

Short videos of Great Artists on the Douyin platform: Content Analysis and Value

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ABSTRACT

Modern Chinese artists differ significantly in terms of their dissemination power. Some famous artists' short videos can receive hundreds of millions of likes, while others can only get sporadic likes. Xu Beihong, a Chinese modern painter and art educator, played a pivotal role in the history of contemporary Chinese art. The study aim is to explore the common value characteristics of great artists' short videos and fill the research gap by analysing the content, subject matter, and presentation forms related to the artist. Based on the theory of art economics, the study takes the top 100 liked short videos of Xu Beihong on the Douyin platform as the research object. First, the accounts that posted these short videos were analysed. Second, content analysis is used to categorise the content of these short videos. Finally, the value behind the data was assessed. Research has found that many short video accounts featuring artists include commercial windows, and many of these short video contents involve commercial aspects. Favourable evaluations of artists are often associated with higher commercial value of the artworks. The results indicate that audience participation and interaction with artworks offer considerable value on short video platforms. Artworks presented through these new channels provide aesthetic and experiential value. The commercialisation of these artworks represents the value derived from audience behaviour and engagement.

Keywords: *Artist short videos, Art economics, Content analysis, Art dissemination*

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of China's digital technology, short video platforms have gradually become one of the essential channels for contemporary art dissemination as an emerging form of digital media. As of June 2023, the number of Chinese Internet users reached 1.079 billion, and the number of online audiovisual users reached 1.04 billion, surpassing instant messaging and becoming the most extensive application of the Chinese Internet (China et al. Center, 2023). The development trend in this digital era is shifting from one-way communication to interactive engagement, and knowledge creation and commercial operation have become widely focused research areas in the dissemination of short video art. Douyin, known as TikTok internationally, is a music-centric creative short video social app incubated by ByteDance. Due to cultural and regulatory differences, Douyin and TikTok have particular distinctions. According to the 2022 Douyin Knowledge Data Report, the volume of knowledge-related content on Douyin increased by 35.4%, with humanities knowledge being one of the fastest-growing content domains for creators with tens of thousands of followers (Developers of the QQ instant messaging platform, 2022). Artists and cultural institutions actively use short videos as a new avenue for contemporary art dissemination and seeking commercial opportunities. Researchers have found that artists and cultural institutions actively use short videos as a new avenue for disseminating contemporary art and seeking commercial opportunities. Based on this background, this study focuses on the short videos of the renowned Chinese artist Xu Beihong on the Douyin platform. By employing content analysis methods, this study aims to explore the cultural and commercial values embedded in disseminating art through short videos.

Mr. Xu Beihong, a great and respected artist and art educator, played a pivotal role in modern Chinese painting history. He studied oil painting in France and later became the Central Academy of Fine Arts president upon his return to China. His painting style was deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture while incorporating Western realistic techniques, resulting in a unique personal style. This research focuses on short videos featuring the renowned Chinese artist Xu Beihong. It employs content analysis to conduct an in-depth analysis, aiming to identify the common value characteristics of these short videos. To better understand the methods and significance of art dissemination of Xu Beihong's works on short video platforms, this study aims to identify the common value characteristics and expected outcomes of renowned artists' dissemination in the digital age through the historical and cultural significance of the artist's short video works. This is mainly reflected in audience interaction and feedback after viewing, the effectiveness of art dissemination methods, and the commercial operation models of artists' short videos.

However, achieving artistic value requires commercialising art dissemination on short video platforms, which presents challenges. Therefore, in-depth research on the value of art dissemination on short video platforms contributes to integrating and developing digital media and art and provides new ideas and pathways for promoting and disseminating contemporary art.

