

A Study on the Language Expression of Chinese Vernacular Realistic Oil Painting

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Abstract: Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting, as a unique art form, has become an important part of the Chinese art scene since the 1970s. This article aims to study the language expression of this art form in different periods, analyze its characteristics in composition, modeling, color, and emotional expression, and explore its status and role in the development of Chinese oil painting. Through literature review and analysis of classic works, this article reveals the historical context and future development directions of Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting.

Keywords: vernacular realistic oil painting, development of Chinese oil painting, language expressions, formal analysis

Introduction

As a mature art form, oil painting can be traced back to the Renaissance period in Europe. Over time, it gradually spread to various parts of the world, including China in the Far East, constantly blending and colliding with the local cultures. In the 20th century, China's dramatic social changes and political upheavals directly influenced the direction and themes of artistic creation. During this period, realistic oil painting in China mainly focused on showcasing major narrative themes at national level. However, with the intensification of urbanization in China, significant changes occurred in the social structure and people's lifestyles. Meanwhile, since the New Culture Movement, the exploration and transformation of rural areas have been an important issue in intellectual circles. Against this backdrop, a new genre of oil painting emerged quietly—vernacular realistic oil painting.

Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting originated in the 1970s, represented by the works of painters such as Chen Danqing and Luo Zhongli. Drawing inspiration from traditional Chinese rural themes, they authentically depicted the real-life situations in Chinese rural and ethnic minority areas, embodying strong social concern and humanistic sentiments. With the development of Chinese society and changes in the art market, vernacular realistic oil painting has exhibited different developmental characteristics and language features in different historical periods, becoming a window into understanding the overall landscape of Chinese oil painting development.

This article aims to provide insights and inspiration for future oil painting creation by conducting a systematic study on Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting and exploring its evolution and innovation in artistic language.



Figure 1: *An Old Man in Xinjiang* by Jiang Shiyang

Source of Creative Material: This image depicts an elderly individual encountered with during the author's fieldwork in Xinjiang in 2008. He possesses distinct European and American facial features and has a friendly and amiable demeanor.

1.1 Research Objectives and Questions

As an artist who has been engaged in oil painting creation for many years, the author has gained profound insights into the language techniques of oil painting and the current situation of oil painting education in China. With the improvement of China's economic performance, the threshold for art learning has gradually decreased, leading to a surge in the number of artists and intensifying market competition. Against this backdrop, oil painting creators continuously explore new ways of creation and artistic forms of expression, posing unprecedented challenges to traditional realistic oil painting. The rise of vernacular realistic oil painting timely fills the blank in creative themes, realizing artists' return to and concern for real-life experiences. Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting, with its profound focus on Chinese reality, showcases distinctive Chinese characteristics. This article attempts to study its language expressions in different periods, aiming to gain insight into the development of Chinese oil painting, especially realistic oil painting in China in the 20th century. It seeks to reveal its local features and provide new ideas and inspirations for the future creation of Chinese oil painting.

The scope and methodology of this study are divided into two dimensions: Firstly, a longitudinal timeline approach, tracing the emergence of vernacular realistic oil painting in the 1970s and 1980s, its evolution in the 1990s, and its developments in the 21st century. It analyzes the historical development and trends of vernacular realistic oil painting in terms of its language expression. Secondly, a horizontal analysis of the formal characteristics of oil painting language. This involves comparing and analyzing works by different artists from the same period, exploring formal language features including composition, modeling techniques, color analysis, and emotional expression. Through an ontological perspective, it delves into the inheritance and innovation of vernacular realistic oil painting, providing theoretical and practical guidance for future oil painting creation.

This article aims to clarify the following threads and questions: Firstly, what are the special background and historical inevitability of the emergence of vernacular realistic oil painting in China? Secondly, what are the unique language expressions in Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting, including aspects such as composition, modeling, color, and emotional expression? Thirdly, what are the characteristics of language expressions of Chinese vernacular realistic oil paintings in different periods? Fourthly, what are the shifts in the language expression in Chinese vernacular realistic oil paintings in the new century and their implications for contemporary oil painting?

