Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Social Psychology and Humanity Studies
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2024.ND17959

The Rise and Diversity of Women's Art: A Study on Self-Expression in Art

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Abstract: In the middle of the 20th century, with the rise of the feminist movement and the continuous development of society, feminism gradually received attention. The artistic creation associated with it also developed, and people noticed the value of it. The status of female artists is gradually rising. The art is gradually diversifying. In this field of artistic creation, female artists have finally gained a place in the field of art according to their own research and efforts. According to their own unique aesthetic value and emotion, female artists give play to their unique artistic talent, breaking the inertia of male dominance in traditional art, and showing the creativity of female art. Through the introduction of the development of women's art from the 1960s to the present, this paper analyzes the characteristics and styles of women's art in different historical periods through the self-expression in women's art works and the maternal image in women's art works. Furthermore, it concludes the differences between them and male creators in art, so as to judge the new direction of contemporary female art to be developed.

Keywords: Woman, art, female idiosyncrasy.

1. Introduction

It was dominated by men until the 1960s, this study looks at the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, where women’s consciousness was growing. The movement was a counterattack to gender and stereotypes in the traditional sense and also criticized objectification, just as Jia Fangzhou said in the first paragraph of Female Discourse in Self-Exploration [1]. Under the political background of women's liberation and liberation, it is always emphasized that times are different, men and women are the same. This undifferentiated theory of "equality between men and women" has obscured women's play of their characteristics and potential. Some women began to question and challenge the stereotype of women through their work. Under the pressure of a male centered society, their female artists are gradually no longer influenced by the aesthetics of male artists. This research is great important for female art, in this study, female artists use a unique perspective to experience and feel to express an artistic aesthetic and emotional experience, as well as the theme, content, and way of thinking, which are completely different from male art. This is reflected in gender differences; In this paper, literature analysis is used to search and read relevant materials and literature. The advantage of this method is that it can well analyze the ideas of female artists in the social environment at that time and the style and characteristics of their creation, which is conducive to the research. The ultimate purpose of this study is to break the traditional inertia of male dominance, challenge gender

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discrimination and prejudice, show women's creativity and artistic value, and promote the diversity of art.

2. Characteristics of Female Art Works

Before the 1960s, according to the "Review of Women's painting Research", it can be seen that "women's painting is mostly kept in the boudoir door and has little contact with the outside world, which makes their works mostly pleasant and pleasant, and the themes are mostly flowers and birds, grass and insects, ladies and Buddha statues, and the landscape painting is basically a copying state, and the painting is mostly meticulous, and the freehand feeling is very little." Due to the constraints of the cultural environment, living environment, and Confucian ethical principles at the time, female painters had few of their own unique art styles [2]. Therefore, this period of women's art was not superior to that of men, lacking the unique art style of women. For artistic creation, they were still dependent on the male-dominated cultural system that had existed for thousands of years and had not formed their own discourse power. During this period, women were like a commodity that conformed to the male standard of beauty, the standard traditional female image. In the environment at the time, women were the dependents of men and were placed in a passive position, while men chose to "watch".

In the emerging women's art of the 1980s, Jia Fangzhou believes that "one of the most striking features is that women have separated from male discourse and have begun to explore their own value" [1]. As Deng Linghong said in the article "Existence and Transcendence - Discussing the Artistic Creation of Chinese Contemporary Female Artists", in China, from the 1980s, with the profound changes in China's political, economic, and cultural environment, China's figurative art underwent profound changes, and female artists became active. Female consciousness gradually awakened [2]. In 1971, when Linda Nochlin was a professor, she was asked a question by Richard Feigen, an art dealer and gallery owner: "I really want to show more works by female artists, but I can't even find a good female artist - why are there no great female artists?" This question left Linda Nochlin speechless for a moment. But it was this question that prompted her to write a book for women called "Why Are There No Great Female Artists?" [3]. She was one of the first to advocate for female artists, an issue that caused people to reflect on the cultural background, so that some female artists slowly came into the public eye. Later, Linda Nocklin published "Feminism and Art History: A Litany of Questions", which became the first feminist art history research paper.

