

The Pink World of Prudence Flint

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Abstract: Prudence Flint is a female painter living and working in Melbourne, whose paintings are characterized by extremely bright pastel shades and slightly exaggerated female nudes. The gentle serenity that is unique to women from a female perspective is brought out in her images. She portrays ordinary women in a variety of interior spaces, showing the beauty of their bodies deliberately reshaped and sculpted, while the backgrounds are rendered with transcendent simplicity and comforting colors. This paper takes several key works of Flint's since her career and her oral interviews as references and explores how Flint's attitude towards patriarchal society is expressed through the manifestation of "femininity" in her paintings, in combination with the theories related to Western dualism and feminist thinking.

Keywords: Femininity, Dualism, Radical Cultural Feminism, Social Construction.

1. Introduction

Prudence Flint has her studio in Melbourne, which is the main location for her artwork. She has kept a diary since she was 19 years old, which influences her artwork now, she will always scribble down her latest artistic creation in pencil drafts, and then leave it to rest for a month, after which Flint decides whether it is necessary for the painting to be rendered onto canvas through her judgment. Now 62 years old, Flint began her painting career in 1989, and in 2003 Flint's series, *The Library Series*, was released, marking the maturity of her artistic style.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. Death by Pink

Prudence Flint is a very active and self-disciplined artist, she began in 2003, with an average of three to six works per year at the rate of output, a look at Flint's work will show that the pink hue is the soul of Flint's art, almost every piece of her work is wrapped in a kind of pink halo under the product of Flint's paintings, in the end, the pink color is a kind of identity, is it a way for painters to pour out the secret of a young girl's heart or is it a kind of rebel spirit of women against patriarchy under the social construction? In Flint's paintings, what kind of identity does the color pink play? Is it a way for the painter to pour out the secrets of a young girl's heart, or is it a kind of rebellious spirit of women against patriarchy under the social construction? We can explore this question from the allegory of "femininity" under social construction and the logic of Flint's art.

First of all, what is "femininity"[1] is a very grand concept, which I will try to express from the surface meaning and social construction level. In terms of surface meaning, femininity is the stereotypical qualities of women such as tolerance, rationality, harmony, emotionality, vulnerability, narcissism, over-indulgence, etc., which are projected by society; in terms of social construction, femininity is the discourse created by "patriarchal" society and culture to respond to women's identities and status, and the social and cultural backgrounds of different times create different discourses to reflect women's identity and status. The social and cultural background of different times creates different

cultural semantics of femininity culture, which is often opposed to masculinity.

Secondly, Flint introduced the religious dualism internalized by Western culture into the logic of her paintings, which is similar to the thinking of many feminist scholars, and similar to the famous psychoanalytic feminist Dorothy Dinerstein[2]'s emphasis on breaking down the social dualism, i.e., the oppression of women by men, so that women can be truly emancipated. Flint believes that color is a coded message, and that color has multiple meanings in different cultures. Pink is a witness to intimacy, the color of watered-down blood, and her work tells the story of her past: the life of a girl growing up in the 1960s in a suburb of Melbourne, Australia. Flint says that "pink is a false promise and violent denial, it is the opposite of blue or army green", and that in her life pink was the color of patriarchal repression, and army green was the color that everyone touted. It stands to reason that in a capitalist patriarchal society, pink plays the role of a "gender symbol," embodying the dichotomy of color.

This dualism was interpreted by Flint as the oppression of pink by military green and blue. It is the same as the feminist dualism: the oppression of men over women. Pink symbolizes femininity in Flint's paintings, so the more pink her paintings become, the more "feminine" they become, and the more they have the spirit of rebellion against patriarchy.

2.2. The "Femininity" in Flint's Paintings

According to the previous discussion, the degree of "pink" in Flint's art determines the degree of femininity in his art, and the higher the degree is, the higher the Flint's anti-depreciation thought is. Below we analyze the "femininity" of Flint's art from several major features of his paintings.

