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*Corresponding Author: harozila@fskik.upsi.edu.my

The Relationship between Aesthetic Value Philosophy and the main Motif Flower of Ceramic Flower and Bird Painting

Liu Yuan¹, Tajul Shuhaizam Said², Harozila Ramli³

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Art Sustainability and creative industry, Sultan Idris Education University, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The porcelain surface design of the Main motif of Chinese flower and bird paintings, reflects the Chinese people's love for flowers. The flower is not only a species, but a state of life in a circular movement, which reveals the aesthetic value philosophy of "nature". However, the Main motif flower of ceramic flower and bird painting's classification and aesthetic value philosophy variables is a blind spot. In this research, three research journal databases, Web of Science, Scopus, and CNKI, are used to systematically review published research papers and electronic books. In addition, the research also came to the China Ceramic Museum, a ceramic Company, a ceramic exhibition, and three places to shoot the Main motif flower of ceramic flower and bird painting porcelain to get more realistic results. Through literature analysis and pictures taken on the spot, the classification of Chinese flower and bird painting, the philosophical variables of aesthetic value of Chinese flower and bird painting, the classification of Main motif flower of ceramic flower and bird painting, Main motif flower of ceramic flower and bird painting Aesthetic value philosophical variable.

Keywords: Aesthetic value, Philosophy, ceramic flower and bird painting, Main motif flower

INTRODUCTION

The aesthetic philosophy of Chinese flower-and-bird painting significantly influences the portrayal of these motifs in ceramic art. This study aims to explore the classification and aesthetic philosophy of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings by synthesizing literature and conducting field visits to the China Ceramic Museum, ceramic companies, and ceramic exhibitions. Through extensive literature review and on-site observations, the study seeks to elucidate the classification of the main motif flower in ceramic flower and bird paintings and its correlation with aesthetic values, contributing to a deeper appreciation of nature's beauty and harmony.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study involved a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and descriptive analyses to delve into the classification and aesthetic philosophy of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings within ceramic art. A comprehensive literature review was conducted, scouring electronic books and literature using keywords pertaining to aesthetic value, philosophy, main motif flower, and ceramic flower and bird painting. The review adhered to systematic guidelines, leveraging databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and CNKI for initial screening. Through iterative processes, 7 relevant papers and 3 books were identified, offering valuable insights into the classification and aesthetic implications of flower-and-bird paintings in Chinese art.

In conjunction with the literature review, field visits were undertaken to key sites including the China Ceramic Museum, ceramic companies, and ceramic exhibitions. These visits facilitated the collection of firsthand data through observation and photography. A total of 288 photographs of Chinese ceramic flower and bird paintings, along with 101 ceramic flower paintings, were amassed during these visits. Following data collection, each document and photograph underwent meticulous analysis and summarization, documented in a spreadsheet format for further examination. Qualitative methods, such as thematic analysis, were employed to discern recurring patterns and themes in the classification and aesthetic philosophy of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings. Additionally, descriptive analysis techniques were utilized to synthesize the findings and present a comprehensive overview of the collected data.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, rigorous validation measures were implemented. Clear inclusion criteria were established for the literature review, and stringent screening processes were adhered to. Field visits to diverse locations provided varied perspectives, mitigating the risk of bias. Visual evidence in the form of photographs bolstered the findings derived from the literature review. Furthermore, findings were cross-referenced and triangulated with existing literature to validate their accuracy and consistency. By employing a mixed-methods approach and robust data validation techniques, this study aspires to offer credible insights into the classification and aesthetic philosophy of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings in ceramic art.

