallic Colors in China Include

Metallic Color Forging Technique:

The book “Nanjing Gold Foil”(Guan, 2009) talks about the reason why it is loved by the world from the imagery of gold and then analyzes the development trajectory of gold foil from the use of gold foil in architecture, lacquerware, literature, medicine, and so on in ancient and modern times, and focuses on the reason why gold foil in Nanjing has changed from flourishing to declining and is now being revived again.

The book “Foshan Gold Foil Forging Technique” (Guo, 2018) analyzes the evolution of gold foil forging technique from the perspective of historical development, records in detail the production steps of gold foil, compares them with those of various historical periods in China and abroad, and analyzes the historical and cultural background behind them.

Metallic Color Techniques:

The book “Mineral Color User Manual”(Wang, 2005)Analyzes the characteristics of metallic colors of various origins according to the origin of the metal, introduces the forms of metallic color techniques in various art disciplines in China, briefly introduces the effects of using metallic colors in various art disciplines, and discusses the specific application methods of metallic colors in relation to one's own creations.

The book“Modern Heavy Color Painting Metallic Foil Expression Technique” (Zhang, 2003)combined with specific works, the book analyzes the unique material aesthetics embodied by metallic color due to its own characteristics, which can achieve artistic effects that cannot be expressed by other paintings; records in detail the various ways of using metallic color; focuses on how to make the silver foil change color and the method of retaining the effect of the silver foil's color change; records the various ways of presenting the metallic color in detailed pictures and text; and analyzes the beauty of metallic color in the paintings with a large number of examples of excellent works. He also explains the beauty of metallic colors in paintings with a lot of examples of excellent works.

Wan Xiaoning's book “Creative Notes on Material Techniques of Heavy Color Flower and Bird Paintings—Metallic Foil Part”(Wan, 2020) records in detail how the metallic color material techniques are integrated with contemporary flower and bird paintings to convey flower and bird paintings with a modern sense of beauty.

The book“Modern Chinese Art-Lacquer Painting”(Qiao, 1998) Briefly introduces the technique of metallic colors in lacquer paintings, analyzes how lacquer paintings incorporate metallic colors into the scope of their materials, and mentions how to pay attention to materials and use them to achieve a high level of spiritual beauty.

The book“A tutorial on contemporary lacquer painting technique” (Tang, 2021)introduces in detail the metallic colors used in Chinese lacquer paintings and the effects produced by using different metallic colors; and through the author's works and the works of his students, he analyzes how to integrate metallic colors with the paintings.

Through the author's works and the works of the students under his supervision, he analyzes how to better integrate the metallic colors into the picture.

The Importance of Materials:

The book "The Art of Expression with Painting Materials"(Hu, 2001) emphasizes the importance of materials. Hu Wei argues that after the development of the times, people's outlook on life, values, ways of thinking, and aesthetic needs have changed greatly, and that new artistic languages will inevitably arise in artistic creation, requiring matching material techniques. He discusses how to learn and utilize materials and techniques based on the Chinese aesthetic origin "Bo" so that the works can present the beauty of materials on the basis of expressing artistic ideas.

Relevant Academic Journals and Dissertations

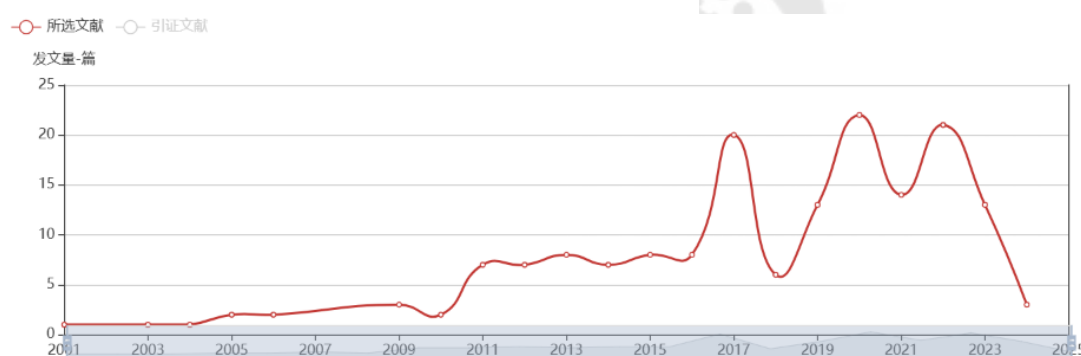


Figure 5 Search for the Keyword "Metallic Color" on CNKI.

Source:Designed by the author

Searching for the keyword metallic color in China Knowledge Network, a total of 169 academic journals and dissertations related to painting were collected, of which 55.3% were dissertations and 41.42% were academic journals, and it can be seen from the picture that the research on metallic color started only in 2001, and after the artists who returned home after their studies in Japan began to teach in various colleges and universities in the 1990s, the research on metallic color gradually became more and more. After artists returning from Japan began teaching in various colleges in the 1990s, the number of studies on metallic colors gradually increased, reaching more than 20

studies in 2017, 2021, and 2023, indicating that the number of people using metallic colors has gradually increased in recent years. However, most of the academic papers and journals focus on the study of metallic color materials and techniques from various angles, as well as the artists' own techniques of using metallic colors and the analysis of these techniques.

The thesis "The Texture of Rock Color Materials and the Aesthetic Expression of Art"(X. H. Hu, 2017) takes metallic colors in rock color paintings as the research object and summarizes the application of metallic colors in rock color paintings.

The thesis "Foil and Foil Technique"(Wang, 2016) explores the historical origin of metal foil in the perspective of world culture and analyzes the reason why metal foil was popular in wall painting in ancient times and there were few works on paper and silk.

The article "Research on the Application of Gold Foil in Chinese Brushwork Heavy Color Paintings"(Kui, 2016) comprehends the application and function of gold foil in various industries and art disciplines from the perspective of historical development, shows the diversity of gold foil's expressive techniques in modern paintings, researches the effects of the use of gold foil in traditional Chinese murals, and analyzes the effects of the use of gold foil in contemporary brushwork heavy-color paintings from the perspective of world cultures. Through the analysis of contemporary Gongbi heavy color paintings, he emphasized that metallic color promotes the innovation of Chinese paintings in terms of color and picture expression.

The article "Analyzing the Use of Foils in Painting"(Z. T. LI, 2017) begins with the concept of foil, analyzes how foil is used in various fields in China, introduces in detail the tools for applying foil and the specific techniques of applying foil in paintings and other fields, and analyzes in particular the use of foil in contemporary works and the aesthetics of the foil technique.

This thesis "Study on the Artistic Language of Chinese Deep Color Painting in the New Era"(Shang, 2010) analyzes how contemporary Chinese paintings explore and practice composition, modeling, subject matter, and technique to constitute the outlook

of contemporary Chinese paintings from the aesthetic interests of valuing the beauty of "Qi Yun", mood, and color, which are manifested in the works of the present generation.

Pang Jing's article "The Use of Metallic Foil in Oil Painting"(Pang, 2019) mainly researches the technical forms and artistic effects of metallic foil in oil painting at home and abroad and analyzes the beauty of metallic colors in oil paintings by taking specific artists' works as examples.

Liu Yang's article "Experimentation of Metallic Materials in Lacquer Art"(Liu, 2014) takes lacquer artworks using metallic colors as the research entry point, combs through the development and evolution of metallic colors in lacquer artworks, and explores the way of using metallic colors in lacquer artworks. It also explores the use of metallic colors in lacquer works and analyzes the similarities and differences in the use of metallic color techniques and the aesthetic interests presented by representative painters from China, Japan, and Korea in their use of metallic colors.

Although there have been studies on metallic foil in many fields, the commonality is that metallic color is used as a technical material but not as an artistic language, and there have been no in-depth studies on its own qualities and spiritual connotations.

Metallic color, which has long been used in Chinese mural paintings, is a material technique that modern artists can reuse in combination with Chinese paintings. Most of the current writings discuss the material and expression techniques of metallic colors and theorize how metallic colors should be used in order to maintain the traditional spirit and cultural characteristics of Chinese paintings. However, they do not specifically analyze how modern artists use metallic colors to create paintings. By studying the artists' lives, studies, and creation experiences, they analyze in detail the application of metallic colors in Chinese paintings and discuss how to innovate in modern art practice, which is the focus of this paper.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

This research is the qualitative research,utilizing a case study approach

To analyze the technical expression of metallic colors in traditional Chinese paintings by studying relevant literature and works.

To study the technical expression and innovation of metallic color in modern Chinese painting by analyzing the creative background, artistic characteristics, artistic thoughts, and the reasons for using metallic color in the works created by four famous artists between 1990 and 2023 through relevant literature, works and in-depth interviews.

Research Subjects

Research subjects: four well-known artists who use metallic colors in Chinese paintings. Among them, Zhang Daoxi and Guo Jiying are the first batch of artists who went to Japan to study in the early 90's and brought back to China the metallic colors and techniques that were lost in Chinese paintings, and taught and disseminated them; whereas Yan Haohao and Yang Yang are the artists who grew up after actively exploring the connotation of Chinese traditional culture in the fusion of Chinese and foreign cultures.

Sample works: Among the works created by the four artists between 1990 and 2023, eight works that have been selected for various art exhibitions, won awards, or are collected in art museums have been selected as sample works. Some of the works of these artists were selected or awarded in the National Art Exhibition, which is the highest standard in the field of Chinese art creation, so the works of these artists reflect to a certain extent the inheritance and development of metallic colors in the creation of Chinese paintings.

Table 1 Artists' Works


<p>Studying in Japan</p> <p>Zhang Daoxi</p>	<p>Artistic Characteristics:</p> <p>He is good at using silver foil variegation to enrich the color of the picture, and his works have a strong sense of life, focusing on conveying the painter's pursuit of character through his works.</p>
<p>“Warmth of Spring”</p> <p>91cm×116.7cm ,1992,</p> <p>The 8th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 1994.</p>	
<p>“Whispers in the Pond”</p> <p>140cm×150cm ,1999,</p> <p>The 9th National Art Exhibition</p>	
<p>“Charm of Lotus”</p> <p>100cm×162cm ,2001 ,</p> <p>Exhibition of the Works by Faculties & Students of the National Color Painting Advanced Research Class of The Central Academy of Fine Arts</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>“Lands of Fish and Rice ”</p> <p>150cm×1800cm, 2014, The 13th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2019.</p>	
<p>“Song of the Four Seasons - Spring Flowers, Summer Lotus, Autumn Maple, Winter Snow”</p> <p>Diameter 80cm×4 ,2019 The 13th Hubei Fine Arts Exhibition</p>	
<p>“Expectation from the Sea”</p> <p>135cm×155cm ,1996 , National Figure Painting Exhibition of Traditional Chinese Painting</p>	
<p>“Sail Off”</p> <p>31.8cmx41cm,1996, Academic Award of the 1st National Color Painting</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>“Plantain Flower” 112cm×140cm ,1998, Academic Award of the 4th National Color Painting Exhibition</p>	
<p>Studying in Japan Guo Jiying</p>	<p>Artistic Characteristics: Diversified visual presentation, strong sense of composition, combination of figurative and abstract object portrayal, and rich and harmonious colors.</p>
<p>“Existence-3 (Reflection)” 117cm×97cm,1993, Selected for the 20th Spring Creative Painting Exhibition (Japan)</p>	
<p>“The Chair and the Naked Woman” 132cmx122cm,1996, Collection of the National Art Museum of China</p>	
<p>“Existence—6 (Shore)” 116.7cmx116.7cm ,1999 , Selected for the 25th Spring Creation Exhibition (Japan)</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

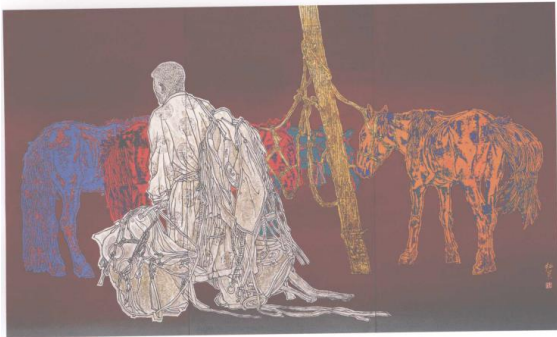


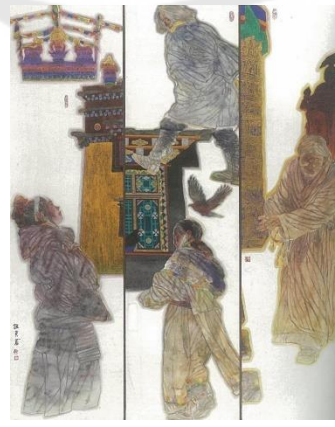
<p>“Seeing Grassland Again”</p> <p>205cm×120cm,2008,</p> <p>The 11th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2009</p>	
<p>“Existence-9 (Reading) “</p> <p>150cm×170cm,2010,</p> <p>The 6th Beijing International Art Biennale, China, 2015</p>	
<p>“Existence - 10 (Winks)”</p> <p>180cm×180cm,2014,</p> <p>The 12th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2014</p>	
<p>“Impression on Huiyuan Temple -in the Morning ,Noon and Atdusk”</p> <p>240cm×200cm,2019,</p> <p>The 13th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2019</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>“Existence- 12 (Debate)”</p> <p>220cm×180cm,2017,</p> <p>The 11th National Exhibition of Chinese Hue Art</p>	
<p>Growing up in China:</p> <p>Yan Haohao</p>	<p>Artistic Characteristics:</p> <p>Modern interpretations of traditional theater and literary characters.</p>
<p>“Sheng Dan Jing Chou” ,60cm×200cm×8,</p> <p>2003, The Second National Chinese Painting Exhibition</p>	
<p>“Mu Guiying in Command”</p> <p>120cm×120cm, 2004,</p> <p>The 10th Hubei Regional Art Works Exhibition</p>	
<p>“The Drunkenness of Guifei”</p> <p>120cm×120cm, 2005,</p> <p>Welcome the Beijing Olympic Games,</p> <p>Showcase Chinese Civilization - A Series of Works by Hundred Young Chinese Artists</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>“Opera Characters about Love” 120cm×120cm ,2007, The 2nd Academic Forum of Contemporary Chinese Painting</p>	
<p>“Matrix 108, Heroes” 198cm×198cm, 2009, The 11th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2009</p>	
<p>“Dream - Red Mansion” 200cm×240cm, 2010, Recrospect and Prospect - Hubei Traditinal Chinese Painting Exhibition</p>	
<p>“Journey to the West - Eighty-One Difficulties” 180cm×220cm, 2014, The 12th Hubei Provincial Fine Arts Exhibition</p>	


Table 1 (Continued)

<p>“Striving for the Top” 110cm×180cm, 2019, The 7th World Military Games National Art Works Exhibition</p>	
<p>Growing up in China: Yang Yang</p>	<p>Artistic Characteristics: Convey thoughts and ideas through female subjects, focusing on character dynamics and demeanor.</p>
<p>“Spring Awakening” 250cm× 210cm, 2009, The 4th Beijing International Art Biennale, China 2010</p>	
<p>“Brilliance.Municipal Waves” 180cm×240cm, 2011, The 4th National Fine Arts Exhibition For Young Artists</p>	
<p>“Walk Series”, 180cmx280cm, 2013, The 6th Beijing International Art Biennale, China, 2015</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>“Approaching Spring” 232cm×192cm, 2014, The 12th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2014</p>	
<p>“Fashion” 200cm×64cm×3, 2015, The Fifth National Fine Arts Exhibition For Young Artists</p>	
<p>“Silent Realm” 240cm×200cm, 2017, The 2nd China Comprehensive Material Painting Biennial, Ningbo 2017</p>	
<p>“Golden Chapterss” 238cm×198cm , 2019, The 13th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China 2019</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>"Prayer"</p> <p>180cm×70cm, 2020,</p> <p>The 10th "Hundred Flowers of Nationalities Award"--Chinese Nationalities Art Works Exhibition</p>	
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Research Tools

Literature review and analysis: study of related literature and works; study of the reasons for the use of metallic colors in Chinese paintings through the collection of literature related to metallic colors, books, exhibition materials, articles published on the Internet and interviews; determination of specific samples of works by visiting exhibitions and collecting works on the Internet.

In-depth interviews: The author chose three research subjects, four university teachers, a curator, a doctoral student, and a young student to conduct in-depth interviews. Throughout the interviews, audio recordings and notes were used to record the entire interactive process, to study in depth the artist's life experience and creative experience, and to analyze the background of the work's creation, its artistic characteristics, its artistic ideology, and the reasons for the use of metallic colors in the work.

Interview Questions:

The in-depth interviews will be organized around the following themes:

Artists' study experiences.

Opportunities for artists to study in Japan.

Artistic themes of the artist's creative works.

Cultural connotation of the works.

Color characteristics of the works.

The techniques used in the works.

The aesthetic appeal of the work.

Reasons for the use of metallic colors in the work.

Data Analysis

Through the collection of information on each of the artists, the artists' life, studies, creative experiences and contributions to society are studied. Analyze the commonality and individuality of their creations from the perspective of art creators.

Analyze the artists' use of techniques and innovative ways of creating Chinese paintings using metallic colors, using information from literature, paintings, sketches and interviews with sample artists. Descriptive analysis of each issue through data to find each artist's ideas and creative style of work using metallic colors in Chinese painting. The background of the artists' works, sources of inspiration, artistic ideas, artistic characteristics and why metallic colors are used in their paintings are studied. Analyze the creative works of the four artists, study how the artists innovatively use metallic color techniques while maintaining the traditional spirit and cultural characteristics of Chinese painting, analyze the similarities and differences in the use of metallic colors in the Chinese paintings of the artists who have returned from studying in Japan and those who have grown up locally in China as well as the artists' individual creative styles, so as to provide theoretical foundations and practical guidance for the future art creation and teaching.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The research objectives of this paper are:

1. To study the technical expression of metallic colors in traditional Chinese painting.
2. To study the technical expression, innovation of metallic colors, aesthetic interest, and cultural connotations in Chinese contemporary painting through the works of four famous artists between 1990 and 2023.

Therefore, this chapter mainly focuses on these two research purposes.

The first part focuses on the technical expression of metallic colors in Chinese traditional paintings on the basis of literature research, observation and analysis of works.



Traditional Chinese Painting

Traditional Chinese painting	Creative Background	Socio-economic Background	Prosperity of Buddhism	
			Combination of Religion and Imperial Power	
			Economic Prosperity and Exploitation of Resources	
		Cultural Background	Multiculturalism	
			Inheritance of Traditional Culture	
		Artistic Background	Integration and localization of Buddhist art	
			The Maturation of Color-based Chinese Painting Techniques	
	Artistic Characteristics	Cultural Connotation	Symbolism	Religion
				Royalty and Nobility
		Color Innovation	Harmonious Color Contrast	
			Visual Effect	
			Metallic Colors are Used in Combination with Lines	
		Artistic Themes	Religious Themes	
			Aristocratic Life	
			Scene Depiction	
		Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques	Variety of Materials	
			Diversity of Techniques	
	Artistic Ideology	Openness and Integration	Multicultural Integration	
			Integration and Innovation of Techniques	
		Emphasizes Individuality and Freedom	Symbol of Social Status and Value	
			Harmony between Nature and Art	
	Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works	Scientific and Technological Development	Advancement of Smelting and Forging Technology	
			Process Development of Carrier and Binder	
			Color Preservation Techniques	
		Artist's Individual Needs	Enhancement of Visual Effect	
			Enhance the Picture Level of the Work	
			Reflecting Social Status and Aesthetic Interest	
		Cultural Exploration	Demand of Religious Beliefs	

Figure 6 Traditional Chinese Painting

Source:Designed by the author

Creative Background

Socio-economic background:

Prosperity of Buddhism

The Han Dynasty introduced Buddhism to China, which subsequently grew in strength. During the Three Kingdoms and the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the regime was divided and China was in a state of social unrest,

with wars occurring from time to time, and the common people were tormented, repulsed by the wars, powerless, and frustrated with the reality of life, and wanting to seek peace from the spiritual world. The ruling class was also in a state of turmoil and needed an ideology to divert the attention of the people to better stabilize the regime. The emergence of Buddhism fulfilled the needs of both the rulers and the common people. As a result, Buddhism flourished, and Buddhist art gained widespread support.

The active support of the ruling class facilitated the spread of Buddhist art and the use of metallic colors in paintings. For example, in the murals of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, we can see a great deal of use of gold to depict Buddha statues and bodhisattvas, and behind these precious colors was often the strong support of the royal family and the nobility. Thanks to their financial support, the color gold was widely used in Buddhist art and became an important means of displaying the majesty and sanctity of Buddhist art.

Combination of Religion and Imperial Power

Since Buddhist thought conveys the idea of spiritual liberation and reincarnation (Hong, 2018). People longed for liberation from the cycle of life and death, and the ruling class wanted to control the spirit of the general public through Buddhist ideas. Therefore, the ruling class vigorously promoted Buddhist manifestations in the finely carved decorations of royalty and nobility and the solemn statues and paintings of bodhisattvas in temples, all of which pursued the artistic effects of magnificence, solemnity, and refinement and greatly contributed to the use of metallic colors in paintings. For example, Fahai Temple was a temple during the Ming Dynasty, supported and financed by the favored officials of the court at that time, and painted by the court painters. Due to the royal support, the creation of murals was able to use high-quality pigments and metallic materials, such as stone green, cinnabar, metallic colors, etc. In particular, the large-scale use of metallic colors made the murals present a brilliant artistic effect, which was in line with the royal aesthetic needs and allowed the people to be devout in their beliefs. The combination of religion and royalty made the demand for metallic colors increase dramatically.

Economic Prosperity and Exploitation of Resources

The Han Dynasty was a prosperous period of gold production in China, with many places of origin of mineral resources and a very broad field of application, which promoted the enhancement and development of metal processing techniques. These gold and silver products were not only traded, bought, and sold as money and luxury goods in social trade activities but also utilized in artistic creations. In painting, the use of metallic colors was an extension of this resource utilization. For example, gold was processed to be hammered into gold leaf or ground into powder, which became an important material used by painters to decorate murals, artifacts, and religious artwork. Such artistic creations required a large economic investment, especially the demand for precious metals such as gold and silver, reflecting the fact that the economic prosperity of the society had a direct impact on the use of metallic colors in traditional Chinese painting.

Cultural Background:

Multiculturalism

The culture of ancient Chinese society was a multicultural one in which many flowers blossomed and many ethnic groups coexisted. As a result of dynastic changes, social development, and cultural intermingling, China has formed a variety of art schools and art ideas; art forms are also diverse, each affecting the other and each flourishing. Such as the Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties period, after the development of Buddhism, Buddhist art forms also came with it, and the development of China's indigenous culture of mutual integration enriched the Chinese painting art creation of the expression of materials and forms. Gold color, because of its uniqueness, began to be used in various art categories, which is originally a reflection of the multi-cultural integration.

Inheritance of Traditional Culture

Traditional Chinese culture emphasizes the communication of color imagery, and gold is a symbol of sanctity, royalty, and wealth in traditional culture. Ancient societies loved to use gold. In addition to the fact that gold itself has value

attributes, the main thing is the symbolism of gold. For example, the royal aristocrats used gold, although they wanted to express the symbol of power and status, but this is also a lineage of aesthetic interest in traditional Chinese culture. Representing this type of aesthetic interest in the art form and art expression in the traditional Chinese art categories has been the inheritance and development of this and that; the use of gold in Buddhism conveys hope and hope for a better life, and this type of traditional thought has also long survived in the artistic expression of China.

Artistic Background:

Integration and Localization of Buddhist Art

The Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties were in the Gupta Era in Indian history, and the colorful and distinctive style of Gupta painting entered China along with the spread of Buddhism, directly influencing the mural paintings of the grottoes on the Ancient Silk Road.(Niu, 2002)

Prior to the introduction of Buddhism and Buddhist painting into China, the Chinese art form of painting paid more attention to the changes of the lines, and the features of the objects were mainly expressed through the sparseness and density of the lines, the relationship between the real and the imaginary, and the front and back of the line, and the colors were auxiliary to the lines to create the works. And pay more attention to color, colorful and rich foreign art styles with the Silk Road into China, the first impact on the mural art form located in Dunhuang, with the flow of population, a variety of exchanges, and foreign art influenced by the form of painting also gradually affected by the local painting style. Metallic colors were first used in the murals of the Mogao Grottoes, and later their traces can be seen in the paintings of ladies and landscapes of the Tang Dynasty.

The Maturation of Color-based Chinese Painting Techniques

“In the late Northern Wei Dynasty, the haloing method of the Middle Kingdom style of painting appeared in the murals of the Mogao Caves. This dyeing method is to dye the red color in the high part of the cheeks and gradually fade towards the edge of the face. This “dyeing high” method and the concave-convex method of

Western Regions(Xiyu) painting style are very different; one of them focuses on dyeing the convex part, and the other focuses on setting off the convex part by deepening the edges of the object. This technique of high dyeing and the former Western Regions(Xiyu) painting style were integrated in the Mogao Caves for half a century and developed into a new type of halo dyeing in the early Tang Dynasty.(Niu, 2002)”

Painting art forms in the process of artistic integration of mutual reference, learning from each other, and the use of color in Chinese painting forms and techniques have been gradually perfected. In the Tang Dynasty, brush painting lines were still the main conveyors of subtle and vivid expression of demeanor and the expression of clothing texture, but the color in the distance could attract people's attention because of the rhythmic arrangement of the color blocks and the colors echoing each other. The relationship between line and color in this period was one of mutual accomplishment, with no distinction between primary and secondary.

The gradual fusion of Buddhist art with the native culture of the Central Plains influenced the use of color in Chinese paintings and gradually expanded the use of metallic colors in Chinese paintings, especially in the mural paintings of the Fahai Temple in Beijing, which reached a peak.

Artistic Characteristics

Cultural Connotation:

Symbolism

Religion

In Buddhist teachings, the Buddha is not obsessed with an external image, and it makes no difference if he appears in any form. However, gold is very precious in the eyes of the world, while Buddha is sacred and mysterious in the eyes of the world; therefore, the image of Buddha is ultimately displayed in gold color in the eyes of the public. Elysium is considered to be the ideal destination that people in the real world aspire to, and therefore, people try their best to decorate it with the most precious and beautiful things in the world. Under the influence of the real world, the world of the Buddha was depicted with great luxury and splendor, and gold, as the most

precious metal, was adorned in all parts of the Buddha's world. For this reason, Buddhist temples, as symbols of the world of bliss, also make extensive use of the color gold to sculpt statues, paintings, and decorate their temples.

Royalty and Nobility

The metallic color is processed from precious metals, a symbol of wealth and therefore a symbol of kingship and status in ancient times, and was endowed with political implications; in terms of cultural connotations, gold, due to its stable feature of non-tarnishing, matched the ideals of emperors and nobles for the stability of the regime as well as the longevity of power and wealth. Gold is seen as a symbol of power and wealth; its color, gold, is seen by the rulers and those in power as a symbolic color and becomes the exclusive color of the royal aristocracy, which civilians are not allowed to use. For example, the Qing Qianlong gold-inlaid treasure gold ou everlasting cup of cultural symbolism vision is the great Qing dynasty power of solid, long life. Gold in the cultural connotation is the symbol of imperial power.

Color Innovation:

Harmonious Color Contrast

Metallic and other mineral colors are used in conjunction with the picture to enhance the sense of hierarchy and three-dimensionality, the high brightness of gold and stone green, cinnabar, and other heavy colors to form a sharp contrast so that the picture is more colorful and vivid. For example: In "Cave 57, Mogao Caves"(Figure 7) main room's south wall, the use of gold leaf is mainly distributed in the visual center of the front row of the main statue of the Buddha, the left and right of the two Bodhisattvas, next to the slightly shorter King of Heaven, and the back row of Bodhisattvas headdresses. It takes up a very small area in the picture. The use of gold leaf in the picture may seem to be an unconscious distribution of the form of dots in the picture, but in fact, it is only the arrangement of the main object of the painting in the decorative part of the picture. The Buddha and the Bodhisattva in the visual center use more gold foil, such as headdresses, earrings, necklaces, and decorations on clothes, etc. The objects in the painting are skillfully and subtly outlined with bright metallic

colors in an orderly manner, highlighting the image of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva with their own hidden golden light, forming a relationship between the real in front and the virtual in the back of the picture. The red robe on the main Buddha in the middle is only decorated with gold foil on the left shoulder part of the robe, and the red color comes out from underneath the gold foil, while the other red robes can only see the gray-red color and even show the mottled traces, from which we can speculate that the robe is painted with vermilion sand and then pasted with gold foil, and the other places are not able to see the gold foil because of the objective and subjective reasons after the age of the robe. And it is in the red on the paste area of a larger area of gold foil so that the color of the gold foil is not only gold but also, slightly through the red, a richer gold. The left and right sides of the bodhisattva necklace and headdress are part of the gold foil in the earth yellow and navy blue background color on the paste out of the red robe on the large area of the gold foil of the gold compared to its more bright; the other did not use the red as the background color and is a point of dense gold foil hair color that is relatively speaking gray. The artist has used this color contrast to present the lightness and greyness of the color relationship between the gold foils. This strong color contrast makes the image of Buddha more prominent and symbolizes his extraordinary status.

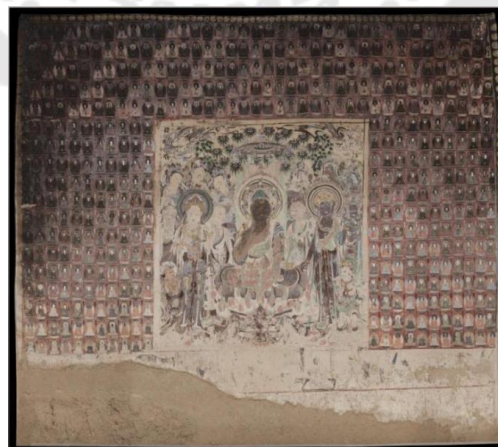


Figure 7 South Wall of the Main Chamber in Cave 57, Mogao Caves

Source: <https://ltfc.net/view/SUHA/608a61a2aa7c385c8d9433d8>

Visual Effect

The Chaoyuan Mural in the Hall of the Three Purities at Yongle Palace(Figure 8) painted in the form of up to several hundred characters, different forms, the main character through the form of greater than other characters to emphasize the form of other characters, other character images do not have a clear relationship between the near big and far small, the painter through the characters of the orientation, the relationship between the characters of the superposition, the relationship between the sparsity of the composition of the main and secondary, harmonious and united picture effect. The whole mural in the use of color is based on heavy mineral color, the character's robe to stone green, stone green, vermilion-based partial lapel, sleeves, belt part of the white, these colors through the size of the area, the color of the superposition, the lines of the interspersed reasonable and orderly distinction between the different characters of the relationship between the many characters have echoed the relationship between the image, but also united in a hue. Metallic color in the Yongle Palace mural in the main technique is raised line gilding, although the mural does not use the dark and light to distinguish the spatial relationship, but then the painters in the character's headdress, crown, wearing jewelry, seat of the local pattern, incense burner, and wearing armor on the first with the mineral color superimposed many times in the form of slightly higher than the thickness of the other colors painted, and so these colors after drying and then use the gold foil pasted on the top. This cleverly gives a three-dimensional sense to the objects in the picture and also enhances the readability and richness of the details in the picture. The distribution of gold leaf on a single figure is also delicate; generally speaking, the headdress part is used more, followed by the figure's lapel pattern, and then arranged in the form of lines or dots in the belt, necklace, and shoes, although not much, but the formation of a mutually constraining balance of the relationship. The brightly colored picture itself, together with the use of gold leaf, adds a sense of magnificence and solemnity. The special luster of the gold leaf makes the viewer feel the solemn beauty of the deity in the picture, no matter from which angle they view it. The use of gold leaf enhances the visual effect of the picture.



Figure 8 Part of the Chaoyuan Mural in the Hall of the Three Purities at Yongle Palace

Source:<https://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/609678bae2d4222ecd8c2ef3>

Metallic Colors are Used in Combination with Lines

The combination of metallic colors and lines is made possible by the techniques of gold hooking, gold tracing, and raised line gilding, which makes the colors and lines complement each other. The lines are smooth and calm, and the colors are gorgeous and harmonious, enhancing the sense of hierarchy and overall beauty of the picture.

Fahai Temple murals (Figure 9) in the picture processing are very delicate; the picture color from afar in the depth of the arrangement is dark to set off light color, light to highlight the dark color, dark color block in light color, light color block in dark color, and color block arrangement on the staggered. A close look at the object is handled beautifully and exceptionally; the five parts of the five senses hook the

line halo dyeing technique to deal with solemn and vivid demeanor; robes are outlined in flat color ink, but the artist, in order to enhance the richness of the picture color and technique, uses the form of gold powder to hook the line in the form of a good color block in the painting of the outline of the exquisite and complex pattern; each robe outlined in gold powder pattern is rich in change; the artist, according to the character characteristics, the size of the block area, and the reasonable arrangement of various patterns of clothing, and the reasonable arrangement of various patterns of clothing, there are mainly flowers and leaves of gold, there are also mainly phoenixes and birds of gold, there are also mainly clouds of gold. In order to make the technique of tracing gold more integrated with the picture, next to the lines that have been outlined in ink in the picture, the gold color is re-checked, so that the details of the picture are more harmonious. Of course, in addition to the plane of the robe on the gold, the painter also intends to highlight the lines of the ornaments so that the lines of the ornaments leach out the thickness of the lines, and on the basis of the gold, some of the robe processing is the first ink hook pattern. In the pattern of the positive form of the red, the negative form of the place is used to depict the gold technique. The entire Fahai Temple mural, according to the painting of the object arrangement, the reasonable use of gold, and raised line gilding technique to create a gorgeous and elegant form, has the artistic effect of opulence. Metallic color in the picture with lines to show neat and meticulous tracing of gold and raised line gilding, with the sparseness of the lines constituting the relationship between complexity and simplicity of each color block, so that the painting of the dignified characters in the form of features and their own morphological characteristics.



Figure 9 Part of Fahai Temple Mural

Source: <https://ltfc.net/view/SUHA/608a61a7aa7c385c8d943a5e>

Artistic Themes:

Religious Themes

Metallic color in the religious theme of the mural paintings (Figure 10) was used more, used in the mural of the character's headdress, neck ornaments, hand ornaments, and other decorative places. Objects of local metal color to carve, in addition to setting off the Buddha and the Bodhisattva's gorgeous solemnity and dignity, mainly because of the metal color material, suitable for use after the leaching powder, one is indeed a realistic reproduction of the texture of precious metals; two is to paste on the metal color can also be hidden through the color underneath, so that the object texture is richer; three is a single figure after the use of metal color, this dense technique Third, after the use of metallic colors for a single figure, this dense technique can highlight the vividness and nobility of the image's demeanor and form. Due to the texture of metallic color, color luster, and precious value, it can highlight the preciousness of the ornament, so this ornament mainly uses gold foil to show more cleverness and reasonableness.

