

# Research on the Value Orientation of Artistic Creation in the Context of Urban Culture

Zichun Jin

Graduate University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 11000, Mongolia

---

**Abstract:** The rise of urbanization marks the arrival of contemporary urban cultural life, which not only satisfies the material consumption of the masses, but also gives birth to people's spiritual consumption demands. As a kind of spiritual consumption, art consumption has shown strong vitality. Under the influence of various factors today, the value orientation of works of art is developing in the direction of popularization, entertainment and secularization. When faced with choices, art creators should not passively cater to the cultural market, but should keep the bottom line of art and create excellent works worthy of the great nation and the great era.

**Keywords:** Urban Culture, Value Orientation, Artworks.

---

## 1. Introduction

The rapid development of science and technology and the rapid development of the market economy have indicated the growth rate of China's modernization process, which has brought about earth-shaking changes in people's living and consumption patterns in a short period of time. With the expansion and popularization of urbanization, the public has begun to move towards a fast-paced urban life. All this not only satisfies material consumption, but also makes people gradually begin to pay attention to spiritual consumption. As a result, the cultural and artistic industry quickly became an important part of the market economy system and was incorporated into the marketing strategy of art products [1]. As the object of mass spiritual consumption, its communication channels are mainly sensory consumption, especially audio-visual, so the consumption concept of audio-visual has become the motivation for the creation of literary and artistic products. For the current art market, how to attract audiences through audio-visual stimulation is the primary question to be considered.

The value trend of works of art in urban culture. The current urban context is influencing the public all the time. Although urban life provides people with an unprecedented material foundation, they also obscure people's aspirations for the future, and at the same time, they also cut off the hearts and minds that can communicate with each other. The continuous replication and expansion of cities and the dependence on electronic products have made people in this era live in virtual reality, and the repeated life and repeated mental exhaustion have produced indelible psychological anxiety [2]. Due to the inability to change the demands of real life, people rely more on the satisfaction of the virtual world to fill the sense of emptiness and loss in reality. For investors in art products, only by catering to people's tendency to consume the senses can they produce economic benefits, and when the keen art market sniffs out this general demand of the public, a competition for the purpose of pursuing sensory stimulation begins. In the current information age, the development of new media and the coverage of the Internet have undoubtedly greatly promoted the expansion and growth of this kind of commercial competition and sensory consumption, urging the development of artworks in the direction of popularization,

entertainment, and secularization.

## 2. Popularization of Works of Art

Contemporary art, represented by new media, has dissolved the boundary between elite art and popular art. Artists that once required ten, twenty, or even a lifetime of cultivation have lost their elite status in the face of new media art such as photography, installation, and concept. The birth of new media art has made art directly cross the cultivation of techniques, which has lowered the threshold and difficulty of becoming an artist. For example, for an art lover, it is far easier to take an artistic portrait than to create a realistic portrait. After all, the former only requires a camera and related portrait photography skills, while the latter requires a lot of money, time and effort. New media art has made it possible for "everyone to be an artist", and has made the production and consumption of art more accessible and participatory.

## 3. Entertainment of Works of Art

In 2011, the main theme movie "Yang Shanzhou", a model of the Acura era, and the American sci-fi action movie "Transformers 3" were released at the same time. As a result, the total box office of the former was only the box office of the latter for one day of release. Obviously, at present, even if the former stars the famous Chinese actor Li Xuejian, compared with such an educational theme movie, people are more inclined to the latter's audio-visual stimulation and enjoyment. The art products of this era have lost their historical baggage of didactic effect and have begun to appear in people's lives as a kind of entertainment consumption.

This kind of entertainment spiritual consumption is not only reflected in the art of film, it has infiltrated all areas of audiovisual consumption. In the art works dominated by visual arts, due to the proliferation of electronic images, the normalized artistic composition and modeling are far from being able to eliminate the aesthetic fatigue caused by electronic images, so many creators will focus on how to show the charm of the schema and how to create the impact of abnormal beauty, it seems that only in this way can people's eyes be stimulated and they can get a short visual shock. In the same way, in music works that focus on auditory art, the

only way to evoke people's numb and empty sense of emptiness in urban life is through auditory stimulation. Therefore, online saliva songs with strong rhythm and super high pitch have become the "spice of life" in people's hearing. This kind of sensory stimulation can indeed make people feel satisfied in an instant, however, no matter how strong the sensory satisfaction is, it is short-lived, and it cannot make up for the long-term spiritual emptiness and loss, and the strong contrast between the two may also exacerbate the expansion of this negative emotion. Such works of art are more like stimulant "spiritual opium", making people go back and forth between insatiability and increased dependence.

