

The Development of Western Children's Art Research and Its Influence on China

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Abstract:

The western world has paid close attention to the children's art for a long time. In relevant studies, children's art has gradually established the relation with the "art" and soon has been included in the "art" system. Researchers and practitioners have gradually admitted the artist status, inherent artistic ability and original art style of children. As art theory and art practice continuously advance, "children's art", as the antonomasia of children's fine arts, is deemed as a concept under the standpoint of modernism, whose limitation is gradually emerging. From the perspective of postmodernism, "children's visual culture" begins to cut a figure and the research perspective of western children's art transforms and its research contents are further expanded. The children-centered principle advocated by western children's art researches conforms to the basic position of Chinese researchers and the demands of China's education development, which has affected the progress of relevant work in China to some extent.

Keywords: Children's art, Western research, Children's art education, China

At the beginning, many artists and art historians thought that children's art was just a kind of children's Graphic Play, which was far from the level and status represented by "art" in the real sense. Western children's art research has experienced a process from creation to enrichment and deepening. At the same time, this has a certain impact on the relevant work in China.

I. The connection between children's art and "art" is gradually established

Children's art began to be formally incorporated into the western art world, which can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century. In Courbet's 1854-1855 painting "L'atelier," the boy at the foot of Champfleury is a metaphor for the generation. It represents the creative ability of artists that is flowing spontaneously from children to adults. The uniqueness of children's art ability and the identity of children's art creators began to be gradually recognized.

In the field of art studies, the earliest professional demonstration of children's art that we can currently see dates back to 1848. Two years after the death of Swiss cartoonist Rodolphe Topffer, his legacy *Reflections et Menus Propos d'un Peintre Genevois ou essai sur le beau dans les arts* was published. Michelangelo is the immortal master of graffiti urchins, and the difference between them is much smaller than the difference between Michelangelo as the immortal master and Michelangelo as the apprentice." In short, the relationship between children's art, apprentice art, and master art is clearly illustrated. The unique value and status of children's art ability and works are openly recognized, and the connection between children's art and "art" began to be established. British art critic John Ruskin also focused on children's art in *The Elements of Drawing*, first published in 1857. Ruskin used the innocent eye for the first time, which refers to children's characteristic, innocent art perception. He suggests that this book painting involved to learn ICONS, but "they are not included in children under The age of 12 or 14 computing" He said children at this age should engage in "the most spontaneous art practice...They should be allowed to scribble to express their free will.(children) should be praised accordingly for their spontaneous and free depiction in the painting process "[ibid.,p.9]. Ruskin wanted artists to be as free from prejudice, knowledge and convention as children. At the same time, they should have no utilitarian heart to complete the observation of the painting object, so as to make the painting "visual reality". However, later scholars such as Gombrich and Nelson Goodman put forward many criticisms on this concept. But Ruskin's interest in and appreciation of children's unique artistic abilities is well known.

II. Second, become the "art" of children's art

1) Research on children's art from the perspective of education

Inheriting the existing views and positions of predecessors, the British scholar Ebenezer Cooke published an article on *Our Art Teaching and Child Nature* in 1886. Cooke thought about the problem from the perspective of art education, emphasizing that teachers should understand students' nature, focus on developing students' artistic expression ability, exercise their imagination and encourage spontaneous spiritual activities, instead of teaching mechanically and telling children how to draw with

precise sequence and cramming. In 1887, Italian art historian Corradi Ricci published *L'arte dei Bambin* [Ricci, C (1887). *L'arte dei bambini*. Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli.]. Through the analysis of children's art activities and thousands of children's art works, Ricci proposed the "laws of integrity" of children's art. This is the first systematic study of children's art. Ricci's achievement basically describes the characteristics of children's art and shows the uniqueness and charm of children's art, which attracts more researchers' attention. Franz Cizek, known as "the father of children's painting" and "the pioneer of children's art education". He believed that children's art developed according to the laws of nature, which was different from adult paintings and even more creative than adult works. Viola's research achievement is one of the most detailed descriptions of Cizek's children's art concept and art education position. It also fully reflects the prevailing attitudes and ideas towards children's art in the western world in the first half of the 20th century.

