

The Locality of Ceramic Art—Taking Jingdezhen Ceramic Art as an Example Ning, Gang

Abstract

This paper analyzes the locality of ceramic art through examples of the development in Jingdezhen, such as introducing representatives and works of the craftsmen, the Jingpiao (drifters in Jingdezhen), and the college teachers. Jingdezhen's ceramic design is not just an integrated industry, but also a classic culture that should be inherited and innovated. To analyze and study the matter of “locality,” it is necessary to shape the cultural landscape of the entire ancient porcelain capital from multiple perspectives. In the future, when people talk about Jingdezhen's ceramic design, they will not only think of the ceramic products that are produced here, but also the ceramics-related economic and cultural activities that surrounds this attractive city.

1. Definition

Definition: Cultural Self-awareness and Locality.

“The problem of the local distribution of economic activity is synonymous with the problem of the distribution of determined groups of productive factors since every economic activity uses a grouping of factors.”

Location and Space-Economy by Walter Isard

Cultural Self-awareness

Mr. Fei Xiaotong talked about the theme of "Challenges of Chinese Culture in the New Century" at the "Chinese Culture and 21st Century International Academic Seminar": "Cultural self-awareness is a new topic raised by the development of Chinese culture. Harmony but not uniformity and multiple complementation are a manifestation of the inclusiveness of Chinese culture.... Cultural self-awareness means that people who live in a given culture have a self-knowledge of their own culture and are clear about its origin, formative process, characteristics, and developmental tendency. This self-knowledge can help us take initiative to transform our culture to suit the new environment and culture in a new era."

Cultural self-awareness is an arduous process. Only by knowing one's own culture and appreciating multiple cultures can we be able to identify our own position in this emerging pluralistic world. Then we can establish a basic order of mutual recognition and a set of principles in which multiple cultures can coexist peacefully, give full play to their advantages and achieve continuous development by adapting and learning from other cultures' advantages. Mr. Fei also generalized the concept of the process of cultural self-awareness on his 80th birthday that "everybody cherishes his or her own culture/values, and if we respect and treasure other's culture/values, the world will be a harmonious one."

Definition of Locality

Generally speaking, "Locality" means the specific time, place, people and event. Here, "locality" refers to the cultural differences and artistic self-awareness. The key to the "locality of the ceramic art" depends on the differences of times, regions, customers, and purposes of use.

2. Exploration of Jingdezhen Ceramic Art from the Perspective of Locality

Locality of ceramic art education

Locality of ceramic art industry

Locality of ceramic art culture

3. Representatives and Works of Craftsmen (practitioners of the ceramic art industry)

Traditional ceramic production areas in China are: Jingdezhen in Jiangxi Province, Chaozhou in Guangdong Province, Yixing in Jiangsu Province, Tangshan in Jiangsu Province, Fuling in Hunan Province, etc.; famous kilns in history are Ding Kiln in Hebei Province, Longquan Kiln in Zhejiang Province, Jun kiln and Ru kiln in Henan Province. Since 1950s, the kilns have been gradually restored. The craftsmen refer to the practitioners in the ceramic industry. Since 1980s, they have become famous as a result of peer-review and recommendation.

Representatives:

Wang Xiliang (see Fig. 1 for his work), originally from Yixian County, Anhui Province, was born in Jingdezhen in February 1922. He is a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts, Master of Chinese Ceramic Art, and the leading authority of Chinese ceramic art. His works value concepts and decoration, and pursue the artistic effect of “quite water running deep.” He has a good control over the brush and the use of color with ingenious composition. His works are simple, colorful, elegant, rich and natural. His famille-rose paintings rank first and have a huge influence in Jingdezhen.



Fig. 1. Wang Xiliang's work

Zhang Songmao (see Fig. 2 for his work), is a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts. He has profound knowledge and made great achievements. He is skilled at the ceramic painting of figures, landscapes, flowers and birds, which are mainly based on Chinese painting, and he is especially good at the overglaze famille-rose painting. He imitates nature, adheres to sketching, has a wide range of interests, and attains profound artistic attainments. He has reached the artistic realm of “drawing merits from others while forming his own unique style.”