Before the 1990s, Chinese female artists had no dominant rights, but after the 1990s, Chinese female artists gradually gained female consciousness under the guidance of Western feminism. As the author of "The Self-consciousness of Chinese Women's Art since the 1990s" said, "In the 1990s, a detail was subtly changed: people began to call each other" a certain artist "instead of" a certain painter "[4]. This shows that people have turned their attention to themselves and no longer think and create paintings in the traditional sense. At this point, female artists begin to pay attention to their unique personal experience. As Jia Fangzhou said, "From their keen perception of life and multiple emotional experiences, female artists use their unique intuition and survival instinct to understand every life, emotion or fact full of life meaning." [1]. In the contemporary feminist period, in the new era of China, female artists observe and interpret the world from a female perspective, so they reflect more personal experience in the content of their works, feedback on their inner world, and strive to express rich emotions. The above is about the development of female art, and the next two points are to analyze the works of female artists and summarize the creative characteristics of female artists.

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3. Analysis of Works

3.1. The Expression of Women in Artistic Works

With the improvement of women's social status, women are becoming more and more spiritually independent. Female artists often create stunning works with unique perspectives and delicate emotions. These works are not only a display of beauty, but also a profound expression of women's own identity, emotions, experiences and social environment. In the traditional social structure, women are often given specific roles and expectations, such as mother, wife, etc., which limit women's self-expression to a certain extent. However, in artistic creation, female artists can get rid of this constraint and bravely show their true selves.

Take Frida Self-portrait, the most common subject of female art, as an example. Frida Kahlo, a Mexican female painter, is famous for her self-portraits. Her self-portraits are full of recognition and exploration of the body. Frida Kahlo was born in Germany to a family from Oradea, Romania; Her mother, who is of Spanish and American Indian descent, was crippled by polio at the age of 6. At the age of 18, her body was shattered by a traffic accident. In the process of recovery, through the mirror prepared by her mother, she drew her first self-portrait, which enabled her to find the way to express her emotions and find the value and meaning of life. As if she had been reborn herself, she began her artistic career with her disabled body. Frieda once said, "My paintings have no meaning to anyone, except myself, I am so lonely, I am my own Muse, I am my own most familiar subject, with the help of self-portraits, I can understand myself more, in fact, this is a desire to vent, but also a kind of self-salvation." Through her paintings, she expresses her physical pain and psychological tenacity. She integrates her body into the creation of art, and her works are full of metaphors. Through artistic creation, she confronts her inner pain, cries out for herself and expresses the injustice of fate. Her works of art enable people to fully appreciate the rough fate of the author, and at the same time, they will be moved by her spirit of persistence. Even though the images in her works are relatively painful, the actual meaning of all her works all reflect the same theme of fighting against fate. "Her works are ironic and soft at the same time, as hard as steel, as free as the wings of a butterfly, as charming as a smile, as tragic as the pain of life" is how some female artists feel about her works. In terms of subject matter alone, women are always the core of relevant works, which shows that women know their own gender and identity very well, can use the female perspective subjectively, and also reflect a strong female consciousness. Women's in-depth exploration of body cognition and expression is the cornerstone of human social progress and the driving force for human progress.

3.2. Maternal Images in Artistic Works

Jia Fangzhou believes that among many experiences, maternal experience is unique to women, and it is also the most intense and important experience for women. After a long period of pregnancy and childbirth pains, women have the happiest and most pleasant feelings as the creator of life. This is a life experience that only women can have, and it is an important component of female artistic creation [1]. The "Big spider" sculpture in Louis Bourgeois's "Mother" is deeply loved by everyone. At the beginning of contact, you may feel surprised, shocked, surprised, and so on, but when you try to understand more details in the work, understand the origin of the author's creation, and then look at this work, the face of the spider will slowly become gentle. One of the most important French-American artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, Louise Bourgeois is also a sculptor, painter critic and writer whose work is full of symbolism. Louis Bourgeois once said that all her creative inspiration came from her childhood, in 1911 Louis Bourgeois was born in Paris, France, a wealthy carpet merchant family, while her father was extremely patriarchal, in Louis Bourgeois's childhood she saw her father took his mistress to live at home, and her mother's blind tolerance made her feel helpless

