

The Development Path of Vietnamese Lacquer Painting “From Painting to Painting”

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Abstract: Paint is material, paint art is spiritual. Lacquer painting is a perfect combination of traditional handicraft and contemporary art in the world. Vietnam is a country of Chinese character culture, and in the 15th century, Vietnam and China began to exchange lacquer art. Vietnamese lacquer painting has been flourishing in the last century, and has achieved remarkable results. It had a great influence on the development of Chinese contemporary lacquer painting. The comprehensive and in-depth study of contemporary lacquer painting is inseparable from the Vietnamese lacquer painting. It is of great practical significance to discuss and think about the Vietnamese lacquer painting from the perspective of painting.

Keywords: Lacquer painting; Painting; Cultural exchange

1. Vietnam has a long history of lacquer art

Vietnam's unique climate features a wide variety of sumac plants. China is the birthplace of the world's lacquer art. Compared with Chinese paint, Vietnamese paint is brittle and dries faster. These laid a good foundation for the development of lacquer art in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, around the Li Dynasty (Northern Song Dynasty, about 1100 AD), lacquer had been used to decorate the Windows, thresholds, sedan chairs, pavilion, Buddhist niches, sacrificers, plaques, etc., and the lacquer workshop made furniture, boxes and boxes, bottles, POTS, dishes, plates and other daily lacquerware. At that time, the technology of collecting paint, making paint, mixing color paint, mother of pearl and gold and silver foil was becoming more and more mature. In the post-Li period, lacquer art was also applied to inlay plates on fishermen's boats, lacquer furniture with mother-of-pearl and statues of gods.

At the end of the Li Dynasty and the beginning of the Nguyen Dynasty, Vietnamese paint art was further popularized and developed, and the production of black paint was more unique. The black paint produced is bright and rich, wear-resistant and sun-resistant, and has excellent polishing performance. Techniques such as eggshell inlay and paint filling have been used.

Now some rural areas still maintain the ancient lacquer art, such as Vietnam's Henan, Nam Dinh, Bac Ninh, Ha Dong provinces. Tinbang village in Beining makes black paint, Pingcheng village makes various sacrificial supplies, Xiatai Village and the village of paint and adhesive paint, almost all villages have the paint industry. Painters farm during the busy season and process lacquerware in their spare time. They not only have the technology of taking paint, making paint and preparing color paint, but also can pile paint, carve paint and make Buddha statues.

2. “Indochina Higher Academy of Fine Arts” is the cradle of Vietnamese lacquer painting

2.1 Establishment of the Indochina Higher Academy of Fine Arts

In 1925, the “Indochina Higher Academy of Fine Arts” was established in Vietnam, and the traditional lacquer art of Vietnam was enlightened by French art, and took the lead in breaking the barriers of traditional Oriental lacquer art expression and embarked on modern easel painting art. French artist Victor... Victor Tavdiu was the first president. ^[1]He was also one of the academy's first oil painting instructors. He carried out discipline construction according to the French art education model at that time. Courses include: anatomy, composition, human drawing, art history, outdoor sketching, etc., requiring 40 hours of training per week. The realistic

concept of Western painting has taken root in the minds of Vietnamese painters.

2.2 Grinding painting sprouted and grew in the “Indochina Higher Academy of Fine Arts”

Vietnam’s homegrown oil painter Nam SAN (Nguyen Van Tho) was involved in the founding of the academy and taught traditional decorative arts courses.

Around 1928, while studying oil painting, students tried to paint with lacquer instead of oil paints. The charm of lacquer art has aroused the interest and attention of French professors. Lacquer painting through color mixing, painting, paint, painting, Mosaic, after grinding to produce the effect, so we call it “lacquer painting”.

Preserving the traditional lacquer art of Vietnam and trying to apply ancient lacquer techniques to modern painting, students such as Dinh Van Seng, Nguyen Kah Chi, and Tran Van Jin worked hard to learn the art of lacquer painting.

In 1931, the students’ lacquer paintings were widely exhibited overseas. The unique charm of Vietnamese lacquer painting has received good evaluation and feedback from the European art market, which greatly promoted the development of Vietnamese lacquer painting art.

Around 1932, Vietnamese painters created some techniques and a variety of colors that further enriched the expressive power of lacquer painting. The unique charm of lacquer painting has attracted many talented painters to the creation of lacquer painting, so that the language and expression of lacquer painting have improved a level.

In 1937, the colorful Vietnamese lacquer painting caused a sensation at the “World’s Fair” held in Paris, and since then it has gradually become the representative type of modern Vietnamese art in the eyes of the West.

The national art of Vietnam ADAPTS to the fashionable taste of the French native to the romantic imagination outside the region, and promotes the survival and continuation of the Vietnamese native art in the institutions established by France in Vietnam.

By the end of the 1930s, many Vietnamese painters were able to paint various scenes of daily life without being bound by traditional painting techniques.

During the decade from 1935 to 1945, Vietnamese lacquer painting developed rapidly and attracted more Vietnamese painters, who constantly explored new forms and new techniques. Some painters imitate the European abstract, formalist style, most painters take the realistic way of expressing people’s life.

