

An Analysis of the Artistic Traits Theory that Triggers Animation in the New Media Era

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Abstract

People's daily patterns and social atmosphere have undergone earth-shaking changes in the ever-changing new media era. Against this background, the unique artistic characteristics and far-reaching significance of hand-drawn animation, an ancient and precious art form, have become increasingly prominent. Although new media technologies, especially computer-generated imagery (CGI) and digital animation tools, have brought disruptive innovations to animation production, hand-drawn animation's artistic value still needs improvement. Under the impact and baptism of digital technology, hand-drawn animation faces creative challenges and gains unprecedented creativity and inspiration. This two-way influence puts pressure on hand-drawn animation and opens up new possibilities for it. This article aims to deeply analyze the artistic language of hand-drawn animation, especially its performance and characteristics in the context of the new media era, to point out a new path for the creative practice of hand-drawn animation, and explore a broader artistic space.

Keywords: New Media, Artistic Language, Hand-Drawn Animation

Introduction

People's daily lives and social atmosphere have undergone profound transformations in the rapidly evolving new media era. Against this backdrop, hand-drawn animation, an ancient and precious art form, has become increasingly prominent due to its unique artistic characteristics and profound cultural significance. Although computer-generated imagery (CGI) and digital animation tools have revolutionized animation production, the artistic value of hand-drawn animation remains (Linna, n.d.). New media technology challenges hand-drawn animation and fosters unprecedented creativity and inspiration.

Studying the artistic characteristics of hand-drawn animation in the new media era is of great significance. Firstly, hand-drawn animation serves as a bridge between cultural inheritance and innovation. It not only preserves the essence of classical art but also finds a broader platform for expression in the new media landscape. Through an in-depth analysis of the

artistic language of hand-drawn animation and its performance in the new media era, we can chart new directions for creative practice and open up expansive artistic horizons.

Secondly, hand-drawn animation's diversity and flexibility in the new media environment endow it with robust dissemination and influence. The rise of new media platforms enables hand-drawn animation to spread rapidly and widely, enhancing its artistic charm through interaction, replication, downloading, and other operations. Hand-drawn animation is a visual delight and a vital conduit for cultural exchange and dissemination.

Finally, studying the artistic qualities of hand-drawn animation in the new media era helps explore the integration of digital technology and traditional hand-drawn techniques. This integration provides creators with more creative inspiration and technical support. By leveraging the advantages of digital technology, the production efficiency and expressiveness of hand-drawn animation can be improved, enriching its artistic expression.

In conclusion, researching the artistic qualities of hand-drawn animation in the new media era has important academic value and practical significance. It helps promote the development and innovation of animation art and supports the inheritance and dissemination of culture. Amid the digital era's wave, hand-drawn animation will continue to radiate unique artistic charm, offering a more diverse and enriched aesthetic experience to audiences.

The Artistic Language of Hand-Drawn Animation

"Animation is by no means just a collection of moving pictures. It is essentially the art of giving life to still pictures(Schaffer, n.d.)." This is how Norman McLaren defined animation. Rooted in the essence of painting and the creativity of movement, hand-drawn animation presents a unique artistic language whose visual expression is breathtaking. This is a visual enjoyment and a cultural inheritance, emotional expression, and value transmission. Every carefully drawn character and every vivid and smooth animation movement contains the animators' thoughtfulness and emotional investment.

Expression Forms and Humanistic Feelings

As an art form full of humanistic charm, hand-drawn animation profoundly conveys rich cultural connotations and sincere emotions with its unique expression techniques(Wells, 2007). The diversity of forms of hand-drawn animation stems from the infinite exploration of materials and drawing methods. Each creator can create an unreplicable hand-drawn animation style through unique materials and techniques. For example, using traditional ink painting, oil painting, pastel, and other materials can produce unique visual effects and emotional expressions, while combining modern technology, such as digital drawing tablets and animation software, can further enrich the expressiveness and production efficiency of hand-drawn animation.

"Three Monks," which won the first China Golden Rooster Award for Best Art Film, is a rare classic in hand-drawn animation. With its unique ink painting style and vibrant character designs, the film perfectly demonstrates the aesthetic charm of traditional Chinese art. The three monks in the movie are depicted in red, yellow, and blue, respectively. This color choice not only cleverly metaphors the colorful world but also creates a unique atmosphere through simple scene design and a large amount of white space. It's novel and exciting. The ink painting makes the whole picture full of the charm of classical Chinese art. The smooth lines and natural painting style make the audience feel like they are in a traditional Chinese painting (Kivistö, n.d.).

