

Creating Scenery with Lines: Analysis of Chiharu Shiota's Works

Huawei Wen, Xinchun Jiang

School of Fine Arts, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua 321004, China

Abstract: The development of contemporary art presents a diversified trend, with conceptual art, installation art, and performance art gradually gaining popularity as emerging arts. Chiharu Shiota is a Japanese female artist whose works cover many fields such as behavior, installation, painting, and so on. Her works bring tremendous visual impact to viewers through intertwined threads, thereby triggering people to ponder and explore issues such as life, existence, memory, and soul. This article aims to analyze Chiharu Shiota's works, explore the creative inspiration sources, material selection, and emotional expression of her works, so as to better understand the unique charm of her artistic works.

Keywords: Chiharu Shiota; Installation art; Self-consciousness

Chiharu Shiota was born in Osaka, Japan in 1972, and now lives in Berlin, Germany. She graduated from the Oil Painting Department of Kyoto University in her early years, and then moved to Germany to study under Marina Abramovich. Her artistic works include installations, behaviors, videos, etc, and are mainly based on abstract objects such as dreams, memories, and anxieties. Her works always take her unique life experience as the starting point, taking people to search for the deep memory of the soul and explore the relationship between survival and death through commonly used objects and winding threads in daily life. Her installation works usually fill the entire room, and the viewer can feel a subtle delicacy and poetry in it as if entering an illusion.

1. Source of creative inspiration

Art originates from life, and the life experiences of artists have an important impact on the production of artistic works. Chiharu Shiota's creations are usually related to her own experiences and memories, such as her early works inspired by childhood trauma and memories. Chiharu Shiota recalled saying, "When she was young, she witnessed a fire in her neighbor's house, and she still clearly remembers the sound of the piano burning and collapsing in the fire." It is through personal experience that the scene of burning often appears in Chiharu Shiota's works. For example, the charred black piano and chair in her work "In Silence" are repeatedly intertwined and twined with black silk threads, extending from the ground to the ceiling. The black silk threads, like the smoke generated during combustion, seem to connect past memories, creating a solemn and silent musical event. The piano wrapped in thousands of black silk threads quickly attracted the viewer's attention with powerful visual effects on the scene, giving the viewer a sense of oppression and suffocation, as if the air was filled with the smell of smoke burning, making the emotional memories of the viewer and the artist resonate.

The creation opportunity of the "Bed" series of Chiharu Shiota's works stems from her coming to Germany to study and staying in a foreign country. Every time she wakes up in the middle of the night, she can't distinguish between reality and dreams. This strong sense of unease has prompted her to have a novel idea. She longs for a sense of belonging, so she began to try to reinforce her bed with silk thread weaving, resulting in works such as "Sleeping", "In Sleeping", and "The River of Life". "In Sleeping", as a masterpiece of Chiharu Shiota, uses thousands of strands of black threads to cross and wrap around the bedside, with 24 women sleeping peacefully on the bed, with countless black threads covering the entire exhibition hall. The contrast between the white wall and the black line brings a strong visual stimulation, and the thousands of silk threads seem to be connected to the thoughts of 24 sleepers, creating a unique sense of peace and mystery on the scene. "Bed" is the carrier of Chiharu Shiota's personal emotional expression, but not only that, but also the inspiration of "bed" to Chiharu Shiota's thoughts has risen to philosophical thinking. She believes that "bed

is the place where we are born, and also the place where we die.” When people sleep in bed every day and have intimate contact with this place that carries life and death, the person who sleeps is in the middle of life and death, “Being” is expressed in the state of “not being”. At this time, the meaning given to art is not only the emotional expression of the artist, but also the questioning of philosophical issues.

2. Selection of materials

In ancient times, there was often a saying that “men plough and women weave”, as if women were born closely related to the material silk thread. Throughout the history of art, female artists such as Cecilia Vicuña and Louise Bourgeois, have chosen lines closely related to their own life experiences to express their thoughts and emotions. This is because the delicate shape and soft texture of the thread are more likely to highlight the feminine and delicate emotions, and also more likely to remind people of the warmth of maternal love. “The power of a thread may seem small, but when thousands of threads intertwine and intertwine to form different surfaces, occupying a certain space, it gives a delicate and grand feeling, which is the same as the feeling left by women to the world of” being gentle and delicate, possessing tenacity, and being able to unleash great power. “”. Although Chiharu Shiota once refused to be labeled as a female artist, the use of the center line in her works makes us feel the ubiquitous femininity. Such as her work “The Key in the Hand”, this large-scale installation art work is composed of countless intertwined red cotton threads and 50000 keys collected from around the world, which are suspended and set off by wooden boats at the bottom. The pieces of hand-woven and twisted threads in the work reflect the complex manual labor. After shuttling and overlapping, they form a huge artistic work in space. The huge energy emitted by the delicate threads ultimately achieves a shocking artistic effect. Moreover, Chiharu Shiota has given different meanings to the boat and the key in this artistic work. The “boat” symbolizes the “palm of the hand”, which accepts the pouring “red waterfall”. The “key” can open a new world, has the function of exploring the unknown, and symbolizes the future. Connecting them together with intertwined red lines represents Chiharu Shiota’s beginning to think about the future, and envisions the future with a fervent heart.

3. Expression of emotions

The choice of creative materials sometimes determines the expression of an artist’s emotions. Silk thread, as a thin and soft material, often plays a connecting role in artistic works. Chiharu Shiota uses silk threads to connect and intertwine scenes or objects in memory, revealing the conflict, blending, and reconciliation between them and reality, thereby expressing the artist’s bright and strong emotions inside. Looking at the artistic works of Chiharu Shiota, we can find that in the weaving space of Chiharu Shiota, the use of line colors is divided into three types, including red, white, and black. When she expresses the sadness and anxiety in her memory, she uses the red line. And when she faces fear, the line turns black. The white thread was gradually used after her illness treatment, expressing hope and rebirth, and also a process of healing her spiritual wounds. For example, her work “Where Are We Going” is composed of ships made of many white cotton threads and black metal threads. The ships woven of white cotton threads are sliced in the air to form floating three-dimensional boats, which are suspended from the ceiling made of transparent glass. All the boats are oriented towards the sky, like sailing on the sea and being arched by the waves, full of poetry and hope. At the same time, there are escalators in the space of the installation works, and visitors can participate in it as the escalator rises, as if they were also incarnated as ships in it, moving upward with the waves. The silk threads in Chiharu Shiota’s works connect emotions and memories. She injects her thoughts into them, displaying emotions and feelings such as the thinking of life and death, existence and extinction through installation works.

Summary:

“Line” is the most important medium for Chiharu Shiota’s creation in three-dimensional space, and it is also the soul of her artistic works. From the “Bed” series to the “Boat” series, Chiharu Shiota uses delicate silk threads to create a space where tenderness and tension coexist, and gradually obtains spiritual healing during the creative process. Using threads to create a realm, Chiharu Shiota uses threads to connect his memories and current emotions, intertwining heaven, earth, human beings, and other lives, creating a new realm, leading everyone to constantly ask about their own existence and constantly seek their own destination.

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