

Zhu LeGeng's Environmental Ceramic Artworks from "Twenty-four Poems" "Mellowness" and "Dilution"

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Received: 18 May 2024; Accepted: 15 June 2024; Published: 28 June 2024

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to interpret the aesthetic concepts and artistic characteristics of Zhu LeGeng's environmental ceramic artworks by analysing the two poetic styles of "Mellow" and "Dilute" in the Twenty-Four Poems. Through comparative study, it reveals how Zhu LeGeng integrates traditional poetic aesthetics into his environmental ceramic art creations, forming a unique artistic style.

Keywords:

Twenty-four Poems, Mellifluous, Zhu LeGeng, Environmental Ceramics

1. Introduction

The Twenty-four Poetical Works is an outstanding representative of ancient Chinese poetic theory, which has had a profound influence on later generations. Among them, the two distinct poetic styles of "majestic" and "light" reflect the aesthetic concepts of traditional Chinese culture. As an outstanding environmental ceramic artist, Zhu LeGeng's works are deeply imbued with traditional Chinese culture. This paper attempts to explore the inner meaning and artistic characteristics of Zhu LeGeng's environmental ceramic artworks from the perspective of the Twenty-four Poetry Pieces.

1.1. Background to the study

The Twenty-Four Poems is a monograph on the aesthetics and theory of ancient poetry created by the Tang poet Sikongtu, which consists of twenty-four quatrains in form, encompassing a wide range of poetic artistic styles and aesthetic moods. In this paper, through the in-depth understanding of the first "Mellow" and the second "Dilute" of the Twenty-four Poetry Pieces, we perceive the "Mellow" and "Dilute" from the perspective of creation. "Dilute" art style, learning to create, comment on, and appreciate art works, and further linking to Zhu LeGeng environmental ceramic art work comment and appreciation, guiding current research and future art creation.

1.2. Significance of the study

The study of the aesthetics of the Twenty-four Poetry Pieces in terms of their “majesty” and “blandness” will help us to gain a deeper understanding of the traditional Chinese aesthetic of “naturalness and lightness” and promote the expression of the spiritual qualities of the works of art. The Twenty-Four Poetry Pieces have not only influenced The Twenty-four Poetry Pieces not only influence poetry creation, but also have a certain significance in the whole scope of artistic creation. The Twenty-Four Poetry Pieces not only influence the creation of poetry, but also have a certain significance in the whole scope of artistic creation.

1.3. Status of research

Research on Twenty-four Poetry Pieces from 1982 to 2024, there are more related materials, mainly distributed in literature, history, art and so on. However, there are fewer relevant documents when searching for the “Mellowness” part of the “Twenty-four Poems” or the “Dilution” part of the “Twenty-four Poems” alone, and when searching for The “Mellowness and Dilution” “Part of the “Twenty-four Poems”. The relevant literature is even less. Moreover, all of the related materials are based on the philosophical and aesthetic ideas of “mellowness” and “dilution”.

In Wang Zhenxiang and Yao Jianping’s “On the Aesthetic Ideas of ‘Mellowness’ and ‘Dilution’ in the Twenty-Four Poems,” they classify mellowness and dilution into the categories of masculine and feminine beauty, and relate them to the poets’ backgrounds to perceive the different zeitgeists of mellowness and dilution. [1]

And Wang Lei’s “on the ‘Oriental sublime realm’ of the two typical aesthetic form” discusses the majestic and dilute in a sublime, the unity of man and heaven, in the connotation and the Western sublime realm has a very different realm. [2]

Generally speaking, there are many studies on the whole book of Twenty-Four Poems, but very few studies on the two rules of majesty and dilution. Muddy and bland correspond to two different states of being, and under certain conditions, they can be used to make comparative comments on works of art. Therefore, this paper takes the “Twenty-four Poems” as a starting point for exploring the two corresponding aesthetic ideas embedded in Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics.

Search “Zhu LeGeng” can be found from 1993 to 2023, the relevant information is relatively small, and search “Zhu LeGeng environmental ceramics” there are relevant literature from 2004 to 2023 is even less, mostly published in academic journals, the earliest can be accessed is The earliest available is “Zhu LeGeng: The Symphony of Gold, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth” published in China Culture News in 2004. Through collation, it can be found that most of the studies on Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics are about the beauty of the mood of his works in space.

