

Analysis of Lens Aesthetics and New Development in Modern Chinese Art Films

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Abstract: As the first Tibetan director in China and also a writer and screenwriter, Wan Ma Caidan has created and produced many excellent films about Tibetan culture and beliefs. His films have largely filled the gap in Tibetan culture in the Chinese film industry, and have also given the Chinese film industry, which mainly focuses on Han Chinese stories, a more diverse and rich ethnic identity. But at the same time, what Wan Ma Cai Dan's movies tell also breaks through the limitations of ethnicity and region. This article analyzes the film visuals of mainland director Wan Ma Caidan and studies how their composition and color are combined with poetic and freehand brushwork in modern Chinese art films. The final conclusion is that the differences in audio-visual language expression and lens aesthetics in films of different ethnic cultures are influenced by ethnic cultures and living environments. And in the context of the prevalence of new media, explore the new development of traditional art films in China.

Keywords: art film, audio-visual language, lens aesthetics, Wanma Caidan, new development of art film

1. Introduction

As the first Tibetan director in China, Wan Ma Caidan's perspective on Tibetan culture and beliefs, as well as his unique visual style, has aroused my interest. This article analyzes the composition, color, and narrative structure of director Wan Ma Cai Dan's films, in order to understand his personal image style and creative techniques. However, there are different opinions on director Wan Ma Cai Dan in China: some people believe that the stylization of his images is too strong, resulting in the Tibetan deification of the film, while others feel that the Tibetan scenes and life in the films directed by Wan Ma Cai Dan are particularly realistic. Therefore, this paper would like to gain a deeper understanding of Director Wanma Caidan, view his works from a more objective perspective, view this excellent Tibetan director from a new perspective, and provide some creative ideas and inspiration for directors who want to stay in a minority type of film.

2. Wanma Caidan - The Contradiction Between Tibetan Belief and Modern Civilization

Tibetan films can be roughly divided into four categories. The first are Tibetan films that reflect national ideology. Most of these films reflect the relationship between Tibetan minorities and the Han nationality, or are dominated by the mainstream thoughts of the country. They appeared more in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China. For example, the movie *Serf*, which

reflects the rescue of Tibetan serfs also reflects the great unity of the nation. 2. It is a display of the unique customs and traditions of Tibet. Tibet is a vast land mass in the southwest of China. The land is sparsely populated. Their living customs and beautiful landscapes are not common among people. The mystery of Tibet attracts us. To explore this seldom-explored area, a series of films reflecting the Tibetan landscape appeared, such as *The Horse Thief*, *Hoh Xilbi* and the recent *Kang Rinpoche*. These films all show the strange scenery of Tibet. The third is to reminisce and praise some great men and great achievements with the history of Tibet as the main content. The fourth is a film that thinks about Tibetan culture, which is also a nationalized film. Most of these nationalized films are made by local Tibetan directors, reflecting their independent thinking as Tibetan intellectuals. Comparatively speaking, they are purer Tibetan films [1]. Of course, the development of this kind of pure Tibetan film has benefited from the efforts of Tibetan directors, and Wanma Caidan is one of the important figures. From *Quiet Mani Stone* to *Killed a Sheep From Balloon*, Wanma Caidan kept thinking about the relationship between Tibetan culture and modern culture, and always explored the way out of Tibetan culture.

Directed by Wanma Caidan, the film shows the life of the Tibetan people and also shows the conflict between Tibetan personal beliefs, family, and society. The characters in the film are very vivid. They love life, the pursuit of happiness, faith, and pursuit. The world they believe in is often ideal, but real life is suffering and full of contradictions. At the same time, as a native Tibetan, Director Wanma Caidan knows the lives of Tibetans very well. He shows the most simple life and the purest side of Tibetans through the film, so that what Tibet leaves to the audience is not only the beautiful mountains and rivers, lakes and seas, but also the lives of people from different regions and cultures. For example, the movie *Balloon* tells about the most simple way of life of the Tibetan people. The whole family relies on sheep herding as a means of income. The adults feed the whole family by raising sheep in captivity, and they also pay for their son's school fees. At the same time, everyone also faces different difficulties in life. The father needs to seek help from friends to breed sheep. The eldest son has excellent grades, but he understands the hard work of his parents and decides to give up his studies. Many disasters. At the same time, in the film, the family is also facing life and death. In the film, the most contradictory part is the emergence of personal beliefs and feminist consciousness.

3. Lens Aesthetics of Modern Art Films

Movies are flowing images. Through the moving lens, the director will show things that cannot be expressed in words. Specifically, it is to express the meaning outside the picture. In the movie *Balloon*, the director uses hand-held photography techniques and trembling camera expressions to focus the camera on the family status, emotional life, and religious and cultural traditions of Tibetan women. "The trembling shots refer to those shots with a high sense of instability caused by shoulder-mounted and handheld shooting. [2]" In the movie *Balloon*, the director's trembling shots give people a sense of restlessness, anxiety and lingering. The erotic nature of the film allows the audience to better understand the anxious and contradictory psychology of the characters. In the section of breeding sheep, the director uses handheld photography and mirror language to touch on the attitudes of the traditional Tibetan people towards sex, expressing the primitive reproductive worship and sexual desire of the Tibetan people.

In terms of video style, *Balloon* and *Killed a Sheep* also have the feeling of a combination of dream and reality, especially the display of two dreams: one is that the two young sons dream of the mole on the back of their brother Jiang Yang. They picked it up and used it as a toy, and the second is his wife Zhuoga's gaze at herself in a dream. The display colors of the two dreams are extremely strong and clearly separate from daily life. The false existence of gods implied in the first dream is closely related to the awakening of female self-consciousness in the second dream, forming an irony [3].



