




# The Style, Lacquer Color and Shape of Han Dynasty Ceramic Sculpture Inspired the Creation of Fine Art

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## ABSTRACT

The Han Dynasty was in a period of rapid development of Chinese feudal society, and the culture presented a vigorous and prosperous scene. In the Han Dynasty, artworks such as diction, calligraphy, music and dance, painting, and utensils and crafts achieved high artistic achievements, and various types of arts influenced each other, penetrated each other, and developed together. Han Dynasty sculpture art takes Han Dynasty social life as the theme, simple and vivid in shape, natural and vivid, fully showing the artistic interest and artistic talent of the Han Dynasty, and the artistic characteristics of Han Dynasty sculpture deeply influenced later art. This paper analyzes Han dynasty ceramics and sculptures, conducts X-ray diffraction analysis on pottery and sculptures excavated in some cemeteries, and explores the style and lacquer color characteristics of Han dynasty ceramics and sculptures with reference to relevant historical materials, so as to provide creative inspiration for modern art design. The results show that the ceramic and sculpture styles of the early Han Dynasty are rough and simple, and the later period is delicate, colorful and vivid. It is mainly attributed to the development of lacquered materials, as well as the development of ceramic preparation technology. Moreover, the development of ceramic preparation technology will also have an impact on sculpture modeling and improve the development of sculpture technology. Therefore, the style and lacquer color of Han dynasty ceramics and sculptures have an enlightening effect on modern art creation, and it is clear that the main purpose of art creation is the development of technology and craftsmanship, as well as the result of human aesthetic standards.

**Keywords:** Ceramics, Han Dynasty, Sculptural Modeling, Fine Arts, Creation, Inspire.

## INTRODUCTION

In the 80s, China underwent a great transformation, in this environment, traditional culture was merged with external culture, and Western modern art ideas rushed into China. Affected by this idea and art thought, modern Chinese art gradually awakened, and a major category of modern art, pottery carving, also underwent obvious changes. The art of pottery carving, which occupies half of the art of pottery carving, has also undergone tremendous changes due to the influence of modern Western pottery art. In the early days, young Chinese ceramic sculptors were easily confused by Western contemporary art when painting, and the novel ideas expressed by them were not well absorbed in terms of overall and abstraction, and some were simply imitated. Their denial of Chinese tradition, criticism of Chinese tradition, and denial of Chinese tradition make their artworks, like "sources without water", soon dry up, which has aroused heated discussions and deep thoughts among contemporary ceramists. In the process, a large group of highly creative potters emerged. Chinese culture has thousands of years of history, a wide variety of species, and a vast spirit, contemporary pottery masters can continue to explore the essence of traditional Chinese culture, and be good at learning and absorbing the good qualities in it. Among these works, Han Dynasty carving art is a dazzling pearl in the history of sculpture, which has a variety of artistic characteristics such as boldness, wanton majesty, natural vividness and simple flexibility, which greatly attract contemporary ceramic sculptors to take them as their creative source. Among them are Guo

Zhen, Yao Yongkang, Lv Pinchang, Luo Xiaopin, Huang Sheng and other pottery carving masters, who are all absorbing, borrowing, and transforming into their pottery carving works, and sorting out their pottery carving works borrowed from the Han people to enrich the basic theory of contemporary Chinese pottery carvings.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF HAN DYNASTY SCULPTURE ART

In the Han Dynasty, the field of application of carving art became very extensive, and the techniques expressed in the artworks became more sophisticated, whether in the expression techniques, creative ideas or the content form of the works, they all presented the unique national characteristics of the Han nation, which was an unprecedented stage of development (Chen, Wen, & Wang, 2020). Han carvings are in many ways associated with funerals, but in essence they are carved for life. Han dynasty carvings are mainly to mourn the deceased kings, clansmen, heroes, etc. Therefore, the stone carvings and terracotta warriors of the Western Han Dynasty are modeled on the pre-Qin bronze patterns, integrated into the creative style of the pre-Qin and the romantic ideas of the Chu state, so that the Han Dynasty carving style was formed (Han, Zhang, & Sha, 2019).

#### Analysis of the Composition of Han Dynasty Ceramics, Sculptures and Lacquer

The Han Dynasty sculpture style is characterized by bold and unpretentious, and forms the Han Dynasty art style. Among them, the stone carvings in front of Huo Qu's tomb are representative, the stone carvings are simple, simple, and slightly bold, and the lines are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. A Stone Horse in front of Huo Qu's Tomb

It can be seen from Figure 1 that the stone horse carved in front of Huo Qubing has rough lines, a large number of corners at the corners, and the lines of the nostrils, eyes, and muscles are simple and lack of delicacy (Huang, 2022). In the middle and late Eastern Han Dynasty, in addition to the emperor and the clan family, the creation of ceramics was also popular among the people. The carving arts of the Han Dynasty, such as portrait stones, portrait bricks, ceramic sculptures, bronzes, etc., were widely popular among the people and became more

common. Most of the craftsmen who carve are folk craftsmen, and the carving works are close to real life, love life, and use freehand techniques to create many excellent carving works. Han dynasty sculpture works and ceramic works are fused, and the modeling style develops in the direction of vivid and romantic, and the comparison results are shown in Table 1.

