The Aesthetic Development of Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting in Contemporary Landscape Painting

Lu Xing*, Haslinda Abd. Razak, Liza Marziana Binti Mohammad Noh

College of Creative Art, University Teknologi MARA, Malacca, 78000, Malaysia *Corresponding author

Keywords: Chinese landscape painting, contemporary cultural context, aesthetic reshaping

Abstract: This paper aims to explore the aesthetic development of Chinese traditional landscape painting in contemporary art. Through an in-depth analysis of 20 selected artworks from the 13th National Art Exhibition, this study reveals the key characteristics of aesthetic changes in contemporary landscape painting, focusing on the content update and theme change, the innovation of techniques and expression forms, and the evolution of style and aesthetic features. The findings indicate that contemporary landscape painters actively seek an organic integration of traditional and modern elements, striving for a harmonious fusion of traditional aesthetics and contemporary sensibilities. They embrace innovative subject matter and modes of expression, showcasing the integration and collision of diverse cultures, as well as personalized artistic expressions and emotional communication. Moreover, artists emphasize the preservation and development of tradition, combining innovation with heritage to infuse new vitality into Chinese landscape painting. This research holds significant theoretical implications for the development of Chinese landscape painting. It highlights the importance of striking a balance between innovation and tradition in contemporary art, as well as the significance of individualized expression and emotional communication. Additionally, this study provides new insights and impetus for the global promotion of Chinese landscape painting on the international stage. Through an in-depth investigation of these key characteristics, this research provides concrete theoretical support and empirical analysis for the aesthetic development of contemporary Chinese landscape painting. It not only contributes to the innovation and preservation of Chinese landscape painting but also enhances the global recognition and understanding of Chinese art within the field of art appreciation.

1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese landscape painting, as a unique form of painting in Chinese art history, possesses a rich historical background and distinctive aesthetic value [1]. With the advancement of globalization and the increasing exchange of art between China and the West, traditional landscape painting has gradually gained attention in artistic practice and theoretical research. However, in this process, the aesthetics of traditional landscape painting have been transformed by the contemporary cultural context, facing numerous challenges and issues [2]. These challenges include how to achieve innovation and transformation while inheriting the aesthetics of traditional landscape

painting, how to integrate contemporary cultural context and artistic forms into landscape painting creation, and how to enhance the influence of landscape painting art on the international stage. Consequently, exploring the preservation and promotion of the characteristics and value of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary artistic creation has become an issue worthy of attention and resolution [3].

This study aims to investigate the development of Chinese traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary landscape painting creation. By examining the connotations and characteristics of traditional landscape painting aesthetics, the aesthetic changes and challenges of landscape painting in the contemporary cultural context, and the reshaping of Chinese traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary landscape painting creation, this study seeks to explore the new developments and directions of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary artistic creation.

To answer these questions, this research will employ research methods such as literature analysis, case studies, and comparative analysis to conduct an in-depth analysis of contemporary Chinese landscape painting aesthetics development.

In summary, this article will explore the background, significance, objectives, and issues of contemporary Chinese landscape painting aesthetics development, providing strong theoretical support for the development of traditional landscape painting in contemporary artistic creation. Additionally, it will offer profound insights into the trends and challenges of contemporary landscape painting aesthetics development for researchers, artists, and educators in related fields, contributing to the maintenance and inheritance of the unique aesthetic value and spiritual connotations of traditional landscape painting art.

2. Literature Review

Based on the research questions, researchers will conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the theories and studies related to the reshaping and development of Chinese traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary landscape painting creation. The literature analysis focuses on three aspects, aiming to establish the theoretical foundation of this research and provide support for further empirical analysis. The main content of the literature review is as follows:

2.1 Traditional Landscape Painting Aesthetics: Theory and Practice

Chinese traditional landscape painting is an important component of Chinese culture and art, with a long history and unique aesthetic characteristics. The connotations and characteristics of traditional landscape painting aesthetics are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

First, traditional landscape painting emphasizes the expression of artistic conception, focusing on the painter's perception and understanding of natural scenery, rather than simple depiction [4]. Through the use of brush and ink and the design of the composition, painters express their emotional cognition and spiritual pursuit of natural scenery, allowing viewers to appreciate the profound artistic conception and emotions.