Keyword selection

The classification and aesthetic value philosophy inspiration of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings were collected from electronic books and literature by Document. The keywords are divided into four main parts: aesthetic value; philosophy; The Main motif flower; Ceramic flower and bird painting. In past studies, the aesthetic value of ceramic painting was called "painting aesthetic value", and "ceramic aesthetic value". Therefore, by searching the keywords "aesthetic value", and "flower-and-bird painting aesthetics", the aesthetic component is included in the systematic review. In Chinese painting, flower-and-bird painting has a profound cultural connotation. The flowers and birds in the picture have symbolic meaning, symbolizing beauty, purity, and elegance, because flower-and-bird painting is often used as the subject of porcelain surface design, reflecting the Chinese people's longing for a better life. So, we added the keywords "Chinese flower and bird painting", "Main motif flower" and "ceramic flower and bird painting" to the search to provide more detailed information. Finally, based on the keywords "aesthetic value" or "flower-and-bird painting aesthetics value", "philosophy" or "China philosophy", "Chinese flower-and-bird painting" or "Main motif flower", a systematic review is carried out. Using photographs collated, the research went to China Ceramic Museum, China Ceramic

Company, and ceramic exhibition for field visits, and took photos of ceramic artworks with the keywords of Main motif flower and ceramic flower-and-bird painting.

RESULTS

Varieties of Chinese flowers and birds painting patterns

Through extensive literature and scholarly works, it is evident that Chinese flower-and-bird painting patterns are diverse and can be classified in numerous ways. The classification is not limited to literal interpretations of "flowers" and "birds" but encompasses a wide array of natural elements and mythical creatures. Ye (2015) elucidates that flower-and-bird paintings, in a broad sense, include not only flowers and birds but also herbs, wood, vines, poultry, songbirds, wading birds, pheasants, and various other animals. Additionally, these paintings often feature fish, insects, vegetables, fruits, crops, subtropical flowers, and plants like pine, cypress, bamboo, willow, maple, and palm. Kong (2017) further categorizes flower-and-bird paintings as a type of Chinese painting centered around animals and plants. This includes starlings like swallows and sparrows, predators such as tigers, lions, and leopards, domestic animals like horses, cows, and sheep, birds of prey such as hawks and falcons, and various insects like butterflies and dragonflies. Additionally, mythical creatures like dragons, phoenixes, and Kylin, as well as aquatic life such as fish and shrimp, are also represented. Plants encompass all woody, herbaceous, native, and aquatic varieties, including flowers, fruits, and vegetables.

Lu (2002) classifies Chinese flower-and-bird paintings into categories of flowers, birds, vegetables, fruits, and beasts. Flowers are further subdivided according to the four seasons: spring (orchids, peonies, roses), summer (pomegranates, jasmine, lilies), autumn (hibiscus, osmanthus, chrysanthemums), and winter (plum blossoms, camellias, daffodils). Vegetables and fruits include grapes, lychees, and bayberries, while birds such as peacocks, swallows, and mandarin ducks, and animals like cats, dogs, cows, and sheep are also depicted. Tang (2019) emphasizes the aesthetic transformation of natural beauty into artistic beauty in Chinese flower-and-bird paintings. He states that these paintings, one of the three main branches of Chinese painting, incorporate all living animals and plants, excluding humans. The subjects range from flowers, feathers, and beasts to vegetables, fruits, insects, trees, and stones. They can be classified by content into single content (not scenery) and combined content (a mix of flowers, trees, birds, fish, insects, beasts, vegetables, and fruits). Liu (2016) focuses on the evolution of bird shapes in Chinese flower-and-bird paintings, categorizing them by historical periods, from early realistic depictions to contemporary freehand styles. Huang (2014) examines the auspicious themes and homophonic symbolism in these paintings, categorizing them into plant and animal themes. He highlights the prominence of the peony, China's national flower, alongside orchids, plum blossoms, and chrysanthemums, which are often likened to noble persons. According to the patterns in this book Jiang (2023), classic Chinese flower-and-bird painting patterns from various dynasties can be classified into plant and animal types, reflecting their frequent appearances in Chinese art. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate these patterns.