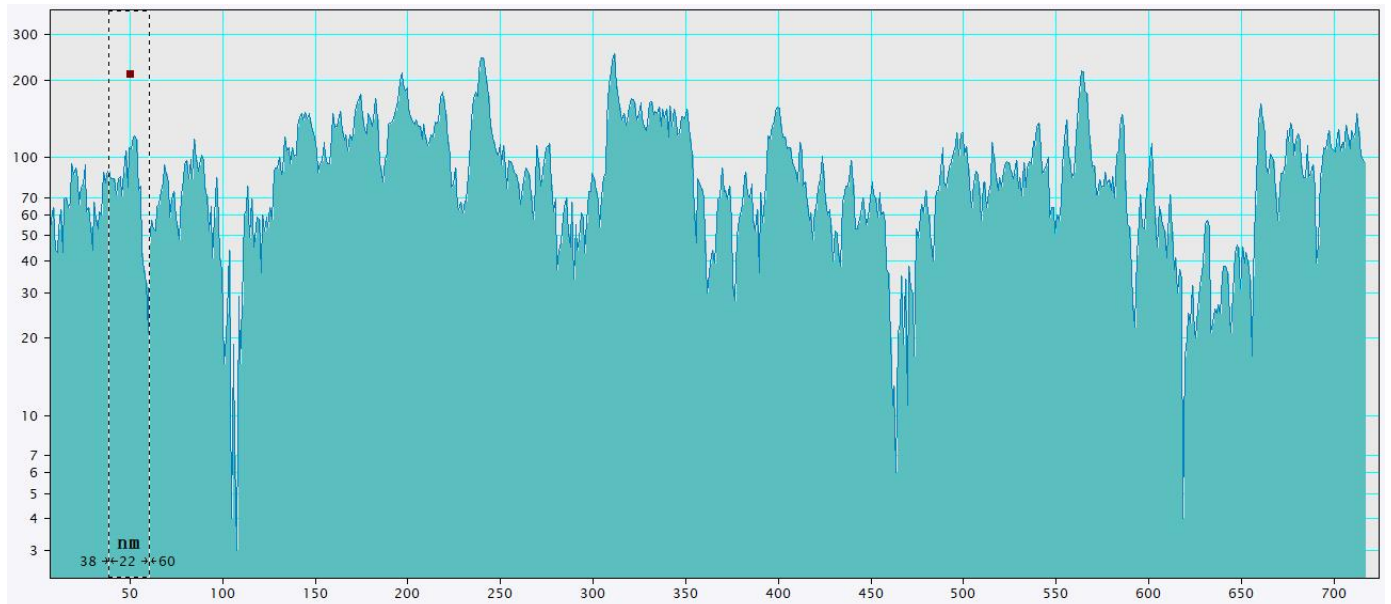
**Table 1.** Comparison of Ceramics, Sculptures and Lacquered Colors in Different Periods

Era	Utensil	Engraving Angle	Paint Color Composition	Sculpt
Early Han Dynasty	ceramics	5~10°	Calcium carbonate, kaolin, iron red, apatite, muscovite	Extensive, simple, single color
	stone carving			
	Tao Ding			
	pot			
Late Han Dynasty	ceramics	11~20°	Cinnabar, hematite, limestone, apatite, carbon black, amorphous carbon black, han violet, han blue (Katsuki et al., 2020)	Delicate, vivid and colorful
	stone carving			
	Tao Ding			
	Cocoon-shaped pot			

Among them, the Han Dynasty stone carvings are very rich, both paintings and carvings, and the storyline is also full of romance and fantasy, which is nostalgic; What ceramic sculpture pursues is not the depiction of details, but the beauty of its internal charm; The bronze carvings are exquisite and gorgeous, moving and still, giving people a feeling of being forgotten. Since then, Chinese carving has developed a strong, natural and vivid, ancient and flexible Chinese style (Li et al., 2022). On the whole, Han dynasty carvings show a bold, simple, free-spirited, galloping romanticism, and focus on the real life of the time in theme; Physically, it attaches importance to the essence of life in Taoism; In terms of creative methods, emphasis is placed on the fusion of romanticism and freehand.

