

**Preliminary Study on Selected Paintings And Comparison of the
Paintings of the Representative Painters of the Renaissance and
Postmodernism**

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Abstract

This research focuses on Leonardo Da Vinci, the representative artist who appeared in the heyday of the Renaissance, and Andy Warhol, the most famous Pop artist of postmodernism, and compares their representative artworks.

The comparative research method was used in this study. Sources of data are provided by researchers' reference and comparison through previous research theories, Internet articles, relevant publications and archived documents of scholars.

During the research, we found that the painting style established by the Renaissance influenced the subsequent pop art. It broke the existing tradition and ushered in new ideas in thinking, but what remained unchanged was the people-oriented central idea of the Renaissance, and again in postmodernism...

文藝復興與後現代主義代表畫家繪畫之比較

趙湘琳, B.A.

Wznzao Ursuline University of Languages, 2023

摘要

本研究針對文藝復興代表畫家達文西，後現代普普藝術家安迪·沃霍爾代表畫作比較。研究方法採用的是比較研究法。資料來源是透過前人的研究理論、網路文章、學者的相關出版物和歸檔文件，提供研究者參考和比較。研究中我們發現，文藝復興所建立的繪畫風格影響了 600 年後，當代出現的普普藝術，它打破了既有的傳統，迎來的是思維上的新觀念，但不變的是文藝復興以人為本的中心思想，在後現代藝術再次出現。由此得知，人類對於藝術精神的追求，跨越時空，永恆的存在於文明之中。

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The original meaning of the word Renaissance stands for resurrection and rebirth. The term of the Renaissance was first used by the French historian Jules Michelet. It is convenient to describe the transition period between the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era.

During the Renaissance age, one of the most well-known artists of the Medici family sponsored was Da Vinci, he used perspective as his painting skill, that makes his paintings more alive, it also contain metaphor so that spectators can interpret in many ways by themselves.

Although Da Vinci had many famous paintings at that time, but most inspiration of them is about mythology or religion, however, a major feature of modern art is anti-traditional. The artists before modern art are all about the objects and features they depicted, and presented reality in their paintings. Afterwards, postmodern art appeared, just like a new trend wants to overthrow the old one, postmodern art refers to a critical consciousness. It doesn't look at progress as optimistically as modernism, but looks at the excessive development and progressive consciousness in modern society, as well as the respect for rationality in a more pessimistic view, also further questioning the power and operation mechanism of art.

After getting tired of the constant "original" concept of art, post-modernity began to take traditional (pre-modern) elements and use humorous means such as appropriation, ridicule, collage, imitation, sarcasm, etc. to create.

Motivation

Interested in the Renaissance from the 14th to the 17th century and the Renaissance plays an important role in politics, economics, and culture. Moreover, there has an exhibition called Immersive Exhibition of Renaissance Art, after attending this exhibition and watching so many paintings, I start thinking about some questions such as: what are those Renaissance paintings different with nowadays? The main thinking concept at that time was religion, tradition, as for nowadays, postmodernism add commercial elements into paintings, it is no longer "Art for art's sake", rather than a kind of concept art.

Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the similarities and differences between Da Vinci's painting Mona Lisa in the age of Renaissance and postmodern's representative artist Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans, and to understand how the Renaissance during the heyday of art affected the art world of later generations.

Research questions

How did the Renaissance influent postmodern artwork style?

Why there have commercial elements add in the postmodern artwork?

What's the difference between the Renaissance and post-modern paintings?

Contribution

The expected value of this research was to allow readers to understand how the painting skills in the Renaissance affected postmodern art nowadays through those two representative paintings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of the Renaissance

When people talk about the Renaissance, they usually think of the main place Florence, Italy. The Renaissance was a great history between the 14th to the 17th century in Italy, Italian social and cultural phenomena are indeed influenced by ancient Greco-Roman culture in many aspects. We can even say that without Greco-Roman classical culture, there would be no Italian Renaissance culture.

