



UNIVERSIDADE D
COIMBRA

Chang Zhang

**THE CINEMATIC POSSIBILITIES OF
PAINTING**

**Tese no âmbito do Doutoramento em Arte Contemporânea, orientada pelo Professor Doutor
António Olaio e apresentada ao Colégio das Artes da Universidade de Coimbra.**

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ABSTRACT

My thesis seeks to evaluate the possibilities of integrating paintings to film creation with case studies such as the films by David Lynch, or the films by Chinese director Zhang Yimou. Assessing synchronic connections between painting and film through the development of technical means in optical creation I refer to “The Old Man and the Sea” by Aleksandr Petrov as an example as a literal relationship between cinema and painting.

Exploring the cinematic possibilities of painting in my own work as an artist, I created a series of hand-painted storyboards with watercolors I made in the Botanical Garden of the University of Coimbra. Here I was mostly interested in the conceptual possibilities opened by showing these watercolors as images of storyboards, expecting the poetical suggestion of a cinematic experience, being here the images as important as the gap between them, waiting to be filled by our imagination, as it happens when we are before a storyboard. I also made two short videos with close-ups of the paintings, the camera moving very close to the painting’s surface, ending up with abstract images and associating them with verses of a 6th-century Chinese poem. Here I was playing with space and time, but also acknowledging how that Botanical Garden, with its plants

from all over the world, in its artificial relationship with Nature, is a timeless place and so many places at the same time.

Keywords: painting and cinema; art and cinema; multimedia art; painting and multimedia.

RESUMO

A minha tese procura avaliar atributos cinematográficos da pintura com estudos de caso como os filmes de David Lynch ou os filmes do realizador chinês Zhang Yimou. Avaliando conexões sincrônicas entre pintura e filme por meio do desenvolvimento de meios técnicos na criação ótica, refiro “O Velho e o Mar”, de Aleksandr Petrov, como exemplo como uma relação literal entre cinema e pintura.

Explorando as possibilidades cinematográficas da pintura no meu próprio trabalho como artista, criei uma série de storyboards pintados à mão com aquarelas que fiz no Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra. Aqui, eu estava sobretudo interessado nas possibilidades conceptuais abertas ao mostrar essas aquarelas como imagens de storyboards, procurando a sugestão poética de uma experiência cinematográfica, sendo aqui as imagens tão importantes quanto o espaço entre elas, na expectativa de serem preenchidas pela nossa imaginação, como acontece quando estamos perante um storyboard. Fiz também dois pequenos vídeos com close-ups das pinturas, a câmara aproximando-se muito da superfície da pintura, e obtive assim imagens abstratas que associei aos versos de um poema chinês do século VI. Aqui eu estava jogando com espaço e tempo, mas também reconhecendo como este Jardim Botânico, com as suas

plantas de todo o mundo, na sua relação artificial com a Natureza, é um lugar intemporal e com tantos lugares ao mesmo tempo.

Palavras-chave: Pintura e cinema; arte e cinema; arte multimédia; pintura e multimédia.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is composed of 6 chapters. Chapter 1 provides a general introduction about the possibilities of integrating paintings to film creation, visual aesthetics of cinema, and their relationship and objectives of this research. Chapter 2-4 were written in the form of research articles that will be submitted to art journals. In order to provide basic information about the research, Chapters 2-4 are briefly introduced at the beginning of each respective section. Critical aspects of the literature review, as well as the relevance of the discussions based on the overall objective of the work, are also portrayed. Chapter 5 explores narrative painting and the connection between static and dynamic images. Chapter 6 provides the video hand-painted storyboards from realistic to abstract styles as moving paintings based on the scene of Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra. The summary of this work is detailed at the end of the thesis.

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Introduction

1.1 General introduction

In 1967, David Lynch, a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, had a vision when he was up late in his studio. The plants in the painting – an almost all-black painting of a garden seemed to be moving. For a second he saw the painting move and got the idea of making a moving painting with accompanying sound. Thereafter, he produced his first moving painting titled “Six Men Getting Sick” (1967), which was a large-scale work comprising painting, sculpture and a one-minute film loop. This painting was originally presented on a sculpted canvas; it later became known as David Lynch’s first short film (Johnson, 2014). Although being one of Hollywood’s most influential directors, he still continues to paint. In 2006, his last feature film, “Inland Empire”, came out. During this period, he produced paintings deliberately crude, unpolished and childlike, combining cartoonish images with nearly

intelligible text. Undoubtedly, his paintings don't have the primal, psychosexual power of his films, but there is still something compelling about them (Hainge, 2005). Also, his multimedia work “I Burn Pinecone and throw it in your house” (2009) (Figure 1.1) seems to be an insane children’s book narrated by a crazed mountain man. Therefore, I intend to elaborate on certain elements that cause cinematic attributes of the painting by examining the films of David Lynch. By using a concrete example of David Lynch, I hope to light some basic assumptions about the cinematic possibilities of painting.



Figure 1.1 David Lynch “I Burn Pinecone and Throw it in Your House” (2009)

Concerning an affective film experience, pictorial quality and visual aesthetics of cinema can be considered a set of cues orienting the audiences toward experiencing emotions (Smith, 2007). It is well known that the films directed by Zhang Yimou have a strongly pictorial quality, which reveals his acute sense of visual aesthetics. Zhang Yimou is the main representative of Chinese fifth-generation directors and won numerous international awards. His film has a unique style in the aspects of artistic, ideological and appreciation, bringing a “soul-shock” and visual impact to film and even cultural industries. In this exploratory study, I plan to examine how aesthetic and pictorial features of cinema relate to one another and contribute to film mood. To investigate visual aesthetics of cinema, I will use the films directed by Zhang Yimou as examples to analyse the roles of the main determinant of pictorial qualities (such as color, composition) in improving visual aesthetics of cinema, as well as to interpret his film as paintings go back among other things (such as language and stage property). This subject will provide a theoretical basis for future film development.

Painting and cinema are both mediums that express duration and thus the unfolding of time (Vacche, 1996). The relationships between painting and cinema have been the subject of much academic discussion and debate since the invention of cinema (Harrison, 2005). Philosophical and theoretical reflections on these relationships and

arguments about cinema as art have certainly revealed the understanding of this topic. The major difference between painting and cinema is the illusion of movement/motion (Betancourt, 2002; Eggertson, 2015). Even if both mediums can employ the illusion, it is not obvious with cinema as it is with painting, since cinema is only through the human perception that the 24 still frames of each second of a film sequence can be translated as actual motion (Gunning, 2007). Through this illusion comes from the temporal dimension of a moving picture, it is still an obvious image of a painting or the perceptual illusion of film (Mathews et al., 2005). When comparing a traditional film to a traditional painting, the major differentiating element is the length, since a film might proceed for two hours and a half while the painting stays still within its own frame of reference. It might be disputed that there are other differentiating elements (e.g. sound and motion); however, I will ignore these in order to string along with David Lynch's original ideas of moving paintings, thus widening the traditional understanding of painting to include "in-betweenness" images. I prefer to focus on the fact that the crucial structure for narrative development comes through time and length, as well as the stretching out of action. Therefore, the focus in my project is on the injection of time as a key instigator in developing intermediary artworks designed to inspire and expand the possibilities of painting.

1.2 Objectives

In order to create continuity and provide visual aesthetics (e.g. subtle changes and brush strokes, expressive and symbolic colors), I intend to utilize the formal aspects of painting (such as texture, color, composition, line, and form, etc.) as a basis for exploring both narrative and abstract possibilities in the cinema and transform single frames into storyboards as a mean of cinematic expression. To explore the cinematic possibilities of painting, the objective of my Ph.D. program are to:

- i) Evaluate the possibilities of integrating paintings to film creation (case studies of the films by David Lynch);
- ii) Investigate visual aesthetics of cinema (case studies of the films by Chinese director Zhang Yimou);
- iii) Assess synchronic connections between painting and film through the development of technical means that contribute to the genesis of new forms in optical creation and expression (How to use paintings in the film? A case study of “The Old Man and the Sea”);
- iv) Explore narrative painting and the connection between static and dynamic images;
- v) Create the video hand-painted storyboards as moving paintings based on the scene of “Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra”.

CHAPTER 2

The Possibilities of Integrating Paintings in Film Creation

Case studies of the films by David Lynch

Cinema has never been entirely restricted by neither its practices nor boundaries. The great efforts of early cinema-painters were consolidated by spiritual persuasions that can link the mind with the universe, and thoughts with images/paintings. Bernard Berenson extended his ideas concerning ‘tactile values’ to consider the impression of movement as one of the greatest attributes of painting (Ladis and Maginnis, 1997). Painted cinema and cinematic paintings individually seek to bring the formal, physical and synaesthetic qualities together through paintings simultaneously (Manghani, 2015). In this chapter, I intend to elaborate on certain elements that cause cinematic attributes of the painting by examining the films of David Lynch. By using a concrete example of David Lynch, I hope to light some basic assumptions about the cinematic possibilities of painting.

2.1 David Lynch's artistic style: Gothic style continues from painting to film

David Lynch (born January 20, 1946) (Figure 2.1) is a renowned artist who is proficient in film, painting, music, literature, design, photograph, etc. The Guardian has rated David Lynch as “The most important film master of our time”. He is also widely considered to be one of our most influential living filmmakers and has won the Cannes Golden Palm Award, the Venice Golden Lion, three Oscar nominations, and 26 individual art exhibitions.



Figure 2.1 David Lynch, an artistic speaker

A four-minute-long experimental animated film “Six Men Getting Sick” (1967) (Figure 2.2) is one of his early non-negligible works: three male avatars are carved on the large fiberboard, and the other half of the man in the upper right corner opens his mouth and waits for vomiting. The face was projected onto the fiberboard, and also the animated images of the remaining three and a half men. In 40 seconds, we heard background sounds, while watching the six men showing how they went from sick to vomiting. Their internal organs become visible, and the vomit, which is as bright as watercolor paint, rushes straight from the chest to the top of the head and then out of the mouth – and then the image repeats.

David Lynch
Six Men
getting
sick
←

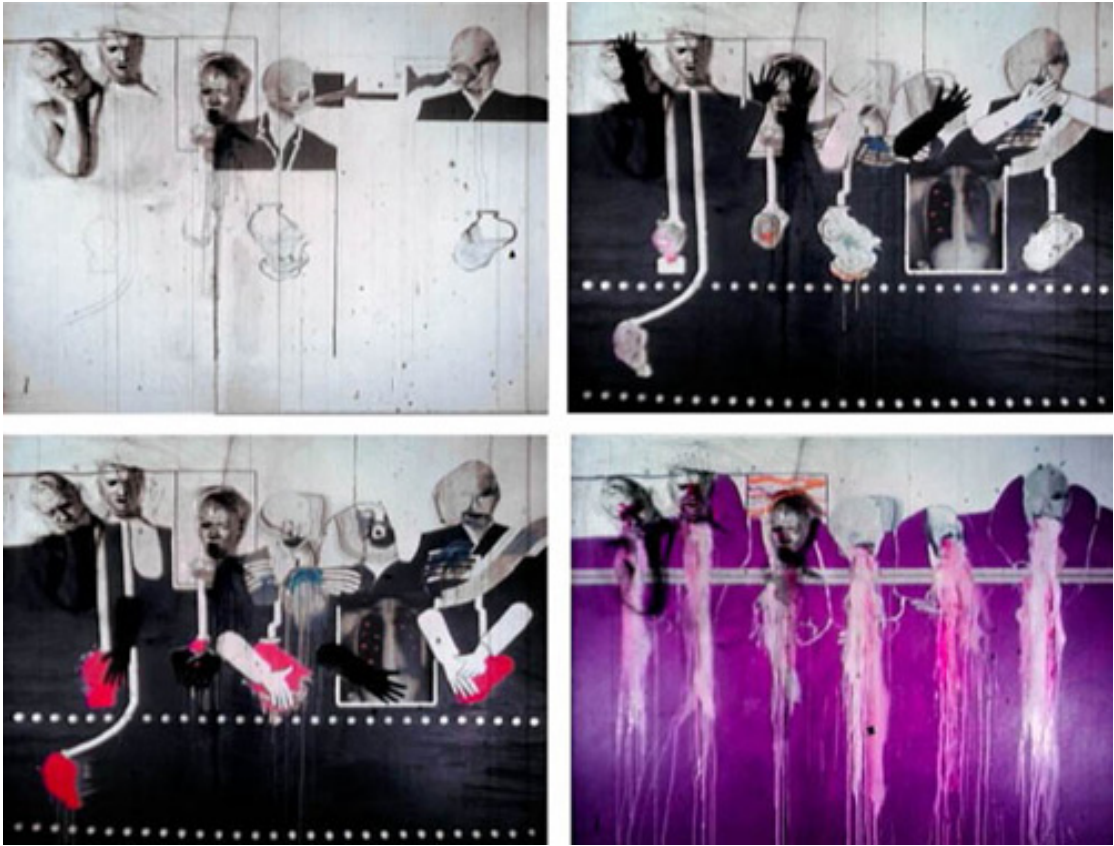


Figure 2.2 David Lynch "Six Men Getting Sick" (1967)

With the birth of “Six Sick People”, Lynch’s personal style has become more prominent. He began to explore the dynamic image, but he could not give up the fascination with painting. For instance, in “A Figure Witnessing the Orchestration of Time” (1990) (Figure 2.3), he mixed insects into the paint, in which things that follow the contours of feeling and intuition rather than linear cause-and-effect relationships. Such abstracted figures went throughout most of his paintings, anguishing among raised brushstrokes, as in 1983’s Nihilistic Delusion.



Figure 2.3 “A Figure Witnessing the Orchestration of Time” (1990)

Every time when I stare at Lynch’s paintings (Figure 2.4-2.6), Philadelphia’s repressed and revealing desperate atmosphere seems to be coming out of the picture instantly. Those ambiguous human bodies, faint colors, and unstructured composition are completely different from the Renaissance songs of worldly enjoyment. The artist uses the brush to unreservedly present the darkness and ugliness of human nature.



Figure 2.4 “He Has His Tools and His Chemicals” (2013)

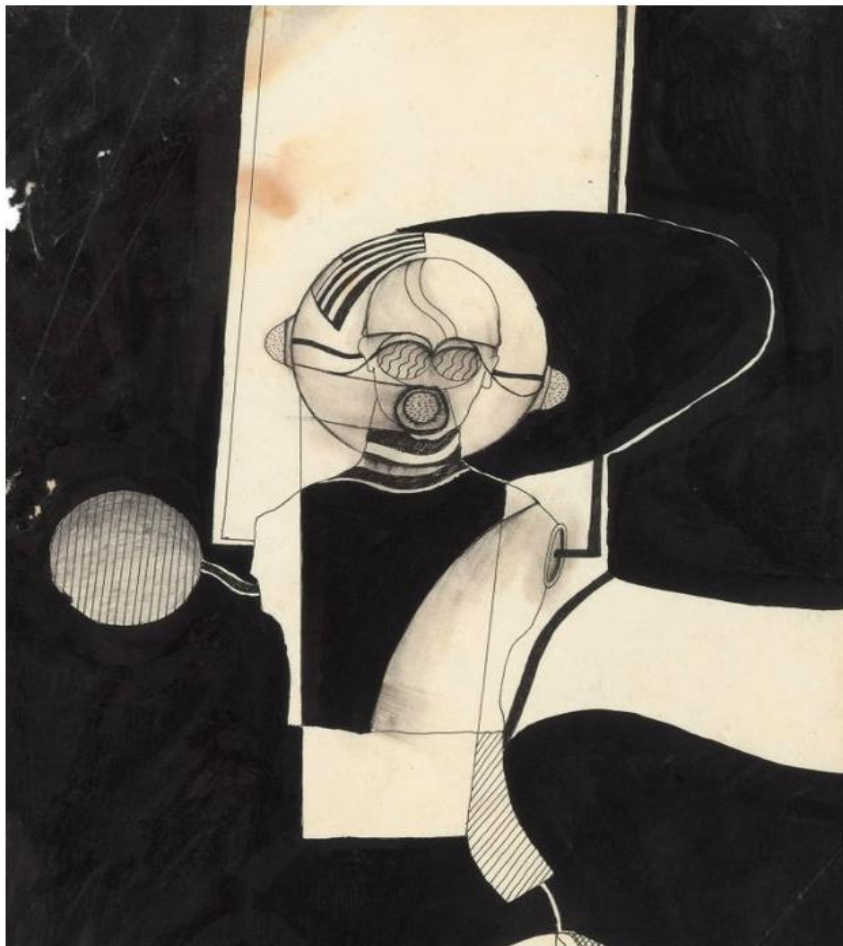


Figure 2.5 “Untitled” (1965-1969)



Figure 2.6 “Women’s Dream” (1967)

Lynch is like a wandering poet on the streets of Paris in the 19th century. He has been secretly observing everything around him. He is also a narrator who is eager to express and constantly tries to analyze contemporary society with his distinctive artistic language. The characters that often appear in his paintings are unrecognizable, the handwritten characters with innuendo and the deep textures are all transformed into the

unique patterns of “Lynchian”, waiting for the viewer to withdraw from the appearance, thus entering the back spiritual world (Lim, 2015).

Moreover, in his opinion, shooting a film is nothing more than creating a “moving painting.” For example, in the experimental film “Eraserhead” (Figure 2.7) he shot in 1967 is like drawing a dream. Lynch uses his personal experience as a blueprint to collage and reorganize different pictures and sounds (Rodly, 2005). It is an absurd horror film with a dark side of reality. The film “Eraserhead” tells the story of a young man’s desperate family life: being forced to marry, giving birth to a deformed child, and his wife running away from home and so on. The film often shows a dark or clouded picture with strange background music. And the setting of the surrealist story left the audience with infinite doubts and sensible panic. Is it a dream or a reality that is difficult to see directly?