Fig. 2. Zhang Songmao's work

Dai Ronghua (Fig. 3), from Poyang County, Jiangxi Province, is a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts, and has a good command of the ancient color, famille-rose decoration, polychrome painting and blue and white. The subjects of his work are

mostly ancient ladies, landscapes and flowers. His works are unadorned and natural, strong and powerful, bright and clean with elegant styles. His paintings are not constrained to traditional styles and he is always in the pursuit of his own artistic style.



Fig. 3. Dai Ronghua's work

Wang Enhuai (see Fig. 4 for his work), is a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts. He studied art with his father Wang Bu (Master of blue and white, a ceramic artist of The Republic Era). With innovative ideas, concise brushwork, profound connotations, magnificent mind, advanced aesthetics, rich artistic conception and inimitable artistic techniques, he has created a unique artistic style of his own. He also established his own art genre with his own brushstrokes and modern ideas.



Fig. 4. Wang Enhuai's work

4. Representatives and Works of Jingpiao (Drifters in Jingdezhen)

Jingdezhen has a long history and is known as the porcelain capital of the world. From ancient times till the present, it has fired a wide variety of porcelains with good quality, a good many of which has been sold overseas. Due to its long history and wonderful ceramic culture, Jingdezhen has formed the unique culture of porcelain capital. Jingdezhen now attracts a large number of ceramic art lovers, forming a new cultural phenomenon called “Jingpiao” (Drifters in Jingdezhen). With the growing number of “Jingpiao,” Jingdezhen has gradually become a gathering place for new generation artists in China, which has provided new impetus for the development of ceramic culture in Jingdezhen.

Craft artist, He Linong (see Fig. 5 for his work), was born in 1970 in Longxi, Gansu Province. He is the executive director of the Jingdezhen Artists Association, currently a researcher at Jingdezhen Ceramic Arts Institute and director of the Modern Art Department. As he was born in northwestern China, he has a deep understanding of the Tibetan people and their living conditions. In his series of Tibetan people, he has represented in a good manner the relationship between feelings and spirits, shapes and expressions. The images of Tibetans painted by him are full of natural lives.



Fig. 5 He Linong's work

Fang Lijun (see Fig. 6 for his work) was born in 1963 in Handan City, Hebei Province. He graduated from the Printmaking Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1989 and is currently a professional painter. His painting draws directly from Chinese reality, no matter in terms of style or motifs. By twisting the figures or

disordering their proportions or sizes, he has gradually developed his contradictory, puzzling and gaudy painting style with motifs ranging from yawning knaves to flying infants. He paints himself and his friends as yawning “bald knaves” with contrasting tones of simple brightness or dark gray.



Fig. 6 Fang Lijun's work

Painter, Chen Shaoyue (see Fig. 7 for his work), is a native of Shandong Province. In 2011, Chinese Collection rated his works “Forest Flower” as one of ten most famous ceramics. His works are collected by the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Surikov Academy of Fine Arts, Moscow University, National Theatre and some private collectors. His unique artistic style reconciles Chinese and Western art and uses Fengshui of traditional landscape paintings and figure paintings, reflecting strong oriental aesthetics.



Fig. 7. Chen Shaoyue's work

Fang Weiguo (see Fig. 8 for his work), born in 1965, is a native of Nanchang city, Master of Chinese Ceramic Art Design, and graduated from the Stage Art Department of Shanghai Theater Academy in 1988; now he is Master of Ceramic Design in China, designer of Chinese National Theatre Art, national first-grade artist, member of Senior Title Evaluation Committee. He is good at combining Western painting with Chinese history and culture and ceramic techniques. He has created a series of ceramic paintings featuring Dunhuang flying goddess, which are simple, elegant, charming and lovely.



Fig. 8. Fang Weiguo's work

5. Representatives and Works of College Teachers

Qin Xilin (see Fig. 9 for his work), graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute in 1964. He was the party committee secretary and the dean of the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute. He is currently the honorary president and professor of the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, and the chief editor of China Ceramics and Ceramic Journal, the judge of the Jury Committee of the Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts, the chairman of the China Ceramic Arts Review Committee, the vice chairman of the China Ceramics Association, the vice chairman of the China Arts and Crafts Association, the member of the professional ceramics committee of the Chinese Artists Association, the vice chairman of the Jiangxi Provincial Culture and Art Federation, honorary chairman of the Jingdezhen City Culture and Art Federation, the member of the UNESCO International Pottery Institute, the honorary doctor of the Korea Gyeonggi University, and the doctoral supervisor of the Helsinki Design University of Finland.



