

Artistic Conception in Meticulous Chinese Flowers and Birds Painting

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Received Date: **08.12.2023**; Accepted Date: **01.07.2024**; Available Online: **15.07.2024**

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ABSTRACT

Chinese painting has its own unique form of artistic expression, which aims to convey the inner emotion and spirits of each one and other. With more and more people being fond of Chinese meticulous painting, their aesthetic views on it are also constantly improving, and they are increasingly emphasising on feeling the spirit of Chinese meticulous painting of flowers and birds through the expression of their own works. Chinese meticulous painting is an inheritance of Chinese excellent traditions, and the images displayed through the paintings can allow viewers to feel the true emotions of the creators. Artistic conception is the soul of meticulous flowers and birds painting, the rich connotation of meticulous flowers and birds painting art in various periods, and also the source and core of creating it. In spite of this importance, there are deficiencies in the analysis of artistic conception in contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting in the current literature. This study attempts to fill up the deficiencies by analysing the relevant content of artistic conception, focusing on the analysis artistic conception of Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting.

Keywords: *Chinese Painting, Flowers and Birds Painting, Artistic Conception, Expressive*

INTRODUCTION

As an important art form of Chinese painting, flowers and birds painting, together with landscape painting and figures painting, are three major art forms of Chinese painting. Of all the forms, the meticulous form of flowers and birds painting has been the most Chinese featured one. With the development of society and the exchanges and integration of various cultures, contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting has undergone rapid changes (Wang, 2022). Chinese meticulous painting has various forms of expression, including line drawing, heavy colour, light colour, pure ink, and so on. Its main function is to be a way for

artists to express personal emotions, as well as to spread and innovate Chinese culture. Meticulous flowers and birds painting continuously promotes the sustainable development of Chinese painting art by integrating other art forms, concepts, and attempts. The aesthetic ability and taste of the general public are constantly improving, which requires artists to have higher levels of aesthetic ability and expression. The significance of meticulous flowers and birds painting is reflected in that it enriches the aesthetic value and educational value of Chinese culture, and promotes people's pursuit of beauty and reflection on the meaning of life.

In China, meticulous flowers and birds painting plays an important part in various major national exhibitions, art investment collections, and interior decoration of people's homes. As an art form to improve people's aesthetic value and cultural significance, its value has been recognized by the people all over the country, and there are diverse national exhibitions, local exhibitions, and individual exhibitions of meticulous flowers and birds painting with the strong support of the government. For example, the national art exhibition once every five years includes almost all art categories (Chinese painting, oil painting, printmaking, sculpture, murals, watercolour, powder painting, lacquer painting, pottery, art design, animation, comprehensive painting, etc.), the national meticulous painting exhibition, the national flowers and birds painting exhibition, the national meticulous painting exhibitions, and various local exhibitions. These exhibitions include many different themes, which also provides a strong guarantee and promotion for the development of flowers and birds painting. For example, the theme of the National Art Exhibition in 2024 is Harmonious Coexistence between Man and Nature (Zhejiang Art, 2023).

Most of the flowers and birds paintings are hung in different spaces (such as art galleries, conference halls, empty walls of art centres, empty walls of living rooms, etc.) It is both a decorative element and a platform to showcase Chinese culture. The uniqueness of Chinese painting makes this art form universal, and under this effect, the expression of artworks can better show the inner thoughts of artists, so artists often express their emotions and thoughts by this form. They often integrate their own life feelings into their works, in order to express their feelings of things and life, to express the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture. They use meaning as the tool for expression, express different mental states with different concepts of artistic conception. Therefore, Chinese painting, with meaning in mind, focuses on the unity of emotional images and rational concepts (Zhang, 2018).

In the process of creating Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting, the performance of artistic conception directly determines the final quality of the work (Liang, 2018). At the beginning of the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting, Chinese artists learned and inherited traditional creative skills and concepts, thus laying a solid practical foundation for the creation of flowers and birds works in the future. In their works, we can see their exquisite skills and keen observation of nature, perfectly expressing the charm of flowers and birds through the grasp of details and the use of color. This is only based on traditional learning, and there are many reasons for questioning the creation of art, without truly thinking or understanding. Many artists have limited understanding of the importance of artistic conception in the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting. Therefore, they tend to ignore it, although they also pay attention to innovation and flexibility in their works, and do not adhere to traditional painting styles and techniques, they try to use different ways of expression to make their works more vibrant and contemporary. This is a shallow and superficial understanding. Thus, given the importance of artistic conception in the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting, the way of their understanding may provide a negative misleading impression for future generations.