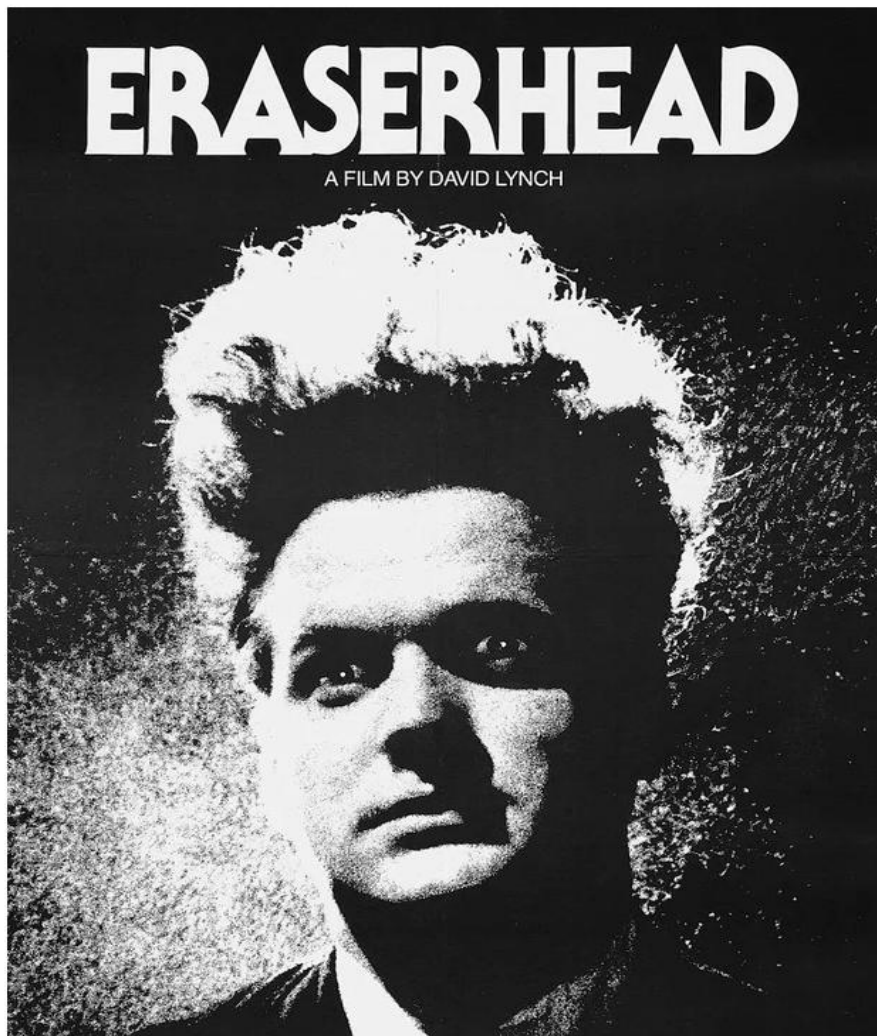


Figure 2.7 “Eraserhead” (1967)

In David Lynch’s paintings and films, the overall tone of the work is filled with a mysterious, gloomy, and horrible atmosphere. It is also filled with the fear of darkness, the sorrow of death, the love of taboos, the beauty of total pain, in short, the dark side of the human spiritual world (Bromell, 1980).



Figure 2.8 David Lynch, “Small Boy in His Room” (2009)

Look at this painting: “Small Boy in His Room” (2009) (Figure 2.8), he used striking red, the strange atmosphere, lack of protection and fragility, the danger and temptation created by the red and black tone, etc. Is it familiar? In his acclaimed movies “Blue Velvet” (1986), “Twin Peaks” (1990-1991) and “Mulholland Drive” (2001), there are also such red curtains and rooms. This is Lynch’s signature idea – using space and color (usually red, black, and blue) to create a feeling of danger and an uneasy feeling. Looking closely, the boy’s head and his body are separated. Lynch also felt that the

strange atmosphere was not enough, and then he added a shadowy black figure behind the little boy. The most astounding thing is that the shadow of this half-man and half-ghost is watching us. In addition, the little boy's head has a stronger three-dimensional sense, and more is the technique of sculpture. This is also the usual means of comprehensive material painting. And in this painting "Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House" (2009) (Figure 2.9) mixed media on cardboard, Pete took the revolver and the dagger, turned over the hills, his girlfriend (of course wearing red clothes), waiting for him in front of the Gothic room window.



Figure 2.9 David Lynch, "Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House" (2009)

When talking about Lynch's paintings, many people compare him to the British figurative painter Francis Bacon (28 October 1909 – 28 April 1992) because the painting styles of both of them are grotesque, violent and abstract, and the theme is devoted to exploring the complexity of the mental state of human beings. Lynch is the same because they are all focused on showing the poor and terrible side of human nature. Not only Lynch's paintings, but also his film roles, are mostly people who live in horror, tension, and pain. This is the typical Lynch's philosophy, and his work from painting to film is always devoted to expressing those dark, horrifying stories. These paintings and movies are full of suspense and horror, but as the excavation deepens, it turns out that each is being influenced by negative emotions, and the distortion and struggle of human nature in those dark backgrounds is the real protagonist.

2.2 David Lynch's film: "Painting" film director

In 1977, Lynch created the absurd horror film "Eraserhead". Thereafter, from the temptation of "Blue Velvet" to the extreme violence of "Wild at Heart" to the nightmare of "Mulholland Drive", David Lynch became one of the representatives of contemporary American non-mainstream movies; his works are all singular, gloomy, puzzling and with strong dark humor. He said, "My film is about confusion and

darkness. You can say that it is real, or it can be said to be nothing. It is not a dream, but it is not a reality.” Therefore, people specially invented “Lynchian” for him. The “Lynchian” is a special description of “skull, dark, psychedelic, uncertain, mysterious, dreamlike and dreamlike” sensory world and spiritual kingdom. When it comes to the early film works, he still can't escape the fascination with painting, and thinks that those films are just trying to “make a moving painting”.

There have been many comments comparing David Lynch and Italian film director Michelangelo Antonioni (born on September 29, 1912), saying that the latter is intercepted by a camera in an orderly, logical, rational space, and then reorganized into an uncertain world, while the former is drawing the same picture of the dream, and then uses the camera to “copy” it (Martin, 2014). Therefore, David Lynch is a wonderful “painting-style” film director.

Through David Lynch’s work from “The Air is on Fire” (2007) (Figure 2.10), we can sneak deeper into his art world and establish some intrinsic connection between film art and other media creations. In the process of editing, we noticed an aesthetic and subjective similarity between these two. He expresses inner energy and vitality through abstract geometric figures with strong geometric shapes. It is also a spiritual projection. In terms of aesthetics, we can say that his paintings are also very “Lynchian”, we can

find some of the same fascinating themes in his movies: mystery, strangeness, darkness, dreams, slight surrealism, etc. Painting, along with some notes, is the way the author explores self-awareness and inner emotions and is the contrast of the theme of the film.



Figure 2.10 David Lynch's work from the visual exhibition "The Air is on Fire" (2007)

2.3 David Lynch's paintings and movies: light and dream

David Lynch paints in movies. Although paintings, movies, music, drama, and art are all in various forms, the inner core is always the same. He used the inspiration drawn from painting on film scenes, lens language, and material.

Painting and film, like technology and ideas, should always be a joint effort to promote mutual tonicity. David Lynch sketched images under the long film. Watching Lynch's paintings is like a wonderful experience: his personal history, his artistic learning experience, and the movie-going experience of fans, etc. They are intertwined and form a fascinating net that escapes. The external world does not exist, time passes, and all the pictures collide and change, dreams by dreams.

In his movie, because he wants to complete a movable painting, the director breaks the time and spatial order, blurs the boundary between reality and fantasy, a series of seemingly loose and inconsequential events ended up being linked together by a common point. David Lynch has a strong desire to express. He uses images and sounds, words, and meditation to create a dream. This allows him to visualize the auditory hallucinations in the daytime, and in the darkness, he can express his self-expression and venting pleasure.

Lynch said: “One of the benefits of the film is that it can express some aspects of speech that cannot be expressed”. Painting has a trait that is true to everything in life. This is the way of painting. Music has the same qualities. Some things can't be put into words. That is what the painting has to deal with. It is also a movie, at least for me, most of the purpose. There are stories in the world, but there are also things that can be expressed in movies but not in words. That is the beautiful language that belongs to the movie. It also has to deal with time, handover and all the rules of painting. Painting is more essential and lasting, and it is better than everything in the world.

In the painting, Lynch likes to use a large area of dark color. It also uses the symbolic effect of color in the film. The film theme is mostly based on sex and death, dreams and industry. In the early days, black and white films such as “The Alphabet” (1968) (Figure 2.11) were created. He also created a color film such as “Blue Velvet” (1986) and used the symbolic effect of color to set off the atmosphere.

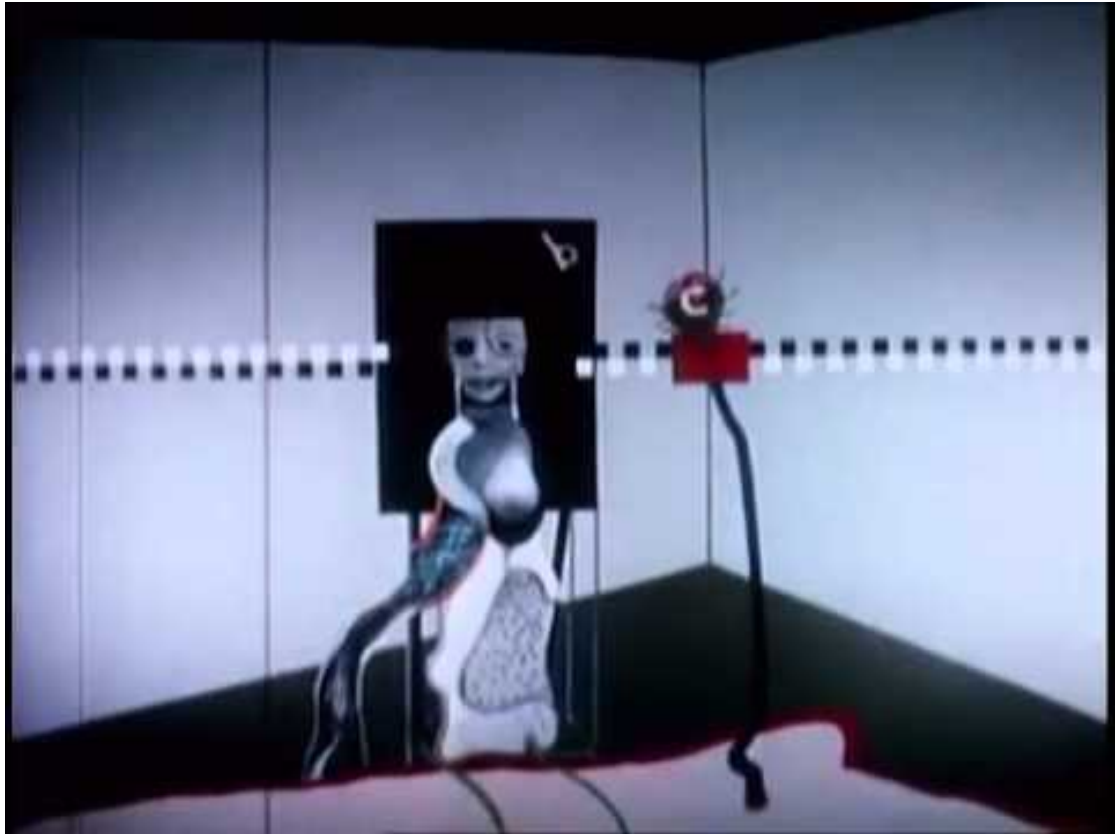


Figure 2.11 David Lynch, “The Alphabet” (1968)

2.4 Characteristics of David Lynch’s movie

2.4.1 Theme

2.4.1.1 Sex and death

Lynch is accustomed to the expression and use of sex in the film, but the sex here transcends the meaning of its surface. For instance, the sex in the movie “Blue Velvet” is the performance of the abuse of the protagonist; the sex in “Lost Highway” (1997)

(Figure 2.12) is a manifestation of violence; while the sex in “Wild at Heart” (1990) (Figure 2.13) symbolizes the freedom of human nature. Moreover, Lynch is also good at connecting sex and death in the film. In his film, the beautiful world is actually cruel and indifferent. For example, in “Blue Velvet”, the male protagonist is confused by the sexy and enchanting heroine; at the same time, he is already facing the threat of death.



Figure 2.12 David Lynch “Lost Highway” (1997)



Figure 2.13 David Lynch “Wild at Heart” (1990)

2.4.1.2 Dream

David Lynch expresses himself through forms of symbolism, often conferring his films a dreamy color. In the film “Twin Peaks” (1990) (Figure 2.14), the detective’s dreams are connected to mysterious situations, from which he gets inspiration. Most of the stories in “Mulholland Drive” (2001) (Figure 2.15) occur in dreams. The dreams in the film even occupy two-thirds of the entire film. It is the most dream-like film in Lynch’s works (Todd, 2004). There is no lack of plot about illusion in “Lost Highway”, but the difference between this film and other films is that its dreams and reality are mixed (Mcgowan, 2000). The reality is hidden in the dream, making it difficult for the

audience to distinguish. The audience must learn to treat the two as a whole. It breaks through the traditional model of suspense films, making the audience addicted to the world of the film.



Figure 2.14 David Lynch “Twin Peaks” (1990)



Figure 2.15 David Lynch “Mulholland Drive” (2001)

2.4.1.3 Industry

Industry is a common theme in David Lynch’s work. For example, Henry in the “Eraserhead” (1967) wanders around the ruins of the city, and enjoys the thrill of nightmares in addition to his curiosity and fear; “The Elephant Man” (1980) shows the horror picture brought by industry; In “Twin Peaks” (1990), the lens of the wood cutting machine is accompanied by special sound effects to create a mysterious atmosphere; while in “Wild at Heart” (1990) the strong car roar highlights the subversion and rebellion of the male and female protagonists. The industrial scene embodied in David

Lynch's film creation always makes the audience feel a decadent feeling, although this is indeed an alternative beauty.

2.4.2 Color

Lynch's early films were mainly black and white. His first short film "The Alphabet" (1968) and later "The Elephant Man" (1980) and "Eraserhead" (1967) were all black and white. The short film "The Grandmother" (1970) (Figure 2.16) is not strictly black and white, but its faint light and tonal distortion make the film appear black and white. In the subsequent color films, Lynch also used black and white tones in many places, such as black clothing, black props and so on. Most of these plots are laid out in the evening or in the dark ground. He uses a dark mystery and horror to create an atmosphere of death.



Figure 2.16 David Lynch “The Grandmother” (1970)

After the previous black and white film, David Lynch tried to use a variety of colors in his film. Lynch has used the symbolic role of color in the film many times, such as “Blue Velvet” (1986) (Figure 2.17), its title has hinted at the symbolic role of

blue, the mysterious blue symbolizes another hidden world. At the beginning and end of this film, the two overprints of the blue sky and blue velvet indicate that the two different blues can coexist, and the two different worlds can coexist. The symbolic effect of Lynch's color is reflected in the color layout of Dorothy's room. The purple color of the floor and walls of the room symbolizes violence and is a hint of the abuse of Dorothy.



Figure 2.17 David Lynch “Blue Velvet” (1986)

In addition, Lynch is also used to create a stage atmosphere in red. Red represents temptation and mystery, symbolizing passion, wildness, and danger. For example, in “Twin Peaks” (Figure 2.18), the detective repeatedly entered the red hut in the dream; red in “Wild at Heart” (Figure 2.19) became the main color of the film, where red is the symbol of wildness. The lens that Lula’s mother painted her hands and face with red lipstick is the pinnacle of the red symbol role and is also a perfect interpretation of her inner madness.



Figure 2.18 David Lynch “Blue Velvet” (1986)



Figure 2.19 David Lynch “Wild at Heart” (1990)

2.4.3 Composition

The screen image is the basic element of the film language. Lynch has his own unique ability in the composition of the film. He is not only good at using appropriate film colors to make the audience feel psychologically stimulated and visually shocked, but also good at using the composition vocabulary to achieve the metaphor and symbolic effect that he pursues. The images, as the basic elements of the film language, showed great visual aesthetic in his movie. Every place reflects the ingenuity of directors and photography. Lynch’s film is symbolic in the composition of the picture, expressing a rich sense of beauty.

For instance, although Lynch owns a distinctly eccentric cinematic style, there are few cinematographic experiments with color or texture in “Twin Peaks” (Altman, 1990). However, there are many fascinating tracking shots, angles, and composition of the screen space in the series, where crucial objects and actions are arranged to develop a storyline. Please see the shot below that may provide some good examples of Lynch’s expert use of the composition.



Figure 2.20 David Lynch “Twin Peaks” (1990)

The above image belongs to a sequence where four men are looking for a hut in the woods. The music evokes the atmosphere of “Western Spaghetti” which is a music style pioneered by Ennio Morricone. Everyone enters the screen space and then stops, assuming a posture evoking masculine heroism.



Figure 2.21 David Lynch “Twin Peaks” (1990)

In another instance, Audrey is snooping around the office of her creepy boss, when the camera captures detail on the wall: a “CIVIC AWARD” framed in glass. As we find out that the boss is actually a recruiter for a brothel, the composition acts in an ironic way.

2.5 Art style and aesthetics of David Lynch’s movie

2.5.1 Reflection and transcendence on Hollywood movies

David Lynch once said that the final right of the film should be controlled in the hands of the director, from which we can see his pursuit of free and independent creation. In the late 1970s, there were quite a few independent filmmakers in Hollywood

trying to rebel against Hollywood's old industrial system. Lynch not only won his ultimate control over the film, but he also made bold breakthroughs and transcendences in Hollywood movies. He still focuses on the social and cultural contradictions in the United States but uses his own unique methods and techniques to describe different stories and at the same time achieve the covert mission of the film.

Lynch's early films "The Elephant Man" (1980) and "Dune" (1984) used Hollywood's conventional narrative techniques. Both films have achieved great success and received high honors, however, he was not satisfied with this, and began to reflect and boldly transcend Hollywood's existing film model.

In the 1980s, Lynch reflected on the mistakes of the US government like other Hollywood directors, but at the same time, he also boldly abandoned the climax writing mode of the Hollywood film script. Starting with criminals and marginal people, he began to explore freedom and desire.

Through the films "Wild at Heart", "Blue Velvet" and "Mulholland Drive", Lynch showed the audience the desires and distortions in the human subconscious and the erosion of the soul, which eventually led humanity into sin and madness. These elements are attractive and make the audiences elusive. The audiences follow Lynch's

film with horror and vomiting. Finally, as the story is revealed, they reflect on their desires and sins and finally return to their normal life track.

2.5.2 The ever-changing Lynch's dreamland

When other countries followed Hollywood, Lynch broke the current status of Hollywood and made a great contribution to Hollywood with his unique skills and methods.

