

# Comprehend the Characteristics and Influence of the Theme of Urban Worker from the Perspective of Art Sociology

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**Abstract:** Through the analysis of art sociology theory, the development causes and characteristics of the theme of “urban worker” are analyzed and explored. First to define the concept of “urban workers” (including migrant workers, local workers, civilian heroes, etc.) to the 13th national exhibition of Fine Arts winning works for the scope, to the 11th and 12th exhibition for reference, select Wang Biao “Get Off Work of No.86”, Cao Dan “Bridge Pouring in The Sun”, Wang Yichan on “Dim Lights” and Lv Xuejing “Beautiful Scenery Line” several works for analysis.

**Keywords:** Art Sociology; Urban Work; The 13th National Exhibition of Fine Arts

## 1. The Definition of “the theme of urban Worker”

The rapid development of Chinese society and the continuous expansion and prosperity of the city have attracted many rural people to work and live in the city, which has become an indispensable part of the city. The theme of urban migrant workers does not come from the tradition. However, as a form similar to the theme of farmers, it is gradually sprouted and generated in accordance with the trend of The Times, and has the characteristics of social group images with Chinese characteristics. Compared with calling it a new theme, it is more like a branch derived from the farmer theme, just like the depiction of farmers’ life conditions in urban life, but also like a portrait of farmers in the new era. As the majority of China’s population, their survival status is related to the future of the country. In accordance with the trend of urban migrant workers developed by The Times, it is undoubtedly a great event to improve the quality of life of farmers.

But “urban workers theme” is not equal to “migrant workers theme”. As the city constantly develops, many migrant workers have changed from the general desire to make money and return to the countryside at a certain time to the hope to have a place in the city. In addition, with the welfare of national policies and the support of the government, migrant workers working in cities have changed from “temporary residence” to “living”, from “first generation” to “second generation”, and gradually can take root and sprout in the city, changing the past status of floating population. So it is not appropriate to simply call it “migrant workers”. Instead, it may be more humane as “urban workers”.

In fact, the artistic creation of urban work was concerned by artists in the early 1980s. At the beginning, the migrant workers who entered the city as “migrant workers” are at the bottom of the society. Due to the construction needs of big cities, the influx of migrant workers conflicts in cities. In addition, relevant policies and regulations have not been improved, so many unfair phenomena such as unpaid wages and longer working hours emerge, which have become hot social topics from time to time. They build advanced facilities in the city, but they live around the edge of the city.

The development of French realism in the bottom class has been known for the creation of the poor people in the 19th century. Without Gustave Courbet, Honoré Daumier and other artists to create at the bottom of the people, it is difficult for people to find artistic beauty from the mediocre and ordinary life. China is a country coming from suffering, so realism has grown immediately since it was introduced into China in the early 20th century. With the development of Chinese society, it gradually highlights its own characteristics. The creation of artists adds more subject consciousness, which makes the artistic expression more connotation and depth.

## 2. What do we comprehend from the art exhibition works

There is no doubt that the art exhibition works are the national exhibition that can best reflect the aesthetic mainstream of new China. Whether the past 11th exhibition works —— Xin Dongwang “Cheng Cheng”, Xu Weixin “shed”, 12th exhibition works —— Jing Yumin “black rain” (sculpture), Liao Yang “mom and dad are where”, etc., or 13th exhibition works —— Wang Biao “eighty-six”, Cao Dan “sunshine bridge pouring”, Wang Yichan on “dim lights” and Lv Xuejing “beautiful beautiful scenery line” (sculpture), etc., can see the figure of urban workers. Especially in the works of the 13th Exhibition of fine arts, we can see a more mature image of migrant workers. In the painter’s pen, the migrant workers seem to be labeled: wearing work clothes, wearing hard hats, holding the tools of labor, or having a rest or work. However, the spiritual connotation shown in the specific creation seems to be different, and with the passage of time, the mental state of urban migrant workers shows a trend of gradually becoming positive from hardship and

helplessness.

Through browsing the works of previous national art exhibitions and emphasizing the analysis of several important works of the 13th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, it is not difficult to find that the works of urban workers have these characteristics:

### 2.1 View the working life from the perspective of others

Artists often view the work and life of migrant workers from the perspective of others, and describe the living conditions of migrant workers from the perspective of onlookers, explaining the workers in their eyes. For example, Wang Biao, the winning work of the 13th National Art Exhibition, “86”, which is a watercolor work, but the first view is the strong atmosphere brought by free and easy brush strokes.



Figure 1 Wang Biao, Get Off Work of No.86 (Internet picture)

Wang Biao's "86 of Work" depicts a group of coal miners with sketches. The painter melts the ink into the watercolor color as the tone of the picture. As the workers walk to the left, the ink becomes lighter with the pace of the miners. This is not only the label-like color brought by the work, but also the spiritual connotation of expressing the miners from the bottom to the light. The work is, of course, so realistic that one can immediately identify the scene for the workers on the construction site; but the work is abstract, compared with the real scene. In addition, the size of this work is 109 \* 150cm, using large frames to create, put the image of migrant workers on the main stage, rising to a higher status. As a Chinese watercolor still growing and developing, it has both the western realistic tradition and the water meaning of Chinese painting, and becomes an indispensable corner in the diversified artistic pattern with a unique way of expression.



