

# RESEARCH ON THE INCOMPLETE ART AESTHETICS OF WOODEN LACQUER PAINTING DURING THE NORTHERN WEI DYNASTY

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## ABSTRACT

China has a very long history of lacquer art culture, from the use of lacquer thousands of years ago to the present, a large number of lacquer art masterpieces have been preserved. The wooden lacquer painting of Sima Jinlong tomb in the Northern Wei Dynasty is now in Datong Museum, Shanxi Province, China. The content of the painting has a strong Confucian color, and the aesthetic requirements for lacquer painting in ancient times were complete and bright, with the primary focus on the functionality of education and the second highest aesthetic value. This wooden lacquer painting has a history of over 1500 years, and there has been research on the cultural history and aesthetics of this painting in China. However, there is little discussion on the fragmentary beauty of this painting. The author conducts research and analysis on the fragmentary phenomenon and texture beauty of wooden lacquer painting, clarifies its artistic characteristics from literature, analyzes the aesthetic value and Eastern ideological and cultural value of fragility, and thus leads to the aesthetic value of "fragmentary beauty" in wooden lacquer painting.

Through a questionnaire survey of the general public, 88.68% of the respondents believe that the incompleteness of lacquer painting has room for imagination, 71.7% choose to prefer natural materials, 28.3% say they do not care about materials, and no one chooses artificial materials. 86.79% of respondents believe that incomplete wooden lacquer paintings have a temporal state and historical traces, 73.58% believe they have Eastern cultural connotations, 64.15% believe that each incomplete form is unique, and only 13.21% believe they do not like the incomplete wooden lacquer paintings. The conclusion is that the fragmentary beauty of wood lacquer painting can be accepted and recognized by modern people. Modern people accept the fragmentary picture of lacquer painting. They believe that the fragmentary picture of lacquer painting will bring the meaning of time and history, and has the connotation of Eastern culture. They also believe that each fragmentary form of the fragmentary state of lacquer painting is unique, and the fragility will enhance visual attention and expand the space of association. The fragility does not affect the aesthetic value of wood lacquer painting.

With the diversification and complexity of public life and aesthetic taste, the fragmentary beauty of lacquer painting will also become a unique aesthetic trend in contemporary lacquer painting art.

**Keywords:** lacquer painting, incomplete beauty, texture, Northern Wei wooden lacquer painting

## INTRODUCTION

In the eyes of artists, imperfection can also be beautiful. Rodin once said, "Things that are considered ugly in nature can become the most beautiful in art. The incomplete wooden lacquer painting is a masterpiece of nature, with natural wood and natural lacquer experiencing thousands of years of vicissitudes and possessing a natural beauty. Behind the

incompleteness is the embodiment of the value of time. After years of suffering, everything is inevitably incomplete and blurred, and the beauty of time arises.

The world in which we live in modern times is complex and ever-changing, and people seek spiritual liberation through pure artistic expression. The incomplete appearance of ancient lacquer painting allows people to think and associate, and look back at history during examination. This spiritual fit can broaden the expressive power of contemporary lacquer art creation.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the cultural value of Chinese wood lacquer painting and the aesthetic value of the incomplete beauty of Sima Jinlong's wood lacquer painting.

2. To explore the aesthetic tendencies of modern people towards lacquer painting and their attitudes towards the beauty of incomplete lacquer painting.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Literature research method**

Since there are few documents on the fragmentary beauty of wood lacquer paintings unearthed from Sima Jinlong Tomb, I obtained information by searching for documents on the fragmentary beauty of other art fields, analyzed and learned from the wood lacquer paintings of Sima Jinlong Tomb, and thus obtained the value of the fragmentary beauty of wood lacquer paintings in Sima Jinlong Tomb.

### **2. Questionnaire survey method**

A survey on the personalized trend of contemporary aesthetics, analyzing the questionnaire survey of modern young people's perception of incomplete beauty.

## **RESULT**

1. According to the literature research, the incomplete aesthetic analysis, sensory psychology and visual analysis of Sima Jinlong's wood lacquer painting in the tomb have strengthened the visual attention and expanded the space of association.

The incompleteness of wood lacquer painting is the incompleteness of nature, which has both the beauty of incompleteness and the aesthetic value of Aesthetics of nature. The incomplete state creates a space for imagination. Hegel once said, 'Imagination is creative' and 'when it comes to skills, the most outstanding skill is imagination'. There are defects around the edges of the wood lacquer painting of Sima Jinlong Tomb. The defects of the edges and the breakage of the lacquer skin make people associate with perfection. The association of history inspires the association of the scene where the ancients used paint more than 1500 years ago. This kind of defect is not artificial, but a natural work that has been buried in the soil for a long time and eroded the uncanny workmanship, which is also the mark of the evolution of the past brilliant history.