In order to address this issue more clearly and comprehensively, this study aims to analyse the expression of artistic conception in the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting. This study particularly focuses on the matter of artistic conception, constituent elements, expressive techniques, and appreciation of expression in the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of the term artistic conception was first seen in the Tang Dynasty. In *Poetry Style* of Wang Changling (698-757), stated that there are three kinds of conceptions of poetry, the artistic conception, the material conception, and the spiritual conception. Pre-modern scholar Wang Guowei (1877-1927) established a relatively systematic theory of artistic conception combining the achievements summarised by previous scholars and the relevant theory from the West, and using artistic conception as the sole criterion for the art of poetry. According to the definition of Baidu Encyclopedia, artistic conception refers to an artistic realm formed by the integration of life scenes depicted in literary works and the expressed thoughts and emotions of them (Chen, 2022).

Nowadays, artistic conception is an important category of traditional Chinese aesthetics, and it constitutes one of the indispensable factors of artistic beauty (Chen, 2022). Artistic conception is expressed in various forms, from poetry, music, drama, to painting. According to Liu (2022), artistic conception is a kind of feeling that can only be understood and cannot be expressed to humans through artistic forms. It is a combination of emptiness and reality, generated in works but drifting outside of creation.

One of the most important functions in the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting is to create a work of greater artistic value, making it a symbol of new ways, new goals, and culture in the field of art. Ding (2023) believes: "There are generally two views in the current research on the issue of artistic conception in the art community: one is the Fusion of Emotions and Scenery Theory, and the other is the Imagination Association Theory, the former leans towards the aesthetic effect generated by the interaction between subjective emotions and external scenery, while the latter leans towards the total sum of all imagination triggered by the author and the viewer after receiving the real-life image, and leans towards the active recreation activity of the aesthetic subject. Meanwhile, Chen (2010) believes that the metaphysical has the meaning of spirit, and the physical has the meaning of tools. Painting is composed of pen, ink, colour, water, and the techniques composed of these factors, they are all physical, they are the tools. While the spirit of metaphysical, is the painter's ideological consciousness, which is manifested as the artistic conception of painting. This has clearly pointed out the issue of artistic conception in creation.

Understanding the performance of artistic conception can help solve many problems encountered in the process of creating, and clarify the key and core issues of creating artistic conception. In her new exploration of the artistic conception of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting, Wang (2022) stated that the expression of artistic conception in meticulous flowers and birds painting is the process of the painter's perception, understanding, and refinement of the meaning of the flowers, leaves, grass, and birds in the nature, and ultimately evolved into their beautiful works. Compared with other art forms, meticulous flowers and birds painting is more and more suitable for artistic conception in different aspects, including colours, shapes and other issues, for example, the 2019 Pinzhen Gewu National Youth Fine Meticulous Painting Exhibition held in Tianjin, China, by analysing the form, quantity, content, style, and other aspects of the works, and found that it has been recognized by the public as the best form of artistic conception, which can best reflect the different levels of artistic conception and no longer as an incompatible relationship with other forms.

Although the creation of meticulous flowers and birds painting has many forms of expression, artistic conception as the core problem is always facing challenges. According to Li (2000), from ancient times to modern times, the aesthetic relationship between man and nature has always been the core content of traditional Chinese aesthetics, on which a complete theory of artistic conception has been formed. Another scholar believes that in the long-term development, Chinese painting has continuously absorbed the nutrition and aesthetic consciousness of traditional culture, forming the aesthetic characteristics of poetry, and the relationship between man and nature is an important content of traditional Chinese art theory and expression, so nature has become an inexhaustible source of artistic conception of Chinese

painting (Hong, 2000). To understand the concept of artistic conception, it is necessary to analyse its formation and development process, so as to ensure a complete theoretical basis and analysis method. In the case that different perspectives may form different views, some scholars may argue whether these analysis points or the display of the form of work are appropriate and relevant to the literature.

Artists' awareness of artistic conception directly affects the success of their works, so it is crucial for artists to have a deep understanding of the process of the creation of their works. It means the artist's own thinking and participation in the process of creating, expressing and displaying artistic conception. According to Liu (2022), Mei Zhongzhi believes in his book *On the Artistic Conception Beauty of Flowers and Birds Painting*, that the artistic conception is a kind of artistic realm formed by painters integrating the objective reality of life they want to express into their works in beautiful forms according to their own aesthetic ideals. This artistic realm generates emotions for the viewer, resonates emotionally with the painter, and the resulting scene is the artistic conception of Chinese painting.

