

The Renaissance Influence on Raphael's Artistic Creation

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Abstract. Raphael, the most important artist in the heyday of the Renaissance, influenced the artistic development of Europe during the Renaissance and more areas in the future with his unique painting style and deep pursuit of ideal beauty. The formation of Raphael's artistic style comes from the background of his Renaissance, his life experience, and the influence of artists of the same period. This paper studies the formation of Raphael's painting style: the background of the Renaissance provided a unique condition for Raphael's painting creation, which catalyzed and formed his unique personal style; The further formation of Raphael's painting style was greatly influenced by outstanding artists from all over the world at the same time. In the end, Raphael formed his own style in the later period of his creative career, which can rival or even surpass other artists: harmonious pictures, exquisite coloring techniques, and the ideal human beauty displayed in the pictures. Furthermore, while Raphael was influenced by other painters' styles, Raphael also had an important influence on painters of the same period and future generations.

Keywords: Raphael; High Renaissance; Classicism.

1. Introduction

As one of the most important artists in the high Renaissance, Raphael Santi profoundly influenced Renaissance art in Europe and more areas in later generations with his unique artistic style and pursuit of ideal beauty. The formation of Raphael's style is inseparable from the influence of his Renaissance background and life experience, which provided conditions for Raphael to learn the works of contemporary artists. To further understand Raphael's works, it is necessary to review the formation of Raphael's artistic style throughout his life. This paper will review the background of the Renaissance in Italy, Raphael's life experience, and how the artist gradually formed his own classical style under the extensive influence of contemporary artists in Italy and around Europe. Furthermore, this paper will also review how Raphael's techniques and aesthetic pursuit evoked the growth of artists and their styles after him.

2. Analysis

2.1. Raphael's Style of Painting

The Renaissance is the era of the rise of European humanism. People attach importance to the superiority of human beings and emphasize the happiness of earthly life. This idea is also reflected in the aesthetic concept of Renaissance painting. Renaissance painters generally focused on depicting vivid, realistic, and human characters. Raphael's painting style shows that his creative ideas are also influenced by this trend. For example, Raphael's works generally adopt accurate human proportions and vivid character movements and focus on depicting the quiet and peaceful human beauty of the characters. In addition, Raphael's later works also show his accurate description of the strong emotions of the characters. For example, in Raphael's later work Transfiguration, the characters under Jesus Christ present exaggerated and dramatic facial expressions, and their body language shows distinct characteristics. These characteristics show that Raphael paid attention to depicting the beauty of the natural human body and the humanization of the human figures.

Religious stories are important themes in Raphael's painting creation. Raphael created many paintings about Christianity in various periods before his death, especially the paintings with the theme of the Virgin, including one of his most well-known paintings, Madonna del Meadow [1,2].

Part of the reason for this phenomenon comes from the composition of the client. Raphael has long maintained good relations with many clergy, including the Pope. He is often commissioned by such people to paint wet murals for residential and religious buildings, such as Stanze di Raffaello [3]. This kind of commissioned creation often revolves around religious themes because of its purpose and the client's belief. In addition, under the influence of social culture, the client's general preference for religious themes may also prompt Raphael to pay more attention to the creation of religious themes. During the Renaissance, decorative paintings with religious stories were widely favored. In contrast, paintings with natural scenery themes are less preferred. Works that simply depict natural scenery often only appear in the painter's sketches or drafts rather than formal works. These experiences of plant sketching are often simply used by painters in the creation of backgrounds of portraits but not the main body. Therefore, the restriction of the entrusted theme determines the main position of the religious theme in Raphael's works. At the same time, Raphael's paintings are also influenced by secular books and other non-religious historical backgrounds [4].

The Renaissance brought not only the development of art but also the progress of natural science, especially anatomy. Renaissance painters are an important subject of anatomical research. The pursuit of the beauty of the natural proportion of the human body conforms to many aesthetic concepts popular in the Renaissance. In addition, the degree of discipline differentiation during the Renaissance was relatively low in modern times, and it was relatively less difficult for artists to set foot in the scientific field. Although many autopsies were not widely accepted by mainstream society, many painters in the Renaissance still studied the proportions and anatomy of the human body with the help of models and corpses. Both Leonardo da Vinci's and Michelangelo's manuscripts show a great deal of research results about human muscle and bone structure. Outside Italy, Albrecht Dürer has also published research results such as *Four Books on Human Body Proportion and Structure*. Raphael may also have learned these research results and applied them to the shaping of people's images. He himself also actively observes and studies the human body structure through sketching and other forms. These works make the characters in Raphael's paintings have the characteristics of high accuracy and natural and vivid posture.