Figure 1: The picture of Zhuo Ga staring at his reflection in the water in the movie *Balloon*.

In the memories of the movie *Crashing and Killing a Sheep*, the director used black and white and frame drawing techniques to distinguish it from the real color and the frame rate in line with people's visual perception, pulling the audience from reality into a dream, the same as the film. The characters resonate. As presented in Figure 1 that in "Balloon", Zhuoga stares at the reflection in the water. The color is simple, and the blue sky is the background. The audience is easily attracted by the performances of the actors. At the same time, the reflection brings a composition that does not conform to the visual experience, brings poetry, and implies the rise of female self-awareness. Every picture in the film is full of heart, revealing the inner changes of the characters in the play in a poetic way with clever shots.



Figure 2: A picture of a boy looking at the outside world through a "balloon" in the movie *Balloon*.

The use of depth-of-field lenses in *Balloon* also plays a very important role in expressing meaning, using the foreground to create visual symbolic meaning. As presented in Figure 2 that at the beginning of the film, the director hides the camera behind the inflated condom, making the condom the foreground of the picture, making the whole picture appear dreamy and blurred, and giving the whole story a sense of absurdity and humor. In terms of static modeling, the director ingeniously uses an original frame like a window to show the power and status between men and women. When Zhuoga returned home and found her husband telling her about her pregnancy, the camera shot at a fixed angle behind the broken window from the perspective of a bystander. At this time, her husband, Dajie, and his wife, Zhuoga, were in the frame. On the diagonal line, the two stand opposite each other, but the area occupied by her husband, Dajie, is much larger than that of his wife, Zhuoga, implying that women in the family are actually in a state of aphasia, and men have the absolute right to speak [4]. In the end, when her husband Dajie walked under the statue of Princess Wencheng, the director adopted the perspective of shooting from above, so that the protagonist Dajie looked up at the statue from below, and for the first time in the visual effect, the effect of women being higher than men appeared. Such a choice of the director's composition also reflects a deconstructionist color against authority, which dispels the male right to speak.

4. The New Development of Chinese Art Films - Diversified Communication

Although filmmakers have tried their best, they still cannot change the objective fact that the art film market as a whole is sluggish. As an intermediary, new media attracts audiences into theaters and is an important channel for film dissemination. In fact, through the dissemination of new media, another way of watching movies has also been produced. The development of the mobile Internet has restructured people's lifestyles and social behaviors. The number of domestic mobile video users is already considerable, and the online video market is also developing rapidly. The habit of watching paid videos is being accepted and formed. Among them, audiences belonging to art movies The power is worth exploring, especially with the power of big data. Audiences belonging to art films will be found and aggregated faster under the influence of viewing habits. "Ke Premiere" is one of the products of the combination of film and new media. It was established in 2016 by director Jia Zhangke as the main investor. The online premiere of short films realizes "an encounter between 'short film' and 'film premiere' in the new media port", and is a new platform for audiences to contact art films. In addition, "Ke Premiere" also cooperates with the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Zhihu, Tencent, and other institutions, aiming to connect online and offline to form a polyphonic and diverse form of film communication.

The combination of film and new media also includes dissemination through video websites. Taking iQiyi as an example, as a video platform that earlier perceived the plight of art films, it first cooperated with the producers of art films such as *Roadside Picnic* and *Silent Break* as a test of water. Complete specific operations in the form of copyright procurement. In 2017, iQiyi directly bought the copyright to *A Boundless North*. When it was broadcast on the platform, it was pushed to the "National Arts Federation" for distribution so that audiences could watch the film online and offline at the same time. Later, art films such as *Dog Thirteen*, *Four Springs* and *August* followed this method and all achieved good returns. However, when purchasing the copyright of specific films, it often conducts precise analysis and differentiated operation attempts [5].

The promotion and distribution methods of art films are also constantly evolving. Regarding the possible future development trends of art films and digital promotion: With the popularization of digital media, future art film promotion will rely more on online channels, such as social media, email, websites, and applications. These channels can provide more precise audience positioning and interactivity. 2. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) Experience: Film production companies can use VR and AR technology to provide viewers with immersive movie trailers and promotional activities. This experience can allow the audience to gain a deeper understanding of the world of movies. 3. Social media interaction: Social media will continue to play a key role, and production companies can establish a loyal fan base through interaction with the audience, such as organizing online Q&A, competitions, and voting activities. 4. Customized promotion: By utilizing data analysis and artificial intelligence, future promotional activities will be more personalized. Viewers will receive promotional content tailored to their interests and preferences. 6. Physical experience: Although digital channels are crucial, some art films may also utilize physical activities such as film festivals, art gallery exhibitions, and special venue screenings to attract audience and media attention.

5. Conclusion

As the first Tibetan director in China, Wan Ma Caidan's works have allowed many viewers to understand the true Tibetan life, and he possesses a strong personal narrative style and aesthetic pursuit. The viewpoints in his works are unbiased, as if they are a true reflection of the lives and contradictions of the Tibetan people, breaking the stereotype of the Tibetan region as "barbaric and desolate" in the minds of the audience. Director Wanma Caidan is also good at using colors. In his

previous films, he did not see colors with high saturation but mostly low saturation and low contrast, sometimes even using black and white. The use of these colors is not only for narrative and atmosphere rendering, but also for the color that a native Tibetan carries in his heart. In today's era where doing is easy but knowing is difficult, the hematopoietic function of art films is very important. How to properly handle the relationship between art films, art theaters, and art film audiences, so that the public can enjoy Regaining the energy of thinking is a feasible future path for Chinese art films.

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