Second, traditional landscape painting emphasizes the use of brush and ink. The application of brush and ink in traditional landscape painting is its unique aesthetic feature. Traditional landscape painting requires a variety of changes, and multiple layers, and focuses on the depth of ink color, the rhythm of ink atmosphere, and the simplicity and clarity of lines. Painters express the changes and charm of natural scenery through the use of brush and ink, allowing viewers to appreciate a fascinating beauty [5].

Third, traditional landscape painting emphasizes the design of composition. The composition design of traditional landscape painting requires rigor and precision, focusing on the balance and

rhythm of the picture, as well as the sense of space and hierarchy [6]. Through the design of the composition, viewers can appreciate a tranquil and beautiful sense of space.

Finally, traditional landscape painting emphasizes the expression of literati temperament. Traditional landscape painting stresses the painter's literati temperament and spiritual pursuit, seeking an elegant and profound cultural atmosphere [7]. Painters express their literati temperament and spiritual pursuit through brush and ink, composition, and inscriptions, allowing viewers to appreciate an elegant and profound cultural atmosphere.

In summary, traditional landscape painting aesthetics feature profound artistic conception, unique brush and ink application, rigorous composition design, and an elegant cultural atmosphere. These characteristics not only form an essential component of Chinese culture and art but also represent a unique artistic expression of Chinese landscape painting in the world.

2.2 Relationship between Traditional Landscape Painting Aesthetics and Contemporary Cultural Context

The connotations and characteristics of traditional landscape painting aesthetics mainly manifest in the depiction of natural scenery and the expression of human emotions, emphasizing the creation of "artistic conception" and the conveyance of "qi and rhyme." However, with the rapid development of contemporary society and the trend of cultural diversification, the inheritance and development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics have been greatly influenced and challenged.

In the contemporary cultural context, people's aesthetic concepts and demands for landscape painting have undergone significant changes. Some scholars believe that people's attention to real life and the pursuit of personalized aesthetics have led to the diversity and innovation of expression techniques and styles among landscape painting artists [8]. Simultaneously, with the development of technology and the advent of the digital age, landscape painting artists have also begun to use new media and technologies for creation, such as 3D printing and virtual reality. The application of these new technologies brings new possibilities and imaginative space to the aesthetic experience of landscape painting.

In conclusion, the relationship between traditional landscape painting aesthetics and contemporary cultural context is interdependent and mutually influential. The connotations and characteristics of traditional landscape painting aesthetics provide important references and inspirations for contemporary landscape painting creation [9], while the changes and developments in the contemporary cultural context also pose new challenges and requirements for the inheritance and development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics. Therefore, contemporary landscape painting artists need to inherit and develop traditional landscape painting aesthetics, innovate expression techniques and styles, pay attention to personalized and diversified aesthetic needs, and continuously explore the application of new media and technologies. By doing so, they can inject new vitality and momentum into the development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in the contemporary cultural context.

2.3 Contemporary Landscape Painting Aesthetics: Changes and Challenges

As contemporary culture continues to develop and change, Chinese landscape painting aesthetics are also facing new challenges and transformations. In the contemporary cultural context, people's aesthetic standards and demands for beauty have changed significantly. Traditional landscape painting aesthetics are considered ancient, conservative, and outdated, while new aesthetic trends focus more on personalization and diversification [10]. Therefore, landscape painting artists need to constantly adjust and adapt to the contemporary cultural context to meet the aesthetic needs of today's audience.

Additionally, with the continuous development of urbanization and the intensification of environmental pollution, people's attention to the natural environment is increasing. In this context, landscape painting has been assigned more social responsibility and cultural mission [11]. Some scholars believe that landscape painting artists need to convey their care and protection for the natural environment through their works, calling on people to cherish natural resources and the ecological environment more [12].

At the same time, the status of landscape painting in the contemporary art market has also changed. Some scholars argue that due to the commercialization and internationalization trends of the contemporary art market, the market value and influence of landscape painting have gradually weakened [13]. Therefore, landscape painting artists need to seek new creative methods and expression techniques to improve the artistic value and market competitiveness of their works.