Lynch believes that film is the best way to express the subconscious; therefore, dream becomes an important element in his film. He often leads the audience into a dream through a strange atmosphere, thus showing the protagonist's inner spiritual world and allowing the audience to understand the inner world of mankind more intuitively. Lynch always pursues the truth behind the dream, and through the dream to explore the ferocious distorted inner world behind reality.

We often ask, what is art? The concept of art has changed across the millennium, and it has never been possible to leave the discussion of humanity and its essence. For David Lynch, art is life, and life is art. His grotesque human body, messy lines, and expressive colors are not only his direct feelings in the present but also his perception of

the dark side of the world. This is the uniqueness of his art and the reason for his greatness.

2.6 The film paintings of David Lynch

David Lynch, born in the United States in the 1940s, is one of the most important avant-garde directors in the contemporary era and an independent film master in the United States. With a strong personal style, he is known in the film circle and is regarded as a representative of contemporary film directors. Lynch is a multi-faceted ghost of cross-border art: not only editing, directing, and acting but also working as a photographer, cartoonist, and composer. He is humorous and treacherous. He is good at using the classic elements of Hollywood genre movies, splitting the narrative context and then re-composing and combining with new meanings, with an alternative crazy open story structure, grotesque screen code rhetoric, romance Irony, and other creative techniques (Nochimson, 2005). He has led the trend of American postmodernism movies. His films are rich and gorgeous, full of strangeness and mystery, just like a mystic picture scrolling in reality and dreams, which points directly at people's hearts (Bulkeley, 2003). His "lost image" style made him unique in the movie world. His child-like unconscious "out of control" creative method grafted the subconscious

induction into the present time and space with a surreal art fable to create a unique Lynchism film language texture (Mactaggart, 2010).

2.6.1 David Lynch's early films

David Lynch created a hidden film consciousness kingdom completely isolated from the real world. He had manually created a mobile video screen to play, which led to the appearance of his first animated short film "Six Men Getting Sick" (1967). He also spent five years with paranoid enthusiasm, refused all contact with the outside world, and finally finished the first feature film "Eraserhead", which gained the attention of the American art film industry. In his creation, he devoted himself to enclosing himself in a highly spiritual interior space for a long time, constructing another layer of wonderful image space and time. In life, his inherently sensitive traits have connected him closely with the heretic world. In his life, he has harvested and gradually stored commendable creative materials for him. As a director, he has a paranoid control of the actors from sound, line design to body rhythm; as a painter, he has a unique understanding of structural space and color rhetoric. As a composer, he is keenly aware of the wild existence in the essential power of music and sound effects. The perseverance of ordinary people made him a great achievement in film art. The

“lost image” in his paintings and film works are not limited to the early creations but are the core philosophy of the films as Lynchism. Understanding the "lost image" can comprehend the language texture of Lynchism. This is an important way to search for the essence of his work after deconstructing the seemingly crazily and symbolic expressions in the Lynchism series of films. In the mature films of Lynch in the middle and late stages, the language texture becomes more obscure and difficult to understand. The existing research further complicates and tags it with more unrelated theoretical systems, making it almost difficult for the audience to see the simple intentions of Lynch as a childlike creation.

Lynch’s painting experience in his youth until his turbulent and relocating growth environment formed the early “Lynchism” and its cryptic and obscure mirror-textured texture and spiritual dilemma (Bromell, 1980). The reality is alienated, and after reflection, we see a series of problems caused by the desire of a more complete material world.

Four early films by David Lynch: “Six Men Getting Sick” (1967), “The Alphabet” (1967), “Grandmother” (1970), and “Eraserhead” (1977), showed his great interest in the art of film and superb talent, and gradually formed a strong personal identity in the middle and late Lynchism film style. The contents of these seemingly

treacherous works were originally derived from Lynch's daily life. He took out the seemingly ordinary fragments and shot them in a surreal expression. As if destined, Lynch was born with a keen sense of intuition about those weird and sporadic things. He believes that things close to darkness are always filled with strong energy (Greg, 2008). He eagerly hoped to use art to present this abstract thinking. To share with more people, it was spread through paintings at first, and then it was discovered that movies are the best medium for spreading the spiritual connotation of flowing images.

The "Eraserhead" is addressed with a weird, meaningless image and intermittent scenes that destroy the familiarity of the story. Its purpose is not to find out whether the protagonist Henry is in a dream or where the ending is, or even it can be said that the purpose of shooting the film was not to clarify anything. What Lynch really wanted to present was to expose his obsessed mental state and ideological dilemma to the audiences through the film. As the first feature film of David Lynch, its extraordinary originality and insight into the internal nature of life have caused countless critics to put down dull text weapons after watching it, saying "It is a work that can only be experienced but not explained". Lynch refused to delve into the basic concepts and practices of video, sound, and film production, but it is for this reason that he made the film screen proactively let the audience directly judge and accept the content of the film

through their own sensory experience. Therefore, “Eraserhead” created a strange image power that can only be perceived and understood by individual consciousness, that is, the Lynchism independent film style formed in the future. Lynch once commented on it: "It's really a perfect film." That was the only time he evaluated his creation, which shows that it has an irreplaceable important reference meaning in Lynch's overall artistic creation career.

2.6.2 The stylized influence of contemporary painting on the formation of Lynchism

David Lynch's best movies are all strongly ambiguous. When talking about Lynch's works, he always touches on the terminology of film concepts: post-structuralism, Kafka, surrealism, expressionism, pop, spiritual formalism, etc. Almost all the mature films of David Lynch are full of Lynchism's extremely personal narrative styles, such as “Mulholland Drive”, “Lost Highway” and “Inland Empire”. This linear-based traditional narrative is not so much a novel exploration of images as Lynch's personalized crazy experiment may be more accurate, but this cannot erase his important contribution in independent films and even to world films (Cook, 2011). However, Lynch's increasingly extreme artistic tendency makes the works in the middle

and late periods look dangerous from the perspective of film analysis. Therefore, many critics and theorists applied their own experience systems to over-interpret Lynch's image ideology and aesthetic characteristics.

I think contemporary painting art has an important influence on the stylization of Lynchism. Painting can be thought to be the beginning and guidance of all the art of David Lynch. It not only opened a window for him to connect to the new world but also made him feel the surprise of bypassing the various art categories. From the composition of the picture and the shadow of light to the creative method and philosophical connotation, Lynch can learn a lot from his painting experience. Many of his creative thinking, abstract expressions, and even the consistent "lost image" in his films come from the art of painting. He once said that he was on the road to the film by seeing the breeze blowing the footer of his paintings, so he discovered the beauty of continuous flowing images. From Lynch's early works, you can see the strong influence of his painter's identity on the film. "Six Men Getting Sick" is a mixed media cross-border experiment, which includes stable engraving animation and unstable moving images. "The Alphabet" is interspersed with a lot of animations combined with live performances to get a treacherous watching experience. The animation in "Grandmother" appears as an auxiliary but it is still essential. Although there is no

animation effect in “Eraserhead”, the film’s strong contrast between light and dark, the structure of the lens and the symbolic character shape, and even the abstract and shocking performance status are quite contemporary. Lynch grafted the way of painting on the medium of flowing images and turned it into a rather state-of-the-art film noir, giving it a rich philosophical insight hidden underneath the surface. Therefore, Lynch’s image creation has an important cross-relationship with his so many years of painting experience in his youth. The two arts interweave and promote each other in the similarities and differences, and they collide with a spark of beauty. This is also the unique aesthetic expression of Lynchism (Kaleta, 1993).

“There are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people’s eyes”. As a creator, the director is no different from the identity of a painter. They all have finished their original mission after the work is completed, and all the rest are left to the work to express. Too much detail or analysis will only make the sacred thinking process secular and reduce the power of its internal transmission. Such a unique and mysterious understanding of the films can be attributed to its painter’s identity to a large extent. Abstract or expressionist paintings often do not have specifically prescribed plots, but are covered by a lot of emotional and mental cruxes, philosophical turbulence. The audiences can have their own completely different multidimensional understandings.

Lynch likes to collect and capture those auras that move and surprise him in the subconscious, and finally, put them on the artistic medium in the unit of the image in the natural way that they expect to be presented. Such creative features make Lynch's films full of fog and complexity, but when the rhetorical appearance of doubt is turned aside, it is actually his first thought as a painter.

Lynch once used this analogy: because the paint has its own texture in painting, it naturally tends to a certain result when applied. But the brush is artificial and can only outline thin lines. When the painter only emphasizes the function of relying on the paintbrush, the result is a simple re-enactment of the inherent thinking, because people replace the speech function of the paint and make subjective conscious self-talk, which blocks the texture and intuition of the paint, breaking It shows the polysemy complexity and unique aesthetic characteristics that the picture itself can possess.

Therefore, in the creation of the film, Lynch also insists on encouraging the occurrence of unexpected and accidental events. Once they can appear and intervene in the creative process, the film will naturally become content with strong vitality and inspiration. If the screenwriter only writes down what he thinks, it will appear very limited; if the director only shoots the plan on the sub-lens and cannot improvise, then everything will be stereotyped and conservative. Lynch attributed the weird infinite

power of his movie to the uncontrolled boiling. He emphasizes that leaving a door for unexpected power, allowing it to be fully utilized. He allows the thinking to boil and welcomes the outside world or material interference and intervention in different time and space. At this time, more ideas will emerge, and the result is incredible and huge (Lancaster, 2005). And such a “runaway” naturalist Lynch-style creation is a wonderful consequence that can only be found when the extremes are completely eliminated.

I think that painting has greatly influenced David Lynch’s film. Years of painting experience has created his unique artistic aesthetic. Although he was later engaged in the film industry, he has not given up his pursuit of painting. Lynch is so good at incorporating his painting concepts into the creation of films. Therefore, the shape design of the characters in his film is always extremely abstract, just like his painting, which seems to be ridiculous. Apart from the visual impact, it represents the externalization of the character's inner world and conveys the inner spiritual theme of the film. With his unique understanding of art, Lynch expresses the dark side of society calmly with depressing colors, which makes the audience fall into the spiritual fortress he cast while being visually impacted (Devlin, 2011).

Visual Aesthetics of Cinema

Case studies of the films by Chinese director Zhang Yimou

The aesthetic features of cinema are divided into two categories, namely low-level and high-level features, based on their level of abstraction (Tarvainen et al., 2015). The former involving features of an artwork that can be examined independently as a whole (e.g. color), while the latter depicting more abstract (e.g. complexity). In this chapter, to evaluate the aesthetic features of the film directed by Zhang Yimou, I analyze coloring means of narration and elicitation of emotions through cinematic techniques as well as abstract impressions. This dichotomy bridges the two facets of cinema aesthetics (Aumont et al., 1983), namely the aesthetic effects of cinema (high-level features) and the cinematic means or techniques (low-level features). I continue to study a broader and deeper color nature and to interpret the emotional value of color through the language, senses and personality characteristics. In this chapter, I explore the simulation

of the natural color image and performance of composition and light, as well as the creation of the particular color format in his film for achieving the accurate expression of color perception, emotion, and imagination processes.

3.1 Use of color in the visual narrative of Zhang Yimou's movies

When cinema is perceived through in its proximity to visual arts, it is emphasized its aspects originated from painting and that were born out of photography. It assumes a strong aesthetic function. In the movie, the visual elements such as picture, color, composition, and space need to be beautifully matched. For example, according to the color matching and change, the film can be perfectly combined and stitched with various colors in order to shape the characters and highlight the rhythm of the movie with different levels, paragraphs, symbolic meanings, and visual feelings.

Color is very important in visual language. It helps to highlight the theme of the movie, gives the audience a strong visual impact, conveys unique aesthetic ideas and connotations, and enhances the artistic atmosphere of the film. In Zhang Yimou's movies, common colors are used to express the theme and style of the film, shape the characters, create an atmosphere, and render the environment to enhance the visual appeal of the movie scene.

3.1.1 Impact of color art in movies

The famous photographer Vittorio Storaro once said: “Color is a part of the film language. We use color to express different emotions and feelings, just like the use of light and shadow to symbolize the conflict between life and death.” As a visual symbol, the symbolic meaning of color stems from the sustenance and hope of each person’s cognition and understanding. The film is an art of narration. The director wants to tell a complete story in a limited time. The color is often used as a carrier of imagery appearing in the film and becoming one of the director’s expression techniques.

The impact of color in the film is closely related to the director. It is the embodiment of the director’s style. Color is an important visual language in the movie. It can create a visual atmosphere and manage the composition of the picture through the color layout of the scene space, therefore providing the audience a strong visual experience. The use of color helps to reveal the theme of the film and increase the sensibility of the film. Zhang Yimou often uses color to highlight the theme of the film, giving the audience a strong visual impact, conveying unique aesthetic ideas and connotations, and enhancing the artistic atmosphere of the film. The artistic style of Zhang Yimou’s films has been established through the use of color. For example, in the “Raise the Red Lantern” (1993) (Figure 3.1), a large area of gray red lanterns has been

used to imply the bleakness and sadness of feudal women's lives.



Figure 3.1 "Raise the Red Lantern" (1993)

Color is the natural attribute of matter and an important visual language. It can truly reproduce the objective world and convey people's psychological emotions. At the same time, color is also a unique visual physiological phenomenon, a spiritual symbol and an emotional language with a strong visual impact.

3.1.2 Implication of color image in movies

The meaning of color is reflected in people's inner understanding of color and subjective judgment of color. In general, white symbolizes purity and sacredness; black symbolizes authority, yellow symbolizes lightness and transparency; red symbolizes

enthusiasm, and pink symbolizes tenderness, etc. People from different cultures, countries, and regions have different aesthetics of color. The role of color imagery in film aesthetics is extremely important, and it is the embodiment of the director's ideological culture, emotional expression, and values.

The generation of color image follows the regular pattern of “intention and image fusion” and is divided into three layers: 1) the first layer is like the fusion of figurative and affection, adding color to the object and thus evoking people to have certain emotions on the object; 2) the second layer is the externalization of emotions. After the wake of the first layer of emotion, this particular emotion will be combined with the object; 3) the third layer, the creative appearance becomes a certain aesthetic image, and this aesthetic image will have a specific “color image” For instance, the use of color imagery was fantastic in Zhang Yimou's film “Hero” (2002) (Figure 3.2). Pure black is a solemn, broad, solemn symbol; white is a symbol of death; blue symbolizes the lofty contest.







Figure 3.2 “Hero” (2002)

3.1.3 Use of color in movies

The role of color is mainly impression, performance, and structure, in which structure refers to the symbol. Color is developed along with the development of human practice. The symbolical use of color is unique in art. Through the symbol, we can easily distinguish the artistic style of the work. The emotions and symbols of color are a kind of conceptual consensus reached by people in the process of long-term color application. Because of cultural and individual differences, color emotions have the characteristics of diversity. The same color is often given different expressions and symbolism. For instance, people often use black and white to symbolize death, but it turned into “yellow-orange and blue-purple” in Van Gogh's painting. The use of color by Zhang Yimou is reflected in the design, which eventually formed his unique characteristics.

3.1.3.1 Choice of colors

The fiery Chinese red is the totem color of Zhang Yimou's film. His first film “Red Sorghum” (1987) (Figure 3.3) laid the foundation for the use of red in his entire film career. “Red Sorghum” is filled with red sorghum wine, wine workshop, red sedan chair, red hijab, red shoes, red cotton-padded jacket, large red area, exactly matching the

plot of the film, which is wonderful. With the bright red sorghum, the blood-red sun, and the red sky as the background of the film, it shows a vivid vitality. In the “Raise the Red Lantern” (1987) (Figure 3.4), the gloomy and deep house courtyard, red lanterns symbolize not only the luck of feudal society's women who were beloved by their husbands, but also the sadness, desolateness, and helplessness of women’s lives. From Zhang Yimou's film, red is not only his means of expressing self-awareness and aesthetic ideals but also a cultural symbol and the soul of his film.





Figure 3.3 “Red Sorghum” (1987)



Figure 3.4 “Raise the Red Lantern” (1987)

The cyan blue is also one of Zhang Yimou's favorite colors. The Chinese used to say cyan blue is from blue, yet it is better than blue. In China, cyan-blue and green are extremely similar colors.

For instance, in “Hero” (2002) (Figure 3.5), “Residual Sword” and “Flying Snow” fight by the sword, dark green and pink green long sword intertwined, implying a complicated relationship. When “residual sword” and “nameless” duel, sky-blue and black clothes are commensurate, implying unrequited sacrifice. In “The Flowers of War” (2012) (Figure 3.6), female students wearing gray-blue clothes, a pastor wearing blue-black clothes, blue light shot from the top of the church, making us feel chill and horror. The whole film is based on “blue” that symbolizes heavy and gloomy.



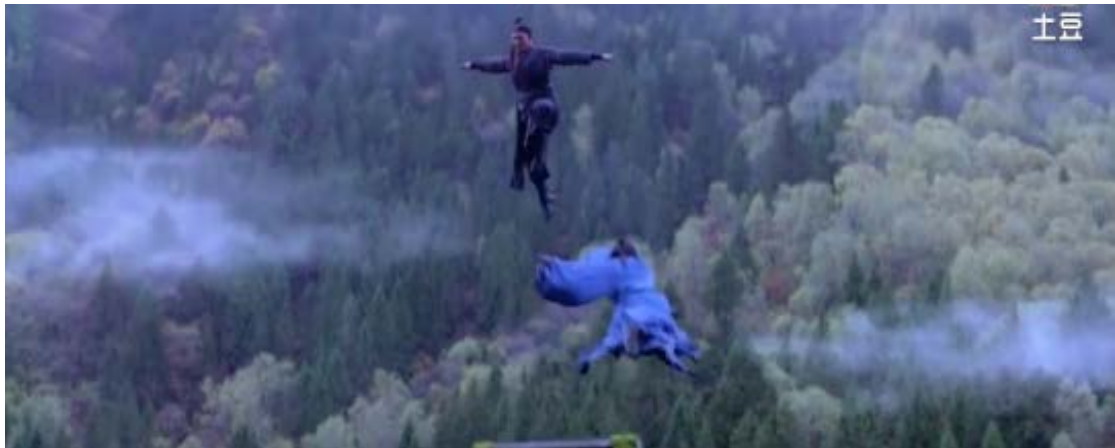


Figure 3.5 “Hero” (2002)



Figure 3.6 “The Flowers of War” (2012)

Black and white, show the different backgrounds of the film. In addition to the three primary colors, black and white, the same color system, and contrasting colors are the expressions of Zhang Yimou. Black can engulf all colors and also brighten any color. For example, in “Ju Dou” (1991) (Figure 3.7) and “Raise the Red Lantern” (1987) (Figure 3.8), the icy closed deep house courtyard is black and gray, showing the cold and dark atmosphere. The clothes worn by Gong Li are also carefully arranged in black and white.



