

Some Thoughts on the Development of Contemporary Art in the Context of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: The development of contemporary art has enabled traditional artistic expressions such as painting, photography, and sculpture to gradually break the rigid mode under the traditional ideology, develop different forms and contents, and gradually expand the artist's understanding of the essence of art. What art creates is not the ice-cold presentation of artworks, but rather, the powerful conveyance of the artist's personal value. The development of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of art has attracted an increasing amount of attention. However, we should analyze new things like the AI art dialectically.

Keywords: Contemporary art; Artificial intelligence (AI); Personal value

1. Contemporary Art and AI

The transformation of any kind of culture and art is not an isolated development and evolution, but rather, it comes into being with the progression of the social and cultural background. In the 1990s, two brand-new development trends appeared in Chinese contemporary art: on one hand, contemporary artists gradually turned to the humanities in social life in their artistic creation, that is, they emphasized the intersection of art and real life, reflected people's livelihood issues and other actual state of human beings, and paid more attention to the actual living environment and state of human beings. In an era when the Chinese and Western cultures continue to collide and merge, artists have integrated and improved the resources of Chinese and Western cultures one by one.^[1] On the other hand, some artists carry on artistic re-creation on the basis of inheriting the tradition and create contemporary Chinese art works with modern meaning.

At the Dartmouth Conference in 1956, John McCarthy of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology brought about an understanding of the concept and connotation of AI, that is, "artificial intelligence is to make the behaviors of machines look like the same with intelligent behaviors of humans." According to another definition, "artificial intelligence is the intelligence displayed by artificial machines." Machines can think like humans, obey instruction code and arrangements, and the machines made by humans can show intelligence. Computer programs, machinery, instructions, and the lack of autonomy and logic are all that AI has. In 2014, an AI robot named "Xiao Bing" was launched in China by Microsoft Research Asia. Since then, Microsoft "Xiao Bing" has been continuously integrated into the art creation process of writing poems and lyrics, artificial intelligence painting, singing, and composing music. Its learning is defined as the step of the so-called "deep learning". "Deep learning" means the process of completing the processing of data according to related procedures based on the basic conditions of data support, and then completing a series of instruction output and arrangement in the form of advanced computer models.

Therefore, under the definition and connotation of contemporary art and AI, we can see the essential differences between the two in the artistic level.

2. The Essential Differences between the AI and the Development of Contemporary Art

During the times when AI has not yet appeared and enjoyed popularity, the development of contemporary art had always followed the development of the times in its own way, and had moved closer to the Chinese civilization to reflect the unique artistic connotation of China. The emergence of AI imposes a huge impact on the development of contemporary art. Analyzing the essential differences between the AI and contemporary art through dialectical thinking is an effective way to clarify the development of art in a logical way.

Whether it is AI or human beings, both of them have to learn, however, the learning processes are quite different. AI itself is unable to think, "because they don't understand what it means, nor can they take actions, at best they are just manipulating symbols."^[2] They only learn from the very large databases. For AI, these artistic knowledges are just data, symbols and codes, which have no temperature or meaning. Also, "only we humans can connect the computer's calculation results with the outside world." The process of human learning is to master the artistic knowledge on one hand, and also to have emotional experiences and physical feelings on the other. The development of art in the 20th century centered on Pollock art and American abstract expressionist painting, when the great momentum of contemporary art began. Whether it is Joseph Beuys or A.R. Penck of German Neo-Expressionism, or David Salle of American Postmodernism, or the French Pop Art and other schools and trends, they are all manifestations of the artists' emotions and their personal integration and understanding of artistic value behind the form and abstraction.

We usually consider art as man-made, something with aesthetic, technical and intellectual value, it is set in a frame, hung on the wall, and placed on a pedestal and looks radiant. Many mediums (canvas, marble, wood or stone) have always dictated the kind of artwork that the artist will produce, under which the medium is the first priority. After changing the concept, the medium can be put in a secondary place. At this time, the concept becomes the first priority. Only after the artist has determined and developed a concept, can he choose the medium to express his concept.

3. The Development Trend of Contemporary Art in the Context of AI

An artist's enduring thinking and exploration of art, his continuous enrichment and reduction, and the continuous injection of his own meanings are the essential differences between the AI and the current development of art. AI can have functions such as calculation and deduction like human beings, but for the reason that it does not have human emotions and consciousness, it cannot have free will, emotion or consciousness, etc. Fields dominated by objectivity in the human society, such as finance and medical care, can actively explore the use of AI to serve humans, while the field of art which combines rationality and irrationality, objectiveness and subjectivity, cannot be completely controlled by AI. Just like the development of contemporary art which blends and merges with modern art, many Western artistic trends are the bold innovations and creations of art by artists. They are the artificial and emotionally conscious outbreaks and understandings, the unity of opposites between the social superstructure and the economic foundation, and the creation and emotional expression of social reality mixed with their own ideology.

Take the impressionism as an example, artists began to have a conscious awareness. They are no longer limited to sponsors, and their connections with private painters and collectors have initially shown the transformation of their own way of displaying art works, which is a preliminary manifestation of modernization. Symbolism mainly enjoys popularity in Europe and is closely related to the cultural and political movements of regionalism and nationalism. Symbolism has the same double structure as realism and impressionism, and has more or less characteristic connections with realism and impressionism.^[3] They reorganize the picture, content and composition with a modernist attitude. In their paintings, the viewer can always perceive the presence of the artist. The artist is always the organizer of the picture with a proactive attitude, a role that cannot be ignored. The fauvist painting has simple strokes and wild colors. The critic Louis Vauxcelles satirically called these young artists a group of wild beasts, and Fauvism got its name since then. The strong colors and brushstrokes of Van Gogh, Cézanne and Gauguin produced a trans-epochal significance of huge international influence with expressiveness and structure, especially because of the exhibitions before the First World War. Since then, Fauvism began to stand out. Futurism was born in Italy during the First World War with an artistic movement with a politicized purpose. It started from literature and developed into painting, sculpture, music, architecture and other fields. It is completely separated from the past by radical revolutions, and Italy has obtained a brand-new future. Futurists called on artists to make a complete break with traditional culture, explore the brand-new themes, praise the industrialization progression in machinery, railways, and urban and suburban environments, and then combine them with the painting inventions of the cubism, to advocate the new rhythm of art, which is turbulent, noisy and flashing. So as to create a comprehensive urban art with a strong sense of rhythm. There is an anti-movement in the history of modern art, that is, Dadaism and Pop Art, the most influential of which is Andy Warhol. It conforms to the image collection and copying and pasting of mass media, and interprets the boundaries of new art.

The art creation with AI is not without merits. From the perspective of acceptance of art, the art creation with AI can provide people with more choices of artwork, and to a certain extent, it can also help improve people's imagination. From the perspective of art creation, art creation with AI can even form a new art school, that is, "AI Art". When there are more and more artworks in AI art, we would be able to try to find the characteristics and commonalities among them.

4. Conclusion

With the development of contemporary art, AI will bring new methods and experiences to artists. Art creation with AI can not only become a means to enrich the treasure house of human art, but also bring more choices and possibilities for art appreciation by humans. Artworks are more related to the artist's emotions and philosophies, rather than just about copying an object. Their appearance is a testimony to the times, a tribute to history, and a record of human beings under the development of art. Like the historical process of human beings, art is getting more and more progressive. The thoughts about the development of contemporary art should be a steady stream of innovation. It should be the presentation of value of the artwork based on the artist's personal emotional experiences and it should be the artist's real interpretation and thinking about art.

References

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