In conclusion, the reshaping and development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary landscape painting creation is a complex and multi-dimensional subject. Based on the inheritance and development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics, contemporary landscape painting artists need to create new expression techniques and styles, focus on personalized and diversified aesthetic demands and explore the application of new media and technologies. By doing so, they can inject new vitality and momentum into the development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in the contemporary cultural context.

3. Methodology

In this study, we selected 118 landscape paintings from the 13th National Art Exhibition as the source of our samples. The exhibition is a nationally recognized comprehensive event held once every five years. We carefully selected the 20 most representative works for in-depth analysis to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of our research.

During the process of sample selection, we paid attention to the following aspects: Firstly, the works we chose represent different genres and styles of contemporary landscape painting, reflecting the diversity and trends in contemporary landscape art. Secondly, we focused on selecting works by artists who have high recognition and influence in the art world to ensure the authority and credibility of our research. Lastly, we also considered the artistic quality and expressive power of the works to ensure the representativeness and artistic value of the samples.

Through detailed analysis and interpretation of the selected works, we will explore their visual elements such as composition, color application, lines, and brushstrokes. We will interpret the aesthetic concepts, creativity, and techniques present in these works, and reveal the reshaping and development of traditional aesthetics in contemporary landscape painting. At the same time, We will integrate the research steps of the Feldman Method for Art Criticism into our study, conducting careful observation and analysis of the artworks to gain a deeper understanding of the practical application and innovation of traditional aesthetics in contemporary landscape painting.

By selecting and analyzing these samples, we can derive specific insights and conclusions about the reshaping and development of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in contemporary art. Additionally, the scientific and rigorous methodology of our research will provide a solid foundation and offer theoretical support and practical guidance for the integration of traditional aesthetics and contemporary landscape painting.

4. Results and discussion

This study focuses on 20 artworks out of the 118 pieces exhibited in the 13th National Fine Arts Exhibition, aiming to reveal the aesthetic changes and developments of contemporary traditional

landscape painting during this period. Through in-depth analysis of these artworks, we have discovered the following aspects of aesthetic transformations.

4.1 The application and challenges of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in the context of contemporary culture

There are two aspects of the application of traditional landscape painting aesthetics in the context of contemporary culture:

On one hand, the inheritance of aesthetic principles in traditional landscape painting: The aesthetic principles and techniques of traditional landscape painting, such as "freehand brushwork," "vibrant and lively," "interaction of emptiness and substance," and "the unity of man and nature," continue to play a significant role in contemporary landscape painting creation. Many artists emphasize the inheritance and promotion of traditional aesthetic principles in their artwork, aiming to imbue their works with richer connotations while maintaining the unique style of Chinese landscape painting.

On the other hand, the development of aesthetic principles in contemporary traditional landscape painting: In contemporary landscape painting creation, artists build upon the foundation of traditional techniques and innovate and expand in areas such as brushwork, coloration, and composition. This enables contemporary landscape paintings to exhibit a more diverse range of artistic expressions, gradually forming a more open and pluralistic aesthetic concept. It emphasizes individualized representation, emotional expression, and reflection of the spirit of the times. This transformation not only reflects the challenges posed by the contemporary cultural context to traditional aesthetic principles but also reveals the vitality of aesthetic developments in traditional landscape painting.

4.2 The changes and developments in the aesthetics of contemporary Chinese landscape painting

The development of aesthetic principles in contemporary landscape painting can be explained through three aspects: the renewal of content and changes in themes, innovation in techniques and expressive forms, and the evolution of styles and aesthetic characteristics. Through the analysis of 20 artworks, the development of aesthetic principles in contemporary landscape painting can be explained through the following Table 1.