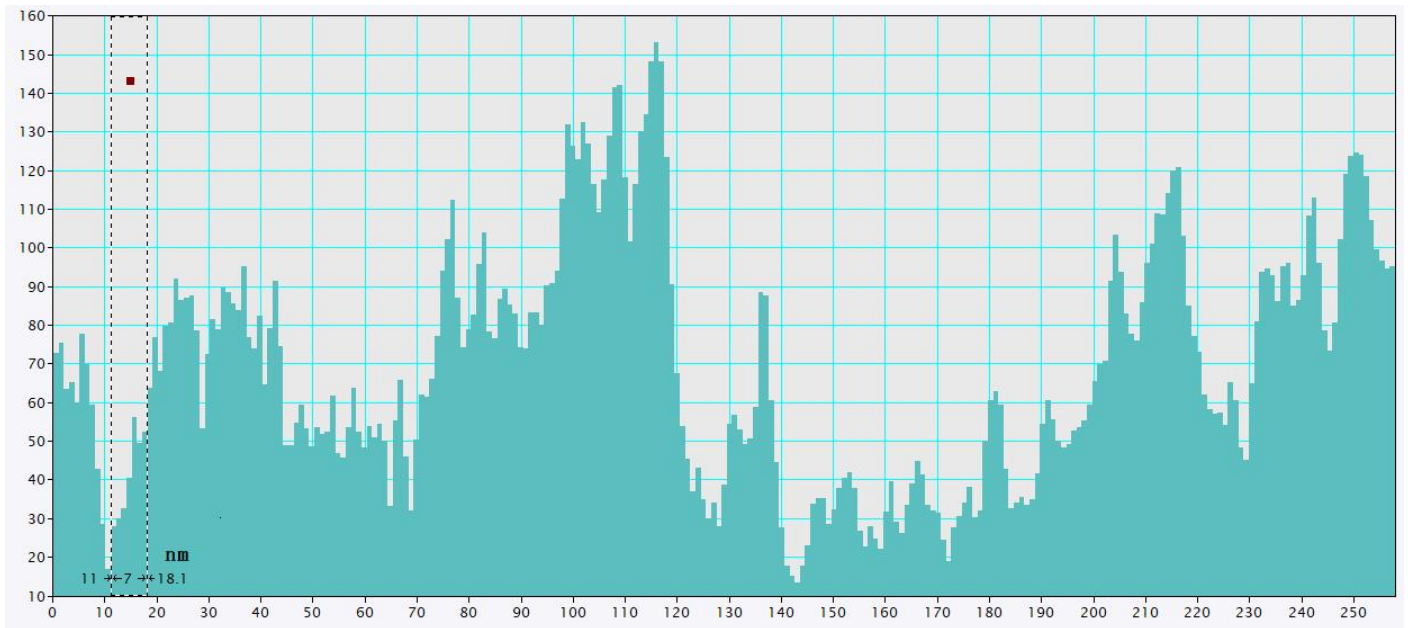
**Process Analysis of Han Dynasty Ceramics, Sculpture and Lacquer Color**

The crystal results of Han dynasty ceramics, sculptures and lacquer colors were analyzed, and X-diffraction and polarization microscopy were analyzed. Clay pots and sculptures from Yangjiawan, Maoling, Hanyang Mausoleum and other places were taken, and the corresponding materials were obtained as samples at the paint surface and material for comparison, and the results are shown in Figure 2.



**Crystal Diffraction Results of Paint Color in Early Han Dynasty Samples**





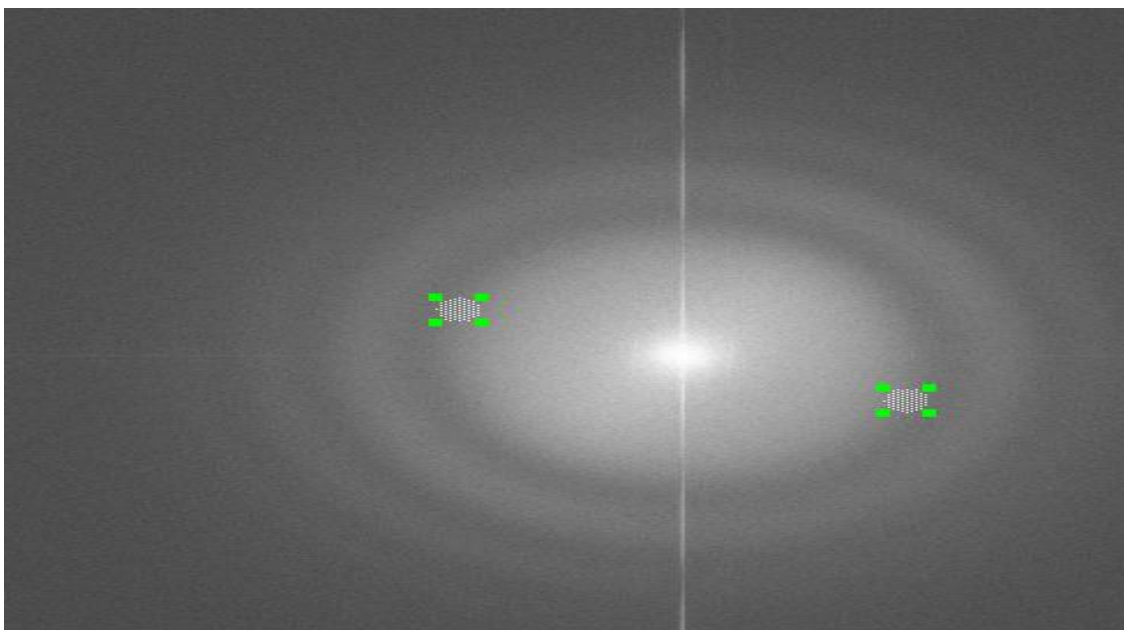
Crystal Diffraction Results of Sample Paint Color in the Late Han Dynasty