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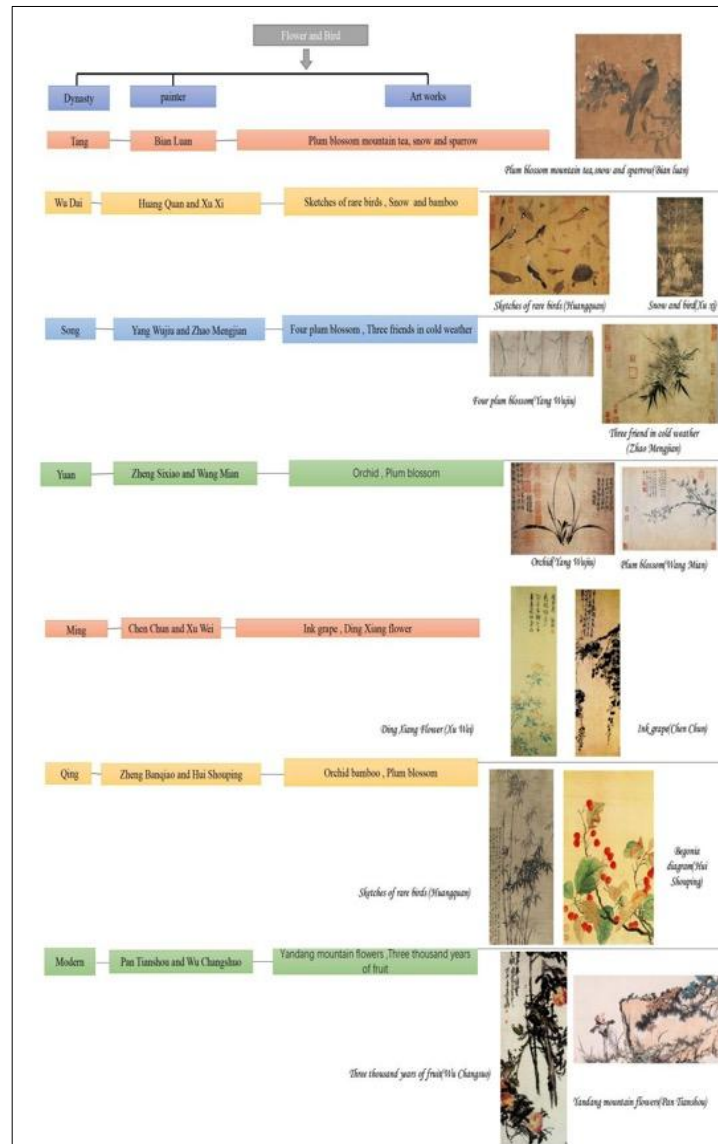