As an emerging science, art economics combines the development of art and economics. Its research scope includes the cost of art production, operational rules, etc., with a critical task being to elucidate the particularity of art consumption and the realisation of artistic product value. This study explores the commercial operation of short video platforms and their cultural value as contemporary art dissemination channels against China's rising digital technology. However, there still needs to be a research gap in the in-depth analysis of specific characteristics of renowned artists on short video platforms. This study attempts to fill this gap and provide a more comprehensive empirical analysis of this field. Research on the commercial and cultural value of artists on short video platforms has yet to be a focus in previous studies within art economics. This study aims to fill this gap. It will conduct an in-depth analysis of the specific characteristics of renowned artists on short video platforms. This approach provides a unique opportunity for disseminating these artists' works and educates the public about art and culture, contributing to the value transformation of art commercialisation. In the continuously evolving

landscape of digital art dissemination, this research is crucial for promoting effective and innovative methods among artists, cultural institutions, and policymakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Artistic and commercial value

Australian scholar Throsby (2000) argues that culture is a unique commodity with non-economic attributes such as artistic, historical, and cultural identity, and its value encompasses commodity, social, and cultural value. The secondary dissemination of cultural products can bring new benefits and opportunities, but it may also harm the original creators' or producers' economic and moral interests. Swiss scholar, Bruno (2013) discusses the differences between the cultural and artistic field and other financial fields, addressing market mechanisms in the cultural and artistic sector, incentives for artists, and the impact of cultural and artistic activities on society. Horowitz proposed that Western cultural and artistic economics form the basic framework for digital art economics, which has practical significance in analysing the digital art industry's economic development, business models, and market operations (Noah, 2014). These three books focus respectively on the intrinsic and social value of cultural arts, the relationship between finance and the market, and the role and particularities of culture in the economic market. However, there are some differences and similarities in viewpoints between artistic and commercial values. With the support of the internet and digital technologies, the integration of art and commerce has become an inevitable trend.

Value of Short Video Art Communication

Integrating art economy and technology, particularly in the internet and digital technology, presents breakthrough points for innovative development (Xi et al., 2021). The commercialisation of art products and the inevitable trend of art "marrying" business involve historical, artistic, and economic values. Seeking economic value from art and artistic value from economics helps elucidate the value discovery of art products (Lin, 2006). Moreover, digital content creation and the development of social media can foster a new group of active cultural participants (Russo & Watkins, 2008). These studies suggest that integrating the art economy and technology provides a new impetus for commercialising and marketizing art. The growth of social media offers new opportunities for artists and cultural institutions, serving as new avenues for cultural dissemination and engagement.

Further investigation into the functionalities and usage of social media platforms like TikTok is emphasised, highlighting the significant changes in our digital society and the art market brought about by social media (Gerlieb, 2021). From a historical perspective, re-examining and redefining art experts from ancient times to the present explores popular notions about social media engagement and professionalism in the art world (Russo & Watkins, 2008). Additionally, the life experiences of artists and their interactions with followers positively impact the popularity of their artworks. However, these interactions have minimal effect on their artistic creation despite artists' expectations for more likes (Kang et al., 2019). These studies demonstrate that social media changes the modes of art dissemination and influences interaction behaviours and creative motivations. Technology and social media are increasingly important in the art economy market. New interaction and dissemination methods are expected to evolve, driving the art commercialisation process.

Audience Engagement in Fine Arts Short Videos

During the pandemic, the online dissemination of art has demonstrated advantages such as speed, broad coverage, three-dimensionality, and vividness, enabling art to overcome restrictions of time and space and gain wider attention and recognition (Zhou, 2022). Short video platforms play an essential role in promoting the dissemination and innovative promotion of traditional culture. They can achieve instant recording and information replication across time and space and utilise social media for interactive communication and node diffusion. They seek cross-domain cooperation to demonstrate the connotation and extension of excellent traditional culture (Huang et al., 2023). Short videos in the field of fine arts need to adapt to the development of the times, where the audience is not only the appreciator of short videos but also the disseminator and re-creator. Through interactive interactions such as comments and exchanges, the audience can gain a deeper understanding of artworks and mutually promote creators, forming a virtuous cycle and jointly promoting the development of short videos in fine arts (Wu, 2022). Short video platforms serve as new carriers for art communication, providing broader opportunities and platforms for disseminating and marketing artworks while providing more convenient and comprehensive ways for interaction and communication between the audience and creators. The audience's active participation increases the social value of short video art communication, helping creators and audiences better understand, appreciate, and create art, thus bringing more value to the platform.