#### **4. Secularization of Works of Art**

Secularization is another significant feature of contemporary literary and artistic creation, which means abandoning the high-profile expression of ideals, sacredness, feelings and other spirits, and turning to ridicule, entertainment, utilitarianism and other ways. Commercialized visual aesthetics unconsciously change people's aesthetic value orientation. The "beauty" pursued by business is not the spiritual "beauty", it still belongs to the category of sensory stimulation. For example, the current public's consumption of celebrity faces, although it is not excluded that some young star actors are both talented and beautiful, but the focus of people's attention is still on appearance, they often pay attention to their works because of the appearance or figure of the actors, but rarely pay attention to people because of the excellent works, this phenomenon is very rare for the old performing artists of the last century. The colonial commercial aesthetic takes "beauty" as the perceptual manifestation of desire, constantly teasing people's desire for "beauty", and seducing people to "bravely" cut off the spiritual shackles and boldly look at and embrace the desire of reality.

The entertainment and secularization of the spiritual consumption of urban life imply the loss of artistic and humanistic care and the disintegration of the social and spiritual dimension in the past. People have never paid so much attention to the mundane and the self as they do now, and works of art are gradually moving towards the unique taste and mood of "petty bourgeoisie", and this kind of kitsch literary and artistic works with popular tendencies may be the inevitable product of the birth of urban life with rich material conditions.

#### **5. The Reasons for the Trend of Artistic Creation Value under Urban Culture**

Compared with the last century, technology has created unique conditions for the creation and dissemination of art today, and the invention of photography has provided us with a new vision and made up for the instantaneous image information that cannot be obtained by the naked eye. With the advent of the electronic information age and the comprehensive coverage of the Internet, art creators have more convenient ways to obtain and disseminate knowledge. This was supposed to provide a bridge for the further development of artistic creation. Interestingly, the truth is the opposite, compared with the last century, the era of many masters seems to be gone forever, and the current art as a whole presents a phenomenon of lack of quantity and quality, plateau and peak[3]. These works often have more and more

complex and gorgeous sensory stimulation, but there is a trend of overall decline at the level of artistic thought and spirit, and the reasons behind it are mainly manifested in four aspects: one is the neglect of the spirit of the times in artistic creation, the second is the excessive dependence of artistic creation on science and technology, the third is the embarrassment of artistic creation in the information age, and the fourth is the penetration of commercial marketing strategies in the consumer era.

#### **5.1. Artistic Creation Ignores the Spirit of the Times**

As a high-level summary of the core and essence of modern civilization, the spirit of the times represents the unique advanced development direction, ideological concepts and humanistic qualities of this society, and is the profound embodiment of the imprint of this great era on the spiritual level of all members of society, reflecting the most noble value pursuit of contemporary people [4]. Looking back at the history of the development of Chinese art, those works or figures that can occupy a place in history often reflect the background and spiritual outlook of the times at a certain level. Therefore, outstanding works of art often have the spirit of the times in a specific historical period, while works of art that ignore the spirit of the times are in danger of being divorced from the times and the people.

The context of urban culture is changing the face of our lives, building a new social life, and reshaping the thinking and spiritual outlook of contemporary people. While satisfying various needs in our lives, it also triggers the displacement and extension of artistic creation in the direction of ideology, expression, creative means and artistic pursuit. To a certain extent, this trend is indeed conducive to the blossoming of art and the contention of a hundred schools of thought, but at the same time, it will also lead to the phenomenon of alienation from the purpose and value orientation of contemporary aesthetics, especially in the current urban life that focuses on sensory stimulation. Its main manifestations are: staying away from traditional charm, excessive self-pursuit, indifference to humanistic care, and detachment from mainstream artistic thought. Although these phenomena are the characteristics of the emancipation and progress of the mind since the reform and opening up, they have also reduced the taste and style of art. The trend of popularization, entertainment and secularization has led to superficiality and impetuosity in artistic creation to a certain extent.

#### **5.2. Artistic Creation is Overly Dependent on Technology**

There is no doubt that today's technology has been deeply integrated into people's lives and consumption. Whether it's online shopping, attending concerts across geographies, or watching a movie, technology is everywhere, and it greatly facilitates people's lives. However, the problem is that while accepting and enjoying the convenience brought by technology, people are gradually becoming dependent on technology, and art creators are no exception. Too high a high level of technology often weakens the artistry of creation, as far as the current annual Spring Festival Gala is concerned, its scientific and technological content is increasing year by year. The stage created by technology is becoming more and more visually stunning, but the excessive emphasis on audio-visual sensory stimulation weakens the artistic appeal of the

performers, and even if the performers' performances are perfect, they are often dominated by the audio-visual environment created by technology.

