

Teaching Methods of Modern Lettering*

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Abstract—Modern lettering art is an emerging art form that has its own independent aesthetic language and can convey unique aesthetic conceptions. Based on the traditional lettering, it incorporates the technical merits and commonalities of printmaking, sculpture, decoration and other arts, cleverly combines Chinese calligraphy with carving techniques, emphasizes the application of "visual elements" in the process of lettering, and pursues a kind of "visual stunning" aesthetic effect. It reflects aesthetic ideas and creative mode of "focusing on the form". This article attempts to analyze the aesthetic elemental features of modern lettering art creation from the perspective of methodology. And it wants to find out the application of modern lettering sculpture in teaching practice.

Keywords—modern lettering; teaching methods; discussion

I. INTRODUCTION

Chinese modern lettering art has gone through nearly thirty years of history. Modern lettering artists and literary theory workers have paid great attention to improve the expression ability of modern lettering art. From the actual development of modern lettering art, in addition to the usual principles of writing and carving, perfect color and other principles, the artistic creation of modern lettering also pay attention to grasp the artistic principle of writing, the elastic principle of modeling, aesthetic principles of carving and other artistic principles. These principles of artistic creation can be improved by establishing a correct sense of occupation, accumulating knowledge through extensive reading, daring to make innovation with indifference, and having the practice in refining and carving, and so on. And then, the students would have the improvement in the learning and practice.

II. TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' AESTHETIC ABILITY AND INNOVATIVE THINKING

The German philosopher Kant once said: "The beauty of nature refers to beautiful things, and the beauty of art refers to the aesthetic expression of things". Therefore, it is very important to teach what the beauty is, the way to appreciate the beauty, and the way to express the beauty. Aesthetic ability mainly includes aesthetic feeling, aesthetic imagination and aesthetic understanding. Meanwhile, aesthetic ability can't be separated from knowledge reserve. If the knowledge is wider, we could have stronger aesthetic ability. The modern lettering creation refers to the production process that integrates conception, design and engraving. A

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good lettering inscription can reflect the author's aesthetic ability and unique artistic insights. In the teaching process, the teachers can't confine students' thinking. They should be good at using heuristic teaching method and discussion teaching method. They can make full use of modern teaching methods. Also, the teachers would give play to demonstration effect, arouse the enthusiasm of students, and give full play to students' innovative potential. At the same time, the students should learn more knowledge. Especially, the students need to learn traditional arts, such as calligraphy, painting art, carving art, etc. Also, the teachers should respect the personality of students. Each student has different characteristics and distinctive styles. The students should have the courage to show unique personality and be brave in innovation. Only in this way can produce different styles and flourishing lettering works of art. In order to cultivate innovative awareness of college students, it should also enhance students' practical ability. The famous educator Brunner pointed out: "The acquisition of knowledge is a proactive process". Learners should not be passive to receive the information. However, they should be active in the acquisition process. Through the practice, students can better summarize the experience. The student's innovative spirit can be implemented in practice. Thereby, it would enhance the ability of innovation. In order to cultivate the innovative awareness of college students, the teachers should also enable students to get close to nature, feel the beauty in nature and discover the beauty. The teachers should combine students' artistic creation with social life practice. In teaching, students should also attach importance to the appreciation. The teachers should encourage students to visit lettering exhibitions, calligraphy exhibitions and other art exhibitions. The students would be inspired by the exhibition. And they can improve their ability to appreciate lettering. It would make up for their deficiencies. At the same time, to watch the exhibition can also stimulate the fun. The students should develop innovative thinking. They would know all the answers. Innovation is inseparable from inspiration. The inspiration comes from life and person's perception of things and life. The inspiration derives from the accumulation of knowledge over time. The works in many calligraphic art exhibitions break through the original two-dimensional graphic art forms. With multidimensional artistic forms, three-dimensional shapes and lines, and the changes in the engraving style, the innovation represents the beauty of calligraphy art.

