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The Linguistic Study of Gong Xunming's Ceramic Painting Art

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Abstract

Gong Xunming is an artist who devotes to ceramic painting art and sticks to his artistic pursuit. His innovation and exploration in ceramic painting art are forever vigorously progressive. Gong commits all his efforts to seek for artistic innovation and newer, higher objectives, without hesitation and never off the track. He shakes off the bondages of nature and traditions. Everything in his paintings faces the sharp contradiction between reality and imagination. His technique of balancing colors gestates the potential genes for modern and future styles. Gong transforms the natural images into abstract ones, and makes them the language to express surreal forms. The new style of his works represents new artistic language and a new world view.

Key words: Artistic language; Ceramic painting; Ceramic phraseological revolution

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INTRODUCTION

In China nowadays, especially in Jingdezhen (which is entitled the capital of ceramics), ceramic art has been universally spread. The Jingdezhen dwellers have been unbelievable perseverance in the historical

narration of ceramic materials and crafts. Nevertheless, in Jingdezhen, even in China, the ceramic history is only about materials and crafts, with no involvement in the spiritual aspect. On the one hand, it is because the main concern of Jingdezhen's ceramics is shaping crafts and folk decorations; on the other hand, from the beginning of Jingdezhen's ceramic making, only the techniques are handed down from ancestors, no ceramic thought is inherited. Even during the whole Chinese history, there is no cultural methodology of spiritual history coming down in one continuous line. The problem left behind by history is so complex, so huge a time span that it is extremely hard to make out a distinct and effective skeleton concerning ceramic spiritual evolution or absolute ceramic art.

Because, as generally acknowledged, the academic spirit respects the historical reality, the historical basis of ceramic painting has to make a breakthrough in the phraseological relationship between ceramic decorations and materials, which should be universally acknowledged.

A. The history of ceramic painting. In the development of ceramic history, to draw on ceramic materials has never been an independent painting category. Dated back to 12,000 years ago, either the ornamentation of rope figure or the totems based on witchcraft and primitive sacrifice were mostly not painted on potteries. They were close to the art of carving and molding. For the painted ornamentation, the technique used was similar to that of rock paintings. Strictly speaking, to paint ornamentation on primitive potteries spiritually overlapped with primitive painting. So it cannot independently be regarded as phraseological standard of ceramic painting, but can be looked upon as the spiritual origin of it.

Although to paint ornamentation on primitive potteries could be called ceramic painting, it was only one mean of ceramic decoration. From the early pottery with ornamentation of rope figure to mechanical molding and kilned porcelain, human beings showed very serious self-discovery, and contributed their self-discovery to God's

mighty power. The Chinese philosophic analysis was the earliest to put forward the harmonious unification between self-nature and divinity, which means the philosophic unification between heaven and human. This indicated the inchoation of Chinese culture, i.e. the beginning of recognizing the nature of civilization.

Ceramic painting and decoration were popular from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589AD) to Tang Dynasty (618-907AD), but they were very simple. In Tang Dynasty, wheat straws stained with blue pigment were used to paint ornamentation by dotting. Some scholars recognize it as the original form of blue and white porcelain, but this opinion is questionable.

From a certain angle, however, during the history of ceramic painting and decoration, blue and white ceramic system was the first to come out. And it symbolized that the spirit of Chinese ceramic culture began to comprehensively walk from theological system to folk system.

Thus, the spiritual history of Chinese ceramics has a corresponding direct relation to the academic methodology to recall the ontology of civilization basing on reality. This methodology had been used for basic cultural studies and had been strictly stuck to until the end of Song Dynasty (1279AD). This is the reason why Song ceramic making was sure to be the summit for harmonious unification of spirits and crafts in the development of theological system.

From the beginning of Yuan Dynasty (1271AD) till now, ceramic painting has comprehensively extended in folk system for decorative demand. This extension features obvious trace of materials and crafts, so ceramic painting cannot be treated as independent art.

The original systematic development of blue and white porcelain was characterized by strong colonialism. The Mongolians changed the traditional Chinese ceramic shapes and decorative styles developing from farming civilization and marked them with symbolic characteristics of central-Asian nomadic nationalities. The Mongolian westward conquest to Europe substantially established the international influence of Chinese ceramics, especially blue and white porcelain, as visual language.