Figure1. Chinese flower-and-bird painting main patterns

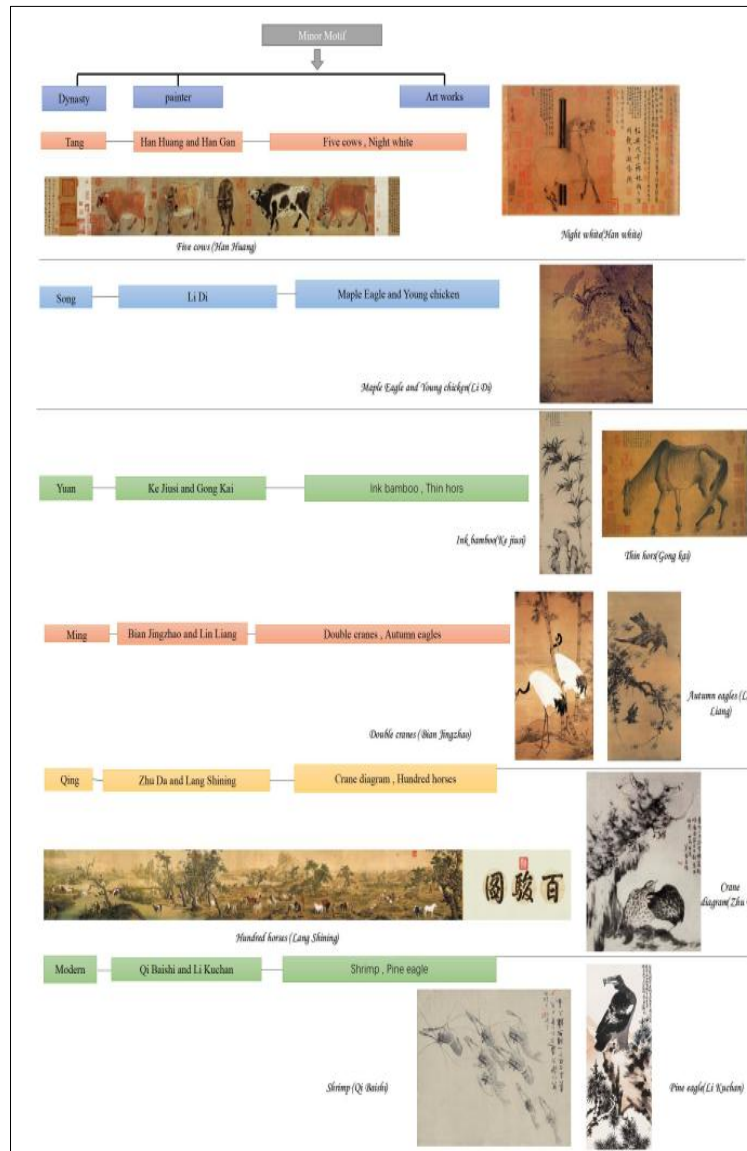


Figure 2. Chinese flower-and-bird painting minor patterns

These researchers elaborated on the classification of Chinese flower and bird patterns and found that Chinese flower and bird patterns were roughly divided into flowers, birds, insects, fish, bamboo, animals, vegetables, and fruits. However, there is no detailed study on the classification of flower pairs and the classification of Chinese ceramic flower and bird painting patterns.

The aesthetic value philosophy creative inspiration of Chinese flower and bird painting patterns

Huang (2018) mentions the Tang Dynasty as a ripe period for flower-and-bird painting. Flower-and-bird painting reached its peak in the Five Dynasties and Song Dynasty. The maturity of freehand flower-and-bird painting in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties enriched the expression techniques of flower-and-bird painting. They brought the aesthetic thought and value of flower-and-bird painting to an unprecedented height. With the development of culture and art, modern flower-and-bird paintings show solid artistic vitality. The aesthetic value is different in different periods, and the colors used in flower-and-bird paintings are also different. Some have solid decorations, bright colors, slightly fresh and

elegant Shi (2011). Ye (2015) mentioned in the book that Chinese flower-and-bird painting is an independent system in Chinese painting and occupies an important position in its history. The origins of Chinese flower-and-bird painting can be traced back to our Chinese ancestors, who, driven by their desire to acquire prey, began to paint bionic images. This marks the prelude of Chinese painting and the foundation of flower-and-bird painting. While expressing nature, Chinese flower-and-bird paintings give people a kind of visual and spiritual beauty. Throughout history, many literati painters have injected profound artistic concepts and cultural connotations into their works while depicting flowers and birds. The exquisite and charming flower images in Chinese flower-and-bird paintings express people's longing for beauty and symbolize auspiciousness, health, peace, and blessings. The birds depicted in these paintings are precious creatures, benevolent guardians of nature.

The themes of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings often have special meanings, reflecting people's willingness to gain some benefit from surprise. For a long time, due to people's spiritual needs, flowers, birds, and other animals in Chinese flower-bird paintings often represent positive and beautiful connotations, such as pomegranates representing "many children and grandchildren", the joy of harvest or sublime awe to express their feelings. Pomegranate split; It is often said that "pomegranate smile" represents people's infinite joy for the harvest. Secondly, according to some flower-and-bird painting themes, people will have inherent directional thinking. The picturesque cherry dumplings link the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival with Qu Yuan. Painting old pomegranates in Nanjing's New Village will remind people of Premier Zhou Enlai's achievements in fighting for the revolution. This traditional theme also embodies the aesthetic value of contemporary Chinese flower-and-bird painting Shi (2011). To sum up, Chinese flower-and-bird painting is an independent system of Chinese painting, which occupies an important position in its history and profoundly influences the later ceramic flower-and-bird painting. The aesthetic value of Chinese flower-and-bird paintings in different periods is different, but Chinese people are especially fond of themes with special meaning and positive and beautiful connotations. The inspiration for people's creations also ranges from the initial desire to capture prey to the depiction of bionic images where artists begin to respect their inner emotions and express their love for nature.