2.2.1. Unchanging Female Protagonist

The protagonists of all Flint's artworks are women, she said that the reason why she started to paint was because she wanted to paint women, and the reason for Flint's tendency to form a fixed content of paintings mainly came from two aspects. One is from her mother. 1962 Flint was born in a Melbourne suburb in a family of six, her mother worked hard to raise her and her four brothers grow up, and in her memory, her mother was always strong and restrained, in 2016 Flint's mother was critically ill during the period, she created the

work of "bedside" to express the nostalgia of her mother, her father was always a powerful image of suppression, he denied Flint's career. Childhood experiences led Flint to take a neutral stance on childbearing; she had made it clear that she would never have children, nor would she envy women who did, as she had seen firsthand how hard her mother had worked to raise several of their children to adulthood.

The second aspect comes from her recognition of her female identity. First and foremost Flint was proud of her female identity, she was passionate about dressing up and photographing herself, and early on she gained inspiration for her work by depicting her own body. From her teenage years, Flint was obsessed with American movies, fashion magazines, and women's novels. She liked female protagonists who were multi-faceted and courageous enough to step out of the crowd to fulfill their dreams, and in 1989, she made friends with many outstanding women in VCA, including Kate Dow, the current head of painting in VCA Art, and from this time onwards, she confirmed the subject of her paintings to be women.

2.2.2. Building an Intimate Female Space

Most of Flint's protagonists are nude women who are engaged in some more intimate activities indoors or outdoors. Under what circumstances would a woman choose to be nude? Certainly only when she is in a space of extreme relaxation and privacy. Libertarian Carl Petro, in *The Problem of Political Obligation: A Critique of Libertarian Theory*[3], refers to the private sphere as a "special, subjugating, natural, emotional, and emotionally biased space.

emotional, and emotionally biased" world. Flint has expressed her commitment to building an unadorned private sphere for women that is open to the male gaze.

2.2.3. Sculptural Female Body

Flint was influenced by the simplicity of the early Renaissance, her human body is presented in a tall, plasticized, sculptural state, the head occupies a small part of the body, in addition, all the female protagonists have a wide crotch, a strong female characteristics, but Flint has made it clear that this does not mean that she worships the female reproduction, and the crotch width does not only mean that it is suitable for reproduction.

2.2.4. Pink Skin

Flint realized that throughout the history of Western painting whether the female protagonist is intentional or unclothed, are full of blind and heavy meaning, so she tends to the bottom of the female figure to a pure state of nudity, when a white woman presents the state of nudity, her skin will appear pink.

2.2.5. Restrained Images and Compositions

In Flint's paintings, there are often apples, bananas, sticks, books, and other "female objects" with special meanings, which are scattered in various places in the space, serving to balance the picture, but in addition to the role of these objects - the role of the female figure as a woman, Flint explains, as a woman who is a woman of color. Flint explains that as a devout Christian, apples, and sticks often symbolize the original sin of women. These objects are quite symbolic, but when placed in a feminist context, they make the image more feminine, which is the effect Flint wanted to present. Flint and her emphasis on the stability and balance of the image, and her fear of losing control of the image comes from her imitation of her mother's stereotypical character and her love of early Renaissance painting.

2.2.6. Montage-like Narratives

Flint was artistically influenced by Edward Hopper[4], Alex Katz[5], and Jocelyn Hobbie[6], all of whom often focused on single portraits. Edward Hopper in particular had the greatest influence on Flint.

Edward Hopper was the most popular American popular and realist painter of the 20th century. His style of depicting disturbing and alienating images of modern society has been called "Hopperian," and it is often used to describe scenes of unbearable tension and desolation. He also focuses on color and mood changes under light and shadow and is good at using strong contrasts of light and darkness, empty single rooms, or solitary figures to suggest the calmness and detachment of modern life. His representative works include *Nightingale*, *Vending Machine*, and *Night Window*. Hopper's art of light and shadow, composition and alienation, and uneasy picture effect have inspired a lot of filmmakers, the most famous of which is Hitchcock to Hopper's "Night Window" as the inspiration for the thriller film "Rear Window".

