

On Anthony Tapiess Mixed Media style

Jianqing Wei

South China Normal University, Guangzhou510631, Guangdong, China

Abstract: Anthony Tapiess is both an explorer of mixed media painting and a leader of informal painting. He is passionate about the exploration of materials and is committed to bringing them to life. Tapiess has always believed that specific materials and their principles coordinate with each other, which successfully changed the visual understanding and aesthetic concept of modern art. Although the materials used in Tapiess paintings are all collected from common stuffs, he still insists on screening different painting materials and striving to expand new aesthetic dimensions from the materials, so as to achieve better artistic effects. This paper deduces the inner principles of the material by summarizing the material, and explores Tapiess mixed media style through sorting and summarizing his unique mixed media.

Keywords: Anthony Tapiess; Material; Unique; Style

Anthony Tapiess (1923-2012) is perhaps the best-known artist of the Spanish contemporary informalism genre. Tapiess was born on December 13, 1923 in Catalonia, a small city in Spain. Tapiess received a good homeschooling from an early age. His father was a lawyer and was keen on literature and art, especially oriental art and books. Tapiess ability to read and appreciate comes from his fathers cultivation, which, at the same time, shapes his character—he rejects blind obedience with critical thinking and truth-seeking ability. This has a profound impact on his artistic creation. Born in a prestigious family of booksellers in Barcelona, his mother was loyal to Catholicism, who was kind and loving. Therefore, his parents love for knowledge and the edification in art and culture have also contributed to Tapiess success.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), the founder of the cubism school, had a great influence on Tapiess with his artistic concept and expression of painting. Tapiess once praised Picasso as follows, “Having witnessed Picassos lofty spirit, I clearly realized that a great artist also has a strong personality.”^[1] Picasso shouted for national freedom and equality during Francos reign, and at the same time his moral behavior and political views also set an example for Tapiess, which encouraged Tapiess to stick to his principles and maintain dignity, and speak out for freedom, equality and justice. Tapiess learned from Picasso that art is not a lie, but an expression of the truth. Picasso opposed adding any concept of sanctity to art, and firmly believed that artistic expressions were changeable. In particular, he expresses his emotions and specific attitude in abstract forms such as geometric symbols, lines, color blocks and compositions, which stimulate the audiences imagination. Among them, the symbol of duality plays a crucial role in the formation of Tapiess artistic style, not only guiding him into a clear direction, but also effectively reflecting that personal artistic quality and integrity are closely related.

Paul Klees (1879-1940) artistic ideas are the common property of the artists who have always been about artistic integrity. Tapiess had been studying Paul Klees artistic ideas and painting techniques. Klee once believed that without a relatively complete, distinct personality and positive thinking, such art cannot reflect any value^[2]. The value of a piece of art comes from artistic ideas. In particular, Klees book "Tao" has greatly inspired Tapiess thought, and he strengthened his own intuition in the creation process. Art can be compared to a form, and it can also regarded as life. Klees evolutionary logic represents the evolution of a certain type of art. Klees painting techniques, such as: graphite toning, collage filigree, slicing line, speckling, scratching, collage mesh and veiled painting techniques, are a lesson for artists all over the world. As for artistic expression, Klee is good at expressing the charm of art by using the layers and shapes of points, lines and spaces. The influence that Klee gave Tapiess is not only on the surface, but also on his creation ideas, enabling Tapiess to create strong visual impact.

The surrealist painter Juan Miró (1893-1983) had a huge impact on Tapiess in terms of artistic concept and the use of materials. Miro believes that the value of an artist is not in the creation of art, but in the influence on future generations. Art will decline due to various reasons, and artworks will be destroyed by various reasons, but the artists thoughts will profoundly affect the aesthetics of later generations^[3]. From this, Tapiess realized that the personal thought must be rooted deeper in order to achieve success in the field of art in the future. Miro is Tapiess guide when he is confused. An artist must possess unique creative ability and a sense of mission and responsibility. Miro was the first to carry forward the essence of the spirit of Catalonia, the man who cried for the lonely people, and the man who had the longing for freedom. Tapiess learned from Miro that people were at their most spiritually active only in a subconscious and illusory state. In Miro's art, the use of materials and techniques is ever-changing, such as cellophane, ceramics, asphalt, and rope collage. Miro is good at using the forms of points, lines and surfaces, concise outlines and the texture of brushstrokes in artistic creation. Miro's Catalunya folk paintings and symbolic symbols have especially inspired Tapiess mixed media creation.

All excellent artists are always inseparable from progressive ideas, and progressive ideas are the source of artists creation. In Feuerbachs article, Marx made the following comments: Although many philosophers have described the world in different ways in the past, it is more important to change the world than the former^[4]. From the Marxist theory, Tapiess realized that it was necessary to thoroughly analyze the defects existing in the capitalist system, and art could make its contribution to the transformation of the world. The Marxist theory also promoted the development of Tapiess material art creation ideas, which began to reflect the poor life of common people. He expressed his dissatisfaction with Francos autocratic rule by means of art, making his mixed media have social and political effects. In the field of art, Freudian doctrine plays an important role because psychoanalysis can explain various subconscious phenomena. Sex, love, madness, hypnosis, words and deeds that Freud talked about were all used by the Surrealists as a way to express their thoughts, and were worshipped with a fanatical attitude. Thanks to psychoanalysis, Freud and Bretons friendship, Tapiess gained new inspiration. Freuds free associative method and Pavlovs conditioned reflex theory, at the same time, answered many questions about the image and graphics of creation. These theoretical bases provide a clearer direction for the transformation of Tapiess artistic creation thought.