The artist's understanding of artistic conception has a significant impact on the development of artistic works. Artistic conception, as an aesthetic concept, has an inevitable impact on Chinese painting. In spite of this, the creators of art often lack the awareness of the expression and contribution of artistic conception in different forms, which makes it difficult for artists to resonate through the expression of their works and the perspective of viewers' appreciation, and even leads to different feelings of one work. As a result, it is difficult for artists to spread their ideas through their works.

The artistic conception of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting is not only a matter of aesthetics, but also a matter of the artist's thought, the technique of the work, the viewers' response and so on. In this case, the beauty of art is the unity of the subjective thoughts and the objective environment, the unity of feeling and reason, forms and spirits, ultimately forming a natural and integrated artistic conception of beauty. Painters can express their feelings for natural scenery through images, such as mountains, water, flowers, birds and so on. Emotions flow through the painter's brush, flowing in the eyes of the audience Kandinsky (1987) believed that harmony in form must completely rely on the purposeful response of the human soul.

In another case, according to Su (2015) and others, people have different views on the understanding of artistic conception, and generally believe that artistic conception is the combination of emotion and scenery. Those who agree with this statement believe that the subjective experience and objective scenes can both form a kind of beauty, and the pursuit of this beauty originates from the consciousness of the creative subject and the appreciative subject, which is a profound and lasting beauty. When people see an artwork, the first thing they think of is not its technology, but the unique atmosphere it contains. Therefore, it is often difficult for people to accurately express their emotions through language. This also indicates that the artistic conception of meticulous painting contains very rich connotations, just like the soul of a work (Liu, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore the artistic expression of flowers and birds painting in the contemporary background. It reveals the importance and application value of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting in artistic creation. This paper analyses artistic conception through the following aspects: the analysis of constituent elements and expression techniques, and the expression of artistic works' pursuit of artistic conception. The analysis process is as follows: Firstly, an overview of the meaning of artistic conception was provided, followed by an analysis of the constituent elements and expressive techniques of the artistic conception in Chinese meticulous painting. Finally, the artistic conception in the creation of Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting was conducted. The results of

this research show,artistic conception of Chinese contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting is not only a reflection of objective things, but also a creation of the unity of mind and scene, of the unity of meaning and context that integrates with the artists' personal feelings, and is a total embodiment of the combination of the viewer's inner expectation of artistic conception.In order to complete the above research and analysis, this paper will adopt qualitative research methods, and adopt the form of interpretation research method and image analysis to analyse the artistic conception expression in the creation of flowers and birds painting, and analyse the constituent elements respectively, from the first meaning to the painting, and the integration of form and spirit. The expression of artistic works' pursuit of artistic conception is analysed from two aspects: the artist's pursuit of artistic conception and the viewer's resonance of artistic conception.

Analysis of Constituent Elements and Expression Techniques

According to the literature review above, it can be known that traditional and contemporary definitions of artistic conception are mainly reflected in literature, while there are shortcomings in the expression and data collection in painting. Therefore, this study focuses on the analysis from the perspective of painting ontology. Therefore, the artistic conception of meticulous flowers and birds painting is realised through the comprehensive application of various expressive elements and techniques. Painters need to choose the right expression elements and techniques according to their emotional experience and aesthetic ideal to create a unique artistic atmosphere.

Analysis of Constituent Elements

Flowers and birds in nature, as the subject of painting, play a great role in expressing the beauty of nature, expressing emotions and aspirations through things, and then achieving the wonderful state of forgetting things and fusion scenes (Zhou, 2014). Artistic conception is manifested as a psychological state or a level of visual aesthetics. In ancient times, the connotation of artistic conception mainly includes: (1) natural artistic conception: When ancient people created art, they often focused on nature as the theme. Whether it is natural flowers and plants, or natural birds and beasts, they can form the most beautiful images; (2) Life Realm: People change with the progress of the times, and when they appreciate painting, they gradually realise that there are many emotions in their hearts. Contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting use objects as carriers, with animals and plants as the main objects, and use their unique methods to express a spiritual beauty. So all beautiful light comes from the source of the soul: without the reflection of the soul, there is no such thing as beauty (Zong, 1943).