During the Italian Renaissance, the trend of famous painters opening studios prevailed. This kind of studio has both functions as a painting workshop and an educational institution [5]. Studio apprentices could receive systematic painting education while working for painters, including painting skills such as preparing pigments, sketching, and coloring. Many leading painters of the Renaissance, such as Leonardo da Vinci, once helped teachers paint as apprentices in their early artistic careers. The existence of this trend provided conditions for Raphael to enter some artists' studios to learn techniques in his early years. Raphael studied painting skills as an apprentice at Perugino Studio in Perugia in his early years. During the Renaissance, it was common for apprentices to participate in part of the work entrusted by a famous painter in the studio, and Raphael was no exception. Participation in the projects of famous painters influenced Raphael's painting style. For example, after participating in the drawing of the teacher Perugino's work *The Marriage of the Virgin*, Raphael drew a work with the same theme in 1504, in which the soft and subtle picture style and composition are highly like those of Perugino's version.

Raphael himself started his own studio after becoming a painter with a high reputation and social status. This enabled Raphael to speed up the efficiency of painting entrustment with the help of his apprentices. In addition to the output of his works, the studio also enabled Raphael to train a group of young painters and expand his influence. These young painters were instructed by Raphael in painting skills and trained in painting literacy. Studio training may include Raphael's innovative content, such as hiring and depicting female models.

The background of the Renaissance provided favorable conditions for Raphael's painting creation and contributed to the formation of his unique personal style.

2.2. Raphael's Life Experience and Painting Style

Raphael's father worked as a court painter in Urbino during Raphael's childhood. Therefore, Raphael was fascinated by his father's Work. This early learning includes not only contact with the artistic style in Urbino but also the way to get along with the clients and rulers as an artist. The study of these two skills enabled Raphael not only to make achievements in art fields in his future career but also to maintain fine relationships with his clients. Renaissance painters usually do not occupy an extremely high position in society. However, Raphael gained a relatively high social status by virtue of his personal genius and reputation. For example, he won the title of a court painter of the papal government in the Vatican, also receiving work on managing cultural relics in the whole of Italy. Raphael's high-standard funeral can also prove his social status. The pope attended his funeral in Rome; In addition, he was allowed to be buried in the Pantheon.

Raphael spent his early years in the studio of his teacher Perugino. As mentioned above, Raphael learned massive painting skills during his apprenticeship, which laid the foundation for his later creations. Raphael did quite well during his apprenticeship. Although there are few records about Raphael at this stage, his participation in the entrusted projects accepted by Perugino can explain Raphael's outstanding talent compared with other apprentices of his peers [6]. Raphael's painting style at this stage is also very similar to the style of the works produced by the studio, and the characterization of his works reflects a quiet and delicate style.

Raphael suspended his work in 1504 and left Perugia to travel and study in Florence [7]. Florence was one of the important centers of cultural and artistic development during the Renaissance, which gathered many outstanding artists and wealthy clients at that time. Raphael was able to extensively study and observe the paintings of outstanding contemporary painters in Florence, such as Leonardo da Vinci's oil paintings and Michelangelo's murals. At this stage, the characters in Raphael's works are more rounded and fuller, and the pictures are full of harmony [8]. After studying the painting experience of other painters more extensively, Raphael gradually formed his own unique style at this time.

In 1508, Raphael moved to Rome to continue his creative career. In the later period of his creative career, Raphael gained a great social reputation and opened his own painting studio. In the creation of the studio, Raphael practiced and tried new painting materials and techniques, and taught his painting experience to many apprentices in the studio. Many apprentices in Raphael's studio have grown into a new generation of important painters after their death. At this stage, the colors in Raphael's works are bolder and the picture tension is stronger; However, the images of the Virgin Mary and Christ in the works of this period still retain the typical characteristics such as dark tranquility and harmonious pictures. In 1520, Raphael died of acute illness and was buried in Rome.