Through answering the above questions, this article hopes to provide valuable references and insights for the future development of Chinese oil painting. Additionally, it aims to endow vernacular realistic oil painting with a more diversified and profound aesthetic perspective.



Figure 2: *Memory* by Jiang Shiyang in 2010

Source of Creative Material: The author frequently played next to this entrance gate during childhood, which is now lying in ruins. The author depicts it to reminisce about the carefree childhood.

1.2 Literature Review

A considerable number of comprehensive works have extensively discussed the history of Chinese oil painting, including Lv Peng's *History of Modern Chinese Fine Arts*, Chen Ruilin's *Course of Modern Chinese Fine Arts History*, Pan Yaochang's *History of Modern Chinese Fine Arts*, and Chen Lusheng's *Pictorial History of New China 1949-1966*. In addition, Si Shunwei's *Thirty Years of Contemporary Chinese Fine Arts (1978-2008)* mainly presents Chinese painting of the new period from the perspective of artistic trends and schools. It particularly emphasizes summarizing and categorizing oil painters and their works mainly based on Western art movements, such as vernacular realism, classicism, hyperrealism, playful realism, and Chinese realistic painting. Gao Minglu's *'85 Art Movement: Humanistic Vanguard in the 1980s* provides a detailed and systematic presentation of the 85 Art Movement using abundant historical materials. *Recollection and Statement: On Chinese Art and Art History After 1949* utilizes oral accounts from historical witnesses to vividly introduce topics such as the developmental themes of the 1950s, art

exhibitions in the 1970s, and new artistic developments in the 1990s. Liu Xilin's *History of Chinese Painting in the 20th Century* comprehensively discusses artists and art movements in various regions, categories, and schools throughout the 20th century. Zhu Yu's *Socialism and "Nature": A Study of Chinese Aesthetic Controversies and Literary and Artistic Practices in the 1950s and 1960s* reconstructs socialist cultural politics in China from the perspective of nature during the 1950s and 1960s. Shang Hui's *People's Art: A History of Revolutionary Art in China* systematically reviews the development of art since the establishment of the Communist Party of China. Last but not least, Zou Yuejin's *A History of Chinese Art in New China: 1949-2000* analyzes the modernist trends among Chinese painters and highlights the complexity of the painter community and the diversity of art appreciation groups, all of which provide a reliable academic background for the author's study.

In addition, some domestic scholars have systematically sorted out the development history of oil painting and published specialized research works on the history of oil painting. A typical example is Liu Chun's *History of Chinese Oil Painting* (2009). The Chinese Oil Painting Society has also fully played its role in promoting the creation and research of Chinese oil painting art. It has organized and planned numerous academic research activities related to oil painting art and published relevant literature collections. For instance, in 2005, it edited and published the *Collection of Essays on Contemporary Chinese Oil Painting: 1976-2005*, which comprehensively includes thematic essays on contemporary oil painting over the past thirty years of reform and opening up. It focuses on how Chinese oil painting grasps the pulse of the times in the face of significant changes at home and abroad, how national cultural psychology plays a role in the development of Chinese oil painting, and how contemporary oil painting integrates with life. Furthermore, it explores how Chinese oil painting confronts Western culture, establishes its own evaluation criteria, and forms its own values. Subsequently, in 2010, the *Collection of Literature of the Chinese Oil Painting Society: 1995-2010* was published. This collection is divided into sections such as *The Birth and Development of the Chinese Oil Painting Society*, *Exhibitions and Academic Symposiums organized by the Chinese Oil Painting Society (1995-2010)*, *Selected Papers on Chinese Oil Painting (1995-2010)*, and *Chronicles of Chinese Oil Painting (1995-2010)*. It includes historical materials on various stages of oil painting art activities over a fifteen-year period and essays on Chinese oil painting published during this period. This collection comprehensively presents the history of contemporary Chinese oil painting development, showcasing the diverse development of Chinese oil painting. It serves as important documentary evidence for understanding contemporary Chinese oil painting.