Figure 1. Wooden lacquer paintings unearthed from Sima Jinlong Tomb in Datong Museum.

Source of the picture :

<https://ss2.meipian.me/users/977687/8070a580998244679a1d3795d22f3325.jpeg?imageView2/2/w/750/h/1400/q/80>

Gestalt psychology, from a psychological perspective, provides a psychological basis for the generation of incomplete beauty. According to Gestalt psychology, when people see an incomplete shape, they automatically supplement the remaining parts in their minds to achieve the completeness, symmetry, and harmony of the shape. For example, 'Brokeback Venus' is the ultimate beauty of Western disability, with her lost arms emitting an indescribable mystery and an abstract sense of beauty. This can also be explained by the perspective of expectation in literature: a thousand people have a thousand Hamlets in their hearts.

We can automatically use the hints and imagination in our minds to appreciate and fill in the incomplete parts of artistic works, and the incomplete parts of wooden lacquer paintings can achieve personal aesthetic completeness.

### **In humanistic analysis, disability is a manifestation of vitality.**

The current incomplete form of wood lacquer painting in Sima Jinlong tomb has given birth to new aesthetic values in modern times, which coincides with the concept of incomplete beauty in history. Incompleteness is an extension of vitality.

Laozi said in the "Tao Te Ching" that "if great achievements are lacking, their use is not harmful; if great gains are rushing, their use is not poor". The most perfect thing in the world seems to be incomplete, but its function will never fail. This is why ancient lacquer painting still thrives in the modern context. Chinese style aesthetics is an extension of ancient Chinese philosophical thought. Chinese people have appreciated and respected the beauty of imperfection since ancient times, and have a great tolerance for things with defects. Incompleteness reminds people of incomplete lotus, rockery, broken jade, broken bridge, sunset and dusk. Incompleteness is not simply "broken" in the eyes of Chinese people, but mysterious, endless extension. This is the uniqueness of Chinese aesthetics.

### **The incompleteness of wooden lacquer painting reflects the value of time.**

Behind the incomplete wooden lacquer painting is a reflection of the value of time. After years of suffering, everything is inevitably incomplete and blurred, and the beauty of time arises. Therefore, the thickness of time is an important test standard for the aesthetic appreciation of Chinese culture. All ancient Chinese aesthetics place great emphasis on

"year", which is a standard of evaluation value system that belongs to Chinese style aesthetics. Through the sedimentation of time, wooden lacquer painting has formed mysterious traces unique to time on its surface. Some paint surfaces have broken to create texture, and time is the best artistic processing technique. The incomplete texture is the coating of time on lacquer painting. Due to the advantage of corrosion resistance of natural lacquer, the wooden lacquer paintings unearthed from Sima Jinlong tomb are relatively intact, but the incomplete state has unique aesthetic value of time. The incompleteness of lacquer painting is a dialogue between humans and history, as well as a dialogue with time, space, and time. It is a reflection of the real world and also a reflection of historical and cultural imagery.

## 2. Obtain results from the questionnaire survey.

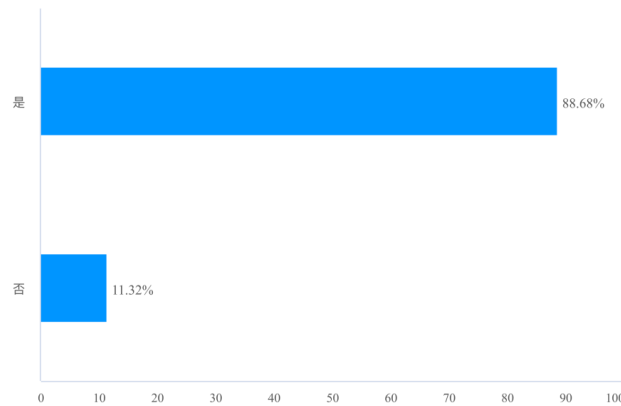


Figure 2. The result data generated from a questionnaire survey on whether the incomplete state of wooden lacquer painting creates a space for imagination. 88.68% choose "Yes" and 11.32% choose "No".

Through the distribution of questionnaires, 47 respondents believed that the incompleteness of lacquer painting had room for imagination, accounting for 88.68%. Only 6 people believe that lacquer painting is incomplete and cannot generate imagination, accounting for 11.32%. From the analysis of survey data, the vast majority of people's perception of the incomplete phenomenon of lacquer painting creates a space for imagination, indicating that the texture state of incomplete painting is abstract and thought-provoking.