But this influence provided Ming Dynasty (1368-1644AD) a great commercial opportunity. Ming Dynasty inherited this ceramic cultural colonialism in all respects, and developed contending-colored decoration on the basis of blue and white porcelain and new materials. Even the five-colored ceramics, which emerged in Jin State (1115-1234), was matured in Ming Dynasty.

In Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the ceramic decorative system was generally folk-customized: the ancient-colored and enamel-colored materials were gradually mature, and the painting on the ceramic body was categorized according to the attribute of materials, not according to the painting environment, structure, or style. This is a key academic change.

During the Republic of China (1912-1949), the decorative painting on ceramics started to focus on the scholars', as though ceramic painting had got independent artistic spirit. But in view of the spiritual embryology of the scholars' paintings, their paintings are merely low-grade variations of the scholars' paintings in Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368AD), and their paintings do not bear the same real spirit and metaphor as Yuan ones. As for the Eight Friends of Zhushan, their paintings on ceramics are literally using the techniques and images of ink paintings. They just changed the painting surface from paper to ceramic materials. Ceramic art must be related to the linguistic ontology of the characteristics belonging exclusively to ceramic materials, so their paintings do not belong to ceramic art.

But this vogue has resulted in the phenomenon that in today's artistic world of Chinese ceramics, it is the painting not the ceramic body that counts. Therefore, ceramic art has long been treated as arts and crafts. The ceramic painting art should be centered on the ceramics themselves, not to regard them as the carrier of painting. But the ceramic painting art was belittled from the beginning and it even developed against ceramic art, which can be proved from the notion that ceramic materials are the same as paper for painting.

B. The present status and problems of ceramic painting art. Jingdezhen, as the international capital of ceramics, has long been the sole base of folk ceramic painting; however, with open social environment it has been impacted and struck in all aspects by various cultural thoughts. The phraseological revolution to change ceramic painting into serious art has been historically gestated there. The following problems that disturb the ceramic painting artists arise: Is ceramic painting only the extension of other painting types on ceramic materials? Can ceramic painting establish its independent linguistic system with the combination of material and style? And can ceramic painting find its historical way independently belonging to itself, in the gap between artistic history and ceramic history?

It is great relief that there have already been a group of people gradually walking out of the history of folk ceramic painting, independently exploring the road to ceramic painting art. These people are normally not connected, and they only make a group when ceramic exhibitions are made. The soul person of this group is named Gong Xunming, who, as an artist, wishes to resolve most of the former questions with his never-ending exploration.

1. GONG XUNMING'S PHRASEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF CERAMIC PAINTING

Gong Xunming was born in Nanchang, China in 1957. He graduated from the Department of Fine Arts of Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute. In 1970s and 1980s, Chinese literature

and arts were demanded to serve the mass people. At that time, Gong's brilliant painting genius would inevitably collide with the social demand. But under such historical and cultural circumstances, nobody's genius was not restricted to show by reality. Most importantly, the inherent sense of restriction by prescribed thinking system under any certain culture is the attribute of human beings. Gong was no exception. The reality and relationship between an artist's thinking history and social history cannot be avoided.

A real artist must try to break through the prescribed social and cultural environments, to obtain his soul and freedom to express. Any person who wants to be a real artist must do as this. In 1980s, China's social and cultural environments were easy to extensively restrict free expression. Here it does not mean freedom for expressing one's opinions. From a deep, spiritual angle, freedom for expressing one's opinions is superficial, emotional. The most significant and central is the conflict between the potential to express and the real social and cultural environments, i.e. under the real cultural conditions, the aphasia of personal expression is more urgent and essential than the so-called restriction of personal opinions.

We can catch a glimpse of this in the present advanced era of we-media. Although we-media have undoubtedly ensured people freedom of personal opinions, the cultural aphasia remains as past because of the restriction of personal talent and cultural vision. Those so-called artists without genius, with certain quixotic stubbornness, have changed their personal anxiety of aphasia into wolves' attack aiming at politics and society.

In 1985, there was a widespread artistic movement towards new tides in China. Because Gong was in Jingdezhen, a very small inland city, and because of the group of people he stayed with, Gong naturally avoided this movement. This movement was the collective explosion of the groups infected by cultural aphasia. With the guidance of western route in artistic history, these people got unexpectedly boosted. "The narration of great soul", demonstrated by the leader of this movement, had literally pointed out the contradiction between personal expression and cultural conventions. However, the participants of this movement were poorly gifted, which directly led to philosophic defects and later brought about universally simple politics in China's modern and contemporary arts.

