

The Power of Photographs in Richter's Paintings – The Essence of Photographs and the Representation of Paintings

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Abstract

Through the analysis of Gerhard Richter's works of art in the period of "fuzzy image", this paper expounds the special internal quality of fuzzy image in Richter's works and reveals an important direction of the development of contemporary easel painting. The special essence of Richter's vague image is that he uses photos to reflect the power and authenticity of the existence of the objective things. He was not satisfied with the radical way of modern painting and tried to return to the traditional way of painting, but in fact Richter kept a special distance between classical painting and modern art. Richter not only blurs the image in his creation, but also shows that he wants to show the objectivity of things, keep the distance, authenticity and give up painting. Richter used fuzzy images to capture the concept of "visual unconsciousness", and finally separated from the concept. When we read how Richter showed the reality of things in the way of painting, we also saw a kind of contradictory psychology when he faced the complicated objective.

Keywords: Gerhard Richter, Blurred Image, Moment, Endoplasm of Photograph

1. INTRODUCTION

Richter was a deeply conflicted fighter who kept a distance between classical art and modern painting. Gerhard Richter was born in the Democratic Republic of Germany (East Germany) in 1932. He went to Dresden School of Plastic Arts in 1951 and moved to The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1961. He studied and worked at the Dusseldorf School of Art. He was appointed professor of the Dusseldorf Academy of Arts in 1971 and retired in 1994. Richter has been called the most respected living artist. Richter, with his pioneering ideas and image style, re-opened the possibility of painting in the late 20th century, which was mainly manifested in the so-called "photo-realistic blurred painting" based on photographic images. Richter's breakthrough in personal art not only restored easel painting to an important position in contemporary art, but also saved the face of European art in the competition with American art. This painting mode also had a profound impact on Chinese contemporary art. In addition to realistic painting, Richter's creations also involve art experiments in abstract painting, installation art, performing art and conceptual art [1, 2].

2. BLURRED IMAGE

"Not only is it very difficult to talk about painting, but I'm afraid it doesn't make a lot of sense," Richter

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said. He believed that what people could say about the painting had nothing to do with the painting itself.

In the 1960s painting was replaced by other new art forms in the West, and Richter developed a new approach to easel art with "photo fuzzy painting". Richter believes that in the age of picture reproduction, traditional paintings should change the media conditions without giving up the painting, so as to maintain the current meaning of painting. Therefore, Richter believes that the most important thing is to put the objectivity, authenticity, instantaneity and distance in the photos into the painting, and at the same time give up the traditional artistic composition.

Richter chose this unique creative methodology. He based it on photographs, but did not reproduce them completely. Artists sometimes reinterpret photographs in a gray color, and in painting photographs, sometimes juxtaposing the painterly and photographic objectivity in one work. The artist ignores the details of the photograph using a technique known as Fuzzification, a technique that Richter is used to. Blur the objects so that everything in the picture looks equal, Richter says. The picture looks smooth, perfect and technical, not so artistic. Blurring unimportant information so that every detail of the picture looks just right. The author thinks that Richter's "fuzzy image" is not to find personal style symbols, but a kind of thinking process [3, 4].



Figure 1. Table 113 × 90 cm oil painting 1962

In Richter's 1962 work *The Table*, you can see that he juxtaposed the two techniques in the picture. There is also a tendency to blur images. Perhaps this is also the origin of Richter's creation of fuzzy painting, so it is necessary to mention this kind of work when we discuss Richter's creation of fuzzy images. In 1962 Richter began drawing from photographs. There is an unusually deep European quality to Mr. Richter's use of photographs. Richter's fuzzy photo paintings are numerous, and I can only list some of them in this chapter.

Richter painted many fighter jets, and in "*Phantom Intercepts*," several fighters line up in a row and fly through the gray sky. Richter used his usual gray tone and his own method of blurring the picture.



Figure 2. Phantom Interception 190 x 140 cm oil painting 1964

In his 1964 work "Cow", Richter used everyday advertisements and posters to create a second time, depicting the image of cows in magazine advertisements. He incorporated the atmosphere of *The Times* into his work.



