

On the Innovation of Color Painting Art in Modern Pseudo-Classic Architecture

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Abstract

Color painting art in modern pseudo-classic architecture is the inheritance and development of traditional architectural color painting. It can effectively enhance the cultural connotation and external temperament of pseudo-classic architecture and is one of the important visual art approaches to inherit Chinese civilization. Based on the analysis of the present problems of color painting art in pseudo-classic architecture such as the skill heritage, theoretical research, creativity implementation, and professional talents and so on, the article proposes to create six new approaches from the aspect of style, content theme, color performance, materials and techniques, theoretical confidence, and personnel training.

Key words: Pseudo-classic architecture; Color painting art; Innovative approaches

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INTRODUCTION

Modern pseudo-classic architecture, as the name suggests, is to use modern contraction technology and materials

to construct buildings which are similar to ancient architectural styles. In modern China, it is to break through the constructional system of traditional wood-based ancient architecture, to use reinforced concrete as the main structure, and to aggregate the styling features (such as large roof, courtyard, window decoration, and color painting) and the structural components (such as wooden columns, beams, brackets, carvings, caisson ceilings) and etc. of traditional ancient architectural essences as symbols of the architecture to convey information so as to realize the purpose of modern architecture's imitating of traditional ancient architecture. Examples include the "1912" block of Nanjing, "Wenshufang" in Chengdu, "Binjiang Road" and "Ciqikou" in Chongqing, "the fifth Garden" in Guangzhou, the "Tang Paradise" in Xi'an, and the pseudo-classic architecture of "Guan Tang", "Tong Ren Tang" and "Quanjudu" in Beijing. Various roof shapes, cornices and angles, brackets and paintings, red columns and golden ceilings, doors, windows and garden landscapes fully reflect the mature skills and appealing of pseudo-classic architecture. Modern pseudo-classic architecture plays a more and more important role in the construction of Chinese traditional towns with characteristics, historical and cultural towns, tourist scenic spots and beautiful countryside. Its role in space creating, environmental optimization and cultural heritage is growing.

Architectural color painting is a unique art form in China's traditional architecture. It uses gaudy, rich and heavy mineral raw materials to coat the exterior components of the architectural wooded structure. It plays multiple roles in preventing the corruption of the wooden structure, reflecting the architectural grade, using the objects to carry connotations, and decorating the landscape. After two thousand years of history changes and context heritage, it has formed a strong national characteristic style with specific norms and it

fully reflects China's remarkable artistic achievements in color decoration in ancient architecture¹.

Color painting art in pseudo-classic architecture is inheriting and developing traditional architectural color painting. As an important constituent element in the design and construction of pseudo-classic architecture, just like the gaudy costumes of the architecture, it has become an important visual art approach to inherit Chinese civilization. To conduct innovative research of color painting in pseudo-classic architecture can effectively enhance the cultural connotation and external temperament of pseudo-classic architecture and play the promotional role of "building a beautiful China" and it is the historical mission of our professional institutions, cultural relics protective and research departments and traditional craftsmen.

1. PROBLEMS

1.1 Problems in Technique Inheritance

According to incomplete statistics, China's existing traditional ancient buildings are as many as 80,000 or more, among which more than 1,100 traditional ancient buildings are listed as national cultural relics under key protection, accounting for 46% of the total. The vast majority have decorative color painting, such as Tiananmen, the Summer Palace, and the Forbidden City, etc.. The task to preserve, maintain and repair existing building color painting is arduous. Traditional building color painting craft uses apprenticeship to inherit the techniques for a long time, which has made traditional techniques on the brink of extinction and a crisis of artisans' technical level declining. Coupled with the construction teams of building color painting art is mixed, and it lacks effective industry technical standards, so that in the repair and rehabilitation processes, the historical information of the craft, materials, patterns, and techniques are missing. Quality problems of color painting continue to occur, which greatly reduces the artistic value of ancient heritage², and even causes irreparable devastating loss. This also makes the historical infiltrating atmosphere of color painting art in modern pseudo-classic architecture gradually fade.

