

A STUDY OF VISUAL FEATURE IN CARICATURE CREATION

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Abstract

Caricature art is the combination of line, color, skills, composition, rhythm, etc. which are performed in an exaggerated way to form a unique code through its drawing skills. It is always carefully conceived by artists, and is presented by visual sensory-based, imagination as the aesthetic complement to bring audience impression. Therefore, the purpose of this research includes: to create a model to understand the process of artists' conception and inspiration: to analyze the audience's cognitive model for caricature artwork; to help artists reflect the creation and design artworks to meet the aesthetic needs of the audience. Disclosed herein is a method for creating a caricature and this research is based on caricature creation conceptual model with the method of expert interview, case study and a series of practical operations. An excellent artwork needs to satisfy three levels for expressing its creative connotation, which are technical, semantic and effectiveness levels. In terms of creation process, the process can be divided into four steps: set a scenario, tell a story, write a script, and create a comic. As the research results, this study verifies the rationality of caricature creation conceptual model through a case-study and provides a theoretical basis for the aesthetics of caricature creation.

Keywords: Caricature Creation, Communication matrix, emotional design.

Introduction

Caricature art is the combination of line, color, skills, composition, rhythm, etc. which are performed in an exaggerated way to form a unique code through its drawing skills. It is always carefully conceived by artists and is presented by visual sensory-based, imagination as the aesthetic complement to bring audience impression. Rhodes (1996) proposed the main features of caricature as being exaggeration and individuation: a caricature is different from a realistic portrait by its specific deformation, on the contrary, it's from a fantastic form by its representation of a known subject.

It's important to emphasize creativity and create the figure's typical personality in order to pursue similarity in the spirit in caricature, meanwhile, the caricature creation is complicated and undefined. This original art form of painting can attract people's attention and strike a chord because of its special painting techniques that can generate great visual impact, and it's widely used to adapt to the

aesthetic of public entertainment standards in various fields (newspapers, magazines, commercial advertising, animation film, etc.). The caricature is presented in the form of grotesque due to exaggeration and deformation, therefore, how to create more favorite caricature works for audiences based on a humorous and vivid feature in this article is the key issue.

The caricature artists create artworks under the sensibility of subjects from three levels (image, impression, and idea); artworks have become a bridge of communication between artists and subjects. Audiences can be impressed by an excellent artwork that is easy to touch one's heart and achieve the same effect between works and cognition. Different artists have distinctive creative techniques, and they like creating works with various forms and styles to achieve the unity of form and spirit. As shown in figure 1, the author has tried a variety of styles in caricature. Exaggeration is an important strategy to impress humor and innovation, which form a funny, flexible, and diverse style with innovative methods. Artists can always quickly grasp the personality characters to render the image with long-term experience, and it involves the

coding of the connotation of artworks about how artists transform creativity into artworks and also involves the decoding of cognition about how audiences feel artists' intention (Flavell, 1992; Onisawa & Hirasawa, 2004). In essence, this article focuses on how to convert the creation process from inner emotion to perceptible creation model and audiences generate semantic cognition from experience, concept, and stereotype, to make the aesthetic experience and art appreciation.

