

The Dissemination of the Ecological Civilization Idea and Aesthetic Education Practice by the Public Art Museums—Taking Zhaoqing Art Museum as an Example

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Abstract: Ecological civilization idea dissemination and education is the driving force to promote the construction of ecological civilization and help the “the comprehensive rural revitalization project in Guangdong China” nick-named “hundreds (of counties), thousands (of towns), and ten thousands (of villages) project”. This paper discusses how art museums, as the practice base of aesthetic education, can spread and convey the idea of “ecological civilization construction” to citizens, and perform the function of serving the society. Ecological civilization construction throughout the exhibition and public education, mobilize rich aesthetic resources, deepen the impact of cultural experience, serve the general public, practice education through culture, cultivate the public’s competences in finding beauty in healthy ecological environment, in realizing the importance of keeping the ecological environment healthy and in combining realization and practice in the construction of healthy ecological environment, build educative bases for disseminating the idea of healthy ecological civilization and its corresponding education.

Keywords: Aesthetic education, Art museums, Ecological civilization

1. Introduction

In this era of national aesthetic education (social aesthetic education, school aesthetic education and family aesthetic education), art museums, as a public welfare cultural institution, are increasingly closely related to the cultural needs of the public. According to research, the number of visitors to domestic art museums has maintained a rising momentum for a long time, and the public continues to enter the art museums to enjoy art exhibitions and experience cultural activities. Therefore, the public service function of the art museum has become more and more important.

In recent years, Zhaoqing Art Museum has played a more and more prominent role in social aesthetic education, forming an interactive mode between aesthetic education and public education, and promoting the cultural education of the public. Art museums, as a main aesthetic collection, display art, build important platform for aesthetic education, raise the public passion in art, improve the overall aesthetic appreciation proficiency towards art productions, provide more conditions for aesthetic “immersion”, so as to promote the organic development of the aesthetic trinity which includes school aesthetic education, family aesthetic education, and societal aesthetic education.

2. The Case of Zhaoqing Art Museum

An art museum to carry out the aesthetic education tactics, is through the expression of art, which fit the social public knowledge system and aesthetic appreciation characteristics, so as to cultivate people’s inner emotion and to improve their outlook on life and values. de Araujo (2018) described a case in which a brazilian art museum connected students and art by providing suitable space and intentionally-planned educational activities^[1]. Lee (2024) also presented a more recent study in which researcher inspected participants’ perceptions on how to balance the cultural dissemination function of art museums and their educational function^[3]. As for Zhaoqing art museum’s case, it involves human

ethics, knowledge exploration through creative thinking, with both humanistic education significance, and scientific exploration value.

2.1. Building exhibition and exchange platform for the “lush and lovely” idea, so as to broaden the channels for aesthetic education

Exhibition is the most important function of art museums, the vane of the academic system of art museums, and the driving force of art communication and cultural export of art museums. The exhibition of the art museum contains profound development values, taking into account the history, foresight, theme, diversity, nationality and world. This kind of common power, which undertakes the guidance of thought, cultural dissemination and the development of people’s wisdom. Adhering to the cultural spirit of The Times, the art museum consistently displays the local academic achievements and research experiences, vividly reconstructs Lingnan history and culture, develops regional aesthetic context, and promotes the construction of urban and rural public cultural resources and exhibition platforms. In recent years, many exhibitions in the art museums try to spread the values of “lush and lovely (green and beautiful) Guangdong”, realize the interaction and communication of aesthetic education, improve the aesthetic level of the public, and promote the development of regional ecological civilization in Guangdong with artistic power, so as to build the art museum as a new regional landmark, closely connected with the cultural life of the local people, and produce quantifiable social and cultural benefits^[2].