III. TO PAY ATTENTION TO NECESSITY ANALYSIS ON ARTISTIC CREATION PRINCIPLE OF THE MODERN LETTERING

In recent years, the workers of modern lettering art began to pay attention to modern lettering art. And the attention has been on the rise. In the history of modern lettering art in China, there are two turning points. First, the founding of "Lettering Research Community of Chinese Calligraphers Association" in 1991 marks that the art of lettering has been recognized by the mainstream art and literature system in China. It brings the creation and theoretical research. Second, in 1993, the first national modern lettering exhibition and the first lettering theory seminar were held in Luoyang, Henan province. In a certain sense, it pushed the modern lettering art to the foreground. Also, the modern lettering art would be truly independent. And it became one of the three major art categories of China's Book Association. First of all, the modern lettering art is a cross-crystallization of calligraphy, fine arts, sculpture and aesthetics. It has strong vitality and productivity. Second, the modern art of lettering helps to promote the exchange of Chinese and Western cultures. Furthermore, modern lettering is still the convergence point of the time-space connection between the traditional lettering and the modernization of literature and art. It mainly manifested in inheriting and innovating, which can promote Chinese traditional culture. Thus, modern lettering art has its own unique importance. It is worth studying and perfecting its art creation theory. And then, it could guide its creation and development from the perspectives of literature and art, life and value.

Lettering includes two aspects. One is to write. The second is engraving. We usually call it "facsimile" and "engraving". Modern lettering is an art. In addition to including the traditional lettering and carving, it also includes the pre-freehand brushwork and late decoration of the creators. Modern art of lettering is an art. It needs to be understood by others. Also, it should make others feel comfortable and be willing to look at it. Moreover, it is necessary to have a deep sense of beauty. And then, it would achieve the best aesthetic result. It can be seen that the overall quality of modern engraved artists and the work ability will directly affect the quality of the work. Thereby, it would affect the development of the modern lettering. However, at the present stage, the modern Chinese lettering artists are not well-known. We still can't call them "modern lettering artists". The reason lies in that they separate the "writing" and "engraving". They can't achieve the perfect fusion of the "writing" and "engraving".

How to achieve the perfect combination of the two aspects? Simply, the modern lettering artists should do a good job of seamless connection between the two aspects. On the one hand, the workers of modern lettering art need to diligently practice the skills of calligraphy and carved art (especially knife marks). On the other hand, the workers of modern lettering art need to achieve the fusion of writing and carving. And then, it would achieve the freehand brushwork in carving. In this process of integration, modern lettering artists would be in special positions. And they would have special functions. They must play a good role of these bonds and bridges. Also, they must master the necessary artistic

accomplishments. Apart from paying attention to the cultivation of ideological and moral qualities, knowledge and skills and working methods, it is also of crucial importance to cultivate the awareness of artistic creation principle. Therefore, to improve the "artistic creation" of modern lettering workers who use "the shaft of a pen or writing brush" has become an urgent task. They should make the innovative use of the carving with knife.

IV. TO IMPART THE ESSENCE SKILLS OF CARVING

The origin of Chinese modern lettering art is to inherit the traditional lettering method. And it is the basis of lettering since ancient times. It also has the unreasonable affinity with calligraphy art, which guarantees the profound cultural connotation of lettering art. First, with drawing lessons from the texture effect of Japan and South Korea, as well as Western modern color and modern decorating design concept, the lettering art in the new era has gained new manifestations. And it can be widely loved and recognized by the public. Actually, in the opinion of the ancients, it has different pursuit with the changes in each era. The judgment on the beauty and ugliness will change due to the secular. The art form ultimately serves the artistic content. It can't neglect the importance of the art form. After all, the art of lettering always belongs to the category of plastic arts.

Specific to the technology, the modern lettering mainly makes the innovation in the knife method. And it is more remarkable for the engraving concave line and the bottom texture. It greatly expands the space for lettering skills. At the same time, it breaks the traditional pattern in the term of color. It integrates the aesthetic taste. The modern lettering art would be rich and diverse. Therefore, the modern lettering art can be roughly divided into three categories: elegant style, bright-colored style and solid style. The elegant styles of works mostly are plain and innocent. The artists would set elegant color. They would use the knife naturally. The shape is modest and elegant. It would make the people feel indifference. The bright-colored style of works focused on the use of color. The color would be gorgeous, rich and harmonious. The artists may use the comparison between red and green. Through the extreme contrast, people would have strong visual impact. Solid styles of works pursue the momentum. The color is rich and calm. It changes the fonts without losing the law. The knife is used naturally. People would favorite this work. In teaching design, the knife method is important in modern sculpture. The sculpture is pure. And sculpture has a foothold. The calligraphy or drawing should pay attention to the ancient method. The knife method should be simple and pure. For the knife skills, we could control the speed. It would select proper way. It is in line with the laws of nature. It is the most superior lettering art. In the face of such works, the audiences often forget the engraving and appreciate the connotation of art. The coexistence of various knife methods does not mean that we must give up the simple and pure pursuit of art. The decorating innovation doesn't violate the improvement of the arts.

