

The Significance of Yu County Great Wall Paper-Cutting for Modern Chinese Painting Education

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Abstract: *This paper studies the application of paper-cut art in university art education in Yu County, in order to enhance students' interest in Chinese painting and folk art. Qualitative analysis is used to interview professors and students to explore the value of paper-cut art in education and the market, encourage artistic innovation, and promote its development in modern society. The application of paper-cut education in art education can enrich students' imagination and creativity, feel artistic power, but also can play an effective role in our country's art and culture inheritance.*

Keywords: *Wei County, the Great Wall, paper-cutting, education*

1. Introduction

As a symbol of Chinese folk art, paper-cutting boasts a rich history and cultural depth. Incorporating it into Chinese painting education allows students to appreciate and create, fostering a deeper appreciation for traditional culture. This enhances their sense of cultural identity and pride, promoting the continuation and advancement of traditional values.

Today, with the world cultural integration, Chinese painting is influenced by the West and gradually lacks its own artistic characteristics. Influenced by the western modern art, the current creative theme of Chinese painting is becoming increasingly self-centered, emphasizing the authenticity of the art born in the heart. The theme of the works revolves around the fashion of changing their own ideas, consciousness and emotions. (Jia, 1994) Chinese painting has broadened the understanding of artistic expression techniques and the creation theme, but the creation theme from a traditional field to the modern field, from the traditional conservative to today's modern conservative, for the traditional creation theme has been forgotten in the people. The younger generation of Chinese painting major students have been unable to correctly understand the Yu County symbolic theme of the paper-cut content, that this theme is too vulgar, not shame.

Chinese paper-cutting, a vital part of traditional art, has a rich history and widespread influence. It encapsulates the societal, historical, cultural, religious, and aesthetic aspects of diverse ethnic groups, reflecting their lives, beliefs, and pursuits. Its diverse themes, including opera tales, auspicious motifs, and folk customs, comprehensively portray the labor, life, and emotions of these groups. (Sun, 2013)

Yu County paper-cut art, a significant representative of Chinese paper-cutting, boasts a lengthy history and profound cultural significance. Its distinctive style and virtuosity have sparked creativity in modern artists, offering novel techniques for expression. Additionally, it finds a place in education, as schools incorporate paper-cutting lessons to foster appreciation and a love for traditional art among students. In conclusion, Yu County paper-cut art significantly impacts modern artistic creation and cultural exchange.

Modern Chinese painting is a contemporary term used to distinguish tradition. The current teaching lack of modern Chinese painting course, the author is trying to enrich the teaching content with a new perspective, improve the course. As an important part of Chinese culture, modern painting is at a turning point in history. (Zhao, 2013) As an important part of Chinese culture, modern Chinese painting is at a historic turning point (Ma & Zhou, 2023). Under the background of globalization, modern Chinese painting is facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges.

In the context of Chinese art history, folk, religious, and literati art coexist and influence each other. Traditional Chinese painting teaching respects teachers, emphasizing the intergenerational transmission of skills. It advocates learning from both modern teachers and ancient masters, promoting spiritual

inheritance and artistic sustainability through mentoring. (Zhao, 2013)

The policy of opening up and emancipating the mind has renewed art education, breaking the shackles of 'left' and valuing students' artistic personality. Students actively participate in social design tasks and art reform with their innovative artistic ideas. The creation of students' works reflects the spirit of the new era. However, challenges remain in reforming the art school system, department settings, and curriculum to align with social development. Key issues include defining the socialist art direction, balancing basic training with creativity, inheriting tradition while innovating, and integrating foreign art education experiences. Deciding how to evaluate and adopt global modern art genres to independently establish China's art education system is also crucial for current art education.

