

# Aesthetics in Art

Zhiliang Meng<sup>1</sup>, Jingru Wang<sup>2</sup>

1. School of Art & Design, Dalian Polytechnic University, Dalian 116034, China

2. School of Textile and Material Engineering, Dalian Polytechnic University, Dalian, China

---

**Abstract:** What is beauty? This question is what each of us is pursuing and exploring. Everything have their own beauty, this recognition of “beauty” is constantly changing along with the development of human civilization. The word “aesthetic” comes from the Greek and its original meaning is “feeling to the senses”. Everyone has different opinion on beauty. Some scholars think that the object of aesthetics research is beauty itself, while others believe that the object of aesthetics research is art, and aesthetics is the philosophy of art.

**Keywords:** Aesthetics; Iconology; Art

---

## 1. The birth of Modern Aesthetics

As we all know, modern aesthetics appeared in the Renaissance in the 17th century, when people began to study it continuously and brought it to a new height <sup>[1-3]</sup>. The Renaissance can be described as an era when a hundred flowers bloom. Poetics, art, music, literature have all begun to change relative to the past on the original basis and developed rapidly <sup>[4]</sup>. Affected by rationalism in Descartes philosophy, modern aesthetics has begun to change. From this, “beauty” is not only beauty, but the desire to explore and pursue our inner emotions. On the road of art, the Bauhaus tried to change the architectural style to make it more “beautiful” during the period when rationalist theory was popular, and make an attempt to use the “soft” view of Blaise Pascal’s theory to revise the hale and rational art view from the Boileau’s theory <sup>[5]</sup>. Anyone who has studied art and design will be familiar with Bauhaus, a leading figure in the school of architecture. When we appreciate his works, we can find that he has rectified and revised the previous buildings, and began to appear different from the ordinary buildings in our cognition, but added his own design concepts and breakthroughs in traditional beauty.

Early aesthetic thought entered its golden age in the second half of the 18th century <sup>[6]</sup>. Why is it the golden age at this time? That is because at this time, many thinkers, artists and scholars explore the theory of beauty and art from various angles. It has to be said that classicism has a profound impact on aesthetics, and it can be gradually revised and rationally criticized while continuing to inherit and continue classicism <sup>[7-9]</sup>. The concept of beauty has gradually shifted from the expression of beauty for goodness and the factors that are beneficial to our body and mind to the view that there is “beauty” in both goodness and evil. One might argue that why there is beauty in evil? Wouldn’t it encourage people to do evil things to others? Absolutely not, the beauty in evil is embodied in the inner expression of human nature and the beauty of how we get out of the factor of evil in our hearts. When we were young, we were taught that we should have materialism philosophical theories while idealism is relatively weak. Think about it carefully, is idealism really so useless? In today’s society, people with relatively abundant material life are increasingly beginning to pursue their own inner spiritual world, and their understanding of the autonomy of aesthetic values has gradually deepened. People will drink a cup of afternoon tea in a lazy afternoon and read an excellent book to have a baptism of body and soul, and do something that we want to do at the end of work, which will often satisfy our hearts, the above are our pursuit of the spiritual world and a yearning for it. The Earl of Shaftesbury emphasized the inner feeling of beauty in metaphysics, Hume and Locke put forward the philosophical point of view of empiricism on this basis, and then most scholars and artists began to study the meaning of aesthetic consciousness brought by the elements of feeling, imagination, and emotion.

## 2. The connection between art and beauty

The aesthetics of humanity and vision in art is closely linked with our harmonious world outlook, Putting the worldview in the overall environment of aesthetics, we made it into something with strong colors. When the worldview is placed in the overall environment of aesthetics, it becomes something with strong colors. Goodness, if it exists in a form that is helpful to our feelings, then it can be said to be beautiful. We always talk about truthfulness, kindness and beauty, in fact, these three words are all words of the same category, the pronoun of “beauty”. On a deeper level, their existence means the inner wise structure of the universe, but if you want to get some enlightenment from them, you must look for it in all stages of beauty. Since there are stages, there must be a step sequence from low to high, the lowest level is the most compact basic in the field ruled by “beauty”, that is, the so-called “dead” beauty created by human beings or nature and without forming power. Since the first class is the beauty without forming power, the

