



Appreciation of Female Ceramists' Works From Women's Perspective

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Abstract

Ceramics is the great invention of China, thus the traditional ceramic culture of China has a long splendid history. As the world famous porcelain capital, Jingdezhen has a large amount of ceramist teams with high tastes and delicate skills, among which female ceramists win special attention. Gradually, women ceramists groups come into birth. In the creative work of women for ceramists, they contribute an emotional zone from women's perspective, which is different from that of men of ceramists. They lay more emphasis on the expression of metaphorical meaning by different vessel shapes, images, colors and so on. Nowadays, women have formed a unique creative group, which has done a great contribution to the foreign exchange and communication of ceramic culture.

Key words: Female ceramist; Ceramic work; Foreign exchange and communication

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INTRODUCTION

As the world well known porcelain capital. Jingdezhen has a long ceramic history as well as ceramic artists and skilled craftsmen generation by generation, among which female ceramists have formed a unique existence. Full of passions for the current time, the female ceramists in

Jingdezhen are keeping on exploring, cultivating and innovating. They express the daily routine life with their familiar artistic language: porcelain. They endow their own experiences, perceptions and emotions with ceramic creation. As a result, they can tell the figures and stories in daily life vividly with their unique intuition and nature, forming a unique perspective of female ceramists. This perspective is the true world which are perceived by their feminine nature and mothering instinct.

1. THE FORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY WOMEN CERAMISTS GROUPS

Under the long domination of Chinese feudal society, women in China have played a subordinate role in a long time. They are regarded as accessories of men and have very low social status. Therefore, women can not play an independent role in artistic creation. After the twentieth century, with the development of productivity, innovation of social relationships, women's self-consciousness are waken up gradually, and women's social status is improved a lot. From this time on, women in artistic field to start their artistic creation actively. With this heated trend, some women ceramists in Jingdezhen begin their independent artistic activities. With the media of porcelain, they express their emotion and consciousness from a unique perspective. Some women ceramists are born of ceramic family, some are successors of unique skills, some are teachers and students of ceramic universities and some are folk artists. Women ceramist groups develop with the reform and opening up policy, therefore their thought, body and artistic talent can reflect the features of this period of time. They tell the stories of women and pottery from women's views, expressing their distinctly feminine charm. They input the exquisite, delicate, sensitive and even passive features into their

works. Due to their efforts and progress in ceramic creation, women ceramists begin to develop into the focus of people's attention. In order to show the charm of women ceramists in Jingdezhen, the government organized Jingdezhen Female Ceramists Association in 2004. With more than 70 women members, it is the first time official women ceramists group in Jingdezhen. At the same time, some exhibitions of women of ceramists are held in a lot of big cities in China. The works with abundant decoration techniques, extensive story selections and various expressive forms represent the highest artistic level of Jingdezhen women ceramists, which win wide affection of ceramic hobbyists and collectors. Special emotion of women mixes together with the plasticity of porcelain naturally, contributing a special expressing zone different from men artists. Appreciation of female ceramists' work from female perspective can help readers understand the world belonging exclusively to women, thereby, the creation process and connotative meaning of their works can be deeply and fully interpreted, and the living situation of current female ceramists will be totally revealed.

2. THE REFLECTION OF "WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE" IN JINGDEZHEN WOMEN CERAMISTS' CREATION

Contemporary ceramic art is the extension and development of traditional ceramic art, also, it is the progress of conventional idea and craftwork. The creative ideas, stylistic features and appreciative taste of female ceramists are different from that of male ceramists, thus, women's ceramic work lay more emphasis on attention to their environment, themselves and nature, constructing a unique perspective which exists far away from men's world.

