



**CSCCanada**  
**Cross-Cultural Communication**  
 Vol. 12, No. 7, 2016, pp. 40-44  
 DOI:10.3968/8618

ISSN 1712-8358[Print]  
 ISSN 1923-6700[Online]  
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[www.cscanada.org](http://www.cscanada.org)

## Inheritance and Development of Chinese Ancient Figure Painting and Modern Fashion Drawing

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Received 18 April 2016; accepted 15 June 2016

Published online 26 July 2016

### Abstract

Nowadays, with the rapid development of economy, people have growing requirements for clothing fashion, which have driven the development of clothing industry in China. However, opportunities and challenges usually coexist. The art of fashion drawing, which has the function of advertising and artistic appreciation etc., also faces great challenges because of this. Especially, with the rapid development of science and technology, it is an important problem worthy of further research and thinking to inherit and develop the Chinese ancient figure painting and modern fashion drawing and effectively combines the drawing skills of traditional Chinese painting with those of modern fashion drawing.

**Key words:** Chinese ancient figure painting; Modern fashion painting; Inheritance; Development

Yang, X. J. (2016). Inheritance and Development of Chinese Ancient Figure Painting and Modern Fashion Drawing. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 12(7), 40-44. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/8618>  
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/8618>

### INTRODUCTION

At present, because of the continuous multi-culture development and the development of globally economic integration, the forms of manifestation of the art of fashion drawing need to conform to the requirements of era development and diversified development factors should also be added. Besides, it is also of vital importance to

use the schools and types of painting in other fields; this is also the only way for the new development of fashion drawing techniques. With the ceaseless innovations in Chinese painting, the fashion drawing, which not only absorbs the traditional culture but also absorbs the skills of Chinese painting, shows its unique charm with the best image in the world.

### 1. CHINESE ANCIENT FIGURE PAINTING

Chinese figure painting is the most precious and unique art in Chinese traditional painting. As clothes are the best way to manifest culture, different nationalities have different ethnic costumes of their own unique styles; this is also the difference in the cultural development among all nationalities. Meanwhile, the Chinese ancient figure painting works with figures as its subjects in the form of fine art is one of the artistic forms with the best dressing fashion and also provides a guarantee to better record and manifest the clothing styles at that time.

#### 1.1 Times Clothing Systems Reflected in Chinese Ancient Figure Painting

Before Tang and Song dynasties, China's works of fine art were mainly created based on figures. However, due to the restriction of traditional Chinese "feudal ethnic codes", all dynasties formulated strict clothing systems, which also became the important standards for evaluation of clothes and pointed to the correct description of clothing systems. Therefore, some painters directly participated in the design of crown clothes. For instance, all of the figures in the *Portraits of the Emperors*, *Admonitions of the Court Instructress to Palace Ladies* and other paintings drawn by Yan Lide and Yan Liben, painters of Tang dynasty were well-documented historical images.

In the slave society, the subjects of paintings gradually changed from burying people and livestock alive with the

dead into objects instead of people. It can be seen from a large number of unearthed cultural relics that many articles for use or tomb figures carved out of wood, jade, ceramics and other materials, coffin carvings, mural paintings in tomb chambers and paintings etc. truthfully reflect the living conditions of that time, especially clothing styles. Among a variety of subject figure portrays, except that the clothes in the works with the realistic theme of evil spirits were recreated based on the former life, all the other works basically objectively reflected life. Genre paintings mainly show the life of citizens and fully embodied the development fashion of the times by portraying the environment and clothing props of figures; for example, *Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival* etc..