Artists apply a variety of artistic media, symbols, and metaphors to independently create and perform artwork, which expresses their own ideas and communicates their life experiences. Caricature arts are the media that provide powerful and essential means of communication. Most research for caricature remains in the aspect of skill expression; ignores the process of inspirations and conceptions. Indeed, there is a rule according to artists' subjective creation and there is a key that artists explore audiences' aesthetic experience after watching the caricature artwork. A successful caricature creation must allow the viewer to complete three processes of cognition through the content: 1) situational cognition, i.e. whether viewers can see; 2) artistic conception, i.e. whether viewers can understand; 3) emotional cognition, i.e. whether viewers can be touched (Micheal, 1999 ; Chen et al., 2014, 2015). Thinking about caricature art as a process of social interaction, to show how the artist's performances are conceived, developed, delivered, and received, and how the viewer is attracted, accurately understanding the artwork, and affected by the artwork all need to be studied. For the evaluation of caricature artworks, we need a better understanding of the communication track between artist and audience, which is not just for taking part in the social context, but also for developing the interactive experience between artist and audience. Then, these factors are analyzed and discussed in order to establish a caricature communication matrix to understand the perceptions of the artist and audience. More precisely, this article involves a caricature creation conceptual model for artists to seek how to perform a deeper level of artworks and think about innovational skills and creative methods, which provides a theoretical basis for the communication and practice of caricature creation. The purpose of this research includes: firstly, the study creates a model to understand the process of artists' conception and inspiration. Secondly, it analyzes the audience's cognitive model for caricature artwork. Thirdly, it helps artists to reflect on the creation and to design artworks meeting the aesthetic needs of the audience.



Figure 1: Caricature Creation (design by Wen-ting Fang)

Research Framework

This article provides an analysis of the artists' artistic creation and audience aesthetic experience through the literature review from communication theory, mental model, and aesthetic theory. In terms of communication theory, an artist's coding is how the artist expresses the creation process of artistic conception; audience's decoding is how the audience comprehends the artworks; the artist is the addresser and the audience is the addressee. This is the cognitive process from the artist sending the message and the audience decoding the message, thus this study develops a caricature creation conceptual model to understand the artist's creative process and the audience's aesthetic experience as shown in figure 2.

An excellent artwork needs to satisfy three levels for expressing its creative connotation, which are technical, semantic, and effectiveness levels (Fiske, 1990; Jacobson, 1987). The technical level is the first level, which concerns composition and color, and the possibility of attraction, which makes the audience perceive the appearance of the artwork and sends the surface information for the audience. Cognition is the connection between the subject and the consciousness, which is an intangible relationship with the artist and audience. The semantic level as the second level requires the artist to accurately express the image characteristics. The effectiveness level as the third level is how to touch the addressee to take the right actions; that is, how effectively does the received meaning affect to conduct the expected way (Fiske, 1990).



Figure 2: Caricature Creation Conceptual Model

In terms of the creation process, the process can be divided into four steps: set a scenario, tell a story, write a script, and create a comic (Lin, 2007). The steps explain how to look for differences, find the character's personality and organize the image. This creative process is the core factor. The audience's decoding process includes: 1) do you see? 2) do you understand? 3) does it touch your heart? Specifically, there are three key steps to understanding the meaning of an artwork, e.g. cognition (attracting), volition (accuracy), and emotion (affecting). The first level, which is about the image, is the thought that the audience is attracted by the appearance. The second level which is about impression is the thought audience understands the meaning of artwork to enter into the phase of association. The third level, which is about an idea, is the thought that the audience can feel the mentality of the artist, and the audience is immersed in the unique artistic charm of artwork

Methods

Based on the previous studies, disclosed herein is a method for creating a caricature, and this research is based on caricature creation conceptual model with the method of expert interview, case study and make a series of practical operations as shown in figure 3. The study can be divided into three sessions. In the session I, the literature review was used as a way to construct the caricature creation conceptual model and combine it with the mental model and communication theory. In session II, professors and students in National Taiwan University of Arts as subjects for interviewing to modify the model and analysis the creation process, and a caricature case study was operated in this phase. In session III, this research involved doing plenty of caricature creation practice with semantic analysis and cognitive model.

