A STUDY ON THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF INK ART OF CHINESE ANIMATION

Narong Khamwijit
Emeritus Sakda Pannengpetch
Raksarn Wannawattawong

Southeast Asia University, Bangkok, Thailand

As a treasure of Chinese traditional art, ink art has a unique aesthetic charm and artistic expression. Chinese animation has gradually incorporated ink and wash art, infusing it with distinctive Chinese aesthetic elements. The paper delves into the significance and progression of the integration between ink art and Chinese animation, examining the stages of growth and maturity. It also scrutinizes the artistic expression methods of ink art in Chinese animation, such as the use of white space, compositional techniques, the use of five inks and six colors, and a variety of brush strokes. Finally, it explores the artistic aesthetics of ink art in Chinese animation, emphasizing the beauty of meaning and mood. - We study the artistic aesthetics of ink and wash art in Chinese animation, which encompass the beauty of mood existing between reality and reality, the beauty of chiaroscuro existing between form and spirit, and the beauty of metaphor-implied content.

Keywords: Chinese animation; ink art; art language

Narong Khamwijit
Researcher, Southeast Asia University, Bangkok, Thailand
Research interests: teaching methodology, education market, education management
E-mail: narong@chula.ac.th

Emeritus Sakda Pannengpetch
Researcher, Southeast Asia University, Bangkok, Thailand
Research interests: education market, students behavior, teaching, pedagogy
E-mail: pannengpetch.s@gmail.com

Raksarn Wannawattawong
Researcher, Southeast Asia University, Bangkok, Thailand
Research interests: education market, students behavior, teaching, pedagogy
E-mail: ruksarn.v@chula.ac.th
Introduction

Ink and wash art attaches importance to the mood and expressive power of ink and brush, pursues the aesthetics of simplicity, innuendo, and white space, emphasizes the texture of ink and the movement of brushstrokes, and expresses images and emotions through the thickness of ink lines, the intensity of ink, and the changes in the use of the brush (Xu & Yu, 2023).

A variety of forms can express ink and wash art, from expressing themes and emotions through realistic brushwork to depicting delicate details, reflecting the Chinese people's pursuit and understanding of nature, humanity, and philosophy. Ink and wash art typically depicts landscapes, birds, flowers, and people as its themes. By echoing ink and brushstrokes and utilizing the emptiness of white space, it conveys a sense of tranquility, profoundness, and introverted emotions. At the same time, ink and wash art is characterized by metaphor and symbolism, expressing deep thoughts and philosophies through the use of imagery and the metaphor of the theme.

As Chinese animation has developed, ink and wash art have gradually integrated with it, infusing unique Chinese aesthetic elements into the works. Therefore, the author delves into the artistic expression of ink art in Chinese animation from three perspectives: the integration of ink art with Chinese animation, the artistic expression of ink art in Chinese animation, and the aesthetics of ink art in Chinese animation.

The fusion of Ink Art and Chinese animation

Integration of values

Wang (2022) stated: Ink art is an important part of traditional Chinese culture; it is created using water, ink, brushes, and other materials and tools. With its unique flavor and expressive power, ink painting provides a rich source of inspiration for Chinese animation. The integration of Chinese animation with ink and wash art can not only showcase the charm of traditional culture, but also present a modern aesthetic sense. This cross-border fusion fosters the innovative growth of Chinese animation, broadens the inheritance and promotion of ink art, and simultaneously introduces a fresh aesthetic experience to the audience, enhancing their understanding of the depth of Chinese traditional culture.

Ink and wash paintings frequently utilize landscapes, flowers, and birds as their primary creative elements to convey the artist's emotions, aligning with the aesthetic concept of "unity of things and me" and the tradition of expressing emotions through landscapes in traditional Chinese culture (Dou, 2022).

The unique flavor of ink art and the connotation of traditional Chinese culture provide Chinese animation with a unique aesthetic style and emotional expression. The use of ink art makes Chinese animation works richer and more diversified, presenting distinctive visual effects and artistic infectivity. At the same time, the integration of ink art also helps to inherit and develop Chinese traditional culture and let more people understand and appreciate the charm of ink art.

Therefore, the integration of ink art and Chinese animation is of great significance in promoting the development of the Chinese animation industry and enhancing its international influence.
The integration phases

Stage I: growth period

The initial phase of integrating ink art and Chinese animation involves growth, primarily through the incorporation of ink painting's rendering technique into traditional animation production, resulting in a unique artistic style and visual impact for the animation work. Specifically, ink animation adopts the rendering technique of traditional Chinese ink painting, realizes the high degree of unity of mood, ink, and line, and presents (Han, 2022).

