

# Watercolor Painting under the Background of Industrial and Commercial Development in the late Qing Dynasty

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**Abstract:** *In the late Qing Dynasty, Western painting techniques and artistic concepts were gradually introduced into China, which had a profound influence on the development of watercolor painting. This paper will discuss the western influence of watercolor painting in the late Qing Dynasty, including the introduction of Western painting techniques, the promotion of watercolor painting by missionaries and diplomatic missions, and the influence of western artistic concepts on watercolor painters in the late Qing Dynasty. By studying these aspects in depth, we can better understand the background and characteristics of the development of watercolor painting in the late Qing Dynasty.*

**Keywords:** Industry and Commerce; Watercolor Painting; late Qing Dynasty.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The gradual commercialization of watercolor painting in China has had a profound impact on the art of painting. However, the commercialization of watercolor painting has brought some challenges and changes to the art of painting. With the development of urbanization and commercialization, watercolor painting began to attract the attention of the market and became a hot commodity. Some excellent watercolor painters began to try to put watercolor paintings to commercial use and explore new marketing strategies.

There were many reasons for the commercialization of watercolor painting in the late Qing Dynasty, including social background, economic factors, technical factors and political factors. The interaction and influence of these factors promoted the development of commercialization of watercolor painting.

## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATE QING DYNASTY

The late Qing Dynasty faced pressure from inside and outside. Internally, social contradictions intensified, including population growth, land annexation, peasant uprisings and other problems, which brought unstable factors to the development of industry and commerce. Externally, invasions and invasions by Western powers intensified the sense of crisis in the country and limited the development of industry and commerce. These internal and external pressures severely challenged and restricted the development of industry and commerce in the late Qing Dynasty.

With the continuous invasion of Western powers and the gradual expansion of trade with China, China's industry and commerce really began to develop. At the beginning of the 20th century, national capitalism was on the rise in China. National capitalists began to invest in building factories, developing industries and promoting the development of China's industry and commerce. During this period, many important national capitalist enterprises came into being, such as Hutchison Whampoa represented by Hu Xueyan and Jiangnan Shipyard represented by Zhang Jian. These enterprises promoted the development of China's industry and commerce, trained a large number of experienced business management talents, and raised the technological level of China's industry and commerce. Through foreign trade, China's industry and commerce have not only absorbed advanced Western science and technology and manufacturing technology, but also further expanded their market. At the same time, watercolor painting also gradually received the attention and influence of industry and commerce.

During this period, coastal cities such as Shanghai became one of the most important trading centers in China and also became the representative offices of many Western enterprises in China. At that time, Shanghai had gradually got rid of the old conservative pursuit, began to dare to face the changes and development of society, and gave proper evaluation in time. In Shanghai, there were a lot of China's first, the first female school, the first female publication, the first female business office publication, all of which showed that Shanghai's urban culture had changed from the old to the new.

Due to the restrictions of the closed-door policy, the influence of Western painting and art gradually penetrated into China. As a painting technique originating from the West, watercolor painting has attracted the attention of a group of visionaries and artists through its unique expression and bright colors. Watercolor painting has unique advantages in presenting details, colors and

light and shadow in the development process of industry and commerce, which can better convey the atmosphere and spirit of industry and commerce. As a novel, delicate and relatively low price art, watercolor painting has been welcomed by the market. Therefore, the development of industry and commerce in the late Qing Dynasty provided a broad space for visual presentation and cultural transmission of watercolor painting. The economic prosperity brought by industrial and commercial development provided more art trading opportunities and market demand for watercolor painting.

In the late Qing Dynasty, with the reform of the education system and the introduction of western art concepts, art education gradually became a field of social importance. As a new art form, watercolor painting was favored by some progressive educators and artists, and was included in the category of art education. In 1909, Local News · Jiangsu Education Association held a Provincial School Performance Exhibition, which provided a broader platform for talent training and knowledge inheritance for the development of watercolor painting. Three points can be drawn from the exhibition. First, the exhibition aims to test the educational achievements. Second, watercolor is one of the painting subjects and has not formed an independent subject. Third, the purpose of the drawing subject is to cultivate students' sentiments.

The government also began to pay attention to the development of culture and art, and played a certain role in promoting and popularizing watercolor painting. In 1910, an article published in "Shenbao · Xuantong Dynasty · Shenbao": Classified news · Miscellaneous notes · Jiaying Great Opening of National Humiliation Memorial Meeting Venerable (Zhejiang), "It is the day of the venue to be reformed, the weather is cool, the national loyalty and anger, full of vitality without fatigue. Hanging song poem picture couplet of more than one hundred pieces, pictures to Jia Shan Sun Jia Zou watercolor painting, Li Xiangyi and the picture of the most, couplet to Xiushui Zhu Juntang have the first ten years together, look after ten years lessons; Wash that national humiliation, ask this moment for the most cloud of the people." It can be seen that another characteristic of watercolor painting is its aesthetic education function. Try to use watercolor painting as a way to conduct moral education in the national humiliation commemoration conference. We should not ignore the profound significance of this kind of art education for the society. This means the awakening of the painter's social public consciousness.

