

Research on the Characteristics of Contemporary Realistic Ceramic Sculpture in Jingdezhen-Taking the Works of the Zeng Longsheng-Zhang Yuxian Family as an Example

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Jingdezhen is renowned for its realistic ceramic sculpture, characterized by its vivid artistry that captures the essence of realism. This research seeks to shed light on the evolution and unique attributes of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, focusing on the eminent contributions of the Zeng Longsheng-Zhang Yuxian family. The study aims to delineate the current landscape of this art form, scrutinize the craftsmanship of its leading masters, and delineate the contemporary developments and characteristics that distinguish Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture.

Materials and Methods: Adopting a comprehensive approach, this investigation utilizes a literature review, field studies, and case analyses to explore the nuances of Jingdezhen's contemporary realistic ceramic sculpture. Key insights were garnered through interviews with notable artists Zhang Yuxian and Zhang Yinling, aiming to deepen the understanding of the artistic and aesthetic evolution within this domain.

Results: An in-depth examination of the works by three Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture masters has unveiled the progressive trajectory of this art form. The study provides a multifaceted analysis encompassing craftsmanship, artistic merit, and aesthetic values, thereby uncovering the distinctive features that define Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture and underscore its unique place in the art world.

Conclusion: The legacy of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, as exemplified by its three masters, demonstrates a remarkable continuity in craftsmanship. Their creative journeys and aesthetic expressions encapsulate the evolving character of different eras, ensuring the tradition's perpetuity while propelling contemporary Jingdezhen sculpture towards innovative horizons.

Keywords: Jingdezhen; Ceramic Sculpture; Realism; Characteristics

Introduction

Ceramics have played a pivotal role in the tapestry of human civilization, embodying a blend of both material utility and profound cultural significance. From their origins as objects of daily use, ceramics have transcended their utilitarian roots, evolving into a form of artistic expression that includes the realm of ceramic sculpture. Within this expansive field, the realistic ceramic sculpture of Jingdezhen occupies a distinctive and pivotal role in the annals of ceramic art's evolution, particularly in China. This prominence stems not only from its unique visual appeal, which is deeply infused with national cultural identity but also from its stylistic adaptation that resonates with the spirit of each historical era.

Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, enriched by generations of craftsmanship and innovation, has matured into a distinct quality and system in its own right. It epitomizes the synergy between the tangible creation of objects and the intangible essence of cultural expression, thereby becoming an essential component of the Chinese ceramic art tradition.

The genesis of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture can be traced back to the Song Dynasty when realistic blue-and-white porcelain figurative ceramic sculptures emerged. During the Yuan Dynasty, the tradition of realistic blue-and-white porcelain figurative ceramic sculpture continued in Jingdezhen. In the Ming Dynasty, the development of realistic sculpture in Jingdezhen was relatively slow. However, by the Qing Dynasty, realistic ceramic sculpture in Jingdezhen saw significant development and achieved high levels of accomplishment, with many lifelike and realistic works appearing.



During the period of the Republic of China, the development of Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture further progressed, giving rise to ceramic sculpture masters such as Zeng Longsheng. After 1949, Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture entered the contemporary development period, witnessing the emergence of three important consecutive ceramic sculpture masters—Zeng Longsheng, Zhang Yuxian, and Zhang Yinling. Their realistic ceramic sculpture works are highly representative, and through the analysis of their works, one can understand the changes and characteristics of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture.

This research delves into the historical and contemporary landscape of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, with a special focus on the seminal works of Zeng Longsheng, Zhang Yuxian, and Zhang Yinling. Through case studies, it aims to analyze and research the changes and characteristics of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, to provide a clearer understanding of the development status and features of Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture art.

Objectives

1. To study the current condition of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture from 1949 to 2023, focusing on the life and works of three masters: Zeng Longsheng, Zhang Yuxian, and Zhang Yinling.
2. To analyze the distinctive features and craftsmanship of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture as exemplified by the works of the Zeng Longsheng-Zhang Yuxian family.

Literature review

Relevant literature for this research includes monographs, theses, and journal articles, among others. These documents hold significant reference value for the current research. The following are the analyses of five selected dissertations:

1. "A research on the Characteristics of 20th Century Chinese Ceramic Sculpture" by Xu Dandan (Zhengzhou University, 2013): This dissertation offers an extensive overview of 20th-century Chinese ceramic sculpture, categorizing it into four distinct periods. Critically, while it covers a broader scope, it provides essential insights into the historical context and development trajectory of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, specifically for the latter three periods that align with this study's timeframe. However, the evaluation of methodologies reveals a need for deeper analysis in the context of Jingdezhen's unique contributions to the field.

