Challenges and Strategies for the Development of Visual Arts in the Context of Modern Society

Shijie Hai

Royal College of Art, London, SW7 2EU, UK

Abstract: Although visual arts are widely applied in design, education, music, and other fields in modern society, their development faces many challenges, such as the widespread entertainmentization of public art creation and consumption, the limitations imposed by emerging technologies on human aesthetic spirit, and the impact of the social environment on the rhythm of art. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the development of visual arts based on their attributes and the iterative laws of modern society from the following aspects: portraying the human spiritual world with humans as the origin, innovating artistic expression rooted in tradition, and mastering the initiative in developing visual arts with diverse media.

Keywords: Visual arts, application, challenges, development strategies

1. Introduction

Each technological revolution and social development triggers an iterative update of art theory and art creation concepts. As an art form that primarily relies on visual images to engage in cognitive and emotional dialogue with humans, visual arts have persisted from prehistoric times to the present and are widely applied in various aspects of society. Therefore, to explore the development strategies of visual arts in the context of modern society, it is necessary to analyze their current applications and the challenges encountered as their scope of application expands both theoretically and practically.

2. The Application of Visual Arts in Modern Society

2.1. Application in the Design Field

Research on the application of visual arts in the design field has been ongoing for many years, as evidenced by academic research on both domestic and international platforms. Theoretical achievements, such as "Research on Product Design Methods Integrating Art, Technology, and Humanistic Elements," have pointed the way for the practical application of visual arts in modern society. The rational application of visual arts has broken the shackles of traditional design, bringing more enjoyment of visual beauty to people. For instance, in the field of landscape design, many designers apply knowledge of visual art axes and sightlines, composition and framing, light and shadow utilization, and perspective science to solve the conflict between the audience's view and the artist's view of the landscape. Take the Vaux-le-Vicomte estate as an example, where one of the design ideas considered the significant impact of the real axis on visual effects. By skillfully using perspective and visual principles, the symmetrical design around the garden's central axis, which is about 1 kilometer long, extends the viewer's sight from north to south, providing a broad viewing perspective and showcasing the estate's grand momentum[1].

2.2. Application in the Field of Education

Visual arts are inherently about beauty, representing an artistic, creative imitation or expression of things, thereby holding substantial educational value and significance. They can either cultivate students' aesthetic abilities and enhance the quality of aesthetic education in schools or achieve effective mental health education and ideological and political education through psychological suggestion and guidance. Due to these aspects, visual arts are widely applied in the field of education. For instance, "Important Perspectives in Art" elaborates on feasible ways to integrate art courses with visual arts. Many higher education institutions focus on students' innovative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, information literacy, teamwork, self-management, the connection of diverse knowledge, and the acquisition of implicit knowledge through visual arts elective courses. These courses include

comprehensive art courses like modern stage design, emotional training courses to accumulate story material, and art appreciation courses like Hollywood history and Chinese calligraphy. Evaluations reveal that students have a deep impression and high acceptance of these courses. Through regular study, their visual arts appreciation levels significantly improve.

2.3. Application in the Music Field

Visual arts and music share similarities and interconnections in their ecosystems, leading visual art forms to profoundly impact music creation, expression methods, and musical elements. This has effectively adjusted the relationship between the artistry and commerciality of music, enabling the harmonious coexistence of music and technology. For example, many music production companies and producers, based on the theoretical foundation of the interaction and evolution of auditory and visual arts and the forms of music visualization, apply iconography and semiotics to the visual representation of music in designing album covers or packaging the image of singers. They also use dynamic visual arts in creative MV recordings, enriching the visual expression of music in other contexts. Therefore, music album covers bear the functions of conveying basic musical information, providing aesthetic sensory stimulation, and expanding the market for musical products. Through the visual elements of graphics, text, lines, and colors on album covers, audiences can understand the album's musical style and cultural ideas, engaging in implicit interaction with the singer and the music. While listening to music, the aesthetic sensory stimulation obtained from the cover enhances the visual imagery of the music[2].