Classification of Chinese ceramic flower-and-bird paintings

A total of 101 ceramic flower paintings were taken in the three places. The types of flowers shown in Table 1 include lotus, chrysanthemum, plum blossom, peony, morning glory, hydrangea, rhododendrons, hibiscus flowers, pomegranate flowers, orchids, roses, Carnelian vine, peach blossom, loofah flower, and Lilium brownie. According to the comparison of the number of ceramic flower-and-bird paintings with flower themes from ancient times to the present day, it is found that lotus, peony, plum blossom, and chrysanthemum are the most popular four types of ceramic paintings. As shown in Figure 3, there are 38 ceramic works of lotus painting, 19 peonies, 9 plum blossoms, and 7 chrysanthemums.

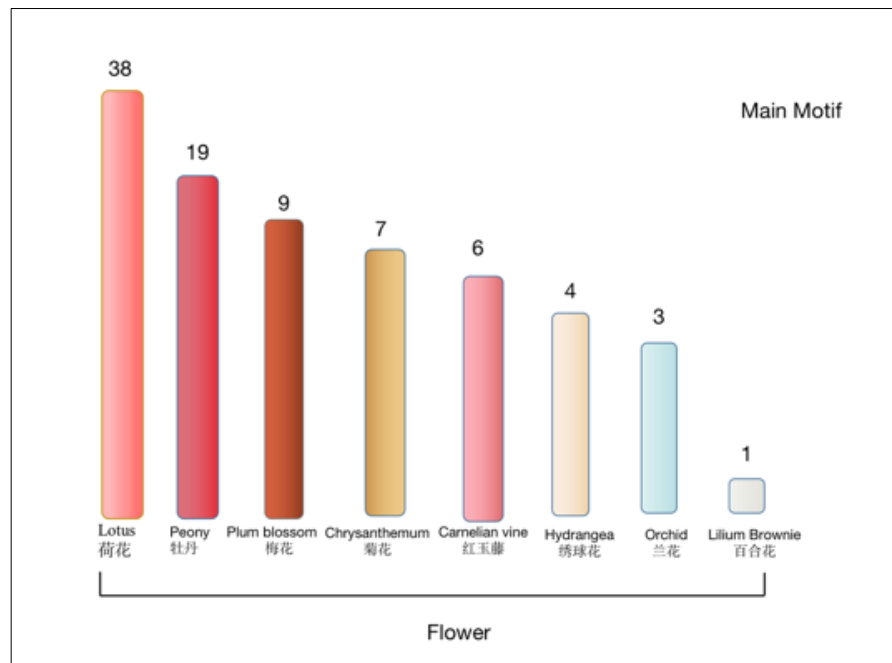


Figure 3. Main motif flower in ceramic painting

Table 1 Number and classification of Chinese ceramic flower painting

<i>Flower</i>				
Photo taken at China Ceramic Museum				
Lotus 22	Chrysanthemum 7	Plum blossom 5	Peony 4	Morning glory3
Hydrangea 2	Hododendrons 1	Hibiscusmutabilis 1	Pomegranate 1	Orchid 1
Rose 1				
Photo taken at Ceramics Company				
Lotus 14	Peony 13	Carmelian vine 6	Plum blossom 4	Orchid 3
Peach Blossom 3	Luffa flower 1	Chrysanthemum 1		
Photo taken at China Ceramic Exhibition				
peony 2	lotus 2	Lilium brownie 1	hydrangea 1	

In the three places, the ceramic flower pattern porcelain presents a different style in the same place and in different places (Figure5).