In addition, foreign scholars have also reviewed and assessed the development history of contemporary Chinese oil painting. For instance, British art historian Michael Sullivan authored works such as *Chinese Art and Artists in the 20th Century* (2013), *A Short History of Chinese Art* (2014), and *The Meeting of East and West Art* (2014). Professors Richard Vinograd and Robert L. Thorp from the United States co-authored the book *Chinese Art and Culture* (2014) from the perspective of cultural history, incorporating 20th-century Chinese art into their research scope. Although their writing on the development of contemporary Chinese art is more generalized, they present a perspective different from that of Chinese scholars. Their pioneering stance is evident in their selection of artists, such as Huang Zhixiang from the Xiamen Dada movement, Cai Guoqiang, Xu Bing, and others.

In terms of research on realistic oil painting, works such as Fan Dian's *Contemporary Chinese Art - Oil Painting*, Liu Chun's *History of Chinese Oil Painting*, Hu Jiancheng's *Spring and Autumn - Documents of the First Studio of the Oil Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts*, Liu Xin's *A Pictorial History of Chinese Oil Painting for a Century*, Zhao Li and Yu Ding's edited *Documents of Chinese Oil Painting*, and Li Chao's *History of Modern Chinese Oil Painting* have extensively introduced the history of Chinese oil painting. Regarding related journal articles, they generally revolve around existing issues, the craftsmanship nature of oil painting, conceptual aspects, and the "85 New Wave Art" movement. However, research on vernacular realistic painting is relatively scarce, mainly focusing on individual case studies of artists and analyses of artistic language styles. For example, the renowned Chinese art critic Shui Tianzhong's *Reflections on Vernacular Realistic Painting* reveals the significance and main reasons for the emergence of

vernacular realistic painting, while Yu Yang's *Nostalgic Gaze - Andrew Wyeth's Vernacular Realistic Paintings and Their Influence* discusses the impact of the Western artist Andrew Wyeth on Chinese vernacular painting.

Overall, research outcomes on "Chinese realistic oil painting" and "vernacular realism" in the 21st century are quite abundant. These provide a substantial amount of literature for the compilation of data and databases in this article. However, literature specifically focusing on "Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting" consists of only 18 articles, mostly journal papers and master's theses, with no available data on doctoral theses. Additionally, these articles predominantly focus on individual case studies of artists and analyses of artistic language styles, with little emphasis on collective studies. This presents ample space for the study proposed in this article.

1.3 Research Method

This article will primarily adopt perspectives from iconography and art studies, while also integrating methodologies from other relevant disciplines such as sociology and history. Focusing on Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting as the primary analytical subject, it will conduct a formal analysis of oil painting language along both longitudinal timelines and horizontal differences in individual language styles. Through studying the language expressions of vernacular realistic oil painting, rich in Chinese characteristics, across different periods, this article aims to gain insights into the path traversed by Chinese painting, especially realistic painting, in the 20th century. Furthermore, it seeks to explore more viable paths and insights for future oil painting creation. The research methods employed will include literature review, observation, data compilation, survey research, and comparative analysis.

Method of literature review refers to collecting domestic and international literature works on Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting, as well as materials such as classic works, collections, interview records of representative vernacular realistic oil painters, and summarizing them to serve as reliable sources of information for the research. Observation method involves gaining insights into the development and features of vernacular realistic oil painting by observing exhibitions in-person and on online platforms. Data compilation method aims to comprehensively analyze collected classic works, collections, photographs, audiovisual materials, etc. Comparative research method involves multidimensional comparison of oil painting languages from different periods and different artists to explore their differences and evolutions, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the language expression patterns and characteristics of Chinese realistic oil painting, and providing examples and experiences for the future development of Chinese painting.

2.1 Artistic Language of Vernacular Realistic Oil Painting

Realistic oil painting, also known as representational oil painting, is a typical form of expression within the realm of oil painting and stands in contrast to abstract and symbolic oil painting. It pursues the authenticity of artistic images, aiming to mimic reality, which is one of the manifestations of mimesis in Western aesthetics. In terms of artistic language, realistic oil painting emphasizes the precise depiction of the real world, striving to reproduce the physical properties of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane. This includes the shapes, volumes, textures, and lighting effects of objects.