Figure 3.7 "Ju Dou" (1991)



Figure 3.8 “Raise the Red Lantern” (1987)

The color in Zhang Yimou’s movies has a strong visual impact. From the perspective of his many movies, the color matching of each film and the color used to promote the plot are carefully selected and highly designed, therefore ultimately presenting high-end effects with color. Color is also a kind of thought and emotion that can convey the intangible and infinite life. At the same time, Zhang Yimou always regards color as the narrative language of communication with the audience. He often uses the aesthetic effect and symbolic meaning of color to promote the audience’s aesthetic experience, thus bringing the artistic charm of color to the extreme.

3.1.3.2 Expression of color nationality

In fact, there is no nationality in color itself. It is only after the long history of different nationalities has produced a different understanding of the meaning of color, which makes the color national. The nationality of color is the national culture and national psychological characteristics embodied in the process of color creation and application. As Denis Diderot said “People of different nationalities have different aesthetic psychology and aesthetic methods. Because humans have the same visual nervous system, the physiological effects caused by color on human vision have the same characteristics and commonality.” Every director will unconsciously infiltrate the traces of the nation in the film. Zhang Yimou is no exception. In his films, the story characters, thoughts and emotions have obvious nationality. The film reflects the director’s thoughts and emotions through the true record of real life, while the director will consciously or unconsciously display his national culture in the process of recording. The film directed by Zhang Yimou has a strong national character in color. He was born in Shaanxi province; the favorite color of local people is red. They used red for the wedding ceremony. This kind of folk customs influenced Zhang Yimou a lot. Therefore, Zhang Yimou’s films have a national identity and the color has many ethnic flavors.

In “Curse of the Golden Flower” (2006) (Figure 3.9), chrysanthemum high platform, palace, etc., with yellow as the main tone of color, are supplemented by red and black. It not only highlights the desolateness of human nature but also reveals the oriental aesthetic concept that is contained in yellow. Zhang Yimou applies the symbolic yellow to the extreme. The yellow symbolizes the yellow-skinned descendants in Chinese culture and also symbolizes authority, status, and sublimity.

“The Great Wall” (2016) (Figure 3.10) is a model of Zhang Yimou's use of color. The interpretation of Chinese traditional culture is extremely vivid through using 5 troops and 5 different colors, such as 1) Purple Deer Army: in the traditional Chinese culture, it is known as the purple gas, the purple is the symbol of the king; 2) Red Eagle Army: the Chinese's preference for red, which has a strong cultural connotation. The sun is like a fire, whose color is red. Red is a joy and enthusiasm in China; 3) Yellow Tiger Army: yellow is one of the most important colors in ancient Chinese culture. The Chinese live in the loess; the mother river is named “Yellow River”. The yellow is not only the inheritance of the descendants of the Yellow Emperor but also the dynasty of the dynasties symbol; 4) Blue Crane Army: the light and elegant female soldier. The crane army relies on the characteristics of women’s flexible mobility; each color in

“The Great Wall” is a symbol of Chinese traditional national culture, meaning endless and inspiring.



Figure 3.9 “Curse of the Golden Flower” (2006)



Figure 3.10 “The Great Wall” (2016)

In modern society, in order to attract audiences in the shortest time, the film works often highlight national identity. Color has a unique role as a representative of film style. Zhang Yimou's efforts in film color not only enhanced the artistic charm of the film but also enriched the audience's aesthetic experience. His films are simple and strong. The heavy color in his film brings us an irresistible emotional and visual impact. It not only highlights the national cultural heritage but also makes it world-wide and achieves a unique aesthetic pursuit.

In Zhang Yimou's films, a large number of colors have been branded with national identity. These colors not only bring visual impact to the audience but also enrich the content of the film. The transmission of these films abroad is a symbol of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and conveys Chinese cultural concepts and color images to foreigners.

3.1.3.3 Use of color to shape characters

Color is an important part of the film scene. It has the functions of expressing people's emotions, showing the inner world of the characters, and shaping the characters. In the production of the film, Zhang Yimou strives to make each character have its own clear color symbols, using typical methods to refine the characters and

summarize the social life, thus achieving the combination of abstraction and individuality.

In the film “Red Sorghum” (1987), within the scene of the marriage of “Jiu er” (Figure 3.11), the outside of the sedan chair is a festive red, while the inside is a dark reddish color. The change in color between inside and outside the sedan chair reflects the inner feelings of the character. The outside is cheerful. The loud sound of suona and earth-shattering sings produce an exciting audio-visual effect, which is in stark contrast with the tragic fate of the girl in the sedan. It deeply depicts the desperation of the character’s heart and shows the essence of Chinese traditional marriage through color, which is internal sadness.



Figure 3.11 “Red Sorghum” (1987)

In the film design, Zhang Yimou often uses color to shape his character and reveal the inner world of the character. In “The Story of Qiu Ju” (1992) (Figure 3.12), he used the bright red pepper to attract the attention of the audience and show the persistence and stubborn character of “Qiu Ju” under the backdrop of the yellow land.



Figure 3.12 “The Story of Qiu Ju” (1992)

In the film “House of Flying Daggers” (2004) (Figure 3.13), the flow of consciousness of the characters is expressed through the color of the clothing and the

environmental color. The tragic fate of the young girl is hinted by the disharmony of color, thus determining the emotional tone of the film.



Figure 3.13 “House of Flying Daggers” (2004)

3.1.3.4 Use of color to create atmosphere and render the environment

In the art of film, the function of color is multi-faceted, while creating an atmosphere and rendering environment is the basic function of color. Zhang Yimou is a master of color, and his use of color has reached a state of perfection. For instance, in the film “Ju Dou”, he put pure tone (e.g. plain blue, red, and yellow) cloth in the square yard of the gray high wall and used this color shade to contrast the story’s grievances. Moreover, he also used the white mist to create a repressed, cold, solid atmosphere. In the film “Raise the Red Lantern” (1991) (Figure 3.14), he used another color narrative method, which contrasts between the fascinating gray and the dazzling red, the gray sky,

the gray ground, the gray-black courtyard wall, and the glare. The red lantern symbolizes the suppression of human nature by feudal ethics and the coercion and deprivation of female destiny.











Figure 3.14 “Raise the Red Lantern” (1991)

3.1.3.5 Use of color to enhance the visual appeal of movie scene

The feeling of color is the most popular form of general beauty. Zhang Yimou interprets the film through the popular art form of color and explores the profound aesthetic meaning of the film color, making it conform to the public’s emotional logic

and thinking logic and bringing a strong aesthetic feeling to the audience. In the film “Yellow Earth” (1984) (Figure 3.15), with extremely simple color and flat shape, it shows the desolate and wonderful beauty and produces an invisible aesthetic effect. The film conveys profound humanistic thinking in a poetic language. The beauty of color is not only reflected in the color, but also in the interrelationship of colors. Therefore, the color of the painting can be reasonably distributed and properly placed, which can create the role of shaping the image and setting off the subject.



Figure 3.15 “Yellow Earth” (1984)

In the film “Curse of the Golden Flower” (2006) (Figure 3.16), Zhang Yimou displayed unparalleled color aesthetics. The film is based on a golden color. The tall chrysanthemum table, the magnificent palace, and the golden carvings, etc., show the blossoming of the Tang Dynasty.



Figure 3.16 “Curse of the Golden Flower” (2006)

In the film “Hero” (2006) (Figure 3.17), the scene of fighting in Populus woods uses the yellow leaves and the red gauze to convey the martial arts realm of quiet, elegant, comfortable in the oriental culture. The whole composition of this film is

exquisite and atmospheric. From “Qingshan” Lake, the desert sand to the autumn leaves, the whole picture looks picturesque.







Figure 3.17 “Hero” (2002)

3.1.4 Use of color to tell the story in the film

Each color has its own unique emotional expression. The meaning of each color in the film is different. When the audience is watching, it affects the emotions of the audience and helps the film to convey the theme.

Color helps the film convey the theme, shape the characters, and show the journey of demonstrating the character. Color can also be used to express the protagonist’s thought and growth process at different stages.

Color also helps the film perceive the audience. Film artists can make full use of color contrast, hierarchy, harmony, conflict, tone, and other changes, causing the audience to reflect the emotions, different colors can often bring the audience different perceptions. Zhang Yimou’s film “The Road Home” (1999) (Figure 3.18) did the same.

In this film, the memories are colored, indicating that the love between her parents is beautiful, while the reality is black and white, which is used to express the death of the father, the sadness of the mother, and the cruelty of reality.



Figure 3.18 “The Road Home” (1999)

With the advancement of technology, color plays a more and more important role in the film. The film picture shows its unique charm with its flowing color. Color is an indispensable part of the visual element, and its status in the film cannot be shaken. Whether it is black and white or color, the creation of any film is inseparable from color.

Nowadays, the film has higher requirements for color. In addition to pursuing the authenticity of the film, it also has a unique ideographic function. Zhang Yimou is a person who used the unique aesthetics of color in China earlier. He is good at using the color with Chinese characteristics as the keynote of the film. He is especially good at using the red and yellow colors of Chinese folk traditional aesthetic psychology to render a strong traditional culture.

Zhang Yimou's use of color in the film "Red Sorghum" has made Chinese films go international. In his film "Hero", "Curse of the Golden Flower" and "House of Flying Daggers", the color is applied to the extreme. In his film, the color has a profound connotation. It can be said that Zhang Yimou's film road is the color road, which is to express the language of national culture with color and to show the world a unique Chinese film. The colorful pictures make people feel the connotation of the film more deeply.

3.2 Film composition and use of light

The composition of the painting determines the success or failure of a painting. A movie consists of tens of millions of pictures. Each frame of the screen is the basic elements of film language. The composition is an important element of film production. Zhang Yimou is a photographic origin and attaches great importance to composition.

He is not only good at using appropriate colors to make the audience feel psychological stimulation and visual shock but also good at using the composition vocabulary to achieve the metaphor and symbolic effect that he pursues. The diversified composition style and expression of rich beauty have become an important symbol of his film. In the following, I will analyze the diversified styles of the film “Shadow” (2018) (Figure 3.19).



Figure 3.19 “Shadow” (2018)

Movie tone - light and dark contrast of light (brightness contrast), includes high-definition, dark tone, gray tone (black and white tone only, color picture tone and color cannot be divided). As we all know, there are colored movies, also black and white. These various film tone and color performances are not only the grasp of the film on the technical level but also a potential expression of the director’s psychology and its style.

3.2.1 Composition art and scene scheduling

What is composition? The simple description is to reflect the various states of the person, what kind of objects to match, what kind of scenery to arrange, and what position each person, object, and scene are in the lens picture?

In “Shadow”, Zhang Yimou is particularly sensitive to composition. Take a few scenes as examples, the first one is the bedroom, and the few scenes in the bedroom are mostly around the male lead and the heroine. The use of the always-lit candle next to the actor is to remind the audience of the torture of the male lead.

Zhang Yimou put a large number of screens in the bedroom, making the space smaller and more complicated, and repeatedly shoots through the screen, is like being hindered, suggesting the dilemma and restraint of the two people’s inner feelings. It has also been used in conjunction with the lights to reflect the shadows on the screen. It is a kind of beauty and a reflection on “Shadow” (Figure 3.20).





Figure 3.20 “Shadow” (2018)

3.2.2 Performance of color and composition

By using the same colors, some people make them appear to be messy, and some people take a high sense of their high quality, which is largely dependent on color distribution. Therefore, the color is not good or bad, and the effect mainly depends on the composition. Especially the simple color of black and white has a strong “dependence” of composition.



Figure 3.21 “Shadow” (2018)

For instance, this picture of the male protagonist (Figure 3.21), in the white bamboo raft is particularly conspicuous in the entire gray-black environment. No doubt, it is the visual focus of this scene. However, this is not just because of the color; the diagonal composition and the guiding lines formed by the eyes and the bamboo raft play a great role in it so that our attention is concentrated on the bamboo raft.



Figure 3.22 “Shadow” (2018)

In Figure 3.22, there is also this shot of the actor with the knife, although the background on the right side of the picture is more eye-catching gray, obviously, our attention is not there, but in the big knife in the hands of Yang Ping. He looked at the line of sight in front, and the front of the big knife pointed in the hand, is the two guiding lines that will meet, so we will follow these two directions, and the white blade will attract our attention in the process.



Figure 3.23 “Shadow” (2018)

In fact, there is another point in the composition in the lens, that is, the change of color and the balance of the picture (Figure 3.23). The actor with the knife is getting darker from top to bottom, and he is almost pure black when the lens reaches the foot. He looks more powerful, while the background of the picture changes from grayish-white on the right side to dark gray on the left side and occupies a large area of the pavilion, which balances the “weight sense” of the entire picture. This also implies that he is facing an opponent that is at least evenly matched.

In the interpretation of Zhang Yimou's films, each of his film has surprising innovations in the composition of the picture. Appreciating and analyzing such films can also be considered as a source of film study.

3.2.3 Light centered on "People"

"Shadow" has also faded away. Most of the time, black and white ink is passed throughout. The story and image style of "Shadow" went straight to the point from the beginning. The audience's long-standing cognition of Zhang Yimou's film is the visual impact of his passionate and inseparable film. He used to apply rich and intense color block collisions to express the plot conflict and character. However, from the first lens, "Shadow" declined this intrinsic impression. The picture is close to black and white (Figure 3.24). The black and white clothing of the character is matched with the main color theme of the film so that the light of the picture keeps the same visual qualities. It always looks like the focus. Although it seems to be watching a black and white film, the face of the character has a distinct color of light, and the more it returns to the background, the more colorless it appears. In the process of watching the film, this high contrast black and white style, and prominent character make it unlike the ancient Chinese movie, but like the American modern movies such as "Sin City" and "300

Warriors". Just Zhang Yimou's "Shadow" is still a typical Chinese background, characters, and expression.

Zhang Yimou used this kind of red-free and green-free low-temperature lighting screen to stubbornly overthrow the habit of adding color to his theme in the past. It seems to tell this new story with a new lighting vision system. Zhang Yimou's categorical abandonment of his past style in this film can be seen by the audience at a glance, which also extends Zhang Yimou's long-term characteristics of resolute and intuitive expression of his image.







Figure 3.24 "Shadow" (2018)

The pursuit of light in “Shadow” has reached the highest level in his history. Film director Zhang Yimou’s requirements for film lighting are very clear and strict. He requires that the most critical point of each picture must be done. For instance, in “Under the Hawthorn Tree” (2010) (Figure 3.25), the persimmon represents a special meaning, so that its light and shadow must be right and perfect. In “The Flowers of War” (2012) (Figure 3.26), the color and reflection of the church glass must be accurate. However, this time in the “Shadow” he simplified everything and used mainly black and white ash. The lighting is also not perfect, but this time, I think it is the most complete.



Figure 3.25 “Under the Hawthorn Tree” (2010)



Figure 3.26 “The Flowers of War” (2012)

3.3 Visual art in Zhang Yimou’s films

Zhang Yimou has been seeking innovation and change in the past few decades, pursuing the value of the film by using different color languages to form unique aesthetic concepts and Chinese-style innovations in various types of films. In these decades, he presented a brand-new aesthetic world in his own way. Here I take his recent movie "Shadow" as an example. “Shadow” tells the story of a King’s substitute struggling in search of freedom. The scene art design of the film is inspired by traditional Chinese ink paintings, extracting the layout features and colors, and

constructing the aesthetic world of the film in the freehand and hazy artistic conception. Starting from the artistic techniques of film composition, in this chapter, I analyzed the images from Zhang Yimou's movies from the visual, auditory, tactile and other sensory perspectives, and tried to find the color language that was reflected in the dynamic images in Zhang Yimou's movies, and also did some meaningful aesthetic analysis and exploration.

3.3.1 The aesthetic meaning of color language

Color language is an important factor in determining the emotional tone in the field of film. This language is different from the intuitive meaning of lines and actions, it achieves another level of indirect narrative and lyrical function through unique cultural connotation and psychological emotion. It requires a second push of more plots and the visual impact of light and shadow to express a unique meaning. The director uses different colors to show different emotional expressions. For example, red can not only present passionate emotions and vigorous life but also imply blood and violence. The tendency of red in traditional Chinese culture gives red special emotional meaning and history Connotation. Zhang Yimou likes to use red. In "Red Sorghum" (1987), he uses a lot of the basic color of red. The newly-married female actress who suffers from

the unfortunate widowhood does not give up and constantly struggles with fate, being accompanied by a large area of red in the red sorghum field, which shows a positive and vigorous vitality, festive auspiciousness, resistance to spirit, passion, bloody cruelty; the red cloth and red lantern in the “Raise the Red Lantern” (2008) represent lust; In “Hero” (2002), the actor’s red clothes and the red light-filled with the lens seem to tell the hatred in his heart, releasing a more powerful wild tension.

Red is the interweaving of lust and blood. In “Yellow Earth” (1985), Zhang Yimou, as a photographer, expresses the bondage of the feudal land civilization to the people on yellow earth using yellow color. In “Curse of the Golden Flower” (2006), the Golden Armor of the King and the Golden Armor of the Prince’s Resistance represents the symbol of imperial power. Blue implies simplicity. In “Hero”, the knights endowed blue justice. The heroine in the green bamboo forest in “House of Flying Daggers” (2004) represents resistance to orthodoxy. The black and white and gray color schemes in “Shadow” (2018) depict the Chinese splash ink scroll. In these highly symbolic images, it interprets the traditional Chinese “Yin-Yang” aesthetics and reflects Oriental aesthetics.