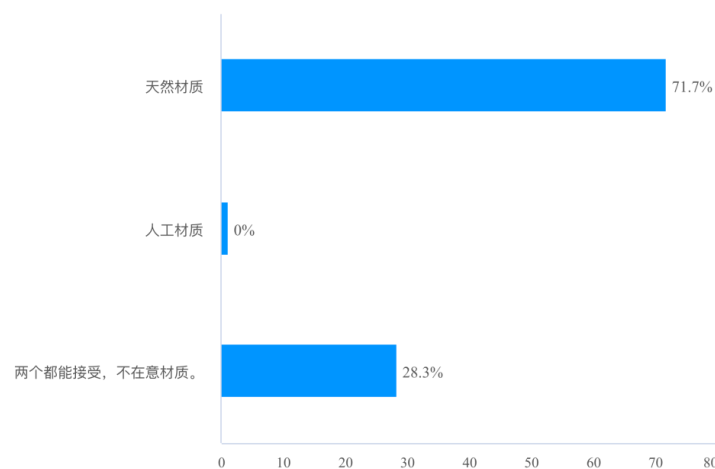


Figure 3. The result data generated from a questionnaire survey asking "Do you prefer natural materials or artificial materials for artworks? Can you accept them even if you don't care about the materials."

Regarding the question of whether artworks prefer natural or artificial materials, 38 respondents chose natural materials, accounting for 71.7%. There are 15 people who can accept both, regardless of the material, accounting for 28.3%. No one chooses artificial materials, accounting for 0%. From data analysis, it can be concluded that most people prefer natural materials for artworks. Wood lacquer painting belongs to natural materials, and it is recognized and accepted that lacquer painting that can analyze natural materials.

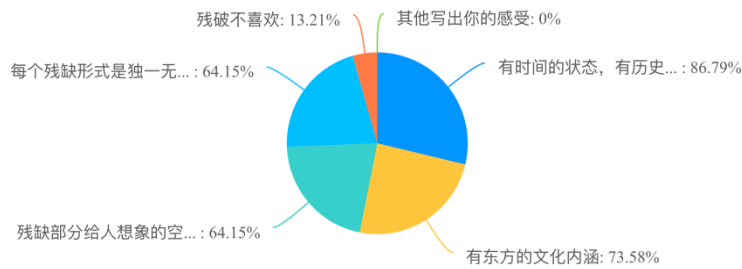


Figure 4. Result data generated from the questionnaire survey regarding the question 'What did you experience with incomplete wooden lacquer paintings?'

46 respondents believed that the incomplete wooden lacquer painting had a temporal state and historical traces, accounting for 86.79%. 39 people believe that there is an Eastern cultural connotation, accounting for 73.58%. 34 people believe that the incomplete part provides space for imagination, accounting for 64.15%. 34 people believe that each incomplete form is unique, accounting for 64.15%. Only 7 people believe that they do not like the incompleteness of wooden lacquer paintings, accounting for 13.21%. From the perspective of data, most people believe that the deformity of lacquer painting will bring about the meaning of time and history, have the connotation of Eastern culture, and make people have imagination space. They also believe that each incomplete form of the incomplete state of lacquer painting is unique. Most people have a valuable and favorable attitude towards the incomplete state of lacquer painting.

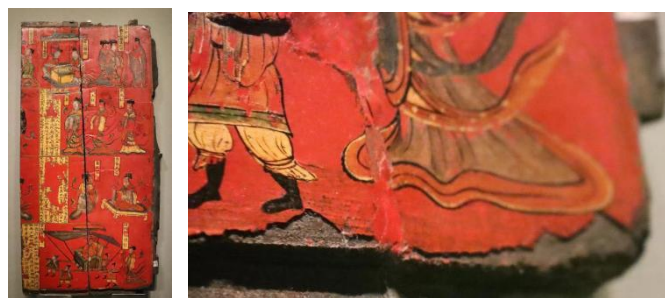


Figure 5. Part of the Northern Wei wood lacquer painting unearthed from Sima Jinlong Tomb.