Gong's personal conditions enabled him to successfully avoid the movement towards new tides of arts. Firstly, Gong graduated from Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, which made him not regarded as the new force for serious art, but the backbone for ceramic arts and crafts. Secondly, after graduation Gong began to take up ceramic work, which made him naturally included into the governmental system. In 1993, Gong became senior artist

and craftsman. In 1997, Gong obtained special allowance of the State Council, which symbolized the end of his long-term work in governmental system. Because of the difficulties and obstacles he met in the system, Gong was compelled to leave the system and chose the way for free living. This was not only the rebel against the life in governmental system, but also the farewell to the cultural consciousness that formed the system. Gong counted it as the release of inherent cultural anxiety to an artist.

In 2008, after his initial accumulation, Gong drove to Tibet, which was his first long march of soul, to eliminate his personal cultural anxiety. And till 2008, it had been 11 years since he got special allowance of the State Council. Another 11 years was from his graduation from Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute till he became senior artist and craftsman. So far, Gong has been to Tibet for six times, alone or leading a team. As the fruits of the collections in Tibet, a serial-type art exhibition called "Tracing the Source" was made, and a loose team of artists for creation and communication was formed. With his help, a ceramic painting genre totally different from Jingdezhen's historical conventions almost came into being. Yet actually these artists do not belong to one genre, because they have their distinctive routes and opinions towards ceramic painting. Sometimes their opinions have no relation. But Gong's contribution to ceramic painting is the attitude to open their thoughts, to make themselves courageous, and to break through the bondage of conventions. As for other aspects, they can develop as they like. So it is still early to call it a genre of ceramic painting, but the forming of ceramic painting art is round the corner.

The two 11-year periods of Gong made his road to research artistic freedom different from those of other artists who followed the movement towards new tides in 1985. Maybe it was this different and solitary artistic road that made history show him the gap to break through: ceramics based on Chinese civilization is the art that has never been explored on the whole, because modern ceramic art is merely the phraseological mighty power represented on ceramic materials by western civilization.

Gong's exploration in ceramic painting as serious art bears the function of strong cultural nerve-cell. His exploration connects the coupling points of both oriental and western civilized forms. Formerly, ceramic painting was regarded as object decoration. It was he who directed ceramic painting to the establishment of its independent phraseology. In linguistic dimension, he made ceramic painting intercross with western shelf art for similarities. This is not to simply change ceramic painting from planar folk decoration or ceramic ink painting of western oil painting or shelf art. The history connected by his exploration (which seems like nerve-cell) is not only the rebel against ceramic ink painting or painting on ceramic materials after the emergence of the Eight Friends of

Zhushan. Gong's historical environment for ceramic painting is directly linked to the whole development and all cultural fields of ceramics, which is the planar outspread of both the history of ceramic objects and the spiritual history of ceramics.

So Gong's exploration in ceramic painting can neither be evaluated completely by the historical system of western aesthetics, nor be viewed entirely by the traditional aesthetic experience of Chinese painting. If restricted into some aesthetic system, undoubtedly we'll obtain no new aesthetic experience, and the artistic development of the whole Chinese ceramic culture in its historically opening part will be abolished. The possibility to establish the genre of ceramic painting will be destroyed accordingly.

To study Gong's ceramic painting carefully and objectively, we need to discard the old general experience and adopt trans-boundary thinking methods with more cultural imagination.

2. THE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF GONG XUNMING'S CERAMIC PAINTING

The language of Gong Xunming's ceramic painting, generally speaking, can be divided into three stages. The first stage is the early period to use ceramics instead of paper as painting material; the second stage is the later period of paint from real life under the guidance of modern thoughts; the last stage is the contemporary period of ontological ornamentation of ceramics.

2.1 The Stage of Using Ceramics as Painting Materials

To paint on ceramic materials exactly identifies Gong as a Jingdezhen artist. But what must be made clear is that, even under the historical environment of universal ceramic painting, Gong has already showed linguistic independence in ceramic decoration. Through observing Gong's early series of *Village Girls*, we can find Gong's academic painting essentials of basic training cannot be underestimated. What's more, he does not completely follow the historical phraseology of paper painting to create his ceramic paintings, with his series of *Running Horses* as proof.