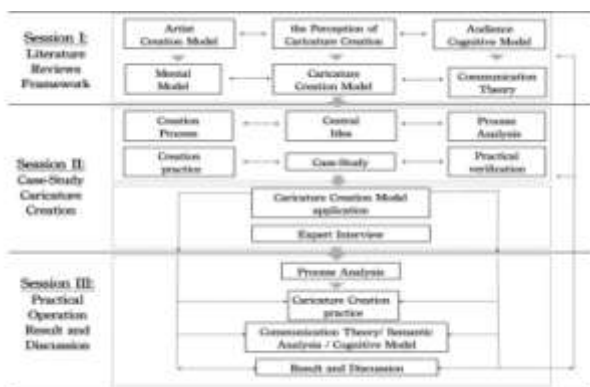


Figure 3: Procedures for Caricature Creation

A case study of Caricature Creation

This study is based on Professor Lin who has authorized authors to use the portrait in the relevant research area as the object of caricature to discuss the process of creativity. It's important to explore how the artist creates artwork from the image, the impression, and the idea according to empirical rule and thinking mode and to study how the audience perceives the artist's concrete context and abstract mood in this study. Actually, four parts are identified based on certain methods and procedures: Setting a scenario means carefully finding the special elements; Telling a story means analyzing the character features; Writing a script means to design with creativity, and Designing a character means choosing the vivid images. Specifically, specific methods include: 1) identify features and facial expression feature, 2) features Composition and features proportion, 3) exaggeration and deformation and emphasis features, 4) emotional expression and Individual expression

The Perception of Image

For the first phase, setting a scenario includes identifying features and facial expression features in order to express the perception of the image. This phase is, essentially, to discuss the problem of technical level, and the artist creates in surface shape to attract the audience.

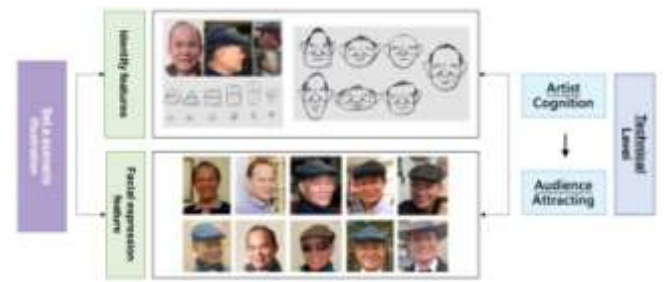


Figure 4: the First Phase of Caricature Creation (design by Jiede, Wu)

Accordingly, point, line, and plane are the basic forms of image composition, whereas the performance of the line plays a vital role. The free combination of lines (e.g., straight lines, oblique lines or curves) can produce different aesthetic effects; lines can form a sense of volume and space with the physical structure and the perspective; as a matter of fact, the power of lines can express the rhythm. Simple geometric shapes (e.g., square, round, oval, triangle or trapezoid) can be used in creating the facial outline of characters. In fact, the author tried many times to draw the facial outline in a concise and crisper way, which has expressed with a sense of decoration as shown in figure 4. This is a general process in which the artist refines, which artist extracts a pure character form with the unique expression of the character to show the subjective creation at the first level.

More precisely, the basis of caricature creation is reality, and it requires the artist to collect plenty of material about facial expressions. Therefore, how to grasp the facial expression can proceed from the details. For example, the artist tries to find out the change of facial muscle structure when the subject smiles as shown in figure 4. Overall, it is the main precondition that many elements have entered into the artist's mind at the beginning of the creation; these complex information elements are conducive to highlighting the characteristics of the subject and the information will be presented in the subsequent creation process.

The Perception of Impression

For the second phase, telling a story includes features composition and features proportion in order to express the perception of impression. This phase is, essentially, to discuss the problem of semantic level, and the artist consciously refines the character of the subject to achieve the first level of cognition

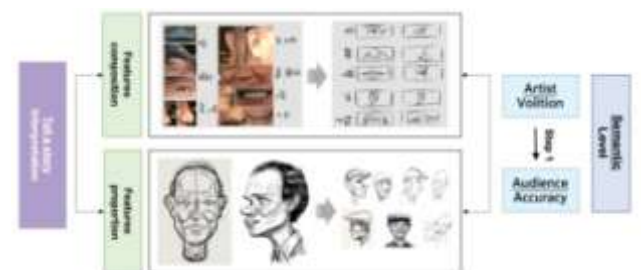


Figure 5: the Second Phase of Caricature Creation (design by Jiede, Wu)

