

# The Localization Construction of Sichuan Native Oil Painting under the Background of Cultural Renaissance

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## Abstract

As a foreign art form, native oil painting cannot be separated from the fusions of Chinese and western art in the exploration of national painting forms. Taking the cultural revival as the background of the times, this paper tries to discuss the localization construction of Sichuan native oil painting from the aspects of expression language, the connotation of subject matter and the painting aesthetic system.

## Keywords

Context, Sichuan, Local Painting, Localization, Cultural Revival

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## 1. Introduction

Sichuan native oil painting plays an important role in the history of modern Chinese painting, its vicissitudes bear the academic value of local oil painting at different times. The author thinks that the localization construction of Sichuan native oil painting is the foundation of its inheritance and development in the era of cultural revival.

## 2. The Development of Sichuan Native Oil Painting and Contemporary Cultural Context

In the context of modern Chinese culture, the rise of Sichuan native oil painting in the early 1980s has become the painting trend of the times for its humanistic care. But the local realistic painting is not without crisis, one of which is that it is becoming a style (Shui, 1984). Just a few years later, when the 85 new wave ideas arose, it gradually faded out of the field of vision of the art circle. Until the mid-

dle and late 1990s, after a decade of silence in the creation of local oil painting, Luo Zhongli, Chen Weimin, Chen Anjian and other painters presented a new appearance of local oil painting in the form of the return of traditional culture, and the local oil painting in the new era was inherited and developed under the nourishment of traditional culture as well.

Ever since the reform and opening, all kinds of western artistic expression forms, schools, thoughts and aesthetic standards have entered China, it blended and developed with Chinese traditional local culture. As a result, the creation of Sichuan local oil paintings has been inevitably affected; some painters' artistic value orientation has been gradually distanced from the local traditional civilization. For example, some painters who are engaged in the creation of local oil paintings turn to the pursuit of trendy contemporary art. At the same time, some painters take local themes as the carrier of their paintings but their works lack the spiritual connotation of that. Now the Government has attached unprecedented importance to spiritual and cultural construction in the process of national rejuvenation. The governments at all levels organize painters to create traditional cultural themes, historical themes and ethnic minority cultural themes art works in various forms, some of them have been purchased by government. These support initiatives from the authorities make the ethnic traditional culture inherited and developed effectively. So the development of culture and art is turning from blind worship of the Western world to national cultural self-confidence. Global information integration under the horizon of contemporary multicultural context makes people more aware of the importance of traditional civilization for the human cultural heritage, in the process of industrialization people gradually lost the local culture which is now protected in a new form named intangible cultural heritage<sup>1</sup>. So Sichuan native painting is getting an opportunity of nirvana in succession in the revival of traditional ethnic culture development now.

### 3. The Localization Construction of Sichuan Native Oil Painting

Due to the inherent social attribute of local oil painting itself, it is an objective reflection of local life under the category of realism, so its localization construction is the deepening of subject matter and the innovative exploration of expression form.