Raphael's experience of living and working in Florence and Rome, two important cultural and artistic cities in central Italy, influenced his painting style.

2.3. The Interaction between Other Painters and Raphael

The formation of Raphael's painting style is closely related to the influence of outstanding artists from all over the world at the same time.

The formation of Raphael's personal style is closely related to his study of the works of his predecessors and contemporary painters in Florence and Rome. In Florence, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo were the main Italian painters Raphael studied.

As one of the most important painters and anatomical researchers of Raphael's contemporaries, Leonardo da Vinci had an influence on the composition and techniques adopted in Raphael's painting creation. Raphael created a series of paintings of Madonna in the middle of his creative career, mostly using triangle composition. This composition, which gives religious paintings a high degree of picture stability, probably refers to the same composition in the Madonna of the Rock created by Leonardo da Vinci. Among Raphael's Madonna paintings, Madonna in the Meadow is particularly similar in composition to Leonardo da Vinci's Virgin of the Rocks. Raphael's portraits were also influenced by Leonardo da Vinci. For example, in Raphael's portrait work Gioconda, the posture of the characters

and the selection of the background behind them are like some paintings by Leonardo da Vinci [9]. In addition to composition, Raphael also learned Leonardo da Vinci's original coloring technique Sfumato. This coloring method is characterized by creating soft edges by overlapping pigments many times, and neutral colors are often used. Considering that Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci were in Florence at the same time in their life records, Raphael may have had direct communication with Leonardo da Vinci.

Michelangelo's influence on Raphael is mainly reflected in the expressive force of the human body. Although Raphael didn't meet Michelangelo, and their relationship was not very well based on the competition between the two masters [10,11], Raphael still learned from Michelangelo's emphasis on human body structure and detailed description of muscle dynamics in his paintings and sculptures. The School of Athens reflects Raphael's progress in human body expression after learning the works of other painters [12]. In this work, Raphael depicted the two most important philosophers in the center of the picture as the faces of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, while his own image casts an admiring look at them on one side of the picture. The composition of this picture may also imply the reality: Raphael witnessed the creation of some of the most outstanding artists in the Renaissance in Florence.

Besides contemporary painters, Raphael also studied the works of his predecessors. Masaccio is the first painter in Europe who has mastered focus perspective, artistic anatomy, and light contrast. Like many other contemporary painters, Raphael studied Masaccio's paintings and his perspective techniques during his stay in Florence.

In the Convento di San Marco in Rome, Raphael met Fra Bartolommeo and exchanged painting techniques with him. Raphael learned his coloring techniques directly from Fra Bartolommeo. In return, Raphael helped him improve perspective techniques.

In addition to Bartolommeo, Raphael also learned Piero Della Francesca's handling of light and shadow and finally developed this technique into a more contrasting and dramatic light and shadow effect in his posthumous Transfiguration.

In addition to Italian painters, Raphael may have learned the achievements of outstanding painters in other regions at that time, such as the color expression in the works of Giorgione and Titian of the Venetian School, and the accurate proportion of the human body in the works of Dürer.

Raphael also had an important influence on painters of the same period and future generations.

Raphael influenced a group of apprentices in the studio he started in the later period of his life. Some of them left the studio after Raphael's death and became outstanding independent painters. Their creative ideas and skills were influenced by Raphael. A typical example is Giulio Romano. As one of Raphael's most important students, Romano learned and developed techniques pioneered by Raphael, such as the coloring technique Chiaroscuro. Romano's excellent painting skills learned from Raphael enabled him to help complete the semi-finished works after Raphael's death, and his personal works before 1524 also showed the influence of Raphael's style. For example, in *The Holy Family in 1522*, Romano adopted Raphael's unique composition in his work. After 1524, Romano, who went to Mantua, gradually developed his own unique painting style and became a famous stylistic artist in the Renaissance.

Although Raphael's life was shorter than that of other painters in his era, his artistic legacy after his death profoundly influenced the artistic development of Europe in the next few centuries as others did. Raphael directly promoted the development of classicism and influenced the development of French academic schools in the 17th century, which set off the movement of neoclassicism in France. In addition, his treatment of light and shade in some works also influenced Caravaggio's painting style, which opened the era of the Baroque style.