2.4. Cross-Application in Other Fields

Due to the characteristics and functions of visual arts, they are also widely applied in other fields of modern society, including exhibition design and collection protection in museums and art galleries, the inheritance and development of regional and local ethnic cultures, the design, marketing, and promotion of tourism cultural and creative products, and the innovation of new media art works. For example, the public's perception of the artistic, historical, and cultural value of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves begins with the visual aesthetics of its architecture, colored sculptures, and murals. People are drawn by the decorative patterns, attire designs, and colors of these art pieces, leading to visual stimulation and further interest in the aesthetic and imaginative aspects behind the works. Thus, the preservation of the murals in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves starts with visual protection, exploring their intrinsic value through visual art language and achieving broad art transmission and re-dissemination with minimal impact through data collection and analysis, image processing, evolutionary tracing, and 3D reproduction[3].

3. Challenges in the Application of Visual Arts in Modern Society

3.1. The Popularization and Entertainmentization of Public Art Creation and Consumption

From the late 19th century to the 1950s, the activity level of all art forms, including visual arts, was unprecedented, and the number of people considering themselves artists far exceeded that of the previous artistic development stage. On this basis, the forms and concepts of visual art creation underwent transformative changes, transitioning from being exclusive to niche and elite groups to becoming more accessible to the general public. The forms of art, the purposes of creation and consumption, were all aimed at meeting the popular demands of the masses. After being exposed to this new form of expression, the public gradually turned it into a means of entertainment. With the continuous advancement of technology, popular and mainstream visual arts emerged in large numbers, leading to commercialization, mass production, and replication, with common modes and features. Although quantity can lead to qualitative changes, this kind of public visual art production and sales faces negative issues such as batch processing, copying, uniform modes, high commercialization, and rationalization. The goal is to produce marketable "products" in a short time, making the external manifestation of art more apparent while its intrinsic value is relatively diminished.

3.2. Limitations of Emerging Technologies on Aesthetic Spirit

In the latter half of the 20th century, rapidly developing technologies such as the internet and artificial intelligence provided new avenues for the display of visual arts, allowing audiences to experience different artistic aesthetics in virtual spaces based on virtual technologies. Although this broadened the platforms for visual art dissemination, it also restricted human aesthetic experiences and impacted the

fields of aesthetic value and spirit. This impact, in turn, influences the development of visual arts. For example, intelligent visual art creation relies on artificial intelligence technology, which often lacks the participation of the creator's subjective will or artistic imagination, making visual art works resemble collections of retrieved materials and unable to effectively convey emotions to the audience. Excessive exposure to such emotionless works can affect the audience's understanding of true art, making authentic, "imperfect" creations less appreciated. Creators, having extensive databases of original materials and lacking experiential thinking to experience life and accumulate materials, may face challenges in analyzing form structures, judging aesthetics, and integrating visual elements, leading to a decline in the quality of visual art creation.

3.3. Challenges to the Rhythm of Art due to the Social Environment

Modern society is a fast-paced society where the quality of many things is measured by economic efficiency and profit. This clearer goal and faster-paced pursuit of objectives in the social environment have had various negative impacts on the rhythm of visual arts. For example, people pursue the efficiency of art creation and the profitability of costs, focusing on the development and use of art creation tools. Tools are used to express the social world and symbols, becoming a popular trend in visual art creation under the social environment. However, people's impressions of many large-scale works often remain at the level of grand scenes, exciting plots, and prominent visual impact, but upon careful reflection, they feel empty.

4. Development Strategies for Visual Arts in Contemporary Society

4.1. Depicting the Human Spiritual World from a Human-Centered Perspective

Art creation ultimately serves the aesthetic realm and spiritual pursuit of works, being the most direct expression of human social spiritual activities. Therefore, in contemporary society, regardless of how the technology and rhythm of art develop, it should be human-centered, focusing on depicting the human spiritual world to achieve a harmonious unity of artistic technology forms and artistic connotations.

This requires artists to first firmly establish the correct concept of visual art creation and uphold aesthetic standards. Especially in a society surrounded by high technology, they should actively and willingly use traditional handicrafts and other low-tech methods for creation and expression. Respecting their own emotional needs and the emotional experience of the audience is crucial. For instance, from the perspective of art appreciation, they should personally engage in the practice of photography, sculpture, painting, and other art creations, paying attention to the texture, shape, and color of natural materials. This not only finds a sanctuary for the soul in personal creation but also infuses the work with emotions, enabling dialogue with the audience.