 Table 1: Analysis with Examples of the Aesthetic Development in Contemporary Landscape

 Painting

Artist	Works	Aesthet	Manifestations Aesthetic Development		Feature description
		с	t	s	
Hao Shiming & Fu Yun	Proliferating				Extracting the purest elements from cultural traditions and transforming them in one's own way, creating a form of expression with cultural connotations and distinct cultural genes.
Shen Xiaoyu	Dawn				By utilizing Western painting techniques, the ink and brushwork of traditional Chinese painting have been weakened, showcasing stronger symbolic features and a sense of design.
Wang Guyu & Wang Yi	Crafting Dreams: The Under Construction Eye of Heaven			•	The artwork selects the working state of the installation of the Tianyan radio telescope's reflective panel unit as its creative theme, updating the subject matter to reflect the spirit of Chinese craftsmanship as a major nation.
Cui Meishi	Night at the Naval Port: Chinese Dream	•		•	Taking an aircraft carrier as the protagonist, the subject matter is updated, and in terms of spatial handling, the artwork intertwines 2D and 3D spaces, employing a unique technique.

Artist	Works	Manifestations Aesthetic Development		0	Feature description
		с	t	s	
Chen Lin	Soaring High: 2019	•			Updating the subject matter, the artwork portrays the background of China's first domestically built aircraft carrier and aircraft takeoffs and landings, reflecting China's rapid development in the new era.
Zhang Jing	Chinese Speed			•	Interpreting the characteristics of the era with a minimalist and highly abstract artistic language that emphasizes both the sense of technology and scenarization.
Feng Yuhong &Fu Haibo	Wings of a GreatNation				Using fighter jets as the theme, it embodies a new subject matter, with extensive use of flat color blocks and a wide-angle perspective to showcase innovative artistic techniques.
Fan Chen	Building Dreams in Space				Using a unique technique to shape the intricate structural design of spacecraft, depicting the reality of technology as a hazy and romantic poetry.
Zhu Jinhui	Silk Road Glacier			•	The theme of the artwork transcends the perspective of everyday life, imbuing the forms with grandeur and sublime aesthetics through the expression of ink brushwork.
Chang Zhaohui	On the Fields of Hope			•	Blending mural painting with Western landscape art, the artwork expresses and conveys a rich sense of local culture and a fresh perspective on landscape through natural visual experiences.
Ni Wei	The Tower of Hundred Feet in the High City			•	Depicting urban themes with thick ink lines, the artwork expresses the composition of urban textures and the underlying spirit hidden behind the city's cold expression.
Fu Zhenbao	Above the Green Land				Abundant in colors, blending ink and pigments, the artwork forms a unique personal language in the technique of green landscape painting.
Ye Xiaoxia	Нарру Ноте				Incorporating block-like structures into ink colors and compositional intentions, emphasizing the expression of subjective feelings through ink strokes.
Liang Tongkun& Qin Xiangrong	Spring of Boao				Combining images from different perspectives in a single painting, it possesses a strong sense of form and composition.
Hu Yingkang	Come to a stop			•	Blending traditional and modern symbols on the canvas, using a free brushstroke technique, it exhibits a strong expressionist characteristic.
Wei Guang	Train of Spring				Depicting high-speed train units, the artwork features a novel theme and incorporates a retro tone in its boundary treatment and color usage.
Wang Yuanfeng	Monument				Portraying grandiose landscapes with close-up and realistic techniques, using segmentation and composition to manifest the order and rhythm of form.
Ma Chang	Variations of Beautiful Mountains and Waters in Guizhou				Offering a grand aerial view, it reveals smoke, terraced houses, wind turbines, balloons, paragliders, and mountain roads, reflecting a mystical realm amidst majestic landscapes.
Huang Tao	Turning Heavenly Barriers into Alternative Paths				Skillfully merging natural organic forms with artificial geometric forms, while pursuing a delicate sense of texture.
Chen Boxian	Years Pass Unnoticed in Mountain Exploration			•	By creating a "realm beyond reality" through misty landscapes and vibrant scenery, it transforms the essence of tradition into personal emotions, encapsulating a deep understanding of nature and a quest for spiritual belonging.

* Type of Space: C; Content update and theme change, T; Technique innovation and expression change, S; Style evolution and aesthetic feature change

Firstly, the discovery of thematic updates and changes is significant. In these artworks, artists have chosen novel subjects or reinterpreted traditional themes in different ways to reflect the changes in contemporary society and culture. This shift in thematic choices and changes in subjects

indicate the artists' reflection of shifting aesthetic concepts and contemporary values.