3.3.2 White and black in “Shadow”

The story of “Shadow” is simple and smooth, but it is full of the depression of the black tragedy. This depression not only comes from the family and hatred in the story but also from the black and white that fills the entire movie. This time Zhang Yimou boldly abandoned the previously highly saturated red and purple colors and used more condensed black and white that more embodies the Chinese style. In physics, black and white are not part of the color in nature, but the extreme property changes of color are reflected to optical signals on the retina that do not exist in the visual range. These color mixtures that do not belong to colors will cause greater depression and unnaturalness in people's psychology. At all times and in all lands, the black and white mixed objects will add a unique aesthetic sense. “Shadow” uses a lot of black, gray, and white colors that cannot be regarded as colors, therefore forming a psychedelic color on the entire screen. Regardless of the setting or character shape, even the location and the environment, the colors with extremely low saturation or even colorlessness are used. Even the blood-splattered during the battle between the two armies is so turbid, highlighting the primary colors of black and white. Black is not only reflected in the character's clothing, but a large number of props also use the same black and white set, especially the non-black props in the daily vision have also deliberately changed colors.

The large-scale application of black, white, and gray has created a beauty that belongs only to this film. This beauty is unreal, and chaos is not natural. Just like the traditional Chinese ink painting style, Zhang Yimou used this black and white emphasis to construct a story of a shadow avatar. A line in the movie is the best interpretation: “True and false, false and real, everything is an illusion.” The black and white, light, and shadow more reflect the truth and reality of Chinese ink painting. The characteristics of black and white bring a unique Chinese ink painting style, while the other colors in the film have also been obviously processed. Whether it is light or saturation, other colors including blood, skin, cloth, etc. will form with black and white. The contrast is even more black and pale.

3.3.3 Ink painting movie

Zhang Yimou’s films usually use the method of transforming Chinese traditional culture into unique aesthetic elements in the film to achieve his breakthrough in the narrative method of traditional films. The film “Shadow” completes the director’s novel aesthetic concept in terms of color and layout by using the characteristics of traditional Chinese ink painting. The director uses different color discourses to tell the story, regards color as an important part of the language of the film, and skillfully uses the

change of color to communicate with the audience, thus making them indulge. In “Shadow”, he chose black and white that is very rich in ink painting, showing a layered sense of similar hue in color and artistic conception and bringing the audience a blurred, unreal, and flexible aesthetic world.

In traditional Chinese ink painting, “Ink is color” refers to the change of the shade of ink is the change of color. The density of “dark ink and light ink” in ink painting is an important factor to achieve “The charm of ink”. The director uses colors purposefully and gives them a certain degree of symbolism. In “Shadow”, Zhang Yimou integrated the ink painting into the art design of the character's clothing, avoiding the colors with high saturation and high brightness. He chose the adjacent hue colors mainly based on black and white gray and then presented on the costumes of the characters with the rendering of ink painting. At the same time, he uses color as a narrative language to explain the character and emotional changes of the characters. The two characters, one black and one white, form a contrast in color. The relationship between the two characters has deeply penetrated the audience, and it is a metaphor for the right and wrong behind the black and white opposition. On the level of clothing color, it gives the film a unique lens appeal and shock. On Zhang Yimou’s visual experiment road, the colors in “Shadow” express the transcendence of the past. Different from the elaborate

design of the team in the past, the simplest black, white, and gray in the colors are used. This may be a true return of the director on his own path of artistic exploration. Drawing on traditional Chinese ink paintings is a nationalized creative path to return to the original. In the film creation, Zhang Yimou uses the layout in traditional ink painting, a way of highlighting the characters in a simplistic way of the overall space environment, in order to create a composition layout, in which the virtual and the reality are mixed. The purpose is to build the lens language with a simple layout of the movie scene. In “Shadow”, Zhang Yimou treated the scene lightly, taking the plot development as the center of the film. In the fighting scene, he used the “Yin-Yang” pictures as the main background. The picture elements are single, and there is only rain. In another fighting scene, it was still rainy, but the screen was switched quickly. The “Yin-Yang” pictures of bamboos at the battle site between the two were used as the background. The mountains and rivers outside the background were treated with the details of the ink painting method. Thus, the depth of the picture is strengthened to further create a mystery of an unknown ending. In this way, the focus of the audience can be focused on the fate of the characters and the trend of the plot, in order to strengthen the sense of rhythm in the storytelling of the film. In addition, this method of

rendering the black and white color tone of the film with the skillful rendering of ink painting creates a hazy mood and gives the audience a unique visual effect.

“Shadow” is exactly following the aesthetics of “The Art of Silence and Zen”. Zhang Yimou abandons the color tone of the previous films and uses high-level black and white color tone to integrate Chinese style landscape paintings into a traditional culture. The aesthetics of the ink painting style does not seem monotonous and tasteless. On the contrary, the whole film is full of charm. These Chinese art and cultural symbols, such as Chinese ink painting scrolls, calligraphy, tai chi pictures, knives, umbrellas, landscapes, palaces, costume renderings, are reflected in the film. The Chinese ink painting of the entire film is a real aesthetic representative of the Chinese people. It is not the colorful colors of the Western style of painting. The black and white colors affect the audience's emotions. Like a traditional Chinese ink scroll, the scene of the ink painting reappears slowly, and the Chinese style visual expression tells the Chinese story.

Synchronic Connections between Painting and Cinema

How to use paintings in the film? A case study of “The Old Man and the Sea”

Cinematic paintings (referring to films that display the act of paintings being made) and painted cinemas (wherein the artist applies paint directly onto the celluloid to explore alternative material support for painting), which occur between; provide points of reference for rethinking the moving images in the more expansive sensorial capacity (Zinman, 2014). Like an idea or a material affordance of the cinema, time is a key instigator in developing intermediary artworks designed to inspire and expand the possibilities of painting. In turn, painted cinemas and cinematic paintings also present myriad possibilities for thinking about cinema as a film without photography, a film that reveals painting as a process while utilizing that as its imagistic wellspring. In this chapter, I will study the several aspects of both painting and cinema, such as color, concept, harmony in art, contrast and symbolism, and thereafter assess synchronic

connections between painting and cinema through the development of technical means that contribute to the genesis of new forms in optical creation and expression.

4.1 Inter-image: film and painting

One of the themes of contemporary film research is undoubtedly the reflection of visual art. Strictly speaking, this issue is not novel. It was the subject of debates by many artists and theorists as early as the mid-1910s to the 1930s. Here I will not delve into the inspiration of the collage of modern art on the film montage. Besides, the following are all famous ideas, including the “making cinema the seventh art” proposed by Ricciotto Canudo, the comprehensive art of SM Eisenstein, the timeliness of Elie Faure, the original flaw film art of Rudolf Arnheim and the film style and media theory of Erwin Panofsky sponsored by the New York Museum of Modern Art (Paolo, 2019).

The research momentum of the film and visual art (or graphic art) began to weaken after World War II. During this period, André Bazin still used painting to extract classic articles about frame and time. One of the important keys to the resurgence of strong relationships is the emergence of the art world in the 1960s, especially the “Expanded Cinema”.

Since the late 1970s and 1980s, in addition to the emergence of new historicist innovation pioneers in the European and American film research circles, some people have restarted the writing path of film and visual art (even further development of photography, video and video installations). For instance, the high groundbreaking works of Dudley Andrew, Pascal Bonitzer, Raymond Bellour, and Jacques Aumont are considered as one of the masterpieces of this visual turn.



Figure 4.1 Tableaux vivants (1900)

If we want to examine the complex relationship between film and visual art, I will use the following discussion to “in-betweenness” images to pinpoint the problem or will

start with film and painting. Since the end of the 19th century, the relationship between film and painting has been a traditional theme of practice and research. More precisely, this actually involves film as a serious proposition of art. In the early film creations, Thomas Alva Edison, Georges Méliès and Jean Epstein of the Impressionist film have revealed the reality and imagination, the specific dimension between art and life through the painting relationship between the painter and the model. The American genius inventor's "An artist's dream" (1900) and "The artist's dilemma" (1900), and "Me's Le portraitmystérieux" (1899) and "Les Cartes vivantes" (1905) are these examples. Lynda Nead's monograph "The Haunted Gallery: Painting, Photography, Film c." (1900), combined with new historiography and media archaeology methods to examine and analyze the significance of "Tableaux vivants" (Figure 4.1) in these works that highlight special effects (Lynda, 2007).

The condensation of painting and the sense of movement of the film are intertwined. In addition to the fun and imagination of the painter's creativity and imagination, it reveals the transposition and illusion of the two different media. Of course, anyone familiar with some classical myths will immediately find that this has an intertextual connection with the Pygmalion mythology depicted in the Roman poet Ovid's "Metamorphoses": Pygmalion is a sculptor who is based on his ideal female

image. He created a statue and fell in love with his own work and named her “Galatea”. The ending of the myth is: Venus gives the sculpture a real-life and helps complete the love story of the sculptor and his perfect goddess. In Epstein’s masterpiece “La Chute de La Maison Usher” (1928), the allusion to “Metamorphosis” is counterproductive. The film adapted from Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Oval Portrait” (1842), especially focus on the painter’s depiction of his wife on the canvas, namely the mysterious and bizarre relationship of his wife: the more vivid the brush paints the heroine. In the same way, the wife, in reality, looks weaker. When the painter completes the portrait, his wife is dead.

All the above-mentioned films are full of real and illusory stories, which are especially revealed through the relationship between the painter and the model, the canvas and the sketching scene. However, the most attractive place, in my opinion, is undoubtedly how the image power of a certain interface produces different meanings between the picture frame and the scene frame. In the frame of the initial film, the lens composition is like the “tableau-plan” or “tableau effect” that movie historians call it: a single lens is equivalent to a field lens, and the entire content of the lens is like a painting, presenting the whole story. And Jean Epstein’s special in “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1930) (Figure 4.2) is undoubtedly the moment when the artist faces

the lens creation. Different from the general creative process of capturing the painter on the canvas through an objective position, Epstein directly regards the lens as a canvas: on the one hand, the male protagonist is painting the camera, and on the other hand, as an audience, we seem to stare at the painter's creation and the brush that is waving up and down with a subjective lens. The canvas and the lens, the painter and the audience face the face; the boundaries between the picture frame and the lens frame disappear, and a certain time-oriented film portrait namely Epstein's "photogénie" seems to be born.







Figure 4.2 “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1930)

Painting works and film works, paintings and films have a variety of images and meanings. Oscar Wilde’s “The Picture of Dorian Gray” (1945) (Figure 4.3) has been long-lasting.

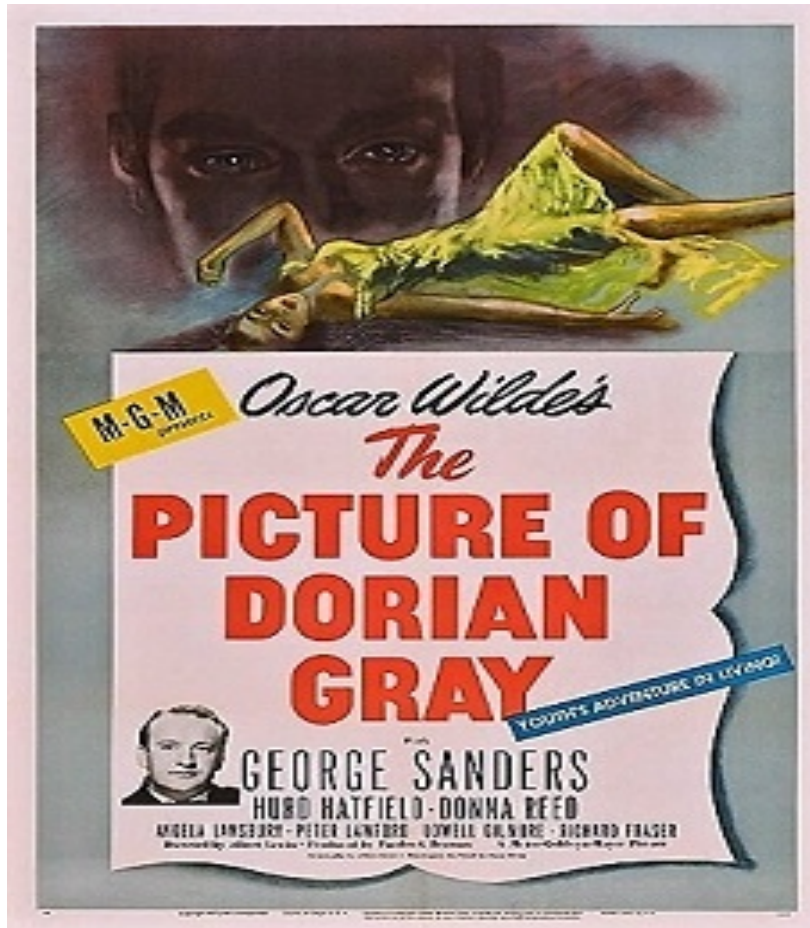


Figure 4.3 “The Picture of Dorian Gray” (1945)

Albert Lewin’s eponymous classical film, citing Diego Velázquez’s masterpiece as a composition, highlights the painter and the painting watcher. The film also uses the black and white and color interchange [e.g. Ivan Groznyy’s “Ivan the Terrible” (1944, 1958)] to show the difference between the inner and outer body of the protagonist. The double-sided metaphor of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is obvious. In the “New Wave” period, Jean-Luc Godard re-developed Emile Zola’s depiction of women and the

allusion of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Oval Portrait" in the "Vivre Sa Vie" (1962), through the heroine standing in front of the window framed her unfortunate fate, and Gundam's voice-over commented on the female's life of Paris in the post-war capitalism, shaping the picture of the film. In the late 1970s, the Chilean director Raoul Ruiz, who was in exile in Paris, restarted the deployment of live-action performances in "L'Hypothèse Du Tableau Vole" (1978) (Figure 4.4). It's a movie with less movement, and it's also a special text that uses the lens to analyze the details of the painting.





Figure 4.4 “L’Hypothèse Du Tableau Vole” (1978)

A few years later, Jean-Luc Godard’s “Passion” (1982) (Figure 4.5) metaphors the creative spirit and methods of restoring the unique perspective of the silent film director Eisenstein that has lost in the film, through the practice of unable to reconstruct the special light source in multiple classical paintings, such as Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix’s “L’Entrée des Croisés dans Constantinople” (1840), Rembrandt

Harmenszoon van Rijn's "De Nachtwacht" (1642), Francisco Goya's "Los Fusilamientos del tres de mayo" (1814) and "La Maja Desnuda" (1797-1800), etc. "Passion" is also the foundation stone for his subsequent conception of "Histoire(s) du Cinema" (1989-1999).





Figure 4.5 “Passion” (1982)

4.2 Motion perception in movies and paintings

Hochberg and Brooks put forward an argument in “Movies in the Mind’s Eye” (1996) whether the apparent movement of the movie should be considered as the psychological process according to cognitive theory and Gestalt psychology. This argument is to reconfigure traditional physiological models, making motion an ocular physiology effect. They proposed that instead of adopting this model, the movement we see when watching a movie is more than just an illusion of movement. It feels as real as other visual movements/motions. The difference between one motion and another is that

it is independent of the empirical state of observation, not our subjective perception. Their conceptual changes to “motion painting” have had a great impact on our understanding of the painting motion. The “painting motion” developed during the Modernist period of Cubism has influenced the old master paintings. The theory of Hockberg and Brooke about the cognitive basis of film motion can be applied to any form of virtual movement. This is the reason why we can see the “painting motion”, which represents the connection between painting motion and film and therefore is important for understanding “avant-garde” movies.

It is well known that continuous motion is captured by images that are continuously displayed in the film. These displacements are generally small for most of the events and are within range of the low-level sensory receptors of the visual system; they have the same response to the visual displacement on the screen and also to the difference provided from one to the next moment by the smooth physical motion (Hochberg and Brooks, 1996).

Unlike motion present in the world, the techniques of painting motion and motion of films are the result of human perception. The motion that exists must be within our perception. Based on the “likelihood principle”, the motions that we see result from a comparison between direct experience and prior knowledge. In both cases, we can see

motion because we understand what we see as a real experience and continuous motion. Our perception of virtual motions comes from encounters with reality; therefore, Hochberg and Brooks believe that it is real in terms of perception. The motion that we see exists in the same way compared to any other visible motion. The commonality between painting motion and movie motion is necessary for this theory to be logically consistent.

As a technical phenomenon, painting motion requires some justification. The image of the painting has some possibilities that photography does not have. It is well known that the photograph is static, which was demonstrated in Eadweard Muybridge's photographic motion studies. The photograph isolates motion into a series of still images where we can see the figure's component adjustments. Each person demonstrates the motion's increments in units. These pictures "capture" the imaged figure, presenting a single moment of the subject in motion. However, the motion does not exist, and its form may be an action that has not yet occurred. In general, they showed us the clue of the motion. When it displayed swiftly in the appropriate sequence, the motion becomes obvious in preference to potential. The relation between movie's motion and the "likelihood principle" is quite obvious: the movement created through displaying a sequence of photographs fully mimic our normal world experience so that

we interpret it in the same way as the usual experience. This is the “photographic motion”.

In the interpretation of the motions in both paintings and movies, the possibility of cognitive connections also suggests the possibility of using a mixture of these two art forms. One of the potentials is the flashing shutter, which illuminates and creates motion in a completely still image. In fact, this essentially puts the content of the movies on the “screen”. This dynamic painting is the logical potential of this conceptualization.

4.3 “The Old Man and the Sea” – Paint-on-glass animated film

Oil painting is a traditional major of art. In today’s fast-paced society, how to revitalize this ancient discipline is a topic worth exploring. Through combining oil painting and animation with modern technical means, it objectively promoted the diversified development of art forms, the perfection of oil painting and animation, and naturally produced a harmonious duo of oil painting and animation language (Materna, 2006). It not only makes people understand painting, but also brings revolutionary breakthroughs in oil painting technology in high-tech form, and also makes good inspiration for animation expressions.

As early as the Renaissance, the standard of oil painting realism established has become a tool for recording social status, customs, and personal documentary. Even for photography and film that will appear in the future, it is necessary to learn its composition, form, color, subject and content. Modern oil painters use different media and tools to convey their own ideas.

Since the 20th century, being influenced by the form of futurism, the artists pursued and called all artistic means to express the things and their forms, even people in motion. From their perspective, the mission of artists is not to describe the static and non-animated surface, but to express the feeling of eternal movement. In the past, due to technical limitations, the expression was single, but now it has developed into many independent visual expressions.