From this, it can be understood that the artistic conception of meticulous flowers and birds painting is composed of four elements: emotion, imagination, understanding, interest, and so on. According to Li (2006), the most important aspect of Chinese meticulous painting is the artistic conception, which emphasises expressing oneself with one's own emotions and conveying one's understanding and feelings of objects in their works. For example, the following small-sized paintings in the form of Song dynasty palace fan, (Figure 1),these paintings with different themes, such as blooming seasons, dynamic fish, subtle grasses and insects, or happy expressions, both vividly reflect the normal states of natural creatures and are full of subtle tension, and use simple colours to express the natural beauty of different themes. The author used the image of birds, the beauty of flowers, the swimming of fish, to express their interest, to convey their own lyrical beauty, from which we can also see the attitude of life shown to good things.



Figure 1. Small-sized paintings of Song dynasty palace fan
(Source: Chinese Art Gallery)

In the constituent elements of artistic conception, it is not just a true portrayal of nature, as Kandinsky (1987) explained in art. A natural imitation, if it comes from the hands of a true artist, cannot be a pure replica. To some extent, it can also emit the sound of the soul. So it requires a process of secondary creative thought creation in order to achieve the expression of artistic conception.

Analysis of Expression Techniques

The artistic conception, due to the difference of people, places and situations, shows a variety of colours, such as Moni beads, creates a variety of beauty (Zong, 1943). The image processing in meticulous flowers and birds painting is that the creator identifies, refines, and sublimates the flowers, plants, trees, and various animals in nature as backgrounds, and then presents them as art on the screen. The expression of these works is not a direct representation of natural scenery, but requires their thinking in order to recreate the artistic conception of nature. Creators can divide the spatial position of the scenery you see and adjust its size, colours, shape, etc. as needed to achieve certain visual effects that they want, which is the performance of artistic conception.

Contemporary meticulous flowers and birds paintings not only innovate traditional works, but also incorporate many new languages, bringing them to a new level. The artistic conception of a painting is mostly composed of various factors and is not directly expressed. The basic structure of Chinese painting is a visual art formed by the combination of brush, ink, colour, water, and techniques composed of these elements, as well as several main forms of art such as themes, ideas, style expression, material forms, etc. According to the book *Yi Jing Xi Ci*, the metaphysical is the Dao, and the physical is the tool. Among them, the metaphysical is the intangible level of Dao, while the physical is the surface of all things, which has already reached the surface of things, this is the artist's ideology, and this is the artistic conception expressed as painting (Chen, 2010). Physical is a tool, but also can be used for the metaphysics. Artistic conception refers to the transformation of natural scenery by painters based on their own personality, habits, preferences, and other factors, while also considering the design composition of the picture to integrate and optimise the language of the screen, in order to achieve the best effect, it is an artist's thinking, and these are the fundamental meanings of Chinese painting (Wang, 2022). The absorption of contemporary elements and the processing of artistic language make the development and expression of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting have a new look.

In addition, the presentation of artistic conception is also reflected in the deep analysis of the artistic essence. According to Zong's (1943) viewpoint, the fusion and infiltration of emotions and scenery of artistic conception reveal the deepest emotions, deeper and deeper, while also penetrating the deepest scenery, with each layer becoming more and more crystal clear; the scenery is full of emotions, which are embodied as scenery. Therefore, a unique universe and new images have emerged, adding rich imagination to humanity and opening up new horizons for the world. And he quoted Yun Nantian (1633-1690) as saying, they are all unique in their spiritual thoughts, so unique that its like they are not from the world! This is my so-called artistic conception. Learning from the outside, gaining the source from the heart. The two teachings of Tang Dynasty painter Zhang Zao (birth and death years unknown) are the basic conditions for the creation of this artistic conception.

Analysis of meaning before painting

In Wang Wei's *On Mountains and Rivers* of the Tang Dynasty, he said that "When painting mountains and rivers, meaning is before painting". In Zhang Yanyuan's *Records of Famous Paintings of Past Dynasties*, it was also said that "the backbone and situation are all based on the meaning and return to the use of the brush".

