

Cultural Symbols of “Chinese Shan-Shui” in the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore (1) how the "Chinese Shan-Shui" themed artworks in the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo reflected national and social changes. (2) how artists utilized materials, colors, and composition to express admiration for natural beauty and explore cultural identity (3) how these artworks in this exhibition reflected social transformation and cultural development, showcasing the interaction between art and society. The samples consisted of artworks from the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo. Data collection included artwork analysis, and artist interviews. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Results revealed that (1) the exhibited works, through the use of comprehensive materials, demonstrated a profound expression of natural and cultural symbols; (2) the artworks reflected a transition from traditional to modern art, showcasing the diversity of Chinese society; (3) the works provided new ways of expressing traditional culture in an international context, enhancing their influence.

Keywords: *Comprehensive Material Painting, Thematic Painting, Chinese Shan-Shui, Cultural Symbols, 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo*

INTRODUCTION

The China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo, as a national-level art event, brings together the finest comprehensive material paintings in China. Particularly in the 4th biennale, the exhibition further showcased the progression of social development, reflecting the transformations of the nation and the spirit of the people. This exhibition not only demonstrated the artists' deep reflections on the times but also their exploration of how materials preserve memory and their innovation in painting techniques. It highlights that comprehensive material painting has become a vital medium in contemporary art for expressing national development and social change.

The Shan-Shui theme is a significant part of traditional Chinese culture, embodying the profound thoughts of generations of writers, philosophers, and artists. It symbolizes the harmony and coexistence between humans and nature. Beyond reflecting the Chinese reverence for nature, it also expresses the experience of human liberation and understanding of the universe. In modern society, the Shan-Shui theme continues to play a crucial role, serving as a bridge for cultural transmission and social development in contemporary China. In this biennale, the Shan-Shui theme within comprehensive material painting illustrates the evolution of Chinese art, offering a dialogue with the world, showcasing the unique cultural identity and artistic expressions of China.

While existing research offers substantial insight into comprehensive material painting, studies focused on biennales and their specific themes remain relatively scarce. Particularly in the 4th biennale, Shan-Shui theme artworks were the most prevalent, making this a valuable area for research. This study aims to explore how these artworks express cultural symbols through materials and forms, seeking to fill gaps in this field and provide theoretical support for comprehensive material painting.

With the increasing integration of global and national cultures, the field of comprehensive material painting faces several challenges, such as the potential for superficial material use at the expense of deeper meaning, unclear themes, and varying levels of artistic skill. This research, through the theoretical frameworks of semiotics and art theory, will explore the evolution of comprehensive material painting in contemporary China. It will

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also examine how the Shan-Shui theme manifests cultural spirit and artistic character, offering new approaches to the development and preservation of artistic and cultural traditions.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows.

To investigate the milestone role of the Biennale in Comprehensive Material Painting in China, including the symbolic meanings carried by its emergence and evolution.

To examine the development process, the social changes and historical context of comprehensive material painting in China.

To investigate comprehensive material paintings created with the theme of Chinese Shan-Shui through various forms and images.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo

The concept of comprehensive material painting arose in China during the 1980s. In the mid-20th century, the global art landscape underwent significant changes and reforms, resulting in three major categories: easel art, installation art, and video art. The boundaries between these art forms became increasingly blurred, leading to greater integration and breaking down barriers between previously rigid classifications. As a result, easel art entered a new era.

During this time, comprehensive material painting emerged as a new sector in the development of Chinese art, naturally taking on the task of transforming easel art. It drew inspiration from internationally renowned art movements and aligned itself with the changes and development characteristics of the time, addressing both artistic and social needs for transformation and cultural expression. Thus, comprehensive material painting possesses strong contemporary art characteristics.

"Focusing on comprehensive material painting itself, the term 'comprehensive' refers to the concept of integrating various painting forms through the use of materials, rather than simply piling up materials. This discipline upholds the spirit of both Chinese and Western painting, enhancing the relationship between materials and painting through experimental applications of various media" (Li, 2014:3). The conceptual origins of "comprehensive art" can be traced back to the early 20th century with the works of Picasso and Braque. "Picasso's 'found materials' introduced new concepts and logic into art, combining different materials to create a new physical state, thus giving rise to a new art style in art history" (Zhang 2021:83). Whether in Picasso and Braque's conceptual collages or Duchamp's ready-mades, the role of materials transcended their traditional functions, breaking free from their physical properties and awakening new possibilities. Unlike traditional painting, this artistic breakthrough began with the innovative use of materials as a key impulse, leading to the thematic presentation of materials.