Figure 2 Cao Dan, "Bridge Pouring Worker in the Sunshine" (Internet picture)



In addition to watercolor works, there are also excellent works about urban workers in the printmaking category. Print maker Cao Dan created gold works —— engraving bridge pouring in the sun, shaped the image of five ordinary bridge pouring, similar to the “Get Off Work of No.86”, the bridge pouring in the sun is also deep tone, a lot of heavy color in the picture, but the pouring still have optimistic calm, in chaotic environment is still the positive heart of the future. The pouring workers squinted slightly into the sun, with their working gloves and tools, and did not seem to neglect their work for the moment. Creator Cao said: “how to emphasize the characteristics of printmaking, strengthen the action of painting to show the visual tension, and to restore pouring workers under the power of life strength, how to make the complex etching process print language fine rendering and large concrete painting with bearing, become” bridge pouring in the sun “ the prints in production level.”

## 2.2 Find ownership and identity in the city

Different from people who were born living in cities, the sense of belonging and identity of urban migrant workers is not acquired overnight, but gradually formed by the accumulation. Urban workers choose to leave their hometown, but they should not only face the discomfort of leaving home and facing a strange environment, but also the sense of distance from urban life and urban residents. News such as “migrant workers choose to sit on the floor because of their dirty clothes” and “because urban consumption is too expensive, migrant workers choose to eat steamed bread to live” are common. For ordinary people, it may be just a quick glance of fresh information, but for them, this is what life looks like. Through the capture of artists and reflected in the art works, some urban workers are confused about the noisy city, and some find their own sense of belonging.



Figure 3 Wang Yichan “Light lights” (Internet picture)

Wang Yichan is the 13th National Exhibition of fine art in Beijing, the painter brought the image of the delivery man into the view of the exhibition. The picture depicts a delivery man temporarily stopping for a phone call. The delivery man in the picture looks sideways, holding the phone and sitting at the electric car. We can't see his look, but from the body language, his confusion and the noise around the —— have nothing to do with him. The most important thing at hand is to deliver the delivery to the customer in time. In addition to red, yellow, blue and black, there are not too many colors in the picture. The background is vague, just like delivery men who usually travel through large and small streets, but rarely observe the city scenery, let alone get involved. He was a participant in the noise of the city, but he did not enjoy it. Such a life is both real and trance for the delivery workers. The picture is plain, but very infectious.



Figure 4 Lu Xuejing’s “Beautiful Landscape” (Internet picture)

Compared with the disconsolate and confused thoughts revealed in *The Falling Light*, Lv Xuejing's sculpture "Beautiful Landscape", which was also selected as entering Beijing in the art exhibition, is more direct."Beautiful Landscape" is a group of wood carvings of nine different forms of sanitation workers. Some of them are thinking with their heads, and some are busy with their work, showing a group record of the daily work state of sanitation workers. Creator Lu Xuejing said, "The sanitation workers have silently made positive contributions to our urban environment. They may not dress neatly, but where they walk must be a beautiful landscape." It is a direct tribute to the urban migrant workers. The creator takes the usually seemingly insignificant urban workers as the object, which not only affirms the labor value of the urban workers, but also praises their simple and exclusive quality.

In fact, in the exhibition composed of many works, it is also like a small world, with heroic themes, national themes with a hundred flowers blooming, and more novel and gorgeous abstract themes. The works of urban workers are selected and appear in the exhibition, which undoubtedly affirms the creative concept of the artists and the value of this group.

### 3. The influence of urban migrant work themes

#### 3.1 The attention to the urban migrant workers has increased

Compared with people born and growing up in cities, migrant workers are more tenacious in their survival. Many jobs are physical work in the transportation, construction and catering industry, reflecting the power of life. Oil painter Xin Dongwang is good at depicting the image of migrant workers, he talked about his touch to the group of migrant workers in the work "early": "I always have an inexplicable moved, moved to local conditions and indomitable atmosphere, moved by the steadfast expression... the majority of people living at the bottom of the society can not leisurely feel the meaning of culture, they can feel the hardships of life and the comfort to win food."

Decades of rapid development in China cannot be separated from the urbanization process driven by thousands of thousands of workers behind it. This also means that the theme of urban migrant workers will continue to be created and developed. In the face of many achievements of urbanization, they are only payers, because of the identity differences, they still have a certain gap from the city. This level of attention is not a mixture, an understanding of giving migrant workers to higher value, or celebrating the great significance of their work, but a call on the public to treat them in an equal perspective when this group still suffers from discrimination.

#### 3.2 The social characteristics of art is further expanded

Boyce's famous judgment that "everyone is an artist" is still mentioned by the public. In addition to "everyone is an artist" in artistic creation, the artistic creation becomes popular, but also the popularization of art communication. The theme of themes and life is the development of existing themes (farmer theme), but also to further expand the social characteristics of art. When migrant workers are painted into their works as objects, it is naturally the possibility to participate in art. Art has long since been accessible to celebrities, but when the audience really expands to the bottom, the social characteristics of art is realized.

### 4. Conclusion

In summary, through the analysis of the works of the 13th national exhibition of Fine Arts, we can clearly feel the beauty of ordinary people revealed in the works of art, as well as the further embodiment of the social nature of art. In China, where the society is developing so fast, a group of painters can set their sights on this group of ordinary people who have come to the city to work, which has expanded the acceptance and expression of art. Since ancient times, art are the mirror of life.

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