Artists can form a unique feature database by themselves after long training and they also can code for the concrete form when they

face to the subject. For instance, small eyes can be replaced by thin lines or dots; large eyes can highlight the black eye ignoring the white part, or even only long eyelashes to instead. The shape of the eyebrows is conducive to portraying the characters' personalities, and thick eyebrows can emphasize the painting with black and thick shapes. The nose can emphasize the shape of the tip of the nose, and elongate or shorten the length of the bridge of the nose. The shape of the ears is also different such as semi-circular, triangle or rhombus. Accordingly, each person has own modeling features such as the hair, the beard or the accessories, which can enhance the performance of the characters with a careful description of these elements. But ultimately, this study conducts a deep analysis of the subject's facial features as shown in figure 5, and makes a large number of sketches of the character in order to look for the facial features such as big nose, thin lips, neat teeth or crescent-shaped eyes.

General comics, actually, often break the normal proportion of the human body to pursue the creation and the same as a caricature. The proportion of facial features is important in the performance of personality. It, the proportion of forehead and chin, can highlight the characteristics of the subject, by increasing or decreasing, lengthening or shortening it to enhance the impressive characteristics of caricature. For example, some people's facial features are more gathered like crowded in the face, while others' facial features are scattered with the overall trend of expansion. Consequently, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of the proportional relation of the subject about front and side face, which has found that the subject's forehead is relatively large and the proportion of nose and cheekbones have a high percentage and the distance of nose and mouth is closed. The author has tried to draw many drafts to find out the difference in the change in the proportion in order to prepare for the follow-up study.

The Perception of Idea

For the third phase, writing a script includes exaggeration and deformation, and emphasis features in order to express the perception of the idea. This phase is also discusses the problem of semantic level, and artists create a fantastic atmosphere to achieve the correct understanding for audiences, i.e., the second level of cognition.

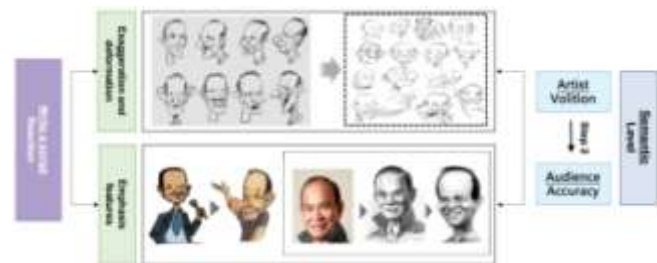


Figure 6: the Third Phase of Caricature Creation (design by Jiede, Wu)

The creative idea is an important means of caricature that expresses with an absurd plot to help the audience experience the true feeling from the fictional art world. Essentially, exaggeration and deformation is the basis of caricature to perform the sense of

cartoon. Exaggeration includes modeling and conceptual aspects, which emphasizes features to make the caricature impressive and highlight the overall creative imagination rather than the surface level of expression. Facial features tried to draw exaggerated and deformed to realize non-life scenes as shown in figure 6. For example, the ears are designed bigger to show the humor, and the teeth are designed exaggerated to express eloquent features as shown in the left figure. To express the overall conception of the subject with the exaggeration method, the mouth is designed like a boat so as to express the plausible image, and the lion is designed for the subject so as to express divine image in his field. Actually, a humorous and relaxed aesthetic environment is created by exaggerated painting way, which accords with aesthetic taste and create a distinction between reality and the cartoon.

How to highlight features of the subject based on exaggeration has been studied through deformed for the character as shown in figure 6. Appropriate deformation will not only influence the similarity with the subject but also can increase the entertainment, which has made the creation originally and achieve the unity of form and spirit.

The Aesthetic Experience

For the fourth phase, creating a character includes emotional expression and Individual expression in order to express the perception of an idea. This phase is to discuss the problem of effectiveness level, and artists create with emotion to transform the real characters into illusory artworks thus audiences can be touched to achieve the emotional interaction.