2.1 Integration of Women's Perspective and Women's Personal Life

Being different from male ceramists, most works of female ceramists are the representation of women's own life. There are two points which can explain this phenomenon, for the first reason, women are graceful, exquisite, romantic and tough in their nature, which make them different from men's quality and style. For the second reason, due to the long domination of Chinese feudal society, women have always been subordinate of men, thus, the life styles they experience, the substance they contact with are different from men, therefore the individual body of women are more sensitive than men which will be demonstrated in their ceramic works. With their true feelings towards life, they will express various kinds of sentiments: sweetness, bitter or groom. In this way a kind of sweet female breathing can be felt through their work, in other words, a kind of quiet and elegant

"female beauty". Women love beauty, and they love pursuing beautiful substances. Starting from a minor detail touching their inner heart, female ceramists can create marvelous artistic form association and imagination. They put the romance, gentleness and sensitives into their artistic work, building a unique sensitive world exclusive to women.

From a deeper sense, women are the creators of life, also they are the embodiment of life, they have the most noble moral feelings and maternal auras. Therefore, female beauty is the highest expression of human beauty, from which people can perceive the birth of new lives, the growth of nature and the loss of earthly things. Of course, all these will be reflected through their ceramic works. Take master of arts and crafts of Jiangxi province Zhou Ling as an example, as a student of ceramic design, she thinks that her own life is the best creative material, and female material is a well which will never be dried up. Therefore, she locked her creative direction in female material. Her hometown is Inner Mongolia grassland, women there can only wait for their husband at home after doing a whole day's housework, the pain of missing, the pleasure of meeting again gives her a lot creative inspiration. With simple but exaggerated way, she describes the inner world of women thoroughly.

Her ceramic sculpture work *Silence Fragrance* expresses Chinese style with a traditional Chinese bellyband and fringe. The woman figure in the sculpture takes a piece of handkerchief, or holds a green fruit, or wears a little bunch of flowers in the hair, which responses delicately with their body language, rousing people's imagination in stillness. While the female figure in the series of scent of woman are more easy and comfortable, and their dresses are more fashionable, their temperament and charm are more mature. They enjoy the ease brought by commonness, generous and open-minded quality contained in idleness. Of course, all these features are reflections of Zhou Ling's own life. Female ceramists prefer to pursue colorfulness in different forms, which are the same with male ceramists. But their works reveal a kind of elegant smell, a feeling of quietness and fragrance. Women love beauty, thus, they love pursuing beauty and they love pursuing romance more. In ceramic creation, they like starting from one specific object and developing their reflection and imagination to create gorgeous artistic forms, women's gentleness and elegance. Some detailed memories; some specific scene in life and some slight actions will touch the soft corner in their inner heart, thus arousing their creative inspiration. Female ceramists embody women's romance, tenderness and softness in their ceramic work, contributing a world which cannot be understood by men.

Take the master of ceramic arts of China Shu Huijuan as an example, she keeps devoting herself to ceramic decoration and material, and she is good at traditional Chinese painting of beautiful woman. The women figures

in her works are quiet, beautiful, gentle and refined. At the same time, the women figures in her works have different hair styles, dressings, gestures and expressions: long hair, slender eyebrows, slim necks, narrow shoulders, sitting down, standing up, appreciating flowers, watching butterflies taking a little nap or taking a walk. This is the unique creative style of Shu Huijuan. Only female ceramists can create women's beauty in such detailed and delicate way. The decorative picture *Rose Garden* makes the best use of the characteristic and nature of the material, providing an effective backdrop for the figure of a girl exuding tenderness and love, the cultural connotation becomes more profound in the unique beauty of artistic conception. Another work of Shu is a vivid expression of the classic work of a well known woman poet in Song Dynasty- Li Qingzhao. With the same name *Seeking, seeking*, Shu describes the figure who drowns her own sorrows in drink with meticulous and exaggerated technique: grave, dark blue tones and some big stones, reflecting the depressed yet bored inner feelings of the woman poet after separating from her husband.