For example, amidst the transition of eras, the exploration of new subject matters extends beyond the conventional understanding of grand landscapes and encompasses the daily lives of ordinary people, including aspects of their clothing, food, housing, and transportation. Architecture, tools, daily necessities, technological products, and weapons serve as tangible manifestations of material development. The connection between scenery and objects is attributed to the genre of landscape painting, signifying a shift from the traditional literati's focus on natural landscapes and flora and fauna to the depiction of new social phenomena [14]. Among the 20 selected artworks in the study, pieces such as "Crafting Dreams: The Under Construction Eye of Heaven" (Figure1)"Night at the Naval Port: Chinese Dream" (Figure2)"Wings of a Great Nation" (Figure3) "Building Dreams in Space" (Figure4)"China's Speed" (Figure5) and "Soaring: 2019" (Figure6) depict unprecedented subject matters, including high-speed trains, radio telescopes, warships, airplanes, and various elements of production and construction. These products of era development directly embody technological advancements and changes in artists' aesthetic perspectives.



Figure 1: Crafting Dreams: The Under Construction Eye of Heaven



Figure 2: Night at the Naval Port: Chinese Dream



Figure 3: Wings of a Great Nation



Figure 4: Building Dreams in Space

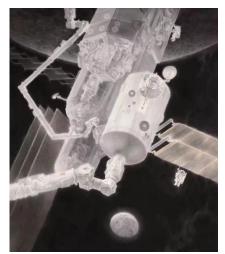


Figure 5: China's Speed



Figure 6: Soaring: 2019

Secondly, the changes in technique innovation and expressive forms are also evident in these artworks. Artists have adopted new painting techniques, materials, and skills, as well as explored different modes of expression. These innovations in technique and changes in expressive forms have brought about unique visual effects and expressive methods, enriching the depth and artistic expression of the works.

For instance, the artist Shen Xiaoyu, who began studying Western painting in primary school and later pursued studies in Russia, has pioneered a path of modern Chinese painting that combines both Eastern and Western influences. Through his unique language and the fusion of watercolor, ink, oil painting, and various materials, it vividly depicts modern urban scenes with distinctive Chongqing characteristics in a strong constructivist style. The artist does not intend to present inherent elements in the traditional sense. Instead, they approach the subject from a broad perspective, simplifying the structure of a modern city into geometric forms. Through organic combinations of size, spacing, and grayscale, they create a symphony full of passion, showcasing the contemporaneity and cultural significance of the artwork.

Thirdly, when observing these artworks, we can observe the evolution of styles and changes in aesthetic features as a significant discovery. The transformations in artists' styles and the evolution of aesthetic characteristics reflect their continuous exploration and innovation in aesthetic pursuits and expressive styles. Contemporary Chinese landscape painting emphasizes personalized expression and the transmission of emotions, with artists paying greater attention to the handling of details and the application of techniques. Through meticulous depictions of light, color, brushwork, and other aspects, they convey unique insights and emotional experiences of the natural landscapes. This evolution of styles and changes in aesthetic features are closely related to globalization, sociocultural transformations, as well as individual experiences and emotional expressions. Contemporary Chinese landscape painting, by breaking traditional frameworks and pursuing personalized modes of expression, presents a diverse range of artistic forms and aesthetic characteristics. This evolution not only showcases artists' creative styles but also reflects the influence of social and cultural transformations on the development of art.

For instance, Zhu Jinhui's artwork "Silk Road Glacier" (Figure7) aims to express the pure essence of life and presents painting in a free form that transcends the characteristics of ink medium. His practice of "landscape" is entirely built upon contemplation of traditional culture and the expression of contemporary materials. He chooses to infuse individual life experiences into his language expressions, constructing an extremely personalized language system for his works, and interpreting painting themes in a personalized manner [15].