For instance, in the animation "Tadpole Looking for Mom," the creator incorporates painting elements into the animation, resulting in a picture style characterized by bright lines. The animation combines the characteristics of ink painting and animation to create a unique visual effect. The use of ink and wash rendering techniques makes the picture show unique brush strokes and ink colors, creating an ancient and elegant artistic atmosphere.

At the same time, the use of ink and wash elements also adds cultural connotation and artistic aesthetics to the animation work. The lines in the work are bright, powerful, simple, and expressive. The use of lines serves not only to depict the image but also to express emotion and promote the storyline's development.

Through the precise use of lines, the creator successfully conveys the joys and sorrows of the tadpoles in their adventurous journey to find their mother, enabling the audience to deeply feel the emotional changes of the characters. "Tadpole in Search of Mother" presents the storyline in a straightforward and concise manner.

By reducing the redundant details and highlighting the key plots and emotions, the story becomes more compact and heartwarming. This simple and concise narrative style is also in line with the ink painting's pursuit of mood and white space, leaving ample room for the audience's imagination. In addition to incorporating the elements of ink painting, the work also incorporates modern animation techniques. By combining ink painting with traditional animation production processes, the work embodies traditional aesthetic features and, at the same time, has a higher degree of expressiveness and fluidity.

In the initial stage of integrating ink art and Chinese animation, one can observe that ink animation shares similarities with ink painting in terms of brush, ink, and line expression, while emphasizing the creation of mood to enhance the artistic quality and distinctiveness of Chinese traditional culture. However, the integration of ink art and Chinese animation still faces certain challenges. Specifically, ink animation pursues the expression of mood and poetry rather than the accurate reproduction of real space. Ink color and line flow techniques create a unique sense of space, allowing the audience to sense the harmonious relationship between the characters and the environment in the picture.

This style of expression makes the spatial perspective of the scene and the distance between levels seem vague, giving the animation a mysterious and dreamy texture. Although the rendering method of ink animation is different from the traditional animation form, its unique artistic effect and aesthetic experience still have high viewing value. Viewers can understand and feel the spatial relationship in the animation through their own perception and imagination, resulting in a good aesthetic experience.

Stage II: Maturity

According to Gou (2021), the second stage of the integration of ink painting art and Chinese animation has made remarkable progress in terms of technological innovation,
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content innovation, and local cultural integration. This integration not only enriches the manifestation of ink and wash art but also promotes the development of China's animation industry and improves the influence and international competitiveness of China's animation. For instance, the ink wash animation Landscape will expedite the integration of the scene background and the frame-by-frame animation, thereby presenting an imaginary image through superposition and creating a striking visual effect.

The application of 3D technology, based on the rapid development of information technology, has given great impetus to the development of ink animation. Through the introduction of three-dimensional technology, ink animation can realize greater breakthroughs and innovations in visual expression, solve the lens sense problem of two-dimensional ink animation, and open up a new development path for the integration of ink art and Chinese animation.

For example, Chinese animation works such as "Big Fish Begonia" and "White Snake: Fate" have deepened the integration of ink art and Chinese animation by incorporating materials, time and space, concepts, perception, and other innovative ways. These works are more in line with the needs of the times in terms of expression, breaking through the traditional forms of animation, combining ink and wash art with modern storytelling, characterization, etc., showing the unique artistic charm of animation works, improving the social status of Chinese animation, and giving the general public a turning point in their view of Chinese animation.

The integration of ink animation and Chinese animation not only shows the combination of technology and content, but also reflects the creators' deep excavation and innovation of local culture. Combining ink art with traditional Chinese cultural elements can enhance the works' rich traditional Chinese cultural connotations and convey deep cultural emotions, thereby endowing ink animation and Chinese animation with unique cultural connotations and contemporary characteristics (Tang, 2021).

The artistic expression of ink art in Chinese animation

White space in ink art
Chinese animation widely uses white space, an important expression of ink art. White space refers to intentionally keeping a certain blank area in the picture, emphasizing the physical objects in the picture through contrast, and creating a sense of aesthetics and mood between the real and the imaginary. In Chinese animation, creators use the ink art of white space to skillfully create a far-reaching picture, reduce the details, and carve out key elements to make the picture (Bai & Zhu, 2020). The surface appears simple and pure. The simple presentation leaves more room for the audience's imagination, allowing them to freely construct imaginary stories and inner emotions in their minds.