Although meticulous flowers and birds painting pursues the meticulous depiction of flowers and birds in the creation process, there is no doubt that the meaning should be the first, that is, the meaning to guide the work (Li, 2006). From this, we can understand that meaning is a spiritual concept, it is closer to the connotation of the superstructure, which is metaphysics, and the work may be directed towards material aspects such as instruments. However, from the philosophical concept of dialectical materialism in Marxism, there is a material world first, then a spiritual world, so does material determine consciousness? The answer to whether meaning is before painting here contradicts this theory is, of course, negative, and can be explained in two aspects:

First, the source of an artist's creation, first of all, is the real things in real life, or thoughts of the artist's own feeling through a phenomenon or image. Therefore, before starting to create, an artist must consider their own ideas and techniques, have their own feelings, and then express their true feelings. This is the prelude to scenery and expression. This is the first picture that the painter sketched in mind, and after repeated thinking and refinement, the final image is formed.

Second, after the concept has been formed, the painter can use his familiar painting method to create, he can put all the emotions he wants to express into the painting. It is the crystallisation of the author's own experience and thinking, the product of social influence and edification as a social person (Li, 2006). Painting creation, on the other hand, is a secondary creation of images, that is, the painter already has his own meaning before he paints. But its production process is after a long practice of training and edification.

Analysis of the fusion of form and spirit

The combination of form and spirit is the basis for Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting to highlight the inner charm of the subject (Liang, 2018). The modelling problem in painting creation refers to the painter's depiction of the appearance and characteristics of things. Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting has a strong subjective willingness to express flowers and birds (Wang, 2022). The explanation of subjective will here is mainly due to the process of artistic creation, which includes the pursuit of aesthetic expression of Chinese culture. Gu Kaizhi (348-409) in the ancient Eastern Jin Dynasty put forward the theory of Expressing the Spirit by Physical Form. Posterity has been the pursuit of the highest artistic conception.

It can be understood that the implication of Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting lies in its perfect combination of form and spirit. When designing works, painters respect the natural form of things, aim to create the form of the artist's inner beauty, and achieve the processing method of natural creation and no human trace (Guo, 2010).

Due to the ability of painting form to convey the spirit, the spirit can endow the viewer with a certain aesthetic taste, and painting form is a spiritual need and a carrier of expression. The biggest characteristic of Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting is that it is full of human nature. Painters can express their infinite emotions towards nature and life through meticulous depiction, whether calm or poetic. Therefore, in the past few thousand years, the widely circulated Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting has proven a form of spiritual harmony and unity. As Zhuangzi (approximately 369-286 BC) stated in his book "On the Unification of Things," the concept of heaven and earth coexist with me, and all things are one with me, which marks the core of Chinese philosophical research. Therefore, humans are also a part of nature and naturally integrate the form of things with the gods they pursue in nature. If analysed from this perspective, meticulous flowers and birds painting is a true manifestation of the highest level of artistic conception that pursues taking form as the essence and combining form and spirit.

The Presentation of Artistic Conception Pursuit in Works of Art

Artists' Pursuit of Artistic Conception

Chinese painting conveys the author's thoughts and views on nature through images, among which flowers and birds painting uses flowers, animals, grass and insects to show the painter's attitude towards life, and is the expression of their inner emotions.

Only by expressing the artistic conception of the work can the artist allow the viewer to experience the artistic conception of the work when they see it, or rather, they have already wandered in the work's artistic conception. The ways of artistic creation are also diverse. For meticulous painters, a good meticulous painting, whether it's flowers or scenery, does not require too much skill, only a certain artistic conception. Initially, meticulous painting often focused on depicting natural landscapes, depicting the forms and expressions of flowers and birds. Of course, this is just a form of realism towards objects. After so many years of development, most Chinese flowers and birds paintings still admire a form of visual beauty. For example, Lin (2021) wrote in his evaluation of Professor Jia Guangjian, "His lotus are not only derived from the reproduction of large-scale scenes like lotus ponds in reality, but also a subjective expression that blends surreal poetic mood." (as shown in Figure 2).



Figure 2. Works of Professor Jia Guangjian
(Source: Chinese Art Gallery)