In the name of art, museum exhibitions utilize the power of art to respond to the green ecological construction. The art museum, together with all sectors of society, will carry out many exhibitions of ecological environment protection and the construction of a beautiful China, which constitute the image of “ecological civilization” artistically constructed by Chinese artists, and presents a visual communication picture of artistic ecological civilization and the harmonious coexistence of man and nature to the public. This is reflected in the tide of The Times of ecological civilization construction. Domestic art museums and artists uphold the humanistic care of traditional Chinese natural ecology, create art works that touch the pulse of the earth and show the healthy ecology, and call for the protection of the natural ecological environment and the construction of a beautiful China from the perspective of art.

In 2024 the exhibition titled “lush mountains and lucid water are invaluable assets--beautiful China, Guangdong ecological civilization art biennale” took place at the Art Museum in the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. This is the very first large-scale art creation and exhibition among interdisciplinary fields combining the environmental protection, art and other departments. The art exhibition showcases China’s achievements in promoting and protecting ecological civilization, by empowering the construction of “the lush and lovely” Guangdong. The “Biennial” brings together the art scroll of harmonious coexistence between man and nature created by front-line artists. Exhibition works use Chinese painting, oil painting, printmaking, watercolor, digital illustration, graphic design, integrated materials, calligraphy, photography and other art forms. The themes involve Lingnan poetic villages with rivers, trendy ecological construction in the Great Bay area, touching stories about earth natural humanities in Southern China, and people’s hope for a better life environment, etc.. All the art items not only stick to the theme of “lush mountains and lucid water are invaluable assets”, but also the pursuit of being novel, unique, and colorful.



Figure 1: Exhibition of Art-crafts involving “lush and lovely Zhaoqing” designed by elementary and middle-school students

Taking provincial exhibitions as the benchmark, the city of Zhaoqing explores local channels for promoting healthy ecological construction. In October of 2024, Zhaoqing Art Museum held an exhibition titled “rural revitalization of the lush and lovely Zhaoqing -- Zhaoqing large art exhibition”. Some example displays can be seen in Figure 1. This exhibition showcased traditional Chinese

paintings, oil paintings, printmaking, watercolor, pottery, and other art categories of works, which show Zhaoqing ecological development, green landscape, as well as rural revitalization of new construction. Many of the works describe Zhaoqing's beauty in "mountains, lakes, city, rivers, forests, springs, and gorges". Pan Shaoping's traditional Chinese painting work "Adding New Green to Bamboo Township" is based on the rural farming scene in Lindong Village, Guangning County, Zhaoqing City during the spring ploughing season. Every March, rape flowers are in full bloom and the terraced fields are green. The villagers cultivate, sow and plant rice seedlings in the fields. The figure of work integrates with nature, presenting a vibrant farming scene. From the perspective of women, the painter truly reflects the real face of rural revitalization, presenting the harmony between people and nature; depicting the beautiful landscape of Zhaoqing. Zhaoqing Xijiang River is not only the harbor of ships, but also the harbor of the Xijiang children. In the evening, resting on the Xijiang River, many cargo ships, close side by side, echo the sparkling river, especially quiet and peaceful. The painter used the impression style to express the overall sense and atmosphere of the Xijiang River and the ships, which prioritized the colors of black and white. The form of woodcut prints presents light and shadow, so that the beauty of Xijiang River has the spirit of light and shadow, which serve as the soul for art of western paintings.

Since its launch, a large number of social groups have visited this exhibition in Zhaoqing Art Museum, cooperating with the provincial Department of universities, the Municipal Bureau of Education and primary and secondary schools to carry out the theme of "Zhaoqing Students enter the Art Museum", which fully expanded the educational function of the exhibition and enhanced the independent consciousness of students to protect the natural environment and protect their environmentally-friendly homes.

Through the exhibitions in Zhaoqing Art Museum, staff try to promote ecological culture in the name of the precious collection, as can be seen in Figure 2. For example, in the 2020 exhibition themed "language of floweres @ spring breeze--Guangdong Art Museum spring-welcoming flowers and trees", the organizers did well in presenting the Guangdong museum collection of flowers and trees works. At the same time, the exhibition introduced to the audience contemporary art, such as sculpture, installation, interactive multimedia, which embodies the different times, different regions of artistic style and aesthetic taste, thus passing on the concept of natural ecological beauty.