1. The material expression of the Mixed Media style of Anthony Tapiess

1.1 The simplicity of color

Tapiess also has his own unique views and expressions on color, "the special color belongs to the depths of ones heart, which is not only similar to the real world, but also has never been polluted by online advertisements. It is also A tragic color."^[5] In Tapiess mixed media art, black, ochre, tan, red, yellow, gray and white express the color gamut of the earth. Among them, yellow and red symbolize the colors of the Tapiess national sentiment. Tapiess believes: "Large areas of gray conjure up the passage of time, division, decay, staleness, tranquility and cleanliness, etc."^[6] The author believes that the gray color is the most real color of his heart. It has a very close relationship with the philosophical world and can better convey the true state of his mind. For example, created in 1958, Tapiess work "Grey Ochre", in this work Tapiess organically combines paint, dust, resin and additional materials to create a rough, intensively processed surface, called Substance Painting. The dull colors represent the dilapidated and imprinted walls of the streets of Catalonia, witnessing the suffering of people since the civil war and the oppression of peoples lives under the rule of General Franco.

1.2 Texture

The structure of the surface texture of an object is called texture, and the texture characteristics of the material are arranged to a certain extent through the combination of materials and expression techniques. The special texture in the work is stylized and processed by the creator, and is given new value and meaning.

The intervention of materials in Tapiess artwork is an important way to express his philosophical ideas. The thick texture and scratches are highlighted in the picture, which reflects his own aesthetic consciousness, which is one of the unique expressions of the mixed media art. Tapiess tries to choose objects that are more common in everyday life as painting materials, giving ordinary mediocre materials a sense of mission. For example, in his 1956 work "the Iron Gate and the Violin", Tapiess hangs a worn violin in a wavy sheet of iron, the texture of which is similar to the melody produced by the violin strings. The dynamic of the violin is transformed from hearing to visual perception; at the same time, the mottled scratches on the iron sheet create a strong contrast with the elegant visual sense of the violin. Wood and iron are a kind of material contrast, static and dynamic are also a dynamic and static contrast, and the artistic conception contained in the object also creates a contrast. Tapiess uses physical materials to make excellent combinations, intensifying the material contrast between different materials.

2. Pictorial Symbols of Anthony Tapiess Mixed Media Style

In the early Western paintings, the painting style was mainly influenced by politics and religion. The cross, as a religious symbol, symbolized the Christian culture and the inspiration for the lower classes. As time goes by, its symbolic forms have become diversified.

The cross symbol in Tapiess works has a strong symbolic connotation. In his paintings, this form of symbol not only expresses the spiritual world in an abstract form, but also expresses the yearning for human nature and the desire for freedom. In the early days, Tapiess did some research on social subjects due to the influence of Marxist theory. The crosses were not only presented in different forms, but also the mysterious X, T, O, Y and other symbols were displayed in his painting. The use of symbols strengthens the sense of balance on the left and right sides of the picture, keeping the overall balance vivid and conveying information for the picture; The combination of virtual and real, combining dynamic and static, breaks rigidity, presents unique visual effects, and expands the audiences infinite imagination.

In many traditional theories, limbs are regarded as the microcosm of the macroscopic world, and all things outside the limbs of all people can be expressed in the limbs of the human body. The cultural differences of various ethnic groups lead to different meanings of the symbols given to limbs, and even go beyond the primitive functions of human organs. The human body symbolizes the power of God, and in general, art is the ultimate goal of life. In Tapiess mixed media paintings, body elements come from subjective emotions and social backgrounds. For example, in the 1988 work "Big Torso", the picture presents an abstract figure of a female torso, which creates an infinite reverie between the likeness and the dissimilarity. The mysterious color symbolizes the admiration for the vitality of human nature and exudes infinite charm. Whether the use of "cross" symbol or the use of torso, Tapiess flexibly uses symbols to express his artistic language, which reflects his artistic thought.

3. Cultural and ethos connotation of Tapiess mixed media art

In Tapiess early paintings, he had always been around the themes of society, politics and ethnicity. It was worth noting that in Tapiess works of this period, the audience clearly felt the unique ethos and personality of the Catalan nation, and this became the driving force for his creation.

Tapiés believes that the Catalan national character is also deeply rooted in his art. Tapiés always has a strong wish for the independence and freedom of the Catalan nation. Therefore, there are four red line elements presenting in his mixed media, symbolizing the blood of the Catalan nation, for example, the 1971 work "Spirit of the Catalans", which depicts the flag of the Catalonia Autonomous Region, dominated by four red lines with a bright yellow base. In the picture, he used materials to depict the painting symbolizing the liberation of Catalonia's national freedom. He strongly expressed his striving for liberation and truth, showing his love for his hometown. Tapiés combines different materials in the process of creation, in order to explore the cultural and ethos connotation and meaning of mixed media creation.

4. Conclusion

Through the study of Anthony Tapiés mixed media style, the author interprets the background of his mixed media style, and deeply understands the expression of material and spirit and the symbolism of symbols in his mixed media style. In the selection and exploration of materials, Tapiés turns the accessible common materials into valuable and meaningful works, and at the same time gives the materials new life and concepts. When an artist selects materials, he is always sensitive to the characteristics of them, as well as the process of transformation, and explores the implied meaning of the materials. By analyzing the Tapiés mixed media style from various aspects, the author finds that his material art works not only inspire people to pay more attention to the real society, but also encourage them to innovate and challenge themselves. Meanwhile, in artistic creation, artists not only need to innovate, but also need to observe and experience life with insight, and create excellent works that keep pace with the times.

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