This dependence on technology is particularly evident in the field of fine arts, which is dominated by visual arts. From the point of view of the plastic art of figure creation, the invention of photography has indeed provided creators with an unprecedented new visual field, and at the same time has provided a wide range of materials for the creation of large-scale figure paintings, but today's painters are suspected of relying too much on photography. Contemporary figure painting creations more or less show traces of transformation by electronic information images. The relationship between the characters is based on the simple cutting and patchwork relationship under the law of formal composition, although the image has the elements of realistic shaping, but it lacks the fullness and tension of European classical modeling. The popularization of photographs has made it possible for contemporary painters to effortlessly transfer photographic images onto drawing paper, thus ignoring the most basic training in modeling, which is a common problem in the figure modeling of contemporary art creators. The photographs imaged by the convex lens are not the same as the human figures, and the pictures only record the moment of objective facts at a certain moment, or the instantaneous projection of the three-dimensional image in the two-dimensional plane, which contains great chance and one-sidedness. As a special narrative method, character modeling should have the characteristics of time extension, and the momentary actions of the characters in the picture should contain the viewer's imagination space before or after the action, which is typical and dramatic. It should not be a reproduction of a photograph, but a reproduction of the reality of an ideal aestheticism that cannot be seen but should be seen according to the laws of human body form.

The development of science and technology has indeed provided unprecedented impetus and support for the development of art, and for art, it should be a tool that can fully reflect the inner spirit and emotional expression of artists, so as to promote artists to better achieve self-transcendence, and should not be used as a shortcut for artists to be lazy. Otherwise, this act of putting art and technology before the horse will inevitably lead to a decline in artistic taste.

### **5.3. The Embarrassment of Artistic Creation in the Information Age**

Since China's entry into the global economic cycle, the world has brought not only many economic development opportunities, but also contemporary art represented by new media art such as installation, performance, and concept, which has caused unavoidable new problems for the development of contemporary Chinese art. Under the influence of this type of art, the non-artistic attributes of art, such as political thought, social value, emotional life, etc., are gradually stripped away and replaced by the exploration of art ontology, and the focus of such artworks is often on the aesthetic pursuit of visual forms. How to create a novel visual experience and how to create a visually impactful artwork have become the motivation and value standard of artists. After all, in the era of "fast-food" spiritual consumption, few people will patiently study the deep ideological and cultural connotations of the works.

At the same time, the boom of new media art has dissolved the boundary between art and the public, making art have the

characteristics of "popularization", which has blurred the boundary between "producer" and "consumer" of art, and "everyone is an artist"[1] has made the threshold of art lower and lower. The Internet is flooded with too many "artists" with a huge number of followers, who are happy to post one after another videos full of brainwashing sensory stimulation to attract popularity and traffic. In a society with developed networks, overnight success does not seem to be out of reach for ordinary people, and perhaps a short video they shoot casually can become popular all over the Internet, and then generate huge profits. This is an age of quick success and timely pleasure, and everything in the world has never been more important to people.

The electronic information age has made the dissemination of information cheap, and information has even filled all corners of people's lives, and this cheap way of communication is not friendly to art creators. For the public, it is easy for them to enjoy an artistic performance by one of the world's top singers through the Internet. This cheap way of acquiring art has made the public's eyes more and more critical. For the average artist, the possibility of creating a work that surpasses the top artists is almost zero, so it is helpless to use audiovisual stimulation to attract the audience, after all, it is easier to create works with sensual tension than to create works of high quality. However, works that only have sensual tension are often limited to the level of sensory stimulation and cannot touch people's souls, so there is no need to talk about the sublimation of ideas. Compared to the essence of human art history, they are more like fast food garbage such as fried chicken burgers, which only produce pleasure when they are eaten, and bring about the cumulative damage.

The oversaturation of artistic products has caused the public's audiovisual threshold to continue to rise, and even some numbness. In their opinion, the art of the top masters is not as gravitational as the cheesy jokes. Such environmental changes have made the public's literary and artistic consumption orientation gradually develop in the direction of secularization, entertainment, and sensualization. Even if art creators have the ability to create high-quality works, how many people are willing to buy them? Many of China's outstanding artists often have a larger audience on the Internet than a small Internet celebrity, and this trend of artistic creation in the information age implies a little helplessness on the part of creators.