In China, the concept of comprehensive material painting officially took shape in 2010, as China opened its doors and rapidly developed in various fields following the reform and opening-up era of the 1980s. Prior to this, none of the artistic movements or forms of expression in Chinese art directly corresponded to comprehensive material painting. Unlike Western "mixed media," comprehensive material painting in China did not inherit or develop from contemporary Western art forms. Instead, it was driven by the urgent need for Chinese easel art to adapt to the global art scene and integrate into international artistic aspirations, which became the catalyst for its rapid development and social attention (Hu, 2022: p1).

In the past decade, as the art world and market returned to a more rational state, contemporary Chinese art has emerged as a new expression of artistic ideas in response to the evolving modern environment. In the "post-pandemic" era, people have become increasingly aware of the role of art in psychological adjustment during times of crisis, recognizing its growing importance. As the global development of diverse art forms continues,

the boundaries between different art genres, and between art and non-art, have blurred further. Comprehensive material painting has evolved through time and become a symbol of China's diversified artistic development.

The increasing publication of comprehensive material painting works in recent years reflects the artistic spirit and expressive power of new-generation artists (Deng & Zhang, 2018:286). Comprehensive material painting explores the aesthetic value of materials and, through openness and diversity, encapsulates the power of art. Various materials possess untapped spiritual meaning, and an artist's attention to materials reflects their sharp insight. Uncovering the material properties is one of the driving forces behind artistic inspiration (Wu, 2019:9).

2. The Artistic Value and Contemporary Interpretation of the Shan-Shui Theme

The imagery of Shan-Shui (mountain and water) holds a special cultural significance and historical sentiment in China. It is one of the earliest symbolic representations of the connection between the Chinese ancestors and nature. Shan-Shui appears in all aspects of traditional Chinese culture and modern life, not only as a beautiful natural landscape but also as a philosophical view of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. In this study, the Shan-Shui theme is the most frequently appearing subject in the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo, highlighting the localized, contemporary, and nationalistic elements of comprehensive material painting. It illustrates the symbiotic relationship between this art form and traditional Chinese culture, while also reflecting key aspects of contemporary Chinese art development.

"Shan-Shui represents the spirit of Chinese culture and contains rich meanings. Its cultural and spiritual form mainly refers to the aesthetics of Shan-Shui, garden design, Shan-Shui literature, Shan-Shui painting, and philosophical thoughts on the relationship between humans and nature. It has cultural connotations that cannot be replaced by other concepts. The 'spirit of Shan-Shui' not only reflects pleasant natural scenery but also embodies the Chinese people's restrained sentiments, primitive life aspirations, complex attitudes toward life, profound artistic wisdom, and views on nature, the universe, and life itself" (Wu, 2019:55). The literal meaning of Shan-Shui is "mountains and waters," essentially serving as a symbol of nature.

At various stages of its development, Shan-Shui culture in China has evolved and changed, with generations of writers, philosophers, and artists offering their unique interpretations and expressions of the theme. This has led to the formation of a deeply rooted Shan-Shui culture that continues to inspire people.

During the period of nature worship, humans, like infants relying on their mothers, sought material resources from the known mother—nature—to meet their basic survival needs. People had a natural reverence for and worship of nature, entrusting their spirits and desires to natural phenomena such as mountains and rivers. In the period of religion and aesthetics, with the rise of Taoism and the introduction of Buddhism in the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), religion began to influence people's spiritual lives. By the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties (220–589 CE), touring natural landscapes became a new trend among scholars and officials, making natural scenery an independent object of aesthetic appreciation. During the Tang and Song Dynasties (618–1279 CE), with the flourishing economy and culture, along with the prominence of religion, scholars and literati traveled to famous mountains and rivers, building various cultural sites and elevating Shan-Shui culture to historical heights. In the period of aesthetics and science, the introduction and rise of modern natural science added new elements to landscape culture, particularly in the scientific exploration of the formation of natural landscapes.

Spiritually, Shan-Shui culture is an integral part of traditional Chinese culture, giving Chinese people a unique spiritual temperament, way of thinking, and value system. It serves as an essential pillar supporting the national identity and spiritual character of the Chinese people (Li 1995:103).

