

# Reorganization and Expression of Dunhuang Elements from the Perspective of Modern Aesthetics

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**Abstract:** *Dunhuang art is a treasure of Chinese culture and an important treasure in the history of Chinese art. Due to the rich content and strong artistry of Dunhuang art, it attracts a large number of domestic and foreign tourists every year. The themes, painting forms and colored sculptures of Dunhuang art have always been the objects that art creators vie to copy. Dunhuang cultural elements are diverse and are a collection of the creative achievements of Chinese painters of the past dynasties, and have extremely high artistic value. This article aims to explore the reorganization and expression of Dunhuang elements in offline art creation from the perspective of modern aesthetics through the analysis and research of Dunhuang art and Dunhuang elements, to provide some references for the mutual integration of Dunhuang traditional elements and modern paintings.*

**Keywords:** *modern aesthetic perspective; Dunhuang elements; reorganization; expression*

## 1. Introduction

Most of the design elements in Dunhuang murals are derived from Chinese religious art, so there are some differences with ordinary murals. The Dunhuang murals are rich in content and grand in scale. The construction period has gone through ten dynasties, spanning nearly a thousand years, and the content is also diverse in style, which fully reflects the cultural aesthetic changes of each dynasty. There are all kinds of painting creations, such as exotic mural paintings, Buddha paintings, traditional paintings of the Han people, and paintings of Flying Heaven, which are rare treasures in Chinese culture. Dunhuang murals have extremely high aesthetic and artistic value and are a valuable heritage of Chinese culture. The analysis and reorganization of Dunhuang artistic elements is an important means to promote these murals and is of great significance to modern art creation.

## 2. The significance of studying the reorganization and expression of Dunhuang elements

As an important work of art in the development of Chinese history, the Dunhuang murals record the trajectory of the changes of the China's era and the development of society. They are not only famous works in the field of art, but also like an annals of history in the field of history. With the development of the times, people walk into modern society and conduct research on the reorganization and expression of Dunhuang art from the perspective of modern aesthetics, which is of great significance to the promotion of traditional culture and the innovation of modern culture.

The aesthetic expression of Dunhuang frescos is enduring and is worthy of referring and studying in contemporary art creation. Although there are many elements in a whole Dunhuang mural, the mural can cleverly integrate various elements such as Buddha statues and Flying Heaven, achieving multiple combinations and expanding the sense of space of the picture through the perfect combination of characters and scenes; in terms of expressing multiple elements, the creator attaches great importance to character's expression. The detailed description of character's look and action can fully show the character's identity and status, and also the character can be intuitively expressed by some dance moves or pilgrimage movements which are static and dynamic, virtual and real. In addition, some exaggerated and deformed unique modeling and creative collocation of patterns in the Dunhuang murals, on the basis of the integration of elements, can enhance the characteristics of the modeling and highlight the internal and external features of the character. And they are the specimens of artistic creation from the perspective of modern aesthetics. The study of reorganization and expression of Dunhuang elements from the perspective of modern aesthetics is not only to provide materials and references for modern art creation, but also to inherit the excellent traditional Chinese art and culture.

### **3. Analysis of the Basic Elements of Dunhuang Murals**

#### ***3.1 Flying Heaven***

The most famous element in the Dunhuang murals is the elements of Flying Heaven. The characters are mainly in flying shapes. Such actions give people a feeling of elegance, and they also make people have an infinite longing for the sky and the future. Art originates from life, and the flying modeling is mainly derived from the dance culture in real ancient social life. Through the depiction of women dancers' facial expressions and movements, the Dunhuang murals show the scene and atmosphere of the characters' existence, and vividly reflect the joy of folk life at that time. For example, in the mural of Flying Heaven of the Heavenly Palace in the Sui Dynasty, the images of palace dancers are diverse, such as the images that dancers are playing instruments, listening to songs and dancing, and putting these images together shows women's elegance and is full of beautiful feelings on earth.

#### ***3.2 Landscape culture***

The image of landscape has always been one of the important elements of ancient Chinese paintings. Naturally, there is no shortage of landscape elements in the Dunhuang art murals. In the Dunhuang paintings, most of the landscape elements are mainly to set off the overall environment and atmosphere that the murals are to render, so as to express the emotions of the murals. From these murals and landscape elements, we can infer the overall artistic style of the period on the basis of the styles of different landscape murals and landscape culture. For example, during the period of the fifth of the late Tang Dynasty, the landscapes in Dunhuang murals were transferred from heavy-color style to light-color style, which can also analyze the evolution of the artistic style and the trajectory of social development at that time.