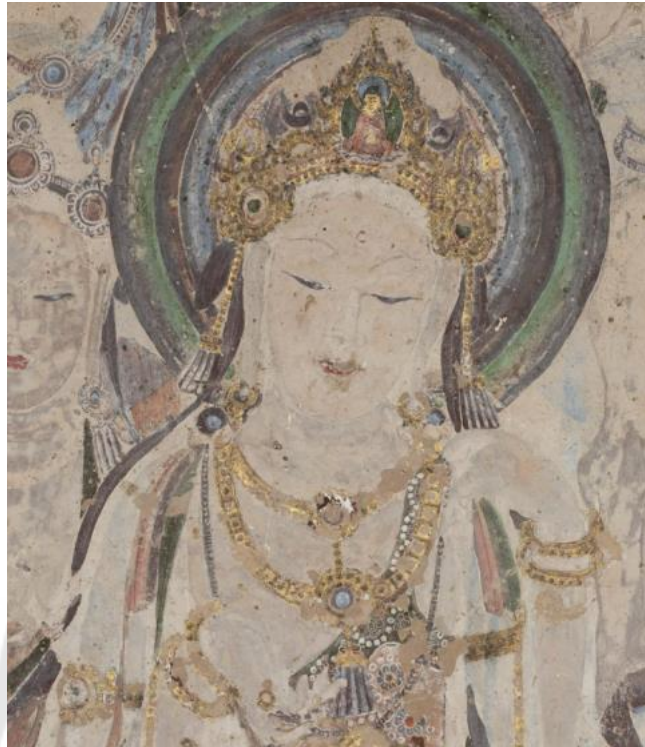


Figure 10 Cave 57: Part of the South Wall of the Main Room in Cave 057 of Mogao Caves

Source: <https://ltfc.net/view/SUHA/608a61a2aa7c385c8d9433d8>

In the east wall mural of the main room of Cave 420 of the Sui Dynasty (Figure 11), gold foil is directly applied to the face, hands, and feet of the main Buddha statue. This direct use of gold foil to show the exposed skin is influenced by the temple statue of Buddha with a golden body, so the Buddha statue in this mural, in addition to avoiding the five senses and directly applying the gold foil all over the whole face and hands, the gold foil is also used in the backlighting part of the main statue of the Buddha as well as the headdresses, neckdresses, and vestments of Bodhisattvas at the left and right sides, which form a visual relationship of dots, lines, and surfaces with the face of the middle statue of the Buddha, which not only highlights the main object but also echoes with other objects, and the painters use the gold foil to form a rhythmic picture form.



Figure 11 Part of the East Wall of the Main Room in Cave 420 of Mogao Caves

Source: <https://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/608a61a3aa7c385c8d9434ef>

It can be seen that the use of metallic colors is concentrated on the backlight, crown, and ornamental parts of the Buddha statues and bodhisattvas, a treatment that effectively emphasizes the transcendent status of these religious Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The painters' use of gold to portray the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas symbolizes the wisdom and compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, transcending the sacred status of mortals. The viewer is visually guided by the color gold to feel the majesty and inviolability of the religious figures, which further enhances the religious infectiousness of the murals.

Aristocratic Life

Noble Statues

Gold is highly symbolic in Chinese culture, representing power, wealth, and sanctity. The emperor is regarded as the “son of heaven” and is a symbol of

imperial power and majesty, so gold has become the first choice of color to express its supreme status.

For example(Figure 12), the bust of Emperor Xianzong Zhu Jianshen of the Ming Dynasty successfully conveys the majesty and sanctity of the feudal emperors through the use of metallic colors. Gold color here is not only a decorative element but also the core technique of artistic theme expression. The golden sun, moon, and dragon patterns on the dragon robe not only symbolize the supreme sanctity of imperial power but also imply the emperor's connection with heavenly destiny. The entire painting expresses the reverence for imperial power through the skillful use of metallic colors. The gold color contrasts with the dark colors at the neck of the coat, the red of the lips, and the black of the hat, eyebrows, eyes, and beard; and contrasts with the background and the cloud pattern to form a similar color contrast, which makes the picture have a rich color relationship and a strong visual impact. The use of gold not only attracts the viewer's attention but also strengthens the artistic theme of the painting, i.e., the sanctity and inviolability of imperial power.



Figure 12 One of the Bust Albums of Ming Dynasty Emperors and Empresses

Source: <https://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/66f3db59e9bd76589574a980>

Scenes Depicting the Lives of Noble Women

In the paintings of ladies painted by Zhang Xuan and Zhou Fang in the Tang Dynasty, the artists were able to express the richness and splendor of the life of the court nobles by using metallic colors in the pictures and to show the luxury and exquisite dress of the life of noble women. For example, in Zhou Fang's *Court Ladies Adorning their Hair with Flowers* (Figure 13), the artist's delicate outlining, dyeing, and careful layout of colors, especially the clever use of metallics, vividly demonstrate the social status of Tang Dynasty noblewomen and their life of luxury and idleness. In the *Court Ladies Adorning their Hair with Flowers*, metallic colors are mainly used in the depiction of dress patterns and the ornaments they wear, and the dresses of the noble women are important objects that express their noble status and position. The ladies in the painting are dressed in gorgeous silk dresses, and there are often embroidered patterns and motifs made of gold threads on the clothes, so the artist uses metallic colors to show the effect of gold threads. These golden patterns not only enhance the three-dimensionality and texture of the dresses but also highlight the luxury and opulence of their lives. The use of gold makes these costumes look more like works of art than daily wear, symbolizing the superior status and wealthy life of the aristocracy. The jewelry worn by the ladies, such as the gold pieces on their heads, bracelets, and the flower inlays painted on their faces, are mainly portrayed in metallic colors. These golden ornaments on the body make the women walking in the palace gardens glitter in the sunlight, contrasting sharply with the grudging expressions revealed in their eyes. Through the embellishment of this golden jewelry, the artist not only shows the opulence of the women's attire but also depicts the emptiness of the women's inner world within the palace walls. In addition to the figures, metallic colors are also used to express the artifacts related to the life of the ladies, such as delicate furniture, utensils, ornaments, and so on. By using metallic colors to depict the artifacts, the artist succeeded in creating an atmosphere of superficially luxurious life, reflecting the richness and colorfulness of the material life of the aristocracy in the Tang Dynasty.



Figure 13 Zhou Fang, Part of Court Ladies Adorning their Hair with Flowers (Tang Dynasty)

Source: <https://ltfc.net/view/SUHA/624517535d3a27508599b6dc>

Scene Depiction

The Depiction of the Background in the Painting

In the Dunhuang 397 caves mural (Figure 14) on the “elephant into the fetal” depiction of the prince sitting on a speeding elephant, On both the left and right sides, there are music players (Yueji) who play music in the heavenly palace, in addition to the above to meet the flying sky, there are colorful auspicious clouds. Here, the colors of the auspicious clouds are green, gold, black, cyan, and red. Auspicious clouds account for at least one-third of the screen space. Auspicious clouds in the mural can be a better rendering of the atmosphere of this fairyland. At the same time, these five-color auspicious clouds and the prince, music players, and flying colors form an echo of the relationship between the prince and the geisha on the head of the golden crown, and the golden auspicious clouds echoing the colors of the whole picture are

more gorgeous. Therefore, metallic colors in the depiction of the scene mainly enhance the decorative nature of the picture.

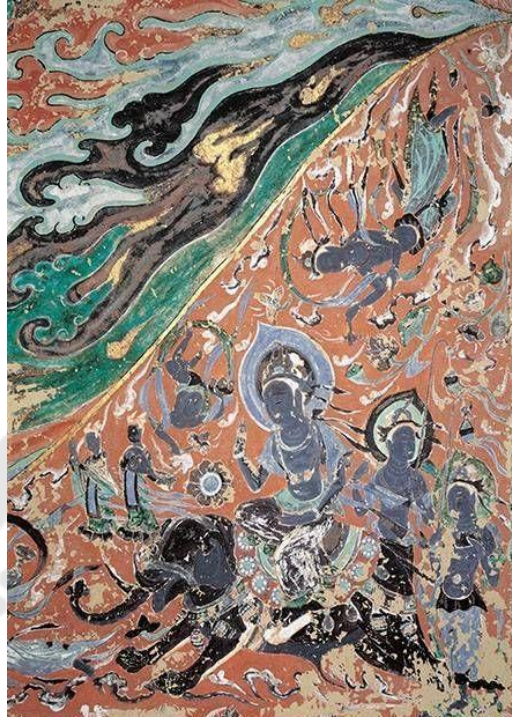


Figure 14 Part of the North Side of the West Niche in Cave 397 of Mogao Caves (Sui Dynasty)

Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/97106552>

Architectural Scene in the Painting

Metallic colors are used to show the opulence of the architectural scene, highlighting the luxury and nobility of aristocratic life. The “Jiangfan Louge Tu (River Sails and Pavilions)” (Figure 15) depicts the picture from the perspective of standing on a high place and looking down from above. The relationship between the real and the imaginary in the picture is skillfully arranged; the real place below is arranged with mountains, rocks, trees, palaces, and people; the imaginary place above is outlined with lines to show the dense water patterns, the boat passing by from the river, and the vivid rower and the man with a fishing rod in the boat, which make up the scene of the real in the imaginary and the scene in the imaginary in the real, which

outline the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. In terms of color application, the whole background is an ochre ink tone, but most of the mountain slopes are rendered in stone green, and the different shades of green of the branches and leaves form a harmonious and unified yet varied whole, and a small amount of the mountain slopes are rendered in stone green, which forms an echoing relationship with the stone-green roofs on the architectural pavilions that are half-shaded by the mountain rocks and trees. The artist outlines the roof ridge line and beam structure with gold, although the amount used is very small, but with the stone green of the roof, the vermilion of the beams, and the stone green of the rocks and trees, they are intertwined and set off each other, forming a beautiful color effect. The use of gold in the picture makes the picture more noble, showing the aesthetic interest of the Sheng Tang period.

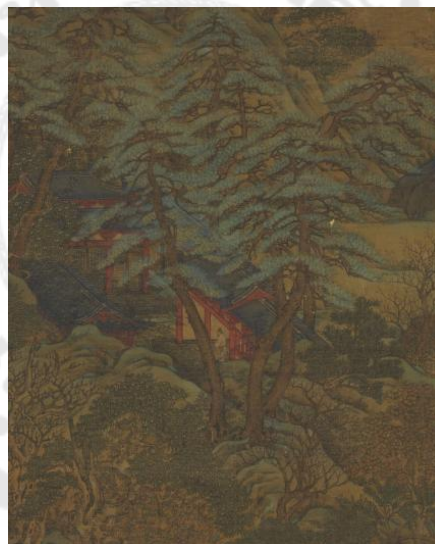


Figure 15 Li Sixun, Part of Jiangfan Louge Tu (River Sails and Pavilions)(Tang Dynasty)

Source: <https://lffc.net/view/SUHA/6229cf4dc0a0c85ae709de6a>

Natural Landscape

The use of metallic colors in combination with other colors to represent natural landscapes gives the landscape painting a lush, watery, and elegant tone. In Zhao Bosu's "Ten Thousand Pine Trees and Golden Palaces Painting" (Figure 16) Chiu Pak Ching used a horizontal composition, spreading out to reveal the vastness

of the river, with cranes flying over the river, bringing the viewer to the trees along the shoreline, and then expanding to see the lush mountains, the hidden golden palaces, and the mist around the arch bridge. The whole picture is very moist with brush, color, and ink, although it is stone green—stone green to render the color of the trees and rocks, but the whole color shows a sense of freshness wrapped in water vapor and mist, making people yearn for the natural landscape life. Metallic color in the picture, although not much, but also just at the foot of the mountain, the mountains and forests of the curved paths with gold dust thinly chapped, rendering, in the roof, the water at the meticulous outline with gold dust; this dosage of gold is not much throughout the entire picture, a good foil to the overall greenish-green color system, but also to the Southern Song Dynasty aristocracy's aesthetic interest in the performance.



Figure 16 Zhao Bosu , Part of Ten Thousand Pine Trees and Golden Palaces Painting
(Southern Song)

Source: <https://ltfc.net/view/SUHA/6089880533ad8750e9a6c27b>

Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques:

Variety of Materials

Metal foil and metal powder are common metallic colors used in traditional Chinese painting. Due to its never-changing and soft luster, gold foil has become the most commonly used metallic color. Gold foil is hammered into very thin sheets of gold and then pasted with a specific adhesive to the desired parts of the

picture, such as the backlight of the Buddha statue and the necklace. Because of its unique luster and texture, gold foil can create strong visual effects and changes in light and shadow in the picture, making the picture three-dimensional and magnificent.

Gold powder, on the other hand, is a powder made from metal in a certain ratio by a special process, usually mixed with glue and used for painting. Gold powder is suitable for expressing complex details, such as the patterns of royal and noble costumes and decorative patterns on artifacts. In traditional green landscape paintings, brush paintings, and murals, gold dust is often used to represent magnificent objects and brilliant, glittering scenes, enhancing the visual impact and symbolism of the work.

The material techniques of metallic colors are elaborate in production and application, reflecting the developed craftsmanship level and rich material culture base at that time.

Diversity of Techniques

Gold Tracing: the gold foil clay fine plus glue, with a pen dipped to outline the lines; “Painting of Cooling Off at Jiucheng Palace” (Figure 17) in the main use of gold tracing technology, in the form of pavilions and pavilions on the roof, bridges and boats, mountain structures, waterfalls, and water lines are all outlined in gold engraving, and the picture colors set each other off, brilliant and colorful.



Figure 17 Li Sixun, Painting of Cooling Off at Jiucheng Palace (Tang Dynasty)

Source: <https://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/608986c299d736503894471e>

Sprinkles: Brush adhesive on the desired area of the picture, sprinkle it with finely crushed gold leaf of different sizes, and press it into the picture.

Raised Line Gilding: Raised Line Gilding is actually two steps, first with the color leaching powder, leaching it into a certain thickness, and then paste gold. In China's traditional murals, whether they are Dunhuang frescoes or Yongle Palace frescoes, they are often used to raised line gilding technique performance frescoes of the Buddha, bodhisattva's crown, celluloid, and a variety of metal utensils, pendulums, and so on. Such as: Yongle Palace murals in the incense burner (Figure 18) are very typical of the use of the raised line gilding technique; the structure of the incense burner and pattern lines are thicker than the rest of the color outlined, and then the gold foil is pasted up.

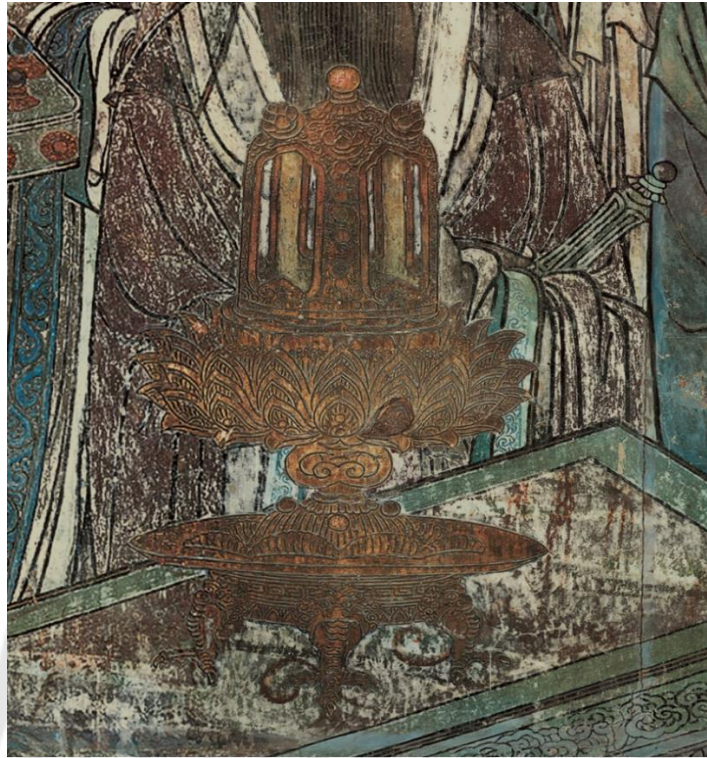


Figure 18 Part of the Mural Painting of Chaoyuan in the Hall of the Three Pristine Ones of Yongle Palace

Source: <https://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/609678bae2d4222ecd8c2ef3>

Artistic Ideology

Openness and Integration:

Multicultural Integration

The Fusion of Chinese and Foreign Cultures (Dunhuang Mural Paintings)

As can be seen from the Warring States period painting “Figures, Dragons, and Phoenixes” the early native Chinese traditional painting is focused on the use of lines and ink in the picture; the figures, phoenixes, birds, and dragons in the painting are outlined in different forms of thickness and sparseness, and the color is also mainly flat. During the Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties, foreign Indian art entered China through different channels and forms and gradually influenced Chinese

painting, and in the process of fusion and absorption, Chinese painting formed its own unique painting style.

In the north wall of the main room of Mogao Cave 057 (Figure 19), the use of metallic colors reflects the integration and innovation of artistic ideas. In traditional Chinese painting, emphasis is placed on the combination of line and color, and color is mainly used to assist the line in shaping the dynamics of the form. However, after being influenced by foreign cultures, the use of color in Dunhuang murals, especially the use of metallic colors, began to show a richer and more diverse style. This change is not only reflected in the technical level, but also in the openness and tolerance of artistic thought, the continuous learning of foreign cultures, and then selectively absorbing them in combination with their own national characteristics.

The murals on the left and right sides of the bodhisattva headdresses and necklaces use a large number of metallic colors, and the painting of blue, green, red, and black constitutes a brilliant and dazzling artistic effect, but because of the ochre-yellow background in the picture, it does not feel that the use of metallic colors is very abrupt, but instead, the other colors set off the more gorgeous. Through the use of metallic colors, the artist creates a sacred and solemn, dazzling world of bliss in the frescoes, which expresses people's pursuit of light and wisdom. At the same time, in the process of absorbing foreign cultures, Chinese paintings have a new way of expressing color staining and color matching and influencing the development of later generations of painting art.



Figure 19 Part of the North Wall of the Main Room in Cave 057 of Mogao Caves

Source: <https://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/608a61a2aa7c385c8d9433d4>

Intersection and Symbiosis of Multi-ethnic Cultures (Mural Painting of Yongle Palace)

The Yuan Dynasty was a special dynasty in Chinese history, ruled by the Mongols. After the Mongols became the rulers of the Central Plains, cultural collisions and exchanges among various ethnic groups became more frequent, with Han Chinese, Mongols, and various ethnic minorities of the Northwest influencing and blending with each other. Culture and art are also greatly affected, although the influence of the world of avoidance mentality, the Yuan dynasty painting to ink art, and folk art, the development of color can not be ignored. Yuan dynasty Yongle Palace murals can be seen in the integration and development of various ethnic groups, mural

characters on the form and appearance of a number of ethnic characters on the appearance of the characteristics. Although there are many characters, the appearance of different ones fully demonstrates that the mural creators of the time were careful observers of life. The use of lines was influenced by the Tang Dynasty painting art, showing the atmosphere and smooth, vivid characteristics. The use of metallic colors in the murals of Yongle Palace is relatively large, especially in many artifacts, such as incense burners, weapons held in the hands, armor, and other large uses of metallic colors. The use of metallic colors from the previous more use of crowns and necklaces to the Yongle Palace murals in a large number of artifacts, you can see this is the integration of national heritage and development of metallic color techniques.

Fusion of Royalty and Religion (Fahai Temple Mural)

The mural paintings of Fahai Temple were painted by court painters, which means that the royal family at that time was very supportive of religious murals. From the outline and color of the Fahai Temple mural, the strong support of the royal aristocracy can be seen. The picture hook line is breath vivid and smooth, the color is mainly red and green, with a harmonious match. Bodhisattvas, vajras, young children, and other five senses and hand halos are very subtle; the skin texture and demeanor vividly halo out. The treatment of the clothes is even more beautiful; each Bodhisattva's clothes are outlined in gold with complex, fine, and form-oriented patterns. This fully illustrates the fusion of royalty and religion, combining the ornate and meticulous painting style with the solemnity and majesty of religious frescoes to present a highly decorative picture. The objects in the painting also imply the royal aristocrat's life atmosphere, letting the viewer see the status of noble people and Buddha, Bodhisattva, to establish a link, letting the viewer have associations. The royal aristocracy's support for religious murals was mainly to achieve the purpose of political indoctrination by painting murals of Buddhist temples so that people would be in awe of them.

Integration and Innovation of Techniques

From the point of view of the metallic color material itself, metallic color has been used in various artifacts as early as in the Shang Dynasty, but the use of metallic color in painting is influenced by foreign culture and art. Chinese painting, in the process of integrating and absorbing foreign art, is inevitably affected by foreign art concepts, coupled with the fact that the metallic color in the local Chinese culture itself is a symbol of wealth and prosperity. The gradual application of metallic colors from artifacts to paintings is a process of mutual integration of ideas and techniques. With the opening of the Silk Road, there were frequent cultural and artistic exchanges between China and foreign countries, and after foreign materials and techniques entered China, they were combined with Chinese paintings to gradually develop new artistic styles.

From the Sui Dynasty Mogao Grottoes, Cave 420, the east wall of the main room murals and Yongle Palace murals in the use of metallic colors can be seen; the use of metallic colors in painting is gradually developed into a technique more compatible with the painted objects. Cave 420 of the Mogao Grottoes is dominated by color, and although there are also line forms in the picture, they are all visually brought to life through the contrast and extrusion of color. The main bodhisattva's face is covered with a large area of paste foil, while the backlit part is composed of lines of stone green and black blocks, which contrasts with the large area of the face in metallic colors. The foil at the bodhisattva necklace on both sides is in the form of lines, and that character's face is a large area of color blocks.

Yongle Palace murals' use of color is still very rich, but the picture pays great attention to the use of lines; the character's features, beard, and clothing are outlined with lines of vivid images on the basis of the use of mineral colors and metallic colors, mainly to make the picture more colorful and the object material contrast more prominent. The use of metallic colors in the picture adds to the religious atmosphere of the murals.

Metallic color, from the early childish use to the Yongle Palace murals in the skillful use of the required parts of the picture, is the fusion of Chinese painting techniques after the innovation of the artistic expression.

Emphasizes Individuality and Freedom:

Symbol of Social Status and Value

Gold is seen as a symbol of wealth and good fortune in traditional Chinese culture, and the use of metallic colors in traditional Chinese art, whether in murals or court ladies' paintings, is dominated by gold. The use of metallic colors in Chinese paintings not only increases the color level and visual impact of the picture but also makes the picture look more opulent, symbolizing a vision of life and reflecting people's desire and pursuit of a better life.

Metallic colors are often used to express revered social status and identity in paintings related to religion and royalty. For example, in the portrait of Empress Cheng Xiaozhao (Figure 20), one of the bust albums of the Ming Dynasty emperors and queens, gold is used to depict the dragon ornamentation on the empress's phoenix crown, and gold is also used to outline the decorative details on the phoenix crown, which realistically reproduction of the top dresses of the Ming Dynasty Empresses and highlights the empress's unparalleled status.



Figure 20 One of the Bust Albums of Ming Dynasty Emperors and Empresses

Source:<http://g2.ltfc.net/view/SUHA/66f3db59e9bd76589574a980>

The use of metallic colors in the portraits of the emperors and queens reflected the strict hierarchy in the society at that time, and gold was not only a symbol of wealth but also a symbol of power and dignified status. By using the color gold to portray these royal nobles, the artist reinforces the image of their revered status. This use ostensibly emphasized the strict social hierarchy, but it also provided a new direction for personalized expression.

Harmony between nature and art

In traditional Chinese painting, landscape painting is the use of ink and brush to express what the painter sees and what he thinks and understands in his heart, and the picture emphasizes the harmony and unity of man and nature. Most of the traditional landscape paintings are outlined with ink and brush, chapped, stained rocks, and trees, but there are some artists in landscape painting using metallic colors to express the natural landscape world, although the amount of use is not much, and most of the time it is used in the lime green that dominates the color of the picture, a small amount of chapped used in the foot of the mountain, the mountain forests of the paths through the secluded place, or in the form of outlining to wake up to mention the roof of the building. Due to the unique special color of metallic color, people can feel the luster similar to the sunshine. The artist uses these appropriately, and the painting of the lime green color constitutes a brilliant and dazzling artistic effect but also lets the viewer feel that the artist with metallic color will be the natural color luster used in the picture to explore more forms of expression of the technique. This exploration makes the artist's works full of novelty but also shows the artist's unique perception and understanding of the natural world.

Cultural Confidence:

The Pursuit of Aesthetic Value

Metallic colors are different from the vegetable and mineral colors commonly used in traditional Chinese paintings, with their unique luster and texture, which, in addition to strengthening the visual impact of the picture, also allows the viewer who watches from a close distance to see a more vivid and rich picture effect,

conveying the affluence of the painter's era or surroundings and the spirit of the artist, unafraid to pursue the pursuit of heavy colors and even the use of metallic colors to make the picture even more gilded and brilliant, which, though this is not the same as the aesthetic pursuit of ink and wash and the Taoist method of nature after the Yuan Dynasty. However, this pursuit of colorful but not vulgar effects also demonstrates the artist's confidence in Chinese culture. This cultural confidence stems from the artist's open and tolerant mindset, absorbing all forms of color techniques that are beneficial to painting from various art disciplines.

Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works

Scientific and technological development:

Advancement of Smelting and Forging Technology

From Dunhuang mural paintings and Yongle Palace mural paintings to Beijing Fahai Temple mural paintings, mural paintings in the use of metal color are more and more fine, and through the changes of the times, they are still shining gold. In addition to the gold itself not being easy to oxidize, thousands of years of the characteristics of the color do not change. The main thing is the metallurgical technology and the development of thin and uniform metal foil technology. The Shang Dynasty used gold foil in artifacts, and with the development of science and technology, the evolution of metal foil forging technology, and the Ming Dynasty's metal foil forging technology development, a certain height was reached, so the viewer can see the mural paintings in the Fahai Temple in Beijing used in the metal color more, letting a person marvel at them. In the Ming Dynasty, there was also a book called "Tian Gong Kai Shi," which briefly recorded the forging technology of gold foil. Although it was much thicker than modern gold foil, the forging technology was basically the same, which shows that a large number of gold foils in paintings could not be used without good gold foil materials.

Process Development of Carrier and Binder

Powdered metallic colors are difficult to blend with water; adding water to powdered metallic colors will cause the metal powder to float up and become

unusable. Powdered metallic colors can only be blended through the binder by grinding and blending with fingers before outlining with brushes, haloing, and pointing. Metallic foil also needs a binder to attach in the picture. Ancient artists and painters used garlic glue, gold glue oil, and other adhesives so that the metallic color could be firmly attached to the paper, silk, wall, and other painting carriers to ensure the durability and stability of the gold foil in the picture.

Color Preservation Techniques

Metallic color in ancient silk books and walls and the combination of mineral color use, after thousands of years without discoloration, in addition to reflecting the painters at that time having a certain insight into color matching, there is also a very important reason: at that time, the choice of the natural minerals from nature itself will not change color, and the metallic color is used in the gold, the nature of the stability of the color. Therefore, the color preservation technique at that time was to use natural mineral colors and metallic colors that were not easy to change color.

Artist's Individual Needs:

Enhancement of Visual Effect

In traditional Chinese painting, metallic hues are not employed in isolation; rather, they are typically integrated with other material processes, resulting in a distinctive creative style. Traditional brush painting use ink and color as primary materials, with outlining and staining as the principal techniques. Metallic hues are typically employed during the final stages of a painting to augment color richness and elevate the visual impact of the artwork. In the Southern Song lotus painting(Figure 21), when the outlining, dying, and coloring are completed, the veins of the lotus are meticulously delineated in fine gold. To convey the form of the impending lotus bloom, the artist deliberately delineated denser gold threads at the flower's tip, enhancing the surface with these threads. Furthermore, the artist differentiates between the sparseness and density of the gold threads on the front and back of the petals, demonstrating a refined and intricate method of expression that not only amplifies the decorative quality of the artwork but also showcases the artist's expertise and creative individuality. This

intricate and refined expression not only elevates the aesthetic quality of the artwork but also showcases the artist's proficiency and creative identity.



Figure 21 Lotus(Southern Song)

Source: <https://ltfc.net/view/SUHA/6579b2e49acc9d08ab340834>

Enhance the Picture Level of the Work

Metallic colors are used in different subjects of traditional Chinese paintings to meet the individual needs of the artists by enhancing the level of the picture. For example, in *Children at Play in an Autumn Garden* (Figure 22), the little boy in the lower left corner of the picture, who is concentrating on playing the game, is wearing a red coat, but this coat is not only a simple coat; the red coat is rhythmically dyed with gold patterns, and through the gold bracelet on the little boy's hand, the little girl's waistband with gold decorative patterns on the red belt, and the toys on the ground dyed with gold, the artist has used the metallic color to organically combine the characters in the lower left corner, who seem to have nothing to do with the background environment. The use of metallic colors makes the characters more three-dimensional and vivid, and the picture forms a seemingly invisible but actually tangible linkage, which enhances the picture level of the work.



Figure 22 Su Hanchen, Children at Play in an Autumn Garden (Southern Song)

Source: <https://lffc.net/view/SUHA/622c57beb98c587608057d4b>

Reflecting Social Status and Aesthetic Interest

In depictions of imperial sculptures, aristocratic portraits, or religious themes, the golden dragon motif on the dragon robe, the gilded background, and the golden embellishments all emphasize the preeminence of the figure. These representations not only illustrate financial prosperity and social rank but also strengthen the viewer's affiliation with and admiration for these identities through visual means. The artist's selection of metallic colors to convey these issues reflects both the contemporary societal condition and his individual perspective on social class and aesthetic preferences.

Cultural Exploration:

Demand of Religious Beliefs

The use of metallic colors was developed mainly due to the introduction of Buddhism and the flourishing of religion. Metallic colors in Buddhist and Taoist art symbolize sacredness, solemnity, and infinite light. Through the use of metallic

colors, artists are able to better express the spiritual connotations of religion so that the murals are not only works of art but also a visual expression of religious beliefs, enhancing the sense of sacredness and solemnity of religious works.

Due to the complexity and scarcity of production, metallic colors were only used in a small area in ancient times in religious murals, court paintings, landscapes, and flower and bird paintings, and the way of expression is more programmed and single, and the amount of metallic colors in traditional Chinese painting art is not well controlled; it is also easy to fall into the cheesy picture form. Of course, contemporary artists have made great efforts to avoid these problems while using a large amount of metallic colors and to let the paintings show a variety of forms.

4.2.The second part of the study focuses on analyzing the research based on documentary research, observation and analysis of works, and interviews. The documentary research comes from the artist's own writings, essays, and interviews with the artist by others. This part mainly to study the technical expression, innovation of metallic colors,aesthetic interest, and cultural connotations in Chinese contemporary painting through the works of four famous artists between 1990 and 2023.

Table 2 Respondents' Details

Artist	Zhang Daox	Artists,Professor of Hubei Institute of Fine Arts
	GuoJiying	Artists,Associate Professor of Capital Normal University
	Yan Haohao	Artists,Vice President of Wuhan Academy of Fine Arts
Artist/University Teacher	Zhang Yujin	Artists,Associate Professor of Hanshan Normal University
	Yang Fei	Artists,Associate Professor of Lijiang Culture and Tourism College
	Wang Jiayi	Artists,Teachers of Tianjin College, University of Science and Technology Beijing
	Wang Biqing	Artists,Teachers of Tianjin College, University of Science and Technology Beijing
Managers of the Bureau of Culture and Tourism/Curators	Hu Yaojie	Curators,Qi Chun Culture and Tourism Bureau,under secretary
Doctoral student	Cai Xiaoqing	Ph.D. student at Anyang University, Korea
Young student	Tan Jiahua	Student of Hanshan Normal University

Contemporary Works

Zhang Daoxi:

Zhang Daoxi has a rich theoretical and practical foundation in the use of metallic colors, and the analysis of his works mainly comes from the author's interviews with the artist, the artist's own essays, books, and the author's observation and analysis of his works, supplemented by the Hubei Academy of Fine Arts professors Yin Xiaobin, Shen Wei, Liu Maoping, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts professor Jiang Caiping,

who wrote articles specifically about Zhang Daoxi 's works, the preface to exhibitions and my interviews with university teachers, curators, and students.

Zhang Daoxi	Creative Background	Socio-economic Background	Reform and Opening Up
			Chinese-Japanese Cultural Exchange
		Cultural Background	Desire for Cultural Transformation
		Artistic Background	The Revival of Color-based Chinese Painting
	Artistic Characteristics	Cultural Connotation	Integrating the Spirit of Traditional Chinese Culture into the Sentiments, Ideals and Pursuits of Modern People
			Deep Thoughts on Nature and Human Existence
			Ethnic Cultural Connotation
		Color Innovation	Focus on Color Richness and Expressiveness
			Fusion of Chinese and Foreign Color Concepts
			Multi-layered Color Superimposition
		Artistic Themes	Natural Scenery
			Ethnic Minority Scenery
		Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques	Focusing on the Drawing of the Base Color of the Picture
			Corrosion of Silver Foil
			The Change of Painting Carrier
	Artistic Ideology	Openness and Integration	East meets West
		Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom	Pursuing Uniqueness of Expression
		Cultural Confidence	Using Modern Art Language to make New Interpretation and Expression of Traditional Culture
	Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works	Scientific and Technological Development	New Materials and New Techniques
		Artist's Individual Needs	Unique Visual Effects
		Cultural Exploration	Conveyance of the Symbolism of the Quality of Purity

Figure 23 Zhang Daoxi

Source:Designed by the author

Creative Background

Socio-economic Background:

Reform and Opening Up

China's rapid socio-economic development has reformed the Ministry of Railways, and in addition to building more railroads, a major speed-up of main lines has begun since 1997. The economic prosperity provided abundant resources for artistic creation. The development and convenience of transportation enabled artists to have more opportunities and conditions to explore and innovate, and the whole society presented a mentality of seeking newness and change. Artists have the opportunity and conditions to go deep into different regions to explore and express the local customs of each place.

Chinese-Japanese Cultural Exchange

"I think this kind of painting benefited from the experience of studying abroad at the Tokyo University of the Arts in Japan. They put the traditional Chinese mineral colors and metallic colors into continued development and gave me a great shock. Just having the opportunity to study abroad and learn back these traditional things from Japan, this material can show the characteristics of Chinese painting, the performance of Chinese painting, and a sense of thickness. For example, Dunhuang murals are also painted with this kind of material, and a sense of heaviness can be achieved by using this kind of material to express." (Zhang, interview, 2024)

The painter studied in Japan and learned the materials of China's lost civilization back from Japan, and after returning to China, he taught at a professional art academy and continued to spread the materials and methods of using metallic colors, and he has organized and contacted many Sino-Japanese art exchange exhibitions since the 90s, reflecting the exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in the field of art. This background of cultural exchange demonstrates the efforts of artists from both countries to engage in dialogue and mutual understanding through their artworks.