3. The Role of the Biennale in Promoting Contemporary Art

The China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo began in 2015 and has since held four editions, in 2015, 2017, 2020, and 2022. Prior to the establishment of this biennale, comprehensive material painting was not recognized as an independent category in the national art exhibitions. The inaugural 2015 biennale opened new perspectives for the field by widely encompassing the origins of comprehensive material painting, adopting a "everything can be used" approach and attitude. This biennale laid a solid foundation for its long-term

development. In 2022, the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo successfully opened in Ningbo as scheduled.

The biennale has effectively promoted the flourishing of comprehensive material painting in China by successfully organizing three previous editions, cultivating new artistic talents, and advancing the academic ideas and linguistic features of comprehensive material painting. The further development of exhibitions and the establishment of related academic disciplines have brought more clarity to the artistic language of comprehensive material painting. Artists and art workers are encouraged to pay closer attention to the transformations of the times, focus on the quality of their works, strengthen the guidance of their artistic directions, and reinforce cultural confidence and strength. This commitment will foster the creation of more outstanding works to meet the cultural needs of the people and enhance their spiritual strength, contributing to the brilliance of socialist culture. At this stage, three key characteristics of comprehensive material painting in China have emerged: first, the establishment of its unique expressiveness; second, a subtle transformation of the Chinese artistic spirit; and third, the creation of platforms that foster artistic teams and encourage innovation in recent years (Lu, 2021:p1).

The 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale serves as a milestone, providing a window to document the progression and transformation of comprehensive material painting at every stage. It bears witness to the flourishing of comprehensive material painting in China, progressing from individual art exhibitions to an independent category in national art exhibitions, and finally becoming a special exhibition level on par with other major exhibitions. This step-by-step process towards systematic recognition has garnered increasing attention from the art world and academia. The biennale is a reflection of how Chinese art is integrating its cultural identity with the development of a new era.

In tandem with the biennale, professional symposiums are also held, where leading experts and scholars in the field of comprehensive material painting gather to discuss the current challenges and successes in the discipline. These symposiums explore how to avoid pitfalls, innovate new methods, and highlight the achievements of the time, while reflecting on the broader societal changes. These discussions help shape the academic direction of the field, providing further theoretical support for the future development of comprehensive material painting.

Conceptual Framework

This research focuses on the Shan-Shui themed artworks in the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo. The researchers construct the conceptual framework of this study based on semiotics theory and art theory, while integrating the artistic practice of comprehensive material painting. Through these theoretical frameworks, the study examines how artworks use materials, symbols, and cultural expressions to reflect social and cultural changes. The details are as follows:

Semiotics Theory: The researchers apply semiotics theory to analyze the use of symbolic elements in Shan-Shui artworks and the cultural meanings they convey. The study explores how visual symbols express traditional Chinese culture and its modern reinterpretation.

Art Theory: This study is grounded in art theory, focusing on the unique techniques of comprehensive material painting. It explores how artists innovate through materials, colors, and composition to express the Shan-Shui theme in contemporary art. The study also analyzes the role these artworks play in shaping artistic forms, concepts, and cultural heritage, revealing the fusion of traditional and modern artistic expressions.

Artistic Practice in Comprehensive Material Painting: By examining the distinctive techniques of comprehensive material painting, the study explores how artists utilize various materials and technologies to innovate and showcase the interplay between tradition and modernity in contemporary art.

By combining these theories and practices, this research analyzes the representation of the Shan-Shui theme in contemporary art and explores its profound significance in the realms of art and culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

The research design serves as the core framework of this study, guiding how to systematically explore the cultural symbols and meanings of the "Chinese Shan-Shui" theme in comprehensive material painting. This study aimed to deeply understand and analyze comprehensive material painting as an art form, with a particular focus on the modern expression of the traditional "Chinese Shan-Shui" theme. Therefore, a mixed-method research design combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches was adopted to ensure the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the theme was fully captured.

2. Target Samples

The target samples of this study were the thematic artworks representing "Chinese Shan-Shui" in the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo. It particularly included significant artworks that reflected national and societal development, as well as those closely integrated with important architectural and public spaces, highlighting trends in social and cultural changes and artistic development.

3. Data Collection

In this study, data collection forms the foundation for building research conclusions. It requires the use of multiple methods to ensure comprehensive and reliable data. The primary data collection methods include:

Literature Review: Utilizing databases and academic journal websites to conduct keyword searches and visiting museums, libraries, and other locations to gather physical materials.