1.2 Problems in Theoretical Research

It lacks modern understanding of color painting art from a theoretical perspective to systematically research and analyze it. We should combine the colors, patterns and

themes in color painting art with traditional Chinese culture such as Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, yin, yang, the five Xing, and folk customs and so on to analyze the functional requirements, aesthetic requirements, ergonomic and environmental psychological requirements of color painting art in pseudo-classic architecture. We have not determined the status and role of color painting art in modern pseudo-classic architecture in artistic decoration, cultural inheritance, and the construction of ecological civilization. The basic framework of the basic theory needs to be established urgently.

1.3 Problems in the Implementation of Creative Ideas

The shaping style is expressive modes, theme content performance, design and construction procedures, the fit of construction and painting materials of China's color painting art in pseudo-classic architecture, etc. are in the bottleneck stage in the development process. It is faced with plights of rigid design, disordered and complicated construction process and unclear verification cycle of drawing effects and so on. Negative actions such as isolated settings, one-sided novelty, and constructing while demolishing and so on in the construction of modern pseudo-classic architecture frequently happen. We should consider how to regulate the process of design, construction and restore of building color painting, clarity standards, and promote self-discipline in this industry to make color painting art in pseudo-classic architecture fit people's visual aesthetic cognitive rules and become highlights in visual landscape, so as to effectively shape city space and human environmental image.

1.4 Problems In Professional Talents

On the one hand, with the tradition of passaging of mentoring, "one hundred mentors have one hundred ways". It cannot avoid martial disputes and the loss of techniques. On the other hand, there is a lack of professional research personnel and even no relative personnel. Professional institutions lack appropriate research and study majors. Modern technology application in building color painting art is low and there is a lack of electronic data base. It becomes imperative to cultivate building color painting art talents and develop the professional team.

2. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

2.1 Innovation of the Style and Pattern

The shapes and categories of China's traditional building color painting are divided into dragon pattern, tangent circle pattern, Suzhou-style pattern, and pearl and auspicious grass pattern and other main patterns. The dragon pattern is of the highest level and it is the main color painting pattern in official architecture in Qing dynasty. It is only used in royal palaces, the main hall

¹ A Concern of Ancient Chinese Architecture: Color Painting in Ancient Architecture Faces Crisis—Interviewing Jiang Guangquan. Retrieved from <http://blog.sina.com.cn>. *Modern Chinese Architectural Color painting* (p.6). Tianjin: Tianjin University Press

² A Concern of Ancient Chinese Architecture: Color Painting in Ancient Architecture Faces Crisis—Interviewing Jiang Guangquan. Retrieved from <http://blog.sina.com.cn>

and doors and other important parts of temples. Its style is rigorous and solemn. This pattern is mostly from the geometric patterns of dragons, phoenixes, and the back of turtles. Patterns of dragon and phoenixes are magnificent. The level of tangent circle pattern is the second highest and its biggest feature is the use of petals with whorls in the ceiling and they are so-called tangent circles. It is generally used in the minor palaces and minor building in royal gardens and temples. In tangent circle pattern, the picture of each component is divided into three-section way: the central portion of painted beam, the intermediate portion of painted beam and the end portion of painted beam. Suzhou-style pattern, originated from traditional folk practices in the south in Suzhou and Hangzhou and then becoming well-known, is generally used in small buildings in gardens, such as pavilions and the hoop head of private houses and doors of high-ranking officials. The end portion of painted beam mainly uses Lianzhu, words, and frets with gaudy colors and decorations. It uses a strong color contrast in the layers of painting and the painting is flexible and creative with a rich flavor of life (Liang, 2008).

Color painting in modern pseudo-classic architecture must break the hierarchy of imperial royal power and not be cramped in the traditional forms. It should establish a correct protective and inheriting concept and a developing ecological concept, extensively absorb the advanced characteristics of different painting styles, use comprehensive style performance forms to meet the requirement of people's healthy physical and mental development, constitute a harmonious visual environment of traditional architecture, stress the concept and value of respecting and protecting nature and in harmony with nature, and establish specific artistic forms and aesthetic orders of color painting in modern pseudo-classic architecture. From a special artistic perspective, we should use the manifesting ways of generalization, exaggeration, abstract and change in art, dynamically combine them, constitute the plane and three-dimensional modeling which is of the beauty of rhythm, the beauty of image and physical beauty. We should reflect traditional eastern artistic characteristics in various environments and spaces, exhibit the rich talent, artistic expression and aesthetic taste of the designers and constructors, innovate traditional styles, and create rich national cultural connotation of pseudo-classic architecture decorative art.