Cultural Background:

Desire for Cultural Transformation

Since the 1980s, Chinese society has experienced a profound cultural transformation. “Because of our generation, we went through the Cultural Revolution, experienced the storm of the theory of the uselessness of studying, experienced the intellectuals accepting the re-education of poor peasants, and then went into the factory before returning to school to study. In 1983, I graduated from the Hubei Institute of Fine Arts and stayed in the school, and then in the creation, I wanted to have some novelty to integrate into the picture. I remembered that when modern Japanese paintings were exhibited in the National Art Museum of China, I went to see them, and I was shocked by the glittering, jewel-like spots of light and the luster of metal foils in those painting materials. I was shocked to see that traditional Chinese painting materials are so freely used and developed in Japan. But in our country, we do use them less and less, and there is no teacher to teach how to use these natural mineral colors and the importance of these materials. For this reason I wanted to go to Japan to study and understand, and since '83 I have been studying Japanese on my own, but I haven't had the chance to go yet; in 1990 I wrote a letter in Japanese to Prof. Kayama Matazo of the Tokyo University of the Arts and sent a photo of my own work along with it. Unexpectedly, Prof. Kayama wrote back and asked me to apply to the Academic Programs Department during the admission period of Tokyo University of the Arts. With such an opportunity. I received a letter of acceptance.” (Zhang, interview, 2024)

Yin Xiaobin, a professor at the Hubei Institute of Fine Arts, talks about “The Awakening of Language: The Art of Zhang Daoxi's Heavy Color Paintings” saying, “Culture and art have been placed into new historical contexts, and in the complex dichotomies and interplay between the local and the world, the self and the other, the East and the West, the center and the periphery, and the traditional and the modern, they have begun to be deconstructed and reconstructed.” (Yin, 2015)

“In the face of the influx of various modern Western art trends, the art of brush painting, as one of the traditional cultural symbols of the Chinese nation, was once caught in the dilemma of ‘losing words’. However, the decline of traditional culture does not mean the death of the ideal spirit; it is under the illumination of this spirit

that Chinese painters, while sorting out the value judgments that have been confused due to the intervention of Western culture and while reshaping the missing beliefs, each with their own standpoints and methods to seek the conversion and regeneration of Chinese Gongbi painting in modern contexts, have once again invested in their sincerity and enthusiasm.”(Yin, 2015)

Foreign-related exhibitions became more frequent, and Japanese paintings and Western Impressionist colors were introduced at that time, which had a great influence on the development of Chinese paintings. In the face of the onslaught of foreign cultures, artists strive to find a balance between tradition and modernity and to promote the modernization and transformation of Chinese painting, which is mainly based on color. Zhang Daoxi wanted to incorporate something new into his painting creations, not only by inheriting the essence of traditional culture but also by actively studying in Japan to boldly absorb and integrate foreign cultural concepts.

Artistic Background:

The Revival of Color-based Chinese Painting

In the 1980s, the Chinese art world presented a path of seeking new and innovative ideas from traditional Chinese art and foreign paintings, and many painters did a lot of experimental explorations in concepts, tools, material techniques, etc., forming a situation where each of them had their own research and breakthroughs in color. In the early 1990s, a group of artists went to Japan to study, and Zhang Daoxi was one of them.

“The study of Japanese painting is to find the essence of traditional Chinese painting and to prove the long history of Chinese cultural influence on Japan. I go to learn not blindly to the Japanese painting expression method all over; but with discernment—absorbing and selecting what is valuable. It is good Chinese traditional things; it has been in the development in the use of these things. I will learn these things back, starting from the basics, from the material how to use, which materials can be discolored, which materials are not color changing, which materials are

chemical reactions or not chemical reactions, and will grasp clearly so that the use of the Then I will be able to use it with ease.”(Zhang, interview,2024)

Professor Yin Xiaobin believes that “in his long-term teaching and creative practice, Mr. Daoxi is keenly aware of the fact that the reason why Gongbi Heavy Color Painting can withstand the strong cultural impacts of ancient and modern China and foreign countries and still maintain a tenacious vitality is because this ancient and ever-new form of painting has the character of eclecticism. In the past and present, it is not only easy to integrate the language of other cultural forms but also easy to develop a new vocabulary in an environment where new techniques and media are emerging. In the face of different cultural situations and problems, it is better than other traditional painting categories (such as the highly complete literati painting) in making self-adjustments, additions, and corrections, and it has a natural semantic and rhetorical advantage in carrying on the tradition, connecting with the contemporary, and generating new cultural meanings and linguistic logics.” (Yin, 2015)

It can be seen here that the color of Chinese paintings has an eclectic character. After returning home from his studies, the artist continued to study the formal structure and color tradition of traditional Chinese murals, blended elements of Western realism and expressionism, and also drew on contemporary art, focusing on the integration of materials and expression, breaking through the traditional artistic language to produce a new sense of color aesthetics. Zhang Daoxi starts with metallic and mineral colors and creates rich color layers and textures by layering colors.

Artistic Characteristics

Cultural Connotation:

Through exchanges with the artist, the cultural connotation of his works is mainly manifested in three aspects, namely, the integration of the spirit of traditional Chinese culture into the sentiments, ideals, and pursuits of modern people; the profound reflection on the state of nature and human existence; and the ethnic cultural connotation.

Integrating the Spirit of Traditional Chinese Culture Into the Sentiments, Ideals and Pursuits of Modern People

“Because traditional Chinese culture is very important to the knowledge and understanding of the natural world, emphasizing the unity of heaven and man, the spirit of all things, and focusing on the harmonious symbiosis between human beings and nature. That is why I anthropomorphize the objects in my representation of lotus flowers, which are alive. The lotus flower's noble character of coming out of the mud and not being stained represents the spirit of two-sleeve cleanliness and incorruptibility and encourages people to self-improve. Therefore, there are cultural connotations and reasons why people love lotus. For this reason, when I express the lotus flower, I use its spirit of being free from dirt to reproduce the visual image of its pavilion and purity, encouraging people to strive for development, and through the creation of the work, it symbolizes people's good wishes of happiness, joy, and peace, and shows the beautiful scenery given to us by nature.”(Zhang, interview,2024)

According to Jiang Caiping, professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, “With the revival of traditional Chinese heavy color painting, Zhang Daoxi's heavy color paintings have inherited the aesthetic concept of ‘Brilliantly Colored and Gilded’ and created a large number of excellent works, which embody the ancient Chinese tradition of a thousand years of lost, very Chinese classical beauty of patterns and techniques of applying gold leaf. His heavy brushwork paintings with metal foils combine the beauty of “Brilliantly Colored and Gilded” with the elegance of “Hibiscus out of Water” to form works with the spirit of the times, which are a fusion of the classical and the modern.”(Zhang, 2015)

His work “Whispers in the Pond” (Figure 24) profoundly integrates the essence of traditional Chinese culture. The lotus flowers and leaves in the work symbolize purity, elegance, and resilience, elements that embody the virtues of traditional Chinese culture. By depicting the scene of the lotus pond, Zhang Daoxi not only conveys his admiration for nature but also shows his admiration for the spirit of Chinese tradition. In addition, the metallic colors used in the work symbolize wealth and

dignity in traditional Chinese art, and the use of this element further enhances the cultural depth of the work.



Figure 24 Whispers in the Pond

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Yin Xiaobin mentioned, "His method of transforming and reconstructing the traditional image symbols into modern compositional and spatial consciousness seems to be out of place, but in fact, it is his intention to blend the classical with the contemporary so that the works can diffuse the cultural temperament that contains both classical cultural connotations and modern visual and aesthetic characteristics." (Yin, 2015)

Charm of Lotus (Figure 25) still depicts the traditional images of lotus flowers, leaves, and rods, but by arranging the gathering and dispersing, overlapping, and back-and-forth relationship of the flowers, leaves, and rods in the picture, the artist strengthens the compositional sense of the picture in the form of dots, lines, and surfaces. This form of composition not only enhances the artistic aesthetics of

the picture but also highlights the balance and harmony of traditional aesthetics, making the picture visually appealing and at the same time conveying a celebration of the beauty of nature. In the form of a four-panel screen, the work shows the dynamic and static relationship between the blooming lotus, swimming fish, and water in late spring; the interaction between the lotus, dragonflies, round lotus leaves, and two semi-circular lotus leaves with withered petals in summer; the incomplete lotus leaves nibbled by worms in autumn, with a brilliant background color to show the joy of the lotus root harvest despite the failure of the lotus leaves; and the interestingly shaped lotus rods in winter with a lonely hue but hinting at the vitality of the coming year, which reflects the concern and respect for the cycle of nature in Chinese traditional culture. The view of the lotus pond in spring, summer, autumn, and winter not only shows the vitality and changes in nature but also reflects people's philosophical thinking and attitude towards the change of seasons.



Figure 25 Charm of Lotus

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Deep Thoughts on Nature and Human Existence

“Life is the source of creation. Whenever I go out to experience life, there is always something to gain, there are always touching images engraved in my mind, and there is always the impulse to express the things I feel ‘Expectation from the

Sea' is a work that expresses the diligence, simplicity, and kindness of Hui'an women. The composition of the picture shows four Huian women facing the sea, expecting their family members to return from fishing. It is difficult to understand this kind of sea view and expectation without experiencing it. The color tone of the picture is beach yellow; the unique costumes, silver ornaments, and flowers on the hats reflect the women's love of beauty; the holding of each other's hands and the empty baskets imply expectation and worry; the returning fishing boat in the background connects the figures as a whole; and the fish that appear vaguely in the background symbolize the men who go out to sea for fishing and also imply the return from the fishing trip with a full load of fish."(Zhang, interview,2024)

"Expectation from the Sea" (Figure 26) delves into the spiritual connotations of traditional Chinese culture while incorporating the realities of modern society. By depicting the daily life and labor scenes of Hui'an women, the work demonstrates the simplicity and resilience of traditional fishermen's culture in China's coastal areas, reflecting a profound reflection on nature and the state of human existence. In his works, Zhang Daoxi not only preserves the techniques and aesthetic spirit of traditional Chinese painting but also combines these elements with modern artistic concepts to form a cultural expression that is both traditional and modern.



Figure 26 Expectation from the Sea

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Ethnic Cultural Connotation

"The relearning of the earlier borrowed nature of Zhang Daoxi's generation appears on the surface to be an exploration of the form of painting language, such as materials and technical factors, but in essence, such a creative practice is not merely embodied in the surface layer of technology but rather responds to the promotion of specific Chinese aesthetics and thus demonstrates an important force of return in the art of Chinese painting." (Shen, 2022)

"In the process of Mr. Zhang's experimentation with linguistic schemes and cultural expression, he has gradually upgraded his art from a pure linguistic exploration to a cultural understanding. In my opinion, this is a deeper level of 'linguistic awareness', a position of linguistic stance. In his works, both the visual sequence and the linguistic scheme all reflect the cultural imprint of his classical sentiment." (Yin, 2015)

From the above materials, it can be seen that although Zhang Daoxi's paintings focus on the study of material language, what makes his works really shine is that they are infused with ethnic cultural connotations. For example, the work "Plantain Flower" (Figure 27) depicts the natural landscape and ethnic culture of Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, against the background of the local customs of the region. Traditional elements of the Dai people, such as Plantain Flowers and Dai girls, are used in the work, conveying respect and praise for the Dai culture. The banana grove and the Dai girl bathing in the river symbolize the tranquility of the Dai culture and the beauty of nature. Through this work, Zhang Daoxi shows the rich connotation of the ethnic culture, reflecting his understanding of and respect for the ethnic culture.



Figure 27 Plantain Flower

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Color Innovation:

Focus on Color Richness and Expressiveness

Liu Maoping, professor and vice president of Hubei Institute of Fine Arts, mentioned in "Each one is good at what he does, each one is beautiful" that Zhang Daoxi's works "break through the traditional program of brush and ink and are good at drawing on the strengths of brotherly art, especially adapting to the demand for visual richness in the modern society and increasing the study and use of color, which

not only enriches the language of Chinese painting but also forms his own artistic characteristics.”(Liu, 2019)

In “Warmth of Spring” (Figure 28), Zhang Daoxi boldly uses metallic colors, such as gold and silver foils, as well as a variety of mineral pigments, which give traditional colors a new form of expression. The colors of the plants in the painting are widely pasted with metallic foils. In addition to using yellow gold and silver foils, Zhang also uses sulfur to corrode the silver foils and uses the red, purple, blue, and green colors rendered by the silver foils after the discoloration to paste them in the corresponding positions according to the structural trend of the plants, and he uses the corroded and discolored silver foils to portray the subtle color changes of the same leaf as well as to differentiate between the front and back of the plants so as to make the visual center of the viewer clearly understandable, and the artist. Of course, the artist does not only use a lot of metallic colors on the plants, although the color of the water surface is unified by the blue-gray mineral color, but the water pattern under the water surface can be seen vaguely with the metallic foil. This kind of direct use of metallic colors and the use of metallic colors and then covering the mineral color to present the relationship the balance between negative and positive space enriches the color of the whole picture. The luster of the metallic color changes at different angles, and the color shows a dynamic effect on the static plane, which breaks through the traditional flat expression of color and adds a unique visual level and expressive power to the work.



Figure 28 Warmth of Spring

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Fusion of Chinese and Foreign Color Concepts

"I focus on color, as I primarily practiced oil and watercolor painting before entering the academy. My artistic approach emphasizes enhancing color while downplaying the use of lines. In traditional Chinese painting, line work itself contains variations. Once the lines are rigidly fixed, the painting loses its sense of spatial depth and contrast between solid and void. That's why I emphasize the interplay of fullness and emptiness, as well as the contrast in color. I have to perfect the color of the picture before going through the draft; that is to say, whether the tone of the whole picture is warm or cold, blue or green, should be determined. Lands of Fish and Rice (Figure 29), it is some pursuit of gray tones. This is the previous study of oil painting, the perception of oil painting, with gray tones, such as blue-gray, green-gray, red-gray, warm-gray, and cold-gray, with these gray tones to express, to strengthen the tone of the picture, to produce this heavy effect." (Zhang, interview, 2024)

Zhang Daoxi is influenced by Western painting art in his creations. In his compositions, he does not specifically use lines to emphasize the

contrast between sparseness and density, or the relationship between solidity and void. He uses color to express the changes in the structure of the objects in the picture. When dealing with colors, he pays attention to the contrast between colors and the harmony of colors in the picture and also pays great attention to the colors presented after color overlaying, such as using cold colors to draw the base color in a warm-toned picture, which makes the color blocks contrast sharply and strengthens the visual effect of the picture, which is also the effect of paying more attention to the expression of colors after the fusion of Chinese and foreign color concepts.



Figure 29 Part of Lands of Fish and Rice

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Multi-layered Color Superimposition

“Plantain Flower in the application of creative expression techniques, this focus on the performance of color to portray the main body, I still focus on color, focus on the thickness of the picture, so a lot of use of metallic colors to strengthen the tension of the picture, to strengthen the thickness of the picture, to

emphasize the overall sense of the banana grove and the changes, to play up the fact that after a day of toil, the young girls use the river to wash away the fatigue and sweat of the day, and this is the time when they are the most relaxed. This is also the time when they are most relaxed, and the playful sounds among them can be heard. In order to emphasize the unity of the tone of the picture, the whole picture is expressed in warm colors, whether it is the water, the characters, or the banana grove, which is expressed in metal foil. The banana grove must not be the only element rendered with metal foil; otherwise, the visual hierarchy would be lost. Metallic foil is also used on details such as the characters' hair and the patterns on their clothing. The light spots in the river are also represented by metallic foils. In the picture, there is color over foil, foil over color, color over color, and foil over foil, superimposed on each other, intertwined with each other, set off against each other, dependent on each other, and not isolated, which is the main feature of my creation to use color and foil to express, so color over color, foil over foil, and this method is to make it richer and thicker" (Zhang, interview, 2024)

It can be seen here that Zhang Daoxi integrates the colors he observes, the colors he perceives, the colors in traditional art, and the colors he learns from foreign vocabularies into each other and finally transforms them into the inner painting language to strengthen the heaviness of the picture. The artist uses mineral colors and various metal foils to portray the objects, and he is especially adept at using the colorful characteristics of the silver foil that is rich in color after it is corroded and changed to express the forward and backward leaves of the plantain leaf, the flipping and changing of leaves, and the sparkling of the water. In the use of color, the artist uses the techniques of overlaying the colors and foils on top of each other, clashing the colors with each other, washing the picture with water, and sanding the picture with special materials to strengthen the richness of the color of the picture and enrich the expression of the characters' emotions in the picture by the relationship between colors, which presents a more diversified visual effect and color layers for the audience.

Zhang Daoxi's color innovation is mainly reflected in the three aspects of focusing on the richness and expressiveness of color, multi-layered color superimposition, and the fusion of Chinese and foreign color concepts.

Artistic Themes:

Natural Scenery

"The birth of a piece of artwork takes a long time to brew, and it must be inspired by deeper life and contact with nature. First of all, the theme can move you to have the motivation to create, not simply see a certain scene to draw down. Art creation is not a reproduction of life, nor is it a copy of life; art is higher than life. It is through the connotation of the work that the reader is impressed. My works are well thought out and must have life experience, first-hand information from real life, and things that can move me and the plot in order to produce a creative impulse; only then will I go to push, to conceptualize, and to create. For example, for the creation of the 18-meter-long *Lands of Fish and Rice*, I went to Honghu Lake, Donghu Lake, South Lake, etc., to collect information on lotus flowers and leaves, from the small river to the tip of the lotus flowers in full bloom, and to see the fruits of the fruit. After collecting a large number of various kinds of flowers, leaves, branches, and fruits in all seasons, I had an impulse to create, and then I really conceived and created. It took five years to create the work, using various metal foils and traditional mineral colors from home and abroad to express the graceful lotus flowers and the koi carp, mandarin ducks, and swans swaying in the water."(Zhang, interview,2024)

Zhang Daoxi is very fond of the theme of lotus; he himself said in the telephone interview, "I still like this kind of lotus. Chinese people also like lotus. Lotus is pure and elegant, out of the mud and not stained."(Zhang, interview,2024)

When it comes to artistic themes, the interviewee Wang Jiayi understands it like this: "Mr. Zhang loves lotus, it has something to do with the living environment in Wuhan, the lotus in full bloom in summer, the dead lotus in winter, because it is common, so it is easier to observe comprehensively, and it is easier to find

his personal style in one painting at a time, and finally the lotus has become his masterpiece. ” (Wang, interview,2024)

From 1990 to 2023, the artist painted a lot of creations focusing on lotus flowers and leaves. The theme of “Whispers in the Ponding” focuses on the depiction of natural landscapes, especially the representation of the lotus pond scene. Through delicate brushstrokes and realistic depiction techniques, Zhang Daoxi incorporates elements such as lotus blossoms, lotus leaves, and wild ducks into his images, showing the beauty and harmony of nature. His works are not only simple reproductions of nature but also convey a poetic understanding of life and a deep sense of human emotions. The peaceful scene of the lotus pond under the sunlight makes the viewer feel a leisurely attitude towards life and a reverence for nature.

The artistic theme of “Lands of Fish and Rice” focuses on depicting the natural scenery and life in the land of fish and rice. The artist takes 6 paintings for a season, and a total of 24 paintings focus on the scene of the lotus pond in the changing seasons, as well as the koi carp, mandarin ducks, swans, and other creatures in the pond, which expresses the natural beauty and humanistic feelings of the central region. The lotus leaves in the pond, from flourishing to withering, are also the artist's realization of the journey of life. Through the delicate depiction of these scenes, Zhang not only shows the beauty of nature and expresses his praise for the harmony of nature and the beauty of life but also pours his own feelings about life into the picture. This choice of theme has the elegance of traditional Chinese painting but also incorporates modern aesthetic concepts.

Ethnic Minority Scenery

“The creation of figure painting is mostly to go deep into the minority areas and collect the regional characteristics of the local customs, such as the Dai in Yunnan, the Miao in Guizhou, the Tibetans in Sichuan and Tibet, and the Hui'an women in Fujian. Especially the costumes of these ethnic groups are dressed up with gemstones and silver ornaments, which are more in line with the use of metal foils and mineral colors we use to express the gemstones on their bodies, which is the mineral

color we commonly use. If you use chemical colors, it is difficult to express the sense of nobility and opulence in the work because chemical colors are easy to fade and difficult to preserve for a long time.”(Zhang, interview,2024)

“A lot of minority subjects are in the process of taking students to experience life with deep feelings. To have feelings, for example, in Hui'an, the locals could not cooperate with you to paint and take photos, and then through the introduction of others to find a girl, that is, the main character in the center of the work ‘Expectation from the Sea’ to find her to take us to run, to communicate, to understand the situation. In the process of understanding and observing Hui'an women. I remembered watching a movie called ‘Widowed Village’ when I was a child, which showed the plot of Hui'an women. In the past, men all went out to sea to fish. But with frequent typhoons, it wasn't uncommon for boats to capsize and lives to be lost. The movie was about men who went out to fish and did not come back, and there were only widows left in the village, which was a very tragic movie. So when I was learning about the situation, I thought of this plot. Hui'an women are very hard; the heaviest work is what Hui'an women do. In the past, men were fishing, and women did heavy work, lifting stones, beating stones, and making houses. All women worked; women worked from the ground back, but also brought a pile of firewood back to cook, so I was inspired by the feeling. Not long after I went there, back and forth for 20 days, I felt Hui'an women were very hard, and I wanted to show this kind of encounter with the women of Hui'an”.(Zhang, interview,2024)

“Sail Off portrays the men who have to send fresh water to their boats before they go out fishing because the boats have to use fresh water to cook, eat, and drink when they go to the sea; the painting of ‘Expectation from the Sea’ shows that the women are looking forward to their fathers and brothers safe return from fishing, and therefore it portrays the Hui'an women watching and looking forward to it from the sea, and the fish at the top of the picture sits on top of the bottom color, which indicates that they hope that they will return from fishing and have a good harvest. At the same time, the fish in the background indicates the expectation of having a good harvest and having fish every year. I went to Hui'an and painted a lot of paintings. At that time, the

paintings were all inspired by my feelings, and if I didn't go to experience life, I couldn't have painted this kind of work at home.” (Zhang, interview,2024)

The artistic theme of “Sail Off” (Figure 30) and “Expectation from the Sea” focuses on the lives of Hui'an women, combining the artist's insights gained from the film to depict their daily labor and life scenes. Zhang Daoxi uses metal foils and mineral colors to show the hardship, happiness, and expectations for the future in the lives of Hui'an women. He emphasizes people's desire for a better life and their positive and optimistic attitude towards life, giving the work a profound humanistic concern. This choice of theme not only shows the artistic style of realism but also expresses respect and praise for the working people, making the work strongly social and realistic.

The theme of “Plantain Flowers” is to express the natural scenery and humanistic features of the Xishuangbanna region in Yunnan. The work depicts a moving image of a Dai girl bathing and relaxing in a banana forest, symbolizing youth and beauty. The brilliant colors of the Plantain Flowers in the picture contrast sharply with the graceful image of the Dai girl, reflecting the exuberance of life and the harmony of nature. Through this depiction of natural life and the lifestyle of the minority characters, the artist expresses his praise for the beauty of nature and his love for ethnic culture.

Through analysis, we know that the artist's painting themes focus on natural scenery and ethnic minority customs.



Figure 30 Sail Off

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/aIHdkWcj6Q0NTH-7o4wEFA>

Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques:

Focusing on the Drawing of the Base Color of the Picture

“Chinese paintings do not have an environment to do underpainting, but traditional murals are painted on a wall substrate, Song paintings are painted on ancient silks, and all of them have a layer of substrate accordingly, a monochromatic substrate, not a rich underpainting. Then Japanese paintings are also flatly brushed with various colors, and there is also a method of overlapping colors. And in order to enhance the effect of heavy coloring in the picture, I necessarily need to repeatedly overlay colors many times. Then over time, I thought it would be better to use more than three colors on the picture every time I do the underpainting, splashing and overlapping brushes, having three colors, blending with each other, interlacing with each other, and producing more color effects, which reduces the time for a single coloring and enriches the picture color. According to the content of the work, the base color will be fully painted and thicker, and then the back of the drawing of the image will be easy and comfortable. Such a color base, in fact, the characters in the work, physical objects, will be you have me, I have you in the color relationship, will not be

disconnected, the color will be unified and coordinated, of course, the base color will be based on the color of the picture using metal foils , otherwise only the local use of metal foils, it will make the picture appear isolated and uncoordinated, there are metal foils conspicuous, snatch the main body. Therefore, the work will take care of the whole picture and then enhance the details according to the priority. Whether I do the base color or post-painting, my works emphasize the fusion of metallic foils and mineral colors, echoing each other and reinforcing the use of heavy colors to shape the object.” (Zhang, interview,2024)

The artist emphasizes the drawing of the color base of the picture, which helps to color and shape the object in the later stage. The base color drawn in the early stage helps to determine the tone of the picture, brighten or accentuate local colors on top of that helps to harmonize the tone of the whole picture. Each of Zhang Daoxi's creative works is done in the base color and then drafted before an in-depth portrayal of the object, so he uses a variety of materials and techniques in the base color painting. Since there is no portrayal of the object, the stage of painting the base color is relatively free, so the artist will not get stuck in a stereotypical way of thinking at this stage, and the reasonable use of color will make the color of the picture show both rich and uniform effects.

Corrosion of Silver Foil

Zhang Daoxi uses a lot of metal foils in his works, especially silver foils, because he especially likes the rich colors that appear after corroding the silver foils with sulfur powder and irons. The color effect and texture of the silver foil after tarnishing cannot be expressed by other colors. However, corroding the silver foil requires great effort. First of all, the cloth should be soaked in sulfur powder. Let the cloth absorb the sulfur powder and then let it dry for use, and then use the iron to heat the silver foil under the sulfur cloth to make it change color. The discoloration of the silver foil is very difficult to control; the amount of sulfur powder and the temperature will affect the color change, so the painter needs a lot of experiments to be able to freely iron out the color he wants. Even after the artist has corroded all the colors to his desired

color, he needs to use special methods to prevent it from continuing to change color. In the drawing part of the picture, since the silver foil is so light that even a slightly greater force of exhalation may blow the foil away, it must be pasted in a windless environment. All these not only test the skill of the artist to etch the silver foil but also test the patience of the artist.

“Lands of Fish and Rice” is 18 meters long, and all the lotus leaves in the picture in spring, summer, autumn, and winter with different shapes and forms are all in the color of corroded silver foil. The relationship between the front and back of these leaves, the stacking relationship, the structural relationship, and the seasonal changes of the leaves are also expressed by the corroded silver foil, which constitutes a breath of coherent and shocking artistic effect. The artist uses the colors of cold blue, cold green, and cold red, which have been ironed for a long time and have a slightly heavier discoloration, to express the dark part and the heart part of the leaves, and uses the colors of warm yellow, warm purple, and warm red, which have been ironed for a short time, to paint the bright part of the lotus leaves. Each leaf is made by tearing the foil into a natural form and pasting it according to the structural changes, and attention is paid to leaving a suitable base color so that the foil has an echoing relationship with the base color, avoiding the lotus leaf being pasted like a handicraft.

The extensive use of corroded silver foil in Zhang Daoxi's works is equivalent to having the changes in the colors of the works in one's own hands and then drawing works with strong decorative and artistic expression based on his artistic qualities and good character.

The Change of Painting Carrier

The same is true of the painting of the lotus; the early works “Whispers in the Pond” and “Charm of Lotus” also use a large number of metallic colors, but at that time the paintings were still painted on paper. Paper, this material, is destined to be the beginning of the work of color, and it can not be painted so thick. As long as the work on paper gives a visually rich and heavy sense of color, it is sufficient.

The “Lands of Fish and Rice” from 2009-2015 was painted on canvas. Painting on canvas not only uses a lot of metallic colors but also superimposes and fuses coarse- and fine-grained mineral colors and metallic colors on top of each other, forming a different effect. Not only is the visual color level rich and thick, but also more layers of color are superimposed.

“Song of the Four Seasons (Figure 31) is painted on silk umbrellas, so there is no way to use mineral colors, and all the foil is used to paint and express. The other thing is that the foil is very thin, and it's easy to stick to the silk cloth. If you paint with color, the color will fall off and peel off when you close and open the umbrella. Due to the thin nature of the metallic color, at best, the color will be partially folded off in the place of the umbrella bone, so the umbrella is basically open all the time to hang. The whole piece of work is painted with metallic colors to express, of course, when making the base color with acrylic colors and latex, the base color that was applied has changed, and then you go to paste the foil.”(Zhang, interview,2024)

Whether it is thinly applied mineral and metallic colors on paper, thickly applied mineral and metallic colors on canvas, or acrylic and metallic colors on silk umbrellas, the artist adjusts the thickness of the colors in the picture according to the vehicle of the painting.

Zhang Daoxi not only makes a lot of attempts to adjust the way of using metallic colors according to the painting carrier. “I think the form of Chinese painting is still relatively casual. What carrier, form can be a fan, four-foot, or four-foot screen can be painted; the size of the painting can be handled by yourself; and the painting carrier is also based on their own needs for the creation of paintings to decide to be able to give play to the material, the form of its own beauty, and try to paint something different so that other people feel the brightest works.”(Zhang, interview,2024)

From the interview, we know that Zhang Daoxi likes to use color to convey his feelings, and he is also very good at using metallic colors to express objects, while his artistic themes are what he is interested in, and he has done a lot of

material collection to have his own feelings, and his artistic themes are mainly focused on the traditional Chinese painting themes of lotus, lotus leaves, plum blossoms, and these natural objects, which have noble character and symbolism, as well as ethnic minority customs, which can be deeply touched by the expression of his work.

As he said himself, "Lotus and plum blossom are the traditional spirit and cultural characteristics of China, which must be preserved for me as a student of Chinese painting. Of course, the technique, composition, and use of materials have changed a lot. I no longer outline and fill in the colors or use three alum nine dyes because I use the superimposition of materials more heavily, and metallic and mineral colors overlap to achieve a richer, more colorful, and more expressive representation of the characteristics of the object. Over time, I also formed my painting language characteristics, both to retain the spirit of the traditional Chinese paintings and to reflect a feature of the times, different from the ancients and different from the others."(Zhang, interview,2024)

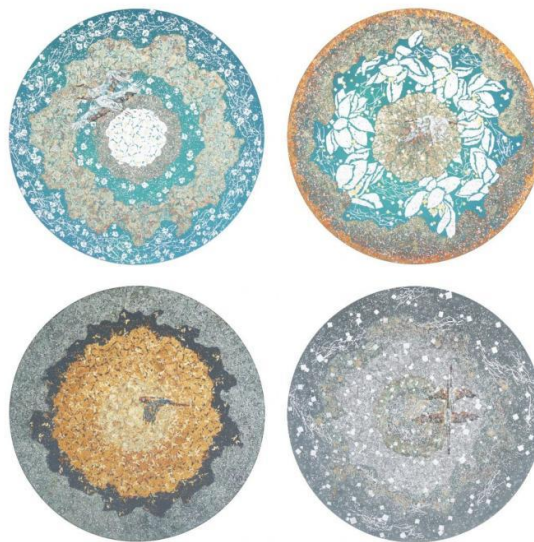


Figure 31 Song of the Four Seasons

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NdGD2ra9RQ68NmTC-sk_zg

Artistic Ideology

Openness and Integration:

East meets West

"I'm going to college before all painting oil, then all painting color. Color has painted gouache, watercolor, and oil painting. Like color, it is the Western color so that I feel the color, and understanding is still quite deep." University of sub-specialty, selected by the Chinese painting, we are studying Chinese painting by the traditional Chinese painting. We have been to Dunhuang, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Nei Mongol, Tibet, and other places to study rock paintings, cave murals, tomb murals, and thangkas to understand how to master the traditional use of gold leaf to express the object. Traditional Chinese paintings and Buddhist and Taoist paintings mostly use metallic colors to express religious figures, statues of Buddha, clothes and ornaments, and most of them are flat paste and raised line gilding, tracing gold, and other techniques, and so is the thangka. Through studying in Japan, I have mastered the sulfur oxidation of silver foil, which produces a rich color expression method and makes the metallic color have unpredictable and unexpected variegated colors. Then the metallic material has an opulent charm of shimmering luster, an effect that cannot be achieved by other colors. For example, in the work of 'Lands of Fish and Rice', silver foil or aluminum foil is used to express the white color of lotus, which has more luster than that of white pigment, which makes it more noble and elegant and breaks the confinement of using only color to express the creation of paintings. In addition, the use of silver foil vulcanized with sulfur to produce color changes in the metal foil to express the swaying lotus leaves highlights the outstanding form, breaking the rule of using a single color. Of course, I will make use of the strengths of traditional and foreign materials. Unlike the traditional leaching powder and gold, I can leach powder and paste silver and color foils, and unlike Japanese paintings where the silver foil is cut and then corroded, which can only be done by chance, depending on the effect of the silver foil's color change. I am constantly experimenting and exploring, corroding the silver foil first, then selecting different colors of foils with colored foils

according to the needs of the picture to express the object, and I can express my feelings more satisfactorily, which is my use of the foil technique”(Zhang, interview,2024)

Zhang Daoxi has inherited the essence of traditional Chinese culture and actively absorbed the concepts and techniques of foreign art. He is influenced by Western painting concepts in color expression, learns from the various forms of metallic color techniques in Japanese painting, and draws nourishment from Chinese mural art. However, these are only the ways he learns; the final works are not the presentation of a single learning method, but according to his own subject matter and the needs of the picture, he chooses the method that is conducive to his own creation and can show his uniqueness to express the works with Chinese characteristics and to give the traditional works a new form of composition and technical language. It is this kind of openness and integration of artistic ideas that enables his works to find a balance between traditional and contemporary, oriental and occidental, that suits his own creation, and to form a personalized visual language.

Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom:

Pursuing Uniqueness of Expression

“Creativity is the most important point in my creation; if a work has no novelty, no innovation, it is difficult to impress people. I am not only innovative in material technique but also in subject matter, which has been painted by many people in ancient and modern times, but I must distance myself from others and have my own uniqueness in order to be considered creative. Therefore, in the use of metallic colors, in addition to retaining the traditional leaching powder pasted with gold, I will pursue more ways to express the object. For example, leaching powder pasting silver, stacking gold and foil, or using patterned paper to paste the foil where it is not pasted, and then pasting the foil, tearing the patterned paper to reveal the shape of the foil in a neat manner, and you can also use glue to paint water, paste the foil before the glue dries, and then sweep away the foil that is not glued, and then the water pattern will appear. Then, in the corrosion of silver foil, also pursue changes in the foil, such as in the silver foil with glue alum water to draw patterns; the integrity of the place does not change

color and then corrode with sulfur, and then painting with glue alum water will not change color, showing the original color of the foil, while the other places have been discolored. Of course my creations, whether I am painting figures or birds and flowers, are all about going deep into nature to capture the touching side.”(Zhang, Interview,2024)

Zhang Daoxi's “Song of Four Seasons” (Summer Lotus) is a work on the subject of lotus created in recent years. Compared with the lotus in earlier years, the image of the lotus and lotus leaves has a more abstract way of expression, and the lotus and lotus leaves in this painting are no longer in the form that they are seen in life but are formed in the mind of the artist after being completely abstracted. The artist adopts an overhead view to represent the subject matter, and in the circular composition of the painting, foils of undulating heights are pasted on the edge of the picture along with the circle, forming the image of mountains; the lotus leaves in the middle are a form with a change in the edge but similar to the round shape; the artist intentionally paints the lotus leaves in a smaller size in order to form an echo with the circular composition and to form a contrast with the foils in the middle of the picture in the form of mountains. All the lotus flowers are made of aluminum foil, and the relationship between the petals is expressed through the reserved background color, which can not only show the graceful posture of the lotus flowers but also form an echo relationship with the blue-green background color. Although the artist didn't paint the water, visually it makes people feel that there is a large number of blooming lotus flowers on the water surface. In the middle of the picture, there is an egret about to pass through the lotus leaves, which adds to the dynamism of the picture and is also a realization of the artist's life experience.

