

# Analysis of the Line Expression in Chinese Ceramic Sculpture

Songjie Hu\*

Jingdezhen Ceramic University, Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, 333000, China

\*Corresponding author

**Abstract:** *The research on line expression in Chinese ceramic sculpture art has a rich form of expression since ancient times. With the progress of The Times and the development of industry, the use of line in ceramic sculpture has added new form and significance. Ceramic sculpture art as a kind of art form of sculpture art, its expression form, the expression of line is also an important part. This paper will be based on the sequence of time development and the performance of lines in ceramic sculpture.*

**Keywords:** *Ceramic sculpture, Line, Artistic expression*

## 1. Introduction

As a great country of ceramics, China has a continuous succession of ceramic sculptures from ancient times to the present. Until influenced by the trend of western contemporary art, China's ceramic sculptures have made great progress and innovation on the basis of inheriting the tradition. The highly expressive line elements also bring unique charm to ceramic sculpture [1].

## 2. An Overview of Lines

In geometry, line refers to the point which has no change in position, size, length and width by moving and extending in a direction. Lines have only length without width or thickness, and are divided into straight lines and curves. In Chinese traditional culture in the given line is endless imagination, is different from the west, Chinese prefer to traditional two-dimensional observation and the expression of image, this makes the lines of the sculpture ontology language, in China's traditional culture carries more spiritual connotation [2], sometimes often accomplished through the performance of a line is concise "intended to pen" first.

## 3. The Relationship Between Ceramic Sculpture and Line

Ceramic sculpture, as a category of sculpture with special materials, has no great difference in the relationship with line, the ontological language, although the materials are different.

### 3.1. The Concept of Contour Line

The contour line is generally used to describe the line that constitutes and defines the edge of a graph or object. In sculpture, the contour line in three-dimensional space can show the structure of the work and limit the contour. Through the distortion and rotation in different directions, the contour line will also show different radians, directions and shapes.

### 3.2. The Concept of Clothing Line

In ceramic sculpture, clothing line is also a very important kind of line. First of all, clothing lines in sculpture creation, for the performance of the characteristics of objective things, temperament, imply the body, dynamic and other aspects of the object has a strong expression. In traditional Chinese sculpture, great importance is attached to the expression of dress lines. Whether it is the grand and magnificent dress lines of the giant Buddha in the Yungang Grottoes or the flexible and elegant dress lines of fairies in the Dunhuang grottoes, the expression and appeal are enhanced through the treatment of dress lines [3].

### 3.3. *The Concept of Motion Line*

In the traditional sculpture of the West, the motion line generally refers to the line formed from the human spine as the starting point, extending downward to the sole of the foot. Compared with western sculpture, Chinese sculpture performance pays more attention to the expression of imagery, so there is not much emphasis on the movement line in sculpture, but it is also reflected in some ceramic sculptures in China. Especially after China introduced the western sculpture teaching system from the last century, some figurative ceramic sculptures created by academic artists have also been unconsciously affected, and the lines of movement have been applied to their own ceramic sculptures.

## 4. The Expression of Lines in Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture

China's ceramic sculpture has a long history. The ceramic sculpture works of each dynasty have their own uniqueness, and the forms of their lines are different. It is precisely because of the uniqueness of these ceramic sculptures that they constitute the unique overall appearance of Chinese ceramic sculpture.

Primitive society period, pottery is still in the initial stage, for the use of lines on the sculpture is not clear manifestations, this period to Majiayao, for example, the use of lines are mostly in some vessels on the performance, and the lines of this period did not change too much to decorative or documentary-based. In the Shang Dynasty, with the improvement of social productivity, the performance of the lines on the pottery also changed significantly. During this period, the decorative lines increased and became more complicated and abstract. A large number of clouds and thunder patterns, Taotie patterns and other patterns appeared on the pottery. In some pottery merchant figurines, there were patterns carved with lines. Although the use of lines was more decorative, there was no more connection with the pottery body.

