# Value Co-creation—The Intervention and Symbiosis of "Art" in Rural Construction

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Abstract: In recent years, the research of art in rural construction has continuously expanded, and specific practices have gradually emerged in rural China. Art, which is diversified, helps to trace and manifest rural aesthetics. The participation of social entities in art rural construction practices also contributes a key force to rural revitalization. The intervention of art in rural construction can promote the reconstruction of rural cultural scenes, cultural spaces, and high-quality development of rural areas. In the context of the intervention of art in rural construction as the background, this paper clarifies the internal relationship, development process, and academic progress between art intervention and rural revitalization, and clarifies the "theoretical and practical" value of art in rural construction. On this basis, this paper clarifies the diversified paths of art intervention in rural construction, in order to achieve practical intervention and symbiosis of art in rural construction, and then provide theoretical and practical reference for future Chinese art intervention in rural areas.

Keywords: Art, Intervention, Symbiosis, Rural Construction, Art in Rural Construction

#### 1. Introduction

"Art intervention", also known as "art intervention in society", is a form of avant-garde art expression that began after the 1950s, and the essence of "intervention" is to integrate artistic creation in daily life practice. Combining avant-garde art theory, art, as a medium for people to understand the world and culture, must be related to reality, while society is the reflection of reality. Only in this way, art should break away from the boundary of "abstraction and independence" and approach society and the masses, relying on artistic forms to participate in social transformation, and exerting its main force in transforming society. [1] In his book Art and Intervention, Professor Arnold Belint of Long Island University made it clear that art intervention in society is an important research topic. In retrospect of the social practice guided by the above academic direction, the social spaces that artistic practice can explore have diverse characteristics, such as urban, rural, and community spaces. With the maturity of early art intervention experience in urban society, art intervention in rural society has gradually become the mainstream of current social research.

The "Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022)" specifies that rural construction should implement "excellent ideological concepts, humanistic spirit, and moral standards, and creatively transform and develop based on protection and inheritance in accordance with the requirements of the times." Under the guidance of the rural revitalization strategy, governments, social organizations, and other organizations should pay attention to optimizing the construction of rural culture and ideological system in the process of participating in rural revitalization. They should collaborate with social artists, university scholars, and other organizations to form rural revitalization support entities, optimize and reshape the rural cultural environment through multiple methods, and form a continuous intervention force for "art in rural construction" [2].

The inherent purpose of "art in rural construction" can be understood as the extraction and reproduction of the inherent artistic value of rural "agriculture" and "locality", and the interpretation of the potential social spirit and artistic material contained in rural areas through higher-level cultural forms and artistic expressions. [3] In layman's terms, it is to re-examine rural culture through artistic media, and explore and reconstruct the inherent artistic and cultural values of nature, humanities, geography, and other aspects of the countryside. Based on the understanding of this paper, the essence of "art in rural construction" is the "new cultural revolution" of rural cultural construction in the new

social context, realizing the rebirth of traditional rural culture in the modern social context through the social intervention ability of art, and assisting in the comprehensive revitalization of rural culture and economy. <sup>[4]</sup> Guided by this research approach, this paper explores the evolution of art intervention in rural development, the endogeneity of rural art, and the involvement and symbiosis from an artistic perspective.

#### 2. The Intervention of Art in Rural Construction and the Evolution of Integrated Development

#### 2.1. In Retrospect of the Practice of Art in Rural Construction

The earliest involvement of art in rural practice in China was the "Rural Plan" activity carried out by more than 20 artists in August 1992. The core of this activity is a comprehensive art activity plan, which was launched through painting and photography in Lyliang, Shanxi along the Yellow River. Artists express their escape from the spirit of materialism in the 1990s through works with great ideals and personal styles. This activity also became the starting point for the intervention of art in rural areas. After obtaining certain social responses, similar activities and plans gradually split into different parts of society, ultimately forming many creative rural art practices.

As artists further innovate the expression methods of rural architecture on the basis of previous rural art forms, the trend of packaging rural environment and culture in the subsequent art community has been driven. Until the 21st century, art intervened and flourished in rural development. In 2001, the student organization of Tainan University conducted an unintentional investigation into the "Creative Learning and Maintenance Plan", which triggered environmental renovation activities in the surveyed village of Tugou Village, Taiwan. And the student team and village leaders reached a consensus to collaborate to create the "Tugou Village Cultural Creation Association" and deeply explore the water buffalo and ox cart culture in the "Tugou Spirit" of Tugou Village. During this period, the "Settlement Park" optimization construction project, the construction of Tugou Village Art Museum, and the Tugou Village Cultural School project were achieved, continuously amplifying their spiritual and cultural connotations and values, and the "Last Buffalo" art product was designed to arouse the villagers' spiritual identification with Tugou Village life. In the subsequent "Rural Plan" and "Green Mountain Township Construction", this will push the art township construction activities to a climax of development.