Fig. 9. Qin Xilin's work

Li Jusheng (see Fig. 10 for his work), a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts, is now a professor and MA supervisor at Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute. He once served as vice chairman of the Jiangxi Artists Association, president of the Jingdezhen Artists Association, and the dean of the Jingdezhen Painting and Calligraphy Academy. He is currently a member of the Chinese Artists Association and a member of the Chinese Arts and Crafts Association. Li Jusheng attaches great importance to form his own ceramic style. The lines in his ceramic works absorb techniques from folk blue and white, which are vivid, spontaneous and smooth whereas his ceramics are featured with wonderful craftsmanship in modelling.



Fig. 10. Li Jusheng's work

Huang Huanyi (Fig. 11) was born in Linchuan, Jiangxi Province, graduated from Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, and is currently a professor and MA supervisor at Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute and a famous ceramic artist. He has won more than ten prizes in the national, provincial and municipal ceramic competitions. His works are collected by the Ministry of Culture and the China Arts and Crafts Museum. Huang Huanyi's career could be divided into three major stages. The "three-dimensional ceramic sculptures stage" focuses on the exploration and practice of shapes; the "space stage" focuses on the creation of environmental pottery; and the "two dimensional stage" mainly refers to the painting on ceramic works in recent years. These three stages seem to match with a path starting from learning from the West to the fusion of Chinese and Western culture, the fusion of modernity and tradition, and finally the return to tradition.



Fig. 11. Huang Huanyi's work

Zou Xiaosong (see Fig. 12 for his work) was born in Leping, Jiangxi Province, is raised in a time-honored and well-known Jingdezhen ceramics family. He is a great fan of ceramic art since childhood and learns from his grandfather Zou Guojun for color decoration of ceramics. He is currently the deputy dean, professor and MA supervisor of Ceramic Art College at Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, the member of Jiangxi Artists Association, and vice chairman of Jingdezhen Youth Artists Association. He explored the unique potentials of the famille-rose materials in an attempt to integrate accuracy, fineness and coarseness in his works. In terms of texture, he strives to represent artistic mood and details vividly. His works emphasize the technical beauty of famille-rose, elegant colors, delicate paintings, smooth and soft images, vivid imagery with the beauty of details. He also values the beauty of materials and pursues artistry and personal refinement through his works.



Fig. 12. Zou Xiaosong's work

Ning Gang (see Fig. 13 and 14 for his works), is the current president and the deputy party secretary of Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, the national second-level professor, Ph.D. advisor, the representative of the 13th National People's Congress, the member of the 7th Municipal Discipline Group (Design Science) of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council, the member of Industrial Design Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education, the expert in Design of Postgraduates Education Regulatory Committee of China, the Master of Chinese Ceramic Art, the judge of the Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts and he enjoys the honorary allowance from the State Council.



Fig. 13. Ning Gang's work

Jingdezhen's ceramic design is not just an integrated industry, but also a classic culture that should be inherited and innovated. Nowadays, from the perspective of "locality," it could be noticed that obtaining high-return economic profits should not be the only consideration for Jingdezhen. Instead, it is necessary to shape the cultural landscape of the entire ancient porcelain capital from a pluralistic perspective. In the future, when people talk about Jingdezhen's ceramic design, they will not only think of the real ceramic products, but also ceramics-related economic and cultural activities in this attractive city.

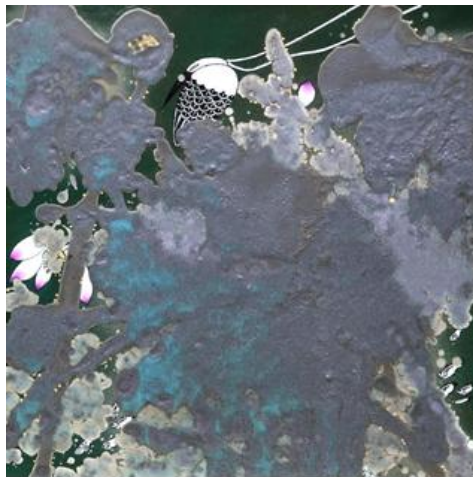


Fig. 14. Ning Gang's work