Zhang Daoxi paints the subject of the lotus that countless people have painted, but he distinguishes himself from others in the form of composition, technique of expression, and choice of materials from the ink lotus, the three-alum-nine-dyed lotus, and the lotus with large brushstrokes, and gives his own perception of life,

understanding of the composition of the picture, and expression of the uniqueness of the color to the traditional subject to create a painting with unique characteristics.

Cultural Confidence:

Using Modern art Language to make New Interpretation and Expression of Traditional Culture

Zhang Daoxi expresses his identification with and respect for Chinese culture through his works on traditional subjects as well as minority subjects. He not only retains the essence of traditional Chinese painting in his creations but also gives new life to traditional cultural elements through the use of modern materials and the innovation of techniques. His works of natural scenery, for example, the element that has appeared many times in his works: the lotus. There are countless works on this subject, but the artist is not afraid of the commonness of the subject but reinterprets the traditional subject with metallic colors, using the aluminum foil that never changes color to express the purity of the lotus and the spirit of going out of the silt and not being stained by mud. The change of colors of silver foil after corrosion and sulfurization is used to show the uncontrollable color changes of lotus leaves in nature and under the sunlight, which gives new visual forms to the traditional themes and is itself a manifestation of confidence in traditional Chinese culture. This confidence in traditional culture enables him to freely use traditional materials such as metal foils in his works and give them new cultural connotations through the modernization of these materials. His works not only show his inheritance of traditional art but also his confidence and courage in cultural innovation.

The depiction of the customs of Xishuangbanna and Dai culture in Yunnan in "Plantain Flower" and the portrayal of the spiritual qualities of Hui'an women in "Sail Off" and "Expectation from the Sea" show Zhang's deep emotion and self-confidence in China's national characteristics and culture. Through the excavation and innovation of national cultural elements, he makes traditional culture take on a new life in the context of modern art. The works contain both the innovative use of modern techniques and the artist's firm belief in the promotion of national culture.

Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works

Scientific and Technological Development:

New Materials and New Techniques

With the development of science and technology, the production process and use of metal foil technology have been significantly improved. Silver foil and copper foil will also change color after oxidizing in the air for a long time, but the development of modern technological means makes it possible to artificially control the color change of silver foil and copper foil to achieve the desired color effect and to use them in the picture to enrich the color of the picture and strengthen the texture change of the picture, and also to retain the effect of silver foil and copper foil after discoloration through modern technological methods.

“In the past, silver was seldom used because silver foil tarnishes and turns black over time, so no one bothered to use it in the picture; when I went to a company specializing in the sale of foil in Japan to buy foil, I asked for advice, and when I said how to protect the silver foil so that it doesn't tarnish, he said that you can use the method of over-molding. But small paintings can be, large paintings do not apply, the Japanese side also has no way to ensure that does not change color, and finally I came back to their own research, in a piece of foil affixed to the foil, the silver foil is divided into 4 parts, 1/4 not protected by the oxidation, 1/4 with gelatin water coated, 1/4 with alum water brushed, and 1/4 with the oil painting on the silver oil, so that after a long period of time after the unprotected place of discoloration of the darker. The other three pieces are all right, some of the silver foil yellowing a little, nothing much changed, so that through the experiment proved that these methods can go to protect the silver foil and corrosion of the silver foil does not change color.”(Zhang, interview,2024)

Zhang Daoxi proved through his own experiments that in order to keep silver foil and corroded, discolored foil from discoloring, he had to use glue, gum alum water, and varnish oil to keep the color from darkening and to continue to present the color retained when he paints his works, and he included these research results in the book he wrote, “Modern Heavy Color Painting Metallic Foil Expression Techniques.”

Artist's Individual Needs:

Unique Visual Effects

The use of metallic colors meets Zhang Daoxi's individual needs in artistic expression. As it carries a strong visual impact and modernity, it can make the works add a unique artistic atmosphere to the traditional painting.

"How to be different from others and how to express my own painting language is one of the key points I consider. I must have my own personal ideas in terms of conceptualization, be unique in terms of composition, and be able to fully express the theme in terms of the choice of painting materials, rather than playing with material skills. For this reason, I will draw some small drafts and deliberate over and over again, and sometimes after the completion of the big draft, I will also review it again and again, and if I find something unsatisfactory, I will overturn it and start over again, and I can never force myself to do it perfunctorily. For example, in 'Plantain Flowers', I had already finished the large draft, but I felt that a group of young girls bathing in the river was in the center of the picture, and the banana trees on both sides were equal in size, which was not quite satisfactory, so I gave in to the pain and re-drafted the large one, canceling the original first draft altogether. Then I redrew the painting so that the banana trees on both sides would change and the figures would be arranged on the left side so that the banana grove could set off the figures more prominently." (Zhang, interview, 2024)

Zhang Daoxi pays great attention to the uniqueness of his works, and in order to express the uniqueness of his works, he usually starts from the conception of the idea and makes small drafts in order to achieve the desired form of the picture, and even if he finally starts to draw, he will decisively discard it if he is not satisfied with the result, and in his pursuit of art, the composition and the material should be able to satisfy the aesthetic interest that he wants to convey.

"I use metal foil in every piece of work, and of course I am good at using all kinds of foils, especially those that have been corroded by sulfur, which are rich and ever-changing in color, and the metallic colors can complete the heavy colors

in my works. In order to enhance the tension and heaviness of my works, I mostly use overlapping colors to produce rich color effects. On the basis of the mineral color, according to the needs of the characters or the birds and flowers in the picture, how can I express the real and rich effect of the object? Only then will I make the metallic color to strengthen the picture. If I only use color to render lotus flowers and leaves, it is difficult to achieve the charming and graceful form of lotus flowers in the traditional way, and it is also difficult to reproduce the traditional and heartwarming works. However, I added a lot of metallic foil to express the changes of the flowers and leaves so that I can better express the golden light of the summer lotus pond, the harmony of the autumn colors, and the beauty of the remnants so that the use of metallic colors can appropriately highlight the aesthetic interest of the work, profoundly convey the beauty of the materials of metallic colors, and highlight the richness and opulence of the metallic colors.” (Zhang, interview,2024)

Many of the lotus flowers in Zhang Daoxi's lotus-themed works are painted by using metal foil in relation to the base color, which is its biggest feature. This technique of expression is different from the traditional works in which the color is used for dyeing, over dyeing, or using hearty ink and brush strokes, and he wants to seek uniqueness, and the metal foil is the material that meets his needs, which not only highlights the pure and luminous image of the lotus flowers ,but also allows the lotus flowers to be to create structural changes in the form of the lotus flower according to the size of the foil block. As the color of the foil is very eye-catching, the artist did not cover the entire lotus flower with foil but leaves the base color according to the structural changes and his own color feeling so that the metallic color can stand out in the picture but also blend into the tone of the picture, bringing a unique sense of beauty. Lotus is a soft plant, but the artist's use of metallic color, a material with a metallic texture, makes his lotus a great distance from others. The unique luster of metallic color shows the sunshine of the summer lotus pond and emphasizes the feeling of the weather with the picture, and the use of metallic color gives the artist's works a unique texture and aesthetic pursuit.

Cultural Exploration:

Conveyance of the Symbolism of the Quality of Purity

“Metallic foil material is often used in traditional Chinese paintings, mostly in religious paintings, which gives the picture a sense of opulence and religious mystery. Then I studied traditional painting, went to investigate and research many times, and, together with the various metal foil expression methods I learned from studying in Japan, combined with the aesthetic interest of Chinese painting and the pictorial language of Chinese painting, in 2003 I compiled a book, ‘Modern Heavy Color Painting Metal Foil Expression Techniques’, which summarizes the use of metal foil to The difference between my lotus painting and others is that I am the first to use metal foil to express the lotus, which is both elegant and moving and does not flatter the common people. Lotus leaves are also corroded silver foil to produce a variety of changes in color, to show the leaf roll, superposition, and its mutilation of the beauty of the plant also follow the law of growth, bringing people different seasons and changes of life gestures. Then the figure painting, Plantain Flower, is also several times to go to Xishuangbanna life, capture the Dai family life to create the plot, a large number of use of metal foil to create the atmosphere, the river flashes in the light spots, banana forest, and so on are all with a variety of metal foil to create a better foil.” (Zhang, interview,2024)

Wang Biqing mentioned “The scenery of Zhang's picture is very typical of China scenery, including Chinese flowers, Chinese lotus ponds, Chinese fishermen, and Chinese Plantain Flowers, all of which are Chinese elements, and the color scheme is also inherited from the past, such as red and yellow, and bright green, which was actually used in a series of Dunhuang murals. The use of metallic colors is not something that only occurs today; for example, in our traditional paintings, such as the traditional technique of depicting gold dragons, there is also the use of metallic colors in paintings, only we find that either the content is different or the method of application is different. But no matter the technique or the choice of subject matter, it is still in the scope of our country to reflect our unique culture, and the content he wants to

emphasize and the way he finds the color of the picture are still reflecting the Chinese scenery and the feeling that the Chinese society gives us nowadays, and he is not reflecting something from abroad, for example, the banana blossom's local culture in Xishuangbanna, the change of seasons in the lotus pond, etc. So I think that the metallic color he uses is not the same as that in traditional paintings of China; he uses it to better reflect the characteristics of today's society.” (Wang, interview, 20224)

In Zhang Daoxi's paintings, metallic colors are not just a symbol of wealth and riches, nor do they have a religious meaning. Metallic colors are a way for him to find a breakthrough in traditional subjects, to differentiate his paintings from his predecessors, and to show his own aesthetic interests and his perception of today's society. He searches for the roots of traditional culture and finds the suitable way of expression for his paintings from foreign art and integrates it with the unique social, natural, and cultural phenomena in China to convey unique paintings with Chinese flavor. Although his works make extensive use of metal foil, they are easy and rich in color, and they can create the feeling of the environment through color, which is not only visually rich but also makes people feel immersed in the climate change painted by the artist. The lotus flower in the picture conveys the quality of noble personality, the Hui'an woman conveys the quality of tough spirit, the Dai girl conveys the youthfulness and vivacity, and the use of metallic colors in his picture conveys the positive and optimistic traditional Chinese culture.

Guo Jiying:

Guo Jiying's works also use a lot of metallic colors, and the analysis of his works mainly comes from the author's interviews with the artist, watching his lectures, and reading the artist's own essays and books, as well as the author's observation and analysis of his works. This is supplemented by the articles written by Prof. Yasuo Ueno, graduate supervisor of Tama Art University in Japan; Prof. Jiang Caiping of the Central Academy of Fine Arts; and Prof. Zhang Xiaolu of Xiamen University on Guo Jiying's works. As well as the author's interviews with university teachers, curators, and students.

Guo Jiyong	Creative Background	Socio-economic Background	Reform and Opening Up
		Cultural Background	A Special Time in History makes for a Special Experience
			Artistic Disciplines are Emphasized
		Artistic Background	Emphasis on Color
	Artistic Characteristics	Cultural Connotation	Exploring the Relationship Between Individual Existence and Social Environment
			Explore the Relationship Between Individual Existence and the Spiritual World
		Color Innovation	The Subjectivity of Color
			Symbolism of Color
		Artistic Themes	Minority Subjects
			Focusing on Modern People's State of Being and Inner World in the Midst of Social Change
		Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques	A Combination of Gold and Silver with Other Colors
			Unique Use of Lines
	Artistic Ideology	Openness and Integration	Promoting Equal Exchange Between Chinese and Foreign Cultures
			Multiculturalism
		Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom	Uniqueness of Individual Expression and Freedom of Exploration
		Cultural Confidence	Honoring the Doctrine of the Mean
			Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Culture
	Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works	Scientific and Technological Development	Involvement of Modern Scientific and Technological Means
		Artist's Individual Needs	Enhanced Image Texture
		Cultural Exploration	The Modern Expression of White Space

Figure 32 Guo Jiyong

Source:Designed by the author

Creative Background

Social and Economic Background:

Reform and Opening Up

“Perhaps it is due to the relationship of the times, or to be exact, it is also in the light of China's ‘reform and opening up’. Since the 1980s, there has been a renaissance of heavy brush painting in China. At the same time, with China's ‘reform and opening up’, modern Japanese paintings were gradually introduced to China, and their new techniques of expression and oriental moods were in line with my own mentality of

seeking innovation at that time, and I also wanted to go directly to see and learn from them and personally contact something that originated from my own culture but had changed. It was also the light of 'reform and opening up' that made it possible to go abroad. It was these internal and external factors that led me to put down my teaching job at the university and come back to Japan as a student for a few years.”(Sun, 2007)

After the reform and opening up, the economy developed rapidly, and the economic prosperity provided better material conditions for artistic creation, as well as broader horizons and development space for artists. Cultural exchanges between China and Japan have become more and more frequent. The artist took this opportunity to go out of the country and went to Japan to study the part of culture that originated from China but has been developed and, at the same time, is the missing part of Chinese culture. This experience enabled him to come into contact with the artistic concepts and techniques of different cultures, which enriched his artistic horizons and creative inspirations.

Cultural Background:

A Special Time in History makes for a Special Experience

“Born during the ‘Three Years of Difficulties’; received ten years of compulsory education in the midst of the ‘Cultural Revolution’, resumed the College Entrance Examination and became one of the first university students, and reform and opening up led to a wave of students studying abroad.”(Sun, 2007)

Guo Jiying was born in a special era in China, a time characterized by memories of material deprivation. His primary and secondary school education was during the Cultural Revolution, a period of political influence that had a profound impact on his personal thinking and artistic concepts. However, after the resumption of the college entrance examination, Guo Jiying became one of the first university students to receive a systematic art education, demonstrating the artist's desire for knowledge during this special era. After the reform and opening up, out of his thirst for knowledge, he studied abroad again. His entire life and learning experience is a microcosm of the times in the process of China's social development, always growing

and progressing in the process of figuring out. This series of significant events has unconsciously shaped his thoughts and cultural concepts, as well as his understanding and pursuit of art.

Artistic Disciplines are Emphasized

“The modern classification of disciplines is basically a Western system. Since the Italian Renaissance, art has been gradually elevated to an important position comparable to any other discipline, leaping from a skill to a discipline of learning and even a university discipline. Of course, painting, as an important part of art, has also gained considerable independence.”(Sun, 2007)

Guo Jiying lived in an era when art was enrolled independently in universities, so it was emphasized in the education system as much as any other subject. Only at that time, the art disciplines were based on the Western system of painting, so before taking the university entrance exams, all they had to do was to learn drawing and coloring, and the study of specialized Chinese painting only began after the university was divided into majors. However, after the artists who grew up under the influence of Chinese culture learned the Western way of color modeling and use of color, they naturally blended these two in their Chinese paintings for artistic expression.

Artistic Background:

Emphasis on Color

“In Japan, when Chinese painting is mentioned, it is mostly associated with Chinese ink painting.”(Sun, 2007)

That is, in the eyes of foreigners, Chinese paintings are black, white, and gray ink paintings, and the colors in Chinese paintings do not give other people a deep impression.

“Because we are the witnesses of this era, from the reform and opening up, China's brushwork heavy color suddenly flourished, at that time called brushwork heavy color. By the end of the 90s, Mr. Jiang Caiping of the Central Academy of Fine Arts directly hit on such a concept as heavy color, refining it out of a single door, because the work brush and heavy color do not have to be non-combined; heavy color

can be integrated with freehand brushwork, the development of this era to the present day, whether it's our surroundings or this evolution of the culture, so that we can not ignore the real so-called color.” (Guo,Lecture,2023)

Jiang Caiping also mentioned that “in the mid-1980s, Guo Jiying studied in the Gongbi Painting Studio of the Chinese Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, which I chaired. At that time, I encouraged him to study in Japan because modern Japanese paintings were handed down from the Tang Dynasty in China and have been continuing in Japan for a thousand years, including patterns, painting materials, and techniques. In recent times, Chinese heavy color paintings from the Tang Dynasty have been fused with Western paintings in Japan to form new Japanese paintings with modern aesthetic characteristics, which is very impressive. In particular, the production and use of traditional Chinese stone color and gold leaf have developed a variety of varieties and color gradations in modern times. Our Chinese heavy color painting was originally the teacher of Japanese painting, but nowadays the students are more brilliant than the teacher, so why should the teacher be ashamed to be a student instead? Guo Jiying taught at the Inner Mongolia Normal University before he went to Japan to study, and his works were awarded the Golden Fork Prize at the first exhibition of the Chinese Society of Gongbi Painting in 1988.” (Sun, 2007)

From the interviews and data collected, it can be seen that in the 1980s, Chinese painting began to pay attention to color, and the artist wanted to break away from the ink-based form of Chinese painting. At this time, Guo Jiying's Chinese painting was already very good, but the artist wanted to seek new ways of expression and artistic language, and the metallic and mineral colors that occupied a brilliant position in Tang Dynasty paintings, which were not preserved by ourselves, were well preserved and carried forward in Japanese paintings, so the artist went to Japan to learn the materials and techniques of using mineral and metallic colors and began to experiment with various materials and techniques. The artist focuses on the visual effect to show unique texture and color layers so that the works are richer in form and have a sense of the times.

Artistic Characteristics

Cultural Connotation:

Through reviewing the artist's writings and papers, watching his lectures, and conducting interviews with him, we analyzed the cultural connotations of his works, which are mainly manifested in the exploration of the relationship between individual existence and the social environment, as well as the exploration of individual existence and the spiritual world.

According to the late Professor Yasuo Ueno of Tama Art University in Japan, "Guo Jiying's paintings are characterized by a semi-abstract style with difficult figures as the main body, and the backgrounds are sometimes overlapping images of the sea or a boat, etc. The complex composition and profound expression of his works are beyond what Japanese artists have achieved. This, combined with the free use of color and refined lines, creates a picture with a sense of heaviness." (Sun, 2007)

Guo Jiying's mentor had a very high opinion of his creations. He is very good at using the objects in the picture to compose different lines and colors intertwined in the picture to form a picture with a very strong sense of composition. His characters are vivid and melancholic, and even when they are painted with their backs to the viewer, one can still feel their inner emotions, and the artist emphasizes the depiction of inner feelings.

Exploring the Relationship Between Individual Existence and Social Environment

"According to the physical concept, we also live in four dimensions, these four dimensions being three-dimensional space plus one dimension of time. The time is different; it is time. Spatial dimension, for example, if you cross the country, this also belongs to the space of the big transfer, a person to the foreign culture of the environment, and the domestic will certainly feel different, completely to a foreign culture of the environment. How do you go to adapt? So when I started to paint self-portraits, because I was reflecting on myself, I actually used a stainless steel plate to deform the figure and then painted it. This kind of image and spatial deformation

actually reflects a kind of psychology, re-knowing oneself, reflecting on oneself. You see, in the past, Xu Beihong, did they all paint self-portraits? What is a self-portrait for? Self-portrait is not because of their good looks; it is because of re-knowing themselves, leaving such a mark of a certain era. There are a lot of meanings in self-portrait. To be frank, I have never thought of self-portrait in China; I have to go out and examine my own psychology first” (Guo, interview,2024)

In “Existence-3 (Reflection)” (Figure 33), the character's facial expression is in a kind of squeezed feeling; the artist intentionally lengthens the proportion of the nose, deepens the lines of the head, draws the viewer's attention to the changes in the eyes, and focuses on portraying the character's melancholic eyes, the perseverance of the pursed lips, and the complexity of the character's expression, which seems to be pondering over something deeply. The texture of the character's clothes in corduroy is exceptionally realistic in the superimposition and polishing of foils and colors. The gestures of the figure in the painting can be seen as either pushing forward or trying to hold on to something. The artist portrays the complexity of the figure's thoughts through his eyes and hand movements. The whole picture is a combination of the figurative and the abstract. Although the figure is slightly distorted, it is very realistic in terms of the expression of the face, the dynamics of the hands, and the texture of the clothes. The background of the picture is an abstract space. The artist uses foils and colors, superimposed foils, and polished blocks and lines to divide the background of the picture into four layers, and then, through the interaction between the figure's dynamics and the background, as well as a unified color palette, all the objects are placed in the same visual space. By placing the realistic figures in the abstract space of overlapping layers, the artist emphasizes the interaction and conflict between the real inner feelings of the figures and the external world, suggesting the inseparability of the individual figures and the social environment, and conveying that the artist is actively searching for his own position and the meaning of his existence in an unfamiliar country with deep cultural connotations.



Figure 33 Existence-3 (Reflection)

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/aOdOstsloZXA4ZJTZkccWw>

Exploring the Relationship Between Individual Existence and the Spiritual World

The work “Existence - 10 (Winks)” was created a few years after the artist returned to China, and this theme has been a source of creativity throughout Guo Jiying's artistic life. The artist is also particularly fond of using the backs of figures to explore the complex relationship between individual life and the spiritual world.

Several horseback riders form the main body of the picture, and their different dynamics demonstrate the diversity of individual existence. Each horseback rider's movement is different, some riding fast, some stopping and looking back, and some dismounting and looking down. The artist uses these three characters to show the different choices and states people face in their life journey, sometimes running through the homeland, sometimes looking back to the way they came, and

sometimes stopping and staying in the homeland, which are related to the artist's own growth experience. Such different states are symbols of individual characters exploring their own existence in the vast world, while the movements of the horses emphasize the dynamism in existence, as if people are in the process of finding their own orientation in the ever-changing environment. This is not only showing an external state of existence but also revealing the complexity of the individual's inner world, showing how one can hold on to oneself and continue to move forward through spiritual strength when faced with choices.

The figures in the painting, through the poles they hold in their hands, form distinct lines in the picture that intertwine with other objects, which to a certain extent reflects the connection between the horseback riders and each other. These figures are both independent individuals and communities, and these different states constitute a complete state of life. This kind of performance just implies the close connection between the individual's spiritual world and the social environment. Each person is an independent being at every stage of his life, but their life and spiritual state are inevitably closely connected to the society, the nation, and the homeland, a relationship that gives the individual's existence a richer cultural connotation.

As the painter is in a constantly changing environment and subject to the impact of multiculturalism, he always maintains independent thinking in his works, exploring the relationship between the individual and the social environment and the spiritual world. As interviewee Wang Biqing said, "He emphasizes the inner world of his characters. His paintings focus on the external expression of what he feels and thinks in his inner world in the form of paintings."(Wang, interview,2024)

Color Innovation:

The Subjectivity of Color

"The subjectivity of color is the core of our color setting. Oriental painting as a whole is not in the realm of realism for color; color itself is not the so-called objective reality but a subjective setting, which is a very important thing. So when we study color, we don't create a lot of obstacles for ourselves ."(Guo,Lecture,2023)

The interviewee, Cai Xiaoqing, thinks, “Guo Jiying uses color very boldly, with a strong impact of color, and his color tends to be an expression of the inner world.” (Cai, interview, 2024)

It is clear from the respondents' views that the expression of color in Chinese paintings does not mean that you paint whatever color you see, but that you subjectively give color to the object according to the tone of the picture and the feeling of color that the artist wants to create. When the skin color of the character does not match the tone of the picture, the artist subjectively expresses the skin color with a color that matches the tone of the picture. For example, in *Existence-12 (Debate)*, although this red skin color cannot be seen in reality, it blends with the overall tone of the picture, and the skin color of the figure and the entire background also echo each other, as well as highlighting the Bodhisattva in the center of the vision, while giving the figure a feeling of extreme piety. It can be seen here that the artist's use of color is based on subjective color setting.

Symbolism of Color

“The Chinese have their own conception of color; Chinese color must be symbolic.” (Guo, Lecture, 2023) “What is the principle of coloring in the painting *Seeing Grassland Again*? We all know that in 88 years 'The Shepherd' showed the grassland. I think it has been very radical, in the translucent stack of clouds with mica, silk on the top, underneath the Goryeo paper as a base, with chapping. At that time there were just too few means, but this is no longer episodic painting. I think it's a great breakthrough, and at that time, many people around me also gave it a very high evaluation. Then 20 years later, when I returned to China, my students led me to the grassland, and this painting was produced. What is the source of color? In fact, the religion of the Mongolians is Lamaism, the Yellow Religion, or Tibetan Buddhism. The most typical color in Tibetan Buddhism, I am painting the nature of its color, not depicting the real scene. So in Chinese paintings of horses, if you use these hues to represent them, I don't think there are many of them, and you take the color out of the subject, and you use lines to depict the object in a minimalist way. The ochre-red color

commonly used in Tibetan architecture as a background actually serves as an after-white, so what is the key to setting up the color? Materials are of course good materials, such as this green I really can not find such a good-looking green, used some water dry color, the rest is purely mineral color, white ultramarine blue, rock red, cinnabar, etc., rock red, the color of the thinnest into the apricot yellow, apricot yellow is a very high regard for the beginning of the Tibetan Buddhist color, the painting of rods is actually a complete oxidation of the effect of the use of silver foil, that's why 'Seeing Grassland Again' is a complicated work." (Guo,Lecture,2023)

Looking carefully at the artist's works and analyzing the content of the artist's lectures, it can be seen that the work "Seeing Grassland Again" (Figure 34) is a symbolic conveyance of the artist's colors. The color of the artist's picture is a service for the picture. After accurately shaping the characters and the image of the horse, the picture object, according to the traditional Chinese hand scroll painting from right to left viewing habits, then the picture is seen in the order of yellow, red, green, and blue horses. The main figure in the picture looks like a male figure wearing a Tibetan dress and carrying a bag who has just walked in from outside the painting. The artist intentionally will be the character, including from head to toe, hair, skin, clothing, backpack, and handbag, all dealt with in white., and the picture of the color of the horse together constitutes the most important white, yellow, red, green, and blue five colors of Tibetan Buddhism. The artist did not paint according to the reality of the characters seen in the color of the horses but will use the Tibetan Buddhist colors with their own artistic expression combined with the performance, giving the work a deeper cultural connotation. From the artist's experience, the white figures and the horses with symbolic colors in the paintings presented in one picture also have the meaning of the return of a wanderer.

The colors in Guo Jiying's paintings are conceived and adjusted according to the artist's artistic ideas, the content of the painting, and in combination with his own cultural attributes and artistic experience.



Figure 34 Seeing Grassland Again

Source: https://topic.artron.net/topic/20130904/works_show16.php?wld=4

Artistic Themes:

Minority Subjects

“I was born in Nei Mongol, at the beginning of the university, I also read in Nei Mongol and stayed there to teach. Being able to reflect on the national subject matter is certainly a natural thing for people to do. So that I’m interested in ethnic minorities, especially the Mongolian, I have to go down to experience life directly in the pastoral areas. Nei Mongol is so vast that I have to travel thousands of kilometers from east to west and do all these things. As a realist painting creator, we can't get away from life because our country's art education is basically practicing socialist realism, that is, for the people. I have to visually convey the first painting creation and, secondly, engage in some ethnic themes because I live in that range, and I have the most creative materials, so I definitely can't do without works in this area.” (Guo, interview, 2024)

Guo Jiying paints a lot of ethnic minority subjects, mostly Mongolian subjects, which is related to his life, study, and work experience. His work “Existence-10 (Winks)” (Figure 35) is a very typical ethnic minority theme work, in which

three figures are wearing Mongolian costumes; one of them is galloping on a horse, one is riding on a horse with a pole in his hand looking back, and there is another person who has not yet mounted the horse. Painter through the three characters and three horses in the visual formation of a stable triangular composition, and three characters holding poles stacked on top of each other and crossed together, constituting another triangular potential, the two layers of triangular composition of the space in the eyes of the viewer are focused on the back of the yurt. The yurt in the painting method of the painter intentionally foils and then in-depth carves. This arrangement can not only increase the hierarchical structure of the picture but also highlight the main characters and also allow three different states and different spaces for the characters to reasonably exist in the picture. The background behind the yurt is painted with a strip of solid colors, which are the five colors of Tibetan Buddhism practiced by the Mongolian people. The figures, dynamics, background, and color arrangement are all representative of ethnic minority elements.



Figure 35 Existence-10 (Winks)

Source: https://12qgmz.artron.net/index/exhibit_detail.html?id=56894&Cityid=586

Focusing on Modern People's State of Being and Inner World in the Midst of Social Change

“Existence is also one of the earliest series in my creation, and I have been painting Existence until now. I stayed in Japan for a long time, more than ten years. That is to say, in a foreign country, especially at the beginning of studying abroad, in a foreign culture, we have a saying that existence determines the consciousness. You are sure of your living environment, and this thing also determines your understanding of things! Therefore, when I started to go to school in the 1990s, as soon as I started to participate in important exhibitions, I have been following this series to continue, so if you look at the content of this series, it is very diverse, including self-portraits, figures, and some of them are ethnic minority subjects, and even Buddhist ones. The environment of existence changes; your existence is actually a coupling of time and space.” (Guo, interview, 2024)

“Existence-3 (Reflection)” is a self-portrait painted during the artist's study in Japan. Inevitably, studying in an unfamiliar country will bring various difficulties, but the artist expresses all these in paintings, re-conceptualizing and deconstructing himself through paintings in an unfamiliar country. Through the extremely realistic facial expressions, body language, and abstract treatment of the background, the artist expresses the psychological pressure and difficulties faced by people in an unfamiliar social environment. The themes of the works focus on the painter's own inner world, emphasizing exploration and reflection on the spiritual level.

The subject matter of the artist's paintings is related to his own life experiences, on the basis of which he contemplates and explores his relationship with the world, nationalities, religions, and so on.

Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques:

A Combination of Gold and Silver with Other Colors

“Silver foil is a bit tricky to use, and not every color goes on the top of the foil, but clam powder is the most effective. Clam powder can be said to be the best color in painting. Clam powder on silver foil is better than any color on paper, wall,

or wood, and the color will be white. When silver foil touches vermilion, it will turn black, and the pigment on the foil will also turn black, and the color will react, so it is more troublesome to use silver foil. Now people are using the technique of oxidizing copper foil, and they are starting to use it because it is cheap, but the texture of copper foil is not good; copper foil is like copper skin—it can't do much.”(Guo, interview,2024)

Zhang Xiaolu, a professor at Xiamen University, mentioned that Guo Jiying “skillfully makes the base color of various metal foils come out naturally through the thickness of its own particles or covers the foil surface with other colors so that the foil blends with the whole picture, forming a subtle unity and change of the foil's light and hue.”(Sun, 2007)

From the above interviews and information, it can be seen that the painter is very good at using gold and silver and is familiar with what effects will occur when gold and silver are matched with colors, so gold and silver are not only a kind of painting material in his picture, but also different techniques of using gold and silver and different matching with other colors will lead to different effects in the picture, and the painter is good at making use of the characteristics of metallic colors and making corresponding adjustments according to what the work is trying to convey.

As himself said, “If you use it properly, it will give your picture an expressive power that is not comparable to anything else” (Guo ,Lecture,2023).

The use of metallic foils not only adds a sense of hierarchy to the work but also gives the picture a unique visual effect.

Unique Use of Lines

Although Guo Jiying's paintings are very colorful, the most distinctive feature of Chinese painting in his works is the line. In depicting human figures, Guo Jiying uses lines imbued with the quality of seal carving to construct the forms. The three figures and the three horse in “Existence-10 (Winks)” are rendered in white, and the color treatment is very simple color blocks, and the richness of these blocks is reflected by the artist's profound line work. The arrangement of the lines in the figures' costumes and the horses' tails and saddles is extremely dense in contrast to the

sparseness of the lines on the horses. Although there are a lot of technical difficulties in using mineral color to outline lines, the artist, through a lot of practical experience, has figured out the rules of mineral color outlining and suitable brushes, and in his pictures, he has conveyed the effect of the changes of the Chinese lines, the texture of the lines, and the objects to achieve a very good expression of the characteristics of the objects through his pictures.

Artistic Ideology

Openness and Integration:

Promoting Equal Exchange Between Chinese and Foreign Cultures

After graduating from Japan with a master's degree in 1994, Guo Jiying did not return to China right away, but traveled to many places in Japan and painted many works exploring himself and the theme of the sea. After returning to China in 2005, Guo Jiying taught at the Capital Normal University with undergraduate and graduate students, teaching the younger generation what he had learned back in Japan.

In the late 90s, the government realized the importance of the material technique of Chinese painting and started the Higher Seminar of Chinese Heavy Color Painting and hired Jiang Caiping to be the host of the Higher Seminar, and Jiang Caiping gathered some accomplished people in the field of Heavy Color Painting to be the teachers for the teaching, and Guo Jiying was one of them, and he taught material technique in the Higher Seminar and guided the students in the creation of the painting, and the Heavy Color Paintings painted by many students were selected to be the major exhibitions of the country, and he served as a teacher many times after that. Influenced by traditional Chinese culture and grew up in Nei Mongol, and went to Japan to study for many years of the artist, itself is a combination of multiple cultures, in Japan is also often back to China to teach what they think and learn, for the exchange of Chinese and foreign art ideas and fusion of a great contribution to the exchange of Chinese and foreign art ideas in the fusion.

“In the 21st century, in order to realize cultural exchanges, I think there are at least two conditions: one is the way of exchange, and the other is the content of exchange. First of all, in terms of the mode of exchange, it should be equal; if it is only introduced like a curiosity, it cannot be regarded as a real exchange. The inflow of modern Western culture into the East is based on the power of its strong modern civilization as a whole, not only on the power of the culture itself. Or rather, it has a highly developed material civilization to reflect the excellent avant-garde side of its culture and art. So although we can't accept it completely from rationality, in reality the impact of its greatness is obvious to all. By analogy, the overall strength of the East in the 21st century will enable us to reciprocate and export our own culture, which will be easily recognized. Secondly, what is the problem of exchanges? The above-mentioned 19th-century Japanese and European exchanges had a great effect, which also lies in the Japanese culture at that time, which was not yet 'westernized'. Japanese culture felt very valuable to Westerners. Therefore, whether the art of the 21st century, representing the Asian or Chinese character culture circle, can achieve its rightful position, the first and foremost issue is that we must not lose ourselves. Imagine, if we take something that imitates the West to communicate with the West, we can't talk about communication, only assimilation.”(Sun, 2007)

Guo Jiying believes that Eastern and Western culture and art should be open and equal to each other to exchange, in addition to the country itself being strong, in the creation of art artists should retain the characteristics of their own culture on the basis of absorption and integration in order to maintain the uniqueness of the nation. He himself, whether it is in action or in the creation of this openness and fusion of ideas, his works, although in the composition, modeling, and color have been affected by the influence of foreign art, he skillfully blends foreign art with the unique and individual lines of Chinese paintings to create works with obvious personal style characteristics.