For example, the white space in "Landscape" gives the audience a sense of the landscape's magnificence and vastness. In "The Pastoral Flute," the absence of white space, revealing only the shepherd boy and the water buffalo, purifies the image, fostering a feeling of a relaxed and extended ambiance. This type of white space not only emphasizes the picture's theme, but also makes the audience feel more emotions and moods in an invisible way.

White space in Chinese animation has a unique expressive power and aesthetic sense, which can shape the depth and hierarchy of the picture and bring more thoughts and
associations to the audience. The use of white space makes Chinese animation visually more attractive and unique, as well as conveying traditional Chinese aesthetic concepts and artistic values.

**How to compose ink art**

Composition plays a decisive role in creation and can influence the visual effect and emotional expression of the work. The composition of ink art in Chinese animation emphasizes balance and symmetry, freedom, and emotional expression (Zhou, 2020). These compositional techniques create a unique and attractive visual effect that conveys rich emotions and moods, making the work more vivid and attracting the audience's attention.

First, ink painting tends to adopt the principles of balance and symmetry in composition. This type of composition can give the picture a stable and harmonious feeling, as well as show the scenery of clear water in the mountains and a paradise in the world. By dividing the picture into two symmetrical parts, the creator can depict various scenes, such as elders listening to a young man practicing the zither, fishermen fishing on the shore, and underwater fish shuttling, among others. This rich superposition of objects, combined with the melodious sound of the zither and other elements, can evoke the viewer's inner sense of enjoyment.

Secondly, ink art emphasizes the freedom of composition and emotion expression. Compared to fixed time and space, ink art pays more attention to the expression of the creator's state of mind and emotion and can flexibly bring different scene elements together in the same picture, resulting in a strong visual impact and attraction that further enhances the expressive effect of the work.

Thirdly, multi-point perspective in ink painting is a unique way of spatial expression that enhances the realism and three-dimensionality of the picture by setting up multiple perspective points in the picture and displaying objects and scenes from different angles and perspectives. This technique can make the picture more three-dimensional and realistic, and at the same time, the use of multi-point perspective provides ink art creators with more creative space so that they can better express their emotions and mood and create more personalized and infectious works.

**The artistic language of five inks and six colors**

One of the artistic expressions of ink art in Chinese animation is the use of the artistic language of five inks and six colors, expressing emotions and rendering moods through changes in the intensity of the ink and the use of other colors. The five ink colors in ink art refer to the color layering of ink, including burnt ink, thick ink, heavy ink, light ink, and clear ink. Each ink color has its own specific use and expressive effect. By using different ink colors, creators can create rich expressive effects and create different atmospheres and emotions.

Zheng & Li (2020) divide the expressive techniques of ink art into six colors: black, white, dry, wet, thick, and light. The use of these techniques in the painting process can make the picture more vivid and three-dimensional, and by adjusting the concentration of the ink color and applying wet or dry techniques, the creator can make the work present different textures and layers.

The five- and six-color artistic language of ink art expands the picture beyond a single tone of black and white and allows for a wide range of expressive effects.
The creator can highlight the key points, express emotions, and add new ideas to the whole picture by changing the ink color and using other colors. For example, in an ink-based picture, the creator can skillfully use bright red and other colors to increase the highlights, making the picture more vivid and interesting.

**Multiple types of penmanship**

The brushwork in ink art includes various techniques, such as starting, closing, hiding, side strokes, etc., each of which has its own unique way of application and performance effect. The picture can present diversified expressive effects by interweaving and interspersing different brush strokes, more accurately conveying the creative intent and emotion, and providing the audience with a unique artistic experience.

Chinese animation uses multiple types of brushwork in ink art to express characters, depict scenes, show emotions, and more. For example, when depicting characters, creators can use the starting brush, hidden brush, and other strokes to express their lines and outlines, highlighting their features and dynamics.

When depicting scenes, creators can use the closing brush, the side of the brush, and other strokes to express the texture and hierarchy of natural scenery. At the same time, through the changes and combinations of different strokes, creators can also express different emotions and moods, creating a unique artistic atmosphere.

Furthermore, the multiple types of brushwork in ink art can not only enrich the picture's expression but also show the creator's skills and personality. Creators can flexibly use different strokes according to the needs of the works to make them more vivid, full of changes and three-dimensional sense.