Source of the picture: [https://www.douban.com/note/809272341/?type=rec&start=30&i=9145607e35JM3j 9149662e35JM3j](https://www.douban.com/note/809272341/?type=rec&start=30&i=9145607e35JM3j%209149662e35JM3j)

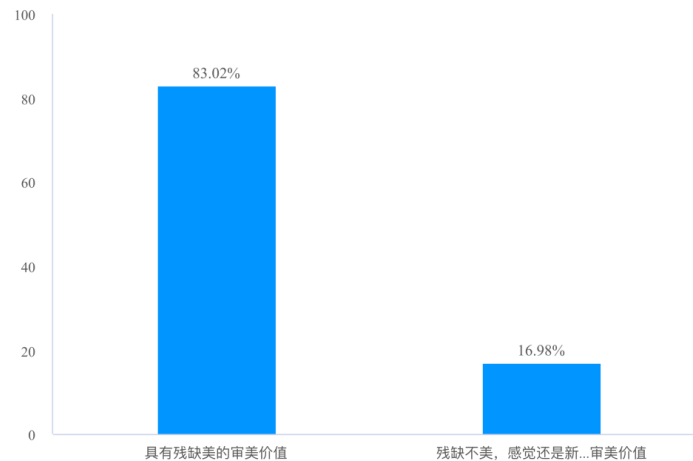


Figure 6. The result data generated from the questionnaire survey "The 1500 year old Northern Wei wooden lacquer painting unearthed from Sima Jinlong tomb is incomplete, and the paint surface has cracks and mottled texture, whether it affects its aesthetic value?".

While answering this question, the respondents were provided with Figure 5 pictures of wooden lacquer paintings. According to Figure 6 analysis, 44 respondents believe that the incomplete wooden lacquer paintings of the Northern Wei Dynasty have aesthetic value, accounting for 83.02%. Only 9 people believe that being incomplete is not beautiful, and that new and complete ones have more aesthetic value, accounting for 16.98%. From the survey data, it can be seen that the majority of people are not affected by the incomplete phenomenon of wooden lacquer paintings, such as cracks and mottled texture on the paint surface, which does not affect their aesthetic value.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through literature review and preliminary analysis of known data, combined with research purposes, a questionnaire was designed, and the collected questionnaires were classified and analyzed to obtain effective information. The acceptance level of incomplete beauty in lacquer painting among modern people and the tendency towards aesthetic taste were analyzed, and the research results were obtained. The wooden lacquer painting of the Northern Wei Dynasty, with traces of time, has Chinese cultural value and aesthetic value of incomplete beauty. Modern people believe that the imperfection of lacquer painting will bring about the meaning of time and history, and has the connotation of Eastern culture, and that each incomplete form of the incomplete state of lacquer painting is unique. The incomplete state will enhance visual attention, expand the space of association, and the incomplete does not affect the aesthetic value of wood lacquer painting.

Lacquer art has a long history in History of China. With the popularity and complexity of modern people's life and aesthetic taste, the fragmentary beauty of lacquer painting has become a unique aesthetic trend of contemporary lacquer painting art. The ancient lacquer painting mainly focuses on the function and enlightenment. In the modern cultural context, people pay more attention to the cultural and aesthetic attributes of lacquer painting. The damaged form of the ancient wood lacquer painting forms a fragmentary form beauty and texture beauty, which is consistent with some contemporary contents and produces a visual beauty. The world in which we live in modern times is complex and ever-changing, and people seek spiritual liberation through pure artistic expression. The incomplete appearance of ancient lacquer painting allows people to think and associate, and look back at history

during examination. This spiritual fit can broaden the expressive power of contemporary lacquer art creation.

The beauty of imperfection is hazy, it prompts people to search for deficiencies, fill them in, and naturally stimulate their own aesthetic feelings to actively observe and analyze, and use their imagination to create.

The incompleteness of wood lacquer painting is the incompleteness of nature. Behind the incompleteness is the embodiment of time value. It has both the beauty of incompleteness and the aesthetic value of Aesthetics of nature. The incomplete state creates a space for imagination. The incompleteness of the edges and the fracture of the lacquer skin evoke associations with completeness, and the association with history inspires associations with scenes where ancient people used lacquer over 1500 years ago. This incompleteness is not artificial, but a natural work of eroded ghost axe craftsmanship that has been buried in the soil for a long time, and is also a mark of the evolution of past glorious history.

The incomplete wooden lacquer painting of the Northern Wei period is incomplete and incomplete for aesthetic perfection, but humanity's pursuit of art is always a process of approaching perfection and unable to achieve it. Perhaps it can be said that disability is a form of pursuing perfection.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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### **SUGGESTION**

Suggestions for future research or users. The research in this article is only one type of wooden lacquer painting from the Northern Wei Dynasty. It should be noted that the damage can be divided into natural damage and artificial damage, and the texture of the damage produced by different ages and time periods is also different. Further in-depth and detailed research is needed.

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