From the exhibition planning and works of the museum, we can intuitively feel that Chinese contemporary artists are showing a strong sense of environmental protection and the ecological concept of rebuilding the harmonious relationship between man and nature.



Figure 2: Zhaoqing Art Museum spread aesthetic knowledge about "ecological arts" by organizing art exhibitions

2.2. Constructing the social and public education venue to convey the lush and lovely ecology through the art museum

In the exhibition of the art museums, the audience forms the interactive communication in the

aesthetic process with the exhibition works. As an institution of exhibition and aesthetic education, art museums usually adopt many functional activities to create differentiated aesthetic experience for different audience groups, so that they can freely explore the aesthetic experience and participate in the collective aesthetic education experience. Prioritizing the idea of “enjoyment from education, art among life”, art museums plan activities that can allow visitors to combine their life experience with artistic accomplishment, and absorb them on the basis of personal emotional experience. The audience enters the realm of classroom education of the museum, and realizes the "parallel" communication behavior of the art appreciation of the museum^[3]. Zhaoqing Art Museum constructs a social communication chain through planning relevant activities and collective participation in ecological civilization knowledge dissemination. An example can be seen in Figure 3. The following are a few measures that have been used in Zhaoqing Art Museum.

Firstly, host a series of lectures on “Lush and Lovely Culture” to promote societal core values. The three major themes are as follows:

- (1) The theme of the landscape concept in the traditional Chinese art
- (2) The theme of natural cultural concept in western art
- (3) The theme of ecological civilization, who meets college students’ ideological and political needs

The theme of the lecture revolves around ecological culture, inviting artists or experts and scholars to give speeches. For example, "ecology and home" in 2010 was the theme of the fourth China Beijing international art biennale. Organizers held supporting academic seminars, in which artists, theorists from around the world around had a heated discussion on the topic of “the relationship between art and contemporary ecological environment”. The scholarly conversation went deep to the dimension of art spreading the natural ecology, supporting human survival and how to build correct ecological view. During the "Xue Guoqing Oil Painting Exhibition", Zhaoqing Art Museum invited Author and Teacher Xue Guoqing to talk about the green and beautiful Zhaoqing in his painting creation, and made a short video to spread to college students and the public, conveying the concept of green and beautiful home of art, and expected to help the “the comprehensive rural revitalization project in Guangdong China”, in urban areas and villages in Zhaoqing.



Figure 3: Zhaoqing Art Museum working with local children to host public education activities around “Healthy Ecology in Our Daily Lives”

Secondly, display the green ecological beauty by using handicrafts

- (1) Oil painting, watercolor, and traditional Chinese painting materials
- (2) Use simulation materials to build the lush mountains and lucid water landscape
- (3) To dye nature images with color pigments in fans and cardboard
- (4) Printmaking (with print templates ready), with mastery in printing skills

Manual creation can help to promote the knowledge acquisition on green natural landscape for the participants in the printing process, so as to have an intuitive understanding of the form of landscape changes and the collocation of trees and flowers. At present, the museum is in urgent need of cultivating internal professional librarians, who have strong ability and high quality and can offer public courses to the public and college students, and share art stories and art practices at home and abroad. Through teaching and practical teaching classroom, it promotes the deep integration of natural ecological culture and practical activities, improves public participation and classroom effect, and provides multiple ways for the public to learn ecological protection knowledge in art museums^[4].

Thirdly, it is crucial to carry out public education activities for the public so as to create classrooms

that promote the “lush and lovely” concept.