#### 2.2. The Academic Progress of Art in Rural Construction

With the help of long-term academic research, art in rural construction has gradually moved closer to academic fields such as sociology, political science, anthropology, etc. The original intention of art in rural construction was only for artists and architects and other groups to engage in an art "battle" alone, mostly based on practical experience accumulation and case study perspectives. [5] With the extension and promotion of academic research, art in rural construction has made breakthroughs in both practical and academic fields. However, due to the institutional limitations of the real social environment and the obstacles of truly integrating art into rural construction, rural construction artists began to exert their efforts laterally, leading a group of diverse scholars interested in art in rural construction, such as anthropology, sociology, history, etc., to conduct observational theoretical research on art in rural construction activities from their respective research fields, which is different from traditional practical experience. [6] In 2016, the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of Peking University held an academic conference on "Rural Construction and Its Artistic Practice" in 2016, including more than 20 experts and scholars in history, society, architecture, art and other fields such as Qu Yan, Wang Changbai, Liang Qindong. They carried out discussions around five topics, namely, ""What can artists do for rural construction, rural social change, and the dilemma of art in rural construction, Chinese social form, rural change and possibility in China". In August of the same year, the Chinese Academy of Arts carried out the "Academic Conference on Art Intervention in Society: Beautiful Rural Construction", and compiled the "Art Intervention in Beautiful Rural Construction: A Dialogue between Anthropologists and Artists" to expand the scope of future academic research on art in rural construction.

In recent years, with the attention paid to art in rural construction in the academic field and the impact of rural revitalization strategies, the academic research direction of art rural construction has also undergone a transformation. The participants in art in rural construction, with artists such as Qu Yan as the core, will focus on "emphasizing the cultural and civilized value of art in rural construction",

hoping to restore and shape rural social order and beliefs through art. In the new context of social development, experts and scholars in fields such as anthropology, sociology, and history have also joined the research team of art in rural construction, extending the single cultural benefits of traditional art rural construction to economic and social benefits. <sup>[7]</sup> For instance, scholar Jiang Ling focuses on "local creation" and conducts research on the industrial benefits of art intervention in society. Shang Chaoyu, a scholar, emphasized that on the basis of the demands of rural subjects, we should combine the existing art and cultural resource management to create a conventional model with high value differentiation. The research on art in rural construction has gradually shifted from traditional case studies such as the "Village Plan" and the "Green Mountain Plan" to local studies, and wide-ranging research topics such as "subject cooperation and community construction" in art rural construction have gradually been generated.

#### 3. The Internal Main Body Power and Endogeneity of Art in Rural Construction

## 3.1. Villagers in the Construction of Art Villages Have Natural Endogenous Power

Driven by the exploration and transformation of "wide-ranging" art in rural construction, the art in rural construction that breaks away from "case practice" will shift its development focus towards the endogenous driving force of the countryside itself, which can provide assistance to art in rural construction. In addition to the driving force and assistance of artists in art in rural construction, rural residents themselves also possess the endogenous driving force of art, and are indispensable endogenous subjects in art in rural construction. Therefore, villagers have played a natural role in promoting art in rural construction. In recent years, with the development of rural revitalization strategy, the social status of farmers has been continuously strengthened. The "Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan (2018-2022)" clearly proposes to ensure the main position of farmers in development and surround the endogenous forces of villagers to assist in rural revitalization construction. Since then, rural development policies such as the Regulations of the CPC on Rural Work, the Law of the China on the Promotion of Rural Revitalization, and the Five Year Action Plan for Improving the Environmental Remediation of Rural Human Settlements (2021-2025) have included the main development status of farmers in the policy items. In the practice of art in rural construction, villagers have also transformed from early bystanders to participants and promoters, and in the subsequent long-term artistic intervention, they are constantly stimulated with "artistic consciousness". [8] Nowadays, art is no longer a static and spiritual product for farmers, but a cultural resource management that plays its unique artistic value in the village. Driven by the development of contemporary art, the endogenous force of art in rural construction is the practical logic of achieving rural governance through cultural goals from the bottom up, centered on rural society. For example, Gejia Village in Ninghai, Zhejiang Province, in 2019, led by the government of Ninghai County, carried out the activity of "artists staying in the village" to stimulate the endogenous power of villagers' art. Many villagers actively request artistic renovation of their own courtyards, using readily available natural materials such as bamboo, stone, and straw, combined with green plant landscapes such as onions, garlic, and vegetables to create original ecological courtyard spaces. At present, a total of 24 shared art spaces have been built, including "Light of Gejia, and the Entertainment Park", 23 art exhibition areas such as "Women's Art Academy and Xianrong Art Museum", and 26 characteristic art homestays. After the involvement of art in Gejia Village, its artistic and cultural endogeneity was continuously explored, and the villagers' "artistic consciousness" was stimulated, driving the development of village industries towards homestays, cultural and creative activities, tourism, and characteristic agricultural products. This enabled the art rural construction to not only play an artistic and cultural nurturing role, but also stimulate a dividend effect. [9] From this, it can be seen that the continuous deepening of art in rural construction has continuously stimulated the main role of villagers, and the demand for and attention to art in rural construction have also been constantly amplified, stimulating villagers' interest in participating in diverse art. In the process of building confidence in art and culture, empathy has emerged with the organizers of art in rural construction, stimulating the endogenous motivation of villagers to participate in art in rural construction. Therefore, without the endogenous motivation of the villagers, art in rural construction cannot fundamentally achieve success.

