



## Chinese Environment or Western Environment:

### Which Choice the Art Education Should Make at the Crossroads?

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#### Abstract

In twenty years since reforming and opening up, China has developed an active and stable road of reform belonging to her, and the art circle has immediately become the swiftest industry. Especially in the 21st century, with the development of globalization, the economic strength of China is continually strengthened and the comprehensive national strength is continually enhanced, which offers the extended platform for art education and a new opportunity for the development of various colleges. At the present time, China art education is in the new primary stage of continual improvement and reform, and the change of environment compels we must reconsider the challenges what we face. Whether the education system under traditional mode can adapt the development of new situation? Whether it is feasible to blindly exclude external culture? Facing new problems, we must adopt new methods. As viewed from artists' views, this article analyzed problems existing art education from various aspects, and aiming at the combination of different art education types with the social education mode on multiple layers such as science, ethic and culture, we introduce the new education concept of "ecological view of art" and study that from our own opinions.

**Keywords:** Art education, Chinese and western culture, Art quality, Ecological view of art

#### 1. China art education orientation in artists' eyes

With the multiform development in the information times and the continual update of education system, the production pattern, the work pattern, the life pattern even the thinking mode of human society will change with them, which undoubtedly brings forward new task and requirement for higher education. And the system and development of art education have early been the focuses. But the quick development of country also increases the pressure of domestic art education to certain meanings, and the urgent mind compel it continually transform to extensive type, but the fixed education mode and traditional education system induce the art education can not adapt quickly rhythmical social reform, and many domestic people still hold antiforeign poignant ideas, which makes art education trail the requirement and advancement of the time.

##### 1.1 *The situation of China art education in the present age*

"In fact, human society needs not much people to engage art and artist has no occupation. What is art? Art is feeling and inspiration." "School education plays a very bad role. Now so much examinee takes the examination of art, which is completely misled. Many people should not study this subject, other subjects may be better for them, but because their study achievements are not good, so they can go to college only through art colleges." Mr. Wu Guanzhong signed with emotion when talking about the actuality of China art education. Mr. Guanzhong was very pessimistic when treating the development trend and actuality of domestic art education. This sort of pessimistic idea arises from the confusion of present art circle. In faith, the present art education plays a role that we can not applaud. Student recruiting with large scale makes art taint dense commercial breath, and more and more students select art for certain intention, and most of them may have not art cell, and when they graduate, most of them are at grass, and art education also runs counter to original intention of art education among vicious circles.

Therefore, Mr. Yuan Yunfu (the president of Art Institute of Tsinghua University) made profound analysis to the situation of domestic art education. As the leader in the domain of art education, professor Yuan Yunfu said with sincere words and earnest wishes, "Modern art education is so flourishing, but the leading department of art education is at the most weakest node," "the proportion of student and teacher has not been the objective proportion of art, and the burden of college is too heavy," "after all, student recruiting with large scale is a sort of burden for every school, so the teaching quality can not be ensured. If the schooling mode of the art college runs the school as engineering colleges, the

art college can not run better.” It is obvious that various art colleges recruit students so quickly with large scale and wide caliber, and many problems such as the teaching quality and the teacher force can not be ensured, which are focuses noticed by artists even the society. From certain meaning, it is very irresponsible to students, education business and society. After all, the education is not the face engineering, and the art education needs individuation and characteristics.

Indeed, with the development of society and the enhancement of international status, as the foundation stone of national development, education plays very important role. Though China has numerous populations, the crowds with higher education are comparatively few, so we can understand that the country is anxious to extend people’s educational proportion. In recent years, whether student quantity or schooling system and scale change to different degrees. Undeniably, that delays the urgent situation of stage education to some extent, but more art colleges excessively pay attention to exterior investment of education, and the teaching environment of education is perfected, but actual college quality and teacher quality are dubitable.

### *1.2 The actuality of western art education*

In foreign counties, the situation of art education is widely divergent. When talking about art and culture, countrymen always praise that our own five thousands’ culture is so splendid and animadvert on the superficial and popular western art without traditions, and they don’t know with the quick development of science and technology, the western culture with only hundreds years’ history had early exceeded us. The stagnation is retrograde, and the rather that we are always in thousands years’ historical river. Through objective comparison, it seems that foreign art education is more active and novel to adapt the global advancement, and the reason is not in how large their investments are, but the foreign concept to treat the art education is very different to the concept of China.

“Foreign art colleges pay more attention to students’ independent art smells, individual attempts or the sociality and the depth of human thinking involved in works (Yuanzuo).” The foreign art education system advocates the independence and freedom, and it always specializes in utilizing the advantaged resource in the society, and whether the recruiting scale or the course structure are very extensive and flexible, and they all blazon forth their own education concept, objective and style through their own tenet and characteristic. The mode that foreign art colleges select talents is opening and free, and they pay more attention to students’ individual ability and inner art passions. This education with object is profound and lively. Foreign selection modes of “one to one” and “many to one” forms complete contrast with “ten thousands people’s examinations” in few days in China.

Of course, because of different national situations and political backgrounds between China and foreign countries, the foreign education system can not run in China. After all, they can be realized based on certain social base. However, it can be a very meaningful example to help us to establish a new art education mode which can adapt Chinese cultural tradition and Chinese characters, and it deserves us to study and research.

## **2. The new concept of art education in new times**

In the information times of globalization, the modernization development and the people-oriented education concept of China require that the art education must go on the innovational road. Whether for the system or the theory of education, the technology or the culture, we all need innovation. Therefore, we must consider how to innovate or where the social factors are to restrain our innovation, and only thus consideration can offer new view and necessary ideal resource for China art education in continual transformation.

