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*Research Article*

## Survey & Analysis on Education Status of Ink Painting's Social Value and Study on Teaching Method\*

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### Abstract

As an important kind of painting in Chinese history, ink painting contains strong national characteristic. Through the learning, understanding and appreciation of ink painting, we can help students understand the significance of cultural inheritance and improve their overall quality. Therefore, this study takes status quo of education of ink painting's social value and teaching method as the research object, and uses the methods of literature analysis, questionnaire and case analysis to investigate and analyze the status quo of ink painting's education. This study summarizes the characteristics and limitations of ink painting's education, and expounds ink painting's social value and its influence on students' comprehensive ability in detail. In order to better transfer ink painting's social value to students, this study combines situational teaching method with creative ink painting teaching method, discusses and designs the teaching method of ink painting in order to develop a more meaningful educational mode of ink painting.

### Keywords

Ink Painting • Social Value • Status Survey • Teaching Method

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As a unique form of painting, ink painting is an important part of Chinese traditional culture and breeds a great power (Johnson, 1990). Through the observation of life, artists take the brushwork as the leading factor, give full play to the function of water and ink (Kee, 2010), and interpret the view of human living environment through vivid creation and practice. The knowledge and metaphor, and the harmony between heaven and man in the ink painting can still serve as an important concept for guiding the development of today's society (Siegel, 2013). However, with the impact of the western cultural thoughts and the diversified development of the world, ink painting is facing a huge challenge, and its intrinsic social value is gradually forgotten by people. At present, in the fine art colleges in China, the education system of ink painting has been ignored as a whole (Lippit, 2012).

According to the records (Hoffmann, 2008), ink painting began in the Tang Dynasty, developed in the Five Dynasties, flourished in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, and has continued to develop in the collision since modern times. Xu Beihong's *Running Horse*, Qi Baishi's *Shrimps* and Pan Tianshou's *Yandang Mountain Flowers* are well-known (as shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3). Painters will not only make the painting lifelike, but also endows it with personality and ideal (Zucchiatti, Font & Galassi, 2012). When continuing the tradition, painters also try to explore new field, which forms the diversity of Chinese ink painting. It can be found by reviewing relevant references (Li, 1999) that at present, researches on ink painting mainly focus on the development history, technique of painting, integration with modern technology of ink painting and the education of ink painting in children, middle and primary schools. However, there are few researches on the social value of ink painting and its educational application in fine art colleges (Keung and Ippolito, 2017). The ink painting has unique artistic expression form and too strong nationality, so it is easily accepted in foreign countries and the relevant research results are also far different from domestic ones (Lin, 1987).



Figure 1. Xu Beihong's works



Figure 2. Qi Baishi's works

Based on the above analysis, this study begins with status survey analysis on education of ink painting's social value in fine art colleges, summarizes the problems existing in the education of ink painting's social value in arts colleges and universities, and deeply analyzes the social value of ink painting. This study attempts to

combine situational teaching method with creative ink painting teaching method in the teaching of ink painting to stimulate students' enthusiasm and creative inspiration so that students can understand the essence and connotation of ink painting while mastering the painting methods and techniques. This study tries to use the spirit of ink painting to guide students to form the correct outlook on life and values, and finally makes it become the idea of guiding the progress of students' civilization.



Figure 3. Pan Tianshou's works

## Status Survey Analysis on Education of Ink Painting's Social Value

### Status survey on education of ink painting's social value

In order to understand the status quo of education of Chinese ink painting's social value, 246 questionnaires are distributed to students and 216 effective questionnaires are collected; 8 questionnaires are distributed to teachers and 8 effective questionnaires are collected in fine art colleges in Tianjin. The specific findings are as follows:

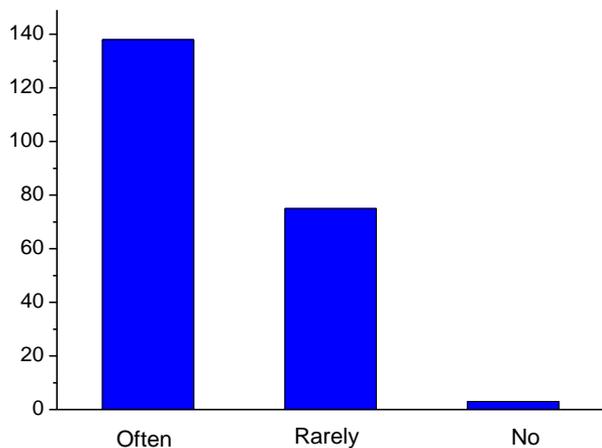


Figure 4. Do you often see ink paintings around you?