From 1925 to 1945, in this short 20 years, Vietnam’s art education has undergone tremendous changes, Western modern art education in Vietnam began, profoundly changed the course of Vietnam’s modern art, Vietnam’s ancient lacquer art under the joint efforts of French teachers and Vietnamese students, It has become the most characteristic type of art representing the modern art of Vietnam in the future, and the “Indochina Higher Academy of Fine Arts” can be called the cradle of the birth of Vietnamese lacquer painting.

3. The influence of Chinese and Japanese lacquer art on Vietnamese lacquer painting

Vietnamese painters attach great importance to the art of learning from other countries, Japan’s gold powder and gold leaf techniques, China’s painting, carving and filling techniques.

Vietnamese lacquer carving works appeared, such as: Hue Village, West Hill Temple, Waterfall, Mountain Village, Rice Paddies in Wind Village, Confucian Temple in Hanoi, etc. These works have been highly rated in exhibitions at home and abroad.

The simplicity of the red paint and the black paint in the lacquer painting shows the relationship between contrast and harmony, so that people get a new feeling in the aesthetic experience, and Vietnamese painters began to boldly treat the sky, the ground, the water, and the background as black or red. The red sky, red water, black sky and black water in the picture do not feel monotonous and boring, but let people have more associations. Just like the ink color and blank in Chinese ink painting, it is recognized and accepted by everyone. Then the brown ground, silver and grey ground, silver or gold covered lacquer painting also appeared one after another.

4. Composition structure and painting consciousness of Vietnamese lacquer painters

More and more artists have become interested in abrasive painting, and even some oil painters who have achieved high achievements in painting have turned to the research and creation of abrasive painting, and many people think that abrasive painting has more development prospects than oil painting. Gradually, more and more Vietnamese artists participated in the creation of lacquer painting, not only oil painters, but also sculptors, printmakers, silk painters, and arts and crafts artists joined the creation team of lacquer painting. The lacquer painting circle gathers the essence of the Vietnamese art circle.

Li Hwan Chang, a professor at Ho Chi Minh City University of Fine Arts, told us that “Tan Van Jin, who for many years served as the chairman of the North Vietnam Artists Association and the director of the Hanoi Academy of Fine Arts, is known for his lacquer

painting and his oil painting. Even Su Yuyun, who is famous for his oil paintings, also painted lacquer.”

5. The unique appearance of Vietnamese lacquer painting

In Vietnamese lacquer painting, you can see bamboo forests, betels, trees, eaves, reflections of lake water, dappled white walls, dazzling sunshine, golden dusk, yellow rice fields, green mountains, white clouds, overlapping peaks, backlit banyan trees on the hillside, winding paths at the edge of villages... Features clean shape, rich and elegant tone, delicate taste grasp, free and smooth style, showing deep painting skills, painting ability and constantly improve the mature painting expression language, to find a suitable for their own value orientation.

The eggshell inlaying technique is believed to have first appeared on Vietnamese lacquerware and lacquer paintings. Eggshell pastes, reverse pastes, casual pastes have produced wonderful results.

Lacquer painting is the “Chinese painting” of Vietnam, and grinding lacquer painting can be seen everywhere in Vietnam, just as ink painting can be seen everywhere in China. The Vietnam Museum of Fine Arts in Hanoi mainly displays representative works of lacquer painting from the 1930s to the 1990s. Most of Hanoi’s more than 150 galleries are painted lacquer. Hanoi University of Industrial Arts, Hanoi University of Fine Arts and Ho Chi Minh University of Fine Arts all have lacquer painting majors.

Lacquer painting in the Vietnam University of Fine Arts is a painting department, lacquer art is a professional college of arts and crafts, Hanoi University of Fine Arts Lai Yingyun and Mr. CAI Kezhen said, “the school painting department of oil painting, grinding painting, silk painting a total of 22 teachers, can teach paint painting.”

6. The influence of Vietnamese lacquer painting on Chinese lacquer painting

In the autumn of 1962, “Vietnam Paint grinding Art Exhibition” was exhibited in Beijing and Shanghai successively, which caused great repercussions in China. In 1963, the Ministry of Culture sent CAI Kezhen from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and Zhu Ji from Central Academy of Arts and Crafts to study lacquer grinding painting in Vietnam Academy of Fine Arts.

In his article “Colorful Exhibition of Vietnamese Lacquer Painting,” Lin Fengmian said, “Vietnamese artists have taken the essence from their country’s ancient artistic heritage and broken through the tradition... [They] went deep into the field of arts and crafts and combined painting and craft to create brilliant lacquer paintings.” In the article “New and Moving Vietnamese Lacquer Painting”, Feng Xiangsheng said that “the artistic effect achieved by Vietnamese artists using the special art form of lacquer painting can not be replaced by other painting types.”^[2]

To sum up, the exchange and dissemination of art culture between the East and the West not only bring inspiration to Western art, but also bring opportunities to promote the renewal of Oriental traditional art. The development path of Vietnamese lacquer painting is worthy of our learning.

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