Among them, the earliest research paper on Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics is Kan Li’s Research on the Development of Environmental Ceramics in China since the Reform and Opening Up (1978 - present), which points out that modern ceramicist Zhu LeGeng’s works no longer pay attention to the ancient modelling and decorative style of symmetry and neatness, but rather, they take simple and powerful cut-out modelling and partial painting collage forms full of modernity that distinguish the traditional beauty of fullness from that of modernity [15]. Instead, his works are filled with simple and powerful faceted shapes and partial painting collages, which are different from the traditional modern sense of fullness as beauty.

Xiao Long “place and Zen - Zhu LeGeng environmental ceramic art of space creation”, Zhu LeGeng’s “environmental ceramic art” attaches importance to the generation of ceramic works of the environment, especially highlighting the ceramics to shape the human environment of the powerful vitality, but not by the environment, but also highlights the spiritual creation of environmental ceramic works. It also highlights the spiritual creation of environmental ceramic art works [3].

Ma Hao, Zhang Shumei “environmental ceramics in public space performance - Zhu LeGeng works as an example” in the article through the appreciation of Zhu LeGeng environmental ceramics works pointed out that the environmental ceramics must have cultural connotations, the humanistic spirit, to have the national aesthetic characteristics and folk aesthetic interest in the form of elements or cultural symbols [4].

In addition, the beauty of Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic works is reflected in Hong Mei’s “The Role of Environmental Ceramics in the Regional Environment” [5] and Huang Danhong’s “A Study of the Beauty of Context in Environmental Ceramics” [14].

After searching, there are no papers related to the study of Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics in the chapters of “Twenty-four Poetry Pieces”, “Mellowness” and “Dilution”. There is no research on Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics in the chapters of “Twenty-four Poetry Pieces”, and there is no research on Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics in the chapters of “Twenty-four Poetry Pieces”. In conclusion, there are few studies on Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics based on “Twenty-four Poetry Pieces”, which are both majestic and diluted. Therefore, this paper chooses to start from the “Twenty-four Poems” to explore the aesthetic connotation of Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics, which is not lacking as an innovative attempt.

1.4. Innovative points of this paper

Through sorting out and summarising the previous studies, we intend to grasp the creation, criticism and appreciation of the poems in depth from the “Twenty-four Poetry Pieces” “Mellowness” and “Dilution”. It further explores and explains the embodiment of “Twenty-four Poems”, “Mellow” and “Dilute” in Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic artworks. The innovation of this paper is mainly reflected in the following:

Firstly, from the perspective of topic selection, breaking away from the full text as the background in most of the previous studies on the Twenty-Four Poetry Pieces, this paper takes the first and second parts of the Twenty-Four Poetry Pieces as the basis of the dissertation text for an in-depth study.

Secondly, this paper takes Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic art works as the theme, breaking through the previous third-person perspective to discuss Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic art works, but from the creator’s perspective, showing the beauty of his works’ “majesty” and “dilution” in multiple stages.

2. The Twenty-Four Poems

The Twenty-Four Poems, written by the Tang Dynasty poet Sikong Tu, consists of twenty-four quatrains, a work on the aesthetics of ancient poetry. The twenty-four poems encompass a wide range of poetic moods and artistic styles, not only exploring

the formation of various styles from the perspective of their creators, but also having a positive impact on poetry creation, criticism, and appreciation.

In ancient times, Mr Zhu Dongrun divided these twenty-four poems into two categories: masculine beauty and feminine beauty. The two different aesthetic states of mind can also be categorised with masculine and feminine beauty. Among them, “majestic”, “vigorous”, “sad”, “bold”, are masculine beauty, while “Dilute”, “Beautiful”, “Elegant” and “Elegant” are the female beauty [1]. It is not difficult for people to taste the beauty of two different personalities presented in the twenty-four poetic products, and the aesthetic ideas of many of the products belong to the same aesthetic category, thus the late Qing writer Lin Changyi pointed out that the twenty-four products have many similarities. The products of masculine beauty, such as “Mellow”, “Strong”, “Sad”, “Magnificent”, etc., have a kind of exuberant, flying, full and indulgent momentum, which can be Their basic tendency can be summarised by the broad application of the word “majestic”. The feminine beauty of “light”, “beautiful”, “elegant” and “graceful” reflects the aesthetic pursuit of idleness and relaxation. The word “lightness” can be used to summarise their basic tendency. Any one of these styles can be found in the “majestic” and “diluted” styles, but there are different ranges and shades.