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and angry. Her mother died when she was 21, and she grew resentful of her father as a result of a suicide attempt and grief. She then went to university to study mathematics, before switching to art at 25 because of her interest. In her later works of art, all of them are constructed by her mother, which also creates the unique and delicate style of her art. Louis Bourgeois said, "My best friend is my mother, who is as smart, patient, and dexterous as a spider." So the work "Mother" was created, this huge sculpture made of bronze, steel and marble 10 meters wide and more than 9 meters high, this work on the one hand symbolizes the protection, tolerance and love of her mother, On the other hand, it also means that this Louise Bourgeois never gave up facing the nightmares of her childhood and repairing her wounded soul like a web. "The spider is a restorer, if you rush into a spider web, the spider will not be angry, but will re-weave and repair it." Louise Bourgeois felt that the calm and smart of the "spider" gave her a reliable feeling, although it looks scary on the outside, but it is good at sewing and repairing like the mother, standing under the spider, as if back to the mother's arms. Louis Bourgeois enlarged the size of the spider enough to make people afraid of the point, which also implies the strong mother, as well as the great mother love, it is a symbol of the mother's power, in the face of life is not easy, in the face of broken family her mother is still firmly protect this daughter. Just as Tang Jing commented on her, "Her expression of motherhood is true and resolute. This is perhaps the most rare part of Bourgeois, she has a strong sense of femininity, emotional, growing sorrow, obscure maternal care, self-reflection all the time [5]. As a female artist, Louise Bourgeois has innate sensitivity and maternal feelings. Her works let people see the powerful power in the female body, but also constantly depict the relationship between people. Yan Ping, born in 1956 in Jinan, Shandong Province, is one of the most influential female painters in China. In 1979, she was admitted to Shandong University of Fine Arts. Due to her excellent academic performance, she was arranged to be a teacher in the school. She not only taught at the same time, but also was admitted to the seminar of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the highest fine arts institution in China, in 1989. According to her works in previous years, Mother and Son shows the warmth and profound emotional power of maternal love, depicting the communication of sight, physical touch and emotional integration between mother and son. Her works are like a hymn, praising the greatness of female maternal love.

The symbolism of color language has become increasingly prominent in contemporary oil painting creation, and it is one of the important means for artists to use the symbolism of color language to convey their own emotions and thoughts [6]. Yan Ping is good at using rich and versatile pigments to express these touching scenes and his own feelings about art and life. Yan Ping has the delicacy and gentleness unique to women [7]. She integrates the details of life into her art works, and shows the unique charm and life emotion of women through the expression techniques of color, line and composition.

Nowadays, women's art shows a vibrant scene in the fields of painting, installation, sculpture, multimedia, etc., and has formed artistic characteristics different from men's art. Modern society has gradually begun to value the ability and charm of women in the workplace. More and more women show strong, confident, brave and so on.

4. The Difference between Female Art and Male Art

In traditional Chinese culture, the difference between male art and female art is mainly reflected in the way, content and aesthetic standards of creation. As Tang Jing said, female artists pay more attention to the things around them, such as life or nature, as the source of their creations. Their emotions are very delicate and they pay more attention to the ordinary affairs around them, while female artists pay less attention to politics, history, and other factors. They do not seek the sublime and the glorious. However, for male artists, they pay more attention to various factors such as power and politics. Male artists have very close contact with society, so their works will attract more social

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attention and gain higher recognition than those of female artists. Male artists are more rational in art, while female artists are more free. Due to the physical and psychological differences between men and women, and the influence of long-term patriarchal consciousness, they may be different from the starting point of art to the expression method. Therefore, male art is more inclined to the creation of three-dimensional art forms such as sculpture and architecture, while female art is more inclined to the creation of flat art forms such as painting and embroidery. In addition to the emotional differences between women and men, there are also psychological and physiological characteristics. Women generally prefer perceptual art to touch the soul more, while men focus on rational analysis and appreciation. In terms of details, women will focus more on emotional expression, while men will focus on the overall view of grasp. This also reflects the difference between the artistic works of men and women. As for the way of expression, female artists may be more life oriented in the way of expression. They naturally obtain the subject matter from their personal experience and live the real-life state from their own perspective and way of life. This reflects the difference between the artistic works of men and women.

5. Conclusion

Female art has experienced a lot of difficult processes in the long history, but fortunately, female artists have been firm to go on, and female artists' continuous efforts have had a very positive impact on the development of art. The research result of this study is to express the unique experience, perspective, and voice of women through various unique art forms of female artists, to further draw the conclusion that the characteristics of female art are different from those of male art both psychologically and emotionally. Emotionally, it involves sympathy for the weak and affirmation of self-worth. With the help of some maternal paintings and female images to express maternal feelings. This study provides a lot of valuable reference significance for future research in this area, which mainly influences and subverts gender discrimination and prejudice in the traditional art and aesthetic concept of feminist art and shows the creative and artistic value of women. Future research should focus on the direction of female art for in-depth exploration, in the future female art will become an important driving force for innovation.

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