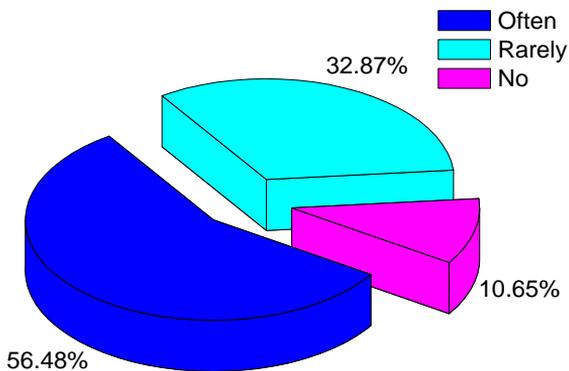


Figure 5. Do you often go to galleries, museums, etc. to see ink painting exhibitions?

**Student questionnaire.** (1) Do you often see ink paintings around you?

The investigation result shown in Figure 4 show that the artistic atmosphere around the students is relatively strong, and ink paintings can be often seen. According to the investigation result shown in Figure 5, students choose to visit galleries and museums to appreciate ink paintings, indicating that students enrich their leisure life through their appreciation of ink paintings.

(2) What is your understanding of ink painting? (multiple choice)

As can be seen from the survey result in Figure 6, most students believe that learning ink painting can increase their employment opportunities by having one more skill, and many believe that learning ink painting can help them understand Chinese traditional cultures. At the same time, some students learn ink painting in order to cultivate their own interests or for fun.

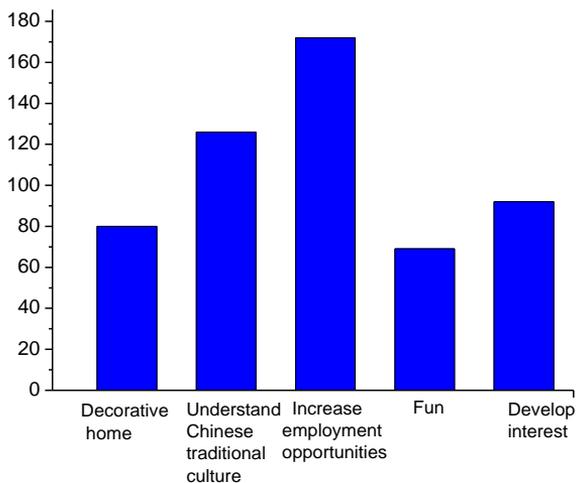


Figure 6. What is your understanding of ink painting?

(3) What do you think is the focus of learning ink painting?

52% of students believe that ink technique is the focus of learning and mastering ink paintings, followed by ink spirit, creative thinking and aesthetic training, as shown in Figure 7.

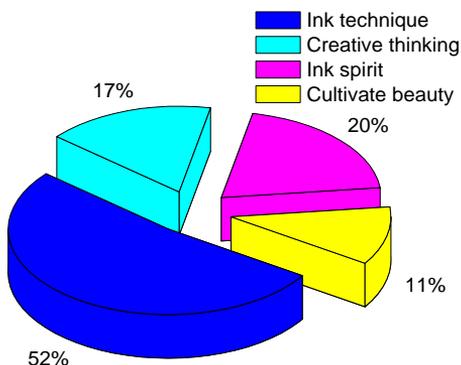


Figure 7. What is the focus of learning ink painting?

**Teacher questionnaire.** (1) What do you think of the position of ink painting teaching in art teaching?

Survey result in Figure 8 shows that 75% of teachers believe that ink painting is not valued at present mainly because of the large number of tools and materials needed to prepare for ink painting and the impact on the surrounding environment. In addition, the impact of Western cultures and modernization and the gradual decrease in the number of people learning traditional ink painting result in the decline of the position of ink painting.

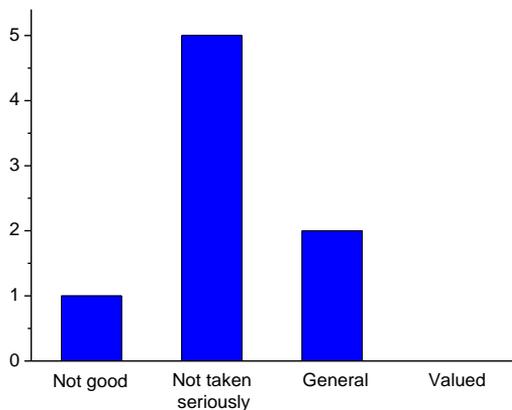


Figure 8. The position of ink painting teaching in art teaching

(2) What are the teaching methods for your class?

As shown in Figure 9, the combination of copy and sketch is the teaching method adopted by most teachers, while creation and outdoor sketch are not adopted. Copy is a common teaching method in ink painting teaching, aiming at training students' basic skills of ink painting, but to some extent it also limits the students' understanding of the meaning of ink painting so that students can't give full play to their painting potentials.