# 3.2. Further Cultivate Endogenous Motivation for Art Education in Rural Areas

The intervention of art in rural areas should revolve around "human construction", with the focus on the spiritual and value construction of art towards people. In the "Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan

(2018-2022)", it is pointed out that it is necessary to drive the integration and development of urban and rural culture, enrich rural cultural products and services, and activate rural culture to provide spiritual nutrition for farmers. The direction of the relevant requirements indicates that on the basis of stimulating the endogenous power of rural areas, external forces should also participate in the catalytic process. [10] In retrospect of the rural cultural construction over the past century, Y. C. James Yen, Liang Shuming, Tao Xingzhi, Huang Yanpei and other scholars have all striven to promote rural construction. So far, deepening the endogenous awareness of villagers' art in rural construction and combining it with diverse forms of education has been an important path to promote rural construction. The participation of villagers in cultural learning often involves local and popular demands, and the cultural characteristics exhibited by villagers of different age groups also vary. For young villagers, they hope to improve the cultivation of "specialized institutions, multiple resources, and market entities" to meet their development needs. For middle-aged and elderly villagers, they are more eager to participate in artistic and cultural activities. Children and young villagers yearn for artistic enlightenment such as children's art education. Therefore, in the process of stimulating the endogenous power of villagers in the construction of art townships, external forces need to combine their own demands, with the joint efforts of the government, public welfare, universities, enterprises, etc., to continuously output diverse art education resources to the village, so that villagers can have more opportunities to access diverse art forms.

#### 4. The Intervention and Symbiosis of "Art" in Rural Construction

In combination with the current characteristics of wide area art township construction and the trend of integration and assistance of forces inside and outside the village, art intervention in rural construction should make full use of cultural resource management at villages, cultivate the rural art market, and highlight the economic value of art township construction while realizing art assistance under the direction of the rural revitalization strategy. [11]

# 4.1. Involve Public Art in Rural Construction to Realize the Development of "Art Festival + Tourism"

The "Opinions on Promoting the Empowerment of Cultural Industries in Rural Revitalization" mentioned that it is necessary to promote the integrated development of cultural industries and rural tourism, promote the integration of rural consumption and tourism consumption, and cultivate new models of cultural tourism industry in rural areas. Therefore, in the process of carrying out art in rural construction, it is necessary to highlight the role of industry assistance in the process of art intervention, and the development potential of art festivals is enormous, with conditions for external and internal forces to participate in art in rural construction. [12] The art festival focuses on rural resources, and by combining activities such as land art, art forum, and rural art exhibition, it will involve public art in original cultural resource management in rural areas, drive the featured and artistic development of village homestay, catering, products, tourism and other industries, realize the cultivation of art ideas, drive the development of village economy and industry, and form a multi subject participation mode (as shown in Figure 1).