In the field of art, the term "realism" is often associated with "realism", the Chinese of which is translated from "naturalism". Realism, as a representational technique in contemporary painting, has become a mature language style. In theoretical studies, the interpretation of the term "realism" often focuses on its external stylistic appearance and is mostly described as realism or naturalism. Realism has multiple meanings in art history. It can refer to both an artistic style and an artistic movement. Harold Osborne's *The Oxford Companion to Art* provides several interpretations of realism: it does not avoid depicting ugliness; it is the antithesis of abstraction; it is opposed to deformation; when combined with naturalism, it is often opposed to styleism and idealism; and it specifically refers to the individualized treatment in Roman sculpture as opposed to Greek

sculpture. In the *Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques*, realism is defined as more closely related to painting art. It is divided into two parts: first, it refers to "the depiction of characters, objects, and scenery as they appear in nature, without distortion or typification." This term is sometimes used to refer to representational or figurative painting, as opposed to abstract painting. The second meaning refers to an art movement that emerged in France between 1850 and 1875, the first realism exhibition organized by Courbet in 1855 in protest against the rejection of his work by the Salon. From this, it can be seen that terms like realism and abstraction or deformation have opposite meanings, but the interpretation of this term is still relatively broad. It requires a clearer contextual understanding to accurately convey its meaning.

Vernacular realistic painting is a unique artistic genre within Chinese oil painting, originating in the late 1970s to early 1980s in the Chinese art scene. In the 1980s, at exhibitions such as the National Youth Fine Arts Exhibition and the Central Academy of Fine Arts graduate exhibition, the oil paintings of Luo Zhongli's *Father* and Chen Danqing's *Tibetan Group Portrait*, caught the attention of the judges. Their works depicted subjects previously unseen in Chinese oil painting: the down-to earth farmers in the fields and the rugged Tibetans on the cold and barren plateau, deeply resonating with the audience. Represented by the works of Chen Danqing, Luo Zhongli and other artists, these paintings depict rural and harsh highland ethnic minorities, with their unique perspectives and profound connotations, prompting people to contemplate rural culture and social development. They were referred to by contemporary critics as "vernacular realistic painting," thus giving rise to this concept.

In terms of artistic language, vernacular realistic painting preserves the authenticity of realistic oil painting while developing its own characteristics. It reflects artists' profound reflections on the changes of the times and their cultural consciousness. In terms of composition and conception, vernacular realistic oil paintings typically employ simple and direct compositions to reflect the simple, primitive, and rugged life scenes in rural and ethnic minority areas, such as farming, shepherding, and festival celebrations. Although these scenes may seem ordinary, they contain profound cultural connotations and life philosophies. Regarding artistic techniques, artists pay close attention to the detailed portrayal of character images. Through observation and experience, they capture the expressions, movements, and gestures of characters, striving to depict the emotions and spiritual aspects of the characters with delicate brushstrokes, making the figures in the paintings vivid and highly evocative. The use of colors tends to favor natural and rustic tones, such as earthy colors, green, and blue. These colors not only reflect the characteristics of the natural environment in rural and ethnic minority areas but also help create a harmonious and tranquil visual atmosphere. At the same time, artists also emphasize the contrast of light and shadow and the harmonious unity of overall color tones to enhance the three-dimensional and spatial sense of the works. In terms of emotional expression, vernacular realistic oil paintings often contain the artists' deep emotions towards rural life. They not only demonstrate respect and appreciation for the lives of local people but also reflect a love for and inheritance of traditional culture, conveying rich humanistic care.



Figure 3: *Sun Yat-sen* by Jiang Shiyang

2.2 Development of Vernacular Realistic Oil Painting

Before the emergence of vernacular realistic oil painting, "Vernacular Literature" had already risen. The term "Vernacular Literature" originated from Lu Xun's work *The New Year's Sacrifice*. In the 1920s, a group of young writers who were closer to rural life appeared on the modern literary scene. Influenced by Lu Xun, their works often focused on rural life and the hardships of peasants, forming what was called "Vernacular Literature." Through depicting scenes of rural life and customs, "Vernacular Literature" addressed significant social issues, revealing the changes in society and the characters within it, becoming a narrative model pursued by modern Chinese writers. "Vernacular Literature" emerged several decades earlier than vernacular realistic painting and similarly exerted significant influence on the creation and study of vernacular realistic painting.