Multiculturalism

The artist studied oil painting before he studied Chinese painting and therefore knows the characteristics of oil painting and the composition of colors very well; the colors in his pictures are, as he himself said, “I am a bit like the Fauvists, because the pure mineral colors are not eye-catching” (Guo, interview,2024). Later on, he studied and lived in Japan for more than 10 years. But his Chinese paintings are not Westernized or Japaneseized; rather, he absorbed the color composition learned from Western paintings, learned the material techniques from Japanese paintings, and combined them with his own learning of Chinese painting techniques to form his own unique painting outlook.

The artist himself knows very well about Chinese painting's method, modeling, technique, and color. “From the perspective of technique, firstly, there is a cultural background. How did this technique come about? The inheritance and learning of the technique. In Oriental painting, if there is no inheritance and learning, we may not even be able to intervene in painting in the past. Therefore, there is a very special phenomenon in China, that is, there is a Mustard Seed Garden of Painting. Why? It is because the Orient is not directly related to nature, it is not using our intuitive vision to learn from nature, it has a legal system, and it is inevitable that it has to learn painting from painting, and this process is also a very important process.” (Guo ,Lecture,2023)

Chinese painting is not a matter of sketching an object and painting it however it grows; rather, it is a matter of learning from the best works that have been handed down to us, mastering the basic techniques, and then observing the natural objects and painting them on the basis of combining subjectivity and objectivity.

The artist of “The Chair and the Naked Woman” (Figure 36) depicts a woman sitting on a chair with Chinese characteristics; the figure looks away into the distance thoughtfully, while the background consists of several chairs and various color blocks and lines, which are also intertwined with the chair in an illusory way, highlighting the main figure. The composition of the female figure and the chair is a vertical upward potential, but the artist, in order to enrich the composition of the picture, also in order to echo with the inner communication of the character, uses a large color

tilt to the right of the potential and the potential of the character's eyes in the same direction, to the left of the lines slanting upward, not only in order to make the picture more rich in levels, but also to convey the character's inner anxiety and indecision. The whole layout of the picture has a strong sense of composition. Although the figure's stylistic expression is not the same as the traditional Chinese painting of three alums and nine dyes, the artist still uses lines to shape the objects, using the sparseness of the lines, the reality, the thickness, the density, and the intensity to emphasize the relationship between the objects. The use of color is very bold; the upper body of the figure presents yellow and red tones, and the lower half of the body is bluish-purple tones, but the whole figure uses metal foil pasted on and polished, and color is mingled and superimposed to form a unified tone and mottled feeling. The mottled texture of the picture and the characters present a psychological feeling of complementarity. The metallic foils are appropriately preserved in the eyes, nose, mouth, and other structures of the characters, portraying their features well. Although this kind of color matching and composition form is relatively rare in traditional Chinese paintings, the painter, after mastering the rules of painting, widely absorbed the forms conducive to his own creation and created works with a distinctive personal style. The openness and intermingling of the artist's artistic thoughts are well presented in the works in terms of modeling, color, and technique.

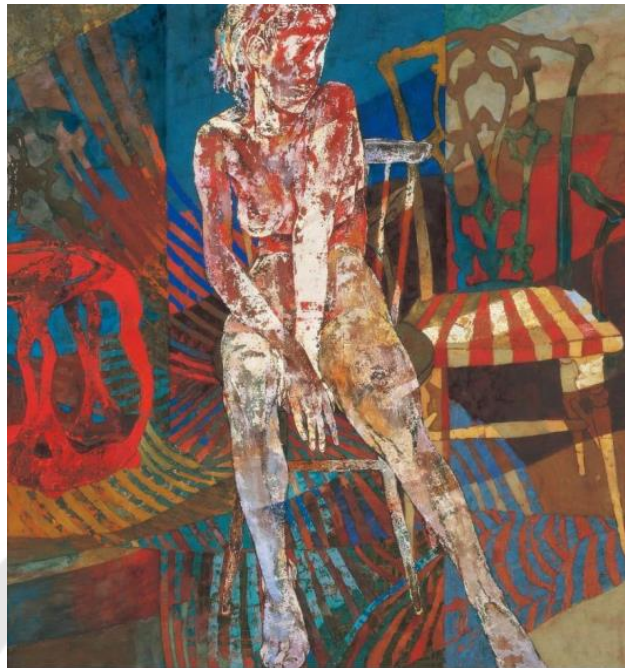


Figure 36 The Chair and the Naked Woman

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/1l0TdIVfG8d2VK1QPGwqXg>

Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom:

Uniqueness of Individual Expression and Freedom of Exploration

In art creation, "I insist more on the line modeling in Chinese painting; the line in Chinese painting is something far away from nature. I draw sketches with my students, and the line I find on the models in my paintings 20% to 30% of the time.; however, nowadays people hate to move 80 to 90 percent of the lines on the models to the drawing paper. Nowadays, a man stares at this instantaneous movement of the objective object, and he begins to trace it. In line-drawing sketching, are the folds in a figure's clothing really that fixed? Even a slight repetition of a movement causes the folds to change, but I am kind of observing the object between the objective and the subjective; it's a kind of observing and illuminating. Observing is one aspect, and illuminating is one thing. Observing is to see with eyes open, and illuminating is a kind of interaction. It's like responding to the shape of an object; you can't say that I'm looking

at a shape and drawing a shape—that's called responding to the shape of an object.”
(Guo, interview,2024)

When Guo Jiying depicts a character, he mainly observes the character's state of mind, his charisma, the feeling he conveys, the character's structural characteristics, and the texture of the character's clothes, and the treatment of the clothing pattern is based on a subjective understanding of the lines, selectively selecting the lines, subjectively grasping the line's trend, and the sense of rhythm conveyed by the lines.

In Guo Jiying's *Existence-9 (Reading)* (Figure 37), the artist paints four young women in the form of a four-panel screen, three of whom are flipping through books in various postures, echoing the theme of the painting. The composition is very distinctive, with the two figures on the left and the two figures on the right facing opposite directions, and the figures are at different heights from each other, seemingly in different spaces. However, the artist has skillfully utilized the incomplete figures in the strip screen for visual interaction. Viewing from left to right, the first girl's entire back is not painted; and the division in the composition happens to give this girl, who is looking down at a book, a sense of support. The second woman, resting her chin in her hand while reading, has her left foot cut off at the edge—this half-missing foot seems to visually interact with the first figure, as if kicking her. Her right shoulder is also unfinished, which similarly gives the impression that she is leaning against something nearby. The third girl, who is squatting on tiptoe, the back of the left side of the painting is not painted; visually, it feels that the painting side is a safe wall, the right side of the book is half painted, and the fourth girl's bag forms an interaction. The last girl, apart from her incomplete feet, can be considered the most fully rendered among the four girl. The work seems to convey the four years of college, the first three years of study in the Ivory Tower, and finally, the social state. The artist has vividly portrayed his observations and feelings about students and modern society.

The colors of the picture are mainly black, white, and grey, with a few interspersed red, green, and pink colors to enrich the layers of the picture. The

background of the picture is made of a lot of foils, some of which are pasted on the whole piece of foil and some of which are oxidized silver foils. The foils are interspersed with the ink and other colors to form cross forms in the picture, and the artist has intentionally arranged some lines to be interspersed in the backs of the characters, which constitute the relationship between points, lines, and surfaces together with the characters.

In the painting, the characters' gestures and movements are expressed by lines, and the organization of these lines is based on the artist's subjective feelings and the needs of the picture, which is a bit different from the organization of the lines in the paintings that we see every day. In Chinese paintings, many painters use extremely dense lines to organize the form, structure, and grouping of the hair, but in this work, the hair is outlined in just a few strokes, and there are not too many lines to show the hair; rather, dense lines are used to organize the relationship between the figure's clothes and the head, hands, and arms to form a sparse and dense relationship. The variation of lines in the painting is not only to express the form but also to express the inner emotion and personality traits of the figure.

The colors in the painting are mainly black, white, and gray, with only a small amount of red and green. The rhythm of the picture is formed through the overlapping and squeezing of the lines on the figures and the lines and blocks in the background. The four figures are distributed on four screens, with the figures' positions rising and falling, and the background behind them utilizes a large area of silver foil, either striped or pasted, visually forming a rhythmic feeling similar to that of musical notes. The lines of the figures' clothing patterns have an obvious sense of free flow. This way of handling the lines reflects the artist's philosophy of pursuing freedom of expression in creation, not adhering to traditional painting techniques, but expressing his inner thoughts and emotions through the free variation of lines. The lines have a strong sense of rhythm and are full of variations, reflecting the artist's free mind in creation. The variation of lines is not only for the purpose of expressing forms but also serves to express the inner emotions and personality traits of the characters.



Figure 37 Existence-9 (Reading)

Source: https://topic.artron.net/topic/20130904/works_show16.php?wld=1

Cultural Confidence:

Honoring the Doctrine of the Mean

“Our Oriental painting, including Chinese painting, and its entire modeling principles and coloring principles are very different. We can't abstract to the degree of Mondrian; the most famous words we say today are that too similar is kitsch. In our conception, too much like it should belong to the category of kitsch, not like it is deceiving the world. It's hard to say what this thing is like; it's already a cold abstraction, so the Chinese people grasped The Doctrine of the Mean, not to say that the abstraction is to the degree of total abstraction, so 'Existence-6 (Shore)' is one of my works for the Creation Exhibition. It is about one meter big. When I was painting it, my tutor actually said when he came to look at it, 'Don't go on with the abstraction'. In fact, I have visualization here; there is a human body here, and in Hiroshima, there are a lot of shells. After human beings have eaten them, there are mountains of shells and the propellers of the ruined ships, and so on. It's like a graveyard, so this painting is so

abstract that it seems to be difficult to accept it in oriental paintings, but of course, when you look at it carefully, it is still tangible, and it's not really much of an abstraction at all in the oil painting. Why are we Orientalists, Chinese for example, and where does the figurative aspect of our thinking come from? We all know what the tool of thinking is. What is the tool of language? It is words. He can't use concrete language to explain philosophical concepts. To create a set of philosophical language, he is saying that non-figurative he is not good at accepting. For example, let's look at the Chinese characters. As I said, what are the Chinese characters? Characters are tools of language. Then thinking is language; language is a tool for thinking, that is to say, on the basis of the most basic underlying logic of thinking. The highest level of Chinese culture is the realm of poetry; we don't rely on logic to produce a concept.”(Guo,Lecture,2023)

Guo Jiying's artistic creation is deeply influenced by the traditional Chinese culture of 'The Doctrine of the Mean'. In traditional Chinese painting, too much realism is regarded as kitsch, while too much abstraction is regarded as deception. Therefore, Guo Jiying pursues a moderate expression in his artistic creation, not pursuing extreme realism or abstraction, but rather expressing the mood and thoughts through moderate abstraction, which reflects his understanding and practice of the Doctrine of the Mean, as well as his confidence in Chinese culture. The picture of 'Existence—6 (Shore)' (Figure 38) is between abstraction and figuration, with abstract water patterns, interwoven color blocks, and raised texture composed of colors and foils, as well as a figurative female human body half-hidden and half-exposed, outlined in positive red, which can be seen vaguely. This way of expression avoids losing the spirit of the picture by being so abstract that no object can be seen or by being too realistic and reflects the Doctrine of the Mean of traditional Chinese culture in the picture. In this way, the artist has found a balance between abstraction and realism that is suitable for his artistic expression, which not only expresses complex emotions and thoughts but also doesn't make the viewer only perceive the language of the picture from the abstract dots, lines, and surfaces.

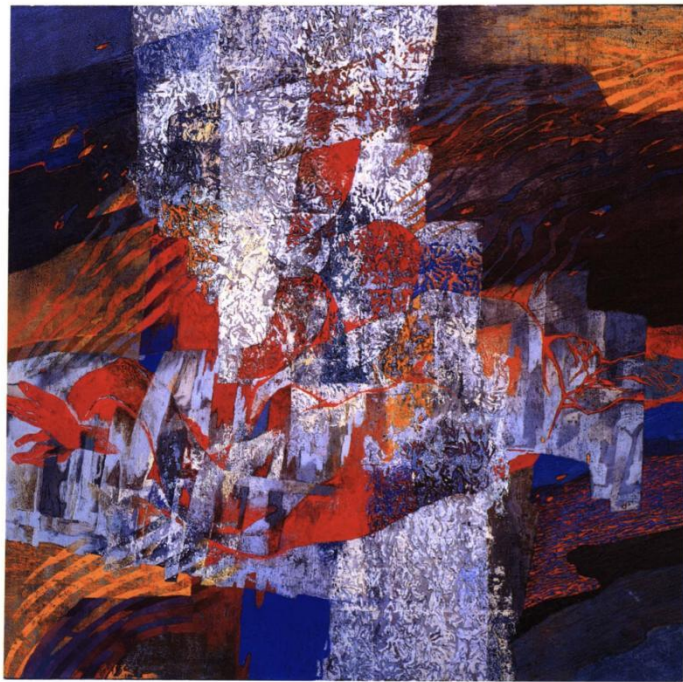


Figure 38 Existence-6 (Shore)

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/I7S9f9mJldjWLKJPOQF9eg>

Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Culture

“In terms of the content of expression, I may be more extreme, so my study of ancient Chinese murals and Tibetan Buddhist murals may have a deeper impact on me; their colors are directly primitive. This primitiveness is very important. Picasso, if they don't absorb the primitive, how can he be creative?” (Guo, interview, 2024)

The work Existence-12 (Debate) (Figure 39) clearly draws on the artistic style of Tibetan Buddhist murals. The Buddha statue in the middle is at the center of the picture, with his eyes half-open and a peaceful demeanor, seemingly observing and witnessing the process of debating the sutra. The seven monks surrounding the statue in different postures form a dynamic depiction of the scripture debate process. Guo Jiying combines the depiction of Tibetan Buddhist paintings with real scenes of sutra debates and divides the work in the form of a three-part composition, dividing and

obscuring the figures through the dynamics of the figures and the three-part edges of the painting in a clever form, and connecting the picture through the relationship between the figures and the edges of the painting. A large amount of red is used in the work, concentrating on the monks, and even their skin color is expressed in red, returning the color of the figures to simplicity, strengthening the monks' debating scene, and highlighting the Buddhist painting in the middle. Red is not only a symbolic color in Tibetan Buddhism but also a visually impactful means of expression. The contrast between the image of the red monks and the black, dark red, a small amount of earthy yellow, and blue-violet in the background creates a strong visual effect and, at the same time, gives the work a mysterious and solemn religious atmosphere. This layout and use of color show Guo Jiying's boldness and uniqueness in artistic expression. The primitive nature of the colors in Tibetan Buddhist murals influences the use of colors in his images. By learning and inheriting the forms of color matching in Tibetan Buddhist murals and combining them with his own images, he thinks about and uses the contrasts of colors and changes in forms, conveying a deep understanding and thinking about life, religion, and culture with traditional colors, and demonstrating his self-confidence in traditional Chinese culture.



Figure 39 Existence-12 (Debate)

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/aOdOstsloZXA4ZjTZkkcWw>

Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works

Scientific and Technological Development:

Involvement of Modern Scientific and Technological Means

“There is a famous Japanese painting called Red and White Plum Blossoms. A TV program once explored the silver foil used in the painting with various instruments. Modern artists are no longer able to recreate it. The reason is that today's silver foil is only about one-third as thin as it was in the past. As a result, Japan gathered all its skilled craftsmen to tackle this technical challenge. Silver and gold are both very malleable, which is why they are used in art.”(Guo, interview,2024)

With the development of science and technology, the varieties of metal colors not only increase but also become extreme in thickness, so that the thickness and color of the material can be adjusted according to the picture and combined with modern technological means, through oxidation, burning foil, and other

processes, so that the work in the light shows a rich variety of color changes and visual levels. Modern technology has not only improved the processing technology of metal materials but also developed more diversified metal colors.

Artist's Individual Needs:

Enhanced image Texture

"I use a lot of gold, not in order to let it show the luster of the metal and increase the sense of decoration; I use it in order to use its texture. Many of my works in the metal foil have been painted above the mineral pigment in order to make use of the metal foil so that it flakes off after the fight off the texture and not have to make the gold and silver exposed in the picture. The direct exposure is relatively small; you see me there. A lot of texture, if there is no metal foil underneath, is not done; it is just a means to assist the creation of a means. I just use this tool material; it is a means of the creative process and not to show excessive decorative splendor. You see a lot of white pigment made from clam shells on the texture of the powder, a lot of places in the substrate through the metal foil to peel off the metal foil to knock it off after the trace left behind is very important to me. And it would be a waste to do it with real gold foil, so there is more silver foil." (Guo, interview, 2024)

In the work "Existence-10 (Winks)", the main figure and the horse are covered with silver foil, and clam powder is used to portray the structural and front/back relationship of the objects. The yurt behind the figure is the effect of oxidized silver foil, and its unique metallic luster is also for the needs of the picture. The yurt in the grassland is the symbol of home, which is shining in everyone's heart, so the artist directly uses the colorful colors and unique luster of the oxidized silver foil to express the warmth of the home. The main characters and horses are outlined with mineral color and then all pasted with silver foil and then outlined with lines after unifying the picture with mineral color in stages, shaping the characters and horses with simple color and rich texture. In the foreground, the silver foil is applied flatly on the black background, and some of the silver foil is pounded off in the area close to the horses and the yurt, forming a natural depth relationship and a good distance from the background. Therefore, the

artist's use of metallic colors mainly serves the picture. The foils of the figures and horses are hidden under the color and appear to come out, the ground in the foreground is pounded with the foils on the color, and the yurt is directly oxidized, and the use of these foils expresses the texture of the picture more fully. Guo Jiying is able to use metallic colors to better express the emotion and mental state of the characters in his works, as well as the overall atmosphere of the works. His incorporation of metallic colors in his paintings is not only a breakthrough in traditional painting techniques but also a pursuit of his own artistic style and individual expression.

Cultural Exploration:

The Modern Expression of White Space

"Foil must be pasted into a square. Why pasted into a square plane? We used to say in Chinese painting that leaving white is really leaving white paper. The meaning of leaving white does not lie in leaving white paper; in fact, you use imitation of old Xuan to leave out the imitation of old color. It is also called leaving white. What does it mean? It means that the expression of my space in this kind of multiplicity is called leaving white, and multiplicity means that it doesn't show to be anything, and if we talk about it philosophically, it is the relationship between existence and nothingness. That's why the ancient Chinese said to use white to count black, that is to say, cloth white, black. With today's concept being very close to the negative relationship, the key lies in that piece of space not showing something specific; that is to say, it can be nothing or it can also be everything. You see the backgrounds depicted of the Song Dynasty small paintings; you say it is the sky, the ground, or the wall. In the end, what is it? Does it matter? What you imagine is what is what; this is the meaning of white space."(Guo, interview,2024)

"Chinese philosophy is all about dialectics, or the concept of yin and yang. So why spell everything out so clearly? As long as your main idea comes across, that's enough. Take a lot of my watercolor works for example—once I've painted the shadows or reflections, I absolutely won't paint the sky or the water separately. It's all just within the water. Why bother describing something like 'the vast blue ocean'? Do

you really think that adds any meaning? It doesn't make sense. Only by directly contrasting presence and absence can you truly emphasize what "presence" means. Without comparing 'being' and 'non-being', a comparison between 'being' and 'being' becomes much weaker." (Guo, interview, 2024)

"Impression on Huiyuan Temple -in the Morning ,Noon and Atdusk" (Figure 40) is a work with a large area of white space except for the main figure and the building, which is rendered whiter than white paper, similar to the white of the wall, by applying clam powder on top of the silver foil. This treatment makes the figures and buildings in the picture more prominent. The use of white space effectively creates a sense of space, allowing the viewer's eyes to focus on the main characters and buildings, and the white space leaves people with infinite reverie, creating a combination of real and imaginary effects. The use of white space here is very skillful. The picture in the three sections of each section of white space, including the entire picture of white space, has no one the same. This is the painter's carefully arranged picture form. The white space allows the viewer to feel the infinite possibilities and unfinished meanings beyond the picture, enhancing the depth and readability of the work. The ethereal feeling created by this snowy white and the solemnity and sanctity of the temple form a harmonious unity of imagery, expressing a quiet and mysterious religious atmosphere. The figures and buildings are arranged in a three-part composition, in which the artist suggests the passage of time through the dynamics of the figures, the fixed buildings, and the eternal white space, and also provides a meeting point of time and space for the picture, so that the scenes of different time periods can be organically connected in the same picture. The viewer can feel the different changes of light and shadow during the day in the picture, and this kind of white space also symbolizes the flow of time and the endless cycle. The use of metallic colors reinforces the artist's cultural exploration of white space.



Figure 40 Impression on Huiyuan Temple -in the Morning ,Noon and Atdusk

Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/342896663_317747

Yan Haohao:

Yan Haohao, as a local Chinese artist, is also very good at using metallic colors, and the analysis of her works mainly comes from my interviews with the artist, the papers written by the artist herself, and my observation and analysis of her works, supplemented by the commentaries written by Chen Chuanxi, a professor at Nanjing Normal University, Liu Guohui, a professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and Xu Xiantang, a professional painter, specifically on the works of Yan Haohao, and my interviews with university teachers, curators, and students at colleges.

Yan Haohao	Creative Background	Socio-economic Background	Impact of Globalization
		Cultural Background	Influence of Family Learning
		Artistic Background	Winning the Gold Medal Leads to Controversy
	Artistic Characteristics	Cultural Connotation	Expression of Traditional Culture
			Cultural Heritage and Innovation
		Color Innovation	"Pure" Color
		Artistic Themes	Self-emotional Experience
			Concern and Reflection on Reality
			Traditional Culture
		Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques	A Combination of Meticulous (gongbi) and Freehand (xieyi) Techniques
			Combined Use of Ink, Color and Foil
	Artistic Ideology	Openness and Integration	Combine Modern Aesthetics and Personalized Expression based on Respect for Traditional Culture
		Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom	The Visual Impact of Provoking Others in Color
		Cultural Confidence	Modern Interpretation of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements
	Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works	Scientific and Technological Development	Enrichment of Material Techniques Enhances the Modernity of the Picture
		Artist's Individual Needs	Soft and Hard Combination of Materials
		Cultural Exploration	Exploring a New Picture Language by Combining Ink and Metallic colors

Figure 41 Yan Haohao

Source:Designed by the author

Creative Background

Socio-economic Background:

Impact of Globalization

After China's accession to the WTO in 2001, the economy has developed rapidly and the process of globalization has accelerated. China's market gradually integrated with the international community, people's lifestyles, consumption habits, and demand for culture and art changed, and the process of globalization

accelerated the exchange and fusion of Chinese and foreign cultures, and the influence of foreign art on Chinese painting and art gradually deepened.

In the era when Yan went to university, that is, at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the artists who stayed in Japan at that time returned to China one after another to teach. “Mr. Chen Wenguang was invited back from Japan by the school when we were in our junior year, and he started to take us from our junior year. We had never touched metallic colors before, and no one had ever studied metallic colors in such a systematic way, not even in the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, and then after he came back, he brought back all the experience he had gained from studying in Japan for more than ten years, and the first time we saw this color. We were really surprised when we saw that work, because we had never seen Chinese paintings like that before, and he painted them all in metallic and mineral colors. It's not exactly like what we traditionally call meticulous (gongbi) or freehand (xieyi) styles—it's more like a mix of both. As for the colors—he especially loved using highly saturated pigments like malachite blue (shiqing), which really stood out. In our first and second years of university, we were trained strictly in traditional Chinese painting, so when we first saw his work, it was honestly hard to accept. It was a shift from subtle elegance to vivid brilliance—the colors were so bright that they created an intense visual impact. At the beginning, most of us couldn't quite embrace it. In the gongbi style we were practicing, we built up layers very gradually—each one made with very diluted pigment. No matter how many layers we added, we could never achieve the kind of rich, metallic, or mineral-like brilliance that he did. His use of color really opened up a whole new world for us.” (Yan , interview,2024)

In the early 1990s, artists who went to Japan to study metallic and mineral colors returned to China one after another and entered various art schools to engage in specialized teaching, which was a visual upheaval for Yan Haohao and other students at that time and broke the students' understanding of the traditional Chinese colors at that time. Influenced by globalization, Mr. Chen Wenguang, who had returned from Japan, began his systematic teaching at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine

Arts, starting with the usage of mineral and metallic colors, which also laid the foundation for Yan's future paintings.

Cultural Background:

Influence of Family Learning

"My father, he himself, is a graduate of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts attached to the middle school. When I was in the middle school, my father thought it would be better to go to a professional school, because our family was originally painting, and I grew up painting, and he felt that it would be better to go a professional route, and then from the attached middle school became his fellow disciples, and I went to the attached middle school."(Yan , interview,2024)

Yan Haohao comes from a family of artists and began painting at a young age under her father's tutelage, developing a love of painting through her strong interest. After entering the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, she systematically learned the basics of sketching and coloring and experienced the transition from freehand creativity to standardized painting training. This experience of studying at home and at a professional institution has made painting an inseparable part of her habits and life. During her study, she learned about the traditional mural art of Mogao Grottoes and Kizil Grottoes through sketching, and her artistic thoughts were deeply inculcated by the ancient art of mural painting.

"In my thesis, I wrote a paper on the frescoes of Kizil, 'Comparison of Kizil and Dunhuang Frescoes', in which I made some comparisons, explored and thought about the traditional spirit of Chinese frescoes and their expression methods." (Yan, 2004)

Yan Haohao has not only made field trips to the traditional Chinese mural art but also carried out in-depth research and thinking, which can be seen from the thesis she wrote, and these deposits have also laid a deep cultural foundation for her artistic creation.

Artistic Background:

Winning the Gold Medal Leads to Controversy

In 2003, Yan Haohao, a recent college graduate, won the gold medal at the Second National Chinese Painting Exhibition for her work “Sheng Dan Jing Chou” (Figure 42) which triggered a large-scale discussion of Chinese painting, with many people questioning whether the work was a Chinese painting. “China Calligraphy and Painting Newspaper reported the entirety of this discussion in 12 consecutive issues from October 2003 to January 2004.”(Li, 2012a)

There were criticisms as well as praises and encouragements, “among which Chen Chuanxi, a professor at the Art College of Nanjing Normal University, thought that Yan's works ‘use Chinese paper and Chinese pigments and express Chinese things, but their spirituality is not Chinese’, and even thought that her works ‘don't conform to the aesthetic habits of Chinese people’; Professor at Shenzhen University Guo Xiyuan said that her works are ‘Japanese painting hybrids’, ‘completely according to the Japanese painting techniques’.”(Long, 2004)

Liu Guohui, a professor at China Academy of Art, said, “Obviously, the paintings are of Chinese people and Chinese things, so why are they not Chinese paintings? This ‘Chinese painting’ covers a lot of things, including the evolution from the frescoes and the evolution from the folk art. That's why I voted for it. First of all, I feel that the author's choice of Peking Opera as a subject for color painting, using gold foil as the background to form a picture, and using the traditional screen form gives me a strong visual impact, both simple and loud. It is this kind of psychological process that conforms to the aesthetic requirements of national aesthetic habits that quickly shortens the distance between the work and the viewer, making the viewer feel both novel and intimate. Peking Opera is a national treasure, and blended with Chinese painting, it is both traditional and very modern. The matching of the gold leaf is also Chinese, and the faces of the figures in the painting are slightly distorted and imaginative. The parallel arrangement of the fans of the figures seems to be unintentional but is quite ingenious. In the combination of all these constructions, we can savor the author's deep intention. It's not ink and wash, but it's Chinese, and it's so appealing to the jury because it looks so brilliant and exciting against the old-fashioned works around it.” (Long, 2004)

Interviewee Cai Xiaoqing thinks, “Chinese painting is an expression of Chinese people's inner feelings, with our Chinese elements, but now we have to border with the world; there must be a collision, and it does not necessarily mean that if you don't look like a Chinese painting, it's not a Chinese painting” (Cai, interview,2024)

Yan Haohao herself believes that “my Sheng Dan Jing Chou is Chinese painting, only that it highlights the visual impact, unlike the general ink works that are so plain and elegant. As I said earlier, I used the traditional tools and materials of Chinese painting, including some of the techniques, and my subject matter is characterized by Chinese humanistic connotations, and my aesthetic and spiritual pursuits are purely Chinese, so how can I say that my works are not Chinese paintings?”(Long, 2004)

These discussions show that Chinese painting at that time was controversial about the use of large areas of metallic and mineral colors, which were extremely heavy in color expression. In the eyes of the opponents, Chinese painting should focus on the meaning of ink and brush rather than emphasizing too much on color, while the supporters believe that this kind of color expression is a continuation and innovation of the Chinese painting before the rise of ink painting.

At the beginning of the 21st century, artists who stayed in Japan returned to China one after another, metallic and mineral colors gradually became important in Chinese paintings, and in mainstream art exhibitions, color-based Chinese paintings gradually showed their prominence. Although controversial, Chinese paintings at this time were in a period full of innovation and experimentation. Many artists began to explore the combination of traditional and modern art, trying to innovate on the basis of tradition. The use of metallic and mineral colors by Yan Haohao in Sheng Dan Jing Chou breaks the limitations of traditional Chinese painting and shows a strong personal style and innovative spirit.

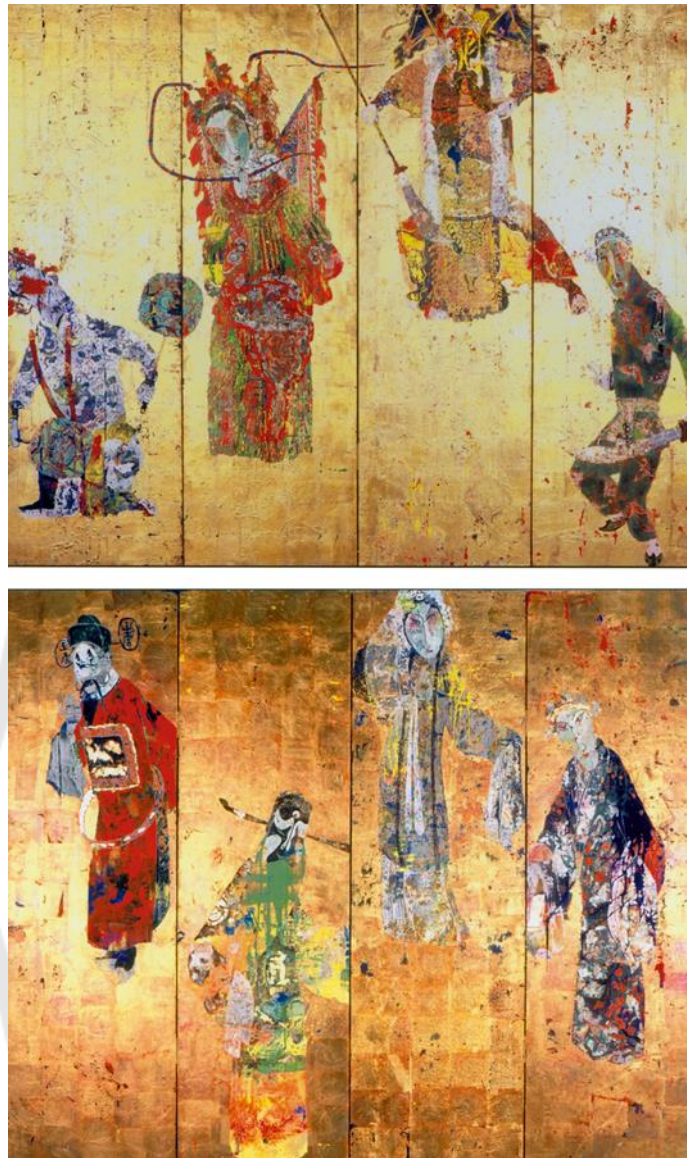


Figure 42 Sheng Dan Jing Chou

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/PCX541Nk_btzzPk8akUR9A

Artistic Characteristics

Cultural Connotation:

Expression of Traditional Culture

Yan Haohao often uses traditional culture and thoughts about life as the theme of her works. Traditional theater and classic literature are the sources of inspiration for her creations, and this choice of theme itself is rich in cultural

connotations and carries a strong flavor of traditional Chinese culture. Through her vivid portrayal of dramatic characters and stage scenes, she incorporates the dynamics and personal emotions of opera into her images, giving her works a vivid vitality.

“The creation of 'Sheng Dan Jing Chou' was accidental and an experiment, she says. 'I wanted to make a breakthrough, and felt that since I had learned the material of mineral, I wanted to find a suitable carrier to express this painting language, and present the unique and extreme expressive power of this material.' Once inadvertently coming into contact with Peking Opera costumes, she was pleasantly surprised to find that the colors of traditional opera costumes and mineral pigments were simply too compatible. The meeting of the two was the ultimate activation of each other's brilliance. 'I think I can use mineral materials to express Sheng Dan Jing Chou to the extreme, from costume to spiritual level.'”(Wang, 2024)

Sheng Dan Jing Chou is based on Peking Opera, China's national art form, and Sheng, Dan, Jing and Chou are its four major trades, which represent different types of roles and character traits. By representing these characters in the form of paintings, Yan Haohao not only shows the audience the charm of the art of Peking Opera, but also conveys the respect and inheritance of traditional Chinese aesthetics through the images of these characters. The detailed depiction of the characters' dynamics, expressions, headdresses, and clothing patterns not only shows the charm of traditional opera, but also the colorful characters and concise sets of the opera stage. Without relying on scene decoration, the artist purely relies on the characters' charisma, movements, and singing to show the vividness of the stage. The artist uses the contrasting presentation of the fully plastered gold leaf in the background and the extreme vividness of the characters' carvings, reflecting the art of Chinese painting's focus on the expression of the essence of the traditional opera subject matter. Through these vivid images, traditional costume colors and sets, she integrates the aesthetics of traditional culture into her paintings, expressing her deep feelings and respect for traditional Chinese national culture.

Cultural Heritage and Innovation

Many of the elements of Yan's works come from traditional Chinese culture, but she does not follow the traditional methods of expression but rather combines them with elements of modern art to recreate them. In particular, she often uses large areas of metal foil to cover the entire background of her paintings. Generally speaking, this kind of large area purely relying on metal foil to express the background will easily make the works show a relatively strong decorative nature, but her works do not look like handicrafts; rather, she gives the spirit of the Chinese painting's freehand expression (xieyi) to the picture that is mainly in metallic and mineral colors. This approach is not only an inheritance of traditional culture but also a modernized interpretation and innovation of it, giving it new vitality.

In this regard, she said, "The spirit of freehand expression (xieyi) is something you must pursue yourself. In the process of creation, you have to constantly remind yourself not to turn your work into a craft object. And to avoid that, the first and most important thing is it must not become formulaic. Once your depiction of any subject becomes standardized, it easily falls into mechanical repetition. The second point is, when handling your composition, don't 'manufacture' it—paint it with your brush. It must be painted, not traced. The brushwork must be alive and expressive. I believe there's one thing you have to keep reminding yourself during creation: My painting must have the spirit of painting. And what is the spirit of painting? First, it has to be vivid. Then, it must be expressive and emotionally engaging. All of this ultimately lies in your brushwork. Don't treat your brush like a painter's roller spreading paint on a wall. Let your strokes leave traces—each mark should be full of life and emotion." (Yan , interview,2024).