At present, most offline or cloud classes of art museums contain natural environment appreciation and green ecological culture, as can be seen in Figure 4, besides art appreciation and craft-handmaking. Art museums showcase rich art resources, which is sustainable in carrying out the brand of public education activities, such as “appreciating the green,” “honoring lush mountains,” “scenic landscapes,” culture brands, and universities, museums and environmental protection institutions, strive for a broader cooperation resources, from professional interpretation to knowledge sharing, to the audiences artistic journey, cultural experience, which organically combined art education and ecological civilization. More measures are in line provided by Zhaoqing Art Museum.

Zhaoqing Art Museum plans to organize a group of artists to start with the works of green and beautiful ecology. The museum plans to organize related theme activities, invite the artists to communicate and have an in-depth discussion, guide the students to experience the distinct themes and time ideas of various types of art works. Through the painter’s description of the green ecology and human feelings contained in the art works, audience will get the aesthetic experience and learn something beyond the art. By telling the trajectory of art, audience will understand the connection between contemporary artists creation and the aggregation of natural ideas. Museum visitors and audience will fully understand the concept of harmony between man and nature in Chinese culture; By explaining the art form, painting style and creative techniques of the works, the museum staff members will lead the public to understand how works of art are written about ecological art, So as to deeply experience the story between the artist and the natural ecology.

Zhaoqing Art Museum is to organize the audience team to appreciate and appreciate the theme works on ecological protection and beautiful China construction in the exhibition in batches, and explain the importance of ecological protection and development from the perspective and perspective of the audience. In the activity, the audience is divided into professional and non-professional categories, so that the professional leader non-professional and large audience can lead the small audience, and the audience entering the museum can stop and observe the exhibits from beginning to end, so that the audience can feel the poetic painting of mountains and rivers and the harmony of living environment from the paintings.

In order to attract college students to participate in art museum work, Zhaoqing Art Museum sets up open social practice courses. College students can have opportunities to volunteer and join the art museum. They will receive professional training by the art museums. Student librarians have the opportunity to accept the education in practice, in addition to obtain work experience, further realize self-value, and the development of knowledge system.



Figure 4: University students are visiting and acquiring knowledge during the exhibition on a design project about “Designing your own ecologically friendly home”

2.3. Digital construction gathers the art dissemination of art museums

Since the popularization of Generative AI, human's intelligent era has arrived. The construction of Zhaoqing Art Museum has started becoming more and more intelligent, with the promotion of the "Lush and Lovely Guangdong Construction" included.

2.3.1 Build the online green beauty exhibition mode and expand the intensity of aesthetic education

Zhaoqing Art Museum gradually shifts gear and focuses on the construction of digital platform of the gallery, using digital media to promote the concept of "lush and lovely (green and beautiful) Guangdong". The digital platform can use 3D virtual technology to gradually complete the online visit of the virtual exhibition hall, increase the fictional interaction between the audience and art exhibits, and develop the online exhibition hall, courses and lectures to significantly improve the exhibition experience. In the application of virtual technology in the field of artificial intelligence, interactivity is the main feature of multimedia technology, so introducing virtual technology can enliven the audience activities that are difficult to achieve in daily life. At present, although this technology has not been popularized in China, it can break the traditional design mode and thinking mode, help to change the public's traditional impression of the museums, give full play to people's imagination, appreciation and creativity, and assist the museum to convey information through new interactive forms^[5].

Guangdong Museum of Art has actively introduced the VR exhibition viewing mode, and created the "VR cloud guide" on the PC web version and mobile terminal. A few years ago, the Guangdong Museum of Art suspended on-site tour and offline education activities such as "See exhibitions together" due to some reasons. In order to make up for the regret that audiences were hindered to go to the exhibition hall to see the original art, Guangdong Art Museum introduced VR panoramic video technology, with the help of a 720-degree mobile panoramic video robot, invited the audience to follow the curators and public education librarians into the exhibition hall online to "watch the exhibition in the cloud" together. Different from the general video guide, in the VR guide, users can control their perspective through the mobile phone screen and choose their favorite viewing angle. Wearing VR glasses, you will feel like being on the scene. The Zhaoqing Art Museum can learn some strengths from it.