2.2 Integration of Women's Perspective and Women's Creative Comprehension

Female ceramists can perceive this world with their sensitive and delicate nature, thus, they can capture the details of life very well. The appearance of some small things, the change of some subtle emotions can touch their inner heart, promoting them to express some emotions which are irrational but closer to their life. They even feel like pursuing life style of the bourgeoisie or of peace and quietness, which is unique to women. They seek for some creative inspiration from women's perspective and mentality. The maid figures created by women for ceramists are more exquisite and delicate: Their manners are elegant, decent and cultivated; their postures are slender, pretty and charming; their clothing are refined without any repetition, all of which reflect women's understanding of dressing and demand for beauty. For women, becoming more perfect by dressing themselves is the goal for all the women, as a result, they have a strong desire to pursue beauty and perfection through the seek for beautiful clothes. Only woman can perceive life in such a careful way, and only woman can express themselves in such a genuine way.

2.3 Integration of Women's Perspective and Nature

The development of nature and the evolution of human history endow women with implicit and tenacious characters, in this way, women artists are more close to nature and they are more adept at capturing natural features and details with their sensitive and curious heart. The emerging of some small creatures, the appearing of some tiny objects will touch their heart, and then

promoting them to express the appreciation of nature in their own way.

Take the master of Chinese ceramic art master Shu Huijuan as an example, she was born in the traditional ceramic art family. Her father, the well known ceramic art master Wang Yeting, is one of the eight great ceramic masters in Qing Dynasty. The landscape painted on the glaze not only has the features of her father, but it also reflects women's detailed description of nature. The composition of her landscape painting is not very complicated or abstract but very concise and compact. Without thick and heavy colors, people can appreciate its pure, fresh and gorgeous feature from her elaborate and pretty style. Her techniques are delicate, skillful and exquisite; the glaze she uses are vivid, natural, fresh and elegant. Appreciating her painting is just like enjoying a piece of distant soft music, or reading a little fresh poem. Her representative work is a piece of famille rose porcelain painting: *Cliffside Spring Hanging on the Green Mountain*. The magnificent mountain, transparent river and a piece of boat in the moist river impress the readers a lot. The traditional Chinese painting integrate with ceramic white ware, achieving an ideal artistic realm.

3. THE CAUSE OF FORMATION OF "WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE" IN JINGDEZHEN FEMALE CERAMISTS' CREATION

The difference in artistic perspective between men ceramists and women ceramists is not by accident. Their differences are due to different psychological and social foundation. On one hand, different physiological basis, as a result of different genders, makes it understandable that there are differences between men and women. From cognitive perspective, men have better abilities in rational thinking and logical reasoning, therefore, they can learn knowledge in a more flexible way. While women tend to be more emotional, thus they are good at getting knowledge from text books. From memory mode perspective, women are better at rote memories while men are better at meaningful memories. From thinking mode, women's emotion are more exquisite, and women are good at image thinking and language communication, while men are good at dealing problems neatly and creatively with their knowledge. From the perspective of excavating problems, women have strong observation ability, therefore, they can find out some minor details which will be ignored by men. As a result of historical inheritance, women have different social status and roles, thus, they have different life experiences and artistic perspectives. Under the long domination of feudality and feudal etiquette, women are restricted from

artistic creation. The very few work created by women should be based on the male perspective, otherwise, they cannot be accepted and appreciated. Therefore, only when women have a relatively high social status can they get engaged in independent artistic creation, thereby, the "female perspective" art can come into being in the true sense.

The active women ceramists in Jingdezhen create from unique female perspective, which fully demonstrates their unique artistic ideas and thinking modes. In this sense, female arts not only shout loudly for women's survival rights, they also belong to a part of the cultural achievements of the whole human race. Before the start of their artistic work, they do not remind themselves of their own female identity. In the process of their artistic creation, they do not pursue the femaleness delicately. The ceramic works with female perspective express women's world naturally and delicately. Female ceramists try to communicate with current society by ceramic works, which can not only show their own charms but also can form influences on others. Female ceramists have made a lot of contribution to the development and transmission of ceramic culture.

CONCLUSION

Human invents ceramics in the long natural practice, and then they accelerate gorgeous ceramic arts in the long productive practice. From the creation of Jingdezhen female ceramists, people can see the marvel and beauty of nature; people can appreciate the harmonious beauty in the integration of female beauty and natural beauty; and people can seek the best way to return to nature, integrate into nature and then realizing the harmonious development between human, nature and ecosystem.

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