Figure 7: Silk Road Glacier, Zhu Jinhui, 186.5cm×200cm, Chinese painting

In conclusion, contemporary Chinese landscape painting builds upon traditional aesthetics while continuously exploring innovative subjects and expressive forms, with a focus on personalized expression and emotional transmission. This allows contemporary landscape painting to inherit the spiritual essence of traditional landscape painting while adapting to the aesthetic demands of modern society, injecting new vitality into the development of Chinese landscape painting.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, contemporary Chinese landscape painting has undergone significant transformation and development based on traditional aesthetics. The integration of traditional and modern elements, the fusion and collision of diverse cultures, the exploration of innovative themes and artistic expressions, and the enhancement of individuality and emotional expression are the achievements of contemporary Chinese landscape painters in their creative practices. These changes reflect the contemporary artists' inheritance and development of traditional culture while adapting to the aesthetic demands of modern society, injecting new vitality into the development of Chinese landscape painting.

However, with the development of globalization and the information age, contemporary Chinese landscape painting faces new opportunities and challenges. To better promote the development of Chinese landscape painting, we need to delve into and explore the essence of traditional landscape painting, while also considering the aesthetic demands and characteristics of modern society. Based on this foundation, we can actively promote the artistic value of landscape painting, cultivate more enthusiasts and artists in this field, and strengthen international cultural exchanges to enable Chinese landscape painting to better integrate into the world.

Therefore, we suggest actively promoting and inheriting the excellent traditions and artistic essence of traditional Chinese landscape painting, as well as the innovative practices and explorations in contemporary landscape painting, to continuously advance the development and inheritance of Chinese landscape painting. At the same time, we also need to focus on the protection and inheritance of traditional Chinese culture, respect and uphold the artistic value and spiritual essence of landscape painting, and create a broader space and better development environment for the future development of Chinese landscape painting.

References

[1] Li, Y. "The spirit of Chinese traditional landscape painting". Journal of Arts, vol.2, no.1, pp. 23-29, 2006. [2] Liu, Y. X. "On the aesthetics of Chinese traditional landscape painting". Journal of Arts, nol.3, no.1, pp. 56-60, 2008.

[3] Yu, H. "Aesthetics of Chinese landscape painting in the context of globalization". Journal of Arts, nov.6, no.1, pp. 34-40, 2015.

[4] Liu, Q. "The artistic conception and aesthetic expression of Chinese landscape painting". Shuhua Shijie, no.8, pp. 19-21, 2022.

[5] Wang, S. "Analysis of Jing Hao's Notes on Brushwork". Meishu Daguan, no.10, pp. 68-69, 2010.

[6] Yang, J. P. "The composition forms of Chinese traditional landscape painting". Journal of Xuzhou Institute of Technology: Social Sciences Edition, no.6, pp. 40-41, 54, 2022.

[7] Liu, Y. X. "On the aesthetics of Chinese traditional landscape painting". Journal of Arts, nol.3, no.1, pp. 56-60, 2008.

[8] Luo, Y. D. "Evolution tendencies of contemporary Chinese painting styles". Journal of Huainan Normal University: Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition, no.4, pp. 146-147, 2007.

[9] Xin, C.C. "New exploration of the contemporary aesthetic perspective of classical landscape painting". Shuhua Shijie, no.1, pp. 89-90, 2022.

[10] Ma, X. J. "The formation of the diversified development pattern of Chinese landscape painting". Zuojia, no.6, p. 190, 2009.

[11] Zhu, X. W, & Bai, Y. "Ink and brush in the era: An analysis of the inheritance and innovation of landscape painting". Culture and Communication, no.6, pp. 91-95. 2021.

[12] Yang, Y. "Concept of urban landscape painting creation in the perspective of ecological art and culture". Cultural Industry, no.24, pp. 74-75, 2020.

[13] Huang, S., & Jiang, C. "The chaos of the contemporary Chinese painting market: Facing the problems for better development". Yishu Pinjian, no. 04, p. 140, 2015.

[14] Dong, S. "Four approaches to the creation of thematic landscape painting in contemporary times: Taking the works of the 13th National Art Exhibition as an example". Yishu Baijia, no.03, pp. 123-128, 2021.

[15] China.com Shandong Channel. "Expressionistic ink painting: Famous painter Zhu Jinhui paves a unique path for improving traditional Chinese painting". [online] Available: https://sd. china. com/qlsh/ 20000951/ 20220921/ 25669269_1.html, 2022.