second class is the formal beauty with forming power, that is, the beauty formed through our spiritual creativity. This kind of beauty is often shaped by our spirit. To put it in exaggeration, it is full of vitality, a production of our spiritual world and the highest stage of beauty. The above two forms are the root of the principle of beauty, that is, the beauty that is synonymous with God. The most essential beauty can regard this form as the primary meaning. From this point of view, we can think that the world is a work of art, and it is no exaggeration to say that artists can obtain the qualifications of the second creator. They give life to objects and create them while extract them from the environment of the spiritual realm. Come out to be concrete. The emergence of art aims at promoting and sublimate our essence, the expression of art not only imitates the outside world constantly, but also draws closer to one's inner emotional world on the basis of the example of the outside world, which is a fundamental rule of imitating human inner emotions. It must imitate the inner emotions of the human world as an inevitable law. Up to now, the artists have revealed their own internal laws with unique internal form, and expressed their internal feelings through various forms of works.

Most of the beauty we can see with our naked eyes is composed of lines and figures. Then the evil we just mentioned also has its beauty, what is it? When we read a book that makes people sad, our emotions will change accordingly. In the process of change, we experienced the author's description of the hero's sad experience, so that the story evoked our inner emotions and felt sad. Although This kind of "beauty" is obviously different from what we have seen and known, but when we think about it, it is also created through our spiritual world. The beauty of evil in art is also the way for artists to express their inner feelings in the form of works of art. The great painter Rembrandt of the Baroque period described the scene of death in the grotesque sketch of "The Levite Finds His Wife Early in the Morning" by the body posture and pointing of the dead. With a few simple lines and figures to interpret fear, the body posture of the deceased and the direction pointed by her fingers suggest who the murderer is. The works of Rembrandt often have recurring patterns that are related to the theme of death. When we first learn to paint, we all learn composition. Composition is the knowledge we must learn as a work of art. At the same time, the quality of composition is also a key factor in determining the success of the work. In Rembrandt's works, whether it is "De Nachtwacht" or "Levite Finds His Wife in the Morning" are both very delicate, which makes the audience enjoy the work very comfortably. Although "Levite Finds His Wife in the Morning" is based on a story in the Bible, the tragedy and horror of this story are vividly expressed through the composition of visual effects and the use of images.

### 3. Own perception of beauty

It can be seen that our understanding of beauty is the expression of emotions, while aesthetic appreciation is embodied through visual expression. The external knowledge of aesthetic principles is traceable for us, while the connotative concept of aesthetic perception is the natural harmony of internal concepts. Although the two are different, they complement each other. When we attach importance to materialism, we cannot ignore our idealism. Do not forget the beginner's mind, and you will reach the bright end.

## References

- 
- [1] H. v. Stein, *Die Entstehung der neueren Asthetik*. 1886.
  - [2] W.Folkierski, *Entre le classicisme et le romantisme, etude sur l'esth. et les esthe-ticiens du X VIII siecle*, 1925.
  - [3] E. Cassirer *Philosophie der Aufklarung*, 1932.
  - [4] W John Hipple Jr. *The beautiful, the sublime and the picturesque in eighteenth-century birth aesthetic theory* 1957.
  - [5] Bryson N, Holly M A, Moxey K. *Visual culture: Images and interpretations*[M]. Wesleyan University Press, 1994.
  - [6] Leuthold S. *Indigenous aesthetics: Native art, media, and identity*[M]. University of Texas Press, 1998.
  - [7] *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition, an Anthology*[M]. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.
  - [8] Skov M, Nadal M. A farewell to art: Aesthetics as a topic in psychology and neuroscience[J]. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2020, 15(3): 630-642.
  - [9] Sunderason S. *Partisan Aesthetics: Modern Art and India's Long Decolonization*[M]. Stanford University Press, 2020.