However, the development of the Italian Renaissance culture was not entirely influenced by the Greco-Roman classical culture; it should be said that the close integration of the Greco-Roman classical culture and the Italian national character (Volksgeist) created the Renaissance culture, which has a profound impact on European civilization in the future.¹ So, on the surface, the Renaissance was a restoration of Greek and Roman culture, but in essence, it was the spiritual breakthrough and innovation of the emerging bourgeoisie.² The Renaissance brought many influential movements such as art, literature, philosophy, politics, science, religion, and other aspects of intellectual inquiry. The most notable in philosophy are reality and humanity, and all creations in this period are basically based on these features. In short, Greco-Roman was a part of the Renaissance, but not totally, and we

¹ Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch*, translated annotated by Yih-Fen Hua (Taipei: linkingbooks, 2007), 214

² Read01, What are the characteristics of the Renaissance? The influence of the Renaissance, accessed June 2, 2016, <https://read01.com/QjDGmM.html>

can't neglect one of them.

At that period, the main change as the basis of Renaissance thinking is to realize that man himself that should be the center and standard of measurement for all things. This consciousness was slowly and continuously established through the rediscovery of ancient documents through poets, philosophers, and humanists throughout the 14th century.³

Renaissance Art

How did Renaissance art flourish? This question has been debated from the Renaissance to the present day, and no single explanation can be self-sufficient, because the development of art in this period has regional differences and diachronic changes like other aspects of culture. Here are a few important aspects that help the arts thrive:

First: Broad and diverse artistic needs.

During the Renaissance, the development of secular life in urban society created a wide range and variety of artistic needs, so that the number and variety of artworks far exceeded that of the Middle Ages. For example, in painting, in addition to traditional religious paintings, there are also paintings of secular portraits, ancient myths and historical subjects. Works of art are widely used by countries, groups or

³ Rosa Maria Letts, *The Cambridge Introduction To Art: The Renaissance*, trans. Chengdan Qian (Taipei: Laureate, 2000), 7

individuals to express religious enthusiasm and beliefs, conduct political propaganda, or fight against opponents, display social status and wealth, promote the glory of countries, groups, families or individuals, and are occasionally used to satisfy certain aesthetics fun and hobbies. Extensive and diverse artistic needs provide a broad space for artists to display their talents.

Secondly, artistic needs are met through artistic sponsorship. The Renaissance was an era of art patronage, and almost all important artworks were made to order. The commissioned contract between the artist and the patron shows that the patron is not a simple investor. They are not only concerned with issues such as price, manpower, and completion time, but also the style, subject matter, content, layout, etc. of the artwork. The degree of influence or even determines the final appearance of the artwork. In a sense, Renaissance art is the product of the artist's collaboration or struggle with his patron. There are both religious and secular groups, such as churches, religious orders, guilds, fraternities, governments, etc., who order artworks or artistic projects from artists, as well as families or individuals. Patrons' attitude towards artworks, their choice of artists and art types, as well as their control over art subject matter, content style, etc., have a profound impact on the group status of artists and the development of art.⁴

⁴ Chinese Journal of Social Sciences, July 5, 2012, How Renaissance art flourished, http://www.zyjjw.cn/news/art/2012-07-05/33748_2.html

Da Vinci's artworks in the Renaissance

Da Vinci was not only an outstanding artist in the Renaissance ages, but also a scientist, inventor, sculptor, musician, mathematician, engineer, and architect. He has made significant contribution in every research fields. Due to he was interested in many fields, one of his specialties was painting, which was well-known Mona Lisa. When Da Vinci was a child, he already possessed the extraordinary skills of artist. He was driven by strong curiosity, he was very fascinated by each kinds of art, and combined with his scientific knowledge, the combination of the two were even more complementary to each other.

To be precise, Da Vinci was a very scientific artist. His artworks are full of scientific thinking. No matter entrepreneurs or artists are willing to watch his paintings nowadays, because appreciating Da Vinci's artworks is not only appreciating a painting, but also appreciating his artistic features in the artworks, trying to figure out what Da Vinci thought at that time and the secrets he left for future generations. Da Vinci's artistic features are mainly manifested in that he attaches great importance to the inner emotions of the characters, and he is very good at expressing the hearts of the characters and portraying the images of the characters.

