

REVIEW

## Research on the Application of New Materials in Contemporary Lacquer Painting

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### Abstract

Lacquer painting is an art form with lacquer as the main media material. With the development of contemporary art, it has given new content. The lacquer painting's novel and changing materials make it rich in texture and unique in picture effects. Due to the fashionable aesthetic elements of contemporary lacquer painting, the emphasis is on the exploration and application of new materials. Different materials can produce different artistic effects, thus giving people different aesthetic feelings. The use of lacquer painting materials is not isolated. It is necessary to organically combine and coordinate the different characteristics of various materials according to its own aesthetic rules. This subject mainly analyzes the material characteristics, texture effects, and process characteristics of the new materials used in contemporary Chinese lacquer painting, analyzes the reasons for the emergence of new materials and their advantages, and discusses the aesthetic value of new materials in lacquer painting and its future development trends and prospects. The application of new materials in contemporary lacquer painting has been explored, the application scope of lacquer painting materials has been broadened, and the potential art law has been found, in order to provide effective application and theoretical support for the future creation and aesthetic development of lacquer painting art.

### Keywords

Contemporary lacquer painting; new materials; traditional materials; multiple synthesis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Lacquer art is an artistic expression form of lacquer. The use of lacquer is one of the long-standing traditional cultures of the Chinese nation. With the development of the times, people have continuously pursued and explored lacquer art, and gradually formed the main expression forms of lacquer ware, lacquer painting and lacquer. Among them, the development of lacquer painting is a process from dependency to independent appreciation and from practical value to spiritual creation<sup>[1]</sup>. If the lacquer art is compared to a towering tree, the new paintings produced in the new historical period, a lacquer painting, are a new



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branch, which reflects the rich modern atmosphere and great vitality of the ancient lacquer art.

Lacquer painting is a new development of traditional Chinese lacquer art and a new creation of Chinese national painting. It is a work of art in which people use painting to express their taste and mood through the decoration process. About 7000 years ago, the lacquer art of the Hemmed cultural period had already begun. The use of oil paint in the Qin and Han dynasties greatly enriched the color system of lacquer ware decoration. It makes the lacquer and color painting to the top of the plane<sup>[2]</sup>. The real objects are painted, but these patterns do not serve as independent aesthetic carriers. Lacquer painting as a pure painting species has been on the art scene since the 6th National Art Exhibition. When lacquer painting was used as an independent painting species, creators have begun to continuously try new materials based on traditional techniques. The abundance of materials and the unique craftsmanship have given lacquer paintings an irreplaceable artistic charm.

Traditional paint inputs are very limited. The pigment that enters lacquer and other paintwork pigment are not quite same, and natural lacquer is mixed to pigment very picky<sup>[3]</sup>. The lacquer acid in natural lacquer can mix with base sex pigment to rise chemical reaction if it contains the pigment of metal such as zinc, barium, lead, copper, iron, calcium, sodium, potassium. After mixing with natural paint, the color becomes dark or even black, so it can't be used. Only the precious metals that do not react with lacquer acid, such as gold, silver, chin, mercury, *etc.* can enter lacquer. The ancients make lacquer art to use mineral salt base metal compound pigment, such as silver, ochre, soot and so on. In fact, in addition to silver, stone yellow, soot, other pigments are not suitable for the paint such as the unearthed ancient lacquer gray in the museum<sup>[4]</sup>.

Lacquer painting is a kind of contemporary painting. There is an inevitable relationship between the language of materials and the language of painting. Compared with traditional lacquer painting, both the formal language and material techniques of contemporary lacquer painting have undergone great changes. The painter's new intention and thought cannot be satisfied only by the traditional method, and they need to have new materials to stimulate and adapt to it. Especially the aesthetic orientation of contemporary lacquer painting pays more attention to the beauty of the natural quality of the material and the aesthetic orientation and evaluation criteria of the material techniques. In today's blurred artistic boundary, lacquer painting medium should have a larger package capacity. Natural, artificial, traditional and modern can be used. The aim of contemporary lacquer painting is to pay attention to the natural beauty of materials, explore the expressive force of materials, materialize materials in artistic creation, develop the aesthetic characteristics of materials, and finally convey the creation concept of artists. To some extent, the history of human art is also a history of materials. Every evolution of artistic concept and form is closely related to the change of material and concept. From the moment of discovering the expressive nature of materials, materials have injected the eternal stimulant into human artistic creation in rich forms. The same is true of the development of contemporary lacquer painting materials<sup>[5]</sup>.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY LACQUER ART

