

A Brief Discussion on the Minimalist Power of Extreme Sculpture: A Case Study of Tony Smith's Sculpture

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Abstract: Minimalist art, also known as the simplest art, simple abstract, ABC art, etc., the ideology of extreme art is anti-trend, in the 1960s was once eye-catching. Today, with the weakening of abstract expressionism and pop art, minimalism has also declined, but its existence still brings inspiration and encouragement to today's people. There are many works of minimalism presented in front of people. This article will talk about the background of the times minimalism and to Tony Smith's sculpture as a column, analysis of Smith's sculpture contains the power of simplicity, minimalism in the study of the use of sculpture, showing people to limit the simplicity of beauty.

Keywords: Minimalism, Sculpture, Tony Smith

1. Introduction

The development of science and technology has made modern people's lifestyles change with each passing day. The accessories brought about by the rapid economic development adorn this troubled world. Everyone's eyes have been dizzying, everyone's hearts are eager for a pure land. At this moment, some art schools have come forward, and minimalism is one of them. Minimalism advocates as few formal themes as possible, and the creation of art must be carefully designed. Minimalism reveals a big sound, elephant invisible simple power. As a pioneer of extreme sculpture, Tony Smith has hidden this simple power in every corner of his sculptures [1].

2. The Time Background of Minimalism

Minimalism is an artistic trend in the United States in the 1950s. After World War II, the United States was not only satisfied with the rapid development of political economy, but also did not want to lag behind people in culture and art. Therefore, the government strongly supported the development of the art and cultural industry and adopted various means of support. Many art schools were thus nourished by the development, and extremism was one of them. At this time, Robert Rauschenberg's early works had the creative intention of extremism. In the 1960s, the simultaneous rise of conceptual art was closely related to minimalism, both of which were firmly opposed to pop art.

The Times make heroes rather than heroes make The Times. The emergence of every art genre is bound to conform to the historical trend, and the extremism is no exception. Before the emergence of the extreme doctrine, Mondrian of the new style has conveyed a kind of intriguing simplicity power with rigorous composition and bold and vivid pen use. Mondrian's artistic creation has moved away from depicting concrete things, and he boldly uses the basic elements of fine art, such as points, lines and color blocks, to construct ideas. Mondrian's art is maturely thought out, fully designed in his mind. This is quite different from the abstract Expressionist view which emphasizes autonomy, freedom and aimlessness. The extremists believe that the works of abstract representationist artists lack careful design, and the whim and instant impulse are not enough to constitute mature art. The creation without careful design is just a contradiction. It is obvious that design has a high status in the creation of extremism. Mondrian perfectly interprets this theoretical core. His paintings reveal a kind of purity and perfection. His works and thoughts strongly promote the birth of extremism.

In 1913, the supremacist soul Casimir Malevich said, "Art is no longer in the service of religion or government. Art is no longer used to describe history. It is only used to express objective objects, to show that simple objective objects can exist and can be used alone, no longer dependent on anything." This

passage lays the theoretical foundation for the doctrine of extremism [2]. From this time on, art has no practical purpose, no ideological representation. All of Malevich's pure geometric figures conform to the idea of extreme theory. His "Black Square on a White Background" (Fig.1) is an extremely simple geometric abstract painting, showing an ordinary black square on a white background. There is no concrete resemblance in the picture, except for the "desert" that critics and audiences have exclaimed. But this emptiness is the fullness of it, it is not a dead thing, it is pregnant with feelings. Similarly, Malevich believes that the decisive factor in artistic creation is not objective things but human emotions. Since modernism, the avant-garde art has included the elements of extreme art. The most obvious early explorations of extremism can be found in the Soviet Union's supremacist and constructivist movements. Malevich is a prominent early representative, and has an indelible influence on the generation of later extremism.

