A Pictorial Interpretation of Beckman’s Triptych on Departure

Chun Luo

School of Fine Arts, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, Hubei Province, 430000, China.

Abstract

"Departure" is the first triptych of German expressionist painter Max Beckman. Although it is not a famous masterpiece, the picture displayed the secular and dark quiet down double conflicts caused the author's study enthusiasm, the author on the basis of the theory of intuition and life philosophy, to lyricism of the objective external world is a pure spiritual world, taking the objective reproduction of reality as a cognitive attitude reveals the essence of things. The strong colors and wild brushstrokes used in the painting also depict the most sincere emotions in his heart. From the perspective of image study, combined with pan, the base of studying previous image description, image analysis, image interpretation from three aspects to study Max Beckman "departure", further explore the "ugly" to make the art form of subversion and innovation of traditional aesthetic tendency and break the inertial thinking aesthetic psychological pattern of artistic value. And his influence on contemporary painting art.

Keywords

Beckman, Departure, Triptych, Iconography, Interpretation

Max Beckman is one of the representative painters of the New Objective Society of German expressionism. From his many works of art, we can see the ugliness of human nature, the darkness of society and the social situation covered by politics. The triptych (Figure 1), painted in 1932, was Beckman's first oil painting in the form of a triptych.

Figure 1. Departure (Germany) Max Beckman, oil on canvas 1932-1935, middle arrangement 215.3*115.2cm, left and right arrangement 215.3*99.7cm, respectively, in the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
1. The pre-pictorial description of the triptych of Departure

The pre-pictorial description of the triptych "Departure" refers to the characters and scenes that can be directly observed in the work. Panofsky calls the pure form world of the carrier of natural meaning the world of art motifs, and the enumeration of these motifs one by one is the pre-pictorial description of artworks (Qi Yinping & Fan Jingzhong, 2011). The painting "Departure" is divided into left, middle and right triplets. The left panel depicts four figures, a strong man in blue and black horizontal stripes, a man in pink, a naked white man and a naked woman in red suspenders. The middle part depicts a woman wearing a pointed hat and necklace holding a naked child with golden hair. On the left side of the picture is a man wearing a red cloth and a hood. On the right side of the picture is a man wearing a blue cloth and a gold hair crown with his right hand in the shape of prayer. Right depicts five characters, the center position has a red hair woman, dressed in a white dress, a kerosene lamp in hand, she left down to a man in yellow clothes, she hiding a naked child, the right side of the screen the top right corner one in blue uniforms, the eyes were brown cloth covered her man.

2. The image analysis of the triptych of departure

Some conventionalized themes constitute the world of images, stories and allegoric, and interpreters need to grasp different historical conditions and use objects and events to represent specific themes and concepts (Fan Jingzhong, 2007).

2.1 Art forms in this work

There is not only the use of color similar to Picasso, but also the composition of surrealist dream images (Hanlin Ju, 2018). Beckman constructed a scene full of weird abuse through the nightmare of hell, and tried his best to embody the unique artistic techniques of German expressionism through exaggerated modeling and raw and distorted brushwork. The movements of the characters on the screen are designed to be stiff, and some of them do not even conform to the maximum scale of the human body. The contour of the characters is depicted with more realistic techniques and slow lines, showing a kind of pursuit for vitality that bursts from the depths of the human soul. The color in the middle part of the picture is bright and harmonious, while the two sides of the picture are dark and strong, and there is a sharp contrast in color. Pain, reality, peace and ideal bring viewers a strong visual impact.

2.2 Artistic content

2.2.1 Women image

Beckman gives the meaning of a specific action or person, images of woman holding the lamp with the same period of Picasso’s "guernica" hand-held lamp of women have the same effect - they are all in the dark to find the direction of the woman, is a symbol of the memories were sadistic evil of the ruler, the resistance of failure, like the walking dead, Unable to extricate (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Comparison of THE WOMAN holding the oil lamp in Beckman's Departure and THE WOMAN holding the oil lamp in Picasso's Guernica.
2.2.2 Fish image

According to early Christianity, fish is a basic symbol and an identification mark (Wang Baohua, 2017). In the triptych "Departure", each triptych shows the image of fish in seemingly unrelated parts (as shown in Figure 3). In this painting, fish is the symbol of will and the symbol of believers praying to God and Christ.

3. The image interpretation of the triptych of Departure

The third level of interpretation is a deeper sense of pictorial analysis, also known as pictorial analysis, whose object is the internal meaning or content of artistic works. The work carries the nature of the creative subject, and the creative subject has different experiences, so the work has its uniqueness (Huang Mei-ding, 2021). The painting "Departure" was completed after Beckman experienced political exclusion, and the fleeing figure in the center of the painting is also related to Beckman's experience to some extent. It is the departure of his new life and his new thought. The imaginary world in the middle of the picture can help people escape the disappointing real world for a short time. The images on both sides are metaphors of violent rule and express Beckman's attack and resistance against violent politics.

4. The aesthetic tendency and artistic value of "Departure"

Beckman through painting expresses his own experience of life, works with his thinking of human nature, society, work as expressing his emotion, the mind of a carrier, convey Beckman himself genre and Beckman, Beckman belong to the same times characteristics of the ideological trend of stage art and artistic mood, in the process, we see the resonance of The Times.

4.1 Subversion and innovation of traditional aesthetic concepts with "ugliness"

Beckman's work contains a large number of "uglized" images. He uses the external appearance of modeling symbols to reveal the inner spiritual connotation of things. He reflects the predicament encountered in the development of human society, such as emotional alienation and lack of spirit, through the interest of "ugliness". The artistic expression of "ugly" in the picture is the subversion and innovation of the traditional aesthetic concept. The dark side hidden under the beautiful appearance makes the audience think about the deep meaning and wake up in time.

4.2 Break the aesthetic psychological stereotype under the inertial thinking

Pattern of the Beckman picture about the "ugly" forms of art, no nonsense, blind fantasy whitewash mediocrity and the insufficiency, but by the depth of the spirit and the thought on people dig hitting certain pathological, deformity, the reality of injustice, critical spirit and social significance, so as to realize self salvation, remain loyal to the human. With its unique art form, it breaks the aesthetic psychological stereotype of people's habitual thinking and gives this field a brand new perspective and experience.

5. The conclusion

Beckman's triptych not only criticizes, struggles and reflections on the current situation of the objective world, but also explores the emotional world and the psychological state of human beings in its depiction of political in-
nuendo and tragedy of life. Beckman lived a difficult life, but still persevered in artistic creation, occupying an irreplaceable important position in the history of art, and left many precious researches and learning materials for later generations, which has a profound influence on contemporary painting.

References