The development of ceramic sculpture in the Warring States period has been relatively mature, and the performance of the lines has also shown vivid and euphemistic characteristics. It can be seen on some eaves tiles or antipodal remnant bricks that the lines in ceramic sculpture in this period are no longer just decorative. The nature of the appearance began to be related to the ceramic sculpture body. Through the reciprocating, smooth and vivid performance of the lines, the ceramic sculpture in this period reflected the typical oriental aesthetic characteristics and artistic characteristics.

The development of ceramic sculpture in the Qin Dynasty reached its peak, and the most amazing statues in this period are the Terracotta Warriors and horses of Qin Shihuang. Not only the history of ceramic sculpture, but also the Terracotta warriors and horses of Qin Shihuang occupy a pivotal position in the whole history of Chinese sculpture. Clay has very realistic modelling characteristic, the line has a very precise contour line, clothing line, motion line, its expression way of line in today to see closer to western sculpture modelling characteristics, so that some people guess at that time there may be a large number of western sculpture craftsmen participated in the army. Taking the Kneeling Terracotta Warriors as an example (Fig.1), the entire outline of the sculpture is accurate and rigorous, without a trace of inconformity with the form. In the shaping of clothing, the shape is implied by the density and pattern of clothing lines to show the dynamic. The dynamic from top to bottom can also be linked through a movement line. Thus, it can be seen that the line expression of the ceramic sculptures in the Qin Dynasty has the characteristics of implying the body and helping the shape, which is unprecedented in the traditional Chinese ceramic sculptures.



Figure 1: "Kneeling warrior figurines", Qin Dynasty

The Han Dynasty ceramic sculpture began to tend to reflect the social reality, performance and social life. This period of ceramic sculpture is no longer a special emphasis on realism, and then began to summarize, freehand, which also affected the later creation of ceramic sculpture. Taking the drum-beating rap figurines of the pottery figurines in the Han Dynasty as an example, the whole pottery figurines are solid and integral. Although the character performance is not in accordance with the strict character ratio standard, the expression is simple and honest, and the smile is grinning. The lines in the sculpture are implicit, general and freehand, reflecting the social life scene at that time.

The online performance of ceramic sculpture in the Northern Dynasties shows the simplicity and refinement of the beauty of Oriental philosophy. The terracotta figurines are typical representatives of ceramic sculptures in this period. The lines of the terracotta figurines are extremely general, omitting complex clothing lines, and only using straight lines or curves to prompt, so that the entire terracotta figurines appear as a whole, concise and non-dragging.

The Tang Dynasty is a peak period of development of Chinese ceramic sculpture. The "Three-color" art of this period is a typical representative. As another representative of the linear combination, the lines of this period show the characteristics of enthusiasm and tension. The flying dance of the lines not only shows the prosperous national strength of the Tang Dynasty, but also injects infinite vitality and vitality into the ceramic sculpture art. Such as Tang riding camel dance tri-color figurines, pottery overall lines unrestrained, full of tension, the characters show rich flavor of life, at the same time, the use of decorative lines, making pottery distinct levels, showing a rich atmosphere.

With the development of ceramic sculpture in the Song Dynasty, the expression of lines had a mature linear beauty. In this period, lines such as the facial features of the figures and the depth of the clothing lines of the ceramic sculptures used the technique of line carving to enhance the performance, reflecting the decorative and national characteristics. For example, the Qing white glaze reverse-porcelain Guanyin Bodhisattva statue in the Song Dynasty has exquisite overall lines and clever expression portrayal, especially the line portrayal at the neck, which does not steal the whole and appears implicit and euphemistic. At the same time, the portrayal of the whole sculpture dress lines is smooth, vivid and full of rhythm. The linear beauty of ceramic sculpture in Song Dynasty had a profound influence on later generations.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties in Jingdezhen porcelain ceramic sculpture model the most representative product, Jingdezhen ceramic sculptures statement overseas during this period, on its modelling concise, of primitive simplicity, clothing lines appear neat and straight, but this part of the ceramic sculpture because of excessively depends on the color image to show the sculpture, so sculpture lines performance is relatively single, not before the elegant feeling.

