

# The Existence of Art Reconstruction: The Logical Path and Spiritual Construction of Western Art Philosophy

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**Abstract:** *In the era when irrationalism prevails, when various doctrines and genres are popular, art presents an unprecedented inclusiveness and openness. At the same time, a new art philosophy is needed to solve the confusion, dispel doubts and give modern people spiritual comfort. This article takes western art philosophy as the research object, trying to briefly sort out the history of western art philosophy, make exploratory analysis on relevant hot issues such as the current "final conclusion of art philosophy", and try to look forward to the development direction of western art philosophy explore.*

**Keywords:** *philosophy of art; art history; spiritual structure*

## 1. Introduction

The philosophical study of art has a long history, at least as far back as the golden age of ancient Greek philosophy. However, the philosophy of art in the strict sense or the philosophy of art in the form of disciplines did not begin to appear until the 18th century. Shaftesbury in Britain, Dubos in France, Baumgarten in Germany and others are the pioneers of this discipline. The turn of Western art philosophy is an inevitable trend in the development of art philosophy. It always revolves around the interpretation of human emotional meaning and the essence of art. There is an inseparable relationship between philosophy and art, whether in the field of western philosophy or in the field of oriental academia. Philosophy of art is the spiritual power of the upper class of social thought, such as Kant, Husserl, Nietzsche, Hegel, Heidegger, etc., they all opened the door of wisdom of philosophy of art. At present, the Westernized international art system has caused Chinese contemporary art to encounter a crisis of legitimacy and development, that is, the essence and core of Chinese art ethics, the construction of the system of art ethics norms, including its main research objects, research content and methods<sup>[1]</sup>. It has not received widespread attention from experts in my country's academic circles, and has not yet formed a clear and effective code of artistic ethics. At the historical point of China's rise among the nations of the world, Chinese contemporary art will move towards a spiritual process of focusing on Chinese art and embodying artistic philosophy. Based on this, the research on the turn of contemporary Western art philosophy and its spiritual construction and its identification and absorption are conducive to the construction of a new human spiritual realm of Chinese contemporary art philosophy. Today, the philosophy of art has become more and more diverse, which provides people with diverse choices. But even in the 21st century of globalization, the seriousness and sense of mission of "art philosophy" can never be absent, and it is one of the fundamental lifeblood of art as art.

## 2. Connotation of Art Philosophy

In short, the philosophy of art studies the beauty of art. Hegel notes the perceptual etymology of the term 'aesthetic' only to brand this meaning as irrelevant, just as he rejects the term 'kallistic' (from the Greek word for beauty) as too general for designating the aesthetic field, because he claims the science of aesthetics should deal only with 'artistic beauty', while making its prime focus 'the highest ideas' that art presents through its beautiful 'sensuous forms'. In Hegel's view, aesthetics is equal to the philosophy of art, which is "the philosophy of beautiful art." Although there are constant disputes between beauty and art in the history of aesthetics, in essence, beauty and art are inseparable. Art is often the presentation of beauty. In contemporary times, the appearance of art has undergone tremendous changes, and art and beauty have also separated to some extent<sup>[2]</sup>. Art no longer takes the responsibility of carrying beauty. In the view of the supporters of modernist theory, art and beauty are separated, and ugliness can also be presented in the form of art because of its ideological or

philosophical connotation. Beauty is always associated with the pleasure of the senses, while ugliness seems to be all the more profound by going beyond the senses to the mind. Modern art's pursuit of ugliness shows that art does not necessarily pursue beauty and pleasure, but art must pursue ideas. In other words, art is about reason and truth. For example, the German philosopher Heidegger clearly stated that "beauty and truth do not stand shoulder to shoulder. When truth is set into a work by itself, it will appear." Art is the perceptual manifestation of truth and has nothing to do with beauty. Beauty is no longer a measure of the value of art. Standards are no longer the whole connotation of art. Art is indisputably bid farewell to beauty and becomes independent. Art philosophy and aesthetics have never been clearly distinguished after their creation, and the aesthetics circle has always been arguing endlessly about the issues of aesthetics and art philosophy. This leads to a series of questions such as whether aesthetics is a discipline, how aesthetics seeks the right to exist, whether aesthetics is a philosophy of beauty or a philosophy of art.