Interviews and Inquiries: When necessary, especially regarding information about the artists and their works, interviews were conducted, focusing on key events such as the exhibition's opening ceremony to interview artists and experts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 2022 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo is the most recent biennale to date, featuring a total of 25 artworks with the "Chinese Shan-Shui" theme, accounting for 22% of all explicitly thematic paintings in the exhibition. The theme of Shan-Shui in these works conveys a sense of stability, relaxation, and joy. The selected themes reflect deeper, contemporary thinking, akin to the tranquility and openness that follows significant life changes. These artworks do not forcefully express profound inner meanings but instead convey a natural and effortless flow of emotions.



Fig.1 "Empty Mountain", Comprehensive Material Painting

The first representative work selected from the 2022 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo is Dong Yajuan's "Empty Mountain" (Fig.1), a Shan-Shui themed painting, measuring 200cm x 200cm. Although the title refers to a mountain, the painting conveys a strong sense of water's fluidity, harmoniously combining strength and softness. The work incorporates watercolor, ink techniques, and various materials, producing a richly textured visual experience.

Dong Yajuan's "Empty Mountain" is a comprehensive material painting that, through the fusion of watercolor and ink techniques, creates a dynamic visual impact. The fluidity of the water and the solidity of the mountain blend seamlessly, generating a beautiful contrast between strength and gentleness. This combination heightens the painting's sense of depth and dimensionality, offering viewers a unique experience where tranquility and motion coexist. The interplay of materials and techniques enriches the texture of the work, while the delicate use of color effectively conveys the emotional and atmospheric elements of the piece.

The use of both watercolor and ink gives the painting a remarkable fluidity, evoking a sense of lightness and movement in the water. This contrasts sharply with the resoluteness of the mountain, creating a distinctive tension and balance. The incorporation of comprehensive materials adds depth and enhances the viewer's experience, transforming the piece from a flat presentation to one filled with three-dimensionality and tactility. The variety of materials not only deepens the conceptual underpinnings but also symbolizes the diversity and complexity of nature itself, conveying the constant flux and eternal aspects of the natural world. Through this interplay of soft water and solid mountain, the work also reflects the coexistence of humans with nature, as well as the harmony between tradition and modernity, encapsulating a pursuit of balance and tranquility.

"Empty Mountain" was created in 2022, during the post-pandemic recovery period. In this unique context, many artists turned inward, reflecting on their relationship with nature. Dong Yajuan's work appears to express a reverence for and contemplation of nature. After the pandemic's profound impact, people gained a deeper understanding of the natural world, and this work conveys a sense of peace and calm, mirroring society's new perspectives on life and nature.

The title "Empty Mountain" itself carries strong ties to traditional Chinese culture. "Empty Mountain" suggests not only a deserted mountain but also a metaphor for a spiritual sanctuary, representing a desire to escape the

noise and return to nature. This is closely aligned with the themes of traditional Chinese Shan-Shui painting. Through this work, Dong Yajuan presents a serene landscape, inviting viewers into a peaceful and harmonious world of nature, offering them a moment of respite from the troubles of reality, returning them to the purity of nature. The title and the Shan-Shui theme are tightly intertwined, embodying an aesthetic of tranquility and detachment, making this work one of profound cultural significance and artistic appeal.

With "Empty Mountain", Dong Yajuan uses her unique artistic perspective and techniques to create a poetic and philosophical landscape painting. As viewers appreciate the beauty of the artwork, they are also reminded of nature's grandeur and the preciousness of life.



Fig.2"Shan-Shui Image", Comprehensive Material Painting

The second representative work selected from the 2022 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo is Huang Haoke's "Shan-Shui Image" (Fig.2), a Shan-Shui themed painting measuring 100cm x 80cm. This artwork utilizes modern visual techniques such as collage and abstract expressionism, breaking away from the traditional forms of Shan-Shui painting. By adopting more conceptual and simplified methods, Huang creates a Shan-Shui atmosphere that feels distinctly modern. The irregular lines and blocky colors give the piece a fragmented visual effect, offering the viewer a fresh and innovative experience. The sense of depth and space in the painting is enhanced by these irregular elements, providing a dynamic visual impact despite the static nature of the artwork. This artistic approach not only increases the visual appeal but also highlights the artist's modern reinterpretation and innovation within the traditional Shan-Shui genre.