2. "Research on Contemporary Ceramic Sculpture Creation in China" by Zhang Zhiquan (Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, 2011): Focusing on the historical background and current situation of ceramic sculpture, this dissertation emphasizes academic styles. It serves as a beneficial resource for understanding the post-1980s historical context but lacks a detailed exploration of Jingdezhen's role in shaping contemporary ceramic sculpture, highlighting a gap this research aims to address.

3. "Sixty Years of Jingdezhen Ceramic Sculpture: A Perspective from Sculpture Porcelain Factories" by Tao Hui (Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, 2013): This article, centered around sculpture porcelain factories, explores the development changes of Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture over sixty years. It provides insights and inspiration for contemporary ceramic sculpture creation. With a temporal alignment with the current research, it contributes to the exploration of the continuity and development trajectory of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture. Additionally, the dissertation's research achievements in various aspects such as craftsmanship and aesthetics of Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture offer important references for the current research.

4. "On the Forming Techniques of Jingdezhen Ceramic Sculpture" by Ge Songbai (Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, 2012): This dissertation extensively discusses the forming methods, techniques, and related tools of Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture, analyzing the sculptural characteristics. It provides a beneficial theoretical platform for practical ceramic sculpture art creation and teaching activities. The detailed scientific analysis of the craftsmanship and techniques of Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture in this

document proves helpful for the current research, particularly in understanding the technical characteristics of Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture.

5. "Research on Jingdezhen Modern Ceramic Sculpture" by Luo Yi (Jingdezhen Ceramic University, 2016): This dissertation is divided into five chapters, analyzing Jingdezhen modern ceramic sculpture. The first part defines relevant concepts, followed by an analysis of the deep foundation of traditional Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture and the development overview of related modern art. The dissertation then compiles representative artists and their works, conducts an overall analysis, summarizes the innovative breakthroughs of Jingdezhen modern ceramic sculpture about traditional porcelain sculpture, and concludes with an examination of existing issues. Although the focus is on Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture post the opening-up reforms, mainly exploring craftsmanship and aesthetics, it does not specifically address realistic ceramic sculpture. Nevertheless, it holds significant value for reference and inspiration in terms of craftsmanship and aesthetics, offering insights that align with the current research's objectives.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this chapter is illustrated in Figure 1.

