

# Research on the Application of Ink Figure Painting art features in Ink Animation characters

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**Abstract:** *Ink Figure Painting is one of the most distinctive art forms in China, and has a national representation. This paper combines the artistic characteristics of Chinese Ink Figure Painting and the characteristics of animation character modelling, analyses the application cases of Ink Figure Painting in animation character modelling, summarises the application rules, and has reference value for designing Ink Animation characters with embedded national characteristics.*

**Keywords:** *Ink Figure Painting, animated character design, Ink Animation*

## 1. The artistic characteristics of traditional Ink Figure Painting

### 1.1 Linear outline

The traditional Ink Figure Painting in China favours the use of simple lines to outline the figure in the process of creation, which looks simple but has a strong expressive meaning and generality. The artist uses the alternation of thick and thin lines to directly express his creative emotions and artistic cultivation<sup>[1]</sup>. The linear outline is therefore one of the most typical features of ink and wash figure painting, where the painter uses the thousands of variations in the thickness, sparseness and intensity of the lines to reflect the visual and artistic beauty of the figure.

### 1.2 Vivid Presentation

"The expression 'convey the spirit' is the most important artistic expression in Chinese ink and wash painting. The expression 'form and spirit' first appeared in the philosophical thinking of the pre Qin period and was later further analysed and explained in the book *Huai Nan Tzu*. In the Eastern Jin dynasty, the artist Gu Kaizhi applied and developed the concept of 'the gods' to his paintings, fully embodying the artistic technique of 'writing the gods with the form'. Traditional ink and wash figure painting on the one hand focuses on the depiction of the spirit and temperament of the figure, and on the other hand fully expresses the painter's painting skills, as the painter puts his own emotions into the portrayal of the figure rather than just an objective depiction. This has led to a common feature in traditional ink and wash character modelling: "the form is unlike but the spirit is like".

### 1.3 Technique into a systematic

An important point in the traditional Chinese concept of painting is that 'everything has a law', which means that everything in the world has a certain law in its growth and development, therefore Chinese ink painting has gradually formed a self contained system of painting techniques and Aesthetic evaluation criteria. For example, during the Six Dynasties, under the leadership of Lu Tanwei, the painters of the time adhered to the painting technique of 'clear image of bones' in the process of ink figure modelling, and later Shi Kui and others had the same dripping intention in ink figure modelling painting. This artistic style, which has since become the basis for the development of Ink Figure Painting, has also enabled the Ink Figure Painting of each era to be both aesthetically common and individual.

## **2. Characteristics of animation character modelling**

### **2.1 Embodiment of the character's personality**

In animation, the character's personality needs to be accurately expressed. Therefore, the creators are required to accurately capture the character's personality characteristics during the creation process, and gradually simplify and perfect its external shape, organically integrating their own psychological temporal pattern with the temporal pattern of the objects to create a character image that is both derived from life and above life<sup>[2]</sup>. The personality of the character is also reflected in the performance, different characters will produce different performances, so the animation creator needs to consider whether the character shape matches the performance when designing the animation image, accurately express the personality of the character image, and choose the shape that is most favourable to express the character's personality positioning to constitute the image.

### **2.2 Hyperbole and hypotheticality**

The most important feature of animation is that it can express visual images that cannot be satisfied in real life, therefore animation is highly exaggerated and hypothetical. The image of a character in animation is virtual, designed by the creator according to the needs of the script and in accordance with aesthetic and artistic rules. It is not affected by the laws of nature and is not restricted by time and space, and can adjust the local shape and proportion of the character to create an illusory or even bizarre visual image.

### **2.3 Symbolic**

Animation is a collection of symbols, the elements of which are the most simple and concise of all the disciplines of film and television, yet in their abstraction to the limit they contain the deepest and broadest meanings. A good image design gives more feeling and inspiration than what you can see with your eyes. Therefore creating symbolic and memorable animated character shapes is also crucial to the pre design of animation.

## **3. The use of Ink Figure Painting in the modelling of animated characters**

### **3.1 An animated character shape that is distinct from realism and conveys the inner character of the object**

An animated character shape that is distinct from realism and conveys the inner character of the object is an important feature of Ink Figure Painting. The character of Ink Figure Painting is a key feature. Specifically, the 'likeness away from form' is a form of abstraction that Ink Figure Painting exhibits. In traditional Chinese Ink Figure Painting, the form of the object is often not sought after, but rather transcends it to achieve a more vivid artistic effect. Ink Animation is based on a concrete image of reality<sup>[3]</sup>. For example, in *Baby Tadpoles Look for Their Mother*, the shrimp is the most distinctive image, which comes from the master of Chinese painting Qi Baishi. The representation of the tadpoles in the piece is highly distinctive, as their form is shapeless, with only a small black dot, which can be difficult to represent. However, the painter's movement of the tadpole is exquisite through the oscillation of its tail and the halving of the ink and wash, together with its flexible movements. Shi Tao's 'Searching all the strange peaks for a draft' from the Qing dynasty is the true meaning of Ink Figure Painting, emphasising that the shape of Ink Figure Painting is derived from a thousand refinements in nature, as in *Feelings of Mountains and Waters*. The figure of the old luthier in *Feelings of Mountains and Waters*, for example, is sketched out in a few strokes, which is abstract and generalised to the extreme, but perfectly expresses the image of his clear bones and even his elegant and arrogant character, which is also the result of the continuous refinement, exaggeration and generalisation of the ink figure.

### **3.2 A double empowerment of aesthetic underpinnings**

In animation modelling, the typical design of a character is mainly through exaggeration and symbolism. Exaggeration is mainly expressed through the head, body and movement. It's all about highlighting the individual characteristics of the animated figure. In modern animation there is no shortage of exaggerated shapes, but they are basically exaggerations and deformations of natural objects,

seeking only to achieve a contrasting visual impact, but lacking deep spiritual and cultural connotations<sup>[4]</sup>. Drawing on the artistic characteristics of traditional Ink Figure Painting, it is of practical significance to the design of animation and to convey the cultural connotations and aesthetic implications of ethnic folklore. The modelling of traditional Ink Figure Painting captures the main features and spirituality of the object, achieving the artistic effect of both form and spirit, and incorporating the spirit of the pursuit of a better life into the exaggerated modelling, with strong romanticism, allowing the audience to feel the dual aesthetic experience from the visual and spiritual connotations of the ink characters.

#### 4. Conclusion

Traditional Chinese art has always advocated grasping the inner spirit of people, and the formulaic nature of Ink Figure Painting focuses on expressing the deeper meaning of the character, a high level of generalisation of the figure design, and a concise way of expressing the state of the character. By accurately grasping the artistic characteristics of Ink Figure Painting and applying them to the character design of Ink Animation, this combination of the essence of ink art gives the character a concise yet vivid shape, giving a transcendent experience. The character design is also free from the face and industrialisation and is full of humanistic and cultural meaning.

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