In this regard, we can learn from the "Land Art Festival" held by the wife of Yue Houhou in Xinke County, Japan, which is regarded as a "model" of art driving rural development, and also a typical case of art festival promoting rural revitalization and development. Since 2000, the "Land Art Festival" activity has attracted the participation of global artists. It has developed into an activity with a perfect art development and operation system based on the diversified development model of "public art, art space, exhibition and discussion, volunteer service, tourism industry". The economic benefits generated not only balance the cost of the activity, but also bring considerable economic income to the local countryside. In 2022, a total of 263 groups of artists from 38 countries and regions and their wives from Vietnam participated in the Land Art Festival. According to the data of the Japanese Economic Research Institute, the revenue from the sale of tickets and surrounding commodities of Land Art Festival accounted for 80% of the operating costs. In the more than 20 years since the Land Art Festival was launched, it has revitalized the development of Seto Islands with art, making it from an abandoned island to a world art shrine. Such activities have also been carried out in China. Southeast Guizhou has carried out public art activities with the theme of "The Book of the Earth, More Than Blue", which is known as the "Rongjiang Model" of art empowering villages in the industry.

However, in China, art is involved in the development of rural construction. "Characteristic towns,

characteristic villages, and art villages" are the mainstream of the development of rural art festivals. The form of coordinated development among multiple organizations such as "government, public welfare, volunteers, artists, and enterprises" is often adopted. For example, Wuzhen Theatre Festival has developed into an art activity with certain influence in China and even in the world. It has created consumer application products and scenes with novel experience and a sense of science and technology around drama, tourism, research and other diverse contents, attracting many opera lovers and tourists at home and abroad.



Figure 1: The diversified participation model of art in rural construction

# 4.2. Intervention of Art and Cultural Resources in Rural Construction to Achieve Creative Development of Rural Construction

If art has the characteristics of stage, concentration, and short-term, then the intervention of art and cultural products mainly focused on cultural and creative activities and handicrafts is more universal, durable, and applicable for ordinary rural areas. It is also an important way for art to intervene in rural development from the perspective of broad art in rural construction. [13] Cultural and creative design revolves around handicrafts and agricultural products, and is based on the perspective of artistic rural construction. Its content design should highlight unity, not only covering visual and systematic planning, but also extracting the cultural connotations of the countryside. It can involve systems such as creative packaging, cultural connotations, cultural brands, channel resources, and modern marketing, and design products from being shallow to being deep in terms of visual, content, industry, etc., to achieve two-way appreciation of cultural and economic value of village products driven by art. Zhang Lei's cultural practice in Qingshan Village, where he holds multiple identities such as "artist, expert, entrepreneur, and new villager", has been driven by the local government. With a combination of market perspective and artistic thinking, a multi perspective and multi-dimensional artistic application scene of traditional materials and modern craftsmanship has been established in the local area. Its products and services cover home furnishings, display windows, store design, art installations, etc. Through the combination of modern artistic creativity and traditional handicrafts, Qingshan Village has formed a unique cultural and creative industry, and driven the local economic development and improvement.

#### 4.3. Involve Digital Art in Rural Construction and the Development of "Art + Digital Media"

## 4.3.1. "Digital Art + Cultural Communication" Mechanism

In the digital age, the flourishing of communication media provides ideas for external forces to stimulate rural endogenous forces. The participants or organizations of art township construction can take advantage of digital media to strengthen the artistic ties and educational ties with villagers, integrate the artistic education demands of villagers of different ages, design and record art education courses by categories, carry out standardized and large-scale education and research under the leadership of the organization, guide villagers to awaken artistic ideas, and stimulate rural endogenous forces through the dissemination of digital art culture. [14]

In addition to the development of digital art education, we can combine digital technology to spread the design ideas of rural areas' original resources. Most rural areas have the advantage of intangible cultural heritage resources, and mountains, water, humanities, houses, fields, etc. can all become media for artistic intervention. On the premise of maintaining sustainable development of culture and environment, combine digital art and cultural communication, integrate, design and re-export rural art resources, and drive the development of rural art through communication. A series of videos such as "Li Ziqi", "A Feng Chases the Sea", and "Hua Nong Brothers" are all based on rural culture to integrate and disseminate content. Art in rural construction can use this idea to turn art scenes into daily life, awakening the outside world's longing for the countryside. The essence of its development is to stimulate the endogenous power of rural art, amplify the value of rural art and culture, and enhance the confidence of villagers in art and culture.