In terms of material usage, the collage technique in "Shan-Shui Image" moves away from traditional ink and brushstroke depictions of landscapes. Instead, the fragmented presentation creates a deconstructed and reconstructed visual experience. The textures of the collage materials and the combination of different elements give the painting a greater sense of dimensionality and layering, allowing the viewer to perceive the material's visual impact from multiple perspectives. Moreover, the abstract techniques used in the painting shift away from naturalistic depictions, making the Shan-Shui theme more symbolic and conceptual. This choice of

materials breaks traditional Shan-Shui conventions, blending modernity with traditional imagery to express reflections and innovations concerning history and culture. The collage method further symbolizes the fusion and clash of diverse elements in contemporary culture, turning Shan-Shui from a mere representation of natural landscapes into a carrier of various cultures and ideas, conveying an open and pluralistic cultural perspective.

The title, "Shan-Shui Image," carries a strong connection to Chinese traditional culture. Although the artwork breaks from traditional Shan-Shui painting methods, its core remains centered on the depiction and interpretation of natural landscapes. Through modern artistic techniques, Huang Haoke deconstructs and recombines traditional Shan-Shui elements, creating a new visual language. The conceptual and simplified treatment of the landscape renders the Shan-Shui image more abstract yet full of resonance and depth. Chinese Shan-Shui painting is known for showcasing the beauty of natural landscapes and conveying philosophical insights. By reinterpreting these elements through modern means, Huang not only preserves the essence of traditional Shan-Shui painting but also breathes new life and meaning into the work.

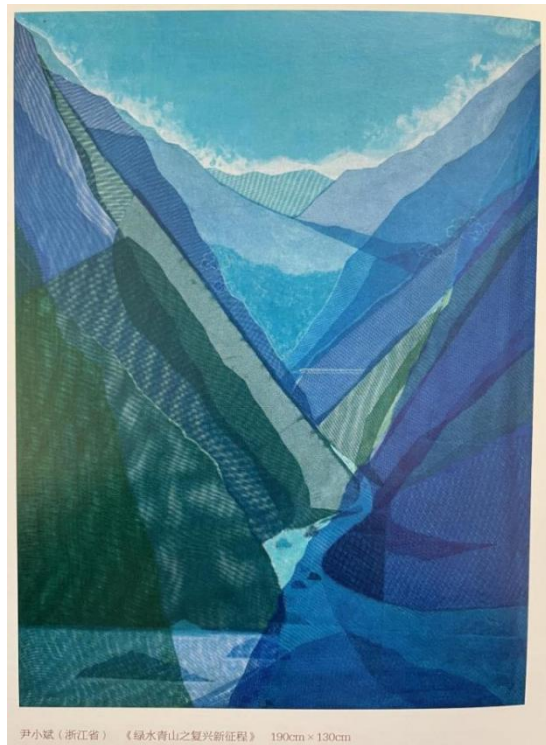


Fig.3"Revitalization of Green Waters and Mountains: A New Journey", Comprehensive Material Painting

The third representative work selected from the 2022 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo is Yin Xiaobin's "The New Journey of Green Mountains and Clear Waters Revival" (Fig.3), a Shan-Shui themed painting measuring 190cm x 130cm. The title of the work reflects China's current national policy, focusing on the ecological civilization construction of "green mountains and clear waters." The artwork draws on the traditional Shan-Shui style, particularly the use of blue and green tones from Chinese painting. Additionally, the artist uses green mesh netting, a material commonly found in urban construction, to construct the landscape imagery, emphasizing the path toward sustainable development where growth and ecology coexist.

In terms of material usage, the artist incorporates green mesh netting, an industrial material, which adds a unique texture and tactile quality to the painting. This makes the presentation of Shan-Shui not only reliant on traditional painting techniques but also enriched with modern industrial visual symbols. The inclusion of this material creates a greater sense of depth and transparency, highlighting the overlapping mountain forms and enhancing the spatial and dimensional aspects of the piece. The green mesh, commonly used in urban construction, symbolizes modern society's growth and development. By integrating this industrial material into

a Shan-Shui painting, the artist reflects on the relationship between humans and nature amid modernization. This material extends beyond traditional Shan-Shui techniques, symbolizing the balance between ecological civilization and industrial progress in modern society. The title of the piece directly echoes national policy, emphasizing the importance of "green mountains and clear waters" in China's ecological construction, and the use of materials reinforces this theme, suggesting the interconnected coexistence of nature and industry.