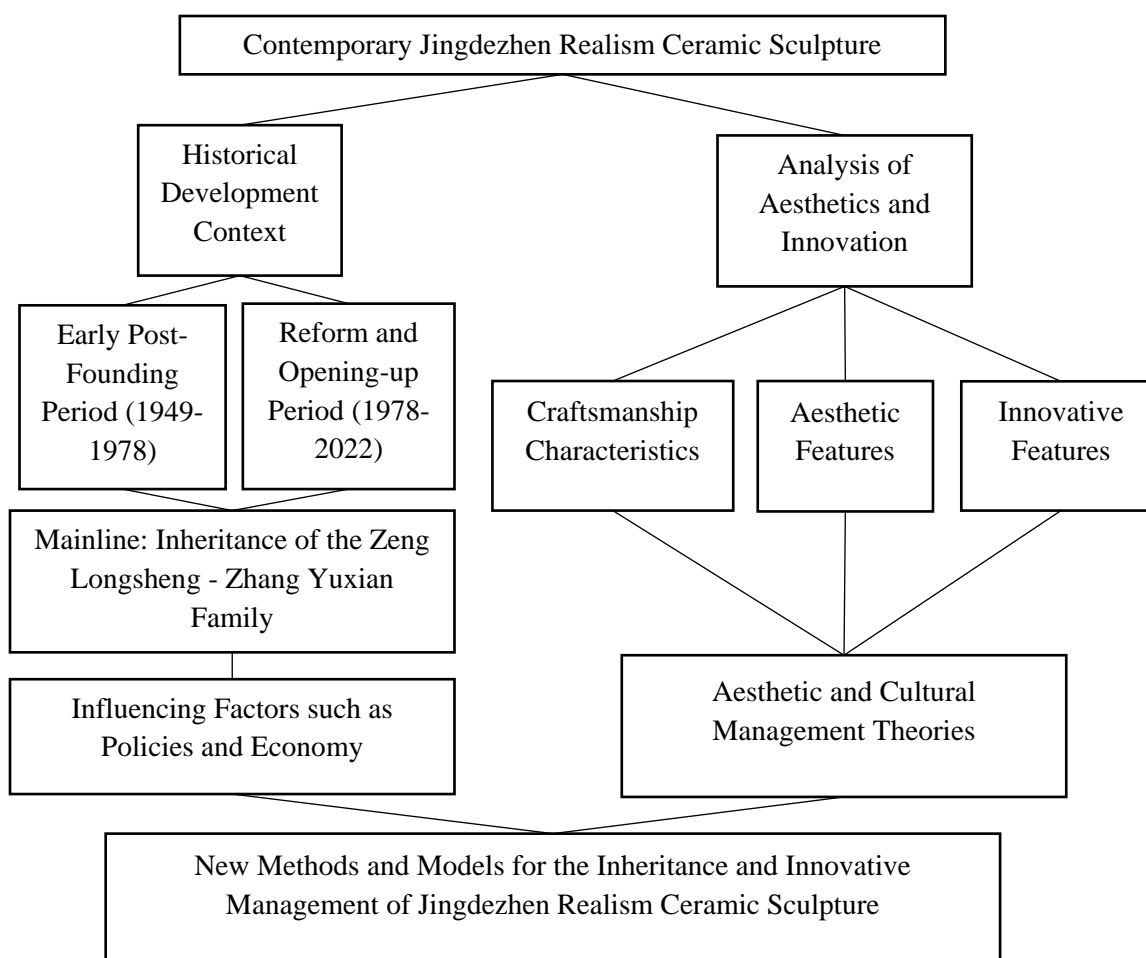


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Note: Constructed by the author



Methodology

This research is based on the needs of the research topic and primarily employs the following research methods:

1. Literature Review Method:

The literature review method involves collecting, identifying, and organizing literature to form a scientific understanding of facts through the research of relevant materials. This method is particularly appropriate for addressing the research questions regarding the development trends and aesthetic characteristics of contemporary realistic ceramic sculpture in Jingdezhen, as it allows for a comprehensive analysis of existing theories and findings within the field. In the initial stages of the research, this research will extensively collect and organize literature related to the subject, utilizing databases and journals that are academically recognized to ensure the credibility and relevance of the sources.

2. Field Investigation Method:

The field investigation method entails conducting on-site research that combines theory with practice. This method is chosen for its ability to provide direct, empirical evidence through observation, interviews, document collection, descriptive statistics, and photographic documentation, making it particularly suitable for understanding the tangible aspects of ceramic sculpture such as historical development and production techniques. The sampling strategy for participants will include a purposive selection of artisans, experts, and custodians of the Jingdezhen ceramic tradition, ensuring a diverse and knowledgeable base for data collection. This approach is suitable as it targets individuals with direct experience and expertise in the field of realistic ceramic sculpture.

3. Case Research Method:

The case research method is an empirical research approach aimed at in-depth analysis and comprehensive examination of a complex, specific phenomenon in reality. This method will be employed to thoroughly understand and analyze the representative works of the family of Zeng Longsheng and Zhang Yuxian in Jingdezhen. Subsequently, it will be used to uncover the distinctive features of realistic ceramic sculpture in Jingdezhen.

Results

1. Life and Representative Works of the Three Masters in Jingdezhen: Zeng Longsheng, Zhang Yuxian, and Zhang Yinling.

1.1 Zeng Longsheng's Life and Analysis of His Works

Zeng Longsheng, born in 1901 and passed away in 1964, was a renowned sculptor from the Republic of China period to the early years of the People's Republic of China (Du, 2022). One of his representative works is the "Great Dragon Boat" (Figure 2), with a total length of 120 cm, width of 30 cm, and height of 56 cm. This sculpture, featuring the dragon seat, main cabin, pavilions and towers, small sampans, and a total of 153 figures, portrays over 150 images of people from various ethnic groups in China. Despite the figures being only 2-3 centimeters tall, they are remarkably detailed, each with a distinct posture. It showcases Zeng Longsheng's profound realistic foundation, also reflecting his works' inclusivity towards multiculturalism and their reflection on societal transitions (Xu, 2016).



