

Study on the Artistic Creation of Characters in Shi Tao's Watercolor

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Abstract:

Watercolor painting has been introduced into China from the West for more than 300 years, and has made great progress in China. Most of the creative themes of watercolor painting focus on still life, scenery and so on. In China, there are relatively few watercolor painters who focus on characters by comparing with other type of paintings. Because watercolor pigments are not easy to modify, painters must have a solid foundation in modeling and have an extremely accurate grasp of color before they can create high-level watercolor characters. With the rapid development of watercolor painting in China, a large number of excellent watercolor character painters have also emerged accordingly. Among them, the watercolor characters created by Shi Tao from Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts present a incisive and vigorous style, have his unique artistic beauty and can stick to the original intention of creation. This paper analyzes the artistic features of Shi Tao's watercolor works, discusses the aesthetic connotation and artistic pursuit of his watercolor works, and summarizes the artistic value behind Shi Tao's watercolor works and its influence on modern painting from the aspects of artistic characteristics, inspiration sources and classification of his works.

Keywords:

Shi Tao, Watercolor Characters, Artistic Creation

1. Chinese Watercolour Painting

After watercolor painting was introduced into China, it quickly captured a large number of Chinese painters by virtue of its fresh, transparent, moist and smooth characteristics, uncontrollable water and the charm of collision between colors. Painters, including some Chinese painters, oil painters and printmakers, began to try to create watercolor paintings. With the unremitting efforts of several generations of watercolor painters, Chinese watercolor painting has made great progress. At present, watercolor has entered a period of vigorous development and innovation. At this time, a large number of watercolor painters have emerged, and the level of watercolor figure painting creation from content to form and techniques is constantly improving. The character creation of watercolor painting presents the characteristics of eclecticism, which begins to become nationalized by combining the traditional

Chinese cultural characteristics. We shall try to understand the development of contemporary watercolor characters to better solve the current problems of watercolor development, meanwhile, it is also more helpful for us to create more profound, more touching works of art. We should try to create new watercolor characters, explore new ideas, find new ideas and create new techniques, so as to promote the long-term development of Chinese watercolor characters.

2. The Artistic Creation of Characters in Shi Tao's Watercolor

Huang Tieshan praised Shi Tao's painting art "Song of Purity and Beauty". Shi Tao's watercolor characters are more inclined to realistic painting style. The watercolor characters in his works show distinct characteristics of the times, and his works of art advocate "truth, goodness and beauty" as well. We can find that most of his works come from real life, and its pictures are full of vitality. The painter successfully transformed people in real life into works of art. At the same time, Shi Tao can skillfully control all kinds of painting art languages, and he can switch freely among watercolor, oil painting and toner painting. He will not be limited by painting tools and materials when creating, and can express his emotional concepts freely. Shi Tao's watercolor characters are so vividly portrayed that we can see the quality behind the characters through his works. Shi Tao's watercolor characters are mainly divided into three types: friendly old man or woman, childish children and beautiful women. There is emotional sustenance given to these characters by painters behind each theme.

Shi Tao's watercolor works for the elderly are mainly composed of old men and old women in northern Shaanxi. As the native land of the painter, the Loess Plateau is where he was born and grew up, so the customs of his hometown have been deeply integrated into the painter's blood. The painter joined the Loess Painting School, which just showed that he had strong feelings for his native land. The simplicity of Shaanxi people is vividly reflected in painters. This also urges the painter to describe the native customs like a mission, which serves as the inexhaustible source of his artistic creation. Art is a manifestation of the artist, Shi Tao's watercolor works are simple and kind, precise in shape and elegant in color. Through Shi Tao's works, we can see that he has a simple and kind personal trait. Generally speaking, the old man in northern Shaanxi depicted in his paintings wears a straw hat, wears a white towel, or smokes a dry cigarette made in his native land. We can feel the thick and simple loess breath overflowing picture. The watercolor characters created by painters are typical representatives who go deep into life and eulogize farmers in the new era. His "Local Accent Series" depicts kind grandfathers with smiles, comfortable life, happiness and harmony. The composition of the picture is truncated, only the heads of the characters are intercepted, and the picture is full of tension, focusing on depicting the voices and smiles of the villagers and highlighting the expressions of the characters in the picture. The characters are vivid and vivid, which can be described as superb work. The old woman described by the painter represents a kind of warmth, and the work "Halcyon Days" depicts an old woman sitting on a bench in her prime. The picture highlights the old woman's face, which is full of traces of years. The painter uses a simple pen, elegant colors and solid modeling skills to depict the scene of an old woman sitting on a bench and basking in the sun, which makes the viewer have an inexplicable intimacy. There is a cat lying next to the picture, which is the finishing touch. The painter wants to express the quiet, harmonious and serene feeling that the rest of his life is very short, and he has a cat to accompany him to grow old slowly. A good work of art must contain profound emotions, and the representation of

figure painting is the object, but it must be full of the painter's own emotion behind it, which is the painter's artistic thinking on real life. The kindness and warmth of the folks in the painter's works is the true expression of the painter's inner nostalgia.

