

On the Research Status of the Storm Society

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Abstract

The Storm Society is the first well-organized art association, which consciously absorb the western modern art achievements in Chinese modern art history. Based on the historical materials, this paper describes the basic facts of the Storm Society, and analyze the research status and weakness of this organization, and summarizes its historical and practical significance in the transformation of Chinese art from traditional form to modern form.

Keywords

the Storm Society, Art Magazine, research status.

1. The Basic Facts of the Storm Society

The Storm Society is brewed in 1930. Its predecessor is "moss Mongolia", which is a painting group organized by Xunqin Pang, but it is soon seized. Xunqin Pang says, "I feel deeply distressed that the spirit of Chinese art and literature is decaying and corrupting, but my shallow knowledge and ability is not enough to pull the decadent a little. So I decide to gather some comrades to strive for the hope of making some contribution to the world together. This is the origin of the Storm Society." The Storm Society is established in Nanjing in 1931, aiming at probing and developing China's oil painting art. The main sponsors of the group are Xunqin Pang, Yide Ni, Jiyuan Wang, Zhentai Zhou, Ping Duan, Xian Zhang, Taiyang Yang, Qiuren Yang, Di Qiu, et al. The so-called "storm" means that this organization attempts to break the old barrier of traditional art, and sets off a raging tide of new art. Since its inception, the Storm Society carried out a large number of activities: first, the issuance of *Art Magazine*. *Art Magazine* started publication on September 1st, 1932, published every 10 days. Four months later, after the last installment published on December 21st this magazine came to an abrupt end at the beginning of 1933. The magazine contains a lot of articles about art theory, works of art, and the ideas of the members of the Storm Society. Most of the articles published on *Art Magazine* are written by the members of the Storm Society. Nearly half a year, the magazine publish 14 issues. Although from the maintaining time, issuing number, *Art Magazine* isn't outstanding at all, but its intrinsic quality and the energy contained in should not be underestimated. In the context of a specific era, from beginning to the end, *Art Magazine* maintained a vanguard, making it one of the most pioneering art magazine in the 1930s in China. Second, holding exhibitions. From 1932 to 1935, the Storm Society hold 4 times of Will billows society from 1932 began to hold exhibitions, to 1935 were held four times of art show, and exhibited a large number of paintings by members of the Storm Society, including oil painting, watercolor, pen and ink, lyrics, sketches and so on, styles including realism, deformation, decoration and other various attempts. The theme of creation is traditional, including still life, human body, landscape and so on, but the technique they use showed a colorful style of modernism, although not astonishing revolt and innovation, but such a bold initiative, collective modernist attempt and exploration is indeed rare, as a stock weak but extremely fresh air, stirred the dull atmosphere of painting world after the incident on January 28th in Shanghai. Third, carrying out academic research, which aroused controversy and debate between different factions of literature and art (especially after the second art show in October 1933, a fierce debate is conducted on *Free Talk-Declaration*, great masters like Zhecun Shi, Maoyong Xu also joined the debate, making it the focus of the exploration of vanguard in the 1930s in Shanghai.

1935 marks the dissolution of the Storm Society. As an important art community in the period of the Republic of China, the Storm Society is the product of communication between Chinese and Western cultures, and the development of arts revolution. The normalization and standardization of the management mode, has a great influence in the history of the development of Chinese art club in twentieth century. Although the community has not achieved the goal of launched in their declaration, but it has opened a new page of China's fine arts movement. The rise and fall of the Storm Society is the epitome of the development of the Republic of China. The Storm Society's attempt of viewing the world by exploring modern art opened up the process of Chinese art modernization.

2. Research Status

2.1 Overall Research

Chao Li has done some important research on the overall situation of the Storm Society. *Research on the Storm Society (2008)* analyzes the cultural issue reflected in the evolution of Chinese modern art by researching the rise and decline of the Storm Society. In the book titled *Hurricane & Passion: the Storm Society and Modernism (Shanghai, 2008)*, Chao Li introduces the basic situation and art works of key members of the Storm Society. Jie Zang's book *The Art Pioneer in Republic of China: the Group Portrait of the Storm Society (Beijing, 2011)* researches the historical development of the Storm Society, focusing on cultural feelings and life events of the key members of the group, reveals the modern art development pattern in 1930s China. Rong Hu studies the pioneering art and literature in China from 1919 to 1935 in his doctoral dissertation titled *From New Youth to the Storm Society: a Research on Chinese Pioneering Art and Literature 1919-1935 (Shanghai, 2008)*. Hu declares that the colleagues of *New Youth* initiate the vanguard movement in 1910s, the organizer of the Creation Society are the explores of vanguard art and literature, and the members of the Storm Society represent vanguard art in the 1930s. In the fourth chapter, Hu reviews the main achievements of the Storm Society.