### *2.1 Chinese and western cross concept of art education under new situation*

The reform of art education in China is later than western counties. The so-called “art improvement” or “art revolution” rooted in intellectuals’ denial, rebellion and consideration to the tradition in early China. Some advanced intellectuals begun to simulate western education system of academism, which was a sort of choice of times. After 1949 when new China was established, because old China was in the state falling to pieces and the masses had no means to live, that induced that education mode mixed with western realism, domestic fossil traditional idea and intellectuals’ reform system to form a sort of new art education mode. After 1990s, though the art education mode was made some adjustments, but the education system and guidance idea had not obvious changes. So through the history of China art education, we can see that many problems had occurred in early time. In another word, the modern art education mode of China is likes that the new car after hundred years is drove by a nag.

The “west” is the concept relative to the “east”. “In our eyes, for a long time, ‘west’ is the cultural, political and strategic concept of imperialism (Round the World the Times).” Undeniably, the shadow induced by the historical problems still hover in many Chinese’ minds. However, if China wants to really realize peaceful development, she must break the misunderstanding to “west” and get rid of the western influences. In recent years, different development history, social system and value orientations between China and western countries made mutual cognitions little wrong, which undoubtedly increased the national emotion and exclusive cultural consciousness. The culture has no boundaries, and in the day that the economy develops so quickly, the cultural opposition between China and western countries

obviously offends time tide. Only the cultural communication is more frequent, our views and selections are more extensive. We must treat west and western cultures more objectively, strengthen the cultural communication among countries, utilize the observation concept with multiple dimensions to dig, abstract and fill up different value views and cultural differences each other, and seek better and more advanced art reform method to seed in domestic art education business.

In fact, some domestic senior educational scholars in the art domain have realized this point early, and all kinds of feeling welled up in their hearts. "The problems faced by China art education are specifically complex", Mr. Pan Gongkai who was the president of China Central Academy of Fine Arts said in the interview of "the contemporary situation of art education". In recent years, many Chinese education scholars summarized and updated the education mode of China modern art in virtue of western theory, and hoped to find a proper point adapting China development or art education. But in many times, the situation is not perfect. Where is the reason? Where the factors restrain the innovation?

"The problems faced by China art education are specifically complex, because we have very deep cultural tradition, and it is a sort of culture which had been flourishing for a long time in the world." I guess that for the embarrassing situation of China culture and art education, the biggest worry may come from home, and the examination-oriented education system with long history still occupies the dominant status. It is very a very challenging task to exactly understand and grasp the concept of tradition and deepen the cognition to tradition importance and future meaning in the range of art education in modern new situation. We should find reasons from multiple subjects and education system, or compare western development logic to find difference in about hundred years' art education history, and accordingly form the theoretic method of independent innovation or education platform. The society is developing and the time is updating, and for the problems evolved in education, the speed of their updating frequency is too quick to be anticipated, and the next is the uncertainty and suspicion to the so-called "new mode of education". What we should recommend and study is to follow the step of time, extend our views and develop our thinking. After all, the art education is one special part in the education system, and it is the integrated carrier of various subjects, so in the voice of globalization, the new concept and reform method what we want to achieve are always not in these theories but out these theories.

### *2.2 The integration of ecological view and comprehension in the cultivation of art quality*

The education without art education is not complete education, and the higher colleges need art education, and the actualization of art education is the need to adapt the development of modern society, and the new requirement and the new challenge of the development to higher education. The art quality cultivation of college students exerts very important function to their moral characters and thinking abilities. As one part of human quality education content, the content of art education is extensive and associated, and it uses its language to transmit the information which can not be explained in words, so many artists believe that the art education is the diversiform cognitive mode which is different to intelligent education, and it is a sort special and important "cognitive ability". The present high level informationization and industrialization induce the isolated stage between people and nature is more and more obvious. More human have realized that only art can help us better actualize the uniform of self sensibility and sense, and make human intelligence and artistic talent fully exerted and functioned.

"In nature, the art education of ecological view is a sort of integration of life and feeling education, and it achieves directly the fountain of life through the most direct life activity and the inspiration and inducement to the cultural connotation and taste," "and the art education of ecological view is not pure art knowledge education, and it is not the art technology education, and it advocates the integration of teaching and the shaping of integer to cultivate students' sensitive and abundant taste feeling, sense and innovation (Guo, Xiangzhen, The Art Graduate School of Taiwan Normal University)." For the art education under traditional system, this ecological relationship may be the new element in the art domain. But in the process of the multiplex association with the world, the art education has not been only limited to study pure art knowledge or technologies. What we should do is to put the art in an extensive relationship which is the complete domain integrating life, feeling, culture and science, and accordingly make students can contact lively and complete art and taste the culture and the human spirit in art.

The art education of ecological view emphasizes using the people-oriented idea to establish a sort of education system with the most opening breakthrough in practice, which uses foreign opening and free education mode for references to some extents, and its final intention is to actualize the complete and free development through the mutual integration between human integral development with various aspects such as science, society, life, culture and feeling. That is to say, the people cultivated according to this mode should be a human with complete development, not the single talent who ignores the human idea but emphasizes skills under the traditional education mode.

The new thinking of the ecological view art education is different to the traditional and narrow art education in the past, and its integral construction breaks former limitations among subjects, designs an organic comprehensive education concept. The talents cultivated under this education system can accord with the requirement of new century, and the art education under this system can follow the development step of the time.

### 3. Conclusions

The education must adapt the change of society, the transform of politics, the development of science and technology and the transfer of culture to advance with time. So the art education is. Therefore, every time and every stage have its task of reform. The teaching staff of college art education should notice the new trend of the from moment to moment, represent advanced cultural direction of extensive people, join into the reform tide of art education, and try their best to do the work of college art education. After all, the road of education reform shoulders heavy responsibilities.

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