With the advancement of the work of many researchers represented by Cizek, the western world's attention to children's art reached its climax in the 20th century and continued until the 1960s and 1970s. For example, researchers like Lowenfeld and Gardner kept producing research achievements on children's art. Children are different from adults in that they are born with and can develop according to the rules of the art performance stage is summarized and summarized. These western classical studies mainly demonstrate the natural development law of children's artistic ability from the perspective of modern psychology, and declare to the world that the development of children's artistic ability does not need the external intervention of adults. This is a warning to the adult world to avoid interfering with the natural development of children's artistic abilities and to give children the space to develop freely.

Kandinsky's discussion of the spirit of art emphasizes that artists intentionally or unintentionally use creative forms to express their inner feelings or understanding of the nature of things. Based on this, Kandinsky explicitly mentioned that there is a huge unconscious force in children that is manifested in painting. It also brings children's drawings to a level comparable (and often even more so) to those of adults. Kandinsky noted that children's artistic abilities and the artistic value of their work were different from the simple recognition of children's artistic abilities. Instead, it emphasizes children's insight into the nature of things and their unique ability to express the nature of things.

Jonathan Fineberg, a famous American art historian, published a series of papers and research results at the end of last century and the beginning of this century, focusing on the intuitive connection between children's art and modern art. *The innocent eye: Children's art and The modern artists*. The direct connection between modern art and children's art is examined in academic detail. Fineberg emphasized that many important artists in the history of modern art regarded Children's paintings as The source of their artistic creation. By virtue of their artistic style, these achieved a great breakthrough, and the strong desire for advocating simple art was aroused.

In Fineberg's research system and theoretical system, the value of children's fine art, which has become an "art", is obvious and has exerted a far-reaching influence on modern art. This kind of influence not only comes from the style of children's art works, but also the influence of children's unique art ability on modern art is more obvious. It should be noted that after more than a century of

development and baptism, the connotation of "The innocent eye" used by Fineberg here is obviously different from that of "The innocent eye" used by Ruskin. Although both of them use this phrase to express children's unique artistic perception and ability, compared with Ruskin, Fineberg lays more emphasis on children's innate ability to perceive details and pay attention to the essence of things, and forms a unique artistic style in art creation on this condition. Children's art has established its own "art" status.

III. The characteristics and limitations of "children's art" in western children's art research

We can roughly summarize the meaning of the concept of "children's art" in western children's art research. First, children are born artists, who only need encouragement but no formal guidance in their art activities. Excessive adult involvement may have a negative impact on children's creative expression. Second, children's art ability is innate and has certain regularity and childhood color. Thirdly, art is a way for children to express themselves and feel the world and has a unique style. The focus of children's art works is not to depict and reproduce the appearance of things. Abstract schemas are used to express children's understanding of the world. Its basic position has also been highlighted. Firstly, artistic expression and expression should avoid existing artistic practices. Every artist and child has the obligation to practice a unique artistic style. My creativity keeps art in a constant state of renewal and positive development. Secondly, in an ideal state, the development of art is not achieved through visible guidance and external influence factors. It is continuously promoted through the organic combination of individual natural growth and internal creative energy. In fact, the basic characteristics of these "children's art" and the basic stand it contains have already revealed the typical modernist style. American scholar Wilson sorted out some research conclusions on children's art from the 19th century to the 20th century. It directly claims that "children's art" is the product of modernism. That is true, but the limits of that position are becoming clear.

Firstly, "children's art" advocates and advocates deal with the contradiction between children's art characteristics and adult standards. As Fineberg puts it, "aren't the characteristics of children's art that we celebrate on a daily basis the same as the quality of the great works of art that are displayed in museums? A large number of advocates and advocates of children's art seem to put children's art into an ideal space and time environment, cut off its connection with the adult world, ignore its relationship with adult art. However, many researchers praise and praise children's art. Many characteristics of children's art meet the needs of art development in the adult world. When we put children's art in the name of "children's art", "children's art". "Children's art" has to some extent become the "accessory" of the world of adult artists. The so-called "pure natural" and "honest" "art" has been infected with the habits of adult society at the time of birth.