Figure 3. The Cow 150 x 130 cm oil painting 1964



Figure 4. Tiger 150 x 140 cm oil painting 1965

In the work "Tiger", Richter depicted a moving tiger moving through the grass with a sense of speed like the wind. Richter used horizontal and fuzzy painting methods to process the picture.



Figure 5. Mr. Baker 46 x 40 cm oil painting 1965

Figure 6. Mrs. Baker 46 x 40 cm oil painting 1965

Figure 7. Little Boy Baker 32 x 26 cm oil painting 1965

Figure 8. Little Girl Baker 32 x 26 cm oil painting 1965

In Another group of works, "The Bakers," depicts the facial expressions of Mr. And Mrs. Baker, the little boy and the little girl, the Bakers, at a social gathering. Mr. And Mrs. Baker wore social smiles, while the children's faces showed gloom. Richter alludes to a certain human aspect in this set of works.

In addition, Richter filled the picture with what seemed to be random blobs of white paint. This seems to be his *modus operandi*.



Figure 9. Oil Painting of 50 x 87 cm uncle Rudi, 1965

In Uncle Rushdie, Richter found the unique painting processing techniques that are associated with Andy Warhol's^① individuals and pointed out the differences. As Richter put it, "Andy Warhol silkscreened and photographed it, and I painted it mechanically."

In his landscape paintings, Richter generally adopts "non-artistic" composition, and the center of the picture is often deviated. For example, in the oil painting House in the Forest, the house is deviated to the edge of the picture, which psychologically makes people feel a sense of nostalgia for the fleeting moment of human civilization. Mr. Richter said the landscapes came from magazines, and he wanted to present the perfect landscapes in his own way.

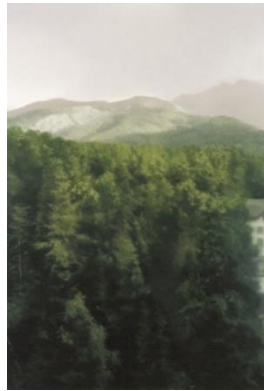


Figure 10. House in the Forest 142 x 98 cm oil painting 2004

In his note dated October 12, 1986, Richter wrote these words: What shall I draw? How do I draw it? What is the hardest thing because it is essential. The "how" is relatively easy. Strive for "how to draw", and thus the necessary conditions, physical and physical possibilities of using technology for the purpose. Intention is to create nothing, to have no thought, no composition, no subject, no form, to receive everything: composition, subject, form, thought and image.

Richter's technique of blurring images is to complete his artistic conception. How exactly does Richter make the image blurry? Richter's "photorealistic and obscure paintings" should have been done in a short time. This blurring technique uses a clean, soft brush to move back and forth across the surface of the painting in an orderly fashion, selecting different blurring effects according to the artist's needs. It is very important to grasp the dry humidity of the picture oil layer, which determines the success or failure of the fuzzy image. This technique of blurring the image also speeds up Richter's creation speed and accords with the rhythm of life in contemporary society to some extent

Ambiguity, in Richter's case, is implicit, but it is also hidden. Richter used vague images to grasp the concept of "visual unconsciousness" and finally got rid of the concept.

3. SPECIAL ENDOPLASM

This paper introduces Richter's "photorealistic and fuzzy painting", and also explains the intrinsic quality of the work. While blurring the image in his creation, Richter also shows the special essence that he wants to show the objectivity, distance, authenticity and abandonment of painting. When we appreciate Richter's "photo-realistic and fuzzy paintings", we should not use the relatively pure visual effect that is typical of western classic oil paintings, but use the philosophical view of German critical thinking to think and talk with the works [5, 6].