To this day, as one of the most important painters in the heyday of the Renaissance, Raphael's works are still widely circulated and studied. Modern and contemporary artists learn from the classicism developed by Raphael to express their unique reflections on art and reality.

3. Discussion

Raphael, one of the most renowned painters of the Italian Renaissance, was deeply influenced by the ideological enlightenment, social culture, and religious background of his time. These factors not only shaped the themes and functions of his paintings but also provided an inspiring environment for his early artistic study, which laid the groundwork for his later accomplishments.

Drawing on the teachings of his master Perugino, Raphael initially adopted a style that reflected the prevailing artistic trends of the period. However, he continuously sought to expand his knowledge and skills by studying the works of contemporary artists. His experiences in Florence and Rome, the bustling artistic hubs of central Italy, provided him with invaluable opportunities to encounter other talented artists and learn from their masterpieces. This exposure allowed him to incorporate their artistic advantages into his own ideas, resulting in a synthesis of diverse influences.

Raphael's painting style encompassed the strengths of artists from various regions around the world. He skillfully employed composition techniques, mastered coloring methods, and excelled at depicting the human form with exceptional precision, paying careful attention to light and shadow. Moreover, he ventured into innovative techniques of coloring, experimenting with new materials for pigments. As his career progressed, Raphael developed his distinctive style characterized by harmonious figures, exquisite coloring techniques, and the portrayal of idealized human beauty. This signature approach garnered not only the admiration and emulation of his clients and contemporaries but also exerted a profound influence on the subsequent development of art history as an integral part of the classical tradition.

Understanding Raphael goes beyond appreciating his exceptional artistic achievements. It requires delving into the process through which his style evolved. By comprehending the formation of his artistic language, one gains insights into the broader artistic development of the Renaissance and its aesthetic ideals. Studying Raphael also serves the purpose of reviving and appreciating the splendor of this remarkable era in painting. Furthermore, exploring his works and ideas can inspire contemporary artists, despite the differences in painting themes and creative environments. By studying Raphael's techniques and concepts, modern artists can learn valuable lessons that enable them to express the important themes of today's world with proficiency and innovation.

In conclusion, Raphael's artistic journey was shaped by the intellectual, cultural, and religious currents of the Renaissance. His relentless pursuit of knowledge encounters with fellow artists, and exploration of various artistic techniques culminated in the development of his own unique style. Understanding Raphael's contributions not only enriches comprehension of art history but also offers inspiration for contemporary artistic creation, showcasing the enduring relevance of his painting skills and ideas.

4. Conclusion

First, the ideological enlightenment, social culture, and religious background of the Renaissance profoundly influenced Raphael's painting concept and theme and provided a good development environment for the artist's early artistic study and later artistic achievements. That is, the background of the Renaissance provided a unique condition for Raphael's painting creation, which catalyzed and formed his unique personal style. Secondly, Raphael's life and study experience in Florence and Rome, two important artistic development places in central Italy, laid a foundation for him to extensively study the artistic styles in central Italy and other regions, and then widely adopt the strengths of artists of the same period in various places. From composition and coloring techniques to human body expression and light and shadow treatment techniques, Raphael's life and work experience in Florence and Rome, two important cultural and artistic cities in central Italy, promoted him to adopt the painting style of a hundred schools of thought. The formation of Raphael's painting style was greatly influenced by outstanding artists from all over the world at the same time. In the end, Raphael formed his own style in the later period of his creative career, which can rival or even surpass other artists: harmonious pictures, exquisite coloring techniques, and the ideal human beauty displayed in the

pictures. This artistic style not only won the praise and imitation of the clients and other painters before his death but also continuously inspired the creative ideas of later artists as an important part of classical art after his death, which profoundly influenced the artistic development history after him. That is, while Raphael was influenced by other painters' styles, Raphael also had an important influence on painters of the same period and future generations.

It is further concluded that the artists in the heyday of the Renaissance were often influenced by culture, religion, life experience, and other artists, and the artists stirred up each other to form a brilliant painting style of the Renaissance and a starry modern. This study provides valuable reference information for the study of the style formation and influencing factors of artists in the future Renaissance. Future research can focus on the direction of interaction between Raphael's works and the audience from an interdisciplinary perspective such as psychology.

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