Xu Beihong, a significant figure in modern Chinese art history and a pioneer in contemporary Chinese art education, has a unique commercial potential due to his significance in Chinese art history. The audience's interaction with Xu's engaging artworks on short video platforms creates an emotional resonance. This resonance enhances the cultural connotation of the works while also bestowing them with commercial value. On TikTok, American painter and sculptor Bartosz Beda uses the platform to promote his work. In just one month, he gained thousands of followers and numerous orders. This study employs effective data sources, such as high-frequency words and sentiment analysis, which reflect the audience's commercial interest and cultural recognition of renowned artists. By combining art economics theories, this study elucidates the economic value of artists and their artworks on short video platforms. Additionally, communication theories are used to explain the role of artists' short videos in cultural dissemination.





RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will focus on the highly praised short videos of Xu Beihong, a well-known Chinese artist on the Douyin platform. The sample selection follows two principles: relevance to the artist and high dissemination and influence on social media. By manually searching for keywords on the Douyin platform using the artist's name and sorting the results based on the number of likes, 213 data entries were obtained. During data cleaning, duplicate data and data unrelated to the research topic were excluded, resulting in a final selection of 100 short video samples with over 500 likes for further study in the past three years. The data collection period was until November 20, 2023, to ensure the timeliness and reliability of the data. directly import collected. This text data is collected from online tool 'GooSeeker' for Chinese word segmentation and sentiment analysis. The tool automatically segments the text and generates word frequency tables, which can then be used to create word clouds. This online tool comes with a built-in sentiment dictionary and supports custom dictionaries. According to the dictionary, each segmented word is classified into positive, neutral, or negative sentiment categories. One-click sentiment analysis calculates the sentiment tendency of sentences, which can be downloaded into sentiment analysis tables.

The data processing methods primarily employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. This includes statistical and content analysis of account categories, text descriptions, title word frequencies, sentiment, audiovisual content, and categorise the top 100 most liked short videos (Table 1). The goal is to reveal the value and impact of outstanding artists' short videos in art dissemination from an art economics perspective. The analytical framework of this study includes the following aspects: First, Analysing the types of short video accounts and their commercial attributes to understand the account holders' impact on the dissemination effectiveness of short videos. Second, conduct word frequency and sentiment analysis on the titles of published short videos to comprehend the perceived value expressed in the video content, and third, Investigate the visual and auditory content of the short videos to explore how production quality and creativity affect dissemination effectiveness and audience response. Finally, from the perspective of art economics, high-view short videos by prominent influencers are analysed to determine the value manifestation in art dissemination and draw corresponding conclusions.

Table 1. Sample of Short Video Images – The Content Analysis

NO	Short Video Images	Classification of Video Content	Image Source
1		Paintings	Douyin Account: Yajian Cultural Relics and Artistic Masterpieces (雅鉴文物艺术臻品)
2		Video Bloggers	Douyin Account: Zhao Jian's Reading Diary (赵健的读书日记)
3		Old Photos Of Celebrities	Douyin Account: Third Young Master Trendy Wind (三少爷潮风)

4		Celebrities Films & TV Shows	Douyin Account: Celebrities' affairs (名人那些事儿)
5		Real & Fake	Douyin Account: Shangzhen Calligraphy and Painting (尚真书画)
6		Copying Process	Douyin Account: Minghua168888
7		The Auction Scene	Douyin Account: Home of Artworks (艺术品之家)

(Source: Short video images by author, 2024)**

FINDINGS

Analysis of Short Video Account Situation

This research analysed the account situation of 100 famous short video bloggers. The commercialisation ratio of these accounts is shown in Figure 1. Among the short video bloggers engaged in artistic evaluation on the Douyin platform, many accounts with enterprise certification are involved in commercial art businesses. In comparison, a higher rate of personal and other accounts has set up art product showcases. The percentage of accounts engaged in commercial activities is 70%. This indicates that artistic dissemination on short video platforms is a purely cultural and creative expression with commercial value and market demand.