In addition, Da Vinci's painting features also include being good at using light and shade to create a better three-dimensional sense, which is closely related to his

own achievements and abilities. He applied the knowledge of mathematics and physics into painting. Da Vinci once said: "The greatest achievement of painting is to give a flat picture a concave-convex sense", which is often referred to as a three-dimensional sense. He summed up a principle of the changes after the ball is exposed to light, thereby creating a method of gradual light and dark, that is, It is said that the work produces a continuous transition of light and dark, so that the work does not see any completely different changes. Just like the artwork of "Mona Lisa", this method shows a soft and real three-dimensional feeling.

The Mona Lisa was completed in 1517, it took Da Vinci 14 years to finish. The main reason of why this painting so famous is Mona Lisa's mysterious smile. Through Da Vinci's superb painting skills making the lady in the painting seem to be smiling but not.

Mona Lisa means "Happy Lady" in Italian, "Mona" should be spelled as Monna, meaning "Madame", and "Lisa" is the title of the person in the painting. The identity of this lady has been guessed in many studies, and some people think that it was Da Vinci's self-portrait of being a woman, because when half of Da Vinci's face is compared with half of Mona Lisa's face, the proportion of the face is actually close to overlapping, and then there has some speculation that the Mona Lisa was the mistress of Duke Julian de Medici, but there is no precise statement for all kinds of speculation.

In my opinion, I think that the Mona Lisa is more likely to be Da Vinci's female self-portrait, because Da Vinci's working environment almost have male, he has also been rumored to be suspected of being gay, but it is also possible that it was Da Vinci's disciple who wore women's clothes as a model.

Mona Lisa's facial expression is also a topic of concern to everyone, that is, the seemingly non-existent smile, in my opinion, staring at Mona Lisa's mouth, there will be an illusion that the corners of the mouth are slowly rising on both sides, but when you only look into her eyes and you won't think she's smiling.

Post-modern

Post-modern art refers to art from the late 1960s to the early 21 century.

A major feature of post-modern art is anti-traditional. The artists in the period of modern art are all about the objects and features they depicted, and presented reality in their paintings.

Before modern art, the French philosopher Descartes' "modern philosophy" appeared, people began to pay attention to the human subject, and the world was rational and pure, and the whole world was shrouded in the trend of modernist progress. Painting has also followed this trend of thought. What painters reproduce is not just real things, but "representation of representation". Instead, they turn to the depiction of the external world, and then go back to explore "painting itself", and

continue to move towards the pure and abstract concept development.⁵

Due to the constant "original" of modern art encountering a bottleneck, when everything original was exhausted, it seems that there is no original thing in this world, and the predecessors have done what you want to do, or even better.

Therefore, after getting tired of the constant "original" concept of art, post-modernity began to take traditional (pre-modern) elements and use humorous means such as appropriation, ridicule, collage, imitation, sarcasm, etc. to create. Artists give different meanings to classic works of the past in contemporary times, not just mere imitations in form.

Postmodern art refers to a critical consciousness. It doesn't look at progress as optimistically as modernism, but looks at the excessive development and progressive consciousness in modern society, as well as the respect for rationality in a more pessimistic view, also further questioning the power and operation mechanism of art.

How post-modern art work?

Since the mid-1980s, all genres of art in the West have disappeared. Art history is also no longer driven by some inherent necessity. People don't feel any clear narrative direction. People also stop arguing about the right way to make art and where to go. Art has entered a "post-historical" state. Art has always taken aesthetics as its

⁵ Contemporary Art "After" Modern Art: After the End of Art, <https://implicationyi.wordpress.com/2015/12/30/現代藝術「後」的當代藝術：在藝術終結之後/>

dominant value for a long time, but today's art has undergone a fundamental change in value concept. From the pursuit of beauty to the pursuit of truth. That is to express the value and meaning of the society and culture of our time. Artists also intentionally reveal cultural meaning through visual images and symbols.