In South Qi Dynasty (479-502AD), there was an artist named Xie He, who was however not included into official history and painting history. Xie derived six techniques from his painting practice, which has been universally mentioned and observed in ceramic painting field as phraseology. Xie summarized the expression of artistic conception as vivid copy of shapes, the expression of lines as the skillfulness and proficiency of painting. As for the image, he regarded vividness as the first principle, and the artist could not alter it subjectively; and appropriate colors should then be added. The control

and coordination of the picture depend on the pictorial composition and the location of the image. Lastly, the artist should stick to painting from life and copying classic works to improve himself.

In the contemporary documents of Jingdezhen ceramic painting, the six techniques of Xie He are frequently mentioned. Either the criticism or the praise of ceramic painting achievements is guided by those six techniques. Thus, the highest standard for the aesthetic pursuit (if there is such pursuit) of Jingdezhen ceramic painting is to be as vivid as life.

The six techniques of Xie He are like *Mustard Seed Garden* (a Chinese standard textbook for painting), whose fame and correct standard in terms of politics are like a double-edged sword. The six techniques can rapidly improve the competence of beginners and crack down any thought to break the rule. Compared with the six techniques of Xie He, *Shan Hai Jing* (an encyclopedia of ancient China) will lose completely its creative value in painting. The subjective images or colors in Dunhuang grotto murals have violated Xie's painting rules, not to speak of the imagined scenes in most paintings about religion. Even the painting art of Thang-ga will be outshone.

In painting, Gong Xunming first follows the shape of the porcelain, and then focuses on the expression based on the shape. In the contemporary area of ceramic painting, the subjects are no more than the plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum, lotus, and mandarin fish, with no diversity. Yet the masters of these painting subjects boast the perfection of their skills and the validity of these subjects. In contrast, Gong's ceramic painting bears rebelling spirit from the beginning. Because the course for his rebel is rather slow, Gong's painting still belongs to the linguistic means of ceramic decoration from the bigger category; and to ordinary people his paintings have no difference from others' except for the subjects.

Observed from a certain angle, the way of painting and the subject innovation in Gong's series of *Running Horses* has no aesthetic difference from other Jingdezhen's artists in ceramic painting. The only things that are new and fresh life in his thought, his distinctive techniques and painting phraseology.

2.2 The Stage of Painting From Real Life Under the Guidance of Modern Thoughts

With the impact of modern thoughts, Gong didn't totally turn to the aesthetic direction of western modernization. If ceramic painting had walked in nature to modernization or post modernization, it would have fallen into the trap of cultural studies. As a sensitive artist, Gong's six times to Tibet serve as six steps for him to find the problems and then to solve them.

The dull expression with ink, in Gong's early ceramic paintings, could no longer meet his strong expressive

need. In his early period to use ceramics instead of paper as painting materials, Gong's main pursuit is the relationship between different painting techniques and the relationship between pictorial decoration and the object. This shows an artist's linguistic continuity and variation in style because of the so-called scholars' ceramic paintings emerged at the beginning of the Republic of China (1912); and this also shows his change of personal painting styles. This period was the indispensable process for him to lay the basis of cognizing ceramic materials and cultural studies. Artists that do not specialize in ceramics are normally deprived of this process.

For several decades, numerous artists from outside Jingdezhen have tried to change the features, even the pattern of Jingdezhen ceramic painting and ceramic art, but all their efforts were in vain. The reason is very simple. They either knew nothing about the attribute of ceramic materials, or knew nothing of the relationship between ceramic history and spirit. Some, with the methodology of western arts, even regarded ceramics as the expressive material for other artistic categories. This notion has no cultural relationship with ceramics, especially porcelain. The excuse for this notion is that although Jingdezhen claimed to be the capital of ceramic art in history, it has made no advance in the present age. Some held this idea because most artists from outside Jingdezhen knew neither the ceramic history nor the ceramic craft.

Gong Xunming, as an artist with ceramic knowledge, became a revolutionary from the inside.

During Gong's second stage of painting from real life under the guidance of modern thoughts, it is apparent to see his anxiety towards the reality of ceramic culture. Using his realistic style, he depicted the nature, which was the preface to his real attempt to break through. He tried using the western tradition of painting from life to express his emotion towards the great mountains and waters, aiming to change Chinese scholars' metaphorical and sentimental notions of painting formed from Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368AD). His six adventures to Tibet helped to confirm his cultural anxiety. This emotional anxiety needed the grand action of epic individualism to ease.