Yan Haohao's paintings are created in the spirit of xieyi—the freehand tradition in Chinese art. "When I first start a painting, I use broad brushstrokes; as the composition begins to come together, I gradually shift to more detailed work" (Yan , interview,2024).

The work focuses on expressive freehand style., with the flavor of ink and wash, rather than pure objective realism. This kind of the spirit of freehand

expression reflects the philosophical thinking about nature, life, and the universe in Chinese culture, focusing on the expression of the divine charm of the object rather than the depiction of specific forms. Her works often convey an inner emotion and mood through multiple vivid superimpositions of metallic and mineral colors, allowing the viewer to feel the vitality of a flow of breath in the picture. The pursuit of this kind of the spirit of freehand expression embodies the concept of “qi yun sheng dong” in traditional Chinese art, transforming the figures' shapes and dynamics in the pictures into carriers of emotion and spirit.

Color Innovation:

“Pure” Color

The color combination of Yan's works is very beautiful, about which she says, “I think this is a combination of my own cultivation and experience. I think experience is actually what we call technique, but these things you have to combine with your own aesthetics, you have to keep trying, in fact, before I paint a lot of big works, I will spend a long time to do some small experiments, that is, to do some small experiments, because I also hope that every time I can present something different to show everyone, there is a different breakthrough, because the rock color is in fact, I think it is very interesting. First of all, I think it is not so controllable, and this is what interests me the most, that is, when you paint, many times your original intention may change. In fact, I remember that Mr. Chen Wenguang told us that the color draft can still be changed when you keep creating, but you still need to have a certain number in your mind, that is, you need to know how I am going to take you to change it, for example, sometimes I might have done the color draft in the early stage, it is a cold tone, but I found that warm gray looks good when I was painting it. Then I may change it slowly, I may make changes on the top of my own color draft, and then I may make changes on the main draft after making changes, and there are also many colors that I found unintentionally. Because Mr. Chen had another very important discussion, that is, one of his techniques, which I don't really understand until now, he told us that the colors must be pure. I now think that the word ‘pure’ should be pure, the word ‘pure’

should have many meanings, one is the color is more pure, because he never encouraged us to mix and match the colors, that is, even if your eye is the same coarse particles, he is not very agreeable to us to blend it together, he told us that all the colors as much as possible is every layer of the top layer and then in the top of the mask after dyeing to make it into other colors and then painted on it, and this is one of my understandings of 'purity'. Secondly, I think the color should be squeezed out, any color is not just put there, it is yellow, it is green, it is purple, it should be put together with other colors, the other colors have a kind of impact, a kind of squeezing, a kind of destruction or a kind of support, so that it exists there, to become a yellow, to become a green. It's not a simple color, it's just a color when you paint it flat, but you have to combine it with all the surrounding things. Then I understand that the 'purity' of color is about these two aspects"(Yan, interview,2024).

The eight Peking Opera roles in Yan Haohao's "Sheng Dan Jing Chou" have taken most of her efforts. The use of color in this work is very unique, presenting a classical and modern visual effect. The entire background of the work is covered with gold leaf, creating a luxurious and classical atmosphere. The use of gold gives the painting a dazzling visual effect and a sense of texture that transcends time. It also matches the theme of the painting very well, and the gold background creates a kind of light and shadow effect under the spotlight.

Against the golden background, the costumes and props of the characters in the painting use very pure colors of red, green, blue, yellow, etc. The use of color is not flat, but the use of penmanship to write out the colors, presenting a multilayered superposition of colors. Such color treatment not only enhances the visual impact of the picture, but also makes each character appear more unique and vivid. The distribution of color blocks seems to be random, but the colors are overlapping each other, for example, the background of the overall foil vaguely transmits the red, blue, yellow, etc. that are similar to the color of the main body's clothes, and the red clothes transmits the blue color that echoes with the other clothes, this treatment presents a mottled effect, enhancing the sense of history and mystery of the picture, and the

picture as a whole is coordinated to show a lively and rhythmic aesthetics. The artist's bright and extremely Chinese colors and modeling style are refreshing to the viewer, and the mottled texture, color effects and vivid charisma of the characters give the viewer unlimited space for imagination.

Yan Haohao uses metallic colors extensively in her art creations. She believes that the greatest charm of metallic colors is the infinite changes of colors, and the artist will adjust the picture according to the color changes presented by the metallic colors during the drawing process, and the final effect of the picture presented often exceeds the expectation. She enjoys working with these metallic and mineral colors very much, and the superposition and extrusion of these colors often bring her surprises, so she has invested a lot of energy in experimentation and research. Although she has become more and more skillful in mastering how to use metallic colors in her paintings, and the color changes in the process of creation are full of uncertainties, but she is happy to challenge such uncertainties, and is brave enough to experiment and make color drafts, and finally “sheer” out the colors that she wants. She is willing to challenge this uncertainty, experimenting and making color drafts, and finally “purifying” the colors she wants.

Artistic Themes:

“In fact, I think that all artists' themes, probably first of all, are their own emotions and experiences, which is definitely a choice of theme, and I may also be able to use this kind of thing to express some of my own doubts, thoughts, or some feelings. I think this is one aspect. Secondly, some of our present concerns and reflections on reality are also a source of my themes. I can use these reflections of my own to express some of my own views on real life, as well as my emotions and my three views. I think that this may also be an aspect, and then traditional culture—I got more elements from traditional culture before, which gave me more ideas, but for the moment, I may favor more realistic themes. Because for my work now, I have to have these works with realist themes, so I may focus more on realist things at this stage.” (Yan, interview,2024)

Although Yan Haohao's artistic themes come from these three areas, I think that her themes are not unilaterally depicting a certain theme but usually combining them to portray objects.

Self-emotional Experience

The theme of “Matrix 108, Heroes”(Figure 43) comes from her emotions and experiences; the theme of the work “It originated from the picture cards (a traditional Chinese toy) I used to play with as a child. I remember seeing a lot of kids playing with picture cards that featured the 108 heroes from Water Margin, and I started wondering what kind of form could be used to express them. I've always felt nostalgic about my childhood, and I found it fascinating that each of the 108 heroes had their own unique traits. I thought I could use my own painting language to make them more interesting—and in doing so, fulfill a dream of mine, a dream from my childhood. That's why I created a series of works based on the 108 heroes.”(Yan , interview,2024)

The artist combines the insights from traditional literature with her own deep memories of having fun as a child, giving the 108 Heroes a witty and interesting dynamic, allowing each character to be painted individually, and combining them together to make the 108 generals show collectively through the styling and coloring arrangement, which is not only a reinterpretation of literature but also an outpouring of her own deep inner memories.

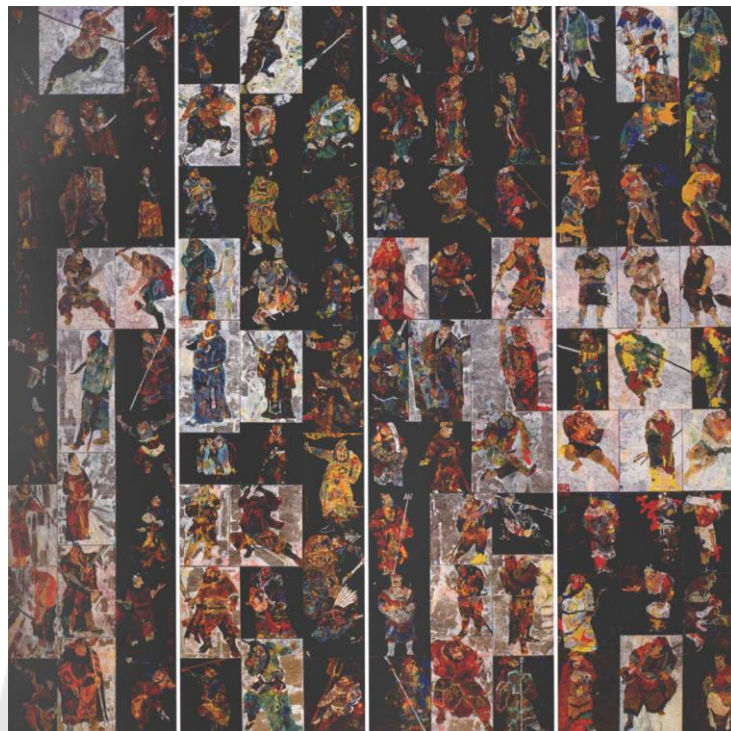


Figure 43 Matrix 108, Heroes

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/qubVz_iU2dcJoLtlTB2sSQ

Concern and Reflection on Reality

Yan has painted a lot of opera characters, but not for the purpose of portraying the plot of the drama, but to express the inner world and lifestyle of contemporary people through the opera characters, and her feelings and reflections on the life of contemporary people are naturally expressed through her artistic creation. For example, in the work “Opera Characters about Love” (Figure 44), the artist shows the diversity of theatrical love stories by depicting the tragic love of Xiàng Yu and Yu Ji and the comedic love of Sun Yujiao and Fu Peng, which are two classic love stories in Peking Opera, as well as conveying the diversification and complexity of contemporary people's concept of love, which expresses the artist's thoughts and emotional confusion about love. The gravity of the characters' dynamics and the dark color tone of the background of “Farewell My Concubine” enhance the tragic atmosphere, while the light-hearted and witty dynamics of the characters of “The Jade Bracelet” and the bright

background strengthen the comedic atmosphere. Through the different love stories of the opera characters, the artist metaphorizes the emotional changes in contemporary society, all of which are based on the artist's concern and reflection on real life.



Figure 44 Opera Characters about Love

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/PCX541Nk_btzzPk8akUR9A

Traditional Culture

Yan Haohao is fond of traditional Chinese culture, and the themes of many of her works come from traditional Chinese culture; for example, the theme of “Dream - Red Mansion”(Figure 45) comes from traditional culture, which the artist herself believes “is a kind of homage to traditional culture from myself, because before painting I will read the writings carefully. Then I will draw the points that interest me, or the passages that inspire me, the words that have a story or a sense of picture, and then I will create them.” (Yan, interview, 2024))

Dream of Red Mansions is one of the four great masterpieces of China, and the artist is very interested in traditional literature. Inspired by the Dream of Red Mansions, in which Jia Baoyu traveled to the realm of Taixu in his dream, her reproduced the scenes in the realm of Taixu in the artist's imagination in the form of paintings to convey her own reflection on the literary works.



Figure 45 Dream-Red Mansion

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/PCX541Nk_btzzPk8akUR9A

According to interviewee Hu Yaojie, “What Yan has painted well is our classical stories and situations, with a sense of fusion of the ancient and the modern, with the feeling of the comic strips we read when we were young and ancient novels about monsters, but also with a modern style, that is, a modern approach to express our traditional recollections or memories.” (Hu, interview,2024))

Yan Haohao's works combine elements of traditional culture, such as theater themes, literary works, and non-heritage, with modern expressive techniques, combining the artist's own experiences and concerns and reflections on reality to express the spirit of traditional Chinese culture, and her works explore the relationship between tradition and modernity, inheritance and innovation. This artistic theme expresses the artist's thoughts on human nature and reflections on social phenomena, reflects the artist's thoughts on the future development of Chinese painting,

and triggers the audience's reflections on the status and role of traditional culture in modern society.

Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques:

A Combination of Meticulous (gongbi) and Freehand (xieyi) techniques

Yan Haohao applies metallic and mineral pigments using xieyi brushwork. Traditionally, xieyi techniques are associated with ink painting, while meticulous and refined brushwork is used for gongbi painting. However, she combines the two approaches. The artist herself describes her style “as heavy color xieyi painting, noting that in the past, heavy colors were typically only used in gongbi works. Because Dunhuang and Kizil mural expression methods using mineral pigments and their painting techniques were, by the Song Dynasty, gradually considered to be “artisanal” and too heavy, they were rejected. In fact, it is earlier, more traditional, and more nationalized than ink painting. I think I want to carry forward this forgotten tradition of injecting ink and wash painting into the tradition of spontaneous writing, abandon the easily misplaced craftsmanship, and make it mineral and heavy color to achieve the purpose of writing. Since ancient times, famous figures have been handed down, and their marvelousness is mostly out of the dashing and fluency, but not in the refinement and density.”(Yan, 2004)

According to Xu Xiantang, a professional painter, “Chinese painting can try some new forms of expression. The idea of the theme of ‘Sheng Dan Jing Chou’ has been shown in other people's Chinese paintings in the past, so it is not considered to be new, but I think that its form is very good and novel, which breaks the traditional means of expression of Chinese paintings and adopts the new materials such as gold foil, which has a very good visual effect and strong impact. I think Chinese painting can try some new forms of expression, and there is no need to pursue traditional expression too much, so I can accept it. This kind of painting method is very decorative, which I like very much because I have done decorative painting before. This

work does inspire me; for example, in terms of materials, Chinese painting can also engage in the application of some new materials.”(Long, 2004)

Yan Haohao herself said, “Many people have asked me what materials and tools I used to create Sheng Dan Jing Chou, and they are even concerned about the process of creation. Here I want to tell you, in fact, I use all the traditional Chinese tools, such as brushes, rice paper (at least two layers of support), and pigments that are traditional Chinese mineral colors. Some of the pigments were sourced personally, such as from beautiful stones found here and there. Then comes the glue mixing. Gum blending is also found in traditional Chinese painting, such as painting green and blue landscapes. I used a brush; some places are hooked, and some places are not hooked, breaking the program of hooking first and then dyeing. There are cases where the outlines are drawn first before painting, and also cases where painting is done before outlining. In fact, this painting is very simple, not as complicated as people think.”(Long, 2004)

Yan Haohao's Sheng Dan Jing Chou employs tools and materials entirely drawn from traditional Chinese painting. However, instead of using the ink-and-brush language that became dominant after the Yuan dynasty, she returns to the use of mineral and metallic pigments that were common in Chinese painting before the rise of literati ink art. The picture uses the metallic colors to the extreme, and a large number of them are used as the background of the picture or used to portray the objects, but the work doesn't have any traces of crafts; rather, it feels that the picture is unusually vivid. This has a lot to do with the artist's way of applying the brush. The artist doesn't use all the mineral and metallic colors in a flat way when shaping the characters; she uses the mineral and metallic colors in the way of writing in the ink paintings, which makes the shape of the works dynamic and the colors bright and eye-catching.

For example, in the work “Matrix 108, Heroes”, the artist draws the 108 Liang Shan heroes from the classic Chinese literature with metallic and mineral colors and also shows the morphological features of each character to the viewers vividly. The artist arranges the composition in four segments, and the characters are

either painted in black or in foil, forming an intertwining of black and white and a combination of yin and yang. The characters are painted in bright colors, but the colors of each color block are very rich and interesting. For example, when the artist paints the yellow robes of the characters, she does not use yellow directly to partially dye or overdy, but lets the colors of yellow, orange, green, and red be used in the picture in the form of superimposition, fusion, and collision of brushstrokes, constituting a yellow block from a distance, but also an unusually rich yellow hue from a close-up view.

In the use of metal foil, the artist also arranges according to the objects in the picture; some of the characters' backgrounds are pasted with silver foil, but the artist does not paste them completely flat but first draws a lot of rich colors underneath the foil, and then, according to the dynamics of the characters, she will also continue to paste the foil to highlight the characters' images in the partial edges of the characters or continue to stain the backgrounds with mineral colors so that the silver backgrounds painted with foils are rich in materials and hues. Although the artist did not use foil directly on the black background of the figures, she skillfully used foil on the weapons in the hands of the figures, on the ribbons of the clothes, on the cuffs, on the collars, and so on, and the small amount of these eye-catching foils on the black background makes the dynamics of the figures stand out even more. The artist's combination of meticulous and freehand techniques makes the shape and color of the picture interesting.

Combined Use of Ink, Color and Foil

Another great feature of Yan's paintings is the use of ink, mineral colors, and metal foils together in the picture, which combines with the theme of her paintings to present a colorful and mysterious aesthetic. For example, her work "Dream-Red Mansion" is also based on the classic Chinese literary work "Dream of the Red Mansion." As the material to show the beauty of the Red Mansion, the artist uses the raw rice paper in the presence of water and ink that has haloed characteristics. First, ink and water are put on raw rice paper to let it naturally densify to form the form of meaning, and then, according to the ink density, the hierarchical traces of the arrangement of the

character image are formed. Dense ink in the picture is not only the bridge between these characters but also between each piece of ink to form an independent picture. Ink in the picture plays a division of the picture, and the characters will be linked together for the purpose of these ink traces naturally stained out of the edge of the vivid form of the characters will be arranged in the ink. Visually, people feel that the characters are in the clouds, a kind of cloudy feeling. These figures are not dynamically related, but they are organically linked by the ink color, which also deepens the theme of the work "Dream-Red Mansion".

The colors used for the figures are all very bright, such as big red, pure yellow, and silver foil. These pure colors, together with the ink and the white of the rice paper itself, form a relationship of black and white and gray and dots and lines. The figures in the paintings are relatively small, and these figures portrayed by the mineral colors and foils are linked together in the form of dots in the picture to form a vivid S-shaped potential, while the bright colors are more vivid against the ink colors, and the bright colors on the ink colors appear to be more inclusive. The silver foil in the picture is usually arranged around the figure or directly used to carve the clothes, forming a material contrast with the white of the rice paper. The artist's use of color, ink, and foil in this work is a contemporary use of the technique and fits the theme of the painting better. The artist is exploring and experimenting with more techniques according to the theme of her painting.

Artistic Ideology

Openness and Integration:

Combine Modern Aesthetics and Personalized Expression based on Respect for Traditional Culture

When it comes to whether Yan's works are influenced by traditional Chinese visual art or foreign painting, Yan thinks, "In fact, all of them, I think these are all subtle; you stayed in the academy for so many years, studying art history and understanding. Everyone is actually more or less influenced by a great deal. You say there is no influence; that's absolutely impossible, whether it is the traditional

Chinese brush and ink culture or the traditional landscape and birds that may be in it, and then the Western kind of expression, those colors, in fact, we are all growing up in this environment. This kind of influence can only say how much you have precipitated yourself, how much you have gained a foothold, and how much you may be able to take out.”(Yan, interview,2024)

Her work “Striving for the Top” (Figure 46) depicts a group of people wearing swimming caps who are struggling on a wide river, with small red flags inserted into each person's cap; the whole picture implies a spirit of fierce competition and striving for upward mobility. This theme symbolizes the pursuit of progress in modern society and can also be seen as a continuation of the spirit of “self-improvement” in traditional Chinese culture. By depicting such a symbolic scene, the artist demonstrates an open attitude towards social reality, as well as a recognition of and reflection on the connotations of traditional culture. The small red flag in the painting is reminiscent of the dragon boat race in traditional Chinese culture, symbolizing struggle, unity, and strength. And the modern bridges and buildings in the background add a sense of the times to the work, suggesting the progress and development of modern society. This combined use of traditional imagery and modern elements reflects the artist's open-mindedness; she neither rejects modernity nor abandons traditional culture but tries to find a balance and integration between the two. The river takes up two-thirds of the painting, and the artist does not use the traditional techniques of leaving white space or painting water patterns to express the river surface but rather expresses the fierce current through the contrast of color blocks and materials. The entire surface of the river is pasted with gold foil, which reveals a blue background, forming a strong contrast with the blue of the sky. The swimmers are not portrayed with a strong focus on the characters, but rather the dynamics of the characters, the direction of the small flags, and the cracks in the foil give a visual sense of the intensity of the competition. Gold is a very bright color in the picture, but the artist neutralizes the strong contrast between gold and blue by using silver to portray the bridges as well as the buildings. Through the black of the small area of hair as well as the small red flag,

the whole golden color block is broken, making the whole picture look vivid and energetic. This bold use of color shows the artist's openness to color expression, not adhering to the traditional rules of painting but freely exploring the collision and fusion between colors, giving the work a unique visual effect.



Figure 46 Striving for the Top

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/PCX541Nk_btzzPk8akUR9A

Her works are not only a great breakthrough in material technique, but she is also good at applying what she has learned, reasonably using metallic colors to express modern art creation, giving the works a certain compositional meaning, but the kernel of spirit reflected in her works is still in traditional Chinese culture. Through the fusion of ancient and modern in cultural connotation, the reasonable use of color, and the diversification of expression forms, the painter fully embodies the openness and integration of the artist's thinking. The artist draws inspiration from traditional Chinese culture and presents it in a modern artistic way, showing her thinking about the times and her exploration of artistic expression.

Emphasize Individuality and Freedom:

The Visual Impact of Provoking Others in Color

“I would make my images just have that pursuit in them. I like to make people look at it; visually, it is very flamboyant, because I may not be such a person usually, but I may still be a little flamboyant person inside, because I usually feel quite quiet. Everyone thinks I am very quiet, but when I paint, it's different. I feel that all the unexpressed emotions may be in my works. I am a very flat person, but when it comes to painting, I feel as if the state of human being is not quite the same. I especially like contrasting colors, because I feel that I might like to provoke that kind of visual impact on others.” (Yan, interview,2024)

Yan Haohao's works are very fond of pure colors, and the colors in her paintings give people a feeling of both enthusiasm and exuberance, but the overall tone of the painting is very harmonious. This is due to the artist's control of the rhythm of the picture, the arrangement of the color area, and the use of contrasting, similar, and complementary colors between the color blocks. Although metal foil is used a lot in the picture, it is used according to the theme of the picture, not just for the sake of using the material, and it is skillfully combined with the theme and cultural connotation of its expression. Therefore, metal foil is a tool to assist the artist to express the theme, and it is also a form of material to show her own unique thinking ability.

According to the interviewee Wang Biqing, “Yan's works are in line with the aesthetics of modern young people, with a rich color palette, without losing the elegance of Chinese elements, and with their own personalized expression.” (Wang, interview,2024)

Yan's work catches the eye at first glance, which comes from her inner love of visually striking color combinations and use of materials.

Cultural confidence:

Modern Interpretation of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements

“In fact, I think there are a lot of things in traditional culture that you can combine and incorporate. In terms of modeling, besides the well-known Chinese paintings that we usually see, there are also some folk arts that you can draw on; for example, there are prints of Yang Liuqing, which I think you can draw on. I like to

look at the murals of tombs the most, because I think they are very dynamic. Sometimes you will feel that they can be very natural to grasp some of the life atmosphere of the things, maybe more necessary when we paint large creations. Because when we paint large creations for a long time, you will feel that the creative inspiration seems to be boxed in. How do you want to come out? At that time, I think we can borrow something more spiritual and then give ourselves a complete treatment in the subsequent creations. In fact, I like to look at those works that may not be often put on art history, especially the very simple folk tomb murals, which I find very interesting, and their treatment is really unintentional but subtle.” (Yan, interview,2024)

According to interviewee Yang Fei, Yan's works “have the elements of Peking Opera, which is a Chinese element, but she expresses the innovation of the form through the innovation of the color, which can better show the charm of our Chinese culture and the fascination of the Chinese elements”.(Yang, interview,2024)

The source of inspiration for Yan's works, the elements of creation, and even the problems encountered during the bottleneck period of creation are all trying to find a breakthrough opportunity from traditional Chinese culture. The choice of the subject of drama in traditional culture for these works, such as The Drunkenness of Guifei and Mu Guiying in Command, is in itself a recognition of and respect for the Chinese culture. Yan's expression of traditional themes through modern methods demonstrates her unique understanding of traditional culture and her recreation of art in a contemporary context. This cultural confidence is not only manifested in the recognition and inheritance of traditional culture but also in the innovation and development of traditional culture.

For example,the work “Mu Guiying in Command”(Figure 47) through the modern interpretation of traditional Chinese cultural elements, Mu Guiying's boldness and self-confidence are vividly expressed in this work, which not only expresses the beauty of the strength of women in opera characters but also conveys the painter's own spiritual qualities, which fully reflect the charm of women's personalities

and the painter's cultural self-confidence. Yan puts emphasis on portraying the charm of Mu Guiying's face and the dynamics of her hands. The painter's portrayal of her eyebrows and eyes is very abstract, with concise lines outlining Mu Guiying's slender eyebrows and eyes, intentionally lengthening the proportion of the character's face; the shape of the character's nose is extruded by the color, and the mouth is outlined very small, but the mouth color is the reddest on the face. Although the lines used in the facial form are refined, they allow the viewer to feel the character's inner spirit of perseverance. The dynamic portrayal of the hand is also very exquisite; one hand presses the plume, the other hand lifts the plume, and the heroine's posture comes out. The tone of the picture is green and green; the background is in the burnt silver foil on the substrate, brushed green and green to form a mottled, irregular texture, showing a light green and green effect; the character's clothing is relatively bright green, partially superimposed with blue, and green clothes unified in a tone and change; the dress of the exquisite pattern painter is a small area of red, yellow, white, and other colors to distinguish; and the character's crown part of the color to form an echo. The artist has portrayed only one figure, but its dynamics and charm convey the posture of fighting with thousands of horses and armies. The artist uses the image of the heroine in the drama to convey the confidence and calmness of women who face difficulties and pressures in real life and uses the image of the drama to praise the female group in real life.

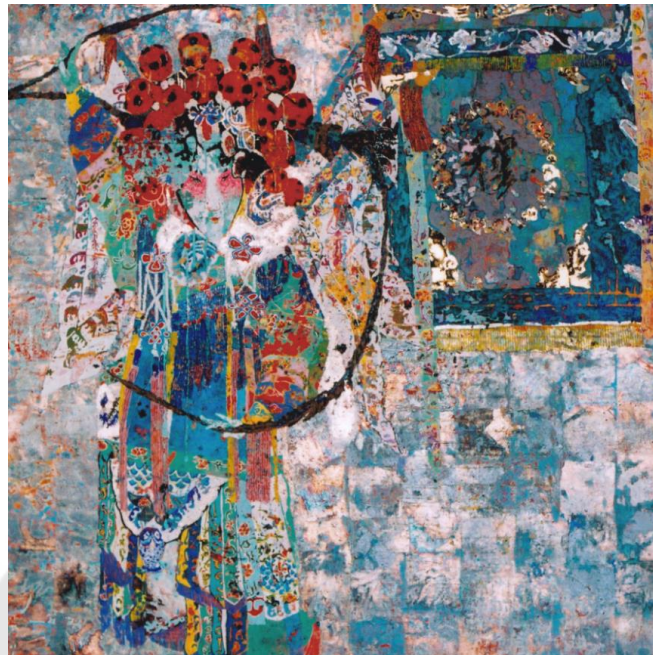


Figure 47 Mu Guiying in Command

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/PCX541Nk_btzzPk8akUR9A

In her paintings, Yan does not stick to gorgeous materials and various techniques but rather expresses the spirituality and perception of real life that she has learned from traditional tomb murals and folk art with lines and colors that are suitable for the image of the picture, instead of just piling up materials and techniques. She uses her brush to draw nutrients from traditional Chinese culture, and in her continuous creative practice, she expresses herself and presents her rich inner world.

Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works

Scientific and Technological Development:

Enrichment of Material Techniques Enhances the Modernity of the Picture

With the development of technology, artists can use richer and more diverse materials to create their works, including metal powder and metal foil. Metallic foils also include many foils that corrode and change color. The emergence of these modern materials provides artists with new expressive techniques, enabling

painters to explore the texture and visual effect of the picture more freely. The changes in light and shadow presented by metallic colors in Yen-Hao-Hao paintings make the works show a unique beauty under different lights, an effect that is difficult to achieve with traditional pigments.

The work “Journey to the West - Eighty-one Difficulties” (Figure 48) is based on the story of the literary work “Journey to the West”, which is an artistic expression of traditional Chinese culture. There are many characters and interesting storylines in the picture. The artist skillfully uses metal foil as a link to connect all the storylines, which is also in line with the expression of the plot of the picture. The characters in Journey to the West are themselves a collection of immortals, human beings, and demons, and the use of the foil is like a cloud running through all the plotlines in terms of visual perception, which strengthens the relationship of the picture's clustering and dispersal. Where there are few characters in the picture, the foils are used neatly, while where there are many characters, the foils are relatively broken. The use of foils on ink superimposed on each other makes the foils very rich in color layers and naturally strengthens the before-and-after relationship of the picture.



Figure 48 Journey to the West - Eighty-one Difficulties

The use of metallic colors brings a sense of modernity, giving new life to traditional themes in a contemporary context. Through the use of modern materials, the artist realizes the fusion of tradition and modernity in her paintings, which not only retain the connotation of traditional culture but also interpret the classic works with modern expression, giving the viewers new visual imaginations. This fusion reflects the artist's innovative interpretation of traditional culture under the development of science and technology.

Artist's Individual Needs:

Soft and Hard Combination of Materials

The metallic foils used in Yan's creations are very suitable for the picture and very ingenious; for example, like the drama characters she paints, although the background is pasted with a whole sheet of foil, it gives the viewer the feeling that the characters in the painting come with their own backdrop, standing under the spotlight, which is just right with the artist's drama theme. According to the artist herself, "The use of metallic colors is mainly based on the combination of soft and hard materials in the picture. The luster of the metallic color and the splendor of the mineral color form a kind of contrast, and I think this is something that when you make a color draft, you have to consider this relationship between hard and soft, a kind of contrast between splendor and mere luster. This kind of material contrast, one of them is to try it by yourself, and another one is to make some small drafts when you are making this kind of creation in order to catch your own feeling, that is, how to turn your idea into a very complete creation, which needs constant practice. Because my choice of material may come from a very unintentional and small creative experiment, I suddenly feel that it feels like this when I put it together, and I think I can enlarge it and use it, and that's why I use it. So I think the use of metal foil should be matched according to the needs of the picture. For example, if you paint those textures and you feel that there is some hardness missing here, or you are missing some brightness, can I use the foil to make it a little bit more ingenious so that it will have a different contrast of texture."(Yan, interview,2024)

For example, the entire background of the work “The Drunkenness of Guifei”(Figure 49) is covered with gold foil, and there is no other scene depicted; the main character is the dynamic of the The Drunkenness of Guifei, and the artist has used the color of the metal to bring the main character to the forefront; however, underneath the metal foil, there are large and small green and red undertones, which are just in tune with the color of the character's clothes. Metallic foil has a unique hard texture, with a smooth surface and strong reflective properties. This characteristic contrasts with the mineral color and texture in the picture, which can increase the visual impact of the work and bring a dramatic effect, especially suitable for expressing the stage atmosphere of traditional opera. The theme of the work, “The Drunkenness of Guifei”, has a strong dramatic character in itself, and the use of metal foil can enhance this dramatic atmosphere, giving the picture a sparkling and magnificent feeling, as if a wonderful drama was staged in front of the viewer. This effect is materialized by the luster of the metallic foil background and the brilliant clothes on the figures. The hard texture of the metal foil and the soft texture of the color in the artist's creation together form the picture of Yang Guifei, who is full of charm.



Figure 49 The Drunkenness of Guifei

Painters use a lot of metallic colors according to the theme of their creations and the needs of the picture, because the unique texture and luster of metallic colors can enhance the visual impact of the works, and the metallic colors can be used through the superimposition of foils and foils, the repetition of foils and colors, and multi-layer superimposition to produce rich layers and depths, so that the works in different angles and under different light present different visual effects.

Cultural Exploration:

Exploring a New Picture Language by Combining Ink and Metallic Colors

“In fact, after I finished *The Sheng Dan Jing Chou*, the first painting I did was *Dream of Red Mansions*. I painted the twelve hairpins of the Golden Hairpin in *Dream of Red Mansions*, and at that time I made an attempt to make a combination of ink, foils, and mineral colors. At that time, I especially wanted to break through the painting method of ‘*Sheng Dan Jing Chou*’, which is a thick painting method for me, and I have been using a very thick painting method to deal with the picture so that the picture looks mottled and heavy, presenting the effect of the current status quo of today's frescoes after they have undergone the baptism of time and wind and sand. Then I thought I would like to try a thin method, so I used ink to stain or splash ink, or the water flushing method, let the ink make a base, and then on top of the stone color, and then in some places embellished with a little bit of metallic color.” (Yan , interview,2024)

In fact, whether it is Yan's use of metallic and mineral colors to paint the picture or the use of ink and metallic colors to create the picture, it is a kind of exploration of traditional culture and an attempt at modernity. The heavy application techniques of mineral and metallic pigments draw their origins from traditional mural painting, while the integration of ink seeks to explore further possibilities within the most traditional forms of Chinese ink.

“Foil and ink match very much; one is very soft, and the other is very rigid. I think it will make the picture look more three-dimensional and vivid. I think there are many ways to present this unique beauty; everyone has a lot of methods.

Some people may splash the ink first, draw the ink first, then draw the foil, and then tear the foil or break the foil very much so that the ink color underneath comes through, which is one kind. There is another kind: to stick the foil first and then draw the ink color, or then draw another color. This is also possible, and then the ink is on top of the metal foil. Because the metal foil is very slippery, a lot of unexpected effects will appear. In fact, sometimes I will make a second creation based on the traces. I will let the picture give me a hint first, then I will think about how to complete this one, and finally turn it into a complete creation. I will experiment and let myself get hints from the unfinished picture first. Not every painting will be so regular and neat according to the steps of creation; sometimes people have to be a bit rebellious and do the opposite. Let the picture give you hints first, and then you can think about how to paint it. I think that's a more interesting experiment." (Yan, interview,2024)

From her work "Dream-Red Mansion", it can be seen that the artist first splashes ink on the rice paper so that the ink and the rice paper form a natural ink rhythm, and then draws strong colors on the base of this ink rhythm and strengthens the main character with metallic colors. Although there are a lot of colors in the whole picture, through the awakening of the metallic colors, the center of the vision is clear at a glance. Metallic color is not a common color in traditional Chinese paintings; however, the artist incorporates it into her works, combining it with traditional ink and mineral colors to form a new color language. By introducing metallic colors into the expression of traditional Chinese ink, the artist not only explores color but also offers the possibility of a dialogue between traditional culture and modern elements. This dialogue not only preserves the divine charm in Chinese painting but also injects new vitality and a sense of the times into traditional art through the addition of metallic colors.

Interviewees Yang Fei and Hu Yaojie both believe that gold and silver are a kind of preference in the bones of Chinese people and that the extensive use of metallic colors in Yan's works is an inheritance of the colors that we loved during our heydays, as well as an innovation based on tradition (Yang & hu, interview,2024). This coincides with the painter's point of view.

Yang Yang:

Yang Yang has her own unique understanding of the use of metallic colors, and the analysis of her works mainly comes from the artist's own thesis as well as the author's observation and analysis of her works, supplemented by the comments written by her postgraduate supervisor, Professor Hu Wei of the Central Academy of Fine Arts; postgraduate student Zhang Ziyi of the Academy of Arts and Design at Tsinghua University; and Associate Professor Xia Kerjun of the Renmin University of China, as well as interviews with teachers, curators, and students at colleges and Interviews.