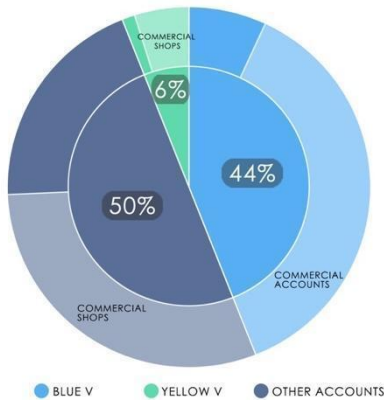


Figure 1. Account types as a percentage
 (Source: by author, 2024)

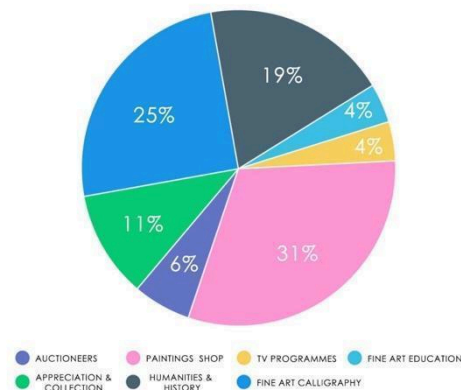


Figure 2. Short video account content classification
 (Source: by author, 2024)

At the same time, this research classified the textual introductions of the 100 short video blogger accounts into different content categories. The percentage distribution is shown in Figure 2. It can be seen that the percentage of accounts related to the commercial field, such as "calligraphy and painting stores" and "appreciation and collection," is relatively high, indicating the level of activity in the art market and the pursuit of art collectors. The percentage of accounts related to the cultural field, such as "fine arts and calligraphy" and "humanities and history," is relatively high, reflecting the audience's interest in art disciplines and cultural and historical fields. On the other hand, the percentage of accounts related to the service field, such as "art auction companies" and "art education," is relatively low. Still, it reflects the demand for art market and art education in art economics.

Analysis of Title Word Frequency and Sentiment

This research used an online word cloud tool to analyse the frequency of words in the titles of popular short videos. The phrase cloud analysis in Figure 3 shows that the larger the font size of a word, the higher its frequency of occurrence. Analysing the high-frequency words, the following characteristics of short videos in terms of titles can be observed: Firstly, they emphasise the value of traditional Chinese art and culture, with words such as "Chinese painting," "traditional," and "China." Secondly, they focus on the collection and appreciation of artworks, with words such as "collection," "appreciation," and "calligraphy and painting." Thirdly, they pay attention to artists and their works, with words such as "Xu

Beihong," "painter," and "artwork." Lastly, they explore the relationship between art and history with words such as "history," "characters," and "stories."

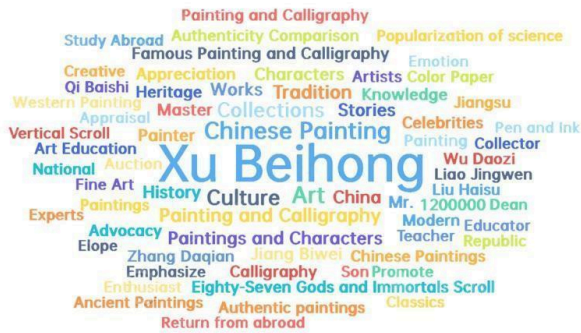


Figure 3. Title text word frequency analysis
(Source: by author, 2024)

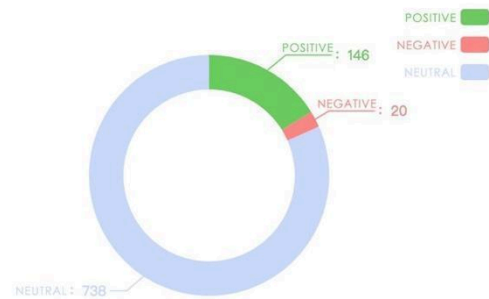


Figure 4. Title text sentiment analysis
(Source: by author, 2024)

Using an online sentiment analysis tool, the title words of 100 short videos were analysed for sentiment, as shown in Figure 4. There were 146 instances of positive evaluation words, 738 cases of neutral evaluation words, and 20 instances of negative evaluation words. Firstly, the positive evaluation words in the title words of short videos mainly come from praises in the field of art and admiration for traditional culture. This reflects the significant role of short videos in emphasising artworks' value, appreciation, and admiration. Secondly, the negative evaluation words mainly involve negative information about artists, the market, and the industry. This includes negative aspects of artists' personal lives, such as naming their children and emotional lives, reflecting some negative issues among artists. Finally, the title words of short videos contain the highest number of neutral evaluation words, most related to basic concepts and vocabulary in art.