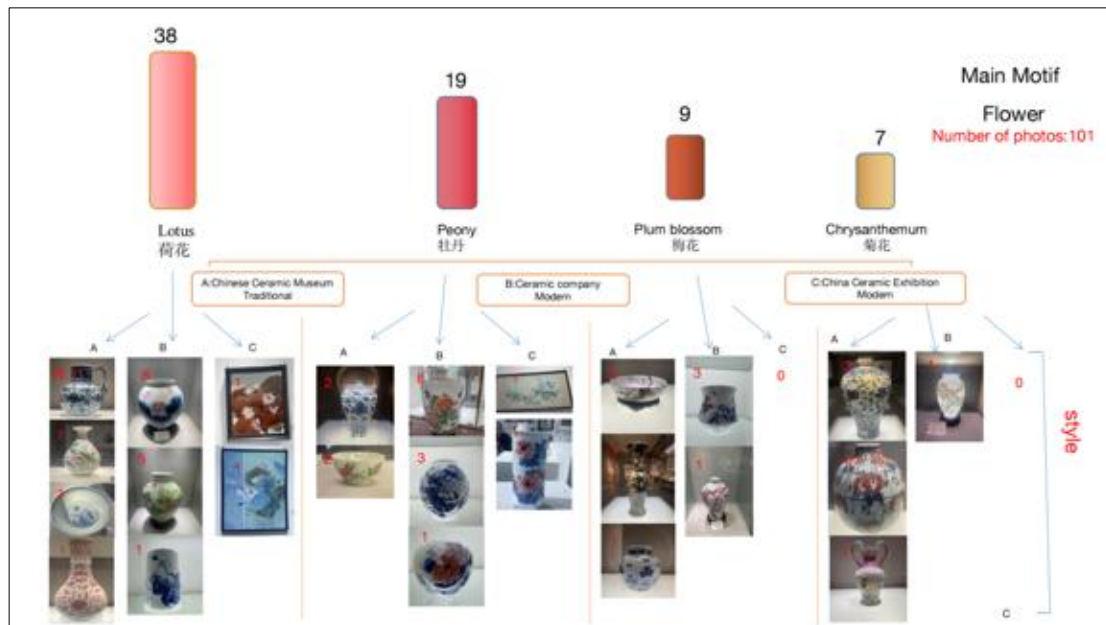


Figure5. Different style of main motif flower

Take the lotus flower for example. The photo (figure 6) was taken at the China Ceramic Museum in 2024. The title of the work is Bule and White watering pot designed with lotus scrolls. It was painted during the Yong Zheng Reign of the Qing Dynasty (1723-1735) in China. Blue and white appeared in the Yuan Dynasty and continued in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the traditional blue and white patterns were very popular in the Qing Dynasty's official kilns. In this work, the artist adopts the technique of meticulous brushwork, combining lotus patterns and water ripples to paint the whole body, and the whole composition is very full. The style displayed in this work tends to be patterned, with rigid rules, meticulous brushwork, and rigorous and dense composition.



Figure 6. Lotus flower work in China Ceramic Museum

The China Ceramic Company has eight similar blue lotus pattern ceramic flower-and-bird paintings (Figure 7). These photographs were taken at the China Ceramic Company in 2024. Unlike the ancient ceramic works in the China Ceramic Museum, the pieces from the China Ceramic Company are created by modern painters. For instance, this work was painted by Lin Yu Mao, a contemporary Chinese artist. The painting technique used is a combination of meticulous brushwork and freehand brushwork. Additionally, it integrates the blue and white underglaze technique with the new color on-glaze technique, known as Dou Cai. In this process, blue and white materials are first used to paint the lotus leaves in a freehand style on an unfired blank. After high-temperature firing, the lotus is painted on the blank with new color pigments in shades of peach and yellow. The composition of the entire piece is centered on the ceramic blank, featuring a rigorous arrangement. The style is characterized by its freshness and elegance, reflecting the innovative approach of contemporary artists while maintaining a connection to traditional techniques.