Secondly, for those working in the cultural industry, it is necessary to use artificial intelligence technology reasonably to promote the fairness, equality, and democratization of visual arts, allowing more people to participate in art creation and dissemination. For example, based on the artistic and cultural values and dissemination effects, reconstruct the concepts, creation methods, production processes, and social existence of online visual arts in the internet era. At the same time, attention should be paid to the connotation of works, increasing the frequency of art creation, producing more derivative categories of works, and shortening the evolution process, while balancing form, concept, and cultural sense.

4.2. Innovating Visual Art Forms Rooted in Tradition

Visual art creation and criticism, illuminated by the spirit of art, involve the pursuit and development of humanistic spirit by different individuals. This process also allows individuals to experience spiritual cleansing. In the new era, promoting the development of visual arts based on the modern social context requires rooting in traditional arts, exploring national consciousness and excellent cultural genes, enhancing the soft power of artistic works, and guiding mainstream social aesthetic and value concepts.

For example, based on the cultural background and rituals of traditional festivals and the existing visual dissemination of festival images, the inheritance and protection methods of local intangible cultural heritage can be explored through the expression of visual image language. Firstly, the public should be guided into a new context of national cultural images, viewing regional festival cultures from an aesthetic perspective and understanding the differences between cultures. This approach not only

attracts people with different cultural symbols and images but also sparks interest in exploring the origins of these cultures while maintaining cultural integrity. Secondly, focusing on strengthening cultural confidence and innovative development of visual arts. For instance, distilling the initial aesthetic elements related to material life from festival totems, utensils, and costumes, analyzing the rationality and rules of this cultural aesthetic, creating cultural and creative products based on the overall visual art image, or industrializing art. This not only generates economic value from the beauty of festival folk customs, improving local life but also enhances the local people's initiative and enthusiasm in developing the culture. Thirdly, under the promotion of integrated media and big data technology, traditional cultural elements can be integrated and endowed with more visual significance. This allows the historical and ideological values of the culture to interact with more audiences through narrative images. For example, designing animations, promotional films, and video games based on traditional festival cultural stories to explore new consumption scenes and modes based on culture and visual impressions. This, in turn, uses consumption demand as the foundation for the evolution of cultural development structure and visual image structure, achieving a virtuous cycle of cultural symbols and content-consumption scenes [4].

4.3. Taking Control of Visual Arts Development through Diverse Media

While emerging technologies have brought more challenges to the development of visual arts in reality, it is undeniable that these technologies have broken the limitations of artistic rationality, enabling more personalized artistic expressions and more diverse interactions between creation and appreciation roles. They can also promote innovation in artistic forms and aesthetic value concepts. This requires relevant subjects to take control of developing visual arts through different media:

Firstly, based on the characteristics of public participation, guide the aesthetic orientation of audiences in a media-integrated environment through sharing, linking, and clicking. This allows audiences to view the dissemination of art information in the new environment correctly and pursue higher quality art works rather than merely satisfying their curiosity, sense of achievement, or thrill with works that have stronger visual stimuli. Secondly, relevant subjects should actively use technical means to display works through internet information platforms or engage in artistic creation across time and space. For example, in modern stage art performances, actively use computer lighting to create stage atmospheres, improving stage design levels and bridging the gap between the virtual and real worlds, thus opening a fast lane for the development of digital visual arts [5]. Thirdly, actively use AI and other digital processing technologies and software to create art works that include life ideals and value judgments, imbued with dreams and conforming to daily aesthetics, increasing the realism of virtual visual arts. Fourthly, promote the construction of a technology-based visual arts industry chain. For example, surrounding comprehensive music visual projects, integrate visual and auditory elements through live performances, presenting highlights that other art media do not have, driving innovation in related industries such as art creation materials. This, through more powerful artistic expression, occupies the mainstream space of contemporary social media culture, promoting the development of related art fields towards ultimate beauty, creating a socially prosperous art atmosphere of cultural integration and intersection.