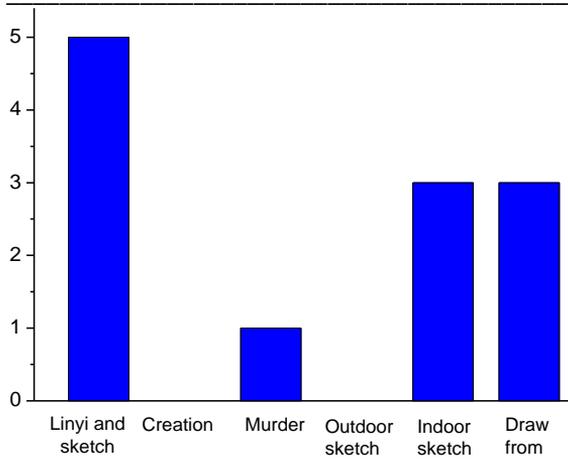


Figure 9. Teaching methods for class

(3) What is the focus of ink painting teaching?

As can be seen from Figure 10, majority of teachers believe that in the process of ink painting teaching, ink painting's painting technique and form of expression are the focus of teaching while the creative thinking, ink spirit, cultivation of beauty are neglected.

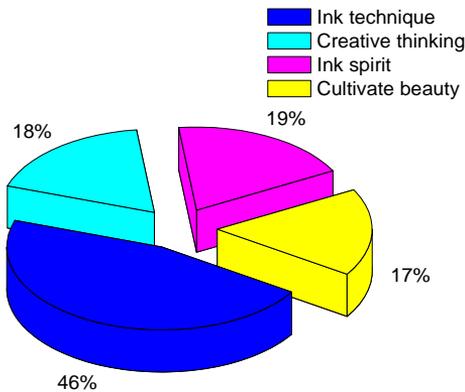


Figure 10. What is the focus of ink painting teaching?

**Existing problems**

Through the statistical analysis of the status quo of ink painting education, we can find that the education of ink painting in China's fine art colleges has paid attention to the presentation of ink painting techniques, the expression of form and the exposition of ink painting knowledge but pays ignores the dissemination and direction of ink painting's social value, the experience of obtaining beauty from life and the cultivation of the artistic spirit of ink painting. Students learn ink painting mainly to expand hobbies and learn painting techniques but they don't have a real understanding of ink painting's social value.

## Study on Social Value and Teaching Method of Ink Painting

### Ink painting's social value

Ink painting is a painting drawn by the mixing concentration of water and ink (Kuo, 1995). It has a sense of historical times and is an indirect way or technique of transmitting Chinese nationality and carrying the national spirit. Ink painting includes the four basic elements, namely moral quality, knowledge, talent and thought (Kaneko, 2003). The painter puts all the spiritual ideal of "self-cultivation, rule of state and the world" into the creation of the ink painting. Therefore, the ink painting has philosophy, literariness and lyricism. The painter's spirit is incisively and vividly manifested through the ink painting (Ekelund, 2004). The ideological connotation of the Chinese nation has been well interpreted through the continuous development of ink painting. To transform and exert the social value of ink painting so that the ink painting and ink spirit can be inherited is the basis of ink painting's continuous development.

### Influence of ink painting's social value on students' comprehensive ability

**To give students the correct outlook on life and values.** In today's society, many complicated things are encountered every day. College students are faced with multiple pressures and troubles from study, life, emotion and employment. Some people will choose to give up, shrink back or compromise in the face of difficulties and pressures. At this point, if a positive and healthy outlook on life and values are guided, it will lead them to the right path. Ink painting plays an inestimable role in guiding students to form correct outlook on life and values. Thus, we should give full play to the positive guiding factors in ink painting, and choose ink paintings that are optimistic and show love for the motherland. The cultural essence of ink painting should be transmitted to the students through teaching (Wagar, 1973) so that the Chinese civilization can be integrated into the blood of the students, set up the right development direction for their future development, and point out the way forward.

**To cultivate students' sense of beauty and artistic accomplishment.** The cultivation of artistic accomplishment is embodied in that when students learn ink painting, they can accept the painting style, type, its cultural features and humanistic feelings through "transpositional thinking" and "merger and inclusion" (Guidi, Atzeni, Seracini & Lazzari, 2014). Aesthetic education mainly guides students to understand the whole world from the aspect of sensibility, and requires teachers to naturally integrate the historical, political and humanistic knowledge into the interpretation of ink painting works and painting techniques so that the students' aesthetic ability and innovative consciousness are constantly cultivated.