## 1.2 Presentation of Skills and Methods of Chinese Painting

### 1.2.1 Clothing Pattern With Different Lines

A most indispensable method for the style design of Chinese painting is the use of lines, which is an independent factor for artistic creation. For this reason, to follow and inherit the traditional characteristics of Chinese painting, each painter must attach importance to lines. Besides, portraying clothing patterns of figures with various line drawing skills made Chinese ancient people's clothing images more vivid and also added many creative inspirations for artists. Chinese painters created the "eighteen-line method" based on different materials of clothing. It is a method to show the techniques of figure clothing painting with different lines. Besides, all the "eighteen lines" have their especially unique names, including iron-wire line, smooth line, nailhead and rat tail line, peglike line, bent reed leaf line, floating gossamer line, mixed line, string line, bamboo leaf line, stick line, thick stick line, earthworm line, date pit line, olive line, Cao-clothing line and water-wave line etc. With the features of softness and droop, Chinese clothes usually float with wind and naturally droop without wind. In the Chinese figure painting, "Cao clothing out of water" exactly emphasizes that clothing pattern is drooping without wind. Wu Tao-Tzu, a painter of Tang dynasty, was skillful in portraying figures with Taoism-Buddhism and formed the "Wu style" with "flying full sleeve, big gown, skirt and silky belts" based on the content of Taoism-Buddhism; this provided a basis for showing the elegance of clothing.

Line drawing, which is not only a leading factor, which forms the national style of Chinese painting, but also a main way to shape figures in Chinese ethnic painting, is a method which show the shape, feeling of quantity, volume and sense of movement of an object mainly with thickness of line, turns of line, false or true line, long or short line, light or heavy line and other various techniques of drawing. Coloring is not needed in a painting with line drawing, which can be applied with colors of light ink,

so it has a unique style rules, pattern of manifestation and rich artistic charms. One's sense of painting brush is growing and one will feel no difficulty in painting when one uses more techniques such as thick, light and strong lines.

The drawing skills with lines have a long history of development and many drawing skills have been concluded after continuous researches and practices by painters of different eras and experience in abundant line drawing techniques and methods accumulated ceaselessly. Eighteen methods have been concluded regarding the line drawing methods for the smocking of figures and they are namely the so-called "eighteen lines". With the characteristics of concise and distinct decorations, the design of figure images with line drawing methods can not be only perfectly present a variety of phenomena but also gave them new life.

There are six requirements for the style of drawing in Chinese painting: Firstly, connections are needed in changes. Long, short, thick, thin, heavy, light, soft and hard lines should be used irregularly in combination with an objective image; not only mutual connections but also changes are required. Secondly, the style of drawing needs to be natural and powerful to avoid dullness. Thirdly, the style of drawing needs to be loose, flexible and concise. Looseness and flexibility are natural and casual phenomenon. It is required to mix interest in vivaciousness and easiness and mix easiness into dignity so as to avoid frivolity and slickness. Conciseness is mainly characterized by one stroke to the end with a back sharp point. Fourthly, it is required to couple hardness with softness; namely, there should be a robust power in softness. The frequently said "cotton with iron" is a perfect presentation of coupling hardness with softness. Only in this way, the line drawing can be used ingeniously in the steady and robust back sharp point. Fifthly, skillfulness and dullness need to be used alternatively and the style of drawing needs to be simple and honest. Namely, mix some dullness in the ingenious techniques of drawing and mix some techniques in the dullness; alternative use of the two can also show the connotation of this method. Fourthly, tenderness should be mingled into maturity. The smooth techniques of drawing show elegance and immaturity while the mature techniques show an implicit vigor of strokes. However, a large range of mature techniques will result in a lack of vividness in the whole works, so the element of tenderness should be mingled with mature techniques and this is the so-called mutual effect of dryness and moisture.

### 1.2.2 Using Varies Techniques and Methods to Show the Colors of Clothing

A painter's painting style cannot be separated from all sorts of clothing styles, which not only include the elegant and drooping clothing styles but also are mixed up with

simple, powerful, reserved, plain, demure and graceful clothing styles to embody the texture of gown mainly made of cloth and linen etc.. The color techniques and methods frequently used in Chinese painting will be detailed below:

**Ink color:** It means the creation completely with the thickness of ink and is mainly used to draw the outline of images in works. Quiet elegance is the best state of China-ink painting, because the range of application of thick ink and excessive use of ink are not allowed. Excessive importance attached to dark ink will lead to tediousness in the sense of frame of the whole works; however, excessive importance attached to light ink will result in the loss of the due charm in the whole painting. Therefore, only the application of proper dark and light ink can reach the optimal effect full of freshness and charm.