The second limitation is that the discussion and analysis of "children's art" largely lack the attention to the influence of cultural factors. In particular, from the perspective of modernism, relevant researches claim that the developmental stage theory of children's art ability acquired by it is universal. In fact, the development of children's artistic ability is inevitably influenced by social, historical and cultural

influences, such as the constant contact with adults, peers and the mass media. "Children's art" does not exist like an island, and children's artistic ability will be marked by history and culture.

Since the 1970s, some assumptions of modernism began to lose their color, and the worship of individualism began to be challenged by collectivism and social public interests. In the vision of postmodernism, it is an important concept and visual culture starts to get more attention. The rise of related research indicates that the boundary between high art and popular art is becoming increasingly blurred, which to some extent changes the basic position of how to define art and examine and analyze art works. Visual culture is not only a background of the times, but also a post-modern perspective to examine children's art and an educational paradigm, which has a significant impact on the study of children's art. Today, with the development of post-modern and visual culture research, "children's visual culture", as a new synonym for children's art, has begun to enter the field of vision of relevant researchers and gradually become a topic of close attention in relevant research fields in the west. Art Education, Studies in Art Education, a professional academic journal of the national association of fine arts Education (NANEY), published the title "Why not Visual Culture?" in 2003., a special issue of "Visual Culture", Art Education invited contributions again in 2005, and published a special issue of "The Return of Visual Culture", focusing on children's Visual Culture and related educational issues. The modernist mythology of children's art is fading, and the century-old belief in children's creativity and the originality of their images is increasingly and still critically examined.

First, a change of perspective. With the integration of imagology, semiotics, hermeneutics and other research methods in the field of visual culture, cultural and sociological perspectives have become the new favorites in children's visual culture research. The exploration of children's art activities and the analysis of children's visual art works are no longer limited to the analysis of children's innate natural art ability, but focus on the analysis of their visual cultural characteristics. The interaction and interaction between children's culture and other cultural groups and their cultural connotation, power operation and right distribution.

Secondly, the expansion of the content is studied. Compared with the traditional studies on the development of children's art ability and the analysis of art works, the research on children's visual culture is no longer limited to children's painting, but also gradually brings other types of children's visual art into the research scope. At the same time, children's digital media art, performance art and other comprehensive art form into the field of research. In addition, the study of children's visual culture is more focused on the relationship between social culture, history and other elements and children's art, among which the analysis of the impact of visual culture and other elements on children's artistic expression becomes the focus of the study.

In general, although the study of children's visual culture has not formed a systematic and perfect research system. However, as an important trend in the study of children's art, relevant studies provide a new perspective and method for the understanding of children's visual art in the current era. This not only helps promote children's art research. At the same time, it provides a new direction for the development of children's culture and childhood research.

V. The influence of western children's art research on China

Since the 1970s and 1980s, many western children's art research documents have been translated into China. The child-centered principle advocated by western children's art research is consistent with the basic position of Chinese researchers and the needs of China's education development, which to some extent promotes the progress of relevant work in China. On the one hand, the study of children's art in the west has a certain enlightening effect on the study of China, and it is an important way to continuously reveal the development law and characteristics of children's art under the background of Chinese culture to firmly adhere to the child-centered position, scientific research methods and the research paradigm of art history. On the other hand, the scientific and rational examination of the research results of western children's art also reminds Chinese researchers to carry out the localization research of children's art and art education based on the social, historical and cultural background of their own country and in combination with their own national traditions. At present, Chinese researchers based on China's national conditions and existing work accumulation, selectively absorb foreign excellent research experience, continue to expand the study of Chinese children's art and apply it to promote the development of educational practice, such as "Creative children's art education", "Ecological children's art education" and other outstanding children's art education concept and curriculum system with Chinese cultural characteristics.

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