Figure 7. Blue lotus pattern ceramic flower-and-bird paintings in China Ceramic Company

There is one lotus pattern ceramic flower-and-bird painting in the Ceramic Exhibition. This ceramic lotus work (Figure 8) showcases the innovative thinking of contemporary artists. In terms of composition, the artist breaks the traditional central composition of the picture and divides it by cutting. On the right side of the picture, there is a freehand painting of lotus flowers and lotus leaves, and on the left side of the picture are water ripples and goldfish. The same lotus flower is painted in two separate independent spaces, visually merging them. In terms of technique, the artist uses color glaze abstract painting for the lotus leaves and water ripples. After firing, new color pigments are applied on the glaze for the concrete painting of the goldfish and lotus flowers. The style of the entire work is a combination of abstract and concrete, with a slightly cool tone. The integration of Western impressionism creates a hazy and abstract beauty.



Figure 8 Ceramic lotus work in the Ceramic Exhibition

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

In summary, analysis of 101 ceramic works related to flowers from the China Ceramic Museum, ceramic companies, and ceramic exhibitions reveals a distinct classification of ceramic flower-and-bird paintings, prominently featuring main pattern flowers such as lotus, peony, plum blossom, and chrysanthemum. Among these, lotus and peony emerge as the most frequently depicted flowers in ceramic art. Furthermore, the ceramic depictions of lotus, peony, plum blossom, and chrysanthemum exhibit a diverse array of styles across the three venues. For instance, within the ceramic museum, lotus alone is depicted in three distinct styles, while ceramic companies and exhibitions showcase a similar range of stylistic variations. These styles range from traditional freehand techniques to modern interpretations, reflecting the evolving aesthetic sensibilities of artists. A noteworthy observation is the discrepancy in pattern style between the Chinese Ceramic Museum and other venues. The museum's ceramic flower patterns tend to adhere more closely to traditional styles, while ceramic companies and exhibitions demonstrate a greater propensity for contemporary interpretations. This distinction underscores the evolving nature of ceramic art and the influence of different artistic contexts on stylistic

expression. In visual arts commentary, it's intriguing to observe how artists navigate tradition and innovation within the constraints of ceramic art. The varying styles of lotus, peony, plum blossom, and chrysanthemum reflect not only individual artistic preferences but also broader cultural and historical influences. From intricate traditional brushwork to bold modern interpretations, each ceramic piece offers a unique glimpse into the dynamic evolution of floral motifs in Chinese ceramic art.

The ceramic works depicting lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, and plum blossom found in the China Ceramic Museum reflect the aesthetic values prevalent during various periods in ancient China. For instance, during the Xuan De period of the Ming Dynasty, the use of "Su mud Bo Qing" raw materials resulted in vibrant blue and white patterns, evoking a natural decorative style. Subsequent periods, such as the Kangxi, Yong Zheng, and Qianlong eras of the Qing Dynasty, witnessed shifts in aesthetic preferences influenced by the reigning emperors. The late Kangxi period favored concise designs with dark and light blue and white patterns, while the Yong Zheng period continued this style while innovating towards implicit and beautiful aesthetics, emphasizing the unity of practicality and beauty. The Qianlong period reached the pinnacle of porcelain craftsmanship, producing intricate works with a preference for grandeur. Transitioning to the Republic of China era, ceramic art retained influences from the late Qing Dynasty but displayed distinct aesthetic characteristics. Glazes became more delicate, with bright colors such as blue, green, and purple becoming prominent. Innovations in ceramic modeling, including the adoption of foreign styles, were also observed. While the late Qing Dynasty tended towards conservative floral patterns, ceramic flower and bird paintings in the Republic of China embraced a nationalistic style, characterized by magnificence and vibrant colors.

The aesthetic significance of lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, and plum blossom motifs extends beyond their visual appeal. These patterns encapsulate traditional Chinese values and aspirations. The lotus symbolizes purity and elegance, the peony embodies prosperity and happiness as the national flower of China, the chrysanthemum represents integrity and longevity, and the plum blossom signifies good fortune. Across different venues and time periods, ceramic works featuring these motifs exhibit diverse techniques, colors, and compositions. The China Ceramic Museum showcases meticulous painting techniques and traditional colors, often reflecting imperial preferences. In contrast, contemporary ceramic companies prioritize artistic expression, employing modern painting techniques and abstract compositions that reflect evolving aesthetic sensibilities. Similarly, ceramic exhibitions feature works by young artists influenced by Western culture, blending Chinese and Western aesthetics through innovative compositions and abstract techniques. The evolution of aesthetic value philosophy in Chinese ceramic art underscores the dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. While techniques and styles may vary over time, the enduring popularity of auspicious floral motifs demonstrates the timeless appeal of cultural symbols in art. Across generations, artists have continued to reinterpret lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, and plum blossom motifs, infusing their works with innovation while preserving the rich cultural heritage of Chinese ceramic art.