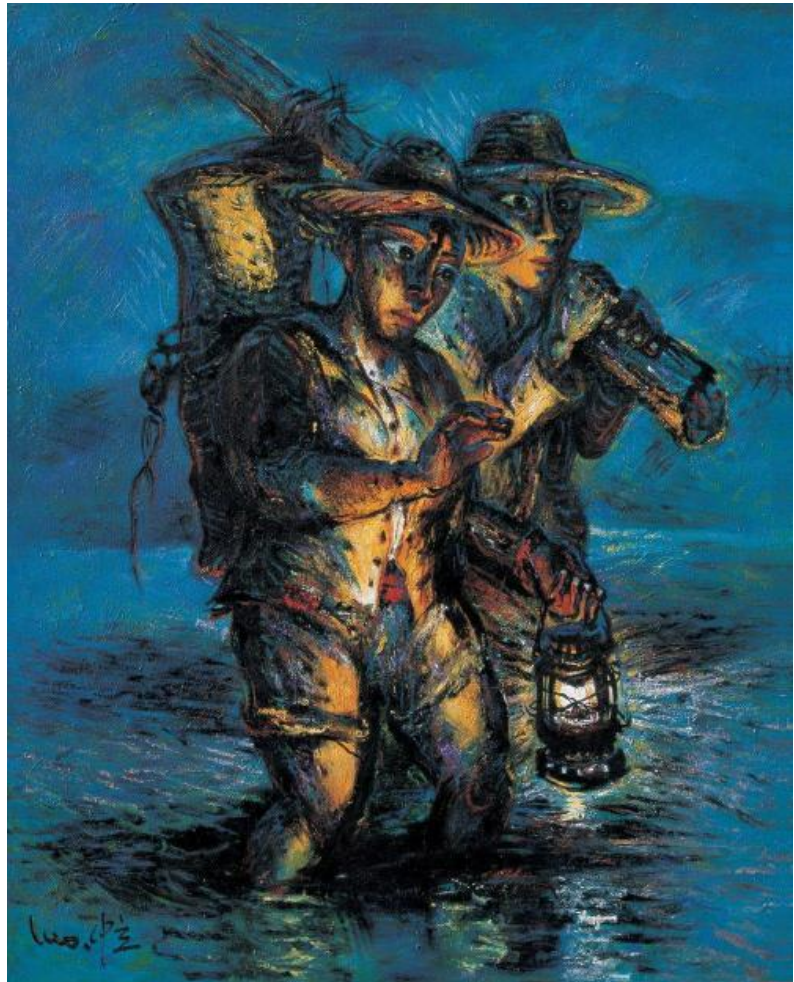
**1) Folk culture connotation of local oil painting themes.** As a kind of artistic form to express local culture, local oil painting usually uses the means of realism to express the purpose of narrative expression. Therefore, the subject matter of painting with social record function contains two layers of value. One is the reflection of the natural features, social events, local customs and cultural phenomena in the local environment, namely the external form value of the local

<sup>1</sup>Intangible cultural heritage in art contains Sichuan's folk operas, shadow plays, folk art, folk literature, traditional sculpture, folk songs and dances and other traditional folk art forms which have been protected by the government in the new era, because their inheritance and development are related to the development of traditional folk culture. They play an important role of cultural revival in China as well.

theme. The other is the spirit of the traditional cultural connotation of the rural society and the aesthetic value orientation of the times reflected by the theme, which is the reflection of the cultural connotation of the times through the theme. Thus it can be seen that the localization construction of Sichuan native oil painting should point the connotation of the subject matter to the essential core of national native culture, just as the relevant scholars believe that “Chinese oil painting should be guided to develop towards the direction of paying attention to the rich and profound cultural connotation behind the country” (Sun, 2012). Sichuan is in southwest China, its local culture has experienced integration and development of different nationalities, regions and times, so its cultural connotation is broad and profound which can provide national culture nourishment for the sublimation of the subject matter today.

**2) Localization of painting and modeling.** The types of folk art modeling contain plane, three-dimensional or comprehensive modeling, etc. The modeling images can be traced back to the original national culture such as religion, witchcraft, totem, myth and legend. The expression way of modelling image generally uses hyperbole, realistic, indicative and abstract wait for gimmick, the figure reflects artistic aesthetic features such as plain or decorous, mature or pu-erile, mysterious or direct, complex or concise, crude or exquisite, exalted or humorous. Drawing lessons from the folk art modeling can be carried out from two aspects. The first is to study the folk art image, summarize the artistic characteristics of the traditional folk modeling image, examine the cultural connotation carried by the modeling, and then seek for the local painting modeling image with Sichuan regional cultural characteristics. The second is the reference to the folk modeling techniques, in-depth study of the art rule of different folk modeling methods, to explore the internal relationship between the folk modeling image and the expression methods adopted, and to enlighten the local modeling techniques of Sichuan native painting. For example, Luo Zhongli’s works of Bashan farmers since the 1990s always showed low and rash figure (see **Photo 1** and **Photo 2**) with a unique aesthetic orientation, which is the crystallization of the folk art modeling.