2.2 Innovation of the Contents and Themes

The stylistic content of traditional architecture painting is fairly old-fashioned, with strength represented by dragons and phoenixes, and auspiciousness represented by Fu Lu Shou Xi, and so on used extensively. The stylistic elements used in the homes of courtiers are entirely different from those used by the merely affluent. In pseudo-classical architecture painting, the subject matter cannot be fixed; one may rest assured that it will

be based on such wide-ranging elements as the special characteristics of the architecture, as well as geography and folk customs. In addition to the use of traditional dragons, phoenixes and geometrical decorations, as well as plants animals and other decorative patterns, the development of society along with current science should be integrated along with modern civilized lifestyle, and the creative methods of western art, including animation, cartoons and other visual forms. Painting and decoration should borrow from modern space art techniques and adhere to a certain sense of scale and proportion such that painting patterns express a unity of content and form of expression and highlight the spirit of the age and features of geography. Painting entirely new subject matter and revealing architectural stylistic features will give people aesthetic pleasure and the shock of the new as well as transmit historical and cultural information and express the environmental significance of architectural space. We must let architectural painting, this traditional flower of the arts experiences a renaissance in China's beautiful construction.

2.3 Innovation of the Expressions of Color

Color in traditional Chinese architecture is very rich. Some colors are quite bright and used in strong contrast, others are simple and elegant and used harmoniously. Generally, palaces, temples, monasteries and other such buildings use more yellow, red and other vibrant colors placed in strong contrast such as red walls and yellow tiles that stand out against green trees and a blue sky. Add to these elements the golden painting in the eaves and the whole is an exceptionally beautiful ancient building. Southern residences and some gardens and temples nestled among the mountains also employ white-washed walls and slate grey roofs for an effect that looks quite fresh and beautiful. Northern residential walls, tiles (or slates) produce a feeling of quiet well-being. Their simple and elegant tone plays an important role in ancient Chinese architecture. Colors follow a hierarchical order as follows: red (south) – green (east) – white (west) – black (north), with yellow and red symbolizing supreme imperial power, and dedicated to his use (Zhuang & Hu, 2007). In Hexi painting, blue and green are the base colors and gold powder is used, where the greater the gold, the grander the building. Tangent circle pattern painting alternates use of blue, green, yellow, red and other warm and cold colors, using black, white and gold for dividing lines to create striking color contrasts. Suzhou style painting uses layer upon layer of paint, with green as the principal color alternating with blue, yellow, red, and so on; borders and edges are painted in blue and green to create a clear tone pattern.

How can pseudo-traditional architecture painting appropriately incorporate local conditions and absorb the achievements of traditional architecture color effects? By researching the traditional rules of color scheme painting

and, based on the overall environment and stylistic features of the architecture, give full consideration to the harmonization of various parts of a building such that the buildings color layout is focused for properly balanced and a large area is consistently harmonized in overall hue. In important constructions such as Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and the three main halls of the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace and the Lama's Temple we can see gold, red and green paintings in the eaves that employ striking color contrasts in the shadows as well as provide a transition to green-colored roofs, and, below them, brilliant vermilion pillars between the windows and doors to create a brilliant whole. A color or a complex of sedate colors can also be used in pursuit of more elegant, crisp, subtle, soft color effects. To sum up, the Great Hall of the People, Capital International Airport, the CPPCC Auditorium, Beijing Hotel, the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, the Agricultural Exhibition Hall, the Stork Tower, Yueyang Tower and so on all serve as the foundation for the art of pseudo-classical architecture painting through their absorption of the principles of Western painting techniques and incorporation of innovations in ancient architecture decorative painting methods that meets to the greatest degree the modern public's aesthetic taste in color.