### 2.1 Definition of Contemporary Lacquer Painting

The history of lacquer art is a history of development related to materials, and contemporary lacquer art has evolved from it. It is no longer constrained by the practical functions of lacquerware. Lacquer painting has broken away from the attachment to the utensils, and has developed from an object decoration into a painting with independent aesthetic awareness<sup>[6]</sup>. The definition of contemporary lacquer painting is inseparable from the interpretation of traditional lacquer painting art and the understanding of the art development of lacquerware materials.

Lacquer painting is born from the traditional lacquer art with a history of thousands of years, and is integrated with modern science, modern art, modern materials, modern craftsmanship and modern expressions. Lacquer painting is born out of traditional lacquerware and clings to independence. It inherits the traditional lacquer art technology, but not restricted by tradition. It not only absorbs the nutrition of Western art, but also extracts the essence of sister art. The world is vast. The particularity of the materials and craftsmanship of contemporary lacquer painting makes it have a deep, subtle and elegant artistic effect, which is incomparable to ordinary art works. The transformation of painting concepts, the renovation of materials technology, and the combination of art and science are the characteristics of contemporary art. Then, the contemporary lacquer painting in the present tense should be completely different from the lacquer painting of the past. It should have the spirit of inheritance and development, contemporary aesthetic value judgments and the contemporary characteristics of art.

## 2.2 Artistic Features of Contemporary Lacquer Painting

Lacquer paintings are favored by people with unique techniques, rich materials and special visual effects, which has inspired the great enthusiasm to open up a new world of artistic aesthetics. “The new artistic concept and artistic language of lacquer painting not only inherit the essence of traditional lacquer painting, but also combine modern craftsmanship, materials and creative concepts. The combination of the two makes the lacquer painting art more modern.” The most important characteristic of true contemporary lacquer painting is its “contemporary nature”. The art of lacquer painting is full of new ideas. Whether in content or form language, it is full of the interpretation of the spirit of innovation. It also gives the millennium lacquer material a spirit of the times<sup>[7]</sup>. With the emergence of various techniques and materials, the expressiveness and content of contemporary lacquer paintings have become more extensive. Whether it is figurative or abstract themes, they can be fully expressed. Since the 7th National Art Exhibition, “excluding decorative sketches” in the selection and delivery of lacquer paintings was explicitly put forward, and the creator’s attention to real life and the expansion of the subject matter of lacquer painting have greatly improved.

The expression forms of contemporary lacquer paintings are specific and abstract. The concrete and local characteristics presented by the concrete works are rich in sense of the times. Abstract works make full use of the advantages of the diversity of lacquer painting materials, and actively use new materials and try new techniques to express the theme<sup>[8]</sup>. The creator should be good at considering the time limit of lacquer and choose the subject matter that can best use the lacquer painting’s specialties. The various paint materials and techniques at this time have not only been used to collage images, but also have become the basic vocabulary of the creator’s artistic conception, so that the materials and techniques are fully integrated into the picture. In addition, the use of new materials and the mastery of modern craftsmanship also determine the artistic characteristics of contemporary lacquer painting. The arts and craftsmanship are concerned. At present, the characteristics of Chinese lacquer painting creation are emphasized. First of all, the performance of paint is used as the first means. Natural paint and chemical paint can complement each other according to the creative needs of the screen and give play to their respective advantages. Secondly, materials that are conducive to the aesthetic expression of the subject matter can be used in lacquer painting, especially the comprehensive use of new and old materials, which adds to the artistic appeal and produces unique picture effects. In short, the art of lacquer painting naturally entered the rational era with the theme of spiritual communication, the integration of materials and spirit. It needs constant adjustment in the process of growth. Traditional lacquer painting can no longer be integrated into the new artistic environment. In the face of the current art environment, new issues should occur<sup>[9]</sup>.