Figure2. Crystal Information in Ceramics and Engravings in Different Periods

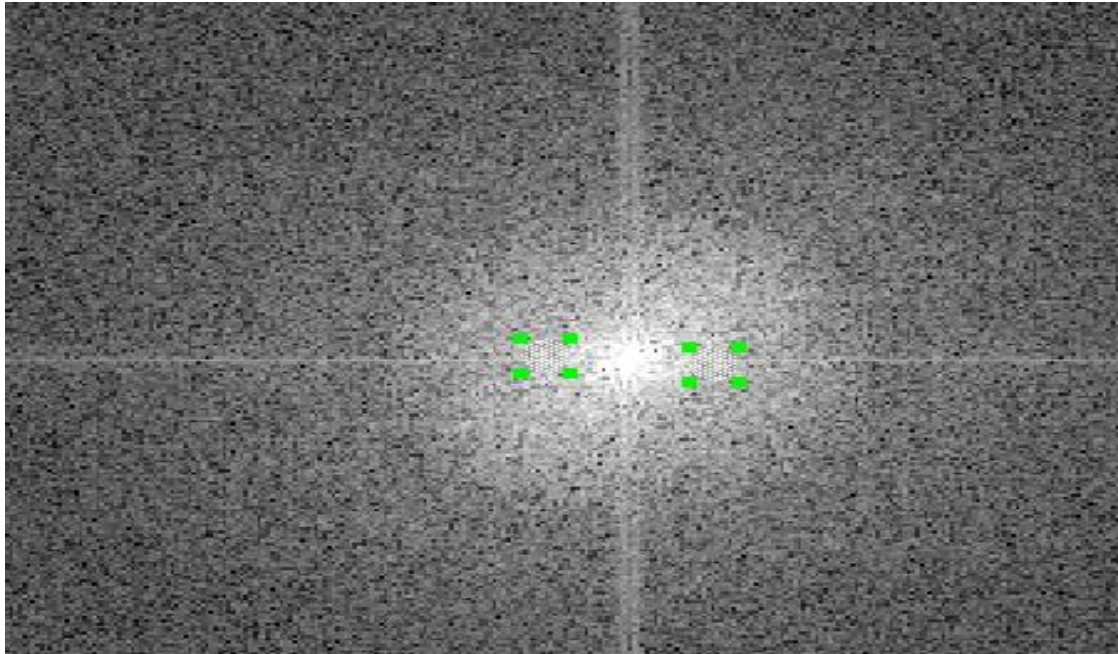
It can be seen from Figure 2 that the crystal distance in the early Han Dynasty was 22nm, indicating that the related process was relatively backward in the preparation of paint color, while the crystal distance in the later paint color was 7nm, which was relatively more delicate, which indirectly indicated that the preparation process was significantly improved. From the data in Table 1, it can be seen that the Han Dynasty construction period added new lacquer color raw materials, including: hematite, limestone, apatite, carbon black, amorphous carbon black, Han purple, Han blue, stone blue, and method of yin drying was used to greatly improve the preparation level of later lacquer color. The improvement of Han dynasty ceramics and sculpture paint color greatly improved the craftsmanship of Han dynasty ceramics and sculpture, and also made Han Chinese carving leave a brilliant chapter in the history of Chinese sculpture, and continued the glory of the Pre-Qin period in the history of Chinese sculpture, and formed a new style of its own.

#### Structural Analysis of Han Dynasty Ceramics, Sculptures and Lacquered Colors

The crystal structure of Han dynasty ceramics, sculptures, and lacquered colors was analyzed, and the results are shown in Figure 3.



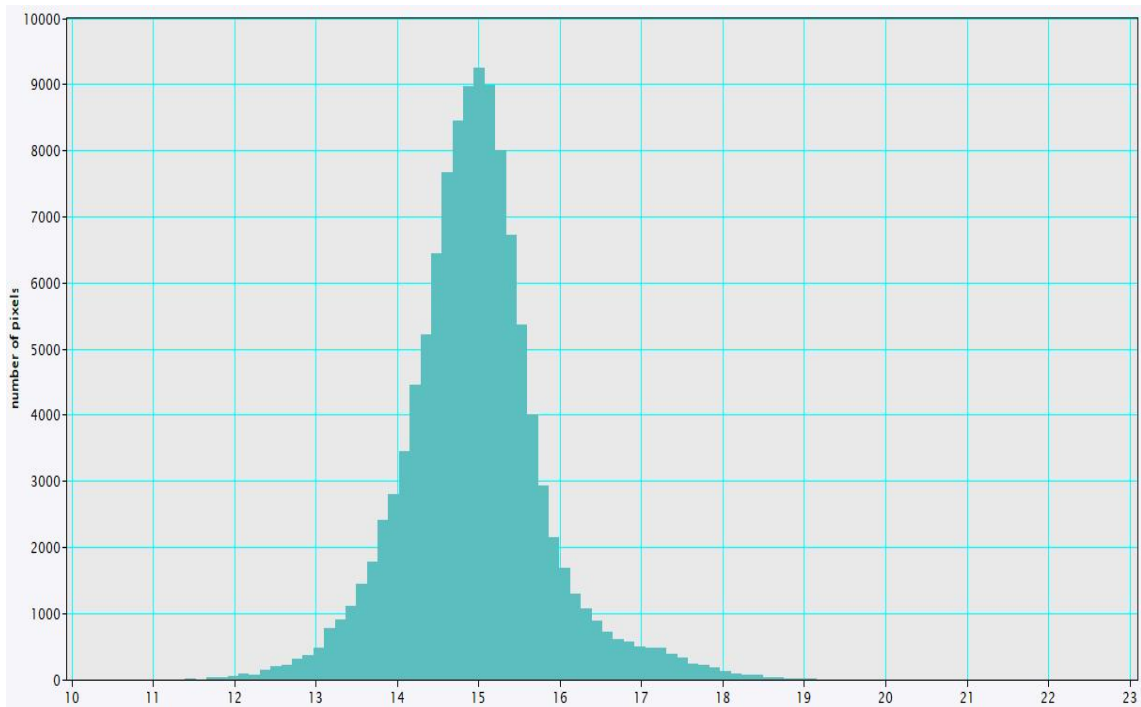
Structural Points of the Early Han Dynasty