Therefore, knife method of the modern lettering should pay attention to the impact of seal engraving and calligraphy.

It would have the unity of the knife and people. The knife method would be mental cultivation methods. In a sense, this is the future for modern Chinese lettering art.

V. THE FOUNDATION OF NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

Without the Chinese characters, there is no lettering. Without the calligraphy, there would have no lettering art. Even if it gives somethings careful revision, it is just a piece of handicrafts. Any art is essentially a reflection of the human spirit. There is no exception in calligraphy. It has become universally acknowledged art. It is closely related to rich spiritual meaning. The philosophical thinking and traditional concepts constitute important content of extensive and profound Chinese calligraphy. More importantly, calligraphy is a unique art form in China. It incorporates the understanding of culture and education into the practice and training of art. And it truly achieves the goal of "traveling in art". Due to unique artistic sentiment, each person's calligraphy has its own style. The innovation is entirely "non-consensual" practice. It is not an achievable result. Therefore, as a modern lettering artist, in addition to the practice of technique, we must also grasp the most basic history of Chinese calligraphy, ancient engraving art history and traditional metallography and philology. We finally recognize the essence of calligraphy art. And the artists would validate the lettering art. Then, the cultural connotation of the lettering art has the content, aesthetic pursuit and artistic personality. And then, it would produce its artistic value. Therefore, calligraphy and engraving in China are the prerequisites for the development of modern lettering.

VI. THE APPLICATION OF MODERN TEACHING METHODS

On the basis of earnestly summarizing many years of teaching experience, teachers deeply study the current situation of demand and book carving in the era, study the law of higher education and the characteristics of art higher education, update the educational concept, develop the training method and establish the guiding ideology. The colleges should organize experience-based teachers, professional teachers and book-caring experts to design and study the training objectives of calligraphy modeling talent, curriculum plans and curriculum content. The colleges should construct three-dimensional (video) textbooks and textbook system. The teachers should take inspiration and guidance education as the principle. And they should take all-round teaching mode integrating various forms of the practice, study, creation and cooperation. The teachers should make full use of rich teaching methods such as online teaching and video teaching. The professional theory should be related to teaching practice closely. It should strengthen the relationship between classroom teaching, practice and discussion, creation and cooperation. Then, it would establish the training objectives of calligraphy culture. They could cultivate the talents of the creative art of teaching, research, practice and innovation.

VII. TO IMPROVE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM

For teachers of modern lettering art, "lettering has no definite method". The key points are continuously to strengthen the learning. That is to say, the students should diligently study the lettering. And then, they should diligently make the creation. It would improve the engraving level in practical study. In the practice, the author realizes that we should pay special attention to the following tactics.

A. *To Get Knowledge in Extensive Reading*

The teachers of modern lettering art should have a wealth of cultural knowledge and pure engraving skills. Rich cultural knowledge plays an active role in giving play to its working ability. At the same time, it directly determines the level of artistic conception of creation. This requires that teachers of modern lettering arts continue to improve their cultural accomplishments. Also, they should constantly read books to get knowledge.

B. *To Work Hard and Ponder Carefully*

The teachers of modern lettering art should enhance artistic accomplishment. It can't just stay in the establishment of correct sense of occupation, reading widely and eclectic innovation. These would enrich the "artistic" level. More important is to use the knowledge in practice. In the practice of communication, this is the basic way to improve modern lettering. Also, it is the starting point and ending point of the study. The students should experience the modern lettering art creation. And it could enrich and promote the modern lettering art. It could truly get the development as an art. The experience is the best teacher. The students should work hard. And they would have the practice. Then, they may have the creation. The students could continuously improve the lettering level in practical learning.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In short, the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures is a principle of the development of culture today. Also, modern lettering art must experience it. As young art, the development history of modern Chinese lettering art is still relatively short. Some problems have arisen in the market economy. However, some lettering artists keep the characteristics of calligraphy and engraving. Therefore, modern lettering art should depend on traditional Chinese culture and draw appropriate reference from the Western art language. Its future development is quite bright.

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