## 3. APPLICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MATERIALS IN CONTEMPORARY LACQUER PAINTING

### 3.1 Types of New Materials and Application Examples

The art of lacquer painting is a combination of craftsmanship and art, which expresses both the beauty of painting and the beauty of materials. The use and exploration of materials in contemporary lacquer paintings are manifested in the exploration and development of new material performance, new methods of using old materials, and special effects of comprehensive materials.

The materials of lacquer painting are various. The combination of various material techniques is ever-changing. Moreover, the materials have their own characteristics as a reflection of individual language. Contemporary lacquer painters’ research and use of materials have become the main means of expressing artistic concepts in lacquer paintings.

There are many types of chemical lacquers. Only a small part of which are currently used for lacquer painting. This study mainly introduces the most widely used synthetic lacquers and some chemical synthetic lacquers. Synthetic lacquer, also known as cashew lacquer, is a natural paint extracted from cashew nut shells. It is a synthetic coating combining natural raw materials and artificial synthetic materials. Its performance is similar to natural lacquer, the paint film is rich and bright, and the paint is more colorful. Its acid resistance, moisture resistance and transparency are higher than raw paint. The paint liquid has good leveling properties. The paint film dries naturally. The paint film is hard and durable, the painting is relatively easy to use, and the price is low. It is widely used in contemporary lacquer painting. However, it also has many disadvantages. Cashew paint cannot be mixed with natural lacquer. The paint film is brittle, reddish, and contains a small amount of benzene.

### 3.2 The Relationship Between Materials, Techniques and Texture

Texture refers to the surface texture of an object. Compared with other paintings, lacquer paintings pay particular attention

to the expressiveness of texture<sup>[10]</sup>. Due to its characteristics, lacquer and other materials combine to form an ever-changing texture. Because of its production characteristics, the stacking, inlaying, overprinting and grinding processes are used alternately to form a wide variety of visual textures, which are irreplaceable by other art forms. The properties of the material determine the general appearance of the picture, but the lacquer painting technique is rich and diverse. As for a material, different techniques will form different picture effects. Only through the perfect combination of technique and material can the unique charm of the material be displayed. The combination of materials and techniques is the essence of lacquer painting, and also a prerequisite for expressing the beauty of texture. In actual operation, different combinations of materials and techniques form a varied texture effect, which also gives the lacquer painting artistic limitless possibilities.

### 3.3 Expansion of New Materials

The material techniques are analyzed and selected to improve the expressiveness of lacquer painting. The use of materials in creation is explored. The characteristics of the new materials maximize the visual beauty of the media. In the repeated experiments, the creators of lacquer painting innovate and look for the possibility of using new materials. The versatility of lacquer painting techniques and the richness of applicable materials have been fully utilized. On the premise of guaranteeing the quality of picture technique, artistic creativity is exploited. The perfect combination of new materials and creative content is the key to the application of new materials. "As long as it is within the framework of this principle, any materials and methods are feasible. On the contrary, if it deviates from this principle, even the use of traditional materials and techniques such as Chinese raw lacquer is not within the scope of lacquer art"<sup>[11]</sup>. It can be seen that the exploration of new materials is endless. With the advancement of science and technology, the research and development of paint will also accelerate the change of paint painting, so that new materials will be extended to a wider field.

## 4. NEW MATERIAL BREAKS THROUGH THE AESTHETIC VALUE OF TRADITIONAL LACQUER PAINTING

### 4.1 Uniqueness of Artistic Language

Because of its possibility and particularity, the new material has a great impact on the aesthetic value of lacquer painting. The uniqueness of language has become a significant artistic feature of lacquer painting, and the new materials have strong independence, because the application of new materials has completely deviated from the traditional pursuit of contemporary lacquer painting.