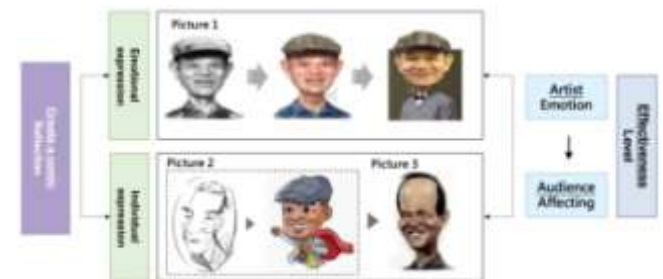


Figure 7: the Forth Phase of Caricature Creation (design by Jiede, Wu, and Wen-ting Fang)

This phase of caricature integrates the deepest thinking into creation, which combines the experience, the technique, and the perception to achieve the aesthetic experience of humor and creativity. Therefore, the artists hope to create artwork to achieve a more vivid and fun effect combining the analysis of the subject and the attempt of the creation. The first picture records the morphological changes in the creation as shown in figure 7, and the artist captures the expression of the smiling moment of the subject to create the attractive artwork with reasonable exaggeration, which also highlights the main features such as the position of cheekbones, the sharp of the nose and the curvature of eyes. The second picture expresses the humor scenario in a creative way, for instance, the image of the old master to convey the knowledgeable personality traits and the image of the superman which combines with the fictional character to express the sensual fantasy of the subject. The third picture, which exaggerates with a big forehead,

has produced unexpected artistic effects and expressed the amiable character. In general, the artists are good at using the absurd plot to express the real world in caricature creation thus audiences, who are moved, can achieve visual shock and spiritual touch.

CONCLUSIONS

This study verifies the rationality of the caricature creation conceptual model through a case study and provides a theoretical basis for the aesthetics of caricature creation. Setting a scenario is the process of finding the characteristic; telling a story is the process of generalizing the form; writing a script is the process of emphasizing the cartoon; creating a character is the process of in-deep artistic processing. The following is the creative practice for a caricature with the author through the analysis of artist conception as shown in figure 8



Figure 8: Caricature Creation practice (design by Wen-ting Fang and Yuan-han Jiang)

This caricature communication matrix finally analyzes the process of the artist’s inspiration and the audience’s cognitive pattern of artwork so as to design the work according to the audience’s aesthetics as shown in figure 9. Artists collect the exquisite elements that are weaved with inspiration and imagination so that it is the process of artistic interpretation. The art congeals artists’ emotion or idea; thus, it must have the function of conveying the beauty and it is the key to open the aesthetic door. Essentially, caricature artists create artwork through the technical level, semantic level, and effectiveness level to communicate the aesthetic experience. Artists who study how to visualize the inspiration have the rational model in the creation and the code for the audience; audiences as the followers of artists’ minds decode with aesthetic experience and they understand the artists’ original intention through image, impression, and idea.

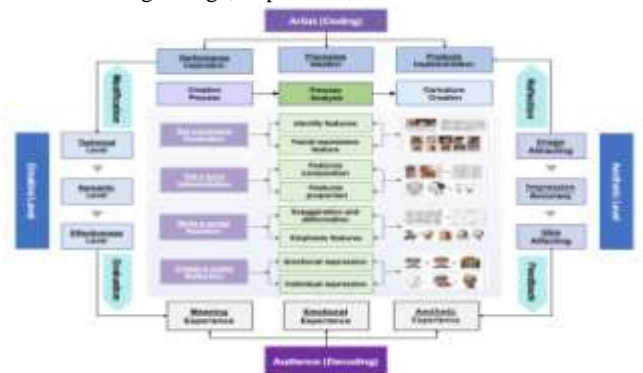


Figure 9: Caricature Communication Matrix

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