Through the delicate portrayal of the characters of the three monks, the film not only reveals the commonality and individuality of human nature but also profoundly explores the concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. The three monks in the film have their characteristics:

- The red monk is enthusiastic and cheerful.
- The yellow monk is intelligent and witty.
- The blue monk is calm and reserved.

Their interaction and growth process reflect the running-in and collaboration of people with different personalities in collective life. This delicate depiction of the characters allows the audience to experience profound human insights and psychological resonance in a short cartoon.

At the same time, "Three Monks" also keenly captures the contradiction between individualism and collectivism in society. At the film's beginning, the three monks work independently and do not cooperate, leading to a series of problems. However, as the plot develops, they gradually realize the importance of unity and cooperation and finally solve the dilemma together. This process is not only a depiction of personal growth but also a promotion of the spirit of collectivism. Through a concise storyline and vivid characters, the film emphasizes the power of unity and cooperation in the face of difficulties. This theme still has important practical significance in today's society.

In addition, "Three Monks" has also become a profound presentation of cultural heritage and values through its unique artistic style and profound cultural connotation. The film shows the charm of traditional Chinese art and conveys the core values of harmony, cooperation, and symbiosis in Chinese culture. In this way, hand-drawn animation is a form of artistic expression and a carrier of cultural exchange and dissemination, allowing the audience to feel the power and beauty of culture while appreciating artistic works.

Modeling Styles and Animation Actions

Hand-drawn animation shows a variety of styles in modeling, among which realistic and cartoon images are particularly prominent, and it also incorporates techniques such as personification and exaggeration. Through in-depth observation and experience of the surrounding environment, the creators skillfully integrate these elements into the animation works, giving them new vitality and meaning while conveying unique insights and insights into life and the world.

In 2021, Looking back at Qi Baishi, the master of traditional Chinese painting, his concept of "writing the spirit with form" is a model of artistic refinement and expression of everyday things in life(Choi, 2021). Under his influence, we saw the birth of China's first ink cartoon, "Tadpole Looking for Mom," in 1960. This animation is based on ink painting, showing the unique form of tadpoles through delicate brushstrokes and the use of ink. In 2023, the nearby tadpoles are outlined with burnt ink. In contrast, the distant ones are rendered with light ink, forming a visual effect of near reality and far virtuality, perfectly presenting the unique charm of ink painting(Wei et al., 2023).

In terms of action design, this animation also cleverly combines the characteristics of ink painting. When the tadpoles swim, the frequency and speed of their tail swings, as well as the changes in formation, convergence, and dispersion, all perfectly reflect the vivid charm of ink painting. The tadpoles' thinking, playing, chasing, and other actions vividly demonstrate their curiosity and exploration of the world, allowing the audience to feel the agility and artistic conception of ink painting deeply.

The Conflict and Integration of Hand-Drawn Animation and the New Media Era

In the wave of new media, digital technology is changing with each passing day, subverting the traditional mode of information production, transmission, and reception. As a unique art form, hand-drawn animation has somewhat collided with the new media era and achieved deep integration. Collision makes hand-drawn animation continue to challenge itself and seek innovative paths, while integration injects new vitality into hand-drawn animation in the new media era. This situation of opposition and unity significantly promotes the evolution of hand-drawn animation art and adds a unique artistic charm to information dissemination in the new media era(Li et al., 2018).

The Contradiction between Hand-Drawn Animation and the New Media Era

When discussing the integration of hand-drawn animation production and the new media era, it is easy to find that the production process is simple and time-consuming. Artists invest vast amounts of energy and time to create unique works of art, emphasizing innovation and breakthroughs. However, the arrival of the new media era has broken the time and space boundaries of information transmission, allowing hand-drawn animation works to be disseminated quickly and widely and even copied in batches(Shuo, n.d.).

This change has weakened the artistic style and uniqueness of hand-drawn animation to a certain extent. However, at the same time, it has also brought unprecedented opportunities for the popularity of art. The distance between art and the public has been shortened on the new media platform. Everyone can easily watch, interact with, and even create hand-drawn animation works as if everyone can become an "artist."