Artworks from each era are deeply marked by the spirit of their time, and vernacular realistic oil painting is no exception. For one thing, the exploration and transformation of rural life have been a fundamental consensus among intellectuals regarding the future direction of Chinese society since the New Culture Movement. As a unique subject of oil painting emerging in the post-agricultural era of China—vernacular realistic oil painting reflects the realistic concerns closely related to the urbanization process in China and its people. For another, as an art form introduced from the West, oil painting, within the social context of China, has been closely associated with the most realistic and popular artistic language. The essence of Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting thus provides insight into the important changes in Chinese art development from the 20th to the 21st century.

In the 1970s and 1980s, while "scar painting" emerged and faded, some young artists turned their gaze away from the noise and crowds, seeking refuge from modern culture. During this period, "Vernacular Realism" broke away from the single "Three Prominences" model that prevailed since the Cultural Revolution, and began depicting characters from everyday life. However, it still predominantly featured a heroic and protagonist-centered perspective. Whether it was Chen Danqing's impressionistic portrayal of Tibetan people, Luo Zhongli's close-up images of farmers, He Duoling's lyrical depictions of rural girls, Shang Yang's epic portrayal of boatmen, or Ding

Fang's tragic portrayal of Northwest farmers, they all reflected the typical style of the time and laid the groundwork for the rise of vernacular realistic oil painting in the 1990s. Works such as Chen Danqing's *Tibetan Group Portrait*, Luo Zhongli's *Father*, He Duoling's *Spring Awakening*, as well as those by Sun Weimin, Ai Xuan, and others depicting rural and ethnic minority characters in the snowy plateau, were referred to by critics as "vernacular realistic oil painting." In their works, amidst the harsh and difficult environment, they still radiated the warmth of humanity.

After the 1990s, Chinese oil painting entered a period of intensive exploration of its essence. The creation of vernacular realistic themes remained vigorous, but there was a noticeable shift in artistic perspective from the "heroic" anthem towards everyday civilian life. Liu Xiaodong depicted snippets of meaningless rural life, Xin Dongwang portrayed simple laborers amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life, Gong Lilong infused Northeastern humor into his works, Sun Weimin captured sunny farmers in vibrant light and shadow, while Wang Yidong portrayed rural wedding customs in classical portrait style. Narratives became more minimalistic, daily life became the mainstream, and even mundane aspects gained prominence after the 1990s. The language and expression of vernacular realistic oil painting became increasingly rich and diverse, with a tendency towards the normalization of painting styles and a departure from grand themes.

Entering the 21st century, the emergence of installation art and conceptual art continued to challenge the existence of traditional easel painting, while electronic imagery attempted to undermine the authenticity of representational painting. The language of oil painting further purified, with themes trending towards hot societal issues, and the narrative perspective of the imagery returning to protagonist-oriented characters. As a country with a long history of agriculture, steadily transitioning from an agricultural era to a post-agricultural one, rural themes remain an endless source of inspiration for contemporary artists. Vernacular realistic oil painting is also undergoing new stylistic shifts.

The development trajectory of vernacular realistic oil painting from the 20th century to the early 21st century not only suggests that vernacular realism is a rich resource waiting to be further explored, but also demonstrates the inseparable relationship between artworks and electronic imagery in the era of mass culture. How to continue to utilize this indigenous realistic subject matter in the new century may perhaps be found by exploring the development of artistic language and the pioneering efforts of different artists.



Figure 4: *Ruins* by Jiang Shiyang in 2008

Source of Creative Material: The image depicts a demolished building in Tianjin. Its dynamic form brimming with vitality ignited the creative desire of the author. Consequently, the author captured it in a photograph and transformed it into an oil painting.

3.1 Implications of Vernacular Realistic Oil Painting for Contemporary Oil Painting

Art historian Mr. Zou Yuejin, in his book *A History of Chinese Art in New China: 1949-2000*, discusses the art history of the 1980s and observes a trend towards "personalization" among artists after the 1980s. He notes that the dissemination of personalized art satisfies the diverse needs of society across different levels and spaces. Moreover, when describing the art development from 1990 to 2000, Zou Yuejin chooses the title "Rural and Urban" instead of the more common "Vernacular Realism." While seemingly similar, this choice emphasizes the "grassroots" and "lifelike" aspects of creative themes, thus aligning more closely with social reality. The study of vernacular realism oil painting not only helps to delineate the development trajectory of Chinese realistic oil painting but also provides valuable insights for contemporary oil painting creation.