In 1863, the French poet Charles Pierre Baudelaire published an article "The Painter of Modern Life". He wrote: "The art era is coming, which will be a new discussion on what beauty is, producing a new rationale, a new theory and a new history."

Since then, artists have increasingly focused on expressing and recreating the world we live in in innovative, bold, and avant-garde ways, while authenticity and beauty seem less important. As a result, many avant-garde artists emerged, such as Vincent Van Gogh of post-impressionism, Marcel Duchamp of Dadaism, and Pablo of cubism. Picasso, and then to Andy Warhol of pop art, at this time modern art was slowly transformed into post-modern art.⁶

Postmodern is still happening today, and there are still various criticisms. In fact, it is very helpful to the development of human history. Such as in the fields of art, humanities, design, philosophy.

One of the representative artists of post-modern art

⁶ What is contemporary art?, <https://kknews.cc/zh-tw/culture/2lg3byy.html>

In 1962, Pop Art became the newest mainstream art movement at the time. Andy Warhol was born in a working-class family in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His artworks not only accurately reflected the social state of consumerism and industrial development in the United States at that time, but also did not shy away from admitting that "money" was the most important life pursuit to him .

When Andy Warhol was a child, his mother would prepare a can of Campbell's soup for him every day after school, and this symbol of civilianization became his photo-based and later screen-printed "Camper's Soup" series. The work is also one of the most classic representative works in Andy Warhol's artistic career. The civilianization art undoubtedly reflects the essence of Pop Art.

Andy Warhol's work is marked by screen printing, which ensures that the artwork can be repeated in large quantities and at a low price. Just like the pop art he promoted, it reflects the influence of the consumer revolution on the public, as well as an attitude of embracing the everyday and pursuing equality for all. His works are based on daily necessities such as cola and Campbell's soup cans. He once stated, "The great thing about this country is that the richest people enjoy basically the same things as the poorest people. You can watch TV and drink Coca-Cola, as does the President and Liz Taylor. Coke is Coke, no better and more expensive Coke, all Cokes are equally good. No amount of money can buy a better Coke, so why can't Coke be a

work of art?"

And one of his famous sayings "In the future, everyone can become famous for fifteen minutes", which pointing out the theory that if everyone was seen enough frequency, that person is enough to become a star. Indeed, it is a good indication of the society now with social networks.

I believe many people want to know what drove Andy Warhol to create Campbell's Soup Cans, curious if there is a special story behind the work, and there are several stories about the inspiration for Campbell's Soup Cans. One of the most fascinating stories comes from an interview where Andy Warhol was once asked about the inspiration for Campbell's Soup Can, and he simply replied, "I've been accustomed to having Campbell's soup for lunch for the past 20 years." Warhol's mother always prepares Campbell's soup for lunch before he gets home from school, and keeps a lot of canned food at home. My mother even used canned flowers to make and sell knickknacks to earn living expenses to support Andy Warhol's early career. Another well-known version is that gallerist Roberta Latow once suggested that Andy Warhol paint familiar objects that the public knows, such as Campbell's soup cans.

No matter which version it is, the "little" things in life seem to play a "big" role. From the meticulous care of his mother to the casual chats between friends,

Andy Warhol keeps them in mind and accumulates as a source of inspiration in the future. Life is like this. Ordinary little things can often achieve unexpected things. Recalling these little things at a certain time may give you the biggest surprise, but it is the most ordinary can of Campbell's soup that amazes the world and becomes Andy Warhol career turning point.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The comparative research method was used in this study. Sources of data are provided by researchers' reference and comparison through previous research theories, Internet articles, relevant publications and archived documents of scholars.