## **5. The Expression of Line in Modern Chinese Ceramic Sculpture**

In China, the concept of modern ceramic sculpture is accompanied by the transformation of traditional ceramic art to modern ceramic art. Different from the traditional ceramic sculpture, the line is attached to the shape itself to express; In modern ceramic sculpture, through the continuous expansion of modern ceramic sculpture creators, lines are not only as "adherents" in sculpture modeling, but have unique aesthetic value and rich connotation. At the same time, due to the development of industry and the progress of science and technology, modern ceramic sculpture presents a unique linear aesthetic in its process of craft, modeling and firing.

In terms of modeling, modern ceramists will also create art by the way of "Clay strip rolling". Although they do not emphasize the imitation of modeling objects, they make their works more unique through the unique modeling characteristics of mud slats. Taking Professor Zhou Guozhen's "Old Sheep" as an example (Fig.2), through the expression technique of "Clay strip rolling", the mud strips are bonded to each other to form unique lines and textures, which strengthen the basic features of the work. The lines are smooth and integrated.



Figure 2: The work "Old Sheep" created by Zhou Guozhen

Modern ceramic sculpture in the use of lines, also has the role of decorative works. Artists mostly take ceramic sculpture as the main body and make the presentation of sculpture works more interesting and flexible through the superposition of various line elements. At the same time, the addition of line elements to ceramic sculpture is not the charm of a single line, but the combination relationship generated by the continuous arrangement and combination of lines to show the decoration of lines.

The linear aesthetic of modern ceramic sculpture in China also presents unique image expression. Some artists will show their individual image realm through the expression of lines, which increases the uniqueness and irreparability of artists. Straight lines are generally orderly and can give people a sense of separation and order. Curve has the randomness and irregularity, give a person free and easy, open aesthetic feeling. Huang Sheng, professor of Jingdezhen Ceramic University, has introduced calligraphy thread into his works through his constant pursuit of Chinese freehand brushwork. In the work "The Great River Goes East", the artist's use of lines to express the image is the best performance (Fig.3). The lines are powerful and extended, and the influence of calligraphy can be felt. The overall expression is free and simple, and we can see that it contains the expression of melody, which expands the depth and breadth of the creation of sculpture and pottery.



Figure 3: The work "The Great River Goes East" created by Huang Sheng

The biggest difference between ceramic sculpture and other material sculpture is that it needs to be fired and molded, and some natural firing texture will appear in the process of firing. With the development of industry, the firing technology of modern ceramic sculpture has been greatly improved. Various firing methods make the natural texture of modern ceramic sculpture more charming. In the process of firing, fire and mud become the protagonists, which are separated from human will. After the baptism of fire, the works will leave traces such as fire marks and cracks. The traces left by these firings are often considered as inferior products in traditional aesthetic cognition. However, for modern ceramic artists, on the premise of paying attention to the expression of the ontology language of ceramic sculpture, these traces of fire are endowed with perceptual aesthetic characteristics such as warmth and hardness.

## 6. Conclusions

China as a ceramic power historically for inheritance of ceramic sculpture is a close, until it is affected by the western contemporary art trend, makes China's ceramic sculpture on the base of the traditions and

had great progress and innovation, and the extremely rich expressive line element is brought ceramic sculpture unique charm. Through the sorting of line expression in ceramic sculpture of various times, it can be found that its significance in creation is not only the influence on the shape itself, but also has a powerful role in expressing emotions and expressing the creator's personality. Therefore, through the study of line expression in ceramic sculpture, we can feel the charm of ceramic sculpture in a more comprehensive and open way.

### References

- [1] Lan Wu. *On the Value of Line in Modern Ceramic Sculpture* [D]. Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, 2011.
- [2] Chunsheng Cao, Chen Sun, Hongxia Zhang. *Linear Beauty of Traditional Chinese ceramic Sculpture* [J]. *China Ceramics Industry*, 2008(02): 32-35.
- [3] Deli Lian. *A Brief analysis of the line Beauty of Traditional Chinese Ceramic Sculpture* [J]. *Art Science and Technology*, 2013, 26(01): 69.