In the history of Western art, various historical and novel themes have always been favored by many oil painting artists. The oil paintings are carefully depicted, with romantic colors and a sentimental storyline style. Since the Renaissance, oil painting artists have begun to pursue realism to achieve a three-dimensional and vivid effect. In 1999, Aleksandr Petrov, a Russian Postwar and Contemporary painter, overcame technology challenges and painted Hemingway's classic literature with the oil painting based on his ingenuity and amazing perseverance. The masterpiece has been put on the

screen, becoming a classic animated film with super shock and plot twists and turns. The well-known animator of the world is not only skilled in oil painting but also uses oil painting methods and ingenious animation techniques in film production.

“The Old Man and the Sea” is one of Ernest Hemingway’s most famous novels. It tells the story of an old man fighting the sea. The protagonist San Diego is an old fisherman who squaws at sea and captures a big fish, but it was eaten by a shark on his way back. In such a story how to express the strong vitality and willpower of the elderly person, the battle scene with the sea and sharks, and the profound meaning of life and the value embodied in the struggle of people. No matter what kind of traditional artistic expression, there is not like the oil painting cartoon “The Old Man and the Sea” (1999) (Figure 4.6) will bring people a more intuitive feeling.











Figure 4.6 Aleksandr Petrov “The Old Man and the Sea” (1999)

Aleksandr Petrov said: “I have been using oil paint to make cartoons for nearly fifteen years. I am used to doing this. I feel that movies can create new visual effects together with the art of painting”. During the production of the oil painting for “The Old Man and the Sea”, the film uses oil painting and finger-painting on the glass to make the material characteristics of oil painting and glass vivid. The transparent and bright texture of oil painting and glass makes people shine and stunned. Alexandre also said that it is extraordinarily difficult to concentrate Hemingway’s work on a 22-minute animated film. He spent two and a half years of long and arduous creative life. We know that according to the 24 frames per second, it is 31,680 small oil paintings. Although the painting of a 10-inch screen doesn't look big, the huge amount and the story itself make it incredible. Moreover, it also displays the visual impact of the strong oil painting style.

This creation is unique to Aleksandr Petrov. His painting method is unique to him. The hand is a pen, the glass is a canvas, and he is stained with oil on the glass plate with his fingertips. The surface is animated. This makes painting easier and more flexible, causing full use of the characteristics of the materials and the fingers, improving efficiency and speed of drawing. And also, he could paint what is desired. The color of

the oil is easy to modify on the glass, and the finger becomes the most direct way to communicate between the mind and the painting and also a shortcut.

Aleksandr Petrov was using different layers of glass to make the same shot. When using the early animation in the celluloid, he drew the characters on the upper layer of glass and made a background on another layer of glass underneath. After the light was filmed through the glass, he then adjusted the background of the wet paint on the glass to shoot the next character. Through the transparency and oil color of the glass, he had to complete a picture before the oil was dried. His skill in oil painting and the speed of his movements are amazing. And he repeated the process of 29,000 times in order to achieve 100% accuracy. "The Old Man and the Sea" was finally completed with a 70 mm large-size film, which is different from the traditional 35 mm film for painting. Perseverance is extremely cruel and testable, and even a trivial mistake in the screen through the screen would be exaggerated to an astonishing degree. Usually animated on 35 mm film, the picture is 9 to 12 inches, and this time with 70 mm film, the picture will be 5 to 7 times larger than the 35 mm picture. Every doubling of the picture has a huge impact on the difficulty of painting. Aleksandr Petrov said: "This is a completely new attempt for me. When I started making this film, I didn't think there would be any new problems, just more than ever. The picture was much larger, but when I saw the

picture on the screen, I was shocked. The pictures that were enlarged were like giant oil paintings.”

This 20-minute animation is full of oil paintings from the beginning to the end. Each frame can be independently a beautiful oil painting with a very strong oil painting performance. In the performance level of the blue sea and sky blending the sea, the meticulously processed animation scenes are very oily and fascinating with well-defined color transitions and heavy ink renderings, all accurately conveying the ruthlessness of the sea and the spirit of loneliness and vitality of the old man. In 1999, the release of “The Old Man and the Sea” immediately caused great repercussions. The audience in Montreal and Paris broke through 100,000 times and won the 72nd Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film.

How to capture the beauty in a flash and release the static beauty continuously in the dynamic process? More importantly, the display of paintings breaks through the shackles of traditional ideas. Because the artists turn to become animators, most of them have higher artistic accomplishment and can create a film with a higher artistic level through modern technical means. Therefore, they objectively promote the diversified development of art forms, improve the types of animation performance, and enrich the means of creation.

In “The Old Man and the Sea”, the performance of the combination of oil painting with animation technology is very strong. The work is full of blue stimulating tension, without any reduction in the expression tension and feeling of oil painting color. It also provides the right choice for how to combine with current high-tech technology. This is the unique artistic value of oil painting technology in the field of animation design. The artist’s superb oil painting realistic skills, the expression, and shape of the characters are deeply portrayed, and the rich expression of the characters’ expressions and even the inner world are full of moving power. The aesthetic value and eternal vitality of the film make the static characters in the oil painting get out of the book traveling through time and space and show them in front of the audiences of all eras, bringing a huge visual impact.

When a painting can make people see and hear the story inside, the development of the story is with the development of the scroll. How great is that? When you see the old man fighting the shark, the seagull swooping over the squid and the sea is full of magnificent pictures. Even if there is no music, you can feel the anger of the old man and the surge of the waves. The whole film is epic. It is also classic art. This is where the oil paintings give it the charm. The rich artistic creation experience and outstanding performance skills of Aleksandr Petrov have brought the painting to a new horizon and a

new logo of the milestone. He produced a duo harmony of oil painting and animated language by combining oil painting with the present era, not only making people understand painting, but also bringing revolutionary breakthroughs in oil painting technology in high-tech form. It also inspires animation expressions.

Exploration of Narrative Painting

Taking my creation as an example

Narrative painting is a very important narrative carrier and an important part of Chinese traditional painting. Narrative painting is a narrative carrier before the words are produced. After the text is produced, its function has not diminished. Instead, with the advantages of narrative, it can fully exert the function of narrative. Narrative paintings have images and texts in parallel, and some make the narrative in painting clearer. I personally prefer narrative painting because it contains both the part of the painting and the part of the literary narrative. As a paint creator, how to properly combine narrative and painting and express yourself in a new way of painting is a subject of my research.

Creation is something that every painting creator must experience. Thinking from content to form is an inevitable process in my creation. As a Ph.D. student in

Contemporary Art, I must study how to create and paint in order to draw good work.

The thesis that I wrote is just some of the experiences in my research and the result of research.

My graduation creation also uses narrative painting as a carrier to practice and explore. During the exploration, I discovered the diversity of painting expressions and found different narrative methods. The fluctuations in content and the way of writing are also narratives. On the one hand, the expression of painting uses different languages to express different atmospheres of the scene. I have tried many times in this respect. Narrative painting is a broad subject, but according to my hobbies and choices, I have found a point of view that supports my research. This point of view is the path that I try to explore. I hope that I can establish my own style in this path. At the same time, I also hope that narrative painting can be as popular as literature and movies. Some painters have a strong sense of writing but ignore theory, while scholars generally lack the painting experience. I wrote this article to return to the painting itself to discuss it from the perspective of the painter.

This thesis is recording an exploration process of my graduation creation, which is also equivalent to studying what is narrative painting. During this process, my thoughts

have been changing. There is inevitably some dissatisfaction in the research process and results, but this process is very meaningful to me.

5.1 Narrative painting in concept

Everyone has a different view of narrative painting. Some people think that narrative painting is partial to plot, some people think that narrative painting is partial to literature, and some people think that the composition of narrative painting has a fixed form, some People think that narrative painting is time-sensitive, and some people think that narrative painting is timeless.

American art historian Julia K. Murray believes that “Chinese Narrative Painting” must portray a story, which refers to one or more events occurring in a series of times and lead to a change in the status of a particular character (Murray, 2013).

The famous Chinese painter Wang Xiaoshu mentioned in his book “Research on Painting Creation” that Narrative painting includes historical paintings, genre paintings, comics, illustrations, etc. It is the creation of paintings expressed through plots. The concept of narrative painting creation is mainly to capture the most typical scenes and characters to express a certain plot and story. Of course, more importantly, it reflects the painter’s thoughts and emotions. This is the unique concept of narrative painting and the

ultimate goal of painting creation (Wang, 2014). Han Zhuang believes that narrative painting should contain moral narrative, literary, and custom. Wu Hong believes that traditional narrative painting includes a “lot-type” composition method and an “idol-type” composition method. Japanese scholar Guyuan Hongshen believes that narrative painting must be plot-like. The narration means imposing a structure and giving meaning to a series of events. Seymour Chatman, an American film and literary critic and professor emeritus of rhetoric, believes that the medium of narrative painting cannot convey a sense of time. American esthetician Nelson Goodman believes “If a painting depicts a moment in a story, then its description of this moment does not require time, yet he ignores the time required by the viewer to examine the image” (Murray, 2013).

When I was in University, I majored in Oil Painting, and my master’s degree was in Film and Animation. I think whether it is a static work or a dynamic work, there must be a sense of empathy. A picture is like a fixed lens, there are the long lens, short lens, close shot, medium shot, distant shot, overall tone, and of course narrative.

5.2 Understanding of narrative painting

Narrative painting includes two aspects, one is narrative and the other is painting. Regarding the narrative aspects of narrative painting, it must be literary, not only

focusing on the description of the text, but also on the development of the story and the ideology. The ideology here is not the growth or preaching of the character, but the personal feeling. Regarding the aspect of painting in narrative painting, there must be a picture, including composition form, vision, image, and language, and the picture serves the narrative. When the picture serves the narrative, everything in the picture should be simple, weaken the visual power of the picture, and allow the narrative to “speak”, since the expression is limited. The narrative here, on one hand, it means the narrative on the text; on the other hand, it connects the various images to allow people to think and imagine. When narrative and painting are combined, there are contents and pictures, which form narrative painting. Moreover, the narrative in the narrative painting can be developed in two or more lines at the same time. As long as you find a good form to express it, you can do it. The narrative in the picture is an expression. We should use a part of the picture to express the content. If the narrative content is only used, the painting loses its meaning. The painting must be artistic, as Mr. Wang Shenglie said, “The lack of artistic work, the ideological will not be very strong, because the ideological we understand is not only referring to the social significance of the content of a work, if it only refers to the social significance of the content, then it is better to write a few slogans and publish a declaration.”

Most narrative paintings only care about the narrative and picture of each painting. I think in addition to focusing on the integrity of the story, narrative painting also cares about the overall role of each small painting. The picture itself is still very important. Narrative painting has its own language. Painting narrative stories in picture language is what painters should do. This language is not real, it is distanced from actual life. Picture language and expression go hand in hand with literary description. At the same time, the presentation of words in the picture is also a narrative method. The picture has images, content, and vision. I think such a narrative painting is a good painting. The narrative has to do with my life, including my narrative painting creation, which also comes from my learning life.

5.3 Literal translation techniques and painting techniques used in the creation of traditional Chinese narrative paintings

Literal translation is a method of directly translating texts into images. In the Figure 16 part of “The Painting of Luo Shen Beauty”, the eight images of double wild-geese, dragon, chrysanthemum, pine, moon, snow, sun, and hibiscus are presented beside Luoshen. The expression method adopted by these eight images is the literal

translation. According to the description of the article, the picture draws the required image, and the static picture is full of all storylines.



Figure 5.1 Gu Kaizhi “The Painting of Goddess Luo Rhapsody”

During the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), Chinese painting developed dramatically, both in subject matter and technique. For instance, the famous painter Wu Daozi created vivid images by using static pens and showed the dynamic characters in his works by using skillful lines. This masterpiece is like the movement of the gods in the “Scroll of Eighty-Seven Immortals”, dancing slowly with the string music as if flying out of the picture.



Figure 5.2 “The Scroll of the Eight-seven Immortals”

As one of the outstanding painters in the prosperous Tang Dynasty, Wu Daozi showed his extraordinary painting genius. Since the Tang and Song Dynasties, art critics have esteemed Wu Daozi very much. He has learned and developed the excellent

tradition of Chinese painting since the Han and Jin Dynasties and has brought Chinese painting to a certain level with the method of line modeling.

5.4 The connection between static and dynamic images

Static images and dynamic images have a mutual relationship, and they also have their own characteristics as independent forms of communication. Modern technology makes the motion effect of static images by using the principle of “Persistence of Vision”. In 1824, the concept of “Persistence of Vision” was proposed by British scholar Peter Mark Roget in his research report. As a unique form of artistic expression, animation gradually appeared from the oldest painting murals on cave walls in Spain to the “Thaumatrope” of John Ayrton Paris in 1825. Before this, the still image has passed for more than 40,000 years. From the optical movie screened by Emile Reynold (known as the “Father of Animation”) in Paris on October 28, 1892, to the extensive use of digital modeling technology in “Avatar” in 2009, with the development and deepening of digital media, computer synthesis technology, and contemporary art concepts, animation nowadays is not only an independent art category and film and television expression, but also used more frequently in our daily life, affecting the way that we see, feel and understand the world.

The “Persistence of Vision” makes the static picture move, forming a continuation of time and becoming “The art of time and space”. But unlike drama and film, animation not only includes the “motion” in drama and film but also inherits image in painting (here I do not discuss other modeling methods in the art modeling concept for the time being, including paper cutting, sculpture, etc.), which has brought us a new form of art. Today, the animation can be combined with real shooting, digital media technology, etc. We can even draw an animation film on the computer’s drawing software without a piece of paper. We can also construct any virtual image in the computer’s virtual three-dimensional space.

Along with the development of photography and film ontology research in the early 20th century, the relationship between static images, dynamic images, and animations has been discussed and explained in the “Art and Illusion” by the British art historian Ernst Gombrich and the “Animation” by the British animation expert Chris Webster. They also pointed out that the animated film needs to pay more attention to the painting performance on the screen and the balance between the static and dynamic, compared with the traditional film and television. Nowadays, in the context of the digital media era, contemporary artists are increasingly keen to combine still images and dynamic images.

In 2014, International master artist Bill Viola launched his first solo exhibition “Transformations” in China in 2014. He combined dynamic images and static images by using digital media and animation technology and created amazing ultra-slow-motion video works that fully reflect their creative concept in motion and stillness, therefore bringing audiences a new audio-visual experience that is different from the traditional. Nowadays, animation has become a comprehensive subject. Animation directors need to consider and apply a more diverse audio-visual language in the creative process. Under this situation, it is increasingly important to understand the basic concepts and characteristics of dynamic images and static images.

Under certain circumstances, the meaning of a single static image may be as important as a dynamic image that is composed of a thousand static images. Therefore, although the production methods of static images and dynamic images show the relationship between the mechanical part and the whole, we need to put the image in a specific work of art and analyze its role and effect in the overall environment.

The static images can be traced back to the past and can also be imagined in the future. This kind of time completeness is achieved by the viewer “reappearing” in the mind, and the effect is just like when we watch the famous ancient Greek sculpture “Discobolus” (Figure 2-6). As you can see, both sculptures and static images can play a

role in solidifying time. The ancient Greek artists have fixed time in the critical moment between the past and the future. As a kind of “Eternal Solidification in Space”, the moment when the discus is about to be thrown out, the beautiful and harmonious and complete display of human movement is displayed, and such an instant selection seems to build a bridge between space and time. The viewer can feel the stretch and stretch of time before and after the moment in his mind, and it is also a real sense of time that is not presented on a watch with a fixed scale. The ancient Greeks regarded the power similar to the source of movement as a fundamental existence. In the ancient Greeks’ understanding, movement is the process by which things acquire their essence. Acquiring the essence of movement means stillness. Modern photographers also experienced this kind of static aesthetics in the process of taking photos and expressed them in the photos. The famous French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson clearly mentioned this aesthetic theory in the album entitled “The Decisive Moment” (1952). He also explained the “Decisive Moment” in photography: “Everything that happens in life has a decisive moment. When this moment comes, many factors around it will be arranged into the most meaningful and coordinated geometric form and show the complete appearance of a certain time. This fleeting moment is the decisive moment.”

Motion is one of the most important features of movies. Films and televisions record motion through the appearance of objective objects on film, while animated movies create motion by using images. Due to the difference in creative methods, it is very common to use static images in animated movies. With the flow of music or the free conversion of a static image, sometimes the static image and the dynamic image have the same motion effects, which can not only save creation time but also make the rhythm of the picture in the animated movie more abundant.

As the French film theorist André Bazin said: “Static images are not just static, which let dynamics have value and are relatively independent. Art is to let people retain the functions of the facial features. It is not a simple theory and information.” In the process of animation, we portray and visualize the space through the understanding of the objective world and the development of the storyline. In the creation, each scene is engraved with the creator’s own personality and thinking. Although different directors have different understandings of animation, some prefer subjective expressions, and some like objective presentations, the concept of space needs to be accurate and clear. If the animation scene exists as the background of the character, it cannot be over-emphasized, thus affecting the audience's attention to the character. But when the character exits or the relationship between the scene and the character is very close, the

conception and description of the scene itself need to be more elaborate. The stillness brought by the static image in the animated film can make the scene and characters in the image stand out like a relief so that the audience has time to see more details of the scene and the dynamics of the characters. The message from the current screen will be more clearly transmitted to the viewer. The information brought by the space is obscure relative to the direct expression of the characters. Representing the space as an object with a static image will make the viewer feel more involved.

5.5 The relationship between painting and animation

What liberated the painting was the invention of photography in 1837. The invention of photography solved the entangled relationship between painting and realism. Modern painters (e.g. Picasso) have entrusted the task of pursuing similarity to photography, and paintings that have escaped the shackles of realism have become livelier and freer. Due to the invention of photography, painters began to pay more attention to the subjective expression in their works. The painter begins to pay more attention to the “Subjective Reflection of Objective Reality”, whereas animation is based on the technology of frame-by-frame shooting and frame-by-frame processing, which is closely related to the production of animation according to the principle of

human “Persistence of Vision” The animator makes the image artistic and moving between the frames. As the animator, Norman McLaren emphasized: “Animation is not the art of moving pictures, but the art of actions being drawn. What happens during the transition from frame to frame is actually much more important than what is reflected in each frame.” Therefore, the animation is to deal with those invisible gaps that exist between frames.

“Persistence of Vision” links the images one by one for the overall vision. As long as it involves dynamic images, there will be segmentation either between the lenses or between the pictures. Such a residual consciousness allows us to connect image-to-image meanings.