Research Design

I will divide my data into two parts to analyze: The first part is an analysis of the Mona Lisa by the Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci. The second part is Andy Warhol's famous Campbell's Soup Cans. Finally do a summary so that I can answer the research questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

The mysterious smile of the Mona Lisa

Author	Leonardo Da Vinci
Completion	1517
Creation style	Sfumato(暈塗法) ⁷ , atmospheric perspective
Art movement	The Renaissance
Exhibition	Louvre Museum

Source: sorted by the author

In terms of composition, in order to strengthen the characteristics of the characters of the era, Da Vinci broke the traditional composition method and broke through the portrayal of women to the abdomen. In fact, the medieval church believed that below the abdomen was lust, and the absurd regulations forbidding portraits to be drawn below the abdomen. Da Vinci's portraits of figures below the abdomen were an open confrontation with medieval views. The painting completely cancels the dull and rigid expressions in medieval paintings, and shows a fresh vitality: its aesthetic value is first reflected in this advanced aesthetic ideal.

Da Vinci successfully used the "sfumato" painting technique in the painting of

⁷ "Sfumato" is a word origin from Italian. It is said to have been coined by Leonardo Da Vinci himself to describe what he called a technique of painting "without lines and borders, like smoke." Simply put, sfumato is to use the method of superimposing layers to create. The characters and scenery in the works often seem to be shrouded in a layer of light smoke, presenting a soft and hazy beauty. Apart from Da Vinci, this technique was widely used by many Renaissance painters.

"Mona Lisa". The character image of "Mona Lisa" is not very clear from the background, and the outline of the character is not so clear, as if it is integrated into the background. Especially in the corners of the eyes and mouth of the character, the author deliberately used the "fading method" painting technique, so that the corners of the eyes and mouth gradually blend into the soft shadow, thus creating a subtle artistic effect and greatly enriching the meaning of image.

Margaret Livingstone⁸, a neurobiologist at Harvard University in the United States, believes that this is not just a simple sfumato method. Da Vinci also tried to "deceive" human vision when painting, so that the appreciator has to look from the side to see clearly Mona Lisa smile. She proposes this theory in her new book, *Vision and Art: The Biology of Viewing*. In her book, she says: A smile painted in a blurry way is more obvious in peripheral vision, so when you focus on her mouth, the smile disappears. Therefore, the disappearance and appearance of the smile is caused by people's eyes wandering on the screen.

The oil paint is composed of slightly different pigments, creating a blur and shadow effect on the corners of Mona Lisa's mouth, making it vaguely feel that she is smiling, but when you look closely, the smile disappears.

To mention about Da Vinci's ability to draw the Mona Lisa in such a

⁸ Margaret Stratford Livingstone, the Takeda Professor of Neurobiology in the Department of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School, working in the field of visual perception.

three-dimensional manner has a lot to do with his interest in human anatomy. He had dissected thirty human bodies as a foundation of exploring painting. He believed that the bones and muscles of the human body were the basis of all structure. He said: Man is the rule of the universe. He tried to use human skulls and leg bones to design buildings, and he also compared the human heart to the interior space of a church.

In addition to the mysterious smile of Mona Lisa, there is another doubt that she does not have eyebrows. Some people think that in Florence in the Renaissance, women were beautiful with thin eyebrows, and because of the durability of pigments, it has been used for centuries so the eyebrows disappeared after that.

It is also said that the European aristocrats popularly shaved their eyebrows at that time, because they thought they would grow thick new eyebrows, but there were many losers. In order to satirize this trend, Da Vinci invited Mona Lisa to be a model. Mona Lisa knew what he meant, and her mood was very complicated. With the beautiful background music played by the musician, an awkward, shy and mysterious smile naturally appeared on her face up.

The expression of the "Mona Lisa", like the expression of the Buddha in Eastern Buddhism, is not something extraordinary people can make. The "Mona Lisa" doesn't smile for anything, she just sits there quietly, a timeless, expressionless expression that comes naturally to her face. The aesthetic significance of "Mona Lisa" mainly lies

in the brilliance of human nature radiated by the characters; before this, even the images of people have a more or less religious flavor.

"Mona Lisa" represents the aesthetic direction of the Renaissance: the profound and noble ideological qualities of women reflected in this work reflect the aesthetic concept and aesthetic pursuit of women's beauty in the Renaissance.

32 Campbell's Soup Cans

Author	Andy Warhol
Completion	1962
Creation style	Screen printing
Art movement	Pop Art
Exhibition	Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)

Source: sorted by the author

When Andy Warhol was looking for a creation theme, a friend suggested that he paint something well known, "like Campbell's Soup," which brought him the iconic theme.