Figure 2. "Big Dragon Boat," by Zeng Longsheng
Note: Photographed by the researcher

1.2 Zhang Yuxian's Life and Analysis of His Works

Zhang Yuxian, pen name Feng You, born in April 1938 in Yugan County, Jiangxi, is notable for his graduation from the Sculpture Department of the Fine Arts Department at Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute in 1959 and his tenure as a faculty member. In 1962, he was transferred to the Ceramic Industry Scientific Research Institute of the Ministry of Light Industry to engage in research and creation of ceramic sculpture and painting. He studied under the guidance of the renowned ceramic artist Mr. Zeng Longsheng, following traditional techniques (Wang, 1998). "Melody of the Lotus Pond" is one of his representative works (Figure 3). Zhang Yuxian's exquisite attention to detail and pursuit of hyper-realism, by intricately depicting a frog crouching on a lotus leaf, not only captures the beauty of nature but also reflects the artist's profound understanding and expression of the subtleties of life. (Chen & Reng, 2023)



Figure 3. "Melody of the Lotus Pond," by Zhang Yuxian
Note: Photographed by the researcher

1.3 Zhang Yinling's Life and Analysis of Her Works

Zhang Yinling, born in April 1962, is a Chinese master of ceramic art and a senior craftsman. In her early years, drawing on the artistic lineage of her father, Zhang Yuxian, and has been engaged in ceramic artistic creation for many years at the China Light Industry Ceramic Research Institute. Specializing in porcelain sculpture, she also excels in overglaze painting and comprehensive decoration. She has made outstanding achievements in the field of realistic ceramic sculpture (Zi, 2007). Her pinched clay sculpture "Cabbage and Seven-Spotted Ladybug" (Figure 4) fully inherits her father's hyper-realistic style. The coloring is well-balanced with appropriate light and shade changes. The texture of the cabbage leaves is clear and natural. A seven-spotted ladybug leaps vividly on the petiole, appearing lifelike. The black and

red spots complement the predominant colors of the cabbage in green and white, forming a harmonious and mutually enhancing unity. This work, taking several months to complete, demonstrates exquisite molding skills, intricate firing processes, and the use of the highest-grade ultra-white porcelain clay. It is double-sided carved, embodying the four characteristics of precision, delicacy, whiteness, and thinness. (Zhang, 2012)



Figure 4. "Cabbage and Seven-Star Ladybug," by Zhang Yinling

Note: Photographed by the researcher

In summary, by comparing the works of these three masters (Table 1), we can observe the unique characteristics of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, reflecting broader trends in contemporary art, culture, or social changes in Jingdezhen or even China.

Table 1 Analysis of the characteristics of the works of three masters

Artist	Technical Characteristics	Cultural/Social Significance
Zeng Longsheng	Detailed depiction of figures, showcasing multiculturalism	Reflects the diversity and historical transitions of Chinese society
Zhang Yuxian	Hyper-realism style, intricate observation of nature	Captures the beauty of nature, reflecting a deep understanding of the subtleties of life
Zhang Yinling	Hyper-realism style, intricate texture processing	Showcases the beauty of nature, expressing awe and a profound understanding of life's details

2. Characteristics of Jingdezhen Realistic Ceramic Sculpture – A Case Study of the Works by the Zeng Longsheng-Zhang Yuxian Family

2.1 Craft Features

Contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture is a testament to the evolution of craft, blending traditional Jingdezhen techniques with artistic innovation to create works that are both technically advanced and aesthetically compelling. This evolution is marked by several key developments.

(1) Fusion of various craftsmanship techniques

Traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, influenced by traditional conservative thinking, has relatively fewer organic integrations of various craftsmanship techniques such as circular carving, delineation, bas-relief, openwork carving, and pinching. Although there are instances of the integration of various ceramic sculpture techniques in traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, these ceramic craftsmanship techniques still maintain their independence and have not truly integrated into a unified whole (Ge, 2012). With the rise of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture began to truly and extensively integrate various sculpture techniques. As shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6, Figure 5 is a contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture,

combining circular carving and pinching techniques to create a comprehensive artistic appearance. Figure 6 depicts a traditional realistic ceramic sculpture from the Qianlong period, using a single circular carving technique. Contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, through the fusion of various ceramic craftsmanship techniques, significantly enriches expressive capabilities and promotes the growth and perfection of the craftsmanship system through integration.