The uniqueness of the artistic language of lacquer painting is an important reason why lacquer painting is independent of the art stage. New materials are constantly being researched and expanded in artistic creation<sup>[12]</sup>. Mining the artistic value of materials and performance of materials has become an important part of artistic creation for consideration. The use and exploration of comprehensive materials have brought new visual styles in contemporary artistic creation. It has brought about changes in creative concepts and various choices of artistic forms. The importance of painting materials has been continuously improved in artistic creation, and new materials have won respect and favor. In the pattern of Chinese contemporary art, traditional handicrafts such as lacquer art, ceramic art, fiber, and metal technology have all entered the ranks of contemporary art through modern transformation. The artists gradually found that the original media and craftsmanship extended the rich artistic language in modeling elements and artistic forms to create new artistic styles. The material of lacquer painting contains spiritual beauty. The concrete expression of the language of contemporary lacquer painting materials and its aesthetic characteristics transcend the auxiliary functions of traditional lacquer painting only for the decoration of lacquerware itself. The purpose of contemporary lacquer painting material expression is not to resort to shallow cognition of the texture of the material, nor to the reproduction of the material technique itself, but to focus on the contemporary manifestation of the meaning of painting, and the material will always serve the content. How to grasp the diversified development of lacquer painting is the key to its innovation. Regardless of "authentic" and "amateur", "conservative" and "avant-garde", as long as it conforms to the principle of lacquer art beauty, the public can accept it with its unique attitude to enter the mainstream of Chinese contemporary art<sup>[13]</sup>.

### 4.2 Expansion of Aesthetic Range

Under the situation of Chinese contemporary art, new materials make the beauty of materials become one of the criteria to judge the artistic value of lacquer painting, thus expanding the aesthetic scope of lacquer painting. With the continuous pursuit of material and spirit, the development and growth of lacquer painting must embrace all favorable material and spiritual factors.

There must be no absoluteness. Inheritance is for better development. The profound lacquer art tradition should not become the burden of contemporary lacquer painting to affect the development of contemporary lacquer painting. Lacquer painting is a visual art that contains mystery and potential. The beauty of materials is enriched and improved by the continuous artistic practice of painters, and it will certainly be more fully and beneficially displayed, and there will be more room for improvement. Artists should dare to take the lead in the world, keep to their own standards, and constantly discover their own crises and find solutions to them. In short, the development and innovation of lacquer painting requires an independent artistic position. On this basis, aesthetic expansion and innovation are gradually maturing under the premise of continuously enriching connotations and expanding compatibility.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the 21st century, a series of policies to protect traditional handicraft culture at home and abroad have brought great opportunities for the development of lacquer painting. Throughout the development of lacquer painting, the inclusiveness and openness of lacquer culture, as well as the diversity and comprehensiveness of language are the powerful driving forces for the development of lacquer painting. Under the influence of the contemporary art trend, lacquer painting art has basically broken away from the category of decorative painting and handicraft painting, and gradually established its own independent status. However, regarding the further development of lacquer painting, there are still a lot of problems for the industry to reach consensus on it. In particular, some key differences of opinion should be examined and analyzed in the light of development, instead of making up conclusions and blindly dividing camps. To give full play to the artist's subjective initiative, the advantages of materials are stressed. With the contemporary aesthetic concept, the elements in the traditional lacquer material techniques are transformed, refined and applied. Through the application of new materials, lacquer painting is creatively endowed with new era connotation. At the same time, artists should adhere to the basic performance principles of lacquer painting, and should not abandon the traditional lacquer art techniques, aesthetic taste and style completely. They must reach a consensus on the issue of keeping the language of lacquer painting diversified and comprehensive development, so as to find the natural beauty of lacquer painting materials in artistic practice and present the current feeling and experience. Through the in-depth exploration of the language form of lacquer, in the process of inheriting and giving play to the aesthetic feeling of traditional materials, more materials are included and various techniques are developed, so that lacquer painting presents a diversified and comprehensive development under the influence of contemporary artistic concepts.

At present, for lacquer painting art, the determination of painting species, the expansion of materials and other aspects have become increasingly mature. In the process of development, the problem lies in getting rid of the craft tendency, getting out of the excessive dependence on texture, texture and many other surface aesthetic feelings, and making it more purely artistic. The author believes that the expression of spiritual world in traditional Chinese painting art is of great significance and value to the research and innovation of lacquer painting language. To excavate tradition technology, this will play a role in making the past serve the present. Traditional artistic wisdom can give new meaning to lacquer painting. The development of lacquer painting should have a variety of trends. They do not go against each other in parallel, but complement each other. They are both interconnected and moving forward independently. In the pattern of diversified development of contemporary art, the ancient language of lacquer painting should also keep pace with the times, achieve innovation and breakthrough on the basis of inheritance and extension, and find a broader space for development in the new pattern of art.

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