#### ***3.3 Buddha elements***

The images of Buddha have always been regarded as representatives of wisdom. In China, Buddhism is also a religious belief with a long history and it has a profound influence on the Chinese people. Therefore, the images of Buddha also occupy a large part of the Dunhuang murals. These murals mainly depict a variety of different Buddha images, including the Three Buddhas, Dubao Buddha, etc., which are well-known Buddhist images by those who believe in Buddha. Also some obscure Buddhist roles are contained. In the murals, the creators will pay attention to the facial expressions, movements, costumes and other details of the Buddha statues while depicting the Buddha statues, vividly expressing the Buddhist image. Some creations also show the plots of the Buddhist stories through series of depictions, giving people a feeling of vividness, pinned people's yearning for a better life. At the same time, these images of Buddha also reflect the development of the Buddha in different periods and fully express the spirit of Chinese traditional culture.

### **4. Reorganization and expression of Dunhuang elements from the perspective of modern aesthetics**

#### ***4.1 Flatness reorganization of element***

In the creation of modern painting art, plane is a common concept, which is to express the content in plane mode. In the flat paintings, the viewer can maintain a calm analysis of the pictures and develop a sense of affinity for the pictures. Although the integration of elements in Dunhuang art is mostly with plane, this plane is mainly shown through lines, which is not very in accord with the aesthetic orientation of the public of modern society. In modern painting creation, creators should learn from the advantage of Dunhuang graphic design, grasp the degree of lines in the image display, eliminate the clutter that lines brings, and pursue the natural sense of graphic creation.

#### ***4.2 Pay attention to a sense of order***

In the depiction of the scenes in the Dunhuang murals, we can strongly feel the sense of order. This sense of order originates from showing respect to the order in ancient Chinese society, and it is also in line with the aesthetics of people at that time. In Dunhuang art, the sense of order is mainly manifested in that everything described in the murals emphasizes the regularity of things. Although the lines are

complicated and diverse, there is still a clear sense of order on the whole. For example, in the depiction of some natural sceneries in the picture, especially in life scenes, most of the images are symmetrical, and there are many repetitions. The structure of the picture basically uses a symmetrical expression technique. This kind of composition makes the whole picture has a sense of hierarchy and order, which makes the picture rich but also orderly. It also fits the aesthetic vision of modern people from the aesthetic perspective of modern art.

#### **4.3 Expressing abstract forms**

Art is a reflection of real life. It has always been believed that art originates from life and is higher than life. This is because art comes from reality but has to be created through the bold imagination of art creators. Therefore, art cannot be separated from abstraction. The Dunhuang frescoes were produced in the context of religious culture. Naturally, they are mostly religious themes and the abstract features are obvious. From the combination of color lines, it can be seen that this abstract design makes the murals more impactful, especially in landscape paintings. And in the depiction of such paintings, the use of abstract design adds a sense of tranquility to the landscape image, which is also in line with the aesthetic needs of modern people for landscape painting.

#### **4.4 Use of color design**

The distinctive color in the creation of Dunhuang mural art is a major feature. From another perspective, the color of Dunhuang art is even one of the origins of the study of Chinese color science, and it is an important material for modern color research. And the color expression in it is representativeness of are. Although the color elements in Dunhuang art are diverse and complex, the colors are still bright, messy and not chaotic, and generally give people a natural and soft feeling under the maintenance of orderly creation. The colors of Dunhuang murals should be studied and analyzed, and the essence of it should be taken and the dross should be removed. And also the experience of color creation should be summed up to apply to the modern art creation, which can inject new vitality into the creation of modern art paintings to enhance the impact and attractiveness of the picture while showing the charm of traditional Chinese culture. Modern art creation often use elements of Dunhuang, such as, many costume designers draw on the color elements of Dunhuang art creation. And such design results can not only show the power of color, but also attract modern people's attention with traditional color culture.

### **5. Conclusion**

There are many elements in Dunhuang art. This article mainly enumerates the elements such as Buddhist images, shapes of flying and landscape paintings. From the analysis of these elements, we can clearly see the advantages in the graphic design, creation of landscape paintings and color design in Dunhuang art paintings. The enduring art of Dunhuang is the source of inspiration for modern technical creation. Incorporating these elements into modern art design can not only make modern art creation more cultural and enhance the appeal of art, but also show the breadth and depth of traditional culture of China better.

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