Paper-cutting, a significant part of Chinese art and culture, faces an inheritance crisis due to societal changes and foreign cultural influences. New forms of paper-cutting have emerged to integrate with modern life, blending traditional techniques with modern painting to reflect cultural adaptation and innovation. Modern paper-cutting art represents both artistic tradition and cultural progress. (Yao, 2007)

The reorganization of Chinese painting teaching curriculum is the key to decide what to learn from foreign art and how to inherit Chinese traditional art. Increasing traditional folk art courses, stimulating students' enthusiasm and improving teaching methods are the key to strengthening Chinese painting education. The current trend of higher art education tends to be divided between China and the West, so it is necessary to put aside the controversy, increase the study of folk art on the basis of maintaining the original curriculum, and guide students to in-depth interpretation of traditional art. The reform of Chinese painting teaching remains challenging, and the curriculum needs to be re-evaluated to balance foreign and traditional influences

We must prioritize protecting and investing in the intangible cultural heritage of Chinese folk paper-cutting art. With societal, economic changes & foreign cultural impacts, this art faces extinction. We must follow the "rescue, protection, inheritance, development" principle and adopt a strategy of "protection, development, improvement" to systematically preserve & rescue historical & original ecological folk paper-cutting art. (Jin, 2012)

Considering the future needs of Chinese painting creation, through the study of Yu County paper-cut in the Great Wall culture, the aesthetic value is integrated into the teaching of Chinese painting in universities, aiming to enrich the teaching content and enhance students' understanding and love of traditional paper-cut art.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This qualitative study combined content analysis of paper cutting samples with interviews of professors and modern Chinese painting students.

As a Chinese painter who has been learning and creating painting art for more than 30 years, the author has been walking along the Great Wall for the past eight years. In 2014, from Dandong, Liaoning, from east to west along the Ming Great Wall to do field investigation, through ten provinces and cities, by June 2022, along the great wall in the folk art record and arrangement —— Along the Great Wall, more than thirty thousand brick carving, wood carving, 300 pieces of the paper-cut art. In the creation of paper-cut works at the same time the author increasingly found the same as a representative of the classic of Chinese art, paper-cut art and Chinese painting has a lot of common aesthetic, began to draw lessons from the folk paper-cut art shape, color, composition of Chinese painting creation, and achieve certain results (works won Beijing ink international biennale award).

2.2 Participants

This study will involve six cities and six universities on interview topics and was consider academic leading Chinese painting teaching professors interviewing at each university. Three professors of Chinese painting from six universities and each school recommended three students majoring in Chinese painting for research. Professor Wang / Chinese painting artist of Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing; Associate Professor / Chinese painting artist of Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in Tianjin; Professor Feng / Chinese Painting artist of Xi'an Xijing University; Associate Professor of Nanjing Qin / Chinese Painting artist; Associate Professor Zhang / Chinese Painting artist of Qilu Normal University;

Associate Professor Zeng / Chinese Painting artist of Guangxi Institute of Arts in Nanning, Guangxi. At the same time, professors from the above universities recommend one second, third and third student from each grade and three students from each university. A total of 18 school Chinese painting students were selected as the interviews to ensure that the interview content was representative.

2.3 Instrument

Handicrafts in any ethnic group with a long history, strong local gas, diverse varieties and styles are long. Chinese paper cutting has been widely spread around the world. Mr.Zhang Fenggao, president of China Paper cutting Association, believes that the birthplace of paper cutting is in China. Only in the Han ethnic group, Paper-cutting art is famous for its wide variety of regional styles, with more than 10 different schools. Through the continuous innovation and development of paper-cutting artists, these styles can be fully displayed, forming a colorful art landscape. (Yang, 2003)

To assess the uniqueness of paper-cutting in Yu County along the Great Wall, researchers will visit Gaojiapu, Shaanxi & Yu County, Hebei. This research will observe and document local paper-cutting styles, themes, patterns, etc. This involves noting artistic traits & recording thoughts/observations in a journal. Finally, analyzing these cuttings deepens understanding of their artistic elements & value, including lines, shapes, colors, calligraphy.