2.1. Interpretation of “Mellow” Beauty Characteristics

“Muddy” beauty is a kind of male beauty, a masculine beauty, a beauty of pouring atmosphere. It is mentioned in the Twenty-four Poetry Pieces: “Returning to emptiness and becoming muddy, accumulating robustness becomes majesty.” Among them, “Jian” means “robust” and “strong”, thus, “Xiong” is a combination of robust forces, but “Xiong” is not the same as “robust”[2]. Here, the “male” in “majestic” refers to the abundance of inner strength and the majesty of the power of heaven and earth, and to become “male”, in addition to “accumulating health”, one needs to “return to the void and enter the muddy”. In order to be “Xiong”, in addition to “accumulating health”, it is also necessary to “return to emptiness and enter into muddiness”. Both “emptiness” and “muddiness” imply a state in which all things in the world merge with each other. Therefore, the state of being majestic and muddy is a state in which the spirit and power of all things are merged and integrated into one [9,12].

2.2. Interpretation of “diluted” beauty characteristics

In contrast to the “majestic” beauty, the “bland” beauty belongs to the female beauty, which is a kind of feminine beauty, plain and ethereal beauty. It is a kind of feminine beauty, a kind of flat and ethereal beauty. The meaning of “light” beauty is indifferent and indifferent, which corresponds to Hegel’s meaning of “cancelling all particularities and obtaining a small infinity”, and it possesses all the vitality in the nature without any sense of superior power. The beauty of dilution is not that the realm is not broad enough, but rather that it is a tranquil water surface after integrating the broad mood, and there is a sense of aesthetic pleasure that “one is as light as a chrysanthemum”. Like the “majestic” beauty, the “bland” beauty is not confined to the ontological symbolism, but is in a transcendental state of the sublime realm. The difference is that, while the majestic focuses on the accumulation of power in all things, the subdued emphasises the calmness and indifference of the spirit of all things after they have become one [9,10,11].

3. Environmental Ceramics by Zhu LeGeng

Environmental ceramics, referring to ceramic art in the environment, which gradually participates in the spatial form of the city and transforms and adjusts, is an emerging art direction combining ceramic art with public space and environment.

Zhu LeGeng is a renowned contemporary ceramic artist, specialising in environmental ceramics forms of expression. He has created a series of large-scale environmental ceramics combined with architectural spaces and explored the combination of ceramics with modern architecture as well as indoor and outdoor spatial environments. His environmental ceramics works, in a unique style, reflect both traditional Chinese culture and modern aesthetic concepts [6].

3.1. “Mellowness” and “dilution” in the design and production process

3.1.1. Monolithic structural design

Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics embody two distinct styles, “majestic” and “subdued”, in the design of monolithic structures, and these two styles do not exist in isolation, but rather are integrated with each other.

The “majestic” style in Zhu LeGeng’s works is characterised by its roughness, boldness and heaviness, with a monolithic structure that often adopts the form of large blocks, and simple and powerful lines, giving people a strong visual impact. For example, his work “Chinese Cow” (Figure 1), which uses rough lines and heavy texture to express the cow’s sense of power, without any unnecessary decoration, simple and powerful, letting people feel a kind of majestic power and boldness [6].



Figure 1. *The Chinese Cow.*

On the other hand, the “diluted” style in Zhu LeGeng’s works is characterised by delicacy, lightness and softness, and the monolithic structural design of this style is often more delicate in terms of line design and as light as possible in terms of material expression, giving people a sense of warmth and comfort. For example, his series of works about “Lotus”, such as “Mirror of Lotus” (Figure 2), are often expressed with soft lines and delicate texture, and the colours are light and simple, giving people a warm and comfortable feeling.

In Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics, the two styles of “majestic” and “subdued” do not exist in isolation, but rather are intertwined and complementary to each other. For example, in the overall rough large volume works, he will intersperse part of the delicate lines, or in the overall shape of the details of the more detailed examination, so that the work is more rich in the sense of hierarchy and three-dimensional sense. Similarly, in the soft interior architectural works, he will also use some rough lines and parts to set off the overall soft and delicate, contrasting, making the works full of vitality without losing the sense of power at the same time.



Figure 2. *Mirror of Lotus.*

3.1.2. Multi-Piece Combination Hierarchy

From the perspective of painting composition, “Mighty” is mostly a vertical composition, showing a sublime and magnificent power. The “subdued” is mainly a horizontal composition, presenting a flat and broad picture of heaven and earth.

In Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics works of art in a number of single unit combinations, “majestic” beauty is expressed in its overall sense of power and shock. He often uses some large, heavy monoliths as the main body, with some relatively small, light monoliths as the auxiliary, through the strong contrast and visual impact to reflect the “majestic” beauty, in addition, he also likes to use a number of monoliths to repeat the superposition of the combination, in the number of also achieve the majestic and magnificent. This combination makes his overall works have a strong visual impact and shock, which can catch the audience's eyes at the first sight.

The “light” style is expressed in the overall softness, coordination and comfort. When Zhu LeGeng combines and arranges the monoliths, he pays attention to the proportions and relationships between the monoliths, reduces the number of monoliths from time to time, and creates comfort and relaxation by creating specific curves in the presentation. This combination makes the overall work closer to the viewer and makes people feel warm and at ease.

At the same time, Zhu LeGeng also pays attention to the contrast and set-off between monoliths when combining multiple monoliths. Through the combination of different sizes, shapes, lines and materials, strong contrasts and contrasts are formed, making the overall work more layered and three-dimensional. This combination makes the two styles of “majestic” and “light” blend and set off each other in the overall work, forming a unique artistic effect.

3.1.3. Decoration and details

In terms of decoration, “majestic” beauty is expressed in strong, bold colours and patterns, as well as dynamic and powerful lines. For example, in Horse Running in Red and Green Colours (Figure 3), Zhu LeGeng uses bright colours and exaggerated dynamics to express a majestic and bold momentum through strong contrasts and conflicts. In addition, he also uses techniques such as flowing, smearing and spray painting in his porcelain panel paintings to create an effect of dynamism and power, making the overall work more vibrant and vital [7].



Figure 3. *Horse Running Red and Green Colour.*

The beauty of the “lightness” is expressed in the simplicity and freshness of the colours and patterns, as well as in the delicacy and softness of the lines. Zhu LeGeng focuses on the smoothness and softness of the lines, as well as the harmony and unity of the colours when dealing with details. In his work *The Triple Realm of Flowers* (Figure 4), he demonstrates the chiaroscuro of lines in the decoration, adopting a combination of natural elements and traditional window patterns to express an aura of lightness and serenity through the simplicity of the composition and the freshness of the colours [13].



Figure 4. *The Three Realms of Flowers.*

When Zhu LeGeng handles the details, the “majestic” beauty is reflected in his focus on the expression of the sense of wholeness and power, emphasising the simplicity and primitive sense of the work through rough surfaces and bold lines. This kind of detailing makes the overall work more wild and powerful, and gives people a sense of primitive beauty and vitality.

The “washed-out” style, on the other hand, is characterised by delicacy and softness. At this time, he pays attention to the smoothness and softness of the lines, as well as the smoothness and delicacy of the surface. He often adopts traditional pottery crafts and techniques, and expresses a sense of lightness and freshness through fine carving and polishing. This kind of detailing makes the whole work more artistic and quality, and makes people feel a kind of elegant beauty and cultural heritage.

3.2. “Mellowness” and “dilution” in the presentation and display of the work

3.2.1. Beauty of Spirituality

When Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics are on display, the two styles of “majestic” and “subdued” in terms of spiritual temperament express a kind of reverence for nature and a love of life.