Yang Yang	Creative Background	Socio-economic Background	Post-Olympics Economic Globalization
			Art Exhibitions Demand Orientation
		Cultural Background	Cultural Intermingling
		Artistic Background	Explore Materials and Techniques
	Artistic Characteristics	Cultural Connotation	Poetic and Aesthetic Mood
			A Pure Land for the Soul in the Hustle and Bustle of the City
		Color Innovation	Focus on Color Composition
			Communication of Color Imagery
		Artistic Themes	Female Subjects
		Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques	Breaking the Boundaries of the Painting Genre and not Sticking to a Certain Material or Technique
			Creativity Based on Respect for the Material
	Artistic Ideology	Openness and Integration	Contemporary Generation of Classical
		Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom	Using Women as Creative Symbols
		Cultural Confidence	Promoting Traditional Culture
	Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works	Scientific and Technological Development	Scientific and Technological Means to Enrich the Diversity of Contents and Forms of Expression
		Artist's Individual Needs	Use Metallic Colors to Create a Visually Modern Look
		Cultural Exploration	Works Give New Cultural Connotation to Metallic Colors

Figure 50 Yang Yang

Source: Designed by the author

Creative Background

Socio-economic Background:

Post-Olympics Economic Globalization

2008-2011 Yang Yang studied at the School of Chinese Painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, where she received her M.A. The success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics greatly enhanced China's international status and national self-confidence. The Olympics demonstrated China's progress in sports, culture, technology, and other aspects, and also conveyed the charm of Chinese culture to the world. For Yang Yang, who is studying and creating in the host city of Beijing, this cultural confidence has inspired her to rethink and explore traditional Chinese art.

After the Olympics, China's economy has continued to grow rapidly, with significant improvements in infrastructure and urbanization. Beijing, as the host city of the Olympic Games, has undergone tremendous changes in infrastructure development and urban landscape. This has provided Yang Yang with a wealth of subject matter for her creations, which can be seen in her works, which mostly focus on urban women.

Art exhibitions Demand Orientation

In 2014, Yang Yang's works won the Silver Prize in the 12th National Art Exhibition, and the 12th National Art Exhibition and Chinese Art Prize—Creation Prize, Prize Nomination Exhibition mentioned that “the current National Art Exhibition deeply implements the spirit of the 18th National Congress of the People's Republic of China and the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches in the symposium on literature and art work and responds to the expectations of the times and the people. With its firm stance on Chinese culture and distinctive Chinese aesthetic character, it vividly depicts the development and progress of the country and the nation and the practical creativity of the people in the new period, painting a magnificent scroll in the history of new China's fine arts and writing a brand-new chapter in the new journey of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” (Editors, 2014)

It can be seen here that the socio-economic context in which Yang Yang lived was in an era of rapid economic development and social stability in China, and that works of literature and art should reflect all kinds of changes, progress, and achievements in the development of society. Artists should take the people's state of life and spirituality as the main content of expression, pay attention to contemporary lifestyles and the impact of socio-economic development on people's lives, and show China's excellent traditional culture and spiritual meaning.

Cultural Background:

Cultural Intermingling

Against the background of increasingly frequent global cultural exchanges, art creation is no longer limited to a single cultural perspective. Yang Yang's works contain both traditional Chinese aesthetic elements and Western modern art influences, and this multicultural background prompts her to seek new ways of expression in her creations. Yang Yang's creations are influenced by both Chinese and Western cultures. She incorporates elements of traditional Chinese culture, such as ink and water, landscape, etc., and at the same time draws on the expressive techniques of Western modern art, such as abstract art and expressionism. This combination of Chinese and Western creative methods makes her works have both a deep cultural heritage and a modern aesthetic perspective.

For example, the work "Spring Awakening"(Figure 51) uses a variety of materials such as metal color, mineral color, vegetable color, paper, etc., and a variety of techniques such as collage, kneading, halving, color accumulation, etc., which is very typical of the use of integrated material techniques, and this way of creation shows Yang Yang's breakthroughs and innovations in traditional painting techniques and the absorption and fusion of diversified cultures. The characters in the painting are very fashionable young women, but the colors used are very light and elegant, with a flavor of traditional Chinese ink painting. The composition of the work is abstract and full of modern art style, while the superimposition of materials such as rubbed paper and metal foil has the meaning of "leaving white space" and "combining

the real and the imaginary” in oriental aesthetics. The cultural background at this time includes the fusion of ancient and modern Chinese and foreign cultures and arts.



Figure 51 Spring Awakening

Source:https://yangyang.artron.net/works_detail_brt026165700060

Artistic Background:

Explore Materials and Techniques

Hu Wei, Yang Yang's supervisor, said, "Yang Yang joined my studio in 2006, and after five years of research, she has been dedicated to her studies and has gained insights from her practice of different topics, such as basic material technique and integrated material and expression, classical art research, and contemporary art research. She has experienced the similarities and differences between the aesthetics of the East and the West in the practice of basic material techniques, explored the meaning of 'the evolution of single-type material techniques' and the spirit of 'the interpenetration and integration of multiple-type or multi-material

techniques' in the research of integrated material and expression. In the study of classical art, Yang explores how to bring the 'classical to today', and in the study of contemporary art, her reflects on the relationship between the contemporary and the classical.”(W. Hu, 2017)

Yang Yang studied under Hu Wei at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Hu Wei was an artist who was sent to Japan in 1987 to study under Hirayama Ikuo, a professor at the Tokyo University of the Arts, and received his doctorate in fine arts from the Tokyo University of the Arts in 1996; he returned to his alma mater, the Central Academy of Fine Arts, in 1997. Yang Yang studied under the tutelage of Prof. Hu Wei and was influenced by her teacher's art, practicing and excelling in a wide range of material techniques, before which her artwork was still purely ink and wash paintings. Her mentor's study, creative experience, and cross-cultural artistic background opened Yang Yang's vision of painting, making her creations break the limitations of traditional Chinese ink painting, and begin to experiment with different materials, focusing on the choice of materials and diversified ways of expression in her creations, presenting a freer and richer form of expression.

Artistic Characteristics

Cultural Connotation:

Hu Wei said in the symposium “Art Face to Face—Dialogue with Artist Yang Yang”, “Yang Yang's works have well grasped the unique feelings and thoughts about the image, embodied the expression of the interaction between form and color, and demonstrated the results of the author's exploration of the integration of classical art research and contemporary art practice, and presented the oriental meaning in the current cultural context in a unique form of language. It shows the results of the author's exploration of the integration of classical art research and contemporary art practice and presents the oriental meaning in the current cultural context in a unique language form.”(Editor, 2015)

Yang Yang mentions in her talk on An Analysis of the Creation of “Approaching Spring”: “In artistic creation, the source of inspiration can be divided into

two main types: one is the feeling gained at the scene, and the other is the experience or feeling gained outside the scene and expressing this feeling through thinking, which is the fusion of visual impression and thinking. The experience is multi-layered, and its feeling will be thicker and stronger with more space. The inspiration for my works comes from indirect experience. I usually like the dreamy, ethereal, quiet, and distant mood of prose and poetry, and I am touched by the words that touch my soul every time I am in the noisy city, which is then transferred into my works. As a result, a beautiful, romantic, and poetic style of painting gradually took shape.”(Yang, 2014)

The cultural connotation of Yang Yang's paintings comes from her keen observation of physical objects, her ability to think about the relationship between form and color, and her internalization of the literature she reads daily into the poetic and aesthetic realm formed in the expression of her works of art, the pure land of the soul amidst the hustle and bustle of the city.

Poetic and Aesthetic Mood

In Chinese traditional aesthetics, “poetry in painting” is emphasized; that is to say, it is emphasized that the painting should be poetic and have the beauty of imagery. That is to say, the creation of paintings emphasizes not only the resemblance of form, but also the most important thing, the resemblance of God, and it is moved by rhyme.

The pursuit of poetic beauty and imagery in art creation has high requirements for artists, and the objects shown by painters are not what they see, nor are they taken for granted, but are the meaningful forms of beauty presented by the artists after subjective processing in combination with what they see, think, and comprehend.

Although what the viewer sees in Yang Yang's works are not traditional figures, or even collages or broken figures, when viewing the works as a whole, the viewer can experience the smoothness of the breath of the paintings and even feel the feelings of the characters in the paintings, presenting an indescribable poetic feeling. The composition of “Approaching Spring” (Figure 52) is a combination of

real and imaginary; the real part is extremely real, and the imaginary part is extremely imaginary. The overall arrangement is that the top is imaginary and the bottom is real. This kind of arrangement stabilizes the form of the picture, and it also forms a kind of interaction with the mountain range, which is pasted with metal foil at the back. The characters are not outlined and dyed, but through the stacking, squeezing, and contrasting of colors, the viewer can feel the emotional dynamics of the characters, and the fingers and palms cannot be seen at all in the picture, but through the dynamics of the two arms placed in front of the skirt, the artist lets the viewer feel that the character in the foreground seems to be tilting her head and closing her eyes very comfortably to feel the breath of the upcoming spring; the side figure, who is snuggling with the foreground character, is righteous and dignified; as if it is expecting and hoping for something. Although the background of the picture is blank and nothing is painted, the artist can feel the objects in the blank space through the characters' hair accessories and dresses, and even different viewers will associate different objects in the space.

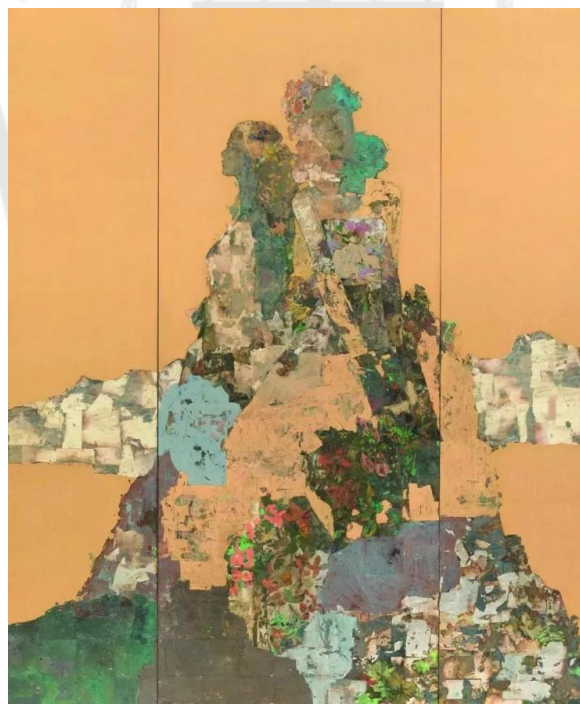


Figure 52 Approaching Spring

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/SbjpeeLe4SU2GiM2B-_diQ

This way of expressing emotions and feelings in abstract forms constitutes the poetic atmosphere of the picture, allowing readers to feel and think about the art world created by the artist. Yang Yang has been exploring new ways of Chinese painting in the process of creation and practice, integrating the poetic aesthetic interest of traditional Chinese culture with the unique temperament of the Orient, and examining the tradition with contemporary thinking and modeling so as to make her works conform to the contemporary nature.

A Pure Land for the Soul in the Hustle and Bustle of the City

Yang Yang's work "Golden Chapters" (Figure 53) portrays four urban modern women; although the specific features of these women are still not visible, the viewer can feel the fashionable atmosphere from the dynamics of these female figures. The artist uses a variety of metallic colors to divide the space of the picture.

The whole painting is based on gold, and one of the characteristics of painting on this kind of material is that the colors are suitable for clashing and superimposing. Because the gold color is easy to slip, it is not possible to make fine outlines like traditional Chinese paintings, so the artist expresses the spatial relationship between the figures according to the material characteristics of this background.

The four figures are portrayed in front and back, and the relationship between reality and reality through the large area of metal foil. The four figures in the painting have their own characteristics through the overall dynamic grasp, the color extrusion between the contours of the portrayal of the female figure, the visual center of the main figure through the standing posture and raised hands reminiscent of fashionable women confidently displaying the silhouette of the figure; the main figure of the rear of the female figure sideways and raised her head to walk forward, we can feel the elegance of her dynamics; the woman wearing a hat on the left side. Although only the hat and the shoulders are more obvious, the top of the jacket is attached to the fashionable clothes through foils, and the bottom of the skirt below only reveals the bottom part of the skirt, leaving the rest to the viewer's imagination; it still gives the

impression of being unnamably fashionable and foreign. The woman on the right side of the picture, holding her skirt and leaning back on her side, is exquisitely dressed and has a relaxed inner spirit.

These four hidden figures have an air of self-confidence, tranquility, and relaxation in the midst of the complicated world with their chic and fashionable gestures. The gold-toned background not only presents a kind of magnificence and nobility, reinforcing the confidence of the figures, but also creates a sense of sanctity, as if providing a spiritual habitat for the busy people in the city.

The partial view of the figures is a fragmented effect formed by the repeated use of color, ink, foil, and other materials superimposed, polished, and impacted, suggesting that modern people are infested by social pressure and complicated affairs, but these women can still show a foreign and relaxed state outside, and the work expresses the pursuit of a state of integrity and harmony. Such a way of handling expresses not only the reflection on contemporary urban life but also reflects the artist's concern for the inner world of human beings.



Figure 53 Golden Chapters

Color innovation:

Focus on Color Composition

Xia Kejun, Associate Professor of Renmin University of China, mentioned Yang Yang's works: "The more broken they are, the more ancient they are, so crumbly yet so mottled, so abstract yet so concrete. Each piece of the female body is carefully handled, never similar, no fixed shape, but each time according to the relationship between the color and the softness of the movement, according to the relationship between the brokenness of the present and the possible generation, all are properly handled, which requires great control and patience of the painter." (Xia, 2017)

Although Yang Yang doesn't meticulously depict the facial features and expressions of her figures, her foundational skills in form and structure are exceptionally strong. The picture alone painted broken or whole is not difficult; the difficulty is to look at the whole from a distance, vivid; into or zoomed in to see and did not specifically describe the form of which form of localization is collage superimposed on the way to constitute the breath of this fluent picture.

The work "Golden Chapters" in the picture does not use a lot of color, but the artist focuses on color composition; the picture is rich in color layers, the gold painting carrier is the first layer, the four characters are divided and linked to the foil is the third layer, and under the foil is also hidden through the black background, which is visually seen on the second layer of color. The whole painting is composed of gold, black, red, and a small amount of silver and cyan. The gold foil base has a smooth surface, and the black pigment is pasted on top of the gold foil, giving the foil both a glossy finish and a heaviness of color. The main figure in the foreground is wearing a red tunic, which is only thinly coated with red on top of the pasted foil, not completely covering the foil and showing a transparent texture. The large area of red on the clothes echoes with the red on the figure's face, and the small amount of red on the hat and blouse part of the figure to strengthen the compositional sense of the color of the picture.

These red colors are not just superimposed or impinged on by the artist. If only the main figure used red and all other colors were gold, the picture would not have such a good visual balance. The left side of the picture, left of the main figure, used more red, the hand to the left of the red, and the hat on the red visual center to the left, but the artist is just right to the right side of the object, tilted her head to the right, and in the waist of the blouse, that arrangement of a splash of red, so that the whole picture in the dynamics of the visual feeling of finding a kind of harmony.

Communication of Color Imagery

Color is very important in Yang Yang's images, which weaken the lines and mainly use color to shape the dynamics of forms and convey emotions, for example. "Silent Realm" (Figure 54). The colors of the objects painted by the artist come from life, and the fashionable dress is the mode of dress of contemporary women, but the way of color matching used is different from the colors of contemporary women's dress seen in real life, adding her own understanding of the form and objects. Most of her images are dominated by gold, which is itself a very dazzling and eye-catching color, and if the images are not color-matched in a harmonious way, they will appear tacky and unflattering. Yang Yang's images with gold as the background and foil and mineral colors superimposed on top of it, however, convey a fashionable, heavy, and harmonious atmosphere. The natural traces formed between the foils, the color texture of the mineral color that cannot be evenly applied to this smooth material, and the old texture of the hue formed after the foils have changed color—the artist arranged these special effects organically and reasonably in the picture, forming a contemporary woman who looks like she has come out of a thousand-year-old mural and visually creating an artistic effect of exchange between the ancient and the modern.



Figure 54 Silent Realm

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/SbjpeeLe4SU2GiM2B-_diQ

For example, Yang Yang's work "Fashion" (Figure 55) in the form of a vertical screen painting of three young women, this work of art painter's main energy is to portray the main object; in addition to the solid color of the gold substrate material, there is no background, so in the use of color modeling, the artist deals with the very subtle; the figure wearing a hat in the middle of the audience faces far away; The girl on the left has her head tilted to the left, her eyes closed as if she is thinking or listening to something, and her hand is slightly raised with a kind of light beat; the girl on the right walks out from the right side with her pockets inserted very confidently; the three girls' three different states are depicted in color. The outlines of the objects in the picture are very integral; except for the changes in the structure of the large forms, the artist has summarized the details of the forms and costumes in color blocks, which is visually consistent with the feeling that people look at the objects from a distance and

only see the whole, and the artist has captured the visual habit of people looking at the objects from a distance very well.



Figure 55 Fashion

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xSKwW5ULLx8az-USPBmcqA>

The local color treatment of the picture is the color expression presented by the artist after subjective treatment. A lot of metallic colors are used to express the five senses, clothes, and skin of the characters. Especially the five senses are pasted with metal foils to show the changes in the shape of the face structure, and then the eyes, nose, and mouth are shaped by scraping and carving methods. Finally, the mineral color is superimposed to strengthen the middle part of the face or deflate the zygomatic folds, which visually strengthens the structural relationship between the five senses of the characters, and at the same time makes the characters show the feeling of being illuminated by the sunlight. The effect of the picture shows the artistic effect of the frescoes peeling off after being dipped in time, but the color effect shows the effect of

being drenched in light under the sunlight. The artist applies her own understanding of the current situation of light and mural paintings to the use of color in contemporary figures and conveys her own understanding of color imagery very well.

Yang Yang's works in the color of metallic colors accounted for a large part of her works; she painted objects that are basically pasted metal foil on the basis of the carving, the screen tone to gray tones, and the same color texture contrast or material contrast to arrange the picture of the relationship between black and white and gray.

For example, in the work "Walk Series" (Figure 56), the artist depicts four young girls in their flowering season in the form of four screens, and the artist depicts the young girls' walking attitude with their own concerns only through dynamic and godly depictions, which is attributed to the artist's keen observation of modeling and simplified processing. The colors of the picture are mainly expressed through different brightness and purity of gold, and there is a clear echo relationship between the colors; no piece of color exists independently. The bright part of the picture, that is, the face, neck, and arm, is where the painter intentionally pasted silver foil on the white so that the viewer's visual center is focused on the character's facial demeanor. The heaviest part of the picture color is in gold foil with ink to chafe the halo, not only to strengthen the structure of the form but also to constitute a meaningful color form. These colors constitute the big black, white, and gray relationship of the picture, and the artist also pays great attention to the contrast between warm and cold colors. The whole picture is dominated by warm tones of gold, but a small amount of lime green is used in local places to strengthen the sense of hierarchy of the picture and make the color of the picture more vivid and lively. The sticker marks between the foils naturally strengthen the sense of air permeability of the picture so that every color of the picture is not stuffy, and every piece of color has rich layers.



Figure 56 Walk Series

Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/SbjpeelLe4SU2GiM2B-_diQ

It is a very bold attempt for the artist to express the figure through this large-area use of metal foil. She subjectively divides the figure's form under the overall outline, reminding people that every female figure has its unique experience and that these color blocks and textures form part of the figure's physical memory, so that the artist reveals the reality and the memory, the reality and the ambiguity, and the various uncertainties that she has experienced in her life's journey. The predominantly gold color expresses that most of the time life is full of warmth, but life can't be smooth sailing; there will always be cloudy or sunnier moments. The artist conveys her understanding of life in the form of color by using metallic foils and mineral colors interactively and translucently.

According to interviewee Wang Jiayi, "looking at Yang Yang's works is like watching a catwalk show; her paintings are like walking fashion, her works are out of our stereotypical impression of traditional Chinese paintings, and they have a kind of watercolor painting that is thin, transparent, and fashionable, which shows the richness of the color changes in Chinese paintings." (Wang, interview, 2024)

Yang Yang uses a lot of metallic colors in her works and creates female figures with different forms, rich and colorful through collage, collision, and overlapping. Metallic colors in her images do not show any luxury or richness but rather

convey the image of the permanence of gold that never changes color, implying the beautiful wish of youthful women to stay young forever, and the superimposition of gold and mineral colors on her body and clothes implies that even though the colors on her body have the traces of age, she will always remain young at heart. Metallic colors convey a stylish, cool, and calm atmosphere in her images. Through the clever use of metallic colors, she breaks the inherent concept of color in traditional painting and creates new visual effects.

Her works seem to be abstract shapes when viewed up close, but she skillfully uses traces of color and foil to contrast and set off the individual shapes. From a distance, one can feel the emotion of the characters in the picture through the colors and the harmonious, rich, and unified dynamics of the forms. The artist is good at finding a balance between the whole and the fragmented, between abstraction and realism, and between bright and gray colors, and reasonably expresses the characters to be conveyed.

Artistic Theme:

Female Subjects

Yang Yang's paintings are mainly based on female subjects. In her thesis *An Analysis of the Creation of "Approaching Spring"*, she said, "Perhaps I have a preference for female figures from the time of sketching, and the females in my paintings have become the carriers for expressing my inner emotions. I pay great attention to the selection and grasp of the figure's appearance and gesture, and different outlines and gestures usually convey different emotions and feelings, which make me feel the urge to create. When I create a new work, I usually draw a sketch first and often keep searching for feelings on the figure's outline, feeling certain subtle changes in the model's or reference object's form and gesture, and making artistic treatments such as deformation and exaggeration of these subtle changes until I get the psychological satisfaction in the sense of aesthetics. Someone once said that the women in my works are the 'Venus of the East'. Venus is the embodiment of beauty, and I do like to express the aesthetic mood, and the whole picture is presented with the

ethereal nature of oriental paintings, as well as the heaviness and fullness of western paintings, and this seemingly paradoxical contrast is fused as perfectly as possible in the works.” (Yang, 2014)

According to Zhang Ziyi, “The series of creations based on the theme of women show her independent consciousness as a contemporary woman, and the strong sense of distance in the pictures reflects her view of self, others, and society, as well as her personal feelings of internal scrutiny; in Yang Yang's paintings, under the sleeping gold stranded clothes is the lithe, faraway, and mysterious body, and the body and its surrounding field together shape the uncertain space. The body and the surrounding field together shape the uncertain space. The artist utilizes the various postures of the body to tell the viewer about her inner emotions. At this point, the body is no longer just a body but a symbol of artistic expression. Since she was a student, Yang Yang has been trained in sketching Chinese figures, from sketching ‘everything’ to grasping the principle of ‘one line’ in pictorial painting. In the long exploration, ‘body’ became her personal artistic expression. During the long exploration, ‘body’ has become the symbol of her personal artistic expression. In art, different emotions have different charms, and artists' exploration of the body expresses their different emotions.” (Zhang, 2021)

Yang Yang has painted a lot of female subjects, and it can be said that female subjects have become a symbol of her personal creation. The female characters in her paintings are tall, and some of them are even slender women presented by the artist's intentional elongation of the characters' proportions. Whether these female characters appear in the form of many people in her paintings, or whether they are presented in the form of several individual characters in the form of lying down, or whether they are composed of a single character, the viewer can see that there is basically no interaction or communication between these characters. Each female figure is immersed in her own world, and even though the figures in *Approaching Spring* are presented in the form of snuggling up to each other, there is no communication between them. The artist relies entirely on the superposition of the figure structures, the superposition of the color blocks, and the echoing relationship of the colors to make the

figures in the painting connect and form a visually harmonious unity. She is also good at arranging the same type of female characters in the picture; for example, the four female characters without communication in "Golden Chapters." The artist uses the same fashionable dress, self-confident demeanor, posture, and weakened features so that the viewer will be able to combine the viewer's own experience with the structure and color relationship and subjectively give their own feelings of the painting in the picture, and even each different experience will have a different feeling. Even people with different experiences will have different feelings.

There is another big characteristic of her figures: some of them are female figures with big, wavy hairstyles in an abstract form; some of them are obviously wearing wide-brimmed hats; but there are also a large number of people who can't be seen as females from their hair alone, because the artist treats their heads in the form of very short inches in the picture, and she makes them look more and more feminine through their clothes and postures. It is through these women's clothing and posture that the artist makes the viewer realize that these are female figures.

Her works on female subjects are very good at using the relationship the balance between negative and positive space to create the atmosphere of the picture. In addition to the image of the characters to be portrayed, the background is almost empty; there is no special painting of the background to set off the main characters or use the background to explain what the characters think. The artist is to leave the background white, leaving space for the viewer to imagine. This, on the contrary, the painter's form shaping, selection, and color matching ability has higher requirements. Only when the artist paints the dynamic charm of the subject's body can the viewer feel the flow of emotions from the picture and empathize with the characters in the painting by using her imagination.

Yang Yang's art theme is mainly female, but how to feel the emotional flow of the characters in the picture, the painter did not go into detail to portray and explain, but through a balance between negative and positive space,

imagery modeling, and simple and ancient colors, leaves the audience a lot of space for imagination.

Changes in Painting Materials and Techniques:

Breaking the Boundaries of the Painting Genre and not Sticking to a Certain Material or Technique

Yang Yang discusses this in her artist's An Analysis of the Creation of "Approaching Spring": "In order to make the picture richer, increase the sense of hierarchy and rhythm, and emphasize the heaviness and durability of the work without losing its vividness and freshness, in the work 'Approaching Spring', I used the way of multiple creations, with deeper and deeper layers. It is like the 'accumulation of ink' in Chinese painting, but very different; it is not a simple repetition. In fact, every time is a new beginning, and closely linked with the next action, every time for the next creation of the ambush, laying the foundation. In the process of creation, there will be a lot of unexpected effects, leaving a lot of precious things. These precious things can not all be flashed in the picture. In order to see the simple in the richness and reflect the richness in the simplicity, we have to do enough homework and summarize and summarize the things into a kind of emotion so that the picture will go to the simplicity." (Yang, 2014)

Yang Yang's work "Approaching Spring" uses various metal foils, gold foil, silver foil, copper foil, etc., and utilizes the technique of collage foil to the extreme. The collage foil itself is a highly productive technique, and if the artist does not handle it well, the picture will look like a handicraft, not like an artistic creation. However, Yang Yang pays attention to the rhythm of the picture and the painterly nature of the work. Even though the picture uses a lot of metallic colors, the artist still uses her keen ability to shape the picture with color to give it a strong sense of spontaneity.

For the hair part of the female figure facing the viewer in Approaching Spring, the artist used oxidized silver foil to stick it in the picture. The oxidized silver foil will show various colors, but according to her own experience, she corroded and oxidized the silver foil into the color needed for the picture, that is, dark

brown with a little bit of red, which can distinguish the hair from the golden color of the background. The artist also kept a little bit of silver foil in contact with the character's skin color without oxidizing and discoloring it so that the silver foil retains its own silver-white color, and this silver-white color is just enough to bring out the character's face. In the hair crevice, the artist corroded the silver foil into gray and black to explain the structural relationship of the hair. Hair that has a few gaps; these few gaps may be corrosion of silver foil in the process of natural fall, thus revealing the golden background. The artist has retained these pieces of the bottom part of the exposure rather than having to use the silver foil to shape the hair according to the reality of the character's hair image as hanging down. It is these uncorroded silver-white and the exposed base color of the hair gap that make the viewer feel that the artist is good at retaining the effect of accidental appearance and making a dedication to the local form, which also makes the foil of the picture present the shape and color characteristics of the imagery.

The color of the shoulders, arms, and skirt of the female figure facing the viewer is golden yellow, which is in the same tone as the gold color of the background. However, the artist has made the gold color permeated with other colors by sticking the oxidized and discolored silver foil on the body, then coloring it, and finally sticking the gold foil and then sanding off the part of the foil so that even though it is the same golden yellow color as the background, it has a different visual effect. The skirt is the place where the artist used more colors. In addition to using corroded silver foil to stick out the form of the skirt, in order to emphasize the atmosphere of the upcoming spring, the artist outlined and superimposed a lot of red, pink, and orange flowers on the skirt with oxidized silver foil using heavy and full mineral colors and then used various kinds of greens to clash with and build up green leaves, which is the artist's intention to let the atmosphere of spring unfold to its fullest extent on the skirt. The artist intended to let the spring flavor be fully displayed on the dress. Obviously, after the skirt is so carved, the picture color will be a little flower. The artist, at this time and with their own keen color modeling ability, will put gold foil on both sides of the skirt

and play a figure next to the form of separation, but also with the background color echo of the purpose. The more flowery part of the retention is also very delicate. From the overall view of the character, the greenish-blue color at the hair, to the color at the arm, and then to the waist and skirt at the more flowery color, there is an S-shaped dynamic potential. The artist uses this technique to make the static standing girl appear energetic and dynamic.

Every part of the painter's picture is between the techniques of applying foil, corroding foil, peeling off colors, stacking foil, accumulating colors, and overlaying colors with the main purpose of the overall aura of the picture, so that the colors of the work are both rich and uniform. In her works, as long as she can make the picture show the effect she wants, she is not bound by certain materials and techniques. Although there are a lot of production techniques when the picture is close up, from a distance it looks like it is sketched, chapped, and dyed with the brushstrokes of the artist's own artistic cultivation to make the picture show the characteristics of the artist's own.

Creativity Based on Respect for the Material

Whether metallic or mineral colors, each material has its own characteristics. When the artist creates a painting, she will consider which metallic colors are constant, which colors change colors, and even what colors they become, and the characteristics of mineral colors, such as thickness and overlapping effects, and then selectively apply the material techniques to the picture according to her own small draft of the composition, the envisioned artistic effect, and the experience of the creation, and transform the material into an artwork of her own unique spiritual qualities through the visual language. The selection and application of materials serve the artist's creative needs, and the artist has the leading role in this process. Of course, it is not excluded that the materials have uncontrolled and unexpected effects in the picture, and these unique artistic effects may also inspire the artist's next material technique. Therefore, when unexpected effects are triggered by the materials in the picture, the artist can play

the subjective initiative on the basis of respecting the material's own characteristics and then make adjustments and choices to the picture from the overall perspective.

For example, “Brilliance.Municipal Waves” (Figure 57), the material of the picture is mainly metallic and natural mineral color; the characteristic of metallic color is that the material is very light and thin, and the color has a certain luster; the luster of gold and silver will be warmer, and the color of copper and aluminum will be stronger; although there are many kinds of mineral color, there are differences between coarse and fine, so it is difficult to be evenly coated in the picture. The base material is gold, although the color is very mild, but this base material has the property of slipping, so there are high requirements for the use of binder glue. The binder should be used just right; otherwise, it will affect the metallic and mineral hair color. After mastering the characteristics of these materials, the artist puts large square-shaped foils on the figure's dress, forming a fashionable dress for contemporary women with the regular shape of the foils. The main figure on the right of the foreground has the most foils, the figure on the right who is about to go out of the picture has fewer foils, and the last figure has only a little foil on the top of her dress, so the artist utilizes the amount of foil to explain the relationship between the reality and the reality of the figures, before and after, and the primary and secondary relationships. The color tone of the picture shows the complementary tone of purple and yellow, so the artist corroded the partial foil into purple-red to make the tone of the picture more harmonious. Because of the characteristics of the mineral color, the painter is to xieyi the brushwork in the picture cunfa, even in the picture cunfa, but also will naturally retain the base color of the gold; this characteristic will be similar to the clothes of the material characteristics of the tulle for better performance. The whole picture technique used by the painter is to respect the material on the basis of subjective initiative; the picture of the relationship between the big, the character dynamics, and the characteristics of the clothing performance is just right.



Figure 57 Brilliance·Municipal Waves

Source:https://yangyang.artron.net/works_detail_brt026165700044?type=1&keyword=%E7%82%AB

Artistic Ideology

Openness and Integration:

Contemporary Generation of Classical

Hu Wei said, “Yang Yang's interpretation of themes and ideology is often the key to grasping the artistic character of her works, while the so-called ‘heavy’ and ‘warm’ works often come from the contemporary generation of the classics. The so-called ‘heavy’ and ‘warm’ works often come from the contemporary generation of classics. In recent years, in her study of Eastern and Western classics, Yang Yang has landed on her most touched moments with an open attitude. Her characters seem to be a bit arrogant and transcendent, as if they are infected by the cold and proud image of ancient Uffizi sculptures. The ‘absence’ of the overall feeling characterizes the artistic expression of the work. In the study of the East and the West, the reliefs of the Parthenon in Athens in the British Museum, the altar reliefs in the Pergamon Museum, and the flaking and missing ‘beauty of the status quo’ of the wall paintings in Xinjiang Kizil all

made her excited and imaginative. These magnificent ancient relics inspired her to think about the relationship between the reality of life and artistic expression, and those haunting 'lost and present' parts are both the beauty of heavenly craftsmanship and also overlap with the perspective of contemporary artistic expression. Therefore, she tries to express 'existence, memory, and forgetfulness' in her works to experience the reality and emptiness of the spiritual world and the meaning and situation in the picture." (W. Hu, 2017)

Globalization has accelerated the interaction and fusion between Chinese and foreign cultures, and foreign cultures and arts have influenced the development of Chinese art. On the basis of learning and integrating foreign cultures, the painting style and way of thinking of contemporary artists have also naturally changed. Yang Yang was educated in Western-style sketching and did a lot of sketching training in styling. Before using metallic and mineral colors, she mainly used Western-style styling concepts to create Chinese paintings with brush and ink. In her early works, the traces of sketching were relatively heavy, and the basic skills of her artworks were very solid, and she was able to vividly and accurately portray the various parts of the characters, but her works were not as meaningful as the works with metallic and mineral colors in terms of the creation of the mood.

Her works with metallic colors, mineral colors, and other painting materials now show an atmosphere, calmness, and elegance. The main reason is that the artist has found a way and material technique suitable for her own artistic expression, and her works now show light and textured female figures with heavy and multi-layered materials. She is influenced by the current status quo of the frescoes before the Han and Tang dynasties in her artistic thinking. After the frescoes have been baptized by sand and wind and destroyed by human beings for thousands of years, there are many cases of breakage, loss of color, loss of foil on the screen, and even some of the head and hand skin color have turned black, but you can still imagine through the relationship and dynamics of the characters the part of them that was destroyed, but it has a meaning. That part of the look, instead, has a meaningful flavor.

Although the colors in her paintings have a strong sense of composition, and she usually uses metal foil to divide the relationships in the picture, the colors used by the artist are subjectively imagined according to the theme of the picture, and she is not obsessed with the intrinsic colors of painting contemporary figures. Yang Yang learns from these ancient works and combines them with her many years of sketching to represent contemporary people, blending her own understanding of the picture, artificially emphasizing or deflating a certain part, to form the present outlook of her paintings. Her creative practice breaks the traditional framework of brushwork and writing with her unique painting language, which includes both Chinese brushwork and ink writing, as well as Western modeling and color composition, exploring a new direction for the creation of Chinese contemporary art; this open and tolerant mind absorbs all kinds of factors conducive to her own creativity and positively thinks about them and combines them with her own strengths, promoting the modernization of the aesthetics of Chinese paintings and giving her works a more diversified space for expression.