There are relatively few works about children in traditional watercolor painting. However, lovely children can be easily found in Shi Tao's works. They are like little angels, who will appear in the artist's artistic career without interruption. Many viewers will like the bright smile and shy expression of the children in his paintings. The children in the painter's works are like fairies one by one, which makes people forget countless troubles in the world at a glance. Regarding to children's creations in painters' works of art, such as "Tibetan Girl", "Russian Girl" and "Girl on White Deer Plain" by Langmu Temple, their background is mostly presenting a incisive and vigorous style, and it takes children as reference, either bright or dark. This technique can strengthen the contrast and highlight the childlike innocence of the picture. His work "Winter" depicts a little girl playing in winter snow, wearing a red-brown cotton-padded jacket and holding a homemade snow toy. The painter grasped the quiet and restrained character of the little girl, with slightly tilted lips, clean and bright eyes and slight joy. The whole work vividly showed the childlike interest of the restrained children. In the picture, the snow is still falling, and sporadic snow falls on the hair tips and clothes of the little girl. The background is white snow, and the painter's creative two large cool colors are skipped, leaving a large area of white space in the middle, which well showed the feeling of snow by adopting the method of "the artistic conception is endless while they're nearly finished" in traditional Chinese painting to, leaving people with endless imagination space. There must be a little angel living in the painter's heart, which is childlike and full of fantasy. Probably only painters who are as pure as children can present such pure children in their works!

When it comes to the most difficult watercolor characters, it must be the most difficult skin with female themes, and the color changes of female skin are extremely subtle, so it is quite difficult for painters to show the bones, tendons, muscles and blood vessels under the skin in their works. Because watercolor pigment is not easy to modify and dirty if you are not careful, when painting women's skin, the painter must do it in one go and cannot alter it, which requires the painter to have a very precise ability to control the weight of water and the characteristics of color. Works with a theme of beautiful female occupies the majority of Shi Tao's paintings. The women described by painters are quiet and soft, fashionable and beautiful, or full of youth. The spiritual characteristics behind the character are well depicted in his works. In his work "Stylish woman of city", it shows a modern fashion woman smiling under the backlight, wearing a hairpin on a big brown wave, a pendant hanging from her neck, wearing a long skirt with floral suspenders on a white background, and sitting in a corner with her left leg on her right leg. The whole picture has a relaxed and pleasant feeling, and the painter perfectly expresses the delicate skin texture of women with watercolors. Moreover, he has a strong ability to control water, and the whole picture is dripping with water, focusing on depicting women's faces and hands. Other portions of the painting are ribbed with two or three colors, and women's suspender dresses and background colors in the picture are integrated and set off against each other. The picture of his works is a combination of reality and reality, and the image of beautiful women stand vividly revealed on the paper. Most of the prototypes of other female works of painters come from students or friends around them, and each

work presents a familiar voice and smile. Thus, we can find that painter is capable of observing life in detail and is adept at discovering the beauty around him.

3. Conclusions

The development of watercolor characters in Northwest China were well promoted by Shi Tao's creation of watercolor characters. As a famous watercolor artist in Northwest China, he devoted himself to promoting the development of watercolor in Northwest China, and his students are the reserve forces of watercolor in Northwest China. Shi Tao himself work conscientiously in his painting career. He goes deep into the people, praises farmers, shows fashionable women, has a pure heart, and can be said to be a painter of the times. During sketching period, he was extremely diligent, going off in the early morning, not returning till late at night. Besides, he also created a large number of watercolor paintings in the painting room. We should learn from this painter's advantages of going deep into life, combining with the times and practicing diligently. "Art comes from life, but it is higher than life". Artists live in the same world as us, so if we want to understand Shi Tao's watercolor characters, so we must combine the painter's life while enjoying his works. The artist's creative inspiration must also come from his life, and the creation without life is soulless, stiff and boring. The birthplace, customs and things around Shi Tao can be the driving force of his artistic career.

Art is changing with each passing day now , and watercolor has changed from the identity of imported paintings to the trend of nationalization. I believe that Chinese watercolor painting will be more by going up one flight of stairs after integrating our traditional Chinese culture and modern creative ideas. It will help us to understand the problems existing in watercolor tasks more deeply by analyzing the famous contemporary watercolor painters, thus promoting watercolor characters to keep up with the trend of artistic development, and prompting more excellent works with profound connotation and touching charm to emerge in Chinese watercolor painting circles.



Figure 1. Local Accent Series



Figure 2. Halcyon Days



Figure 3. Winter



Figure 4. Stylish woman of city

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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