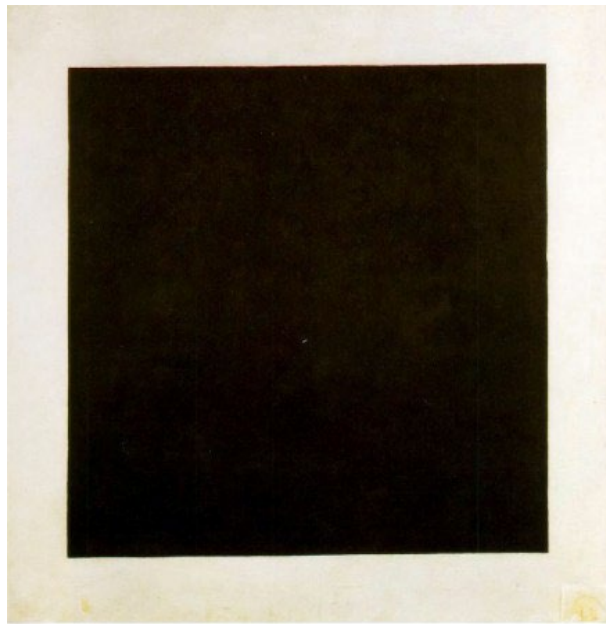


Figure 1: "Black Square on a White Background", created by Tony Smith

3. Tony Smith, the Pioneer of Minimalist Sculpture

Tony Smith is an American visual artist, architect, sculptor and a renowned literary theorist [3]. Tony Smith was trained as an architect, but went on to achieve astonishing success as a sculptor. To explore the power of simplicity in Tony Smith's sculptures, we come down to his career as an architect, working on a project led by architect Wright [4]. The building, called the Sonya, is clean, flat, has many corners, has no basement and stands directly above the ground. Wright took a fresh look at traditional architecture, emphasizing the importance of "serving people." At that time, Smith was influenced by the architectural style of Wright during the "Prairie Wind" period. He was fascinated by Wright's manipulation of geometric forms, and he continued to study the abstract geometric forms of Le Corbusier, Mies and Le Corbusier. Wright, le corbusier and mies is the representative figure of modernist architects, Smith influenced by modernism, so to speak, the traditional realism is difficult to express his inner complex feelings, not stick to one pattern of modernism conforms to the ideas of his soul, so his modernistic style buildings everywhere, revealed his thinking of human nature, for the thinking of social relations between people [5]. These thoughts also laid the ideological roots for his later paintings and sculptures. Smith had been deeply influenced by simplicity as an architect, and it is no wonder that in his later career as a sculptor, his works reveal the simplicity of simplicity.

4. The Power of Simplicity in Tony Smith's Sculpture

Here's an interesting fact in Smith's paintings and sculptures: As much as possible in order to rule out other factors besides painting an impact to the viewers, his paintings are mostly "untitled" name, but his sculpture is on the contrary, they have a simple name, such as "twisted", "arch", "the marriage", "cigarettes" and so on, some of these names are relevant to the subject matter and performance hint, some words, Through these fragmentary names, one can still see Smith's deep, abstract constitutive language.

The power of simplicity in Smith's sculptures is evident in the titles he gave to his works. Tony Smith's early sculpture creation from the distortion and deformation of the tetrahedron, "Cigarettes" (Fig.2). Smith is the creator of the first environmental sculpture, open structure of the angular, sculpture shape distortion but not mixed and disorderly, standing on the ground more feet strong, give a person the strong strength, additional simple very black. It has both the three-dimensional space of sculpture and the tall and upright structure of architecture. Smith found the perfect balance between sculpture and architecture. "Vigorous, honest and radiant", as mentioned in the classic Confucian book of Changes, is vividly expressed in this integrated work of architecture and sculpture. The complex and simplified shape is composed of simple cigarettes distorted and distorted, like lines interspersed in the physical space, the external is infinite void, the internal is a virtual space limited by the physical space frame. The transformation of the real and the virtual in the simple distortion and deformation of the perfect answer, carefully designed simple form in the transformation of space. This is not only a sculpture work, but also a building. When people visit it, they will be in a corner of their home, on a certain floor to feel the happiness accompanied by day and night, and then they will come to the vast void to experience the infinite beauty of tranquility. His sculpture inherits his consistent style as an architect, creating rich virtual space and real space with distortion and deformation, and manipulating geometric creations with ease. The whole work gives people succinct and clear, with a sense of majestic power, which makes people's mind return to tranquility and clarity.



Figure 2: "Cigarettes", created by Tony Smith

Smith's subsequent sculptures often embody the two centers of structural group and abstract logic, which inherit the main design ideas of modern architecture. In the form of expression, Smith's structure combination language tends to remove the structural materials of building laminates, roofing, walls and decorative buildings, while in the form of sculpture, it is shown as a minimalist physical structure. Eliminate all superfluous structures and go straight to the source, is Smith's answer. Abstract logic is Smith's own personal reflection on space, form and aesthetic theory. In 1962, Smith created "Free Ride" (Fig.3). This seemingly simple sculpture actually contains the scientific concept of three-dimensional coordinate axes X, Y and Z, which was once used by Ritvid in furniture design. At present, in the "Free Ride", the extremely simple expression of the form of the creation technique more reflects the philosophical deposits and spiritual pursuit hidden in the work. This technique is especially favored by modernist architecture and has been widely used in architectural design around the world. Similarly, Liu yuxi in tang dynasty "intelligent" performance is also the spirit of pursuit, even seemingly simple simple appearance, the reserves is a powerful spiritual force in people's heart, this power by contracted style show in front of people, and the earthly thing in the world vicissitudes of life of people is bound to be deeply moved.



Figure 3: "Free Ride", created by Tony Smith

Smith's life is accompanied by the power of simplicity. He has designed architecture, studied painting and finally pooled what he has learned in his life into sculpture, making his sculpture have a spiritual power of simplicity beyond materials, which is his thinking across many fields. He insists on his contracted power, the limit of his socialist sculpture is unchanged, as usual, abstract contracted form feeling, can say his art career and eventually across the virtual to real, across the inside and outside, across the people and objects in an abstract of the limit form of art thinking, aroused people's hearts with contracted force to lead people into the peaceful pure world. Smith moves freely among architecture, painting and sculpture, each of which is not limited to him, and each of which complements and complements each other, and the core of which is the constant power of simplicity. Art is interlinked. Among various categories of art, there is no single subject that affects the others. Music, painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, video and even more in the future will never be isolated from the beginning.

5. Conclusions

German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's famous saying 'Less is more' represents the core idea of minimalism. In fact, the spirit of simplicity has long been reflected in Chinese traditional culture. Lao Tzu once said: 'less is more, more is confusion'. Smith's sculptures are deeply rooted in the essence. The reason why his sculptures are moving is that no matter how chaotic the region is, I stand there, simple, and the environment does not affect us. We are the creators of our own environment. The simple power of the West is mostly reflected in the design, and the simple power of China has penetrated into the soul of the whole Chinese nation, which has been perfectly interpreted in China's cultural life, artistic thinking, and philosophical ideals. Simplicity is a style of art, but not limited to art or design, it is a philosophy, a value, a power to wash people's hearts.

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