CONCLUSION

There is almost no classification of Chinese ceramic flower-and-bird paintings, so it is very necessary to study Jiang (2023). This study conducted an in-depth examination of the classification and aesthetic significance of floral motifs in Chinese ceramic flower and bird paintings. Through a comprehensive literature review and empirical research involving 288 photos of ceramic flower and bird patterns and 101 images of ceramic works related to flowers, the study elucidates the intricate relationship between

aesthetic value philosophy and the main motif flowers in this art form. The ceramic works depicting lotus, peony, chrysanthemum, and plum blossom found in the China Ceramic Museum reflect the aesthetic values prevalent during various periods in ancient China. For instance, during the Xuan De period of the Ming Dynasty, the use of "Su mud Bo Qing" raw materials resulted in vibrant blue and white patterns, evoking a natural decorative style. Subsequent periods, such as the Kangxi, Yong Zheng, and Qianlong eras of the Qing Dynasty, witnessed shifts in aesthetic preferences influenced by the reigning emperors. The late Kangxi period favored concise designs with dark and light blue and white patterns, while the Yong Zheng period continued this style while innovating towards implicit and beautiful aesthetics, emphasizing the unity of practicality and beauty. The Qianlong period reached the pinnacle of porcelain craftsmanship, producing intricate works with a preference for grandeur. There is almost no classification of Chinese ceramic flower-and-bird paintings, so it is very necessary to study.

The primary findings indicate that Chinese ceramic flower and bird patterns are broadly classified into categories such as flowers, birds, insects, fish, bamboo, animals, vegetables, and fruits. Among these, the main motif flowers lotus, peony, plum, and chrysanthemum emerge as central elements in the aesthetic and cultural landscape of Chinese ceramics. These flowers are depicted in various styles, ranging from traditional freehand techniques to modern interpretations, with the China Ceramic Museum favoring more traditional styles compared to ceramic companies and exhibitions. The study also highlights the symbolic meanings associated with these floral motifs, which are deeply rooted in Chinese aesthetic philosophy. Ye (2015) mentioned that the lotus represents holiness and elegance, reflecting a desire for purity and grace. The peony symbolizes prosperity and happiness, while the chrysanthemum stands for honesty, auspiciousness, and longevity. The plum blossom is admired for its noble, modest, and resilient qualities, symbolizing auspiciousness.

Critically, while the study offers significant insights into the classification and aesthetic significance of floral motifs in Chinese ceramics, it also has its limitations. The sample size, though substantial, may not encompass the full diversity of ceramic art across different regions and historical periods. Additionally, the study primarily focuses on visual analysis and symbolic interpretation, potentially overlooking other dimensions such as the socio-economic factors influencing ceramic art production and the role of contemporary artistic innovations. Significantly, this study contributes to the broader understanding of how traditional Chinese aesthetic values are embodied in ceramic art. It underscores the enduring importance of cultural symbols and their evolving representations in art. The shift from bionic depictions to expressions of love for nature suggests a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation in Chinese ceramic art. Future research could build on these findings by exploring a more diverse range of samples and incorporating interdisciplinary approaches to understand the socio-cultural and economic contexts of ceramic art production. Additionally, examining the influence of contemporary artists and global art trends on traditional motifs could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving nature of Chinese ceramic art. In conclusion, this study reaffirms the centrality of aesthetic value philosophy in the creation and appreciation of Chinese ceramic flower and bird paintings. It highlights how traditional motifs such as lotus, peony, plum, and chrysanthemum continue to resonate with cultural meanings and aesthetic values, while also adapting to contemporary artistic expressions.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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