What needs to be explained here is that even if digital media imaging technology is widely used in Hayao Miyazaki’s “Thousand and Thousand Searches” and Jin Min’s “The Godfather of Tokyo”, as long as human factors are fully expressed between frames, they still belong to animation from the effect of view. Here, the digital media technology is just for the simulation of traditional technology. On the other hand, if digital technology achieves only “natural” or lacks artificial factors, we cannot classify them as animation Just as we would not call “Jurassic Park” an animation, although we all know that dinosaurs are a kind of “doll”. But the difference with the “dolls” in the

animated film is that they imitate nature rather than have a distinctive sense of human participation. The difference between “artificial” and “natural” is sometimes as great as the difference between a comic portrait and a photo of the same person. The animation artists give life to the image symbol that was originally lifeless. They can endow their feelings to things in each frame of the animation and have absolute control over the movement of time and space. This characteristic is the real charm of animation. Whether an animated film is biased towards narrative or non-narrative is not a standard to measure whether it has a sense of animation. The viewing experience that the movie itself brings to the audience is more crucial. Having a sense of animation is more important than being animation conceptually. As Sartre mentioned in “Nausea”:
“Function can’t explain anything, it gives you a general understanding of what is the root of the tree, but not the root of the tree.” There is no absolutely correct definition of anything. The most important thing is to understand the true charm of animation through feeling and thinking. Just like the vivid souls portrayed by artists in portraits and comics, the animators bring those whimsy to every frame and every picture. Animation is not the painting version of the camera, but the dream version of humanity. Recalling static and dynamic images is back to this “absolute control” of the picture. Animation is not only a technology but also magic and a kind of poetry.

The process of creating an animated film includes the combination and reconstruction of still images, dynamic images, music, lenses, and color elements. It is more important for the director to activate the residual consciousness phenomenon of the audience in the gaps between lens and lens, and to enhance the audience's explanation intention for the film. To make good use of a series of complex image combinations, first of all, you have to figure out the single “element” in the combination, followed by using semiotics of Montag in terms of film editing methods. Therefore, it is necessary to use the reasonable display of pause in the animation film and to think about the incoherence of time and space in the picture in the presence of the phenomenon of residual consciousness.

With the continuous development of digital media technology, the gap between various traditional media and art forms is becoming more and more blurred. Although the ubiquitous modern elements make the definition of contemporary art more difficult, I have been focusing on exploring and understanding contemporary art as a unique form of artistic expression. I started through the creative way of residual consciousness and conducted a series of explorations on the connection between static and dynamic images. I hope that through this kind of exploration, I can strengthen my understanding of the characteristics of the ontology of static and dynamic images, open my thinking in

the process of creating works, and explore more abundant artistic language and expression methods. By analyzing residual consciousness in the static image to create a dynamic image method, I specifically discussed how to reasonably understand and use it in the creative process. Finally, I put the theory into practice and applied it to my watercolor works, in order to deepen my understanding of the characteristics of dynamic and static images through a specific practical process.

I study static and dynamic images in order to distinguish specific concepts or their differences as well as to explore the ways by which static and dynamic images are used to spread ideas in the process of artistic creation, the relationship between them and the different roles in the narrative of film and television I hope I can fully understand the meaning of “time flow” and grasp the images and time to convey more messages through this kind of comprehensive application and thinking of static images in the creation of the watercolor works.

5.6 Conclusions

My research mainly focuses on the static and dynamic images as a way and means of disseminating ideas in the process of artistic creation, as well as their connection and difference between each other, in order to fully understand the meaning of “time flow”.

I tried to extract the essence of the description object and give the feeling to each frame in the painting. The static image is instantaneous relative to the moving dynamic image. It cannot visually completely show the motion and movement of the objective object. However, it is more like a “slice of time” that shows a state of stillness. The state is expressed in the animation movie as the pause of time and the static sense of the picture. Images with a sense of static can bring us a clearer image so that it is easier to be recognized and remembered. This characteristic is mainly reflected in three major aspects:

1. The static image is temporal, and this temporality exists in our consciousness and is achieved by the “reappearance” of the viewer in the mind. The effect is just like what we feel when we watch the famous Greek sculpture “Discobolus”. The viewer can feel the stretch of time before and after the moment in his mind. This sense of time does not come from the scale on the clock, but our true inner feeling. In animated films, the reasonable use of the static sense brought by static images can bring the audience back to reality from the illusion of the film world, realizing that “this is a film rather than reality”. After that, the audience will generally have doubts like “Why pause here?” At this moment, the existence of time and the director's intention is immediately highlighted. Although this method will disturb

the normal rhythm of the narrative, more information and details can be sent in the process of pauses, so that the audience thinks about the first half of the film where the pause does not occur and starts anticipating the second half of the pause.

2. The appropriate pause and the use of static images in the animated film can allow the audience to draw away from the constantly flowing picture, which allows the audience to “exit” and reflect. The participation of reflection is an act to enhance the level of emotion and consciousness in the previous viewing. It will allow the audience to relax and stand at a higher angle to understand the relationship between the film and himself.
3. In the future, the reasonable combination of static and dynamic images in the creation of animated movies can increase the enthusiasm of the audience to participate in the film, thus making time, space, and information more colorful. “Motion” is the normal state of animation. No matter how many static images are added to the movie, the movie still must go along the timeline. But whether it is a sudden pause in time or a fixed image moving in the lens, this “strangeness” brought to the audience by this time stun will pull the audience back from the world imagined in their own minds and realize the existence of the animation itself and the author, as if this pause has reminded the audience to participate in

the movie. This visually inconsistent time presentation is only an appearance. In the gap, the phenomenon of “residual consciousness” will allow the audience to link the paused time. This participation comes from the conscious level rather than the visual level. The audience is not only a participant but also the creator himself, watching the frozen space and time and putting together the complete image of the puzzles scattered on the ground. Such an experience from the inside out is also a magical attribute unique to the essence of animation. Through the research of this topic, I have a deeper understanding of the characteristics of dynamic and static images. In the process of practice, my thinking is clearer, and the creative methods have been expanded. In the past creative process, artists often only focused on the visual effect and ignored the essential relationship between form and content. After research and analysis, either the specific control of static and dynamic images or the creation of creative forms have been significantly improved.

In addition, there are also many shortcomings and problems in the process of this research. In the writing of the thesis, the ability of language expression is still lacking, and the words are not precise enough. In the process of practicing creation, the height of consciousness is not high enough, and thinking about problems seems relatively straightforward. However, this research has brought me a lot of experience and a way of

thinking that I never have before. I hope to continue working on it in the future.

I have completed this research work under the careful supervision of Prof. António Olaio. During the writing of the paper, he gave me a lot of creative freedom and thinking space. Not only that, from the selection of the initial research topic to the final completion of the thesis writing, he gave me great inspiration and support so that I can sort out my ideas and complete the thesis.

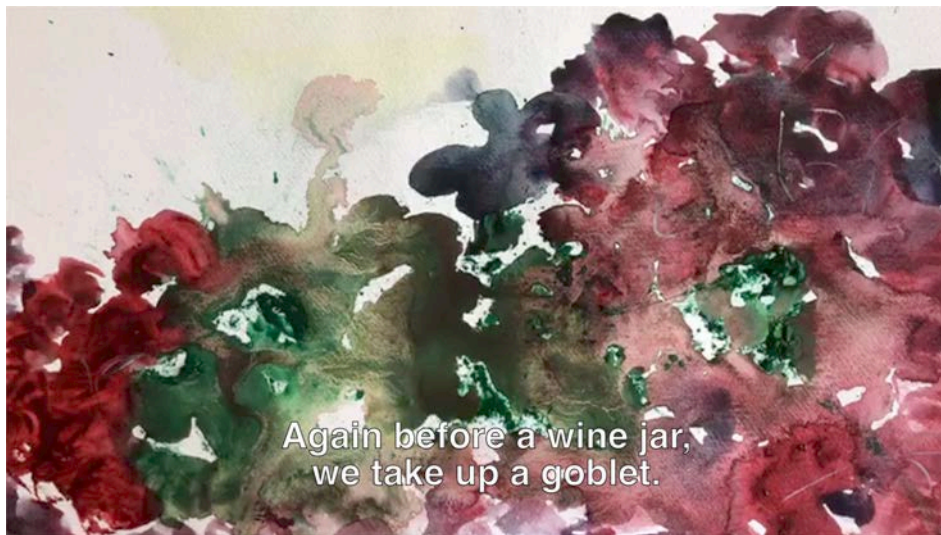
Creation of the Video Hand-Painted Storyboards from Realistic to Abstract styles as Moving Paintings

Taking “Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra” as a scene

According to the process of “Color scripts – sketch setups - a series of watercolors – storyboard scenes and sequences – post-editing – complete”, I devoted myself to 1) optimize the character, background rendering, scene design, and color design by drawing a large number of watercolors, 2) finalize experimental effects of color and then combine meticulous hand-painted storyboard with a digital computer; 3) animate my paintings in the Video “BOTANICAL GARDEN” storyboards (Link: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcwMzI2ODc5Ng==.html) with a Chinese poem called “Peonies at Jixing Temple” and endow them movement, suggesting the movement of the eyes of the viewer through the paintings, exploring the abstract qualities of the details. The poem written by Emperor Yang (born in 569, died in 618,

Sui Dynasty) adds new conceptual possibilities in the space created between the images and the words. Furthermore, I also made a new Video [“STILL MOVIES”](https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcxMTQzMDQ3Ng==.html) (Link: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcxMTQzMDQ3Ng==.html) with the same poem, using some of the new paintings that I made, such as paintings of landscapes, paintings of faraway mountains, clearing your mind from everyday life thoughts, opening your horizons, exploring the cinematic qualities of still images of paintings. No movement only that of the transition from one image to the other, and that of your mind... what already happens in the cinema when you're facing a still image for some time.

Video "BOTANICAL GARDEN"





For whom do they shed their petals and leaves,
for whom do they bloom?



Video "STILL MOVIES"



Springtime radiance, gradually,
gradually where does it go?



Again before a wine jar,
we take up a goblet.



Again before a wine jar,
we take up a goblet.



Again before a wine jar,
we take up a goblet.



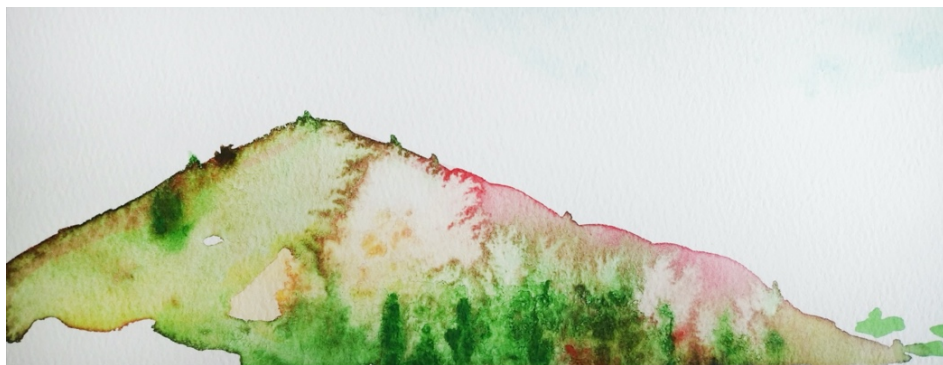
For whom do they shed their petals and leaves,
for whom do they bloom?



Again before a wine jar,
we take up a goblet.



All day we've questioned the flowers,
but the flowers do not speak.



For whom do they shed their petals and leaves,
for whom do they bloom?

6.1 Creation of watercolors exploring abstract qualities of painting inspired by David Hockney's "A Yorkshire Sketchbook"

David Hockney (born in Yorkshire, England in 1937) is considered one of the most influential British artists of the 20th century. He has been fascinated by nature since childhood. This makes his painting works related to the tree, trail, sky, farm and other topics. Hockney uses the innocence of his heart to record the best moments of nature and bring them to the world.

In the 90s, Hockney constantly painted the landscape of his childhood in East Yorkshire and published a book titled "A Yorkshire sketchbook" (Figure 5.1). He gradually felt that watercolor might be the best tool to make his heart and mind together. His watercolor works contain lightly faint color, covered with thin mist, as if in the early morning of the British countryside.

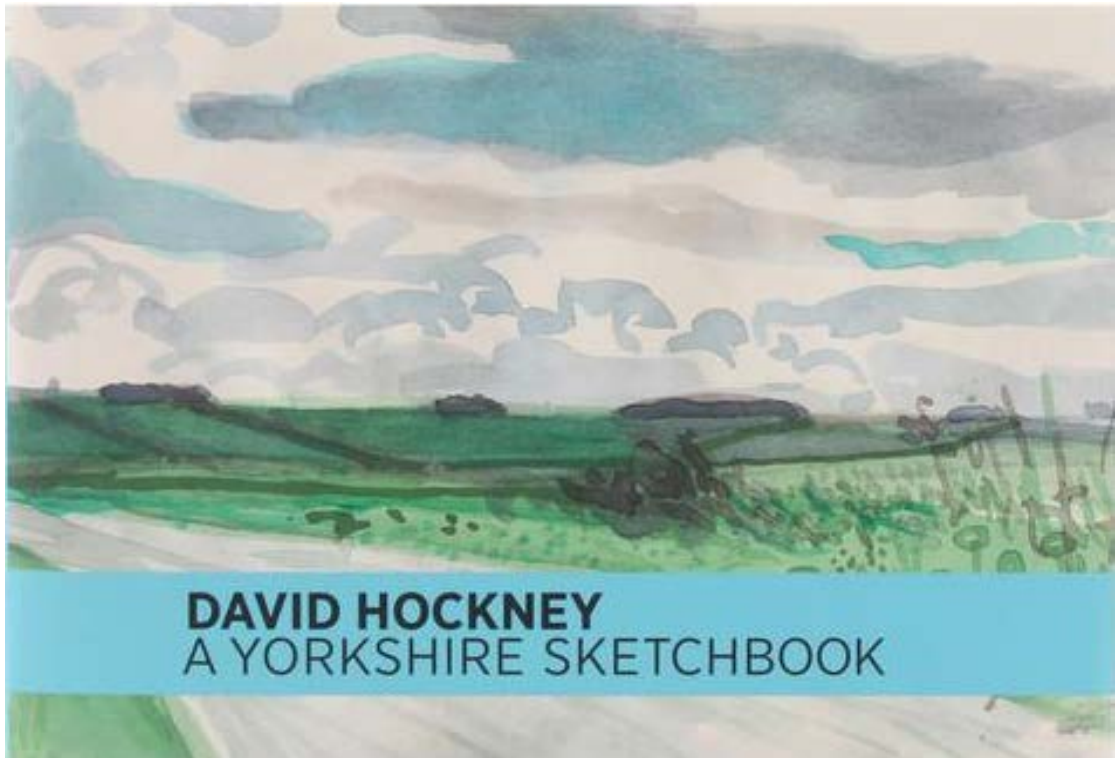






Figure 6.1 David Hockney's "A Yorkshire Sketchbook" (2011)

David Hockney's Yorkshire Sketchbook is made of beautifully simple watercolor sketches. Living in this world, there are already too many established secular rules to obey. But at least in the world of art, we can create rules that belong to our own philosophy or aesthetics or, like David Hockney, to be freely inspired by Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse whenever he wants. We constantly adjust, change, and perfect these rules in art, and finally let the spirit of self get a safe place and create a vigorous and immortal vitality here. And these rules are our understanding of the world and love.

David Hockney said: "All painting, no matter what you are painting, is abstract in that it's got to be organized". Therefore, I got the inspiration from him and thereafter attempted at rendering landscape/scene of "Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra" in this most difficult of mediums (watercolors) in a more abstract sense, which I have never tried before. Please see the watercolor paintings in Section 5.2, which were created for a series of hand-painted storyboards.

6.2 Creation of watercolor paintings of “Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra”

David Hockney used to say “With watercolor, you can’t cover up the marks. There’s the story of the construction of the picture, and then the picture might tell another story as well”. I totally agree with it. Besides, in my research, I chose watercolor to depict the series of scenes from the Botanical Garden also because watercolors are wet colors, colors in the water, which is the most vivid method to draw “nature”. Therefore, I have painted 198 watercolors based on the scene of “Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra” and created storyboards with different combinations of these watercolors, just like editing a film in different ways. At the same time, metaphorically, I’m dealing with the possibility that, looking at any painting, we may always imagine it as part of a scene where could have been something before and something after, as though each painting might be a still image of something that lasted longer and from which we are only allowed to see that painting. In these “storyboards” I deal with the possibility of creating the feeling in the viewer that in between those images and other images might have been.

I know I'm not making a cinema here, but surely; I'm dealing with it.

Here, I'm playing not only with sequences, but also sometimes with the spaces between them and their relative scales. In these combinations of paintings, I called "Storyboards" their cinematic qualities lie also in the way people perceive the paintings in their display.

6.3 Creation of video hand-painted storyboards as moving paintings

I have also created the video hand-painted storyboards (1. Video “BOTANICAL GARDEN” [and 2. Video “STILL MOVIES”](#)) using watercolors of “Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Coimbra”.

[Link 1: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcwMzI2ODc5Ng==.html](https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcwMzI2ODc5Ng==.html)

[Link 2: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcxMTQzMdQ3Ng==.html](https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDcxMTQzMdQ3Ng==.html)

6.4 From static to dynamic: narrative, language, image, and field thinking of paintings

From the static continuous painting experiment, if we want to make a panoramic description, this is very difficult, but we can find some representative scenes and working methods to show the status of diversified symbiosis. With the internationalization of contemporary art, contemporary art has a knowledge spectrum of independent dynamic images. Since 2000, online games, FLASH animation, ink animation, 3D animation, interactive media devices, sound art, theater, bio-art, etc. have undergone great changes. The medium of contemporary art has been greatly expanded, and contemporary art has a theater-like interaction and experience relationship with the scene and space.

Despite this, I chose to use a very niche expression of watercolors to show the state of the botanical garden. I think it has a new significance for the expansion of digital art and new media. Of course, the origin of early Chinese animation has an important thread of thought that has grown from painting. The ink animation film of China in the early 1980s “Havoc in Heaven”, “Prince Nezhas Triumph against Dragon King” and “Where is Mama?” have set off an important wave in the international arena, because of their nationalized and exotic (e.g. the oriental ink language) styles.