2.2 Research on the Key Members of the Storm Society

As the most important member of the Storm Society, Yide Ni 's works and influence are relatively more researched. Xia Wang studies Ni's theory on art education in her article *Research on Yide Ni's Art Thought (2011)*. The author gives high evaluation to Ni's moral quality and art achievement by saying, " Ni Yide is a representative of Chinese modern art. He is not only a writer, oil painter, but also an art theorist. This is commendable. In 1930s, he admires western painting and sponsors the Storm Society. In 1940s, he asserts the after-war art trend. In 1950-1960, he advocating for Oil Nationalization. He has always been at the forefront of the development of art, and his art thought reflects the development track of China's modern art ." [1] The author concludes Ni's life experience as: Yide Ni's long-term continuous art education practice accumulated rich experience, and his deeply love for the motherland is a prerequisite, his knowledge and self-cultivation is the support, the nation's tradition is the basis, the spirit of innovation is a driving force, all together form Ni's art education thought as a fusion of Chinese and western, and respect for creativity and art itself. Tao Cai investigates Ni's experience of studying in Japan, getting the conclusion that as a connecting link between the preceding and the following stage, Ni's experience of studying in Japan not only directly affects the art tendency in China in the 1930s by the establishing of the Storm Society, but also reflects the relationship between countries with modern artists. [2]

Ting Xu investigates Di Qiu's life experience, art achievement, and art thought in her article *Di Qiu and his Painting Art (2012)*. Aimin Zhou 's paper *Research on XuQing. Pang and Modern Painting Art (2012)* focuses on one of the most important sponsor of the Storm Society Xunqing Pang. The author thinks that thought the experience of organize the Storm Society, Pang's artistic ideal and ability are showed. In this process, Pang gets deeply understanding of China's social reality and art status, which causes him change from a youth who is purely intoxicated in the shape and color of the artistic ideal, to an artist who gets deeply understanding of the relation between art, life and society. Jianyin Wu writes in his research on Taiyang Yang's watercolor art, " Taiyang Yang observations the

landscape calmly, paints with emotion. His painting are simple and unadorned, but the interest and charm of his word are showed vividly. Zhen Hu does some research on Lei Fu, one of the key member of the Storm Society. His artical *Lei Fu and the Storm Society* () tries to figure out the correlation and difference between Fu and the Storm Society. In Fu's idea, the Storm Society is not only a colorful dream of Ni and Pang. Fu lets himself wake up and thought this heavy dream, he sees the eagerly longing and response to the reality. In the author's point, Fu stresses the value of the subject, and put his whole ideas into the concrete art activities and the ideal of life, not only to make their own continuous distillation, and truly become a rich artistic aesthetic subject, but also with their own unique perspective, to find out the artists who can truly reflect their artistic criticism.

2.3 Research on Art Magazine

Art magazine is one of the important achievements of the Storm Society, which also has very important influence in the history of aesthetics. Lei Zhuang's master's dissertation in 2013 is one of the excellent research on *Art Magazine*. The author holds the idea that Art Magazine is not only a community founded publications, but also a school publication, and the professional academic quality of the professors also brightened the academic characteristics of the publication. In other words, Art Magazine is special and of high academic value. [3]

3. Research Evaluation & Recommendation

In recent years, some encouraging achievements have been made on the subject of the Storm Society. Generally speaking, the research can't reflect the fully picture of the whole organization, and it cannot reveal the historical position of the Storm Society in China's modern art history. In particular, there are several issues that must be brought to the attention of the academic community.

Firstly, the weak point and difficulty of the research. Most of the research focus on the group as a whole, only a few does research on the individual. The study of the members is still in the initial stage, and the relevant articles are only brief introductions. Furthermore, individual such as Duo Zhou, Zhentai Zhou, Pingyou Duan, Xian Zhang, etc , are rarely investigated.

Secondly, to make an objective evaluation on the Storm Society, it is necessary to put it back to the historical and social background. Recent research focus on evaluating the artwork of the group subjectively, rather than analyzing the historical and social background of the birth and decline of the Storm Society objectively.

In short, although the Storm Society survives only 4 years, the contribution it makes to the modernism of China's art history should be evaluated objectively. Some serious work should be done on this subject.

References

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- [3] Lei Zhuang, Research on the Art Magazine, (MS. East China Normal University, China 2013), p.42