**3) Nationalization of painting techniques.** Western oil painting and China traditional painting has essential difference from painting materials to technical language, western painting loves exquisite modelling of three-dimensional space and works follow the scientific focus perspective rule, while in China its traditional painting stresses two-dimensional spatial subjective scatter perspective and the modelling of Planarization laws. For example, Chinese folk murals, wood carvings, door god paintings, New Year paintings and so on are often shaped in the form of lines, the image of the performance is usually planar treatment; Traditional Chinese painting emphasizes subjective construction of picture composition rules in order to achieve “vivid spirit”. As a result, Sichuan native painting uses the expression techniques of traditional Chinese painting for reference in the expression of technical language, and can use the composition rules



**Photo 1.** Crossing the River, Luo Zhongli.



**Photo 2.** The Winding Mountain Road, Luo Zhongli.



of Chinese folk painting for reference in the form of its composition, and explore the innovative forms of the expression techniques of painting from the expression techniques of folk art. In his series of works, the painter Meng Tao used the rule of scatter perspective, applied the techniques of line expression in traditional Chinese painting in the picture to weaken the three-dimensional space of painting and pursue the planar effect with regional and national cultural interest, which made the work unique in charm. Traditional folk art contains rich national culture. The study and application of traditional folk art can enhance the national language expression of painting, and thus increase the localization tension of works.

**4) Color expression refers to the national traditional color system.** The application of color in Chinese folk art is various and has a unique color system of Oriental image. One is a relatively gaudy strong color contrast performance, the color often works with symbolic meaning, which can be seen in folk New Year paintings, murals, wood carvings and celebrations usually. For example, red means auspicious festival, black appears mysterious and solemn; In the color system of the five elements in China, blue, white, red, black and yellow are used to represent the five directions of east, west, south, north and the center. Second is the relatively simple black and white color system. The limit color often has a mysterious and dramatic effect, so it is used in sacrificial activities and religious activities generally. Some painters like strong stage color contrast in folk dramas in the application of picture colors. Luo Zhongli's works, such as "night rain on Bashan mountain" and "money leopard", use strong color contrast to obtain visual impact. The proper application of the traditional folk color system in local painting can not only make the painting work itself have more national cultural characteristics, but also provide reference for the use of color symbolic meaning to express emotions in the creation.

**5) The aesthetic value orientation of painting goes forward Nationalization.** The development process of Sichuan native painting is also the continuous construction process of the aesthetic value system of native painting, it goes from the realistic critical value system to the responsibility of intellectual cultural consciousness. Today, when national culture has become the mainstream form of social and cultural context, the spirit of the new times has pointed to national and cultural self-confidence. The popularization of artistic accomplishment has a deep understanding of foreign art forms and traditional national culture. Even the farmers in the new era are characterized by culture, wealth and confidence. When traditional culture goes into the theme of local art, national culture elements reasonably go into among them also, above all, it stems from the painter's feeling, understanding, then the performance to traditional rural culture, the painters show cultural exchanges through time in works from which they transfer the aesthetic connotation of traditional culture to the audience. If we can turn Xialiba People's type of local culture in the art of painting to Yangchun Snow's type of national culture, it must be understood by people, nobody need

to worry about that aesthetic spirit dimension expression is fit or highbrow, because profound folk culture has always been the spiritual world of everyday life to ordinary people.

#### **4. Conclusion**

To sum up, the localization of Sichuan native oil painting is not simply regionalization, nor is it the pursuit of the artist's personal aesthetic taste, but the inheritance and development in the integration of foreign culture and traditional culture. The western oil painting language is no doubt the dependence of the external expressive form language of Sichuan local oil painting, but the national traditional culture of Sichuan region is the spirit of artistic connotation and which accompanies with local oil painting's developing and inheriting process. In a word, national traditional culture is particularly important for the construction of local oil painting form. Of course, for Sichuan native oil painting, its inheritance and development cannot run away from the study of the objective influence of social and cultural context, this subject needs the writer to conduct research in the future.

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#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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