#### 4.3.2. "Digital Art + Creative Product" Mechanism

The traditional marketing and development model of rural products no longer has market advantages, as shown in Figure 2. In the trend of online economic development, rural art that integrates digital technology needs to develop towards brands, culture, and creative products. The development mechanism of "digital art + creative products" can focus on artistic illustration, animation, virtual reality and other carriers, integrate rural art and digital art resources, and superimpose multiple elements of culture, art, creativity and design, so as to enhance the artistic value, cultural value and brand value of products. [15]

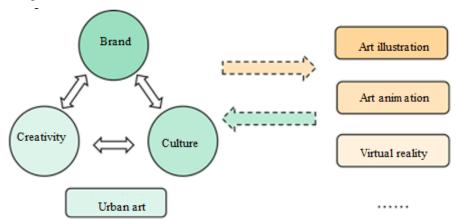


Figure 2: "Digital art + creative products" symbiotic development

Introducing digital technology into rural product design, using products as a static and concrete expression carrier for art, and constructing rural art products or industries with rural regional characteristics and customs and cultural customs, is of great significance for art in rural construction. For example, the digital art town "Gankeng Hakka Town" in Shenzhen has developed multiple digital IP images around Hakka people, such as "Little Cool Hat". Its art derivatives involve rural areas, anime, films, etc. The town not only achieved the goal of art intervention and economic development, but also was selected as a "national-level cultural and tourism characteristic town".

#### 4.3.3. "Digital Art + Cultural Tourism Integration" Mechanism

The rapid development of social economy not only enriches material life, but also accelerates the pace and pressure of life. The fast-paced life in cities makes more people yearn for rural areas, and also provides new development opportunities for the involvement of art in rural construction.

The key to "digital art + cultural tourism" integration is to integrate the value of production subjects, channel subjects, terminal subjects, consumer subjects and derivative subjects with the help of digital art, as shown in Figure 3, transform rural cultural resource management into audio images, comprehensively display the regional style and cultural and artistic characteristics of the countryside, highlight the artistic beauty and charm of the countryside, and then attract foreign tourists, providing continuous impetus for rural art intervention. For example, "Boao Town" takes "Ao" as the element of art, and carries out design around history and humanity. The town combines the art resources related to "Ao" to create the IP image, and extends its artistic and cultural creation of stories, movies, products, etc., bringing foreign tourists into the art scene, combining audio-visual experience of local cultural characteristics, deepening tourists' cultural impression and improving their cultural experience.

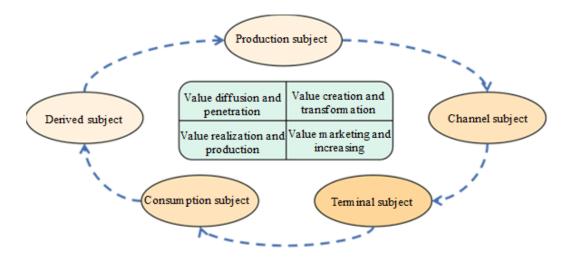


Figure 3: Composition system of "digital art + cultural tourism integration"

The art in rural construction in China has distinct characteristics of the people, endogeneity, tradition, and artistry, and is a community of traditional society and modern art. Driven by rural revitalization, art in rural construction has been given the task of cultural revitalization. The premise of its implementation must be rooted in the cultural fertile soil left by the countryside, preserving the social structure of the countryside and integrating modern art and economic development characteristics. [16] In the process of artistic intervention in rural construction, on the one hand, it is necessary to closely control the regional culture and elements of life in rural areas to meet the needs of villagers for a better life; On the other hand, we should explore the unique cultural forms and heritage of rural areas, mobilize the vitality of historical, cultural and artistic activities, and eliminate the nostalgia and folk memories that strongly harm villagers through specific artistic forms and cultural content. [17] In this way, intervening in rural construction through art will have a two-way rationality of continuing the spiritual context of rural folk customs, enhancing their cultural confidence and artistic cultivation.

#### 5. Conclusion

On the basis of integrating diverse experiences and ideas, China's art township construction should continue to explore construction paths suitable for China's development characteristics, focusing on the strategic requirements of rural revitalization. While highlighting the artistic characteristics, it is also necessary to balance the benefits of economic and cultural revitalization. In the process of construction, a self-reflection loop should be formed to explore potential problems in art rural construction and explore solutions based on practical directions. Art in rural construction will play a leading role in cultural assistance in the future trend of rural revitalization and development. Therefore, on the basis of the existing forms of art intervention in rural construction, it is necessary to continue to spread diverse construction ideas such as artistic environment design, cultural and creative art design, and landscape art design, in order to highlight the characteristics of Chinese art rural construction. At the same time, art in rural construction should also focus on building brand culture. While improving the rural art and cultural environment, it should also continue to deepen the cultivation of residents' artistic ideas and cultural emotions, develop art rural construction into a long-term closed-loop promotion project, and promote art rural construction to help promote rural cultural revitalization.

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