2.4 Innovation of Materials and Techniques

The development of modern science and technology promotes continuous innovations of the function, technology, materials and artistic forms of pseudo-classic architecture. The creative approaches of Color painting design are more modern. Computer simulation technology makes the effect more intuitive. Informationization and scientization of the design methods and material crafts of color painting art highly integrate. New building materials and modern constructive technology make building decorative arts change every day. Traditional building color painting construction procedures, material texture, production modes and others continue to be optimized in the color painting design and production in modern pseudo-classic architecture. On the one hand, we should enhance the transformation of the toxic components in traditional color painting mineral pigments such as azurite, malachite, cinnabar, lead, orpiment, real gal, female topaz, brown soil, red soil, and white soil and so on. On the other hand, we should develop new painting materials which have strong coverage and obvious function in preventing insects, moth and moisture and can integrate with traditional materials. At the same time, with the awareness of conservation priority and environmental priority, we should promote the green development and low-carbon development of color painting materials (Yan, 2010) to implement common but different color painting art promotional strategies in different areas. Meanwhile, according to the physical characteristics of the steel and concrete materials of pseudo-classic architecture, we

should improve the construction processes and optimize drawing tools and methods to improve the quality of color painting art.

2.5 Establishment of Theoretical Confidence

In contemporary China, research on architectural color painting art usually: a) starts from the historical development process to explore the historical development of architecture and rarely involve architectural color painting art; b) from the perspective of traditional architectural aesthetics, explain the constitutional form, aesthetical creativity and color painting pattern of the architecture; c) starts from the repair technology to conclude the practical experience of the older ancient architecture repairing generation of workers, explain traditional architectural constitution, decoration and color painting, and introduce traditional technology, materials and crafts. There is a lack of multidisciplinary professional comprehensive research combining construction, design arts, materials, crafts, history, and economics, etc.. We must systematically explore the general integrating and merging rules between color painting art and architectural art, architectural culture and ecological environment, study the characteristics of combining the decorative feature, symbolic feature, regional feature and educational feature of color painting art in pseudo-classic architecture, establish architectural aesthetical cognition, art design, craft process, drawing effect evaluation criteria and incentive mechanism different from construction, sculpture, painting and drawing, form modern pseudo-classic architectural color painting art development and application theoretical system which has national and regional characteristics and combine art with technology.

2.6 Innovation of Talent Cultivation

We should scientifically co-ordinate and plan, step-by-step implement and guide to solve the problems regarding professional construction and talent cultivation in modern pseudo-classic architectural color painting art. First, we should integrate and improve existing professionals, mobilize multidisciplinary research, enhance the electronic filing, technical analysis and scientific maintenance of traditional color painting. Second, according to market needs, we should set the major of modern pseudo-classic architectural color painting design in institutes of artistic design, architecture and architectural decoration, integrate modern architectural color painting into the teaching content of professional institutes, systematically teaching the original categories and their form characteristics of classic Chinese architectural color painting, and couple with field research to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning. We should conduct architectural color painting course training, cultivate solid color knowledge, perspective knowledge, and comprehensive modeling capability of feature flowers, birds and figures, absorb, tailor, and pluck literati painting, murals, and sculptures

and other artistic varieties to innovate talent training methods. Third, we should implement learning and training of the construction team, strengthen their self-discipline, and improve their awareness of traditional culture, modeling art and construction craft technology.

CONCLUSION

Faced with the theoretical, practical and talent training and other practical problems in modern pseudo-classic architectural color painting art, we must conduct multi-disciplinary professional research combining architecture, arts, materials and history, leading by design arts. Only by inheriting the traditional essences of architectural color painting, innovating the themes, contents, forms, color expressions, design conveying and conception presentation of color painting art, and developing modern coating methods, materials and techniques, we can achieve great breakthrough in the theoretical constitution, creative

implementation and talent cultivation of pseudo-classic architectural color painting art, so that our modern pseudo-classic architectural color painting art shines with unique eastern style in the world architectural detraction field.

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