

Discussion on the Application of Mythological Themes in Ceramic Sculpture

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Abstract: Ceramic culture is a typical representative of Chinese civilization, with high artistic value and practical value. It has a history of thousands of years since the Neolithic period. With the development of the productive forces of human society, its shape and decoration have been mainly practical, such as Liangzhu black pottery and Yangshao painted pottery, to the exquisite and rigorous Tang Dynasty three-color ceramic sculpture and Ming and Qing porcelain, and then to the ever-changing themes and forms of modern ceramics. with the development of world history and civilization. Ceramics can be said to be the crystallization of human material development, while myth is the spiritual precipitation of people's social development. This article will explore the cultural and artistic value of this style in ceramics through the application of mythological themes in ceramic sculpture.

Keywords: Mythological themes, Ceramic sculpture, Modelling

1. Introduction

World history is a rich history of civilization. Every era and every country has its own splendid culture, which promotes the continuous progress of mankind. Among them, China is an ancient country with profound traditional culture. Ceramic culture and fairy tales are the precious wealth left by the ancients to us. As time goes into modern times, traditional fairy tales have a new collision with contemporary ceramic art. This article will discuss the ancient Chinese and Western mythological theme art, combined with contemporary ceramic sculpture art [1], to study the use of mythological themes in ceramic sculpture.

2. The Mythological Stories

Mythology seems to be an indispensable subject for art. From the earliest ancient witchcraft rituals to Homer's epics in art history, from the Renaissance classical gods to the rise of new gods in contemporary Hollywood literature, it constantly provides inspiration for art with its own times and creativity. Myth is a story created by people limited by the level of social development. It is an irreplaceable cultural symbol in the process of human civilization. It belongs to folk literature through people's oral creation, highlighting people's idealized worship and awe of supernatural phenomena at that time. For example, in the face of flood disasters, people's thinking at that time formed a myth to explain the phenomenon. In the philosophical work "Huainanzi" of the Western Han Dynasty in China, a war broke out between the co-worker of water gods and the god of fire, Zhurong. The co-worker's anger broke the large pillar supporting the heaven and earth, causing the sky to collapse and flood. In the "Bible" said: "The Lord saw people on the ground sin is extremely evil, so he announced that will use the flood, destroy the heaven and earth have flesh and breath of living things, all die". The emergence of mythological stories shows the ancient people's naive artistic imagination of everything in the world, which has very high artistic value and philosophical value.

In the book "Primitive Culture" written by Edward Taylor, the founder of British cultural anthropology, it is mentioned that art originated from "witchcraft" [2]. He believes that for humans in the primitive period, due to the lack of deep cognition of the world around them, there will be a feeling of mystery and awe. Although the art of the primitive period had obvious witchcraft motives and purposes, in the final analysis it was the material practice activities dominated by people, which was the root of art. With the development of social productive forces, human practice level and cognition level, people's thinking ability and aesthetic ability have formed corresponding styles under the influence of social background, and some myths and stories have gradually developed into special social ideology, that is, the embryonic form of religion. Western mythological sculptures show idealism, sophistication and

elegance, expressing inner strength with outer shapes. The mythological sculpture of ancient Greece and Rome has reached a very high level, and outstanding sculptures such as "The Three Goddesses of Fate" (Figure 1) and "Aphrodite of Milos" have been born, which have influenced the subsequent European mythological sculptures. A huge influence, among which I was impressed by Bernini's marble sculpture "Apollo and Daphne" (Figure 2). The sculptures of the Renaissance belonged to religious myths in the subject matter, but more prominently put people-oriented humanism. Later, in the mid-eighteenth century, neoclassical sculpture, which was influenced by the French Revolution, once again pushed mythological sculpture to a peak.



Figure 1: The work of "The Three Goddesses of Fate"



Figure 2: The work of "Apollo and Daphne"

3. The Application of Chinese Traditional Myths in Ceramic Sculpture

Ceramic is one of the important carriers of the spirit of Chinese traditional culture. It is the crystallization of the wisdom and craftsmanship of the working people of all ages. It is an art deeply rooted in the earth and closely related to life. It is also the earliest artificial material. There is no obvious category distinction in the art of the earliest ancient Chinese ceramics. The vast majority of ceramic sculptures belong to a decorative type of ceramics as well as decoration. The two have certain differences and close links. In China's early decorative patterns, such as the Shang Dynasty to the Western Zhou Dynasty, the prevalence of Taotie pattern (Figure 3), similar to reliefs carved shape is not limited to decorative patterns. In ancient Chinese mythology, there are four evil beasts: Taotie, Qiqi, Chaos and Taowu. In the legend, Emperor Huang decapitated Chiyu, and his head landed as Taotie. In the "Shanhaijing · Beishanjing": "Gouwu Mountain has more jade on it and more copper under it. There is a beast, its shape is like a sheep's body, its eyes are under the armpit, tiger teeth claws, its sound is like a baby, its name is roe deer owl, it is cannibalism". The Taotie pattern combines the images of birds, animals, fish, insects and other animals with the imagination of people. The solemn pattern gives a sense of mystery and reflects people's awe and worship of natural gods at that time. At the same time, it also has the significance of the rulers to maintain the authority of the king.