### **5.4. The Penetration of Commercial Marketing Strategies in the Consumer era**

As a kind of consumption, art products have a strong market attribute, and will naturally be incorporated into commercial marketing strategies. In a sense, the era of consumption is an era of sensory enjoyment, and any artistic product must revolve around sensory stimulation. Therefore, artistic products, like all material products, must be able to create profits, so how to cater to the aesthetic tastes of the public has become the primary motivation for literary and artistic creation. For capitalists, it is not enough to be able to generate profits, they want to achieve the highest profits at the least cost, so they do not think about whether the works of art they create will benefit the public, but how to attract them. With the help of commercial marketing strategies, art products that rely purely on sensory stimulation have encroached on the spiritual territory of literature and art, and works of art have gradually lost their function of cultivating

people's spiritual sentiments and become a tool for capitalists to extract profits. The penetration of commercial marketing strategies has amplified people's secular desire for sensual needs, forcing literature and art to make spiritual concessions to capital, and at the same time, a large number of art creators have also become "prostitutes" for the profits of capitalists.

## 6. Conclusion

In the context of contemporary urban culture, art consumption pervades all corners of life, whether it is listening to music on the subway, going to the movies in their spare time, or going to art museums to watch art exhibitions, people are consciously or unconsciously consuming art. This kind of consumption is so important to people, but it is now trending towards entertainment and secularization. Compared with watching an opera in a concert hall, people are more willing to use their mobile phones to watch short videos with audio-visual stimulation.

With the development of science and technology and the advent of the network era, this kind of consumption has become more and more convenient, as long as you have a mobile phone, people can get spiritual satisfaction without leaving home. For people, excessive sensory consumption brings about the emptiness of the virtual world and the reduction of dopamine secretion. For marketing, if you want to have more revenue in the era of information explosion, you need to constantly refresh the lower limit of the audience's audio-visual threshold to obtain higher clicks and playbacks. As a result, the pursuit of exciting literary and artistic consumer products has gradually become the creative motive and purpose of marketing. Recreational products that stimulate dopamine production have become the focus of public attention. Under this vicious circle, the orientation of artistic creation and consumption has gradually changed. In order to achieve higher ratings, some music competition programs have become treble competitions, and it seems that whoever can soar high will be favored by mentors and audiences. The music program has been turned into an extreme competition similar to sports. Art works compete with each other about who is better at making the work and who has the more visual impact. Under the two-way choice of conscious guidance of market cultural marketing and unconscious consumption of the public, the entertainment and secularization of art consumption seem to be inevitable.

Of course, as a part of the public, art workers are understandable, and they also need some secular utilitarian comfort, which is also a manifestation of their self-worth in society. However, it is necessary to be vigilant that creators should not lose themselves in the commercial trend, and carry out vulgar or even disgusting creations by unscrupulous means in order to obtain commercial value, such as: all kinds

of evil fun hunting videos, violent anti-social illustrations, absurd art performances, etc. In contemporary times, although such works may bring high traffic and high income to creators in a short period of time, the spiritual pollution it brings to the people will exist for a long time.

It is not difficult to see from the art creation in recent years that there are also some art that caters to the market, and these works often have their own personality. The creator seems to pay more attention to the monologue of his inner world, and the abnormal form or image shaping is mixed with metaphors from the subjective perspective of the individual, which seems to have a very profound ideological connotation, and seems to be a profound moan of innocence. They tend to be more self-absorbed and don't care about what the masses think. Here, the author does not intend to criticize this kind of work, which is often exploratory and innovative, and has a high threshold for art appreciation, but it is far from "the art of the people". However, the creation of "people's art" does not mean that academic standards should be lowered to cater to the current aesthetic preferences of the public, but that the sociological value of the work should be enhanced in the creation of individuality. The sensory stimuli are ephemeral and insignificant, and only those typical arts that can deeply reflect the connotation of society and form a certain internal relationship with social life have a lasting and shocking power.

In fact, the aesthetic orientation of popular art is the result of the combined effect of the changes in social life and the production and operation of the cultural market, they do not have the right to choose, they can only passively accept all these changes, so as literary and artistic workers should be more cautious in artistic creation, keep their bottom line under the erosion of the commercial market, pay attention to the needs of the people, pay attention to the spirit of the times, reflect the voice of the people, and strive for excellence.

## References

- [1] Shang Hui. *The 20th Century: An Aesthetic Vision of a Nation* [M]. Sichuan: Sichuan Fine Arts Publishing House, 2008: 32, 160-170.
- [2] Shang Hui. *Between: An Aesthetic Narrative Through History* [M]. Hebei: Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, 2013: 165-166.
- [3] Xi Jinping. *Speech at the Forum on Literary and Artistic Work* [N]. *People's Daily*, 2015-10-15(2).
- [4] Zhong Chengxiang. *Several Biases in Current Literary and Artistic Concepts and Creations* [J]. *Red Flag Manuscript*, 2018(19): 24-26.
- [5] Shang Hui. *The Dramatic Nature of Painting Art* [J]. *Chinese Oil Painting*, 2018(01): 20.
- [6] Mao Zedong. *Speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* [N]. *Liberation Daily*, 1943-10-19.