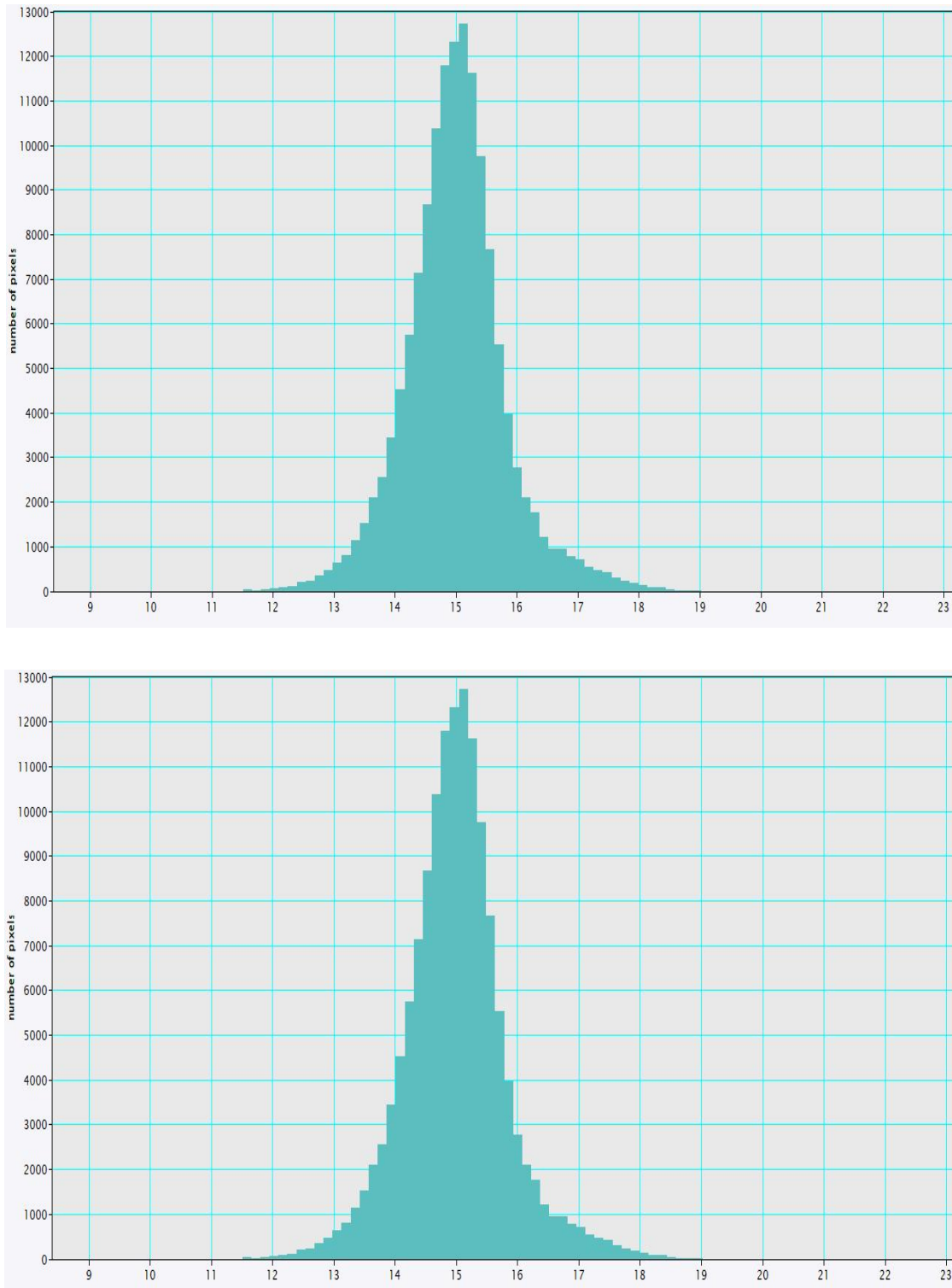
Structural Points in the Late Han Dynasty

Figure 3. Ceramic and Engraving Structure Points in Different Periods

It can be seen from Figure 3 that the distance between the early structural points is longer, while the distance between the later structural points is shorter, indicating that the structure of the early ceramic is unstable, and the structure of the later ceramic is more stable, which also fully proves the development of ceramics and lacquer technology in the Han Dynasty. In addition, there is a difference in the amount of material per unit area, and the results are shown in Figure 4.



The Number of Distributions in the Early Han Dynasty



The Number of Distributions in the Late Han Dynasty

Figure 4. Crystal and Lacquer Color Distribution of Ceramics in Different Periods

The results in Figure 4 shows that the number of ceramic crystals and lacquer color distribution in the Han Dynasty is higher, at 13,000 pcs/mm<sup>2</sup>, which is 1.3 times that of early ceramics.