Emphasizing Individuality and Freedom:

Using Women as Creative Symbols

According to Hu Wei, “Yang Yang's sensitivity to modeling, her obsession with color, and her fascination with material techniques enable her to carry these elements that satisfy her emotional expression into the ideal realm she longs for, and the artistic impulse that comes with it leads her consciously toward the call of the subject, making material techniques an energy source for the spiritual aspirations.”(W. Hu, 2017)

There are many artists in contemporary Chinese art who use women to express their understanding of art and use women as their pictorial language to convey what they think and feel. Most of the works are in the form of Gongbi paintings, in which women's softness is outlined and dyed on paper or silk with Chinese painting colors. However, in Yang Yang's works, the viewer can see that the material she uses is metallic, and the metal foil she uses is very thin but still has a metallic texture.

Using metallic materials to express female characters is in itself a reflection of the artist's unique personality.

Zhang Ziyi mentions, "Women are a common symbol in paintings, but from Yang Yang's paintings, we can find that she intends to break free from the moving sense of femininity.(Zhang, 2021)" Most of the women in her paintings don't have much hair that is very feminine but appear in the abstract form of bald heads and inches. However, the clothing portion of the picture has very obvious female features, such as tight undershirts, half-length skirts, wide-legged pants, and high-heeled shoes, etc., which show the female features. Only the women in her pictures, whether they are looking straight ahead, tilting their heads in thought, or walking sideways, all show an air of confidence and relaxation. Apart from the fact that the artist intentionally does not use hair to strengthen the female features, the decision not to emphasize hair is mainly based on the compositional needs of the picture. The outline of her picture pursues a minimalist sense of wholeness, with the figures narrowed at the top and narrowed at the bottom, a dynamic form that creates a very stable and calm feeling in the picture. For example, the two girls leaning on each other in "Approaching Spring" are both painted with beautiful hair, but the dynamic of leaning on each other and the long skirt that extends out of the painting below form a very stable form in the picture, and the artist intentionally treats the head smaller and the skirt wider and longer in order to strengthen the contrast between these two parts so that it is easier for the viewer to visually focus their attention on feeling the expression of the character's emotions. Similarly, the female figure without hair is also painted to emphasize the contrast between the narrow top and the wide bottom so that the female figure's outer contour form is more concise, which can also show the female temperament more obviously.

The artist mentioned in her thesis, "A large number of sketching classes during my study period made me have a strong interest in the image of women, and urban women became the subject of long-term attention and creation, realizing the expression of the self-world through the image of women's bodies, and conveying the sense of life.(Y. Yang, 2022)" She takes women as the symbol of her creation because it

is the subject matter and image that she is very interested in and has long been paying attention to and practicing in her paintings, and also because she is able to use her familiar materials and subject matter in a free state to express her deepest feelings or thoughts about the state of life.

Cultural Confidence:

Promoting Traditional Culture

Although Yang Yang's works express contemporary life and have a strong compositional meaning, she conveys a unique Chinese aesthetic in the creation of the mood of the picture. In her work *Approaching Spring*, except for the figures and the concise mountains behind them, the background of the picture is a large area of white space, an aesthetic that is similar to that of the ancient painting *A Spring Outing* by the Lady of the State of Guo. When the ancients painted *Spring Tour*, they did not paint any spring flowers, plants, or trees at all, but only through the leisurely dynamics of the characters, their light clothing, and the brisk pace of the horses to let the viewers feel the leisurely yet springtime atmosphere of *Spring Tour*. Yang Yang's "*Approaching Spring*" also lets the viewer feel the vitality of the coming spring through the dress of the characters and the colorfulness of the picture.

In her picture, she uses adhesive glue to paste foils, stacks foils and colors, uses water to punch the picture to form natural texture, and uses special brushwork to chafe so that the silver and copper foils change color and the gold color remains unchanged for a long time. These techniques and effects convey the constancy of the universe and the impermanence of individual life, using color to explore the relationship between the universe and the individual and to examine the sense of eternity and fickleness and splendor. The artist uses her works to convey the Chinese view of the universe and life.

The unique Chinese aesthetic connotations and cultural thoughts with Chinese characteristics that come out from Yang Yang's works are to promote the traditional Chinese culture in the form of art.

Why Use Metallic Colors in the Works

Scientific and Technological Development:

Scientific and Technological Means to Enrich the Diversity of Contents and Forms of Expression

Contemporary art performance presents diversified expressiveness and diversified expressive techniques. The blossoming of art forms can not be separated from the development of contemporary science and technology in addition to the artist's own open-mindedness, diligent thinking, and the spiritual quality of good performance. Scientific and technological means have broadened the choice of the painter's base of the picture, enriched the color of metallic and mineral colors, broken the barriers between art paintings, and allowed the painter to have more space for choice in artistic creation. Yang Yang's work, Spring Awakening, has a relatively large screen size, reaching over two meters in height, and the painting features a collage of various materials. The right side of the picture is made of paper, on which gold, silver, ink, and other colors are painted, and this part of the picture forms a certain thickness, while the left half of the picture is mainly made of mineral colors and then pasted with foil. The folds of the figure's blouse, including the skirt, are pasted on paper. These materials are reasonably arranged in the picture, and the artist allows the painting materials and the dynamics of the figure to form a visual form with a clear contrasting relationship in the picture.

This form of visual expression shows that Chinese painting has undergone great changes in material techniques, and these changes have also led to the fact that the artist can use various materials to make abstract objects in the picture, which can not only highlight the main characters but also enrich the material and color language of the picture, conveying the effect and picture language that cannot be expressed by purely using metallic and mineral colors. Therefore, the continuous development of modern technology will also help the diversity and uniqueness of art creation.

Artist's Individual Needs:

Use Metallic Colors to Create a Visually Modern Look

According to the interviewee Zhang Yujin, “The pigments made of metallic materials or themselves appear in the picture as metallic materials such as gold and silver foils, which in themselves not only reflect the beauty of the metallic materials but also mainly transform the metallic materials into painting colors to enrich the picture. After sulfur vulcanization of metal materials, they become colorful and random colors, which are sometimes impossible to be painted by human beings. Misty, subtle in line with the oriental Taoist philosophy, indistinct, in which there are things of the aesthetic characteristics. Metallic color to break through the limitations of the material itself—this is progress, but the flavor of the picture to deal with the Oriental philosophical aesthetics based on imagery modeling and hazy and subtle aesthetics based on the metal foil; carbide can not be jumped in the picture highlights, just the material to present, then fall into the only material and material. The material itself is only the medium of painting; it must be served by the philosophical aesthetics and culture. Intentionally return to the gold essence of wealth and symbols, how to use gold and silver and other materials to present a sense of beauty, and the pursuit of wealth and beauty, as well as the philosophical and aesthetic unity of the painting, is the metal material color pursuit of the goal. Otherwise, there are thousands of metal materials, so it's better to do installations.” (Zhang, interview, 2024)

The figures in Yang Yang's works all come from the accumulation of daily sketching, and she has a very in-depth understanding of the characteristics of the figure form so that she can not only perceive the emotional dynamics of the painting object but also express her own feelings about life through the painting object. In her artistic creation, she intentionally weakens the richness of gold and silver, and she mainly uses metallic colors as a means of enriching her picture creation, exploring painting styles suitable for contemporary figure expression by using metallic colors, ink colors, mineral colors, and other materials.

For example, in the work “Brilliance.Municipal Waves”, the artist depicts five female figures in the picture who are showing their respective manners in

the city crowd. The artist expresses the five urban women with different styles through their dresses, hairstyles, and attitudes. The characters in the painting are formed by the interweaving of many colors, rich in color; from right to left, the viewer can see the female character with a pill head with a warm orange sense of light coming in valiantly from the outside of the painting, and this composition arrangement is to let the viewer's eyes follow her, the character's clothes are plastered with silver foil, and then let the silver foil produce a small amount of green on the basis of the halo dyes, the artist in order to emphasize that the character has a wind in the soles of her feet and to differentiate between the left and right legs of the relationship of the left leg with green, red and purple, while the right leg is expressed with ink and fuchsia. The second female figure looking back with her hair is also very colorful, but her dominant color is blue; the third figure, that is, the short-haired female with character behind her, has red as her dominant color; the fourth female figure looking down as if she is ready to pick something up or to look at something has orange as her dominant color. The last female figure standing on the left side of the painting has purple as her dominant color, and starting from the second figure on the right to the left, each figure has its own color tendency.

The artist's composition and color arrangement are to let the whole picture form a relationship of opening and closing so that the breath of the picture flows. After the first figure on the right guides the viewer into the picture, the last figure stands on the side of the painting in the form of a top, dividing the left side of the painting into three forms of varying lengths, and the artist leaves an S-shaped blank on the right side of the painting according to the body form of standing sideways. This arrangement gives the picture a sense of rhythm. The color of the first figure walking in on the right side echoes with the main color of the four figures next to it, forming a relationship between the colors that merge first and then open.

In the background of the painting, the artist has covered the silver foil, and in the upper half of the painting, the colors are overlaid on top of the silver foil, and these colors are the main colors of each figure intertwined and blended on the

silver foil. In the lower half of the painting, the silver foil is overlaid with fewer colors, and basically the silver foil naturally turns into a warmer color, echoing the orange in the painting. There is also part of the silver foil that the artist uses the technique of chipping and polishing to make the silver foil partially peel off and reveal the black color underneath the foil, which also forms an echo relationship with the heavy color on the figure.

From here we can see that the artist is not only good at managing the picture, but every local arrangement in the painting is for the service of the picture and adds her own subjective consciousness. Metallic color is her main way to enhance the modern sense of the picture. If she didn't use metallic color to make the background and simply left the color of the rice paper or leather paper, it would be difficult to bring out the characteristics of the women with different personalities that she wanted to portray. The foil on the character's clothes is also to better express the texture of modern clothes. This texture, made with cracked silver foil, is a natural effect that can't be achieved by haloing with other colors. Ancient people used gold and silver to show royalty or to put gold on Buddha statues, and she is using these metallic colors to show ordinary women in contemporary cities, potentially expressing that ordinary women can also use these gold and silver colors.

The artist likes to use metallic colors to create a visual sense of modernity and to reflect the uniqueness of her artistic thinking.

Cultural Exploration:

Works Give New Cultural Connotation to Metallic Colors

Xia Kejun mentions, "When Yang Yang shaped the image of the painting, it was necessary to not only show the local brokenness and fragmentation, i.e., to look at it separately, with each piece of the body seeming to be a localized fragment, but also to show the breath of the form of the whole as if there was an inner tenacious willpower integrating these fragments, just like Nvwa refining the five-color stone to mend the sky. Moreover, it is also necessary to let the women of our time have the freedom to express their ramblings and idle elegance so that each of them can have

their own gestures and states. So how to deal with the relationship between the part and the whole, as well as the miscellany of colors and the harmony of the whole, highlighting the expressive power of the material itself while conveying the simplicity of the ancient elegance, have all repeatedly tested the artist.” (Xia, 2017)

According to interviewee Tan Jiahua, “Yang Yang's works are in the process of incorporating metallic colors into traditional techniques, using them to express the environment, state of mind, and thoughts and feelings that the subject is in.” (Tan, interview, 2024)

Metallic colors, especially gold and silver, represented divinity and noble status in ancient times due to their scarcity. Yang Yang's works, on the other hand, make extensive use of metallic colors to express contemporary ordinary female figures. In her paintings, metallic colors are used a lot, but she uses various techniques to weaken the luster and magnificence of metallic colors so that metallic colors are used as an expressive color in her paintings.

This kind of color is very similar to her artistic pursuit, and what she wants to express is the connotation of Chinese aesthetics. She once mentioned in her thesis that “the time view of Chinese aesthetics is to look at life in the process. The flow of life is endless; Chinese art is beyond time, behind the time to grasp the reality of life, revealing the meaning of eternity. The pursuit of eternity is a major feature of Chinese art.” (Y. Yang, 2022)

The partially broken but whole female figures in her paintings, formed by the repeated use of metal foils and colors, are hazy in form but vivid in spirit, which is not only the artist's expression of the life form in Chinese aesthetics but also her own heartfelt thought that youth is easy to pass away, but the spirit is everlasting. The color gold is given by her to mean eternity, and the color-changing effect of silver, which is formed by artificial and natural methods, also represents impermanence. Her works present the exploration and expression of impermanence and eternity.

For example, in the work “Prayer”(Figure 58), the artist portrays a female figure praying with her eyes closed. On the golden background, the artist applies

gold foil to the figure's headscarf and satchel to stick out the form of the object according to the structural trend of the object, while the clothes and legs are made of mineral colors flowing and superimposed in the picture to form a natural and vivid clothing effect. The brightest part of the whole picture is the upper half of the artist's face that reveals her forehead and eyebrows and the hand that is superimposed on top of a hand. The brightest part of the face is made of silver foil, and the form of the eyebrows and eyes is the gold color of the base that was intentionally left out when the silver foil was applied. The artist intentionally used the gold color to express the timelessness of the figure's state of prayer. The face and hands are portrayed with silver foil that is easily discolored but not temporarily discolored, which conveys the idea that each supplicant has own spiritual pursuit, and the bright silver color coming out of the large area of gold represents people's pursuit of a better life and yearning for a better future in a warm society.



Figure 58 Prayer

Source:https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/m4Bmw7fCshXYCr4vrSG_PA

Metallic colors in Yang Yang's paintings are not only a means to assist the artist's creation but also a way for her to express the connotation of Chinese aesthetics. This kind of use makes the overall atmosphere of the picture vivid and the local colorful and organic, forming a simple and rich picture form, which constitutes an important part of her unique artistic outlook.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research is to study the technical expression of metallic colors in traditional Chinese paintings as well as to study the technical expression, innovation, aesthetic interest, and cultural connotation of metallic colors in contemporary Chinese paintings through the works of four renowned artists in the period of 1990-2023. This study takes Chinese paintings in which metallic colors are used as the scope of the research and analyzes the creative backgrounds, artistic characteristics, artistic ideology, and reasons for using metallic colors in the works created by four famous artists who are good at using metallic colors during the period of 1990-2023 in order to study the technical expressions, innovations, aesthetic interests, and cultural connotations of metallic colors in modern Chinese paintings. The research methodology included case studies of artworks by four artists and in-depth interviews with three artists, four university teachers, one curator, one current doctoral student, and one undergraduate student. The results of the study are summarized and discussed, and recommendations are presented in the following paper:

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Technique Performance of Metallic Color in Chinese Traditional Painting

The flourishing of Buddhism, the combination of religion and imperial power, economic prosperity and the exploitation of resources supported the use of metallic colors in traditional Chinese painting. Metallic colors became an important element symbolizing religion and imperial power in this context, appearing frequently in religious themes, aristocratic life themes, and scene depictions.

The intermingling of multiple cultures and the conveyance of color imagery in traditional culture provide the use of metallic colors with symbolic cultural connotations. Due to the characteristics of gold's preciousness, eternal and unchanging color stability, which can convey the symbols of solemnity, mystery, and good life, gold is valued in religious paintings and the painting art of the royal aristocracy.

The use of metallic colors is also influenced by the localization of Buddhist art and has been further promoted with the maturation of Chinese painting techniques. Metallic colors with a sense of gloss and high brightness are used in contrast to other heavy mineral colors by superimposing and interspersing them, creating a loud and harmonious visual effect and enhancing the color expressiveness of the work. In traditional paintings, metallic colors are usually used in combination with lines, highlighting the layering and visual impact of the work and enhancing the decorative nature of the picture.

With the diversification of painting materials, artists are able to use more diverse techniques when using metallic colors, such as tracing gold, sprinkling gold, raised line gilding, etc., to further enrich the painting language of the picture.

The use of metallic colors benefits from the development and progress of smelting and forging technology, carrier and binder technology, and color preservation technology, which makes metallic colors applicable to the expression of paintings as painting materials. Its use in traditional paintings not only achieves an opulent decorative effect, but also carries the pursuit of colorful color aesthetics and the expression of cultural self-confidence, and becomes a symbol of the personalized needs of the art creators, demonstrating the social status and aesthetic interests of the time.

5.1.2 The technical expression, innovation, aesthetic interest and cultural connotation of metallic colors in Chinese contemporary paintings.

By analyzing the use of metallic colors in the works of four artists, Zhang Daoxi, Guo Jiying, Yan Haohao, and Yang Yang, during the period of 1990-2023, it is possible to summarize the characteristics of metallic colors in Chinese contemporary paintings in terms of four aspects: technical expression, innovation, aesthetic interest, and cultural connotation:

Technique Expression:

Diversification of material technique performance:

All four artists emphasize the comprehensive use of metallic colors and other painting materials in their use of metallic colors, but Zhang Daoxi and Guo Jiying, who returned from studying in Japan, are more inclined to the combined use of metallic colors and mineral colors, while Yan Haohao, a locally grown artist, explores more the comprehensive use of ink, color, and foils, and Yang Yang, who is not confined to a single material and technique, flexibly uses a variety of materials and techniques according to the needs of the picture.

In terms of technical expression, all four artists break through the limitations of traditional materials, emphasizing the richness and expressiveness of color, and through the superimposition of multi-layered color foils, the works present visual heaviness and tension. Zhang Daoxi is good at corroding silver foil, a special technique that gives the picture a rich texture; Guo Jiying focuses on the subjectivity and symbolism of color in his technique; Yan Haohao applies metallic and mineral colors using a freehand brushwork style; Yang Yang's works use metallic colors not only as colors, but also as a language to convey symbolic meanings.

Metallic color is presented in different ways in Chinese paintings, showing the diversity and richness of metallic color materials and techniques. Whether it is the fusion of metallic color and mineral color, the fusion of color, ink and foil, or the reproduction of traditional techniques and the comprehensive use with other materials, metallic color has gained a unique form of technique in contemporary art.

Innovation:

Material and Technique Innovation

Zhang Daoxi takes the change of the color of silver foil into his own hands, and his works make a lot of use of the colorful effect presented by sulfur corrosion of silver foil to enhance the expressive power of metallic color, exploring the diversity of metallic color in different materials and textures, and the durability of the visual presentation.

Guo Jiying's works make full use of the unique texture of metallic colors, using them as a color language and texture language to assist in the creation of

the picture, and transforming them into a painting language that serves to express the inner emotions and personality traits of the characters.

Yan properly uses metallic colors by combining the techniques of Meticulous (gongbi) and Freehand (xieyi), incorporating modern aesthetics and personalized expression on the basis of respecting traditional culture, and giving metallic colors a new cultural context.

Yang Yang's works break the boundaries of painting, combining the use of metallic colors with traditional inks, colors and other comprehensive materials, and creating more visually impactful and modern picture effects by exercising her subjective initiative on the basis of respecting the materials.

Innovation of Art Theme and Cultural Expression

Zhang Daoxi's works are mainly based on natural scenery and ethnic minority customs, enhancing visual impact and enriching traditional cultural imagery through metallic colors. For example, he prefers to show the beauty of lotus flower's defects when he depicts lotus flowers.

Guo Jiying uses metallic colors as a visual language for the fusion of Chinese and foreign cultures, and explores his relationship with the world, nationalities, and religions based on his life, study, and work experiences, and externalizes his exploration of the inner world in the form of paintings.

Based on traditional Chinese culture, Yan Haohao integrates metallic colors into modern aesthetics, showing the dialogue between tradition and modernity.

Yang Yang expresses the theme of women in a deconstructed form through metallic colors as a symbol of cultural imagery and emotional expression, reinforcing the mental state and emotional world of modern women.

Artist's Individual Needs

Zhang Daoxi uses metallic colors to express traditional themes, giving them new techniques and color forms; he uses the rich and varied effects of metallic colors to express the changes of flowers and leaves in lotus ponds under different seasons and climates, and he expresses the richness of colors in the picture

through the superimposition of metallic colors and mineral colors, conveying the beauty of metallic materials.

Guo Jiying pays attention to exploring the symbolism of colors, using metallic colors to express minority subjects and spiritual confusion, reflecting the inner world of people in the midst of social changes. Painters use metallic colors mainly to serve the picture, looking for the relationship according to the texture presented by metal foil and color, and then filling in the color, etc. The luster and texture of metallic colors are conducive to the expression of the objects in the paintings and enhance the texture of the picture.

Yan Haohao's works use metallic colors to strengthen the emotional depth of the theme and present the artist's concern and reflection on reality. The extensive use of metallic colors comes from the artist's inner love of visually striking color combinations and use of materials, so the use of metallic colors in her works catches people's eyes at first sight.

Yang Yang uses metallic color as a tool to express the theme of women, using metallic color to show her unique understanding of shape and color by splashing, collage, and fine carving to show the independence and detachment of modern women, and to strengthen the expressive power of the picture.

Aesthetic Interest:

The works of all four artists have a strong sense of composition. Zhang focuses on rearranging and arranging realistic objects; Guo Jiying usually portrays figures figuratively, while the background is abstractly represented; Yan Haohao recreates her own understanding of the characters in operas and novels in the form of paintings; and Yang Yang recreates real-life female characters in a hazy and subtle way.

In the use of color, Zhang focuses on the richness and expressiveness of color, weakening the expression of lines; using metallic and mineral colors superimposed on each other to form a thick, rich picture language, with subtle and rich color variations, displaying a visual effect that is both gaudy and elegant. Guo Jiying emphasizes subjectivity and symbolism in color expression. The painter observes life

and understands life, and the color of the picture is not what he sees but what he paints according to the theme of the picture and the needs of the picture, and he attaches great importance to the use of lines in the picture, and the relationship between color and lines in the picture is complementary. Yan's pictures show a strong sense of fun, with exaggerated and distorted character shapes, and the use of purely irreconcilable colors in the picture to superimpose, squeeze and contrast the color tones of the picture, and the overall color tone presents a colorful and brilliant artistic effect. Yang Yang's outline pursues a minimalist sense of wholeness, weakening the depiction of the five senses and focusing on the conveyance of the character's state of mind; the color of the picture presents the artistic effect of partial fragmentation but overall harmony and unity, and the artist organically combines metallic colors, mineral colors and other painting materials to present an atmospheric, rustic and elegant meaning.

By analyzing the aesthetic interests presented by the works of these four artists, it can be seen that the aesthetic interests of contemporary Chinese painters are showing a diversified trend, and the aesthetic interests are usually very much related to the artists' personal experience, the subjects they are interested in, their artistic qualities, and their literary qualities, and so on.

Cultural Connotation:

Zhang Daoxi is extremely interested in the traditional lotus theme, and has painted many lotus-themed works. He anthropomorphizes the lotus and focuses on portraying the spirit of the lotus, integrating his understanding of the spirit of traditional culture into the creation of paintings; going out to the field is the best way for painters to collect materials and find inspiration, in which painters record the moments when they are touched, and combined with their own reflections, they use their images to explore the relationship between nature and the human state of being, and convey their love of life and their positive and optimistic attitude towards life to show the face of the new China, He conveys his positive and optimistic attitude towards life and nature, showing the face of new China.

Guo Jiying is in an ever-changing environment and subject to the impact of multiculturalism. His works always maintain independent thinking, exploring the relationship between the individual and the social environment and the spiritual world, and focusing on the exploration of the inner world of the characters, usually placing the realistic characters in the richly layered abstract space of the screen, emphasizing the interactions and conflicts between the characters' inner reality and the external world, and hinting at the inseparability of the individual characters and the social environment. He emphasizes the interaction and conflict between the real emotions of the characters and the external world, suggesting the inseparability of individual characters and the social environment. His works also show the different stages and states of life through the figures in his paintings, exploring the relationship between the individual and society, ethnicity, homeland, religion, and so on.

Through the vivid portrayal of characters in dramas and classic literature, Yan combines these vivid characters with her personal emotions, and through the in-depth portrayal of characters, costumes, and scenery, she integrates the aesthetics of traditional Chinese culture into her paintings, expressing her deep feelings and respect for traditional Chinese national culture. In the in-depth portrayal of objects, emphasis is placed on the conveyance of the spirit of writing, and the colors pursue the rhythm of Chinese ink painting, focusing on the vividness and expressiveness of the picture.

Yang Yang's works incorporate her daily perception of poetry into her paintings, which present the beauty of imagery, pursuing the resemblance of God and moving people with rhyme. The character of the picture is a meaningful form of beauty presented by the artist after subjective processing, combining what she sees, thinks and understands. The artist combines the poetic aesthetic interest of traditional Chinese culture with the unique temperament of the Orient, and examines the traditions with contemporary thinking and modeling, so as to make the works in line with the contemporary nature, and her works pay attention to the conveyance of the fashionable and loose spiritual qualities of the contemporary women.

Metallic colors have been used in traditional Chinese paintings according to the theme of the picture. Metallic colors were introduced to Japan during the Tang Dynasty, when Japan frequently traveled to China to study and exchange ideas. Metallic colors flourished in Japan because they met the aesthetic needs of those in power. In China, due to the rise of literati ink painting after the Yuan Dynasty, the use of metallic colors was nearly lost as ink was emphasized and colors were despised. Until the 90's, Chinese painters went to Japan to learn this set of material techniques back home, and then slowly taught to young artists, in the development of more than 30 years, Chinese artists to learn Japanese painting with an eclectic mentality, but also from the Chinese traditional painting in the frescoes and other art disciplines to find the roots, and then combined with each painter's personal experience, artistic training to create a unique Chinese characteristics of the artistic landscape. This phenomenon reflects the importance of cultural and artistic exchanges, as well as the need for artists to absorb and integrate the cultural characteristics of their own ethnicity in order to maintain the uniqueness of the nation.

5.2 Discussion

The research focus of this study is to explore in depth the creative backgrounds, artistic characteristics, artistic ideology, and reasons for using metallic colors in the works created between 1990 and 2023 by four renowned Chinese artists who are good at using metallic colors. Through documentary research and in-depth interviews, the technical expression, innovation, aesthetic interest and cultural connotations of metallic colors are discussed in depth.

The artist's creative background has a profound influence on the artist's creation. The socio-economic background is mainly influenced by the reform and development, Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges, globalization, and the orientation of art exhibitions; the cultural background is composed of internal and external factors, the internal factor is the artist's own desire for cultural transformation and the influence of family studies, and the external factor is the special experience and cultural intermingling in special historical periods that promote artistic creation. The artistic

background is the increasing emphasis on color in Chinese painting, and the artists actively explored the revival of Chinese painting in the form of color, from the traditional emphasis the way rather than the tool, began to gradually focus on the tool, exploring the materials and techniques, and the metallic color became the artists' painting language and materials in this period.

Artistic characteristics are mainly manifested in cultural connotation, color innovation, artistic themes, and changes in painting materials and techniques. The cultural connotation of the artists who used metallic colors in this period is mainly manifested in the modern expression of traditional culture, national culture, and traditional visual elements by using metallic colors as the main language of painting, and actively exploring the relationship between the individual's existence and the social environment and the spiritual world, and attaching importance to the creation of a sense of meaning. Color innovation is based on the fusion of Chinese and foreign color concepts, emphasizing the subjectivity and symbolism of Chinese painting colors, and focusing on the richness and expressiveness of colors. Artistic themes are mainly centered on what the artist sees and thinks, focusing on natural scenery, minority subjects, concerns and reflections on the real world, emotional confusion and emotional experiences in their own inner world, and displaying the unique mental outlook and spirituality of the Chinese people. Changes in painting materials and techniques are mainly manifested in exploring the materials and techniques of metallic colors, applying them to the drawing of base colors and the detailing of objects, skillfully using various materials and techniques of metallic colors, and choosing the appropriate metallic colors for painting according to the needs of the picture.

Artistic Ideology is mainly expressed in three aspects: openness and integration, emphasis on individuality and freedom, and cultural confidence. Artists of this period accept new things with an open and integrated mindset, and at the same time promote exchanges between Chinese and foreign cultures with an equal mindset, which are of course based on respecting the traditional culture and combining it with modern aesthetic expression. Artists in this period emphasized the individuality and

freedom, and artists expressed their uniqueness from all aspects, some pursued the expression form, some in the expression of individual painting language, some in the color expression, and some started from the creation of symbols, and the artistic expression presented diversified forms of expression. Cultural confidence is mainly manifested in digging deep into the connotation of traditional culture, and expressing and interpreting the Doctrine of the Mean, ancient simplicity and elegance, and sublime cultural spirit unique to traditional Chinese culture in a new way with modern language.

Why metallic colors are used in the works is mainly due to the development of science and technology, the individual needs of artists and cultural exploration. The research results show that metallic color itself has a unique material aesthetics, the use of metallic color in the picture can strengthen the visual impact of the picture, enrich the color of the picture, meet the artist's demand for the texture of the picture, so that the work has a more contemporary sense. Metallic color broadens the expression methods of art and helps artists to break the traditional constraints and explore more diversified ways of expression.

Compared with existing literature, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the technical expression and innovation, aesthetic interest and cultural connotation of metallic colors. Wang Zhiyan's study explores the historical origins of metallic foils by placing them in the perspective of world culture, and analyzes the reasons why metallic foils were prevalent in ancient times for wall paintings and rarely for works on paper and silk(Wang, 2016). Li Zhaotian's study begins with the concept of foil, analyzes how foil is used in various fields in China, describes in detail the tools for applying foil, the specific techniques for applying foil in paintings and other fields, and focuses on the use of foil in contemporary works and the aesthetics of their presentation(Z. T. LI, 2017). Shang Yinghui's research analyzes how contemporary Chinese paintings explore and practice composition, modeling, subject matter, and technique in the light of the aesthetic sensibilities expressed in contemporary works that emphasize the beauty of chiaroscuro, mood, and color, which make up the face of contemporary Chinese paintings(Shang, 2010).

By comparing with previous studies, this study contributes in the following aspects:

Compared with previous studies, this study comprehensively analyzes the technical expression and innovation of metallic colors in Chinese paintings mainly by analyzing the creative backgrounds, artistic characteristics, artistic ideology, and reasons for using metallic colors in the works of well-known artists. This research method allows us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the aesthetic interest and cultural connotations of the use of metallic colors in works. This study thoroughly analyzes the creative background of contemporary painters' use of metallic colors, placing their use of metallic colors in a macroeconomic, cultural, and artistic context. By analyzing the artistic characteristics of the works of artists who excel in the use of metallic colors, this study highlights the unique visual effects presented by metallic colors in Chinese paintings, and reveals how artists innovate in material techniques, colors, themes, and compositions in the creation of Chinese paintings. Through in-depth analysis of artistic ideology, it reveals that the artist's innovation is not blindly learning foreign art or simply inheriting traditional art, but rather, it is based on an open and tolerant mindset to learn traditional culture and foreign excellent culture, combining with the Chinese aesthetic connotation, characteristics of the times, the artist's personal experience, and artistic qualities. By analyzing the reasons for the use of metallic colors in the artist's works, it reveals that the artist explores diversified ways of expression by combining their characteristics on the basis of respecting the material techniques.

In conclusion, this study provides a strong practical case for the modernization and transformation of Chinese painting, and proposes specific suggestions for the use and innovation of techniques to make it closer to the aesthetic needs of contemporary audiences.

5.3 Suggestions

Suggestions for future research are that the relatively small number of artists interviewed in depth may lead to inaccurate results. In future research, expanding the scope of the study and increasing the sample size will help to gain a more in-depth

understanding of the technical expression and innovation of metallic colors in contemporary Chinese painting.

Conduct interdisciplinary research on metallic colors, increase the development of metallic colors, especially in terms of stability and durability, and develop metallic colors suitable for a variety of substrate materials, so as to provide more possibilities for artists' creations.



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APPENDIX



Appendix A

Artist Biography

1. Zhang Daoxi

Zhang Daoxi, born in 1955 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, was a postgraduate student at the Research Laboratory of Kayama Matazo, Tokyo University of the Arts, from 1990 to 1993; a researcher at Waseda University; and a lecturer of Chinese painting at the Japan-China Friendship Association. Professor at Hubei Institute of Fine Arts. Member of the China Artists Association.



Works of the National Art Exhibition:

Whispers in the Pond,

140 cm×150cm, 1999,

The 9th National Art Exhibition.



Lands of Fish and Rice ,

150cm×1800cm, 2014,

The 13th National Exhibition of

Fine Arts, China 2019.



2. Guo Jiying

Guo Jiying, born in Nei Mongol in 1959, received his master's degree in modern painting at the Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tama Art University, Japan, 1990-1994, under the supervision of Yasuro Ueno. Associate Professor, Capital Normal University. Member of the China Artists Association.



Works of the National Art Exhibition:

Existence - 10 (winks),
180cm×180cm,2014,
The 12th National Exhibition
of Fine Arts, China 2014.



Impression on Huiyuan Temple
-in the morning ,noon and atdusk,
240cm×200cm,2019,
The 13th National Exhibition
of Fine Arts, China 2019.



3. Yan Haohao

Yan Haohao graduated from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 2002. She is a member of the China Artists Association and is currently the vice president of Wuhan Painting Academy.



Works of the National Art Exhibition:

Sheng Dan Jing Chou,
60cm×200cm×8, 2003,
The Second National Chinese
Painting Exhibition.



Matrix 108 Heroes,
198cm×198cm, 2009,
The 11th National Exhibition
of Fine Arts, China 2009.



4. Yang Yang

Yang Yang graduated from the School of Chinese Painting of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2011 with a master's degree. She is a member of the China Artists Association and a member of the China Artists Association Comprehensive Material Painting and Artwork Conservation and Restoration Art Committee.



Works of the National Art Exhibition:

Approaching Spring,
232cm×192cm, 2014,
The 12th National Exhibition
of Fine Arts, China 2014.



Golden Chapters,
238cm×198cm ,
2019, The 13th National Exhibition
of Fine Arts, China 2019.



Appendix B

Respondents' information

NAME	CATEGORY	ROLE/POSITION	INTERVIEW DATE
Zhang Daox	Artist	Professor of Hubei Institute of Fine Arts	August 19,2024
Guo Jiying	Artist	Associate Professor of Capital Normal University	August 29,2024
Yan Haohao	Artist	Vice President of Wuhan Academy of Fine Arts	September 5,2024
Zhang Yujin	Artist/University Teacher	Associate Professor of Hanshan Normal University	August 19,2024
Yang Fei	Artist/University Teacher	Associate Professor of Lijiang Culture and Tourism College	August 21,2024
Wang Jiayi	Artist/University Teacher	Teachers of Tianjin College, University of Science and Technology Beijing	August 19,2024
Wang Biqing	Artist/University Teacher	Teachers of Tianjin College, University of Science and Technology Beijing	September 19,2024
Hu Yaojie	Managers of the Bureau of Culture and Tourism/Curators	Curators,Qi Chun Culture and Tourism Bureau,under secretary	August 18,2024
Cai Xiaoqing	Doctoral student	Ph.D. student at Anyang University, Korea	October 22,2024
Tan Jiahua	Young student	Student of Hanshan Normal University	September 17,2024

Appendix C

Sources of information about Guo Jiying's lectures:

October 20,2023

“Materials and Techniques in the Creation of Heavy Color Paintings”

VITA