Finally, this anxiety forced Gong to pursue the nature, to look for the ontological origin of ceramic history, which led him to turn to ontological ornamentation of ceramics. This turn became his crucial moment of personal artistic history, and probably the crucial moment of ceramic painting history. During his six adventures in Tibet, from realistic painting to expression, from techniques to phraseology, Gong didn't indulge himself in the excitement to enjoy his passion for the great mountains and waters. He, however, made a perfect spiritual journey. This change was different from his change of style during his second stage of modernization. The change is a poetic

one on the basis of historical reality brought by the evolving history of ceramic materials.

On the one hand, ceramics are counted as the standard of human civilization. If studied according to the historical line of artistic spirit, ceramic painting art is undoubtedly not an independent artistic phenomenon. Ceramic painting, as object decoration and carrier of God's spirit, has emerged in ceramic history from beginning to end. The decoration of non-folk ceramics also inherited the idea for ceramics to be the state's pillar. So the decoration used monochrome glaze as the standard. Altar-blue glaze and altar-red glaze, together with yellow glaze (used only by the imperial household, representing the mightiest authority empowered by the Heaven) were important symbols for family, country, and world; whereas tea-dust glaze symbolized the old and well-known family. The standards of glaze color and ceramic shapes follow the dialectic relationship between the object and principle, while ceramic painting and decoration are less important. Of course, the ceramics concerning religion follow another cultural line.

On the second hand, the historical standard of ceramic painting regarded the normative ornamentation as legitimate. It was the prescribed expression of culture on ceramics. Their difference lies in their different craft work and techniques. With regard to other ceramics to express rich contents, they are for scholars to appreciate or play. Of course, some top ways of playing with ceramics would be thought much of by the state. However, it is only a matter of personal interest, no matter to the emperor or to the nobleman. This has no relation to the legitimate rule of ceramics, but the principle for appreciation or play is almost the same.

The official wares which were treated as legitimate can vividly reflect the strict ranking system of ceramics.

The Republic of China (1912-1949) that had overthrown imperialism was banteringly called an era without laws and rules. The strict ranking system of ceramics was accordingly destroyed. This period in ceramic history can be compared to the time of European renaissance. The school formed by the Eight Friends of Zhushan came into being during this period and became one of the schools holding significant cultural views of ceramics. In today's view, the Eight Friends of Zhushan were the main force for ceramic painting, because they steered painting from paper to ceramic materials, which made it historically possible for ceramic decorative painting to develop towards planar surface.

The Eight Friends of Zhushan did open the historical window for planar ceramic decorative painting, but they only ranked as one of the schools of ceramic painting, why was that? This was because the Eight Friends of Zhushan were restricted by their times and their cultural visions. It must be acknowledged that to paint on ceramic materials was a new trend for ceramic decorative painting

during the Republic of China (1912-1949), with the imperial ranking system of ceramics just being destroyed. That new trend enriched the decorative ceramic language explosively. However, another reality could not be neglected, i.e. to paint on ceramic materials is literally counteraction to ceramics.

Without ceramic ranks, which aspect can we see about ceramic history?

Undoubtedly, it is the plain aspect which makes ceramics, especially porcelain, represent human civilization. As mentioned formerly, ceramics not only are the invention of cultural super-material, but also bear human spirit. This aspect of ceramics is inherent and easily neglected, but in ancient human civilization, it was the distinctive symbol of China.

The Eight Friends of Zhushan destroyed the ceramic ranking system, making all cultural contents become ceramic decorative language. But at the same time, they destroyed ceramics, especially the super-material attribute of ceramics. They indeed overcorrected it.

The most important thing, even the core, for ceramic painting is of course to respect the characteristics of the material. It is wrong to historically eliminate the material's characteristics ultimately, especially the substantial characteristics.

If planar ceramic painting is inevitable in history, the primary tide of ceramic painting is surely not to use ceramics as painting material, but is the ontology of ceramics.

The ontology of ceramics demands the phraseology of ceramic painting to develop in ceramic history, neither the history of scholars' paintings, nor the history of western painting.

What is the historical reality of ceramics? Of course, it is the decorative history of ceramic painting.

2.3 The Stage of Ontological Ornamentation of Ceramics

Gong's ceramic painting turn to ornamentation of ceramics signifies the beginning of a splendid history for ceramic painting. In ceramic phraseology, the ontological ornamentation of ceramics is to continue some linguistic sense towards ceramic decorative history. With regard to expressive means, the attributes and characteristics of ceramic materials must be followed. Absolutely, this is not simply to show the white body of the porcelain. In both the body and the picture, artists need to regard fully representing the characteristics of ceramic materials as the starting point.