### 3. The Historical Background of the Western Art Philosophy Turn

Throughout the history of Western art philosophy, the historical changes it has experienced are directly and inseparably related to the development of productive forces. "Art" is not a static form, but always changes with the development of productive forces, the progress of the times, and the transformation of people's ideology. From the 14th century to the 16th century, that is, the Western "Renaissance" period, Europe on the eve of capitalism was unprecedentedly prosperous in cultural thought, and "people-oriented" became its mainstream worldview. In the 17th and 18th centuries, feudalism completely disintegrated<sup>[3]</sup>. Some scientists and thinkers inherited the tradition of the Renaissance, opposed religious theocracy, and advocated science, which led to the rapid development of natural science. Then the "age of steam" established the dominance of the bourgeoisie. During this period, artists intended to criticize the gap between rich and poor and social corruption brought about by the Industrial Revolution. As a literary trend of thought, realism first flourished in France, abandoning the idealization of romanticism and telling people to return to the essence and pursue the truth. Schelling first put forward the modern viewpoint of "art philosophy" in the early 19th century. The era in which Schelling lived was when the natural sciences began to rise and spread widely, which just shows that the concept of "natural philosophy" was a product of the times, and it also had a certain impact on the natural sciences at that time. After Schelling, Hegel absorbed the aesthetic thoughts of Schelling and Kant, and believed that beauty expresses rational thoughts by the essence of sensibility, and it is necessary to combine sensibility and rationality. Then he put forward the philosophical view of dialectical idealism, and perfected his own aesthetic thought. From this point of view, Hegel was influenced by romanticism and realism at that time, and he also put forward the concept of "The End of Art" for the first time.

The Second Industrial Revolution from the second half of the 19th century to the early 20th century gave rise to the "Electrical Age". The mechanical movement of physics brings about the conversion of energy, and the practice of chemical optics makes impressionism appear. Taine is a witness to the transition from the "Steam Age" to the "Electric Age". Taine was deeply influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, coupled with the great changes of the times; he put forward the idea of combining art and science. After the outbreak of the First World War, modernism began to dominate, which included symbolism, Dadaism, surrealism and so on<sup>[4]</sup>. The artistic expression becomes abstract, deformed, exaggerated and other effects, and the French artist Duchamp is the most representative figure in this period. He is good at using irony to let the world understand that the changeable and beautiful society in the past will eventually disappear with the chaos of war.

From the second half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, the "information age" followed. The development of many technologies has not only brought about changes in lifestyle, but also changed people's spiritual needs, which has brought corresponding pressure on art. In this era of flooding of images and the decline of traditional art, what will be the direction of art? American philosopher Arthur Danto seems to be trying to give an answer. He called this era "the era without master narration", art has no boundaries, and "everything is allowed". Although Danto absorbed Hegel's philosophy, he didn't accept it entirely, but combined with the historical trend of thought in the second half of the 20th century to reflect on the development of art. He believes that what exists as art relying on theoretical ability cannot be called art, but philosophy.

#### 4. The Logical Path of the Western Philosophy of Art Turning

Since Hegel, the idea of an end of art has become a staple of aesthetic theory. Modern art has completed the transition from epistemology to ontology, and art and aesthetics have also turned. With the promotion of the turn of western contemporary art philosophy and the active development of rational cultural spirit, the conflicts existing in the field of western art philosophy have been gradually resolved, and the harmonious coexistence of multiple cultures has basically been realized. Philosophy should be based on the diversity of artistic and cultural system forms, take on the complexity of the existing form of art, and reconstruct a new balance based on the overall concept of the human cultural system.

The theoretical logic of the turn of Western art philosophy, in the final analysis, this turn is alienation based on "art reconstruction of existence", and its essence is the alienation of the subject. Contemporary Western art philosophy uses "art to reconstruct existence" to regulate the various encounters of human beings. Human beings also reveal the psychological state of human beings in multiple dimensions on the basis of Western "art reconstruction of existence", deepening human beings' in-depth thinking on the meaning of future existence and various philosophical issues in reality. In the process of turning to Western art philosophy, artistic intuition and rational intuition are respectively located at the two tops of the art philosophy system, so art and philosophy are the two keys to achieve "absolute identity". And between the two, there is a close relationship between the realist and the idealist. Kant believed that the origin of art comes from the aesthetic judgment between human's rational ability and intellectual ability, but the origin of art is by no means the essence of beauty. The essence of art is the stipulation of four aspects of quality, quantity, relationship and modality developed by aesthetic judgment in its judgment activities. Kant re-opened the door to the essence of art through double deconstruction of the essence of art and aesthetics. Husserl believes that a purely aesthetic attitude towards works of art should be adopted, and a purely aesthetic attitude towards works of art can only be realized through a non-existent phenomenological intuition. The pure aesthetics of phenomenology is the fundamental way for human beings to understand the world, and the artist's observation of the world is a pure phenomenological intuition. In his view, the "noumenon" of art exists in the works of art, and without the works, the artistic experience is impossible to talk about. The image in a work of art is the core content of a work of art. Artistic images must be perceivable and therefore must be based on artistic reconstruction of existence. This also constitutes the theoretical logic of the Western art philosophy turn.