**Famille rose:** As for the technique of expression, this is mainly used in Mogu, outline drawing and rendering. Colors selected are dominated by the white pink and colors of plant and followed by the light mineral colors and watercolor. During the line drawing of famille rose, avoid application of dark ink of one color; light ink should be the principal color. The matching between excessively dark ink lines and famille rose will cause a dull and rigid texture without vividness and beauty. When mixing the pink color, excessively thin or excessively dark color is not allowed, because plenty of light colors will result in the lack of charm in the whole works. Thus, alternate application of thin and thick colors is required. As the application of power is the key of famille rose, natural vignette should be achieved in the power and color of famille rose. Famille rose's distinct characteristic of brilliance can be exerted better without any exposure of power.

**Light color:** Based on China-ink painting, divides the object portrayed into eight or nine parts; then, simply apply light colors to them. Light color is that ink stays with color, which doesn't hinder the exertion of ink's function; the two integrate into each other without losing the real charm of ink; in this way, there will be a plain and quietly elegant effect in the works.

**Heavy color:** As for the techniques and methods for outline drawing and rendering with heavy color, the color used is heavy and the color sense is very magnificent and decorative. During the rendering process of heavy color, it is required to use thick color with moisture, achieve proper thick and thin colors and attain natural matching of colors from deep to light. It is noteworthy that disorder, dirtiness and greasiness etc. should be avoided in the use of sequence; besides, excessively thick, thin and nonuniform use of color should be avoided. Wang Shigu of Qing dynasty once said: "I finally knew how to use the mineral blue and mineral green after learning them for thirty years". It is seemingly a little exaggerated, but

it also tells us it is not easy to control the rendering and color setting.

**Color setting:** As different colors show different feelings, painters usually express their real feelings with colors. In Chinese painting, the colors favored by the painters include the coccineous, vermilion, flower blue, mineral yellow, gamboges, carmine, bright red, mineral green, earth yellow, ink color, white pink, and mineral blue etc.. The mineral green includes grade-I green, grade-II green and grade-III green etc.. The mineral blue includes the grade-I blue, grade-II blue and grade-III blue etc. However, the most fundamental colors only include the yellow, blue and red, namely gamboges, flower blue and bright red. Various colors can be made by mixing all of such colors.

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## 2. MODERN FASHION DRAWING

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### 2.1 Emergence of Modern Fashion Drawing at the Right Moment

Since ancient times, fashion drawing has always been the widely favored expressive subject matter in all art activities of human being. The Industrial Revolution in Europe not only accelerated the development of clothing industry but also contributed to the emergence of fashion drawing. At that time, the release of abundant fashion magazines and insertion of a large quantity of fashion drawings in magazines were praised highly by many people. The period between 1920s and 1930s was the most flourishing stage of fashion drawing. Then, many talented painters of fashion drawing take up their brushes with the inspiration of freedom and boldness, continuously make innovations, researches and trials, broke through coherent limitation of conventional drawing, add innovative elements and continually created numerous unique paintings. However, the continuous development the television and film industry has caused a huge impact on the clothing art. In spite of this, the fashion industry became popular around the world again in the late 1980s.

A fashion effect drawing, which is the initial thought of fashion drawing, exhibits the effect of clothing worn by people and mainly plays the role in recording the era and re-showing the clothing structure, color and styles. Then, the fashion effect drawing mainly aims to provide a fashion design with the most simple and direct assistance in methods and techniques and test whether the clothing design is reasonable. The most simple, direct and effective method is based on the creation on paper, because piecing together, sewing, tailoring with knife etc. will waste a long time and many human resources. However, with the development of clothing industry, fashion drawing gradually became an art and an important discipline and thus the effective drawing of clothing drawing became fashion drawing, which promoted the improvement of

technological level. Besides, the function of fashion drawing turned from the effect of clothing worn by people into the people wearing clothing; meanwhile, the fashion drawing also depicted the era features of the people. Therefore, it meant that era style and era spirit was also integrated into a fashion drawing which initially recorded the features of clothing.