Gong's stylistic change in ceramic painting was not finished in one day, and was even not linear. To an artist's exploration, this change is sometimes like skipping. Gong never stopped trying different painting styles. Sometimes he would abruptly leap from his early period of ceramic painting to his last stage of ontological ornamentation. This is an unchangeable reality, indicating that the so-

called early stage and middle stage of his ceramic painting are not definitions of time for him, but close to the interaction of his inner spirit. As an artist, the clear stylistic change of Gong in ceramic painting will fully prove his genuine and uncommon self-sufficiency in spirit. It can even be seen that the inner part of his style in a certain period was not completely perpetuated. The rich spiritual journey of Gong can be sensed instantly through his works.

At this point, Gong is undoubtedly, first of all, a unique and genuine artist in this era.

All Gong's changes were actually originated from his inner spirit, while most artistic practitioners' changes depend on the outer stimulation. Although, from the starting point, Gong's six adventures to Tibet belong to one kind of outer stimulation, but it was not the core reason for his changes. Although those adventures provided him subjects for ceramic painting, his expressive means could hardly be obtained by them.

Therefore the stylistic change caused by the outer stimulation is certainly not secure, not genuine. The reliance on outer stimulation, without the participation of inner spirit, can only be seen as imitation of others or improvement of forms. If we make a comprehensive view of Chinese artistic works or phenomena, it is hard for us to find an artist with independent phraseology. From the perspective of western artistic history, most Chinese modern and contemporary arts are only subject transformations of modernistic phraseology or post-modernistic phraseology. Those arts belong to Dadaism or new Dadaism (Fluxus), or expressionism, or abstract expressionism with stylistic variations, or semiotics, or the variant realism.

To modify other artists' phraseological subjects and linguistic senses is the commonly used means for Chinese modern and contemporary arts, which is the reason why Chinese arts cannot obtain enough respect from the world.

One truth must be made clear: art is innovation in phraseology. It is the different phraseological essences that make different arts and become the nature of historical progress.

If we compare the period of Eight Friends of Zhushan in ceramic painting to the period of Barbizon School in western painting, Gong Xunming's exploration in ceramic painting enjoys the same historical status as the phraseological revolution of impressionism.

By comprehensively reading all Gong's works, we may arrive at a seemingly right conclusion right away: Gong's ceramic painting belongs to western modernism. It is undeniable that if we did make such judgment rashly, we would walk into the logical trap of western aesthetics.

We are accustomed to count the similar form as the similar artistic style. So we make an analogy between the abstractness in Chinese ink painting and western abstract expressionism. We even developed ink painting into a

new kind of art called “new ink painting”. Actually, it is only a freak crossed by different cultural genes. The final purpose of this kind of explanation is to rigidly assimilate human arts.

And the reason why ceramic painting becomes the material supplement for other painting categories is that we have assimilated some similar elements from the aesthetic angle. For instance, because we assimilated blue and white porcelain art with ink painting, blue and white porcelain art finally became the art similar to ink painting. The result is that blue and white porcelain has no complete and independent style, phraseology, and vocabulary. It resulted from our lack of foresight in culture, because we are easy to succumb to mighty cultures.

Here, it must be stressed that some critics do treat Gong's ceramic painting as an impression of the landscape, or classify him into the so-called school of impressionism. But in his ceramic painting, the generalized expression and refinement of reality are absolutely not the aesthetic views put forward by impressionism. The understanding and generalization to colors by western impressionism are absolutely not the tradition of ceramic painting to be inherited in ontological ornamentation. In essence, their historical changes in phraseology are two totally distinct things.

CONCLUSION

Ceramic painting undoubtedly a very tiny branch of art in the history of Chinese ceramic culture, but this branch makes it possible to generate a new kind of art. Ceramic painting, along with ceramic culture, is part of human spiritual wealth not belonging to one nationality or country only. Therefore, to establish an artistic category

for ceramic painting, not only need we respect the historical reality of ceramics, conducting both inheritance and development; but also we should be equipped with wider international field of vision, trying to discover the universal expressive value and meaning belonging to human arts. Gong Xunming has made great contribution to the rudiments of ceramic painting by his exploration, which bears historical significance; however, a single artist, with limited competence, cannot consider and solve all the problems. To establish the phraseology of ceramic painting, more serious artists should be called on to work it out hand in hand. With rich, extensive, deep subjects and universal people to participate, ceramic painting can finally form a historical linguistic environment.

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