

The Philosophy of “Form” and “Modeling” in Sketching Education

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Abstract—Representing the “natural form” does not mean obliterating its natural properties, instead, the representing must not only adapt to the object but also keep independent of the object. Adaptation here refers to grasping the “natural form”, namely precisely understanding the basic structure and spatial relations. Meanwhile, independence here means the painter must center on the picture in his mind instead of the objective one, which further refers to understanding and using “artistic form”. Training on sketching should integrate “form” and “modeling” in a scientific way to import integrity, rhythm and aesthetics into the picture.

Keywords—*natural form; artistic form; modeling philosophy; integrity; rhythm*

I. INTRODUCTION

During the course of sketching education, we should focus on not only the scientific aspect but also the artistic aspect. We should use advanced, simple and practical teaching philosophy as our guidance to give students lessons which are easy to understand and accept, so as to motivate them to pin down their goal and learn eagerly. In teaching practices, the simpler and clearer the philosophy is, the easier it is for the student to form his own beliefs on learning and find his own method of learning. “form” in sketching education is twofold, comprising “natural form” and “artistic form”. Moreover, “modeling” means modeling something, which refers to the method and process used in sketching. Modeling possesses properties like integrity, designability and aesthetics. By integrating effectively the natural form and the artistic form, we can help cultivate the student’s capability of modeling, which can be expressed in the simple equation: natural form + artistic form = modeling.

II. BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF MODELING IN SKETCHING

“Form” usually refers to images and bodies of objects, which in sketching education comprises natural form and artistic form. Generally, the natural form means what we see in daily life, viz, the stationary objects being sketched and the plaster body which remains its natural properties after being processed. The natural form is simple, primitive and basic. The artistic form refers to the typical artistic image which expresses the artistic effect of the painting work. The artistic form changes the natural form of the object into its artistic expression, which forms its artistic image by

revealing the essence behind the appearance and integrating the subjective and the objective, content and shape, individuality and generality.

“Model” originally means the vessel used for molding, which is of typicalness. In artistic creation, “modeling” is what’s created at an instant of building the object, like operas, films and dancing, etc. In painting, modeling means depth-reaching building and depicting. Key of training on sketching is to let the student grasp the law in shape building. By modeling, the two-dimensional planes will be presented as three-dimensional objects in the sketching and the spatial relations of the objects will be restored. However, the modeling must be based on theoretic support, namely scientific and rigorous methods and laws, completely logical thinking and multi-leveled contrasts.

Natural form demands precision which is fundamental to it. Artistic form being of aestheticism is key to modeling. While the natural form belongs to the conditional reflex in physics, the artistic form is a process of mental transformation in artistic aesthetics. The modeling ability is developed during long-term observation, repeated corrections and ceaseless cognition. Both the precision of natural forms and aestheticism of artistic forms must be strengthened by training. If some students cannot improve their skills for being highly sensitive to precision, studying and grasping the artistic form becomes especially important to them. The philosophy focusing on both form and modeling means to cultivate students’ artistic aesthetics by encouraging them to use laws of modeling in sketching.

III. NATURAL FORM AND ARTISTIC FORM IN MODELING GEOMETRICAL SPHERES

During sketching education, geometric objects are usually used to heighten students’ recognition and understanding of modeling. But in actual education, few people can truly know of the importance of geometrical objects. Geometrical objects are the basic elements which make the world. It is the cornerstone of sketching education to acquaint and train the student about geometrical objects, especially cubes and spheres. The transition from one side to another of a cube is very rigid and the transitional line is very sharp. A cube only occupies very limited space. However, different from the cube, a sphere transit progressively from one side to another. In actual life, cubic objects are mostly

artificial while most natural forms are of irregular spherical shape or of complex shape. Sketching modeling uses cubes to show the structure of spheres and tries to find its laws and axioms in irregular spheres and complex forms. For example, if we put a plaster head into a cubic space with the similar volume, it will help us induce the large facets of the plaster head and show its three-dimensional and spatial makeup. Of course, the human head is not a cube but an irregular oval which with a lot of changes in its outline forms the basic structure of a head.