He projected the image of the can on the canvas and painted it by hand, creating the first original paintings of Campbell's soup cans, which appear to be more uniform than their original appearance, as if they were mechanically produced. There are subtle differences and flaws among the 32 different flavors of Campbell's Soup. By depicting the common and common things in daily life, as a "noble" art that interprets the theme of "civilization" in detail, it fully reflects the essence of Pop Art.

The serigraphs of Campbell's Soup are true to life, undecorated, without any trace of "quasi-art" like the rich and vivid brushstrokes. Warhol changed his style of painting and tried to "represent it as it is", but it also angered the public and critics.

Many people saw it with deep disgrace. "Could this person just be copying the canned soup packaging?" His style of painting is often interpreted as cold and empty. Nonetheless, Warhol insisted that the subject matter be left unadorned, with an emphasis on "natural beauty".

Warhol saw the beauty of the Campbell Soup logo and admired its simple and bold use of color, a classic quaint font. He believes in brand myths: a bowl of soup, a drink that is so sweet that you can't pay for your life, will make you happy. As long as everyone is a US citizen, he is full of praise for this as a descendant of immigrants. In his words: "The greatest thing about this country in the United States is that it first started to promote that the richest and poorest customers buy basically the same things. Turn on the TV and see Coca-Cola and know that the president drinks Coke. Elizabeth Taylor also drinks Coke, and when you think about it, you can afford Coke yourself."

Andy Warhol uses the art of mass production, combining business and art, he believes that making money is an art, working is an art, and making money business is the best art. It can be seen that he expanded the meaning of the word "art" and was not limited to the realm of pure art.

32 flavors of Campbell's soup

black bean	chicken noodle	vegetable	green pea
tomato	onion	pepper pot	consommé
cream of mushroom	scotch broth	cheddar cheese	turkey noodle
cream of asparagus	beef noodle	chicken vegetable	chili beef
vegetable beef	split pea	bean	tomato rice
cream of celery	chicken gumbo	beef broth	turkey vegetable
vegetable bean	cream of vegetable	cream of chicken	chicken
minestrone	vegetarian vegetable	beef	chicken

Andy Warhol's famous artwork 32 Campbell's soup cans have a unique feature that same appearance of cans, but the different words of flavors on the cans.

CONCLUSION

To sum up my data analysis, we can find out the similarity between Mona Lisa by Da Vinci and Campbell's soup by Andy Warhol is both of them dare to break the traditional rules and create new style of art.

The spirit of breaking the traditional way in the Renaissance influenced the later Pop Art, but the way of the Renaissance was to show new technology in the skills of painting. Pop Art use the progress of industrial development and the convenience of printing machines to increase exposure opportunities.

Warhol has undoubtedly become the spokesperson of Pop Art. He knows how to package himself and understand the preferences of the market. He cleverly applies the concept of advertising to his art form, using consumer goods, celebrities, news stories and repetitive images to highlight the concept of "mass production", this is in contrast to the works of art formerly pursued by traditional art and abstract expressionism.

Art is no longer the only one, unique, art can also be turned into a mass-produced product.

Andy Warhol was well aware of the power of advertising images: the more repetitions and exposure of an image, the more profound the impact of an advertising image on people. The more people see these images, the less sensitive they become to

them, and eventually it becomes a subconscious and habitual memory.

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What is contemporary art?, <https://kknews.cc/zh-tw/culture/2lg3byy.html>

"Sfumato" is a word origin from Italian. It is said to have been coined by Leonardo Da Vinci himself to describe what he called a technique of painting "without lines and borders, like smoke." Simply put, sfumato is to use the method of superimposing layers to create. The characters and scenery in the works often seem to be shrouded in a layer of light smoke, presenting a soft and hazy beauty. Apart from Da Vinci, this technique was widely used by many Renaissance painters.

Margaret Stratford Livingstone, the Takeda Professor of Neurobiology in the Department of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School, working in the field of visual perception.