Figure 5. "Chrysanthemum and Pumpkin," by Zhang Yinling.
Note: Photographed by the researcher



Figure 6. "Duck," from the Qing Qianlong period
Note: Retrieved from https://www.sohu.com/a/338893279_182897

(2) Enrichment of Craftsmanship Language

The development of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture craftsmanship has continually propelled the enrichment and independence of craftsmanship language. In various aspects, contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture reflects the development and transformation of traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture craftsmanship, encompassing tools and materials, craftsmanship processes, and techniques. Without compromising the existing traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture craftsmanship system, many new craftsmanship elements have been added, including the introduction of new technologies, materials, and functionalities. This has significantly enriched the Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture craftsmanship system, establishing it as an independent genre within contemporary Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture art (Ren & Xie, 2016). As shown in Figure 7, the contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture combines realistic ceramic sculpture with the

functionality of a modern desk lamp, a craftsmanship expression not possible in traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture. This integration enhances the craftsmanship language system of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, adding depth and diversity to its artistic expression.



Figure 7. "Daiyu Reading" Ceramic Sculpture Table Lamp, by Zhang Yinling

Note: Photographed by Zhang Yinling

(3) Breakthrough in Colorful Decoration Craftsmanship

The realistic portrayal of Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture is inseparable from the integration of ceramic colorful decoration craftsmanship, and contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture continuously seeks breakthroughs and developments in colorful decoration. Figure 8 depicts a Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture from the Kangxi period, employing simple family rose decoration. In contrast, the contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture in Figure 9 delicate shades of blue, green, and other colors to depict the attire. Therefore, the emergence and prosperity of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture not only hold significant value for the development of the contemporary sculpture craftsmanship language system but also play a crucial role in driving the development of the contemporary Jingdezhen colorful decoration craftsmanship system.



Figure 8. "Zhong Kui Drunk," from the Qing Kangxi period

Note: Retrieved from <http://liang303dong.blog.163.com/blog/static/6600928120092140594198>



Figure 9. "Li Qingzhao," by Zhang Yuxian

Note: Photographed by Zhang Yuxian

2.2 Artistic Features

Contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture has not only achieved significant milestones in craftsmanship techniques but has also garnered attention for its notable artistic achievements. Specifically, the artistic features of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture are manifested in the following aspects.

(1) Strong Realism

After the mid-1980s, modern ceramic art entered China on a large scale, and ceramic sculptors in Jingdezhen began to abandon realism, opting to borrow expressive techniques from modern ceramic abstract deformations (Luo, 2016). The absence of any form of ceramic sculpture art would impact the integrity of the contemporary Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture art system. Fortunately, traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture still exerts a strong influence. However, contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture has flourished, enriching the diverse landscape of contemporary Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture art. Figure 10 depicts an abstract ceramic sculpture created by Liu Yuanchang, a Jingdezhen ceramic sculptor, with abstract form and patterned decoration. Figure 11 features a realistic ceramic sculpture created by Zhang Yuxian, showcasing cabbage and snails that are identical in form, color, and size to their real-life counterparts. This exhibits a hyper-realistic stylistic characteristic. The juxtaposition of these two different styles contributes to the thriving artistic landscape of contemporary Jingdezhen ceramic sculpture.



Figure 10. "Emotion," by Liu Yuanchang

Note: Photographed by the researcher



Figure 11. "Cabbage and Snail," by Zhang Yuxian

Note: Photographed by the researcher

(2) A Contemporary Artistic Realm with a Sense of Time

Throughout its long developmental history, traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture has established an aesthetic realm centered around traditional aesthetic ideologies. While this traditional aesthetic realm is undeniably a crucial component of the essence of Chinese national aesthetic aesthetics, adhering solely to it in contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture would inevitably result in an aesthetic realm lagging behind the spirit of the times. Therefore, the new era calls for new traditions, and contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture has emerged to meet this demand. It embraces a new, contemporary aesthetic realm to align with the spirit of the times, thereby propelling contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture into a new and modern aesthetic realm. As depicted in Figure 12, the contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture transcends the constraints of traditional figurative themes. It sculpts the image of a modern young girl, creating a new aesthetic realm rich in a sense of time.