A. *Natural Form of Geometrical Spheres*

Natural forms in sketching are consisted of proportion, structure, perspective and form joggling. The fundamental thing is precision. Take for example a geometrical sphere under light shooting down from upper left 45°, because there is other auxiliary light except for this one, though the sphere has a large transitional area, which is gradually graying for different sides of the sphere transit progressively. Thus, we are faced with two problems namely the boundary between light and shadow and the progressive relation among multiple sides of the sphere. Peculiarity of the boundary characterizes its modeling. It is basic to learning modeling by understanding structure of the objects through focusing on the boundary between light and shadow. Sides of a sphere have multiple and complicated relations between them. It is common to see boundaries darkened at both ends while lighted in the middle. Because spheres have various boundaries and different shady faces and high and low points, the part being lightened will become shallow in color while the two ended where light is blocked will become darkened. This principle is significant to model training in sketching education. Because structure of the object will decide the reception of light when the light becomes complicated and people cannot use their eyes to judge physically, the boundary lines of a sphere can help us do the analysis for boundaries between light and shadow having the natural property to extend in at the two ends. Therefore, it is a necessary condition to use the boundary as a baseline, otherwise, the picture will become unbalanced. At teaching the traditional principle of “three faces and five tones”, we should stress and demonstrate repeatedly the importance of boundary between light and shadow.

B. *Artistic Form of Geometrical Sphere*

Sketching is not only about painting what we see, and it also uses what we cannot see to express the form and structure of the object. Boundary of a sphere is relative complete, because around the boundary there is also the lighted area versus shaded area. During sketching exercise, students because of being interfered by light often ignore the lighted area around the boundary. This is against the basic law concerning the boundary between lighted and darkened areas of a sphere. Therefore, students must use the modeling principle of a sphere to build a stable idea in this aspect so as to effectively represent the artistic form of the sphere. At the lighted part of a object, the content is not uniform. Even though the painter cannot see the difference, he will touch some gray in consideration of rational recognition or form the perspective of modeling, so as to show the volume of the

object. If there is no theoretic support, no deep analysis, or no complete modeling idea, the painter cannot represent the whole picture of a larger and more complex object because the light cannot reach everywhere and there is always unexpected light distribution and unsatisfactory angle of view. At this time, we especially need use our reasoning to grasp relations included in the object. These relations can be induced by changing from painting still life to painting plaster objects and proven by changing from painting plaster objects to painting still life. Moreover, basic theories about sketching must be expressed by transition between difference sides of an object. When relations in a painting are dealt with to a certain extent and the lines are welded naturally and agreeably, even there depiction is immature and incomplete, the aesthetic beauty of the object can still be represented.

C. *Relation of the Contour and Edge*

Under whatever condition, it is a pity if the painter cannot deal very well with the edge of objects in the picture. How to deal with the edge is very important to modeling, which may work negatively on the effect of painting. Knowing about contour and edge is knowing about the relation between “natural form” and “artistic form”. The relation between a contour and an edge is that they overlap and differ from each other. In a physical image, the transition between sides objectively exists. But at the edge, it is actually the continuous transition of sides where the contour and the edge overlap. Dealing with the edge is dealing with the artistic form, which can enhance the sense of volume and space. The edge is not a simplified contour line, which also includes the progressive relation between the sides. At sketching, both the contour and the edge should be taken care of, thus there appear the contour line and the edge line. When dealing with the edge, it usually needs to use lines, especially at short-time work because. Because there lacks the graying transition, using lines to represent the contour becomes very important. But generally, only naturally welded lines can produce the edge. When edge processing completely integrates with modeling, the edge will connect with the internal of the object so as to make the object looks solid. Processing correctly the edge can help enhance the sketching like the green leaves make the flowers look more beautiful. Inadequate attention to the edge is ignoring the complete effect of the sketching, which is against scientific modeling principle and harmful to the artistic effect of the picture.