From these two works, it can be seen that although the artist chose the same theme when expressing his thoughts, the artistic conception performed varies depending on the season. It has the characteristics of poetry and the romanticism of real life. From here, it can be understood that this is the artist's initial psychology in creating artistic conception. Renowned art critic Xia (2022) commented on *Creek and Pond Over Snow*, the main tone of the painting is greyish green, with snow falling on the pond and creating a strange and radiant atmosphere. While the thriving business of nature and the chill after the snow create an inherent conflict between the natural forces, it also highlights the stunning wonders of the natural ecology. This painting is highly traditional and contains modern consciousness, with unique scenery and meaning. Beyond heaven and earth, it forms a unique spiritual wonder (Fang Shishu's Notes on Tianlouan from 1692-1751), which can be considered a masterpiece of the times. With the prosperous development of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting and the establishment and competition of diverse styles, meticulous flowers and birds painters are more focused on determining their own artistic style, which of course also emphasises the uniqueness of artistic conception. This expression technique has pushed it to a peak. For example, when commenting on Su Baijun, Zhang (2018) said, "His works have a dark and profound style, with an unexpected sense of decorative beauty." From different works, we can see the traditional techniques and creative ideas of Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting. Although it is only a meticulous painting, it can reflect many things. Every excellent flowers and birds painting creator has an extremely rich spiritual world. For the creator, there is not only the reality he saw at the time, but also an emotion in his heart towards nature.

The Resonance of Viewers With the Artistic Conception of the Work

The presentation of artistic conception is precisely a life experience that people are pursuing. For creators, a beautiful flowers and birds painting allows viewers to imagine the real scene the artist is facing from the shape of the flowers and the expressions of the birds, making people associate the entire nature from a painting. When creating a moving realm on the screen now, it constitutes an artistic conception. Those who appreciate the heart are the top, those who are pleasing to the eyes are the bottom. Without exerting force on the artistic conception, there is no implied meaning or sound beyond the context. So when painters create, they can only rely on the moving artistic conception of the work in order to make it exude a moving artistic charm, and make the viewer stop in front of the painting and linger (Ding, 2010).

Contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting is manifested in the new era by utilising aesthetic principles such as coordination, balance, contrast, and order in plane composition, constantly creating new artistic forms and providing people with updated visual enjoyment. Applying the concepts of Deconstructionism and Decompositionism in western art to contemporary meticulous flowers and birds paintings has elevated people's impression and evaluation standards of meticulous flowers and birds paintings from being true, delicate, and profound in artistic conception, promoting attention to the appreciation and formal meaning of flat visual language. Breaking away from the simulation of objective objects in traditional meticulous flowers and birds paintings, enhancing subjectivity in modelling, perfectly combining image modelling with modern composition consciousness, and presenting objective objects with geometric attributes. Through analysis and application, diversified unity is achieved. Its focus has formed a new artistic image and spatial expression, forming a painting form with strong characteristics and atmosphere of the times.

Artistic Conception in Contemporary Meticulous Flowers and Birds Painting

Emphasis on The Performance of Modeling Artistic Conception

Realistic meticulous flowers and bird works have their own unique characteristics in shape, composition and brush use. In the process of learning excellent modern works, we can draw the essence from ancient works and increase the connotation of works, so as to achieve the purpose of creating creative scenes. At the same time, the author can also comprehensively discuss the two aspects of brush and ink, so as to deeply analyse the relationship between brush and ink. Such a practice can make the meticulous painting more precise. To create the artistic conception of flowers and birds painting, we should pay attention to the expression of the form. Flowers and birds painting prefers to pursue the likeness of spirit, and be good at using all generalisation techniques, attaches importance to the likeness of appearance but does not stick to the likeness of appearance, and even pursues the difference between similarity of dissimilarity and similar while dissimilar, so as to realise the spirit of the object and the feelings of the author. The freehand style advocated "It is childish if we only pursue similarity in painting" and later "do not seek the likeness of shape". However, in the view of Jia Guangjian (2021), painting in an extreme similar outside and expressing an extreme similar inside leads to the spirits of all wonders. He claimed that an extreme similar form rather than an extreme true form, which is actually the image of Chinese painting aesthetics. Image is an emotional image, a mental image, image can be similar, can be different, can be real, or can be not real, when Jia Guangjian's meticulous colouring of lotus flowers presents the ethereal lotus pond, which is both real and imaginary, as well as poetic. Lin (2021) in his word, argues that that we can experience a surreal poetic realm through the reconstruction of the mind

Emphasise on the Presentation of Artistic Conception of Techniques

Chinese literati painting focuses on the unity of emotional images and rational concepts by incorporating meaning into the painting (Zhang, 2018). However, in the view of Ding (2019), contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting continuously draws on the techniques of other painting genres and draws reasonable inspiration from other forms of artistic expression in the development process, enhancing the artistic expression of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting and winning more people's love. However, in the process of creation, as Chen Yanqiu (2006) mentioned, the ultimate pursuit is not in reality, but in meaning. The concept of seizing nature advocated in the creation at that time was an extension of the theory of learning from nature, then epitomising in mind proposed by Zhang Zao (n.d) of the Tang Dynasty in his *Painting Realm*. The so-called source of mind is the state of mind, which is the initial driving force behind the expression of artistic conception. It is not difficult to see from this that the technical expression and application of Chinese meticulous painting, like the form, are not the main pursuit form of creation.