**To enrich students' knowledge structure and improve students' comprehensive quality.** Ink painting involves a wide range of knowledge and a wide span of time and space, covering political, historical and cultural knowledge (Robertson and McDaniel, 1999). Through ink painting, the relatively dispersed subject knowledge is penetrated into an organic whole so that students can contact more knowledge while learning ink painting. At the same time, students' ability to think independently is cultivated to find out the correlation among different subjects. Besides, students' habit of finding problems, analyzing problems, summing up and solving problems

(Jarvis, 2010) is formed. In this way, students are gradually shaped into complex talents that meet the needs of social development.

**Study on teaching method of ink painting**

**Situational teaching method.** Situational teaching method (Smith, 1999) refers to that teachers purposively create life situation, physical demonstration situation, picture reproduction situation related to students according to the teaching content and teaching goal so as to arouse students' emotional experience. It is a kind of teaching mode combining cognitive activity and emotional activity to effectively arouse students' interest in learning.

**Creative ink painting teaching method.** The creative ink painting teaching method (Andrews, 1990) combines the basic formal languages of ink painting (point, line, face, shape, color, ink) with the experience and memory symbols in the student's brain. It uses the composing rule of modern art to carry out creative combination. In the teaching process, it starts students' potential inspiration and aesthetic characteristics through the situation and guidance of teachers. Simply speaking, it realizes "spiritual start" through "symbol reconstruction", as shown in Figure 11.

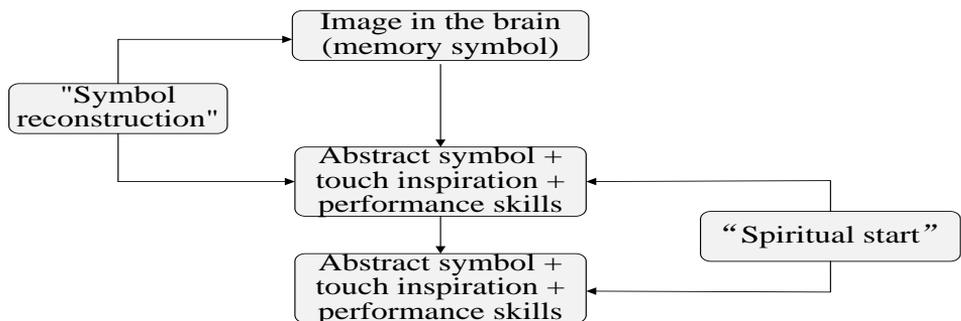


Figure 11. Creative ink painting method

**Case analysis based on situational teaching method and creative ink painting teaching method.** In order to stimulate students' interest in ink painting, fully exploit their creative potentials, and transfer ink painting's social value to students, this study combines situational teaching method with creative ink painting teaching method and takes ink painting Buddha carving as an example to carry out teaching design and implementation. The specific operation is as follows:

The teacher first introduces the course through gestures and storytelling to arouse students' interest in learning, then presents several representative groups of Buddha statue (Figure 12 is Maitreya Buddha statue), and guides the students to think. For example, like the Buddha statue or not? What are the features of the Buddha? What's the historical background? And then the teacher explains the background culture knowledge of Buddha statue to the students and makes them draw the Maitreya Buddha in their eyes according to the feature of Maitreya Buddha and their own understanding. Under the guidance of the teacher, students draw their own ink painting statues according to the painting skills of ink painting through the memory and understanding

of the Buddha in the brain. Some of the students' works are shown in Figure 13. After the students finish drawing, the teacher will question about the students' works. For example, what's the used in drawing and why do you use this technique, and what does the work want to express. After fully understanding students' drawing intention and the expression technique, the teacher sums up the social value transmitted by the Buddha statue, comments on students' works, and puts forward several painting techniques which can better express the characteristics of Maitreya Buddha to enrich the forms of students' painting techniques.



Figure 12. Maitreya Buddha carving



Figure 13. Student work

## Conclusion

As a special thought expression carrier, ink painting, like human being, has life and emotion and contains immortal social value. This study deeply explores the status quo and teaching method of education of ink painting's social value. The following conclusions have been drawn:

(1) Through the analysis of the questionnaire of students and teachers in fine art colleges, it is found that the current ink painting education mainly focuses the training of painting techniques while ignoring the spread of ink painting's social value. Students' learning of ink painting is utilitarian and students don't get the right guidance.

(2) This study analyzes and summarizes the national spirit and social value of ink painting, and points out that ink painting's social value can set up correct outlook on life and values, cultivate students' aesthetic feeling and artistic accomplishment as well as enrich students' knowledge structure and improve their comprehensive quality, which has positive influence on students.

(3) In order to better transfer ink painting's social value students, this study takes the ink painting Buddha as an example based on the investigation results of the status quo of ink painting education. In this study, situational teaching method and creative ink painting teaching method are combined to carry out the teaching design of ink Buddha painting class, and the facilities are provided. The results show that the method can help students to master ink painting skills and cultivate their creative consciousness. Ink painting's social value is transferred to students imperceptibly.

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