### The Myth of Han Dynasty Ceramics, Carving Style

#### The Paint Color Improves the Artistic Conception of the Carving

Han Dynasty sculpture as a whole presents majestic freehand characteristics, and highlights "freehand" through the arrangement of lacquer colors. Due to the use of materials such as lime, apatite, carbon black, amorphous carbon black, han purple, han blue, stone blue and other materials (Sun et al., 2021), in the process of

ceramic preparation, blue is used to highlight the overall impression and situation, borrowing the intention to create the environment, using the pen to shape it, to write and convey the spirit "Seeming or not like" as a deliberate ideal criterion. Its image is simple, large and large, mostly randomly triggered, happy and endless, to achieve the wonderful state of forgetting and forgetting. Mingren Wang Yanxiang said: "Words are actually less flavorful, and the emotions are straightforward and difficult for animals, so they show imagery, make people think and chew, feel and understand, and they are profound...." The requirements for artworks are that they must have both profound connotation and afterglow, and from the afterglow, you can get a touching effect, which shows that the core of Chinese art is not simply to imitate the shape of objects, nor to directly express their feelings, but to use freehand methods." (J. Wang et al., 2022). The upgrading of lacquer color and freehand carving can express people's inner emotions and actions through the analysis of physical images, and these emotions and actions themselves contain the thinking of the creator. The carving of the Han Dynasty, through heavy volume, structure, perspective, carving angle, etc., pays more attention to the use of lines in carving, and expresses their carvings with the rhythm and rhythm of the lines, as well as the form of the lines. Han carvings have a smooth appearance and rarely have shades, but they attach great importance to the refinement and summary of large volumes, and focus on the overall magnificent feeling. Locally use black line carving to portray the clothing, movements, and expressions of characters. The style of Han dynasty carving is strong and powerful. Among these stone carvings, the Han Dynasty stone carving style is bolder, and can be created at will, most of the Han Dynasty stone carvings, are completed on the basis of retaining the original ecology, most of these stone carvings, most of them retain a strong feeling (Y. Wang et al., 2019), plus the imagination of the creator. It embodies both the awe of nature and the aesthetic pursuit of the "unity of heaven and man" created by the creator himself. The wood carvings of the Han Dynasty are similar to the creation of stone carvings, they start from the big aspect, there will be some virtual and real differences in each part, and the larger volume will be highlighted, and then depicted in some specific details, so that the wood carving has a strong, rigid, and overall feeling. The Han carvings created in this way have both feelings and connotations, and are sublimated in feelings (Zhou et al., 2021).

#### Firing Technology Improves the Vividness of Ceramics and Carvings

In "Huainanzi", "Fu Tiandao, nature, Wuwei." If you accuse people, it is promising, but it is not natural. "The artistic style of Han dynasty sculpture was deeply influenced by this natural and vivid aesthetic idea. Han dynasty sculpture, whether it is a human or animal figure, a single image or an image in the form of a group combination, attaches great importance to the expression of dynamics, expressions and spirits. The sculpture art of the Han Dynasty drew on ceramic preparation technology, and adopted point carving for carving, from scattered to concentrated carving, and paid attention to the angle of carving. The carvings and ceramics of the early Han Dynasty mainly reflected the authenticity, nature and simplicity, mainly because the preparation process was poor, the adjustment of details could not be realized, and even the problem of poor stability would occur. For example, portrait stones and portrait tiles are limited by expressive techniques (relief or semi-relief), and more attention is paid to the use of exaggerated line carvings to express the dynamics of people and animals naturally and vividly, expressions and scenes (C. X. Zhu et al., 2021). The art of ceramic sculpture is not limited by carving techniques, and through natural exaggerated dynamic shaping and vivid expression portrayal, it creates vivid Han Dynasty characters, animals and all aspects of life scenes. With the upgrading of carving technology, lacquer color and smelting technology, the engraving content and techniques are more abundant, and line engraving, female line carving, convex line carving, concave line carving, as well as bas-relief, high relief carving, and open-cut carving are realized (J. Zhu et al., 2019).

Due to the improvement of the carving process, the sculpture is more exaggerated. The sculptor shapes the object through the expression of "exaggeration", conveys the creator's thoughts and emotions about things, and makes the sculpture resonate with the viewer. For example, in the dance picture unearthed in Xiao County, Anhui, a woman bent her waist and danced, and her long sleeves also flew greatly in the direction of bending her waist, with dynamic exaggeration and a delicate demeanor. A person is playing the piano next to the dancer, and three people are watching on the screen, and the combination of movement and static produces a very strong performance effect; The image of Jing Ke's assassination of King Qin in the stone of Jingke in the portrait of the Wuliang Temple in Jiexiang, Shandong Province, focuses on the various dynamics of different characters in the face of Jing Ke's assassination of King Qin, and the scene is complex and changeable, but it perfectly reflects the theme; Nanyang portraits a fighting beast in stone, the beast tamer in the picture holds the head of the bison with his hand, the bison bows its neck but the spine is high, the head and hooves are cocked, and the people and cows facing each other are facing each other, dynamically exaggerated and deformed, and the plot and atmosphere of wanting to gather and leave produce a strong sense of entanglement and dynamics.



## THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF HAN DYNASTY CERAMICS AND SCULPTURE TO MODERN ART

### Show Modern Beauty in an Unpretentious, Crude Form

Most of the statues of the Han Dynasty were carved in the shape of stone and wood. In Han carving, most of the carved animal statues are in a lying position, and less carving, thus maintaining the original texture of stone and wood. Without any modification, it is still original, giving people a simple and natural feeling. In its image-making method, it shows the artistic characteristics of Taoism as "inadequate" with shape and object shape, and emphasizes a majestic momentum in a capitalized way, reflecting that "only the stone carvings of the Han Dynasty have this kind of momentum, and only have this momentum." Under the premise of ensuring the original shape of the material, the carving is carried out in the form of round carving, and various techniques such as relief carving, line carving, and line painting are integrated to achieve the shape and spirit, highlighting the momentum of the entire building. This aesthetic characteristic has also been used and absorbed by contemporary potters and integrated into their pottery works. Talking about the rough simplicity of contemporary pottery, it is impossible not to mention Mr. Zhou Guozhen, who was rooted in the excellent land of Han Dynasty carving art. In his book "Manga on Modern Chinese Ceramics", Zhou Guozhen clearly put forward the connection between modern ceramics and tradition: "Tradition has both an old side and a modern side. It can be a burden or a burden. "The two civilizations of East and West can learn from each other, but they must not be imitated, let alone replaced." "Contemporary art should not only be universal, but also should be art with personal, regional and national characteristics." Zhou Guozhen's disciple Li Jianshen divided Mr. Zhou's works into four stages: the hazy stage, the aesthetic stage, the ancient style stage, and the new expression stage, each stage has its own characteristics, and the ancient style stage of pottery carvings is inspired by Han Dynasty carvings. Zhou Guozhen's pottery carvings not only inherit traditional Chinese culture, but also inherit the carving art of the Han Dynasty, making it present a vigorous, simple and simple feeling. The painting at this stage has a strong wholeness, which is manifested as "like and not like" in form, combining the details of the surface layer with the entire picture, so that the picture has a kind of inherent vitality, and there is an artistic conception that is integrated with heaven and earth, integrated and integrated. After absorbing the roughness and simplicity of Han carving, Zhou Guozhen further excavated the accidental factors in pottery firing, the expression of clay, and the texture language of pottery. In this era, his ceramic carving art can be divided into four parts: one is the pursuit of accidental effects and specific textures, the second is the use of new ceramic materials, the third is the use of new molding methods, and the fourth is the mastery of clay and the integration of emotions. The pursuit of accidental effects and specific textures is mainly reflected in the mastery of glazes. In 1982, because of a sudden power outage, a peculiar glass crack was caused, and since then, Zhou Guozhen has begun to study the art of glass crack texture. For example, "Snow Leopard" is a dull, rough oil painting, the glass in the oil painting has cracks, and the dark glass can be seen in the cracks, and the glass of the glass still exudes a faint light. Since then, Zhou Guozhen has set his sights on porcelain, porcelain and porcelain are different, he uses the difference between porcelain and porcelain to create a series of flawed porcelain, such as "Jack", which is to use a rough box of soil, carve the appearance of a toad in the box, and then apply a layer of green pigment, because the pigment is mixed with the pigment in the box to form a phenomenon similar to the roughness of the toad's skin, this phenomenon, like there are many fine pigments on the toad's skin, This pigment and porcelain are perfectly combined to form a "like and not like" art. In "Uncle Wang Jiang Dabo", the two colors of glaze without light and light are combined, so that the texture of the glaze changes greatly. Things that were originally ugly, flawed, and contrary to the norm have a new breakthrough in aesthetics. And this imperfect glaze aesthetic is to expand the expression language of ceramics, until today, the expression of glaze color and glaze is still the mainstream of ceramics research.

### Use Delicate Techniques and Painting Styles to Highlight the Essence of Beauty

Han Dynasty sculpture has Zhuangzi's "heaven and earth have great beauty without speaking", and traditional Chinese art has advocated the artistic concept of innocence and nature, simplicity and unscrupulousness, and believes that maintaining a natural and simple state and not carving is the highest form of beauty. Chinese poetry is based on innocence and nature as the highest aesthetic standard, Zong Baihua concluded, "The brocade is rusty, and the carving is full of eyes", which is not as good as "the first hibiscus, naturally lovely". Ye Xie talked about beauty in the "Original Poem": "Those who are born beautiful in all things, beauty is in heaven, and beauty is in heaven." "Han Dynasty sculpture has a natural, unrefined beauty, which is also reflected in the daily life of the Han Dynasty. This daily life is natural, man-made, but beautiful. The sculptures of the Han Dynasty are the products of the reflection of the social life of the Han Dynasty in the minds of the artists, and the creators put their aesthetic ideals on them through the intermediary of imagination and emotion. Social life is the source of creators. The whole process of artistic creation is the subject's behavior of using a certain material form to convey his aesthetic understanding and aesthetic feelings of social life, and its materialization or objectification is the creator's unique aesthetic mastery of the real world, including his thoughts



and feelings, personality characteristics and experience of life. The natural, vivid and spontaneous nature of sculpture art in the Han Dynasty has deeply influenced modern ceramic sculpture artists. In modern ceramic sculpture, Yao Yongkang has a distinct natural and frank characteristic, and he has his own clear view of traditional culture: "Live in nature, live for nature." This is where my pottery philosophy belongs. As a potter, only by living in nature wholeheartedly can we comprehend the true meaning of human nature, material nature and life; in order to touch the essence of art; in order to create natural pottery works. Yao Yongkang created a large number of excellent sculptures in his early days, such as "Pottery and Porcelain", "Wisdom and Demon", "Unforgettable Moments" and so on. In these works, "Unforgettable Moment" is a specific scene that shows the female volleyball girls hugging each other tightly, using clear introduction lines to outline the characters, but the whole is a whole lump-like whole, thick and strong, bold and unrestrained lines, as if you can get close to this hot scene. His works are in line with Kandinsky's proposal in *On the Spirit of Art*: "If the emotional power of the artist breaks through the 'how to express' art, then the art he creates will begin to awaken."