### **3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER-SAVING COLOR PAINTING IN THE LATE QING DYNASTY**

In the late Qing Dynasty, there were internal problems such as political corruption, social unrest and ethnic contradictions, which required reform to stabilize the national situation. Faced with foreign aggression and unequal treaties from Western powers, Japan and other countries, the Qing government was alarmed. In the late Qing Dynasty, a series of reform attempts were made. The Westernization Movement was aimed at strengthening the national strength and coping with foreign aggression. By introducing Western knowledge and concepts, the movement stimulated the pursuit of science, rationality and modern values, and promoted the modernization process of traditional Chinese society.

With the dissolution of the government in the late Qing Dynasty, it marked the rupture and transformation of traditional values. With a great deal of contact, penetration and communication between China and the West, the Western painting became a new visual experience for the Chinese people who were closed off due to the country[1]. Under the influence of western artistic concepts, watercolor painters in the late Qing Dynasty began to dabble in different themes. Traditional Chinese paintings mainly focus on landscapes, flowers and birds. Influenced by the West, watercolor painters in the late Qing Dynasty began to depict various subjects such as urban life, portraits of people and historical stories, which made the fields of expression of watercolor paintings more diverse.

Western artistic concepts emphasized the observation and depiction of light and shadow, color and material, which had an important influence on the techniques and creation styles of watercolor painters in the late Qing Dynasty. They began to pay attention to the processing of light and shadow, the level of color and delicate depiction, and strive to present a more realistic visual effect. In 1911, published with the "declaration · Xuantong Dynasty · Declaration" on the article "commercial travel notes · View Si Lu Yuan Chang mirror frame No. Light and shadow of Chinese scenic spot painting record (Xiang Customer)" in the "more than a day to walk through Si road, see Shi Lu West head Yuan Chang mirror frame No. Hanging light and shadow in front of the law of scenic spot painting around China, if a few colorful photos. I initially thought that it was printed into, and look at it closely, but the painter is also. In recent years, only Tong Ailou, Xu Yongqing and Zhang Yuguang are good at light and shadow painting."

### **4. THE INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE ON WATERCOLOR PAINTING**

Commercial art refers to a kind of art that has social practical significance and reflects the purpose of life application. It is an art that can create economic value. During the period of the Republic of China, there were frequent trade activities between China and foreign countries, and a large number of foreign products entered the domestic market. At the same time, with the growth of the domestic industrial system, the output and quality of locally produced goods continued to improve, and the sales competition between different brands of domestic goods and between domestic goods and imported goods became increasingly fierce,

making art "occupy a more important position in commerce"[2].

With the development of industry and commerce in China, people's living standards have gradually improved, and more and more people begin to have the ability and demand to buy art. As an emerging art form, watercolor painting is favored by more and more people. The commercialization of watercolor painting has also promoted the communication and cooperation among artists. The trend of commercialization has led to the formation of an industrial chain cooperative relationship between painting artists, which can not only promote the exchange and innovation of techniques, but also provide artists with more business opportunities and benefits.

It promotes the development of watercolor art: commercialization makes more painters devote themselves to the creation of watercolor painting, increases the number and variety of watercolor painting creation, and also promotes the continuous innovation and development of watercolor painting techniques and artistic styles. It has entered the life of the common people and become a popular art form. This not only expanded the audience group of watercolor painting, but also promoted the public's understanding and appreciation of art. Promoted cultural exchanges: The commercialization of watercolor painting expanded the audience group of watercolor painting, making it a popular art form. The commercialization of watercolor painting makes the cultural exchanges between China and the West more frequent. The spread and promotion of watercolor painting also contributes to the exchange and integration between Chinese and Western cultures, which has important cultural value. To meet the market demand: With the development of economy and social progress, people's demand for artworks is also increasing. Commercial watercolor products meet the market demand and provide people with more abundant cultural consumption choices.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The commercialization of watercolor painting in the late Qing Dynasty not only promoted the development of watercolor art, but also promoted the art and culture, promoted the cultural exchanges between China and the West, and also provided new opportunities for China's economic development. However, the commercialization of watercolor painting also brought some negative effects. Due to the requirements of commercialization, some painters may over-cater to the market demand when creating watercolor paintings, and lose their independence and creativity. Such commercialization trend may also lead to the art of painting gradually becoming a tool for commercial interests, and losing its original aesthetic and artistic pursuit.

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