Figure 12. "Veiled Maiden," by Zhang Yuxian

Note: Photographed by the researcher

(3) Renewal of Artistic Creation Concepts

Traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture has been quite conservative in its artistic creation concepts. Within the same developmental stage, the creative expressions of traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture are nearly identical, indicating a slow pace in the renewal of artistic creation concepts and an overall tendency toward conservatism and closure. In contrast, contemporary Jingdezhen realistic

ceramic sculpture creators have comprehensively broken away from traditional artistic creation concepts. They have extensively absorbed and drawn inspiration from contemporary artistic creation concepts that align with the times, including Western hyper-realistic creative ideologies. This has resulted in a rapid and comprehensive updating of artistic creation concepts.

2.3 Aesthetic Features

After the reform and opening-up, contemporary Western aesthetic thoughts massively entered China, causing a significant impact on and profound changes in traditional Chinese aesthetic thoughts. Contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture is a product of the collision between contemporary Western aesthetics and traditional Chinese aesthetics. It maintains, to a large extent, the characteristics of traditional Chinese aesthetics while introducing a plethora of contemporary Western aesthetic elements, thus creating an aesthetic landscape that combines Eastern and Western elements and blends the ancient with the modern.

(1) Inheriting and Promoting Traditional Aesthetics

In the decades-long development of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, it has steadily progressed without radical attempts to overthrow tradition. Consequently, a rich array of traditional Chinese aesthetic elements can be clearly observed in contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture. On the one hand, it inherits the profound and extensive Chinese traditional aesthetics. In contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, there are even more traditional aesthetic elements compared to traditional Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture. This is mainly due to the greater depth and breadth of exploration and development of Chinese traditional aesthetics by contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture. The art form includes elements of traditional Chinese craft aesthetics, object aesthetics, natural aesthetics, and folk aesthetics, forming a collective embodiment of Chinese traditional aesthetics with substantial content. On the other hand, contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture promotes Chinese traditional aesthetics. The creators of contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture are not content with directly transplanting or mechanically incorporating traditional Chinese aesthetics into their works. Instead, they actively express these elements in innovative ways, integrating the creators' emotions and insights, making the traditional Chinese aesthetic elements in their works more vivid, personalized, and contemporary. As shown in Figure 13, Zhang Yuxian's realistic ceramic sculpture work "Jianzhen" not only embodies rich traditional Chinese aesthetics, reflecting the simple and unadorned spirit of Chinese Buddhist aesthetics but also meticulously portrays Jianzhen's expression and demeanor, vividly expressing his profound devotion to Buddhism. The work is both spiritually and visually captivating, exhibiting lifelike realism.

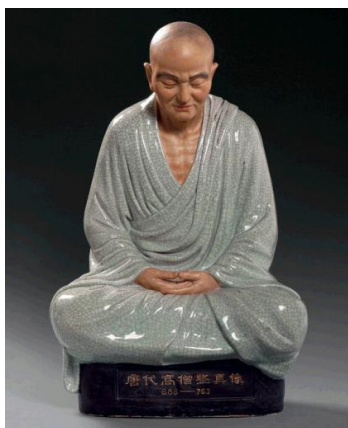


Figure 13. "Jianzhen," by Zhang Yuxian

Note: Photographed by the researcher

(2) Integrating and Innovating Contemporary Aesthetics

The reason why contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture is termed "contemporary" is largely due to the infusion of numerous contemporary aesthetic elements into the traditional foundation. These contemporary aesthetic elements are mainly derived from the study and reference of Western contemporary aesthetics. Since the early 19th century, Western aesthetics has entered a stage of modern development under the impetus of the capitalist system and the technological revolution. Over the past two centuries, it has formed a vast Western contemporary aesthetic system, comprising both essence and flaws. Contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture creators adopt an eclectic approach, selecting the essence that suits the Chinese national conditions and discarding the undesirable aspects.

The purpose of introducing Western hyper-realistic concepts into contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture works is primarily to imbue the pieces with a contemporary aesthetic sensibility, aligning them with global aesthetic trends. Unlike Western hyper-realistic ceramic art, which mainly depicts inanimate objects, contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture predominantly portrays vibrant figures, animals, and plants, exuding a lively life force (Wu & Liu, 2011). Overall, traditional aesthetic elements still dominate contemporary Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture works, ensuring that the primary aesthetic quality remains rooted in national identity. Figure 14 represents Western hyper-realistic ceramic art, objectively depicting an inanimate backpack. In contrast, Figure 15 showcases a realistic ceramic sculpture created by Zhang Yuxian, portraying a lively monkey and embodying the distinctive cultural aspect of the Chinese zodiac.



