

A Study on Arnheim's Theory and Criticism of Visual Thinking

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Abstract: Arnheim is a representative of gestalt psychology, and also an integrator of gestalt psychology and art. And artistic thought has multiple perspectives, such as philosophy, psychology, empirical science and aesthetics. It also reveals the lofty pursuit of the beauty of art, which has a methodological guiding significance for the current practice of art. At present, there are many research achievements on Arnheim's art theory, but the depth of his theory is still not enough. In view of this, this paper takes Arnheim's visual thinking as a new line of artistic thought to cut and expound, trying to grasp the essence of the artistic thought.

1. Visual dynamics is the medium of artistic expression

Arnheim believes that the expressiveness of art is to unify the form of art works. The formal structure of art works contains visual dynamics, which is the universal force in the universe. Therefore, the meaning of art can be shown through the structure formed by the visual forces.

1.1 It is dynamics rather than motion

Arnheim defines visual dynamics as directional tension, which is sensed in perception on the one hand, and manifested in the inherent properties of the object presented on the other hand. He distinguishes visual dynamics from force in physical motion by comparing the two words "motion" and "power".

1.2 Generation of visual dynamics

Arnheim thinks that the reason why the visual dynamics can be felt is a psychological counterpart of physiological force produced by external stimulation. So the visual dynamics is the intermediary between communication psychology and external. Through the analysis of the mechanism of visual dynamics, we can find that the production of visual dynamics is the intermediary between internal psychology and external material.

1.3 All artistic expressions are symbolic

In Arnheim's opinion, the two can be explained mutually. The expressiveness of art represents the symbolism of art and the essence of art. The schema of art itself is a force structure. Through the capture structure, the viewer understands the symbolic meaning of the art, which makes the viewer naturally participate in the art activities. Therefore, every component of an art work, whether subordinate to form or subject matter, is symbolic.

2. The value of Art

2.1. The value of Art

(1) Art as a tool for understanding self and the world

Art creation is a universal understanding of the world and human beings. In addition, if there is no material or form of expression, the expressiveness can not be conveyed. Therefore, Arnheim attaches great importance to the expressive communication in the art works.

Art is symbolic in Arnheim's view, which represents the human beings' understanding of the essence and truth through the surface, which is the embodiment of the deep cognitive function

developed from the perceptual thinking. The artistic view, which regards art as a tool to understand the world of self, is the unique point of Arnheim different from the previous theories of aesthetics and art.

(2) Art as a tool for the development of creative thinking

Arnheim thinks that cognitive function is the primary function of art, and cognitive function is based on visual thinking. The mechanism of visual thinking is an important part of Arnheim's art theory, in which the formation of visual image is mainly through the formation of perceptual force and stimulus to form a kind of understanding of the outside world. Visual image has the characteristics of abstraction, perception and thinking, so it is regarded as the medium of thinking to be developed by Arnheim.

2.2. Realization of the value of art

(1) Art as a treatment

Arnheim believes that good works of art tell the truth, and there is a "transparency" between the form and the correspondence of meaning, which makes art a necessary means to convey the effective statement of reality. So this makes art a treatment method. On the one hand, doctors can look back on their attitudes through the symbolic meaning conveyed by the patients' works of art; On the other hand, it is also required that the creation of patients should be of high quality.

(2) Art as an educational means

It can be said that education is the foothold of Arnheim's art theory. He emphasizes on enhancing the position of art in education from the perspective of perception. As the function of cognition and creativity, art and science are the basic means for human beings to achieve activity orientation. He pointed out that once we realize that creative thinking is perceptual thinking in any field of cognition, the central position of art in general education becomes obvious. It is also seen that the application of art in education is to cultivate students' visual thinking. It is worth noting that this kind of visual thinking is centered on the image formed by perceptual power.

3. The application of Arnheim's theory of visual thinking in art criticism

3.1 Visual dynamic style and artistic criticism

(1) Slant style

Arnheim believes that the most effective way to make the style dynamic is to tilt the orientation. In the system of vision orientation, visual perception is used to the orientation of space in horizontal and vertical directions. If the spatial orientation deviates from the coordinate axis, it will get a kind of tilting motion, which is from the tension of trying to restore the orientation of space base. It can be said that the style of power generated by inclination is introduced into art and has a great range of application.

(2) Deformation style

Arnheim's deformation is a change in the spatial structure of an object itself, which is switched between the original pattern and the two states close to the original. He also pointed out that in addition to the deformation of the space structure of objects, the distance of space between objects will also have deformation effect, especially in space art. In some cases, the distance of space will be compressed by both objects. And at the same time, the space distances will also produce reaction forces to squeeze objects on both sides.

(3) Stroboscopic style

The static pattern of stroboscopic motion can also convey strong dynamics. In Arnheim's view, the condition for stroboscopic effect is that under the same background, there are several objects with similar styles and functions. The visual objects are different in position, size or shape, and they are connected by similarity of pattern and function but separated by different perceptual objects. Then the whole composition can produce some stroboscopic and overlapping motion.

3.2 Principles of composition of visual dynamic and art criticism

(1) Power of the center

Arnheim believes that interaction between the two spatial systems must produce the complexity of shape, color and motion cherished by our visual senses. Moreover, it symbolically represents the struggle between the perfection of the universal view of any object or creature and the downward pull and upward resistance. Center is originated from concentric system, and almost all organic and inorganic things will be around a center and configuration. Centrality can be said to be the characteristics of all composition. It can be determined by mechanical means or perceived directly through perception.

He thinks that to appreciate an artwork, we must investigate and explore different levels of structure from the most important form, which affects the progress of the level below it. However, as long as the centers of a configuration are in perfect balance, the whole is in a static state. This means that the centres are mutually constrained in such a way. That is, when the centers in the art composition reach a balance in the state of mutual competition.

(2) The weight creates the center

Arnheim has done a thorough study on how gravity affects visual composition, mainly focusing on the impact on the dynamic center.

Arnheim believes that although the pull force of gravity is from the center of the strongest power in the visual world. It must compete with the force from other power centers. Weight is not only associated with the attraction of gravity, but is usually perceived as an attribute of the visual object by which it is made. Moreover, the attraction and rejection of a visual object would depend on the relationship between the visual weight of the object and the visual weight of other objects in the range of mutual influence.

(3) Highlighting the center

Although the center of art composition is not equal to the center of the picture, according to the logic of vision, the creator also likes to arrange the subject to the center of the picture, which makes the whole composition stable. In the culture of each period, the central government often used to express the noble forces, and had a sense of stability beyond all living beings and time. It has special importance, and the viewer often gives the central position of things important, so the central thing also appears to have a sense of weight.

3.3. The purpose of criticism that the form and meaning would be unified

Arnheim's art criticism has guided art to the state of unity of form and meaning. He thinks that if an artist creates an art, the main intention is to obtain a balanced or harmonious formal relationship. Also his analysis of artistic expressiveness is to examine how the form is in line with the meaning of the expression.

It can be felt that Arnheim, art criticism which is unified in form and meaning, still focuses on the analysis of form. He thinks form is the concrete meaning.

At the same time, he also believes that the reason why visual dynamics has significant expressiveness is born from an assumption of Arnheim. It assumes that visual dynamics exists in the universe and has the universal effect. Therefore, visual dynamics can express both nature and human emotion and ideological activities. This is the criterion for artistic creation, and also opens up unlimited space of imagination for artists.

Reference

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