**The visual appeal of ink art in Chinese animation**

**The mood's beauty - the real and the imaginary**

The artistic aesthetics of ink art in Chinese animation are firstly embodied in the beauty of mood, in which the harmony between reality and reality is an important aesthetic expression. Conceptual beauty refers to the fusion of emotion and scenery, creating a unique visual effect and emotional world. The creators of ink art enhance the transformation of reality in the scene by employing the technique of balancing reality and emptiness, thereby establishing a distinctive artistic atmosphere and mood, stimulating the audience's imagination and emotional resonance, and providing a unique artistic experience.

In Chinese animation, ink and wash art creates a fascinating mood by expressing a combination of reality and falsehood. By integrating the emotion with the scenery, the creators are able to visualize the emotion and then express the deep emotion and meaning. The treatment of "real and imaginary" allows the scenery and emotion in the picture to reflect and complement each other, enhancing the richness, vividness, and connotation of the work. For instance, creators have the ability to blend reality with dreams and idealized scenes, resulting in poetic images created through the interplay of reality and imagination.

In "Pastoral Flute", the creator crafts a dreamy and poetic dream of a shepherd boy, expertly employing the artistic technique of interplay between reality and reality. This technique emphasizes the shift between reality and reality in the scene, infuses rich visual language and deep artistic connotation into the ink animation, and provides the audience with a unique artistic experience.
**The beauty of chiaroscuro - both in form and spirit**

The beauty of chiaroscuro in Chinese animation embodies the artistic aesthetics of ink art, where both form and spirit play important roles. Charm refers to the fact that the work combines both human spirit and form, while chiaroscuro refers to the fusion of scene and natural scenery, as well as the way of dealing with the real and the imaginary, which successfully expresses a certain meaning or flavor.

This meaning or flavor not only reflects the creator's understanding and expression of traditional culture, but also provides the audience with a unique and profound aesthetic experience. This aesthetic experience allows the audience to feel the charm and value of traditional Chinese culture while enjoying the work.

Traditional Chinese aesthetics emphasizes the expression of "Qi", whereas the aesthetic thought of the Six Dynasties period incorporated "rhyme," which formed the aesthetic idea of Qi Yun beauty and gradually became an important concept of Chinese painting (Cheng, 2018).

By showing the vitality of characters, birds, and animals, creators can create an atmosphere with vitality and meaning. In Chinese animation, the creators show the aesthetic effect of chiaroscuro through the ink art of both form and spirit, making the picture full of vitality by vividly expressing the characters, animals, and other images.

For example, in "Big Fish Begonia", through the image of Tsubaki holding the narwhal in rotation and the colorful leaves fluttering around, the creator creates a static picture with a sense of dynamism and vitality, which demonstrates the classical Chinese temperament. At the same time, the brush's rounded and flowing strokes create a complete and full Chinese fantasy world, fully demonstrating the work's beauty and conveying deep-seated emotions and meaning.

**Metaphorical beauty**

The metaphorical beauty of ink and wash art in Chinese animation, which conveys a unique sense of beauty via metaphor and symbolism, also mirrors its artistic aesthetics. This aesthetic approach perfectly matches traditional Chinese culture's metaphorical beauty and provides new ideas and directions for the development and innovation of ink animation. When the audience appreciates the works, they can delve deeper into their connotations and elevate the aesthetic quality of the art by interpreting the metaphorical techniques employed in the works. In Chinese animation works, creators use metaphor to hide the meaning and symbolism of the storyline or image in the details.

For instance, the creator skillfully employs the sound of the wind, an environmental sound effect, to convey the inner emotional state and future destiny of the old piano player. The sound of the wind usually represents the power and changes in nature, but in animation works, it can symbolize the changes in society and the ups and downs of personal destiny.

The plot and symbols in "Acacia," like the red bean shedding, the butterfly breaking the cocoon, and the door partition, carry profound metaphorical connotations, implying that the protagonist, Liuniang (the actress in Amination), matures, breaks away from her class, and so on. This type of metaphorical beauty conveys emotions and the fates of individual characters.

This technique of expressing emotions, thoughts, and meanings through metaphors makes the work more connotative and deeper.
When the audience enjoys the work, they can further realize the emotions and thoughts conveyed by the work through the interpretation and perception of the metaphors, which adds to the enjoyment of viewing.

**Conclusion**

Ink and wash art plays a significant role in Chinese animation creation. Ink and wash art's white space, composition, and artistic language of five inks and six colors, as well as multiple types of penmanship and other expressive methods, make Chinese animation works richer in artistic aesthetics and aesthetic value.

At the same time, ink art conveys the beauty of mood, rhyme, and metaphor, which gives animation works a deep emotional and artistic value.

**References:**