Figure 3: Taotie Pattern



Figure 4: The Four Gods of the Han Dynasty, Wadang

As well as the four gods of the Qin and Han Dynasties, the tiles (Figure 4) are impressive in the combination of mythology and ceramics, which contain rich ancient Chinese people's simple view of nature and a large number of astronomical contents obtained through practice. The center of the four gods tiles has a prominent dot representing the sky pole of the central palace. The 'central palace' refers to the sky area around the Arctic, symbolizing the central court represented by the emperor, and the "sky pole" is the North Star. "Records of the Grand Historian·Book of Heaven" at the beginning reads: "The Miyako Celestial Star, its one bright, too permanent also. The ancients have long recognized the

phenomenon that the North Star does not move in the sky and the stars rotate around it. The position of the Beidou and the North Star can be used to find the north direction or to determine the season. Sui and Tang Dynasties, Dan Yuanzi's "Bu Tian Ge" starry sky is divided into "three walls twenty-eight", twenty-eight is divided into four groups, that is, "four elephants". In ancient mythology, the four elephants were guarded by a divine beast: the East Palace Qinglong, whose color belongs to green, and the five elements belong to wood, which governs spring and the East. The West Palace White tiger, whose color belongs to white and the five elements belong to gold, governs autumn and the West. South Palace sparrow, color is red, the five elements are fire, in charge of summer and the south. Xuanwu, the color of black, the five elements of water, governs winter and the north. The four-elephant god eaves tile is an image of intentional expression created by people's careful observation of animals and rich imagination. The pattern is filled with the center of the middle dot. The pattern and size are strictly stipulated. The static and dynamic, rigorous and active. Although the four gods tiles are only used as the shelter of the front section of the building tube tile, they are widely used in palace and ritual architecture with their beautiful shape and the prevailing concept of yin-yang and five elements at that time. It is a combination model of sculpture art and architectural art, highlighting the unique artistic atmosphere of Chinese traditional culture [3].

4. The Contemporary Chinese Ceramic Sculpture Art and Mythological Themes

With the development of the times, contemporary ceramic sculptures have made great progress in presentation methods and craftsmanship, and ceramic art styles and public aesthetics also tend to be diversified. Art works are no longer limited to their respective categories. With the assistance of modern technology, the style of contemporary art works has become more and more extensive. Chinese contemporary art in the information age is largely influenced by Western art ideas. The blind absorption of some works of art has cut off the connection between tradition and contemporary, making the works lose their "roots" and fall into nothingness. Chinese traditional culture has been in the same line for 5,000 years and has never been interrupted, which fully demonstrates the superiority of our nation and culture. Chinese contemporary artists should take traditional Chinese culture as the foundation, absorb excellent foreign art and culture from the West, and bring forth new ideas to create more representative creations. works of art.

Ceramic sculpture art style of contemporary China is the result of modern ceramic art movement in the 1980 s, it broke through the ancient Chinese ceramics art the same pursuit of extreme exquisite, modelling is rigorous and meticulous traditional rigid style, to explore the ceramic material of natural mud, modelling image expression and not constrained by shape, people-oriented, pursuit in art activities and the interaction between soil, With the unique texture effect of ceramic soil, it boldly expresses the feeling of "turbidity" of art works and endows works with deep spiritual power.



Figure 5: The work of "Hai Gong Zi" by Geng Xue, 2014

With the rapid development of productive forces and the accelerating pace of life in contemporary society, the traditional ceramic art themed on myth can make people more peaceful with its unique creativity and artistry in today's society. After thousands of years of precipitation, ceramic sculpture art

has reached its peak in both craft level and image height. Contemporary mythological ceramic sculpture is based on traditional Chinese mythological stories, using traditional molding techniques such as kneading, clay strips and clay pieces, combined with decoration methods such as glaze color, texture and defects, so that viewers can exert their imagination and create an extraordinary virtual space.

In 2014, Geng Xue, a well-known Chinese artist, released a ceramic animation work "Hai Gong Zi" (Figure 5), the tenth story in the second volume of "Liao Zhai Zhi Yi". It tells a strange story of a scholar on a desert island with a snake sperm and a prostitute who turns into a snake sperm. The protagonist of the animation is a celadon hanging line puppet, trees, flowers and other scene accessories are also made of celadon. The dark blue light shadow is projected on the screen, and the crisp sound generated by the celadon collision echoes, simple and ethereal. A seductive Liao-zhai story unfolds in the image world created by the artist. Wang Huangsheng, director of the art museum of the central academy of fine arts, commented: "Geng Xue reveals the hidden emotion and soul world of human nature and forms his own unique language style with comprehensive and cross-border artistic techniques such as sculpture, influence, mythology and behavior". Geng Xue uses contemporary sculpture, painting, video and other comprehensive artistic techniques to reconstruct the "Haigongzi" scene in Pu Songling's works with rich imagination. The focus of the work is not on narrative, but on ceramic sculpture. It is expressed in the form of animation, linking the cold and fragile nature of porcelain with the fragility of characters, and bringing the language of ceramics to the extreme.

5. Conclusions

By analyzing the mythological thoughts in traditional Chinese art and its practical application in artistic creation, this paper studies the integration and development of mythological themes and ceramic sculpture art in the contemporary art environment, and concludes that mythological themes are still very important in ceramic art today. A valuable creative direction. From a historical point of view, in terms of material, my country has the world's oldest ceramic culture. From the rough and simple painted pottery and black pottery of the Neolithic Age to the contemporary pottery art in full bloom, ceramics has become a symbol of China, and it is the inheritance and development of contemporary China. The most solid foundation of ceramic art. Ideologically, my country has a wealth of excellent literary treasures such as ancient myths, religious myths, and folk myths, among which a large number of excellent myths and stories have been written into teaching materials, providing strong spiritual support for the Chinese nation, and can also become a source of inspiration for Chinese contemporary artists. At the same time, starting from the contemporary environment of the times, multimedia, digital and other technologies are applied to art, combined with the experimental and public aesthetics of contemporary ceramic art, so that ceramic sculptures with traditional mythological themes have a new look.

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