British art historian Michael Sullivan once summarized a series of significant issues in the Chinese art world of the 1990s. Firstly, art shifted from elite culture to the masses. Secondly, Chinese artists faced complex adaptation and struggles in learning, understanding, and confronting Western art. Thirdly, amidst the clash of Eastern and Western cultures, Chinese artists experienced a crisis of identity recognition. Sullivan's discussions not only allow domestic researchers to see Chinese contemporary painting from a Western perspective, enriching their understanding, but also boldly reveal many materials and viewpoints that domestic theorists may not have access to. Thirdly, his concept of de-elitism in historiography and literary narrative language can provide certain reference significance for Chinese researchers.

Many scholars have also offered insights into the existing issues of Chinese realistic oil painting. In her article *Reflections on the Contemporaneity of Chinese Realistic Oil Painting*, published in the 2010 issue of *Fine Arts*, Zhang Zuying emphasizes the importance of studying the characteristics of oil painting art, particularly its painterliness. She suggests that painting should not be about mere production; instead, it should reflect the artist's creativity and stroke intention. Losing the unique expressiveness and charm of painting means losing the soul of this art form. Additionally, modern aesthetic concepts and new visual experiences should be introduced to keep Chinese oil painting fresh and vibrant, meeting the aesthetic and spiritual needs of contemporary society and modern individuals. In his article *On the Modern Transformation of Contemporary Realistic Oil Painting in China*, published in the 2006 issue of *Southeast Culture*, Wang Zhong argues that although realistic oil painting has achieved diversity in its forms and languages, the lack of spiritual depth in the works cannot be ignored. Huang Ping, in his article *On the Realistic Road of Chinese Realistic Oil Painting*, published in the 2010 issue of the *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute (Fine Arts and Design Edition)*, criticizes the fading and even loss of the spirit and character of Chinese realistic oil painting, which should embody the "expression, revelation, and criticism of social reality," driven by the rampant commercial interests of the market in the 1990s. Zhong Han, in his article *Reflections on the Issues of Realistic Oil Painting*, published in the 2006 issue of *Art Research*, argues that realism in painting has undergone repeated transformations between its conceptual and formal oppositions, presenting richness and complexity. Realism still cannot be considered mature, and it has its "weaknesses" in the development process, which requires us to be self-aware. Mr. Zhong not only reflects on the problems inherent in painting itself but also pays attention to postmodern art, grasping the characteristics of postmodern thought, and finding a new starting point for realistic oil painting in the context of postmodernism. Moreover, he inadvertently observes the intertwining influence of figurative and abstract painting languages.

Based on the realistic nature of vernacular realistic oil painting, many artists and scholars have established corresponding norms for the technical aspects of oil painting. Xiang Shizhong, in his article *Careful Description, Respect for Technique and Reasoning*, published in the 2012 issue of

Art Observation, argues that realistic oil painting should embody a consciousness of excellence, emphasize technical proficiency, utilize traditional techniques, focus on detailed portrayal, employ realistic techniques, and pursue painting density. The article presents its own viewpoint on the construction of the essence of oil painting, particularly emphasizing the technical aspects inherent to oil painting. Wang Yidong, in his article *Reflections on Realistic Oil Painting Creation*, published in the 2011 issue of *Fine Arts*, believes that a painter engaged in realistic figure painting must possess the following abilities: 1) the ability to depict characters accurately; 2) the ability to capture and portray characters' best expressions; 3) the ability to integrate characters and environments effectively, ensure that the environment serves the characters well; 4) proficiency in composition skills; 5) unique understanding of color; 6) the ability to understand life uniquely, or in other words, the ability to transform the reality of life into artistic reality, which involves the relationship between reason and emotion; 7) the artist's works should reflect the painter's personality and convey the painter's authentic personal charm. Wang Yidong is a typical representative of the realistic school in Chinese oil painting, and these requirements for painter abilities summarized in his practical experience have significant reference value in painting practice.