Guo (2010) believes that contemporary meticulous painters attach great importance to the role of colour language in their paintings. They have intentionally avoided the singularity and routinization of colours, updated the concept of colouring according to items, changed the program of three times of alums and nine times of dyeing, absorbed some of the expression languages of Western painting in colour processing, enriched the colours of traditional meticulous paintings, and created forms and expression techniques that are more suitable for modern people's aesthetic taste. However, in Guo Ruoxu's *Picture Observation and News*, he proposed that the present-day paintings, while valuing their elegant and beautiful appearance, are pleasing to the public and do not meet the principles and interests of painting. From this, it can be seen that the application of contemporary technology and the citation of western painting require a degree of mastery (Guo, 2010). However, we cannot excessively apply the expression methods of western oil painting light and colour, the use of backlight effects, as well as the abstract treatment of light and colour and the decorative techniques of light and colour realism, to the creation of Chinese painting.

As Guo et al. (2010) were concerned, the attempt to use various new materials, tools, and techniques has brought about exciting and diverse new images, but the excessive use of these things has greatly weakened the unique charm and spirit of traditional Chinese meticulous painting, making it easy to fall

into the category of craftsmanship. The creators have worked hard in both flowers and birds designs, and have developed their own artistic techniques based on this. At the same time, this is also the creator's interpretation of the anthropomorphic or personification of flowers and birds in nature, indirectly expressing the artistic conception and emotions he wants to express.

Emphasise on the Expression of The Artistic Conception of Color

Personalised colour expression can increase the aesthetic effect of a work and showcase its artistic value (Ding, 2019). When learning and creating realistic meticulous flowers and birds paintings, attention should be paid to coordinating and unifying colours and structures. This can not only enhance the freehand brushwork of meticulous painting, but also give people a deeper understanding of the author, colour, and composition considerations. Flowers and birds painting is a reflection of natural forms, which embodies the author's emotions towards life and nature. The natural environment is diverse and colourful, with various colours combined to form a unique style that can also reflect the creator's mood. Over time, one will develop their own style. For example, when creating works with meticulous patterns or flowers and birds themes, creators should pay attention to the integration of colour and shape to achieve a harmonious and in-depth performance of the picture.

Taking Jia Guangjian's flowers and birds paintings as an example, just like the *Blue Water and Golden Lotus* published in Chinese Painter on January 1, 2019, in 1997, and *The Moon is Always Brighter At Hometown*, in 1996, (as shown in Figure 3) these two works were his representatives, and his use of colour throughout the entire painting reached a vertical state. The large expanse of turquoise above contrasts with the light yellow patches, giving a strong visual impact. The blue tone above the painting appears calm and profound, and the blooming white lotus is both dynamic and serene, showcasing auspicious and peaceful elements. This visual effect fully unleashes the expressive power of colour language. From these works, we can fully realise that the formal language conveyed by the beauty of colour in the work is completely different from the composition and use of lines. It is a supplement to the first two and has been further strengthened.



Figure 3. Works of Professor Jia Guangjian
(Source: Chinese Art Gallery)

It can be seen that when the creator of meticulous painting takes a certain part as the main body to represent a whole, he first considered the overall shape and layout, and then the overall composition problem. This can make the realistic meticulous flowers and birds painting picture more clean and coordinated, and also lay the foundation for the colour distribution of the subsequent picture. Liu & Li (2016) cited Hegel's (1770-1831) prophetic assertion in *Aesthetics* The peak of vividness in painting can only be expressed through colour. The magic of colour can eventually become dominant, so that the content becomes insignificant compared to it. This makes painting a fragrant atmosphere, a magical technique of colour tones, and its correspondence, mutual radiance, and playful harmony begin to cross the boundary to music, just as relief sculpture starting to get close to painting during the rapid

development of sculpture. However, according to Chen (2022), any colour can cause us to have different feelings and psychological associations, and colours with the same hue can produce different psychological associations.