2.4 Procedure

Data Collection Process: The investigator follows these steps: First Steps Develop study design and questions, clarifying purpose and ensuring questions explore the topic deeply. The second step Obtain interviewer consent and support. The third step Create interview outline with topics, questions, and tips for valuable interviews. The fourth step Conduct remote interviews for respondent comfort and flexibility to delve deeper into topics. The fifth step Verify and check credibility of interview data through team feedback and cross-checking. The sixth step Organize data, code topics and points, and generate text summary for analysis.

3. Results

This thesis aims to discuss the following results.

3.1 The Ming Great Wall paper-cut art

Distribution of paper cutting art along Ming Great Wall: Predominantly semi-arid, with limited summer rain, cold winters, brief frost-free periods, sparse vegetation, and desolate landscape favoring defense. Prominent paper cutting regions include Yu County, Zhangjiakou, Xinzhou, and Yulin. These lie in China's loess Plateau's second tier, with cold winters, withered vegetation, loess mountains, houses, and monochrome landscapes. Beautiful color ornaments enhance bedrooms' natural beauty. Simple tools & common materials suffice for paper cutting, symbolizing hope. (Liu, 2019)

Characteristics of folk paper cutting along Ming Great Wall: Known as hollow art, it offers transparent visual experiences and showcases vivid shapes & diverse colors. Folk artists employ exaggeration & deformation, combining life objects with their subjective vision to create unique, novel images. (Hu, 2023) Their work is not limited by any established pattern, nor it pursues the magnificence of skill and form, but is based on the understanding of the features or specific impressions of objects. (Zheng, 2003)

The ancient Chinese working people highly advocated the natural plants with many children and strong vitality. Therefore, in the folk paper-cut art creation, they was create a variety of metaphorical and symbolic works. In the modern animation creation, the creators can innovate and adapt those paper-cut works with metaphorical and symbolic significance, so as to enhance the cultural connotation of the animation works. Adapted, for example, in the folklore story "mouse marry female" animation works, "mouse marry female", "mouse marry" paper-cut in the Chinese traditional society is endowed with the good meaning of auspicious festival, every festival will be posted on the wall or the window, it can reflect the ancient people worship rat, love rat, rat of a special psychology. (Wang, 2023)

The ancients attached great importance to the funeral and held the etiquette. Paper-cutting reflects the thought of turning evil into good and sorrow into joy. The forms of paper-cutting used for funeral and

burial are "prayer flags" and "paper tying". The ancients had the custom of putting paper cut in the coffin, the Southern and Northern Dynasties have prevailed. (Xu & Ling 2023) The straightforward composition and concise and clear shape are deeply engraved with the aesthetic meaning and life wisdom of the working people along the Great Wall.

Chinese folk paper cutting, especially along the Great Ming Wall, is one of the most popular art forms in Chinese folk art. Its tools and materials are easy to obtain, its technology is easy to learn, and it has special properties that no other art category can match. Therefore, this ancient traditional art is widely spread among the people and enduring. (Zuo, 1995)

The Chinese paper cutting art along the Ming Great Wall comes from the folk artists in the border city, with a strong life atmosphere.

3.2 Yu County paper cutting art

China is a big country of paper-cut art, and this art exists widely all over the country. Although the paper-cut art in different regions has certain commonality in the theme and form, it has distinct regional cultural characteristics in the cultural function and pattern design. The paper-cutting art in Yu County, Hebei province is a bright pearl in the field of Chinese paper-cutting art.