The focus on the present and the emphasis on life in vernacular realistic oil painting provide valuable guidance for the development of contemporary oil painting. Art continually changes and reshapes our ways of viewing and understanding the world. Therefore, we should rebuild the intertextual relationship between traditional and modern concepts, rebuild the interrelationship between regional life and expressive language, and rebuild the interrelationship between Eastern aesthetics and contemporary culture. Through an in-depth exploration of rural themes, artists can better reflect social realities, breathe in sync with people's lives, and chart a path for the development of oil painting with distinctive Chinese characteristics.

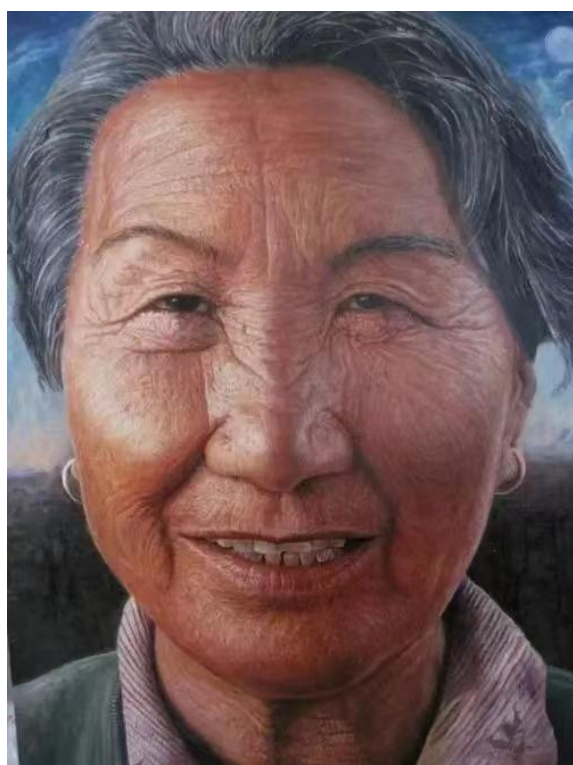


Figure 5: *Grandma* by Jiang Shiyang

Source of Creative Material: This image depicts the countenance of the author's grandmother, a kind-hearted elder. The author captured this photograph in 2010 and later transformed it into an oil painting.

3.2 Conclusion

The Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting has been an indispensable part of the Chinese art scene since the 1970s. This article delves into the various forms of expression of this art at different historical stages, and provides a detailed analysis of the formal elements such as composition, modeling, color, and emotional expression. It not only reveals the historical development of Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting but also accurately delineates the inheritance and innovation of Chinese realistic oil painting in the 20th century. Additionally, it opens up an important perspective for us to understand the overall evolution of Chinese oil painting.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the development of oil painting has not only benefited from a stable social environment and academic atmosphere but has also actively sought innovation. With China's transition into the post-agricultural era, the creation of works based on rural customs and peasant theme has not only broadened the horizons of oil painters but has also allowed art to gradually break free from political constraints, leading to a closer relationship with society and a path towards self-discipline and pure aestheticism. Artistic creation has become increasingly free and relaxed. Contemporary Chinese oil painting continuously evolves in its artistic language, with the essence of oil painting language being fully developed. Against the backdrop of China's transition from an agricultural society to a modern industrial one, the transformations within the language of vernacular realistic oil painting in China signify a shift in the development of Chinese oil painting and art in the new century. The solid and profound historical background of Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting, rooted in the transition from an agricultural society to a modern one, ensures the continued vitality of this uniquely Chinese genre of painting.

Nowadays, realistic oil painting is not only active in the elite art circles but also extends its influence into the broader cultural spaces where the masses gather. Exploring the emergence of vernacular realistic oil painting, a special genre of oil painting in China's post-agricultural era, is closely related to how oil painting engages with reality in the context of mass culture and breathes the same air as the people. Moreover, amidst the wave of national rejuvenation, a clearer understanding of the development trajectory of Chinese vernacular realistic oil painting deepens our appreciation and understanding of our national cultural heritage and cultural soil. Looking ahead, artists can continue to explore and innovate based on this foundation, injecting new vitality into the development of Chinese oil painting.

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