Emphasise on The Expression of Poetic Artistic Conception

The expression of poetic artistic conception in Chinese painting is similar to Ni (2021) in that literature and art are interconnected. Since ancient times, there has been a saying in China that poetry and painting are not separated from each other. The Greek poet Simonides (c. 556-468 BC) stated that poetry is a painting with sound, and painting is a poem without sound. During the Song Dynasty of China (960-1279), Su Shi (1037-1101) mentioned in his comments on others' paintings that poetry and painting are essentially the same, with natural craftsmanship and freshness. And another example, Wang Guowei (1877-1927) believed in his *Lyrics Of The Human World* that there is a realm with self and a realm without self, tearful eyes asking the flowers, they do not say a word, countless dropped petals drifting in the wind, then there is nothing left, how do I stand the empty chamber in the cold spring, while the sunset is setting in the sound of cuckoo, this is a realm of self. Picking up asters near the Eastern fence, my gaze upon the Southern mountain rests. The cold waves rise in a plain, and the white birds leisurely descend, this is a realm without self.

The focus of both classical poetry and meticulous flowers and birds painting is on the treatment of artistic conception. However, in order to enhance the overall effect of flowers and birds painting, it is necessary to pay attention to the organic combination of artistic methods, techniques, and means. Therefore, contemporary paintings not only emphasise the use of brush and ink techniques, but also emphasise the treatment of the poetic imagery in meticulous flowers and birds paintings. They use methods such as line drawing, meticulous light colour, meticulous heavy colour, and Mogu techniques to enhance the artistic conception of the painting, with a focus on shaping the poetic imagery of the painting, ensuring that the artistic conception of meticulous flowers and birds paintings is poetic.

Another view, as proposed by Wang Bi (226-249), is that one forgets the words when one gains the image, and forgets the image when one gains the meaning, thus achieving the state of words are finite while the meaning is infinite. This refers to the concept that the artistic conception of Chinese painting also emphasises the essence beyond the rhyme, which is an infinite transcendence of beauty. This indicates that artists since the Wei and Jin dynasties have fully understood the philosophy of life and the concept of beauty in life's taste (Liu, 2013). It is why Chinese painting pursues the meaning outside the painting and the poetry inside the painting. It was pointed out that painting should have the charm of poetry, so that poetry and images can blend together, and through the expression of painting images, infinite meanings can be realised from the limited painting. Just as Pan Tianshou (1897-1971) proposed in *Essays On TianGeHua Tan* that painting must have a brush outside the brush, ink outside the ink, meaning outside the meaning, that is, the essence of perfection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study discusses the artistic conception of contemporary meticulous flowers and birds painting, and reveals its importance and application value in artistic creation. We can see as Lao Tzu in *Tao Te Ching* put forward the philosophical concept of the nature of Dao and Fa, a profound influence on the development of Chinese painting, especially on flowers and birds painting. Flowers and birds symbolise the static and dynamic beauty of life respectively, and the combination of the two shows the harmonious picture of nature. The life spirit of Chinese painting is rooted in the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Zhuang Tzu, pursuing the beauty of artistic conception, nature, innocence and simplicity.

This study also specifically analyses the artistic conception in the aspects of modelling, creative technique, colour and poetry. It reveals the artistic conception of contemporary flowers and birds painting and emphasises the importance of immersive painting creation, which reflects the harmonious relationship between natural beauty and the artist's soul. This paper expounds that the artistic conception of Chinese painting is the integration of objective things and subjective emotions of the author, meaning is its core, and pursues the unity of mind and scene, meaning and environment.

In modern society, the connotation of Chinese meticulous flowers and birds painting is more rich because of the influence of aesthetic concept, and artistic conception has become people's special pursuit of this art form. Excellent meticulous paintings not only show the painter's skills, but also convey the overall atmosphere of his ideas and pictures, and its highest state is reflected in the heart of poetry. Looking forward to the future, meticulous flowers and birds painting will continue to explore and innovate on the basis of inheriting the tradition.

Globalisation will inject more international artistic elements into it and shape the style of the times. Technological progress will promote the integration of flowers and birds painting with digital art and virtual reality to provide a richer art experience. At the same time, with the promotion of environmental awareness, flowers and birds painting is expected to play an important role in the construction of ecological civilization. In addition, more attention will be paid to its education and dissemination, in order to train a new generation of artists and ensure the continuation and flourishing of the flowers and birds painting tradition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank all participants in this study and confirm that this research was not funded by any organisations.

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