Yin Xiaobin's "The New Journey of Green Mountains and Clear Waters Revival" showcases the perfect fusion of modern art and traditional culture through its unique artistic effect, painting style, cultural meaning, and contemporary context. The piece is not only a beautiful Shan-Shui painting but also a profound reflection on ecological civilization and sustainable development. By blending modern materials with traditional Shan-Shui painting, Yin Xiaobin expresses a deep love for and commitment to protecting the natural environment, conveying an ideal of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The title, closely linked to the Shan-Shui theme, elevates the work's artistic expression and cultural depth, making it highly valuable both in terms of artistic merit and cultural significance.

In the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo, Shan-Shui themed artworks exhibit a return to a state of stability, relaxation, and calmness. After enduring the challenges and traumas of the times, artists approach their creations with a more peaceful and open-minded attitude. Their works reflect a love for nature and an optimistic outlook on life. For instance, many pieces use soft tones and natural transitions to create a serene and harmonious atmosphere. Through the use of comprehensive materials, the artists capture the pure beauty and inner strength of natural landscapes.

In some works, natural materials like wood and stone are incorporated to express a return to nature's essence and a reverence for life. This phase of creation conveys a sense of hope for the future and an appreciation for life, showcasing the artists' renewed sense of purpose after overcoming difficulties. The artworks express a longing for peace and tranquility, with the artists striving to convey their hopes and confidence in a beautiful and fulfilling life through their art.

Question 1: How has the evolution of comprehensive material painting in China reflected the development characteristics of contemporary Chinese culture and art?

Throughout this process, Chinese art has closely aligned with national and social development, exhibiting distinctive characteristics of the era and rich cultural connotations. Artistic works, whether in the choice of themes, the use of painting materials, the innovation in techniques, or even the naming of the works, fully reflect China's cultural landscape and social values. These artworks emphasize humanistic care, advocating for the harmonious coexistence between people and nature, as well as between people and society. Additionally, they play a significant role in the inheritance and promotion of China's outstanding traditional culture.

Question 2: What role has the China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo, as the top platform for showcasing comprehensive material paintings in China, played in the development of comprehensive materials?

The application and innovation of comprehensive materials in Shan-Shui themed paintings, as demonstrated in the China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo, have been highly representative. The use of comprehensive materials has enriched the form of Shan-Shui paintings, breaking the limitations of traditional ink paintings. Research shows that artists, through the use of new materials such as metal, glass, and fabric, have created diverse textures and visual effects, expanding the artistic expressions of Shan-Shui paintings. This innovation not only creates visual impact but also showcases richness and creativity in the use of materials.

Question 3: What artistic characteristics and social-cultural progress have been revealed by the Shan-Shui themed paintings presented at the Biennale?

The exploration of Shan-Shui symbols in the context of the new era has become more diverse and layered in comprehensive material painting. Research indicates that across the four biennales, Shan-Shui themed works have evolved from their initial, more immature stages, through periods of gradual maturity and adversity, to a return to stability. Each phase reflects the spiritual state and cultural atmosphere of society at that time. For example, works created during the pandemic often reflect a deeper contemplation of life and nature, while post-

pandemic works convey a sense of tranquility and composure. These changes highlight the profound transformation of Shan-Shui symbols in the new era, as well as the continuation of cultural spirit.

CONCLUSION

The study of Shan-Shui themed works from the 4th China Comprehensive Materials Painting Biennale Ningbo reveals profound insights into the evolution of contemporary Chinese art. However, reflecting on the limitations of the research, it is clear that the scope is somewhat narrow, focusing mainly on a specific selection of works and themes from one biennale. Future research could broaden the analysis by including a wider range of biennales, artists, and thematic comparisons, allowing for a deeper understanding of how comprehensive material painting interacts with different cultural and social contexts over time.

Moreover, future studies should emphasize the dynamic interaction between tradition and innovation, exploring how this balance continues to shape the evolution of Chinese art. As society and cultural landscapes evolve, the enduring significance of cultural symbols like Shan-Shui in contemporary art should be continually re-examined. By doing so, researchers can provide fresh perspectives on how these symbols adapt and maintain relevance in a rapidly changing world, contributing to the ongoing dialogue between heritage and modernity in art.

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