The pronunciation of "Yu" is the same as "jade". The paper cut in Yu County is called "window cut" because it is often pasted to the window. It is said that Yu County paper-cutting has a history of more than 200 years, combining New Year wood-block prints in Hebei Wuqiang, Tianjin Yangliuqing New Year paintings and traditional art forms of local carving and embroidery. Through continuous evolution and development, this art form gradually gave birth to a unique style. It not only shows the amazing engraving technique of point color, but also integrates bright and colorful colors into the picture, making the work permeated with rich regional characteristics and unique charm. (Zhang, 2008)

Since ancient times, China has respected the thought of round sky and place, and symmetry. It is not difficult to explain that Yu County paper cuts are mostly round. Its creation methods are mostly alignment and repeated folding techniques. With the aesthetic concept of symmetry and uniformity, various patterns are constantly reorganized, superimposed and matched, so as to get complex but regular exquisite patterns. This kind of symmetrical beautiful paper-cut form has been spread for a long time, extensive and practical, at the same time in the costume design, painting art, architectural design and other fields are reflected, has a very strong artistic charm. (Sun, Ma & Wang, 2023) Each art has a unique artistic style, and the materials and tools used in paper-cutting determine the unique artistic style of paper-cutting—simple, concise, clear and bright. (Yu, 2006)

Yu County paper cutting color can be divided into two categories: one is monochrome paper cutting, the most common color of this type of paper cutting is red, there are black and white, but black paper cutting is not common, and white paper cutting is also white in the village; and red is lively and unrestrained, so in every festival and happy events, people are very keen to use. Nowadays, with the increasing appreciation of art appreciation ability, the demand for monochrome paper cutting is less and less. The other is the unique color paper cut, it set color freely, the effect is more impact, the five basic colors of color paper cut are: red, white, cyan, black, yellow. The five colors are also influenced by the Taoism, and "gold, wood, water, fire, soil" echo, but with the inheritance of innovation and the improvement of aesthetic, Yu county paper-cut color from five into six, respectively: pink, red, green, yellow, blue, purple, this is the basic color system, other colors in paper-cut more for the color harmonic. (Lin & Guan, 2023)

The overall composition reflects the advanced sense of the picture, full and with a sense of rhythm, images and logical arrangement. All of these are permeated with the recognition of life and thinking of the people of Yu County. Traditional art continues to develop in such a cultural atmosphere, and the two will be each other and complement each other.

The themes of paper-cut works are usually expressed through specific themes. For example, the core of the reproduction worship theme in paper cutting is the respect for life. Through a series of works such as "fish play lotus", "fish bet lotus", "baby step lotus", and so on, fish, lotus and other elements to praise the ancient theme of reproduction and reproduction. Although the theme of the paper-cut works reflects the author's understanding of life, emotional attitude and aesthetic taste, it has obvious subjectivity, but it is not completely subjective. As Gorky said, it comes from the author's experience, a thought inspired by life. In the traditional paper-cut pattern, chicken, fish, fruits, animals and so on everything is closely related to their life, production and life, the authors love and familiar with these things, enthusiastically

show them, and through these subjects for the fertility, reproduction, auspicious, putting the evil, town curtilage good vision yearning. Here, practicality and aesthetic significance achieve harmony and unity.(Zhong,2003)

3.3 Organization of learning activities

The content needs to be organized in order, and so are the learning activities. Usually, the ranking of the learning activities depends on the content. Therefore, I always remember that I teach art students, who have a strong sense of novelty. Therefore, in order to better teaching, the study of paper-cutting into external teaching is more suitable for art students.

Students visit the Great Wall and Yu County's ancient city to explore folk paper-cut art. Interacting with national artists, they learn directly, using scissors and knives, about the techniques and aesthetics of this traditional art. This experiential learning complements classroom education.

Students can replicate paper-cut artists' works with a brush, varying colors to express mood. While copying, they should focus on mastering the modeling and artistic concept of paper cutting to create classic renditions. Use the paper-cut aesthetic learned in Yu County, create a local scenery or character works, to practice the knowledge they have learned outside.

Chinese painting art and Chinese paper-cut art are interlinked, which integrate and promote each other in the development of hundreds of years. Chinese painting and Chinese paper-cut are both from the traditional Chinese art aesthetic, and the two are abreast, and are the representatives of Chinese art.