With the widespread dissemination of hand-drawn animation works, people's demand for innovative ideas is also growing. They are eager to see more novel and unique expressions to satisfy their pursuit and expectations of art. Although the new media era poses particular challenges to the originality of hand-drawn animation, hand-drawn animation still wins people's love and attention with its unique charm and market value.

At the same time, new media platforms have begun to realize the value of hand-drawn animation and have provided space and opportunities for its display. This provides a broader stage for hand-drawn animation creators and brings the audience more diverse and higher-quality artistic enjoyment.

Interaction between Hand-Drawn Animation and Digital Technology

In the current era of vigorous development of new media, the artistic charm and unique hand-drawn animation style have been widely recognized and spread like never before. With the rapid advancement of digital technology, this technology optimizes the creation process of hand-drawn animation, reduces tedious manual operations, and dramatically improves efficiency and costs(Yang, 2023). For example, using digital software, we can quickly complete color filling, layer management, and careful arrangement of animation sequences, which significantly simplifies the traditional hand-painting process(Shen & Dong, 2024).

Furthermore, integrating hand-drawn animation and digital technology can also create unique visual effects. For example, combining hand-drawn elements with 3D rendered backgrounds or using digital special effects can significantly enhance the visual impact of hand-drawn animations. The digitization of hand-drawn animation also gives it new features of participation and interactivity. With the support of digital technology, audiences can participate more actively, interact, copy, download, upload, and other operations, and even deconstruct and reconstruct animations to obtain a new viewing experience(Lammi, n.d.).

The introduction of digital technology has undoubtedly significantly enhanced the interactivity of hand-drawn animation. Through augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) technology, viewers can immerse themselves in the world of hand-drawn animation and interact deeply with it. This blend of hand-drawn animation and digital technology not only injects new vitality into traditional art forms and brings new development opportunities but also poses new challenges. It changed the production and dissemination of hand-drawn animation and opened up a new world for the development of animation art.

In the New Media Era, the Significance of Hand-Drawn Animation

In the current wave of new media, hand-drawn animation has injected vitality into information dissemination with its unique artistic style. It not only adds diversity to the way information is presented but also dramatically enhances the attractiveness of information through its unique charm, making the content more engaging and closely connected to the topic. In addition, hand-drawn animation also has a particular emotional expression that can touch the audience's hearts more deeply, thus significantly improving the dissemination effect of information.

Enrich Information Dissemination Forms and Make it more Disseminating

Driven by the wave of new media, hand-drawn animation, as a unique artistic display, has dramatically broadened the dimensions of information dissemination and significantly enhanced its effectiveness. Hand-drawn animation shows endless creativity and changes in theme conception, image creation, layout design, etc. These subtle differences give the work a unique visual charm. More importantly, the diversity and flexibility of hand-drawn animation ensure the complete transmission of information and vastly enrich the form of information dissemination.

"Sanxingdui National Treasure Large-scale Disco Scene" published by Chuanguan News Client! The 3000 electronic music band is so top-notch! "For example, this work cleverly combines hand-drawn animation with live video and incorporates humorous Sichuan dialect electronic music elements, making ancient Shu cultural relics seem to "come alive" and glow with new vitality on the Internet. In particular, the use of cyberpunk style and cool neon special effects perfectly integrates cultural relics from 3,000 years ago with future technology, creating a visual effect full of tension and beauty, which satisfies the audience's desire for "new" and "wonderful" "Desir(Mao, 2024).

The application of digital media animation in disseminating folk culture, especially using the two-dimensional animated short film "Red Bank" as a case study, explores the role of digital media animation in promoting the dissemination of folk culture under cultural diversity(Zheng, 2024). This clever use of hand-drawn animation not only breaks the limitations of traditional information dissemination but also creates a strong visual impact through refined content and vivid hand-drawn animation forms, effectively realizing the dissemination of information. At the same time, it also brings unprecedented aesthetic enjoyment and viewing experience to the audience.