#### 5. The Spiritual Construction of the Turn of Western Art Philosophy

The philosophical spirit of traditional Western art is the spirit of the universe. The core of the spirit of the universe is to regard the universe including human beings as an eternal and perfect composition, and to grasp and embody this perfect composition as the highest ideal of life. With the completion of the transformation of Western art philosophy from epistemology to ontology, Western contemporary art abandoned the spirit of traditional Western art philosophy, and began to grasp the world with the characteristics of people's emotions and imagination, emphasizing the realization of artistic aesthetic subjects and objects in imagination change. The ontology of art form comes from the universal form structure and form force grasped in the human practice and operation carried by it as an artistic symbol. In the most essential sense, all kinds of modern art are the reflection of the "truth" and "experience" of life, or at least all the art about "truth" and "experience". In the face of this kind of art where "truth" and "experience" are highlighted and "aesthetic" is weakened, the traditional "essentialism" art philosophy is indeed facing a crisis<sup>[5]</sup>. It is to overcome this crisis that Hegel's "artistic conclusion" and George Dickey's "artistic convention theory" come into being. The essence of the spiritual construction of contemporary western art is not "concept", but to construct the "truth" and "experience" of life. It is precisely because the traditional western art philosophy deviates from this spiritual essence that the traditional western art philosophy has fallen into an inextricable aesthetic crisis in a bluffing concept game.

In the process of spiritual construction of the western art philosophy turn, the masters of western contemporary art philosophy have completed the spiritual construction of the western art philosophy turn. Only in the space of philosophy, can art learn from the truth of science, politics, and love to achieve a new breakthrough and creation, and become a force that can change the situation of the world. Hegel made a clear judgment on art, which reveals the truth through the manifestation of "truth" and "experience". In other words, the "truth" and "experience" of art are the essence of art and the

fundamental driving force for truth and traditional changes. Although philosophy is a logical system, logic and sensibility are inseparable, that is to say, philosophy has an indirect perceptual form, so the philosophy of art can also be regarded as the perceptual manifestation of ideas.

## 6. Summary: Thoughts on the Development Prospect of Art Philosophy

The modernist art that appeared in the nineteenth and twentieth century's attached great importance to aesthetic appreciation, and gained the same lofty status as classical art. However, the commercialization and dailyization of the post-modern art scene make art gradually lose its function of criticizing and revealing the truth. Perhaps art has lost its criticality and its function of revealing truth, but the "end of art theory" has attracted widespread attention, and it calls for us to respond in a philosophical way. Before the transformation of art sweeping the world, we have the responsibility to find a new theory for the development of new art, which can explain such a new Art philosophy of art form.

It is almost impossible to establish a new art philosophy at present, but art philosophy has begun to pay attention to these issues under the globalized cultural landscape. Although the importance of art and art philosophy to contemporary people is far less than the importance and mission of classical art, modern art, and traditional art philosophy, it is necessary to find a broader road for art<sup>[6]</sup>. It is necessary and important in our time. The diversity of art philosophy does not mean that art philosophy has become a girl who can be dressed up by others, who can be collaged and illustrated at will. Simultaneously with the meaning of philosophy of art, there is also the inherent stipulation and seriousness of philosophy of art, "Because whether there is "philosophy of art", and what kind of "philosophy of art" there is, determines the quality of artworks. It also reflects the artist's value orientation, education level, perception of life and ability to grasp life. There is no doubt that "philosophy of art" has a sense of mission, and this seriousness and sense of mission should never be absent. "The inclusiveness and openness of art philosophy should be reflected in its tolerance of art types and art presentation forms, while the invariable art philosophy is seriousness and internal regulations. Art philosophy always conveys humanistic care; with its aesthetic character demonstrate the value of art as art.

Only in this way can art be passed on from generation to generation, and the current art can be as readable and perceptible as the traditional art after a long time. If artistic creation loses its independent spiritual character, artistic philosophy will also lose its life because it has nothing to rely on. It is not important how the external form of art changes. What art can never lose is its connotation, its power to inspire people to experience and create. Art should always maintain its proper sense of gravity.

Art should also always keep a certain distance from people's existing life, leaving space for self-examination and maintaining the seriousness of history. This is where the value of art works lies. "Philosophy of Art" carries the lofty mission of leading people through the trivialities of daily life and reaching the spirit no matter in the past or in the current human existence. Even in the current world where post-modern art is flooding and people's thoughts are nihilistic, people still need art to give him comfort, aesthetic pleasure, and spiritual salvation. Therefore, the philosophy of art has never been absent, but the mission has new connotations and breakthroughs due to changes in human existence, and it can still enable contemporary people to obtain spiritual enlightenment.

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