In fine arts universities, students can study Yu County paper-cutting, a representative of Chinese traditional folk art, as part of the Chinese painting program. This course offers students an opportunity to learn about Chinese culture and opens a door to understanding the essence of traditional folk art. The aim is not just to appreciate the aesthetic and cultural value of paper-cutting, but also to inherit and promote it. Young talents in this field play a crucial role in its protection and inheritance, making it a significant responsibility for fine arts students. To learn paper-cutting, students need to grasp relevant knowledge, as talent cultivation is essential for its preservation and innovative inheritance. By studying professional knowledge, students can gain a deeper understanding of paper-cutting and, through communication and creative design, realize the need for innovative transformation and development of traditional Chinese culture, thus fostering cultural confidence and patriotism. (Zhang, 2023)

After the end of the course, the first step is to upload photos of students' works to the network platform, so that more audiences can understand the unique beauty of paper-cut art and appreciate the traditional paper-cut art written by Chinese painters.

The second step is to organize the works completed by students to do an exchange exhibition in the cultural center of the ancient city of Yu County, so that local folk artists and tourists can watch the students' works and put forward suggestions, which is conducive to students to summarize their extracurricular learning results.

The third step is to copy the works created by the students in the exhibition hall of my school, so that the teachers and students of the school can give evaluation and give guidance and suggestions, and display the excellent works in the school library or other public areas for a long time.

4. Discussion

There are some problems in the application of paper-cutting art in the modern art creation and education. First of all, with the development of technology, many artists tend to use digital tools to create, which leads to the neglect of the traditional art of paper cutting.

Secondly, the education system is not enough attention to the paper-cut art, the lack of systematic teaching and practice opportunities. This makes the new generation of young people to understand and grasp it is insufficient, unable to give full play to the potential of paper cutting.

In addition, the degree of marketization of paper-cut art is not high, and the commercial value has not been fully reflected. Despite its unique cultural and aesthetic value, paper-cutting art is often seen as a traditional handicraft rather than a high-value work of art. This makes it difficult for paper cutters to obtain enough economic returns, which affects their continuous development in the art field. With the rise of folk art, various places constantly call for the industrialization of folk paper-cutting art. However, the industrialization of folk paper-cut art is a double-edged sword. Although it can solve some economic

problems, it will also lose its essential spirit under the influence of commercialization. Therefore, protecting the culture is the most effective way.(Zhang, 2008)

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the paper-cutting art faces some challenges in the modern art creation and education. In order to solve these problems, we need to strengthen the attention to and protection of paper-cutting art, improve its position in the education system, and promote its commercial development in the market. At the same time, we should also encourage artists to continue to explore and develop new forms and new uses of paper-cut art, so that they can glow with new vitality in the modern society.

6. Recommendation

It is true that art needs to reflect the truth of the artist's heart, but literary and artistic works should not only serve themselves and express the artist's own ideology and artistic concept, but also serve others and the society. The Yu county paper-cut inside is full of auspicious symbol of auspicious theme works worth today's fine arts college Chinese painting students to learn, to learn, and on the one hand, including Yu county paper-cut art, the vast field of traditional Chinese folk art, on the other hand, learn the classic tradition of Chinese painting itself, to have a more in-depth understanding of Chinese traditional culture, for the future creation of Chinese culture with solid preparation.

Not only college students should learn the paper-cut art of Yu CountyCounty, but even many Chinese painting artists can also learn from the unique shape, color, composition, and theme selection of paper-cut art, so as to enrich their established Chinese painting language, form and theme. The author also hopes that more artists can pay attention to the Yuxian paper-cutting art, not only learn from its essence, but also use their own wisdom and talent to feed and enrich this art form. At the same time, the author also expects them to create new era paper-cut works with both traditional cultural characteristics and modern flavor, so that more people are interested in and love the traditional folk paper-cut art of China.

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