Figure 14. "Bag," Marilyn Levine

Note: Retrieved from <https://www.bojingyuan.cn/new/ceramic-art.html>



Figure 15. "Golden Monkey Presents Auspiciousness," Zhang Yuxian

Note: Photographed by Zhang Yuxian



Discussion

1. Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture, while maintaining a strong adherence to realism and deep-rooted Chinese cultural themes, also demonstrates interactions and differences with global ceramic art trends. The global development of ceramic art encompasses a wide range of abstract to hyper-realistic styles, whereas Jingdezhen's works focus more on vivid portrayals of figures, animals, and plants, reflecting a unique cultural identity and aesthetic value. This specific mode of artistic expression contrasts sharply with Western hyper-realistic ceramic art, which often focuses on the form and symbolic meaning of inanimate objects. Jingdezhen's distinctive features not only secure its place in the global art scene but also highlight its role in preserving Chinese traditional arts.

2. Despite providing deep insights into Jingdezhen's ceramic art, this study has certain limitations. The research scope primarily focuses on specific artists and works, possibly not covering the broad diversity of Jingdezhen's ceramic sculpture. Additionally, the geographical limitation reduces opportunities for comparison with ceramic works both within and outside China. Methodologically, the study mainly relies on visual analysis and historical context, which could benefit from a more diversified research approach. Incorporating methods like direct interviews, technical studies, and firsthand observations would offer richer data and perspectives.

Conclusion

This study, through in-depth investigation and analysis, draws the following conclusions:

1. The sculptural works of the Zeng Longsheng-Zhang Yuxian family reflect the evolution of contemporary Jingdezhen Realistic Ceramic Sculpture. Zeng Longsheng, Zhang Yuxian, and Zhang Yinling are key creators, inheriting a consistent craftsmanship technique. Their creative experiences and aesthetic expressions in their works reflect the era-specific characteristics of various contemporary periods. This study has unearthed the evolution and unique characteristics of Jingdezhen realistic ceramic sculpture, demonstrating how these artists have contributed to the preservation and evolution of this art form.

2. This research successfully fills the identified knowledge gap by providing a detailed examination of Jingdezhen's realistic ceramic sculpture within the context of its historical evolution and contemporary significance. Contemporary Jingdezhen Realistic Ceramic Sculpture possesses distinct features in craftsmanship, artistic expression, and aesthetics, exerting significant and positive influence on society and holding important value. The exploration of artistic features such as strong realism, the creation of a contemporary artistic realm, and the renewal of artistic creation concepts further illustrate Jingdezhen's dynamic and evolving artistic landscape.

Recommendation

1. To enhance the integration of digital technology in promoting Jingdezhen's Realistic Ceramic Sculpture, adopting specific, innovative strategies is essential. Embracing 3D printing can offer a novel approach to replicating traditional Jingdezhen techniques, making these unique methods more accessible for study and appreciation globally. Additionally, leveraging Virtual Reality (VR) to create immersive exhibitions can open up new avenues for global audiences to experience the intricate beauty of Jingdezhen sculptures without geographical constraints. Augmented Reality (AR) applications can further enrich educational experiences, overlaying detailed information about the artistry behind each piece, thereby making learning more interactive and engaging.

2. Engagement of diverse stakeholders is crucial in preserving and innovating Jingdezhen's ceramic heritage. Organizing collaborative workshops that unite artists, educators, and policymakers can foster a collective approach to innovation, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern artistic expressions. Community involvement programs can also play a pivotal role, encouraging local participation in ceramic arts through public installations and educational initiatives, thus nurturing a community deeply connected to its cultural heritage. Furthermore, integrating ceramic arts into educational curricula and supporting young artists through scholarships can ensure the craft's transmission to future generations.



3. Policy recommendations should focus on providing robust support for artists and preserving Jingdezhen's cultural legacy. Establishing dedicated cultural heritage funds can offer financial support for innovative projects and the restoration of historical sites. Policies promoting international collaborations and exchange programs can also enhance Jingdezhen's global presence, fostering a vibrant exchange of ideas and techniques. Lastly, the development of a digital archive for Jingdezhen's ceramic art would not only serve as an invaluable resource for global audiences but also ensure the preservation of this rich artistic tradition for posterity. By implementing these strategies, Jingdezhen can continue to flourish as a center of ceramic excellence, bridging its storied past with a dynamic future.

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