Make the Report Closer to the Topic and Facilitate the Expression of Information

In the current wave of new media, short videos have won widespread power due to their rapid, intuitive, and easy-to-share characteristics. As a unique art form, hand-drawn animation has somewhat collided with the new media era while achieving a deep integration(Zielinski & Merewether, 2020). This collision has led hand-drawn animation to

challenge itself and seek innovative paths constantly. At the same time, the integration has injected new vitality into hand-drawn animation in the new media era. This unity of opposites has dramatically promoted the evolution of hand-drawn animation art. It has also added a unique artistic charm to disseminating information in the new media. The evolution of animation as a creative medium and the different characteristics of traditional art and experimental animation emphasizes the unique ability of animation as a new media art to engage with audiences through interactive interfaces and immersive experiences (Ratn & Deeba, 2023). However, this format is not a panacea and may only be suitable for communicating some content. In contrast, hand-drawn animation provides a unique perspective, making it an ideal complement and choice, especially in scenes that require in-depth analysis, emotional resonance, or artistic presentation. Moreover, the communication method of hand-drawn animation perfectly fits the contemporary new media environment. Take "New Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains," created by the New Media Center of "People's Daily" as an example. This work is based on the famous Northern Song Dynasty painting "Thousands of Miles of Rivers and Mountains." It uses advanced technologies such as real-life modeling and CG, combined with traditional Chinese painting techniques, to combine dance and opera, folk music, and other conventional cultural elements cleverly integrated into the animation. The audience seems to have traveled through time and space, flying over mountains and valleys, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, passing through the forest sea of Saihanba, admiring all creatures in the national park, and immersing themselves in China in fields, jungles, snow-capped mountains, lakes, cities, and other scenes—development and changes in these ten years.

This work is an innovative transformation of the artistic form of "Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains" and a unique telling and dissemination of new stories of Thousands of Miles of Rivers and Mountains in the Internet era. It vividly demonstrates our country's brilliant achievements in various fields and presents initially serious reports in a relaxed and aesthetic form that is deeply loved by the audience. This work has become a cultural symbol and artistic benchmark in the new era.

Achieve Emotional Foil and Deepen the Audience's Feelings

As a unique and creative art form, hand-drawn animation conveys concrete and vivid information to the audience with its unique colors, exquisite textures, and fascinating plots. In this art form, the painter skillfully integrates thematic content, deep emotions, and personal insights into each work, leading the audience to deeply feel and appreciate its profound meaning (Cooper, n.d.).

With the rapid development of digital technology and the diversification of the audience's aesthetic needs, hand-drawn animation is no longer content to tell stories. It began to carry more emotional and philosophical expressions, thus evolving into a more profound and rich art form. The rise of new media platforms has provided unprecedented interactive opportunities for hand-drawn animations. Audiences can participate more actively, enhance their perception and understanding of animations through interaction, and thus experience and think more deeply about the emotions and philosophies conveyed by animations.

In the new media era, the presentation forms of hand-drawn animation are becoming increasingly diverse. In addition to traditional animated and short films, hand-drawn animation can be presented in various novel forms, such as online animation, interactive animation, and virtual reality (VR) animation. These new forms provide a broader stage and innovative space for hand-drawn animation to express emotions and philosophy.

For example, "The Journey of a Red Star," carefully produced by CCTV, is a successful attempt. This work adopts the form of stop-motion animation, with a hand-drawn retro style as the central axis, and cleverly combines the stop-motion overlay of pictures with real-life actions, video special effects, and soundtrack sound effects. Through the presentation method of "one shot to the end," it slowly unfolds a magnificent picture of the century-old journey, vividly presenting 17 crucial scenes such as the Nanchang Uprising, the Long March, the Founding Ceremony, and the fight against poverty on hand-painted cards. This work breaks the conventional perspective and presents essential moments and scenes in the century-old history in an "artistic" way, allowing the audience to immerse themselves in this magnificent history with a strong visual impact.

Conclusion

In the ever-changing new media era, hand-drawn animation stands on the cusp of change, facing unprecedented new opportunities and severe challenges. The integration of digital technology has undoubtedly provided hand-drawn animation with more prosperous and diverse expression techniques and has also broadened its communication channels and platforms. However, the convenience of technology also comes with risks, which may lead to stereotypes and mechanization tendencies(Sharma & Juyal, 2023).

To ensure the unique charm and artistic value of hand-drawn animation in the digital age, creators need to have a deep insight into the aesthetic trends of the new media era and keep up with the times. At the same time, it is even more necessary to adhere to the admiration and inheritance of traditional hand-painted skills and prevent them from getting lost in the new wave. While pursuing efficiency and modularity, we should also pay attention to the personalized expression of the work and show the creator's unique perspective and emotional experience.

Therefore, we must not only take advantage of digital technology to inject new vitality into hand-drawn animation but also maintain the cherished inheritance of traditional hand-drawn skills to ensure that the artistry and uniqueness of the works are continued.

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