Richter is diverse and powerful in artistic expression. In the works of "Photo-realistic fuzzy painting", Richter makes a new interpretation of painting through a certain attribute of photography. In this process, we can see the intrinsic quality of Richter's fuzzy works. "I'm not trying to imitate a photograph," Richter says. "I'm trying to make a photograph, to make a painting that looks like a photograph." He believed that the authenticity and objectivity conveyed by photographic images were higher than that of painting, because there was a kind of most direct information of things in photography. He believed that the depiction function of photography replaced the realistic function of painting. What he cares about is the relationship between objectivity of things and pictures, not the relationship between the ontological language of painting and pictures. Direct sketching, in Richter's view, distorts the objectivity of things because it creates styles, and that objectivity can be conveyed directly in photograph.

Richter has rigorous and speculative artistic ideas. Richter's artistic view can be divided into three aspects: first, the religious function of art. He believed that art could soothe the soul and search for the essential meaning of religion. Art itself provided the function of the church after the withdrawal of religion. Two: Artistic monism. The content, form, concept and spirit of art are a unified whole. Thought is art and content is form. Three: Artistic autonomy. Art has reproducibility, but reproducibility is not art itself, art is its own

reality [7, 8].

Richter said, "Instead of creating something -- no statement, no explanation, no conception, no creation, no consciousness -- just letting it happen in order to be more real, richer, more alive, until it was beyond my comprehension." In his career, he has never stopped painting photos. He wanted to use photographs to make paintings reflect the reality and existence of objective things as photographs do. When everyone is discussing the painting itself and the painting nature, Richter's discussion points to the authenticity of the object.

Next, I will introduce some "photo-realistic and fuzzy paintings", and let us understand the special essence of Richter's fuzzy image from the concrete works. In his work "Alpha Romio", Richter's pictures from the pictorial magazine are half images and half words.



Figure 11. Alfa Romeo 155 x 150 cm oil painting 1965

The images in Richter's work are often out of focus and overexposed, and the images seem magical. Blurry images can create perceptual commonality in the work. Richter uses black and white photographs, which often evoke images of death, as his material.



Figure 12. Woman with Children 130 x 110 cm oil painting 1965

In 1965's "Woman with Children," the woman sits on her knees on the beach, holding the boy in her arms as he faces the camera. The child was still sucking his finger and wasn't paying attention to the camera. This photographic work becomes very moving when it is painted in oil. In the face of this work, we will have a sense of alienation from the passing of time.



Figure 13. Occupied Houses 112 x 82 cm oil painting 1989

In Richter's landscapes, the brushstrokes are hard to see, and the edges of the objects are as smooth as if they should be brushed. In "The Occupied House" (1989), this technique takes the picture to a fantastical and wonderful state. In the picture, the white building blended into the background and matched with the vague shadows of the trees, giving people a sense of nostalgia. Richter's work exemplifies the idea that photographs give paintings "special qualities".

Richter ponders the triangle of photographs, paintings and reality. He does not care about the surface information of the photos, but is obsessed with the hidden authenticity of the photos. At the same time, he made use of the unusually calm and rational approach of the Germans images.



Figure 14. Aunt Marion 96 x 77 cm oil painting 1964



Figure 15. Mr. Henry 56 x 55 cm oil painting 1965

Richter presents a neutral observer of the Second World War in such works as Aunt Marion and Mr. Henry. The lens in the picture seems to have no emotion, just as an objective record and presentation, without praise or criticism, without likes or dislikes. Richter loves snapshots and even thinks that amateur photographs are better than professional ones. So Richter's work was to make the painting more like a photograph, not like a painting. The special nature of photographs makes Richter break away from the traditional system of painting criticism, because photographs are objective and have no artist's mood. Richter's artistic way of seeing the world objectively shows the inherent philosophy and sensitivity of The

German people.

