

Dai Leng 戴峻: The Practicality of Fine Art 美术底实用¹

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美术和实用这两个是对待的名词，美术主文的，实用主质的，为什么我要主张美术的实用呢？

这也有个缘故，我且写在下面，请大家评论。

Art is the antithesis of the practical. The artistic is dependent on one's refinement (*wen*), while the practical is dependent on raw substance (*zhi*). Why should I advocate the practicality of fine art? There is a reason for this. I will write it out below for your consideration.

美术的范围是很广的，其最著的就是图画，手工。现在一般教育家对于教授图画，手工，采用实用主义，就是无论画什么图画，做什么手工，都要切于实用。这种主义我也很赞成，但是教员的教材都要有选择，学生的成绩都要能美观才好。现在各处的教育会，渐渐儿举行图画手工成绩展览会，我曾经参观了许多，所陈列的成绩趋向于实用方面居多，其中图案大都是非创造的、非精美的。手工有做草鞋的，有扎扫帚的，都做得非常粗笨，那美术二字，更不必谈了。这种儿图画手工成绩，从表面上看下来，似乎实用，但是不合于伦理的。既不合于伦理的，那就不能算真正的实用。

The range of fine art is extremely wide, and its main forms are painting and handicrafts.

Nowadays, educators use pragmatism when teaching painting and handicrafts. That is to say:

¹ Practical art is a type of art or craft, as woodworking or needlework, that serves a utilitarian purpose. This type of art not only requires the art projects to be practical, it also pursues the satisfaction of an individual's aesthetic standards. See: Liu Qingxiao 刘庆孝. "Mei yu yong de yishu: qianxi shiyongmeishu de shiyongxing yu shenmeixing" 美与用的艺术——浅析实用美术的实用性与审美性 [Beauty and practical Art — an overview of practical art and the aesthetic nature]. *Qilu yiyuan* 齐鲁艺苑 03 (1987): 17-18.

no matter what kind of picture the students draw or what kind of handicraft they do, it should be practical. Although I fully agree with this approach, it would be good if teachers were able to make choices in their teaching materials and if students' artworks had more of an artistic nature.² Recently, educational outposts everywhere are gradually holding more and more exhibitions of paintings and handicrafts. I have visited many such exhibitions and most of the artworks tend to be of a practical nature; most of the patterns are uncreative and unrefined. Among the handicrafts, there are hand-made straw shoes or brooms, but all the objects are very rough and lack any fine art quality. These kinds of handicrafts and paintings seem to be practical on the surface, but in fact they do not follow the standards of fine art.³ Therefore, they cannot really count as practical.

图案画在工业上很有大用的，我们应该本我们的创造力，绘成各种图样应用于布匹绸缎及其它种种起居上，振兴我们中国的工业，做草鞋，扎扫帚，表面上似乎切于实用，细细的想下来，学生做这等的手工究竟合不合呢？学生的家庭将来是否肯使子弟做这等职业呢？我以为手工的种类很多，如木工，金工，纽扣细工等，皆非常切于实用，何必做草鞋扎扫帚呢！

Patterning plays an important role for the industry. We should be creative and come up with many different patterns for cloth, silk and many other goods to promote our Chinese industry. At first glance, it might seem practical to make straw shoes and brooms. However, when given more careful consideration, is it suitable for students to manually work on such handicrafts? Do the students' families expect their children to work these kinds of jobs in the

² 学生的成绩：Literally, it refers to "student's performance", but in the context, it refers to "student's artwork".

³ 合于伦理：The term *lunli* is usually translated as "ethics" but here it refers to a "standard of art from".

future? There are many kinds of very practical handicrafts, such as carpentry, metal work or even the meticulous creation of buttons, so why make the students work on straw shoes and brooms!

今就贮茶的茶杯说说，茶杯是家家必用的，假如花样不美观，人是不愿买的。这是什么缘故？因为凡人都有审美的感情，不能惹起人审美的感情，就是切于实用，人都厌弃的，所以我说无论画什么实用的图画做什么实用的手工都要含有美术的意思，有了美术的意思，这实用的物件更加实用，更加风行，哈哈，这才是美术的实用！

Let's take for example teacups, objects that every household today needs to have.

Consumers will not purchase these if their design and pattern are not good. What is the reason behind this? It is because every ordinary person has a sense of aesthetics. No matter how practical an object is, people will not be willing to purchase something that does not meet their aesthetic requirements. That is why I believe, regardless of what practical drawing one does or what practical handicraft one creates, one needs to maintain the concept of fine art.

Equipped with this concept a practical object will be used more often and gain in popularity—

Haha! And it is exactly this I call the practicality of fine art!