Since 1996, video art has risen in China. Since 2000, the popularity and dissemination of Internet information technology have become a popular public art platform, and the new media art is in the ascendant. After 2000, with the popularity of computers, it has undergone great variety.

In the era of artificial intelligence, the global text brought by electronic media replaced the original dominant “mainstream” culture with its multimedia images and vocabulary. The spread of this new culture has penetrated into every corner of the world and caused a deep impression of local culture.

I strive to use a simple method to express what I want directly to the people and to present a complex spiritual world with classical forms of expression. So the

topic of “From painting to animation” is very meaningful to me. Talking about how animation is involved in animation? How does painting go along a new way in the practice of multimedia? How to make deep reflection and a combination of the language of painting and the language of new media? This is a new possibility and direction.

In addition, how to find the difference between contemporary art in image, language, semiotics, and narrative logic is a new topic. I try to go through some typical cases, to find experimental methods, and to understand how these methods are practiced and become a new possibility today, how to analyze from the static image representation language ontology and study the current status and future of dynamic images?

During the creation, I found that no matter what expressions have their own logic and narrative methods, each painting is a moving stage while growing on the side of disappearance and each picture is a show of drama. There is the meaning of “infinite rivers and mountains into the drawing”, which is metaphorically represented by flowers, trees, goldfish, and other images, symbolizing the multiple relationships between them. With regard to metonymy and metaphor in space, this is important rhetoric. Space is a maze, and images are met unexpectedly in the space of

symbolism, and metaphor. The space set in the painting is a process of deconstruction and construction. I want to study the possibilities of image and space, history and reality. Through the multiple relationships of images, space and narrative in painting, I can find similar historical contexts and connections. They have an intrinsic logic and origin in the image method and film.

David Hockney believes that there is another fundamental difference between static pictures and movies, in addition to a dynamic, static difference. You can integrate time into painting, but the movie imposes its time on you. If someone invites you to say, “Go to my house to see the greatest movie in the world”, you might say “Next time” because it takes a lot of time. Painting does not have this problem. In addition, painting is easier to remember in its whole. I think people have more ability to remember static pictures, and these static pictures can go deeper into thought.

Finally, I want to say that “Picture” is everywhere. We can use pictures to think, dream, and understand the environment and others.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

To explore aspects of painting and cinema as well as their relationships, I have devoted myself entirely to the study of cinematic attributes of painting (film paintings), visual aesthetics of cinema (painted films), as well as synchronic connections between painting and cinema. In addition, I have also utilized the formal aspects of watercolors as bases for exploring both narrative and abstract possibilities in the storyboards. The relationships between painting and cinema can be completely appreciated through a comprehensive understanding of the complex characterization of both media.

Both paintings and movies are for people to appreciate. However, the composition, the arrangement of layers, and the use of colors in the paintings provide good references to the movies. However, there are essential differences between paintings and movies. Because the painting itself is already a complete work, it reflects life or story in a static form, while what we see in the movie is continuous moving images/pictures. Here, the picture/image is just an element in the whole movie, and it does not have a complete and independent meaning.

As a Ph.D. student in Contemporary Art, my supervisor has different knowledge reserves, emotional structure, artistic feelings, and expressions. He is also trying to guide me to create a batch of “new” works that challenge my own painting experience.

My work in the creation of watercolors of the Botanical Garden is to present an outside landscape, which is for us to "walk through." I am trying to discover a humanistic spirit that carries the perspective of the botanical garden. I strive to get rid of the production of artistic effects and use a freehand brushwork to expand my intentional space. I have been creating a series of paintings and keep the language of painting to be consistent in its expression. Through the external form, I dedicated myself to describing a tree, a fountain or a scene from the spirit and the inner essence.

My supervisor always suggests that painting language should be opened to be flexible and exploring the possibilities of its own process. If it's tight everywhere, it will be breathless; If it's loose everywhere, it will be empty. There is a contrast to everything in the world. It is very important to leave empty spaces in a painting.

What I want to present is a form of showing spirit and freedom. Through free brushstrokes and colors, we recall our image of happiness, pain, desire, harmony, strength, humility and even sadness. Color becomes the most unique fantasy and

expression of understanding. I want to express the objects in the paintings full of fantasy, full of fun, free and lively.

I believe that good paintings must incorporate the painter's emotions. The so-called art refinement refers to the artist's ability to express objects through vivid painting language according to his comprehensive ability of modeling, composition, color, and perspective of painting. In this process, if the artists integrate their emotions and situational expression, the works will be more vivid and more appealing. Emotional expression, the subjective feelings of the painter, and it is the "sense of sorrow and joy" reflected in the picture, which will arouse the viewers' response.

Art is life. That has always been the motivation of my work. Creation and exploration have kept me discovering the undetected and even fleeting beauty of life, and at the same time, I have been constantly exploring the potential of myself. The free state of painting creation is a unique way for me to communicate with the world, in which I constantly like to enjoy its aesthetical dimension.

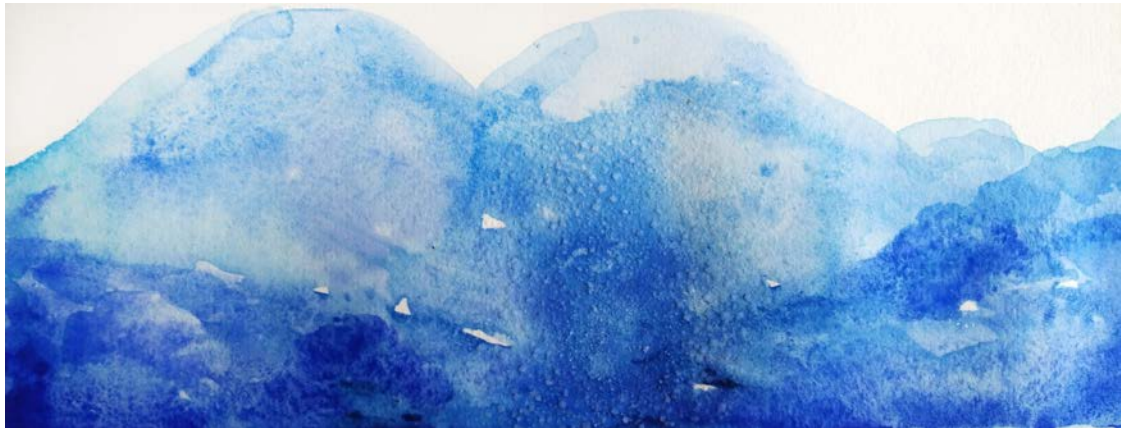
Every painting presents the beauty that I found, urging me to look for the charm of color. Via brush and paper, I constantly find an appealing field for creativity and discover new feelings. It is important to observe life with our own eyes and find our own feelings in art creation.

As Andrew Wyeth used to say: “For me, painting is not going out to find a good scenery, but to find things that I have grown with and have been loved.”

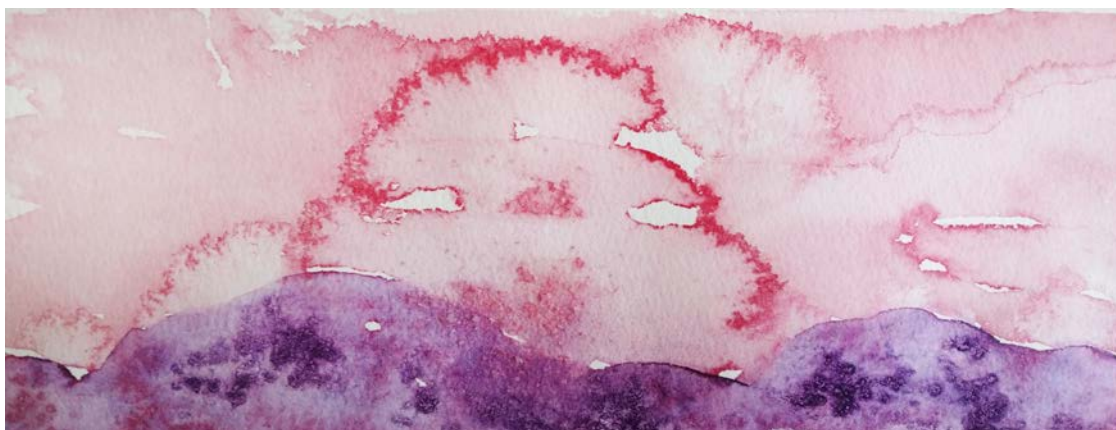
Thanks to my supervisor for his support in this path, opening me new possibilities
I will surely continue to explore and go further!

STORYBOARDS

Storyboard #1



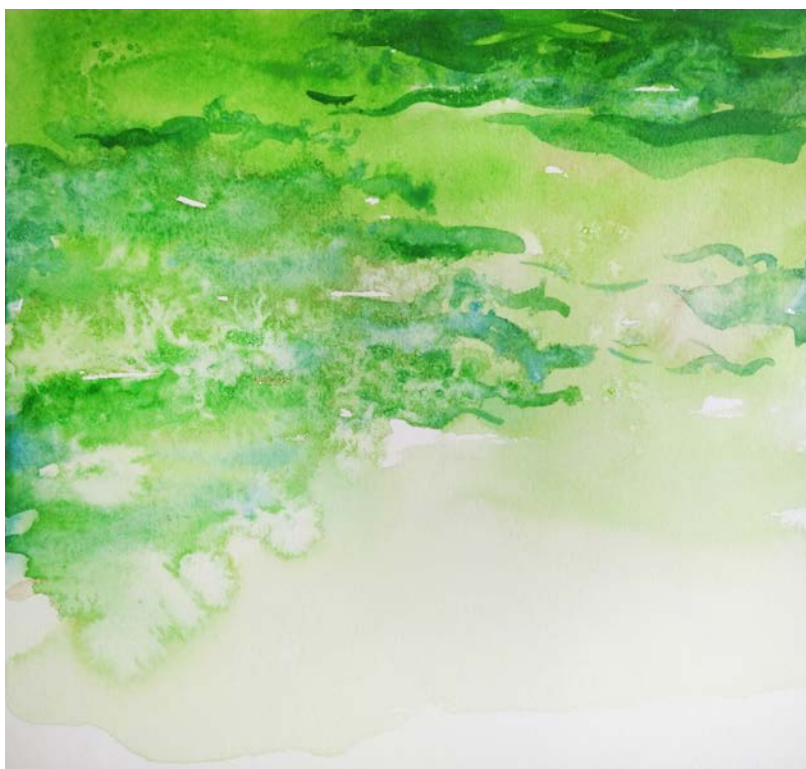
Storyboard #2



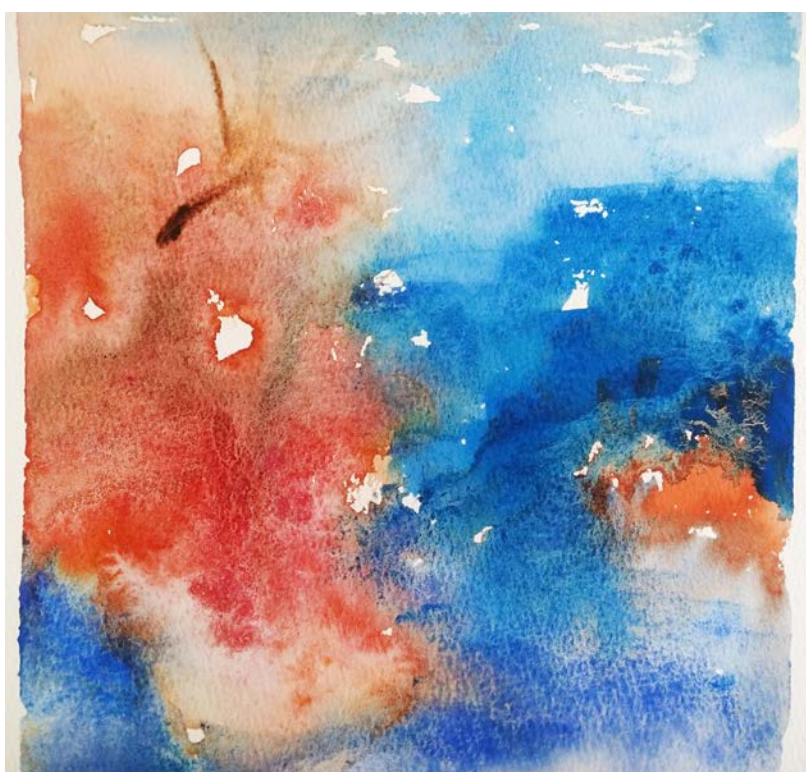
Storyboard #3



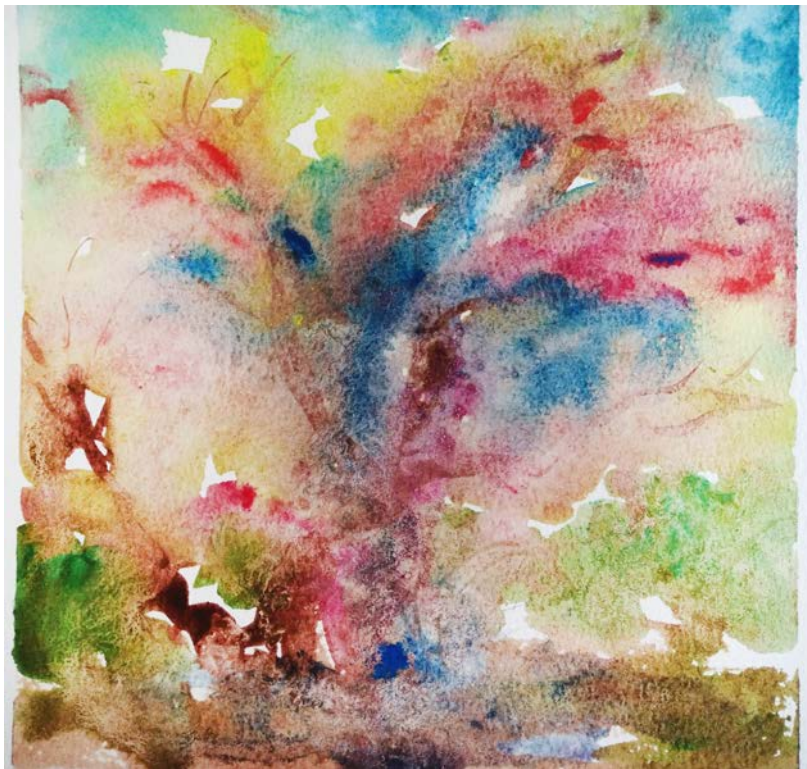
Storyboard #4



Storyboard #5



Storyboard #6



Storyboard #7



Storyboard #8



Storyboard #9



Storyboard #10



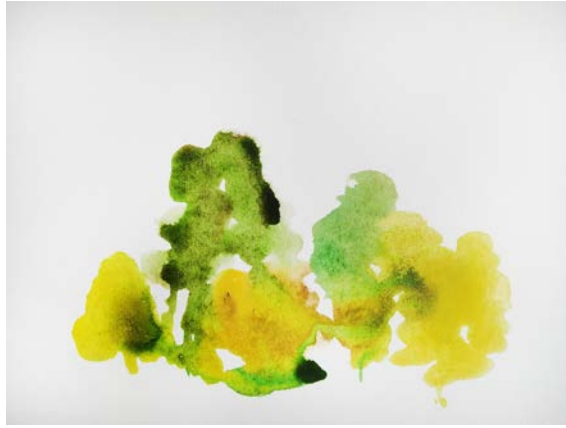
Storyboard #11



Storyboard #12



Storyboard #13



Storyboard #14



Storyboard #15



Storyboard #16



Storyboard #17



Storyboard #18



Storyboard #19



Storyboard #20



Storyboard #21



Storyboard #22



Storyboard #23



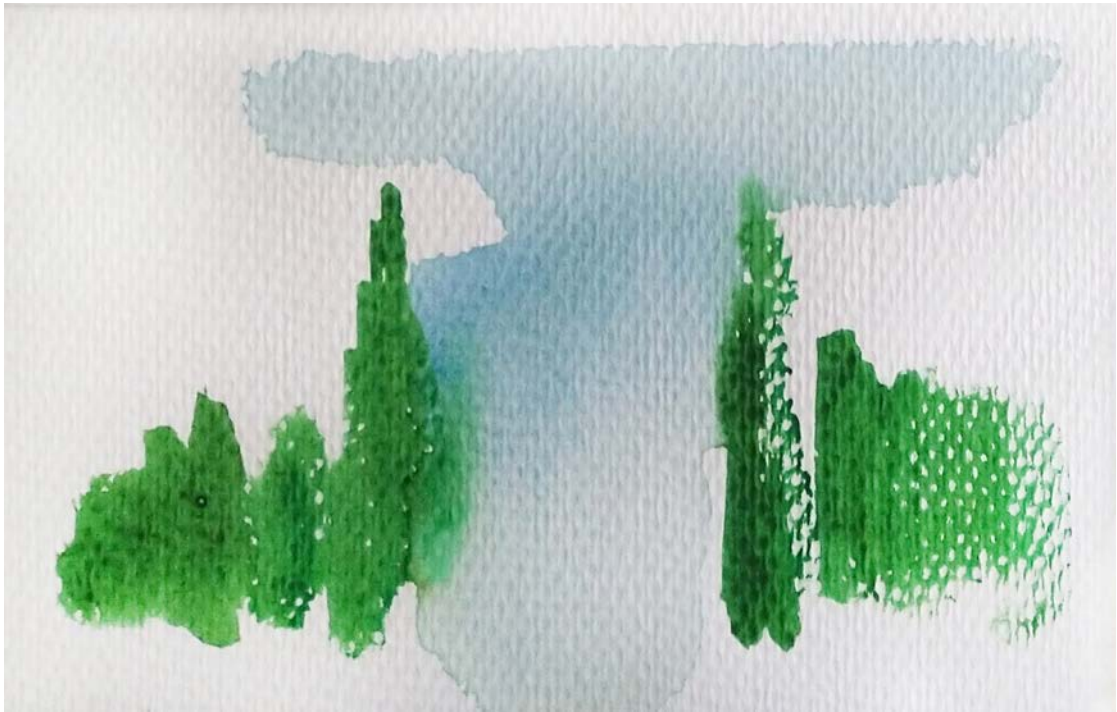
Storyboard #24



Storyboard #25



Storyboard #26



Storyboard #27



Storyboard #28



Storyboard #29



Storyboard #30



Storyboard #31



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