IV. RHYTHM AND COMPLETENESS IN MODELING AESTHETICS

Though sketching exercise is a rigorous painting process, a high-profile sketching work can also have its peculiar aesthetic effect just as the traditional Chinese picture has its lively spirit and charm. Therefore, during the sketching exercise we demand more attention and thinking about the key position of “artistic form”. Natural form of the object like boundary and contour exists in the objective world. In the course of modeling if the painter could not use the basic aesthetics to initiate analysis and give judgment he would blindly copy the object and lose the artistic form of the

object. Especially when the light or the angle of view is not ideal, if the painter could not analyze and judge, his painting would show problems like being messy or patched or broken, etc.

Without aesthetic support, even a picture being made with some skills and proficiency may look rigid and kitschy. Cultivation of aesthetic consciousness should progress along with teaching basics of sketching. The cultivation is a pluralistic and complex process which blends reason and emotion and demands import of emotion and creation. It is fundamental to cultivating aesthetics of modeling to have a good command of the rhythm of painting. Rhythm is the natural law objectively existing in the object, which is most commonly seen accompanying melody in music. It is the soul of artistic beauty. But in sketching rhythm means grouping points, lines and sides to form an orderly whole. Light gives the basic tone in the painting and brings about the boundary between light and shadow and changes of the color gradation, which further develop the orderly and subtle differences in the sketching. This is the rhythm of a sketching. Rhythm in a sketching is not abstract but very concrete visual language. It is what is produced by the combination of points, lines and sides drawn with different power, strokes and shades. The combination after being adapted to the whole expresses orderly changes and gives the artistic effect. Sketching education means to make the student be good at finding and expressing beauty, helps cultivate their aesthetics and sharpen their observation, thinking and judgment.

Modeling integrity in sketching is also a key to artistic effects. Steps taken to do a sketching can only be clarified by developing the student's observation, and its consciousness and conception of sketching integrity. Otherwise it would be very difficult. During rigorous sketching exercise, the student should repeat, connect and paint the details from time to time, but whenever painting stops the sketching must keep integral. In actual education, it is rare to see sketching done with incomplete steps and modeling but showing very good effects. The rare case cannot negate the importance of integral modeling. Rigid and integral steps are the basic precondition for learning well sketching. Integrity and precision of the natural form both belong to the science of arts. They are not only we should think importantly of in sketching classes but also a habit and ability a proficient sketching painter should possess.

V. CONCLUSION

The modeling power of a sketching is more important to its artistic form, especially when the objects being sketched are distributed unsatisfactorily or their relation between are unreasonable. Representing the natural form does not mean obliterating its natural property instead it demand adapting to the objective as well as keeping independent from it. By adaptation we mean grasping the natural form and presenting precisely the basic form and spatial relations of the object. By independence we mean the painter should stick to the picture in his mind instead of the objective one, which refers to the understanding and exercise of artistic form. Sketching exercise should combine from with modeling in a scientific

way so as to import integrity, rhythm and aesthetics into the picture. The end of high standard sketching exercise is to present the painter's characteristics and independent standings about arts through what's expressed in his works. This process demands a lot of painting, proactive thinking, repeated adjustment and cultivated aesthetics. Clear, smooth and revealing pictures are made mostly by our subjective treatment. The more proficient the painter is the more subjective treatment he will use during painting. Sketching is not only about reasoning, sensing and hard work, it is the sparkle produced at arts colliding with skills. It is factual expression of feelings. It is made up of all valuable artistic information except for colors. 2) During sketching education modeling laws and methods are solidly entrenched into the students' minds by using the conception of form and modeling, after which, the students will develop variation, appreciation and creation and finally arrive at a new level in sketching.

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