The same is true for Yao Yongkang, whose natural and frank emotions bring his creations closer to the essence of art. Only by loving one's own life wholeheartedly can we experience the true meaning of human nature, material nature and life in nature, contact the essence of art, and create natural ceramic sculptures.

On this basis, in 1985, Yao Yongkang combined the strong and natural style of Han Dynasty sculpture to create many works "Tao", "Empty", "Jing", etc., in which "Tao" uses clay to portray a seated handicraft person, the figure is thick, and the clothes and hair are represented by freehand thick clay strips. The appearance looks simple and clumsy, but it shows the life of the characters through the dynamics and scenes on the hands, and the expression is natural, which is in sharp contrast with the simple and clumsy appearance. In terms of volume, it is consistent with the feeling of Han Dynasty sculpture, without hollow treatment, highlighting the volume of the entire ceramic sculpture, thick and vivid. The pottery work "Jing" depicts a meditative monk, physically enlarging the head of the monk appropriately to reinforce the image of the monk in meditation. The body of the figure is slightly shaped to reduce the cumbersome decoration. Only using traditional blue and white glaze to outline the outline of the character's body with simple line expression, etc., is simple and natural, and casually created. In his view, art is all connected, and the sculpture of painting is a kind of shaping art, testing the author's grasp and shaping of shape. Continuous painting can not only improve the ability to shape, but also train the coordination of the eyes and hands. The understanding and grasp of form are the basis for artistic creation.

### **Pay Attention to the Rationality of Structure, Color and Shape**

Classical Chinese aesthetics believes that works of art should pursue both the reality of objects and the nothingness beyond reality, that is, highlight the scientific nature of art creation. The biggest feature of Chinese art is that "words are endless and meanings are endless", and what can be expressed in words, shapes, sounds, and colors is limited, and they are not the most real, but the structure, color, and shape must meet the aesthetic requirements of human beings. The spirit of Chinese art is to transcend words, shapes, sounds, and colors, and art is to use words to write infinity, borrow shapes to paint heaven and earth, borrow materials to enhance the spirit, but at the degree of human acceptance of beauty. The combination of scientific theory and modern art works is based on the pursuit of artistic image, and truly reflects the living world. Han Dynasty craftsmen paid attention to intuitive, external, and large modeling characteristics, but they had to use the carving technology and paint color ratio of the time to carry out modeling design, and it was within the scope of human aesthetics. Han dynasty ceramics and sculpture were mainly functional in the early stage, and spiritual emotions were pursued in the later period, which was a process of purification and deepening. The beauty of Han dynasty ceramics and sculptures is simple, flexible and simple. For example, contemporary ceramics, the shape of very important works of sculptors, and the play of artistic conception, such as "You Chun" in the "Xijiang Moon Ladies" series, from the hull of the ship to the figures, are all directly shaped by clay tablets and clay chips in bonding. Since the character shape is a one-time molding, the mud is required to be shaped when wet, and the clay flakes are not suitable for large bends, so the production pursues freehand, but also expresses natural, subtle and elegant aesthetic taste. "Xijiang Moon Series" conveys the bland, subtle and far-reaching artistic beauty and the artistic interest of the literati and elegant people.

## **CONCLUSION**

Under the influence of Western modern art, concepts and ceramics, Chinese modern art has changed from traditional design to modern design. It presents a variety of artistic styles. However, the design concepts and styles of Han dynasty ceramics and sculptures can provide inspiration for modern art creation. Modern ceramic sculptors should discover, borrow and inherit traditional culture, and find inspiration from traditional culture to create. Through the diffraction and microscopic analysis of ceramics and sculptures of the Han Dynasty, this

paper finds that there are great differences between ceramics and sculptures in the early and late Han Dynasties. The early sculpture art of the Han Dynasty was known for its majestic antiquity, vivid nature, and simple and flexible characteristics. The role of ceramics and sculpture in the late Han Dynasty paid attention to reflecting the social life of the Han Dynasty, the shape was simple and vivid, and the style was romantic and freehand, which also deeply influenced the art of later generations. The above changes are mainly the result of the development of sculpture ceramic preparation technology and paint color technology. Therefore, contemporary sculpture should be combined with carving materials, based on traditional culture, to create, not only stable and vivid, but also have the rationality of structure and shape. In addition, the absorption of the characteristics of Western expressionism, the retention of handmade traces in the creative process, artistic expressions and the language of ceramic materials are all pointing out new directions for the exploration of modern ceramic sculpture.

### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

All the author's contributions are equally in the manuscript.

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