The charm of art is mainly embodied in its creation and discovery. An artistic creator, who can skillfully combine the introspection innovation with the aesthetic principle of theory, is a real brilliant creator. Interpretation of aesthetics, which is one of the functions of paintings, shows its true meaning in research and analysis based on promotion and improvement. Fashion drawing is a special painting. The difference between a fashion drawing and ordinary figure painting is that a fashion drawing's painting theme is simple and unequivocal; besides, a fashion drawing mainly focuses on clothing, so it can be said that a fashion drawing is a painting of figures in dress. However, as restricted by the drawing content and theme, not like an ordinary figure painting, one can accomplish what he want to express just with one drawing method in a fashion drawing; as a matter of fact, he needs to enrich the content of drawing by using various existing drawing techniques and methods and also needs to create a special cultural atmosphere with a innovative thought. This is also the final objective of a fashion drawing. Besides, the fashion drawing is a result produced by the further sublimation of artistic thoughts. A great variety of drawings also have laid a favorable foundation for the themes and contents of fashion drawing.

## **2.2 Expression Techniques of Modern Fashion Drawing**

The continuous development of science and technology led to the increasingly abundant painting materials, which thus resulted in the diversified drawing methods of fashion drawing. Therefore, when learning the fashion drawing, one needs to strengthen the training of his abilities of line drawing, sketch and character shaping. As the most fundamental expression techniques of modern fashion drawing, the frequently used thick and thin lines, irregular lines and uniform lines etc. give full play to the application of lines. Lines, which are a means of artistic expression to depict figure images, fully show a creator's understanding of a character shape and the conception of clothing design. Namely, the so-called lines are on the basis of character shapes. Immature modeling handling in a fashion drawing will also affect the effect of the entire works; then, the works will have no value of appreciation and art regardless of the perfect and beautiful application of lines. To sum up, in a fashion drawing, lines must be simple, complete and highly artistic, because the expression techniques of modern fashion drawing can be exerted better on in this way.

## **3. APPLICATION OF SKILLS AND METHODS OF CHINESE ANCIENT FIGURE PAINTING IN FASHION DRAWING**

The fashion drawing gradually came to China along with the development of fashion trend and has met with great favor among many domestic fashion designers, which gradually have gradually recognized the true value of fashion drawing. For this reason, most of their techniques and methods can be converted into each other and can be mutually used for reference. The research and analysis on the technique combining lines with colors are shown below.

### **3.1 Application of Lines of Chinese Painting in Fashion Drawing**

There are many types of Chinese painting, among which line drawing painting is the most common one and is similar with the sketch in western painting. Since the ancient times, Chinese painters have been used to portraying the structure and modeling of scenery with the line drawing method; without attaching much emphasis to the influences of light and shadow on scenery and the changes arising, Chinese painters integrate such elements into lines in a refined and implicit way. Simply changing the vigor of strokes and thickness of lines can generate a fantastic light and shade relation; besides, the handling of density of lines will generate an equally satisfactory result, which can also be generated by sketching in western paintings. Line drawing is to express all desirable contents of clothing with a direct and simple method, so the rational use of line drawing method in a fashion drawing can save a lot of time and also provides a guarantee for an excellent artistic effect. Thus, it is of vital importance to rationally use liens of Chinese painting in fashion drawing.

### **3.2 Application of Color Techniques of Chinese Painting in Fashion Drawing**

The color techniques of Chinese painting have been detailedly described above. The application of the four color techniques including China-ink painting, light color, famille rose and heavy color in the fashion drawing can reach the effect which cannot be attained through other patterns of manifestation of modern painting and also cannot be attained by modern drawing techniques; it is even an artistic state which is irreplaceable through computer-aided drawing. Thus, it is of vital importance to rationally use the color techniques of Chinese painting in fashion drawing.

## **CONCLUSION**

The rapid development of multi culture, so we should pay more attention to the art form of fashion art, keeps up with the pace of development of the times. Chinese painting has



been constantly innovation and development, in fashionable dress painting into to the technique of Chinese painting methods at the same time, do a good job in the inheritance and development of ancient China figure painting and modern fashion painting, play a role in the colors of traditional Chinese painting techniques application, line drawing method is reasonable and applied to fashion drawing, create unique clothing, to provide protection for the better development of the fashion industry.

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