4.4. Strengthening the Accessibility of Visual Arts in Daily Life

The people are the most fundamental support for all activities and developments. Therefore, to promote the widespread application of visual arts in contemporary society, it is necessary to strengthen the connection between visual arts and daily life accessibility. This will allow more people to understand visual arts, appreciate visual arts, and develop a higher demand for visual aesthetics.

For example, rail transit plays a crucial role in modern life. People rely on rail transportation, whether on weekdays or weekends, naturally giving rise to the physical and spiritual culture of the subway and other aspects. This includes station culture, train culture, collectible culture, historical culture, symbol culture, and thematic visual arts. Based on the theory of visual arts, these elements can be fully integrated into subway culture, highlighting the symbolic significance of cultural symbols.

Take the Beijing subway as an example. It is dedicated to highlighting local special culture and ethnic customs, integrating historical and modern multicultural elements to achieve innovative visual expressions. For instance, the Zhushikou Station on Qianmen Street features an arched ceiling with folk characteristics, connecting to distinctive walls that display traditional architecture, everyday life, and folk activities of old Beijing. These vivid scenes naturally lead people into the streets and alleys of old Beijing, allowing them to experience the rich living atmosphere and charm of the city's heritage.

The construction of visual arts in other cities' rail transit culture and other aspects of daily life can draw on the above experiences, focusing on both static and dynamic visual expressions. This includes creating themed trains and platforms, regularly updating themed posters, and achieving interaction and connection between offline facilities and the internet or apps based on visual arts. This approach allows the audience to receive enjoyable visual feedback within a three-dimensional environment.

4.5. Expanding the Foundation and Scope of Visual Arts Education

The development of any art form naturally relies on individuals who understand art and have ideas for its professional growth. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously expand the foundation and scope of visual arts education, starting with allowing more individuals to understand what visual arts are during the stages of early and basic education. By continuously stimulating their interest in visual arts, they can be guided to become talents engaged in visual arts-related work.

For example, the "Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards" have added content and teaching requirements related to students using digital imaging devices and technology for artistic creation and appreciation, and have proposed teaching recommendations that include digital media arts and film-related content. In practical teaching, schools should encourage not only art course teachers but also teachers of other subjects to actively implement the new curriculum standards. This can be achieved through interdisciplinary courses and special teaching activities that help students understand digital media arts and visual arts.

For instance, introducing a photography course at the middle school level, with visual culture as the theme, allows students to use their knowledge of arts, science, and mathematics to document school life, social life, and the people and events around them through a camera lens. This helps them fully experience the charm of visual arts. On this basis, schools can connect to high school art courses and even local university visual arts-related courses and teaching frameworks, organizing extracurricular visual arts and new media arts practice activities. This approach not only improves students' artistic aesthetic abilities but also encourages them to consciously use visual arts to innovate problem-solving methods in their daily studies and practices, aligning their learning and growth goals with a career path related to the visual arts system.

5. Conclusion

In summary, visual arts are widely used in contemporary society and play a positive role in leading the value direction of human artistic aesthetic activities. Therefore, although the mature development of artificial intelligence technology and others has brought alienation challenges to visual arts, by adjusting art creation ideas, balancing the relationship between technology and art, and deeply exploring the value of excellent traditional Chinese culture, it is still possible to promote the healthy cyclical development of visual arts and push forward the iterative innovation of art.

References

[1] Wang Dan. Application of Visual Illusion Art in Visual Communication Design [J]. Shoe Craft and Design, 2023(5):64-66.
[2] Zhang Ya. Research on the Application of Ink Art Elements in Advertising Visual Design [J]. Shoe Craft and Design, 2023, 3(18):45-47.
[3] Wu Xiaoling, Xun Zhengliang. Exploration of Digital Media Art Application Strategies in Visual Communication Design [J]. Journal of News Research, 2023, 14(14):83-85.
[4] Xu He, Guo Zining. Exploration of Modern Development and Living Heritage of Peking Opera Visual Art Design [J]. Art Evaluation, 2024(3):146-151.
[5] Li Zhenhan. The Extension of Art and Technology: Reflections and Prospects on the Development of Dynamic Visual Design [J]. Art Research, 2023(6):170-173.