2.3.2 Innovate the infiltration mode of aesthetic education and enhance the cultural experience

Zhaoqing Art Museum actively expands its service ideas, enriches the ways of art education, and adopts new media live broadcast to carry out natural ecological theme education. Together with the youth League committees of provincial universities, the museum regularly holds art activities with the theme of ecological environment protection for various types of schools, promote the sharing of high-quality educational resources in the name of art, and give full play to the function of art education. The above-mentioned example of Guoqing Xue's works exhibition is a typical example, as can be seen in Figure 5. Staff members working for the art museum will continue to expand "cloud live broadcasting", "cloud guide", "cloud sharing" and "cloud sharing" to expand cultural communication channels, radiate more educators, enhance the appeal and appeal of ecological culture, and deliver green and beautiful voices online. The museum also offers a special event for art and design graduates, through which graduates can collect their own artistic memories, and by expressing green and harmonious art works and design works and derivatives emphasizing ecological concepts, so as to sublimate the ecological emotions of young students. In the main exhibition hall of the museum, a physical exhibition space of "natural ecology, green and beautiful environment" will be built, artistic scenes will be built through sound and photoelectric facilities and art installations, venue service facilities will be improved, and volunteer interpreters will be trained to provide more and better immersive experience for the audience^[5]. Figure 6 presents a scene in which a volunteer is making some explanation on a piece of art-work related to nature & healthy ecology.

Based on the use of natural ecological resources to build a strong cultural and cultural landscape, the museum makes use of outdoor field space as much as possible to explore the possibility of visual art creation in situ. By creating a new pattern of ecological culture and art in rural areas or natural ecological areas, public art can be integrated into the natural ecological environment of the public^[6].



Figure 5: The concept of “lush and lovely ecology” were expressed in an artistic manner during Exhibition of Guoqing Xue’s oil-painting works



Figure 6: Volunteers were explaining about the art-work titled “Green”

3. Conclusion

While China has made world-recognized achievements in ecological progress and green environmental protection, global ecological crises such as environmental alienation, a sharp decline in biodiversity and nuclear pollution remain major issues that need to be solved by the international community. The concept of respect, adaptation and protection of nature, and of green, circular and low-carbon development is the basic concept of the country’s thought on ecological civilization.

The principle for the Zhaoqing Art Museum lies in this key sentence: "The green and beautiful culture embodies the friendly feelings of the Chinese nation toward our Mother Nature, Ecological civilization holds up the dream of China to be strong and beautiful." The mission for Zhaoqing Arts Museum is to serve the general public, to empower colleges and universities, to pass on the fine

traditional Chinese culture and even let it shine, to maintain continuous overall planning, to carry out various forms of art activities with the help of art resources and the rich content of public education, to publicize the theme of "lush and lovely Guangdong" ecological civilization construction, biodiversity protection and ecological resources development and utilization. While serving the university for extracurricular teaching, the Art Museum should give full play to the social service function of the art museum and make the best of the important role of an art base, so as to become an effective ground for the dissemination and education of the country's ecological civilization thought.

As the social civilization moves forward, and the nation pays more attention to the ecological environment, the museum exhibitions place more and more emphasis on the theme of "ecological civilization". With the assistance of the digital media, art museums can take advantage of exhibitions to enhance the dissemination of ecological culture to the public, and take the responsibility of the national aesthetic education especially the part of improving the functions of the rural aesthetic education system^[7]. At present, the cooperation mechanism among art museums and social organizations and schools still needs to be continuously supported and improved. At the present stage, the cooperation experience is not rich enough, and a healthy cooperation system has not yet been formed. Therefore, art museums' practitioners should draw lessons from their peers, absorb the mature and excellent experience of peers in running art museums, optimize the public functions, and enhance the innovation ability of "aesthetic education and culture".

Acknowledgement

Dissertation Fund: 2024 research project of Zhaoqing University: "LI XIONG CAI Art Museum empowering Zhaoqing cultural tourism" (FW202407)

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