The beauty of “majesty” lies in the praise and reverence for nature. Zhu LeGeng’s works are often based on natural elements, expressing the magnificence and majesty

of nature through rough and bold artistic techniques. When the works are exhibited, the audience can feel the grandeur of nature and feel the awe of nature through the works [8]. The beauty of the “lightness” is in the love and pursuit of life. He expresses the beauty and warmth of life through delicate and soft art techniques. When exhibited, his works often resonate with the viewers, making them feel the warmth of life and the pursuit and yearning for a better life.

All in all, Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic works reflect the beauty of “majesty” and “lightness” in their spiritual temperament, one in the sense that the audience can understand the interaction between human beings, nature and life through his works, and the other in the sense that art nourishes and enlightens the spiritual world of human beings. One is the beauty that the audience can understand the interaction between human beings and nature and life through their works, and the other is the beauty that art can nourish and enlighten the human spiritual world.

3.2.2. Rhythm of integration with the environment

In the integration of the works with the environment, the “majestic” style is manifested in the echo and reinforcement of the works to the environment. Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic works often appear in the form of large-scale monoliths or groups, echoing the environment through strong visual impact and shock. He is good at using the techniques of contrast and contrast to integrate his works with the environment, making the overall effect more prominent and eye-catching. This integration allows the work to better blend into the environment and become part of the landscape, enhancing the sense of art and beauty of the environment. (Figure 5)



Figure 5. Zhu LeGeng environmental ceramics works into the environment.

The “subdued” style, on the other hand, expresses the integration and harmony of the works with the environment. Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics focus on the harmony and integration with the environment, creating a warm and comfortable feeling through delicate lines and materials. He is good at using natural elements and traditional patterns to integrate his works with the environment, making the overall effect more natural and harmonious. This integration allows the works to better blend into the environment and become part of the landscape, enhancing the comfort and beauty of the environment.

Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics works fully reflect the beauty of “majesty” and “dilution” when they are integrated into the environment. Through different ways of integration and spatial arrangement, the overall works complement the public space and are more full of vitality and infectious force. At the same time, his works also provide a new perspective and way of thinking, allowing artists to more deeply understand the connotation and value of environmental ceramics.

4. Conclusions

“Twenty-four poems”, “majestic” and “light” as the first and second respectively, presenting two very different aesthetic realms, but these two aesthetic state is not isolated, under certain conditions are mapped onto each other. Similarly, in Zhu LeGeng environmental ceramic art works, you can also see the two aesthetics of mingling and collision.

Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramic art works, with the aesthetic tone of majestic beauty and diluted beauty, show the unique charm of ceramic art. His works are not only about shaping materials, but also about thinking and expressing nature, environment and culture. He skillfully combines the strength of majesty with the elegance of simplicity, forming an artistic style that is both tense and introverted.

In Zhu LeGeng’s works, majestic beauty is expressed in the reverence and presentation of the power of nature, as well as the respect and play of matter itself. Using his unique ceramic craftsmanship techniques, he blends clay, fire and water to create ceramic works that are both powerful and textured. The epitome of nature can be seen in these works, which are full of strength and life.

The washed-out beauty, on the other hand, manifests itself in the exploration and expression of the inner world, as well as the pursuit and presentation of the spiritual dimension. Zhu LeGeng conveys the inner spirit of his works through his simple and concise modelling language. His works often give people a sense of quietness and indifference, allowing them to feel the purification and sublimation of the soul in the process of appreciation.

In Zhu LeGeng’s environmental ceramics artworks, “majesty” and “lightness” do not exist in isolation, but are interpenetrating and influencing each other. This kind of intermingled aesthetic realm not only reflects the unique charm of ceramic art, but also shows the artist's profound thinking about nature, environment and culture.

From the “twenty-four poems” “majestic” and “light” to see Zhu Lekong environmental ceramic works of art, can be found in the aesthetic connotation and artistic value. Zhu LeGeng through a unique creation method and expression, the two aesthetic realms are perfectly combined, presenting us with a piece of ceramic art works that are both powerful and introverted beauty. These works are not only in the presentation of art, but also in the contemplation and expression of the environment, nature and culture. In the future, Zhu LeGeng is expected to continue to give full play to his unique artistic style, create more excellent environmental ceramic art works, and inject new vitality into the development of ceramic art.

Conflicts of Interest

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

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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