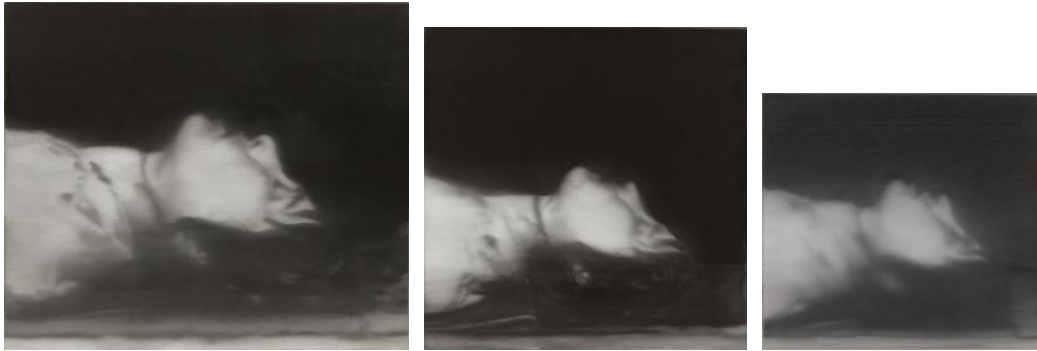


Figure 16. October 18, 1977:Death 1. 67 x 62 cm oil painting 1988

Figure 17. October 18, 1977:Death 2. 32 x 26 cm oil painting 1965

Figure 18. October 18, 1977:Death 3. 32 x 26 cm oil painting 1965



Figure 19. Oil painting of 140 x 200 cm in a Small Room, 1988

"October 18, 1977" is a series of 15 paintings. Work in four German youth intellectuals^②is ideological tendency of red terrorists. They bombed the German Military headquarters and the German police station, and carried out several bombings across Germany. The last four died in prison, and German newspapers published photographs of their autopsies. Richter based the work on these photographs. In three of them, called "The Face," Richter records the scene in which Asselyn (Andris Bard's girlfriend) walks through the lens. Richter paints a cold, aloof picture of Asselyn, and it is impossible to tell whether she is afraid or sad.

Richter's figurative works depict toilet paper, benches, streets, and important people, but the images consistently convey a cold, emotionless message to the viewer. Richter believed that the value of art lies in providing solace to helpless, desperate and lonely human beings. Richter believes that there is no standard for his choice of images, and that the choice of images is random, building on the diversity of his images. "If I find something that works, I'll stick with it," Richter says. These things must have two things: they must change painting and they must have value beyond painting."

Art is an instrument of expression, interpreting our understanding of the world in different ways, and at the same time solving things that bring us closer to ontologies that we cannot understand. Richter found an Angle, and that Angle was photography. Drawing from photographs, Richter was freed from the choice of subject and the need to create. Richter looked far into painting itself, opened the inspiration of photography to painting, and sought for the modern meaning of painting. His appropriation of the photographs, without modifying or transforming them into modern forms, symbolises his avoidance of the subject. The special quality of Richter's blurry image is reflected in the objectivity and authenticity of his photographs. He was

not satisfied with the radical approach of on-shelf art and kept a special distance from classical painting. While reading how Richter used painting to show the authenticity of things, we can also see his ambivalence when thinking in the complex objective world [9, 10].

4. CONCLUSION

Sometimes Richter's paintings do not conform to the original expectations of traditional viewers, but they provide us with a realistic possibility of painting in the present. Art had a religious purpose in Richter, and he used it to set the world right.

In the 1960s, Richter created a series of realistic, blurry images based on private photographs, amateur photographs, and black-and-white portraits. Since 1970, he has been working through photography and correspondence on the implications of painting, so he says, "Painting seems incomprehensible, illogical, meaningless, it reveals so many aspects, it dissolves standards because it deprives things of meaning and appellations. It shows us multiple meanings and infinite variations, thereby negating the emergence of a single meaning or idea." He believed that the things expressed in the most difficult, the most extreme, the most absurd, the most beautiful, the most brilliant ways were the best. Richter's "photo-realistic fuzzy painting" has created a new way for contemporary painting, which is a new way of painting expression after philosophical speculation. This breakthrough focuses more on painting ideas. Art was for Richter the highest form of hope.

5. NOTES

- ① Andy Warhol was a pop artist from 1928 to 1987.
- ② These four youth is: andres budd, arvella goodrum, gore, Lin, hall, mace and Horace mann hoff ur kerry.

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