Flint drew on the montage camera sense of Hopper's picture, whose paintings and studies can be understood as montages of sequentially disjointed or contingent scene dispatches created by the artist with her characteristic palette of pastel shades. Flint's female protagonists are constantly engaged in seemingly mundane activities tinged with obscurity. In addition, "Hopper's style" can also be found in Flint's work. In Flint's 2016 work *Bedside*, a woman lies on a bed staring blankly ahead, her eyes like stagnant water, with no ripples or intersections with anything else, and in the logic of Flint's paintings, the figure does not interact with the viewer, the whole picture is like a sudden pause. In the logic of Flint's painting, the figure does not interact with the viewer, and the whole picture looks like a frame of a movie that has been suddenly paused. The other woman has her back to the viewer and is facing the man on the bed. Flint explains that this is a transcendentalist work, as she was taking care of her dying mother, and the scene came to her in a trance in her sleep, and that her mother was not old and sickly, which confirms the reason why the woman on the bed looks young. Flint brought to the picture the alienation of life at that time, and the doll thrown on the floor is proof of her farewell to her mother.



Figure 1. two or more references

2.3. The Voice of Pink Rebellion under the Discourse of Patriarchy

As a feminist painter, Prudence Flint never chose a direct anti-patriarchal subject as the theme of her picture. But we can still see her challenge to patriarchy in many ways.

Many believe that feminists who seek equal rights for men and women will tend to be more masculine in character and behavior, forming an androgynous "neutrality". For example, the terms "tomboy" and "womanizer" have emerged from this social phenomenon, which is indeed one of the feminist trends. In fact, since the first wave of feminism in the West, feminism has split into various ideological groups that share a common goal but have different ideas. share a common goal but have different ideological programs.

The language of Flint's art is more in favor of radical cultural feminism[7]. Unlike radical liberal feminism, which advocates that women should abandon "femininity" in favor of "masculinity," cultural feminists, although they share with liberal feminists the belief that inequality between men and women comes from patriarchalism. Although both cultural feminists and liberal feminists believed that the inequality between men and women in society stemmed from patriarchy's confusion of sex and gender, they gradually split into two camps. However, they gradually split into two camps. In contrast to the liberals, the cultural feminists believed that women seeking equality first had to recognize their femininity, ignoring the dualistic constructed theories of false definers (and in turn patriarchal advocates) of femininity, such as that women are supposed to be so-and-so-so they are naturally weak, while men are supposed to lead and oppress women.

Flint begins by affirming her femininity by embracing her body, with its wide but unsuitable for childbirth waist and crotch, unshaven armpits, and unkempt movements at their most comfortable and ease. Finally, Flint uses the most feminine label "pink" throughout her work, as the soul of Flint's art, the pink halo represents her reaction to patriarchal

society.

3. Conclusion

We analyzed the artistic characteristics of Flint Prudence's works, identified several major features of his painting, and attempted to construct the relationship between his painting characteristics and feminine temperament, ultimately revealing the anti patriarchal aspect of Flint Prudence's painting.

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References

- [1] From Kenneth J. Gergen. Social Construction in Context.
- [2] From Dorothy Dinnerstein The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise,Pages 124 to 134.
- [3] According to Carol Peterman, the private sphere is a world of "particularity, conquest, inequality, nature, emotion, love, and favoritism." See Carol Peterman, The Problem of Political Obligation: A Critique of Liberal Theory, p. 190.
- [4] As America's most popular popular painter of the 20th century known for his rustic and realistic style, Edward Hopper, the painter created his most brilliant works during the period 1925 ~ 1950.
- [5] Contemporary American portraitist who favors abstraction and paints mostly women.
- [6] Contemporary female painter from New York, USA, whose images are characterized by high brightness and saturated colors.
- [7] From Rosemarie Putnam Tong's Introduction to Women's Thought, page 71.