Based on the above results, short video platforms have significant advantages in promoting and disseminating artists. Future research can explore utilising short videos more effectively to spread artists' creations and lives and increase public interest and participation in art. Additionally, for artists, engaging more with the audience through short videos can enhance audience retention. Artists can optimise the themes that interest the audience to increase the amount of positively received content. Artists can also use short videos for personal branding, showcasing their artistic style and creative philosophy. For platforms, recommending relevant artist short videos based on users' viewing interests can be beneficial. Platforms can also provide more support for art creators, helping them produce high-quality artist content.

Classification and Statistics of Video Content

This research conducted a statistical analysis of the visual content of 100 highly rated short videos, mainly consisting of artists' works, short video bloggers, artists' photographs, and scenes from artists' films and TV dramas. As shown in Figure 5, artists' works appeared 56 times in the short videos, short video bloggers appeared 46 times, artists' photographs appeared 40 times, and scenes from artists' films and TV dramas appeared ten times. There were six instances of comparing the authenticity of artists' works with counterfeits, three cases depicting the process of artists imitating other artists, and three instances of showcasing the auction scene of artists' works. However, in terms of the thematic content of artist-themed short videos, they mainly covered aspects such as the artist's historical background, art appreciation, exciting anecdotes, authentication of genuine artworks, painting techniques, and comprehensive evaluations. From this, it can be observed that, on the one hand, in the context of art and

culture, the short videos featured many artists' artworks, TV dramas, and old photographs, reflecting the audience's attention and love for the personal stories behind the artists and their works. On the other hand, from a commercial perspective, this study found that the highly rated short videos included personal evaluations and opinions from short video bloggers, reflecting the interactive and social nature of secondary dissemination of art on short video platforms, which helps to promote the vibrancy and development of the art market.

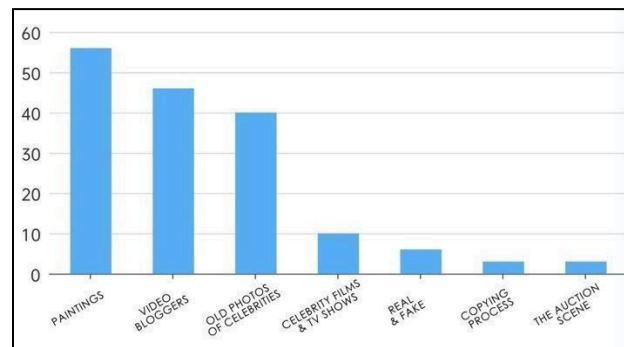


Figure 5. Content and frequency of short video Images
(Source: by author, 2024)

Simultaneously, this research also conducted a statistical analysis of the auditory content in 100 highly rated short videos, revealing that 88 videos had background music, 89 videos had voice-over narration, and 82 videos had subtitle displays. This indicates that in short video production, the synchronisation of sound and music is crucial. It is mainly achieved through background music, voice-over narrations, and subtitles, which add emotional, atmospheric, and informational elements to the videos, enhancing the audience's understanding of the narrative and improving the artistic and informational conveyance of the videos.

DISCUSSION

Art generates extensive positive externalities for society, referred to as "non-user benefits." These benefits are directed toward the overall public and include "option value," "bequest value," and "existence value" (Bruno S, 2013). Short videos can provide wide-ranging positive externalities for disseminating art and artists. The audience is not limited to individuals who consume specific cultural activities but encompasses the public.

Value of Participation and Interaction

As cultural forms transition into postmodernity, the value of art is shifting from "exhibition value" to "participation value." Interactive participation has become the focus (Li, 2013). Short video platforms provide a convenient way for audiences to appreciate art, expanding the reach of art to a broader audience and facilitating the understanding and exposure of art to more people, thereby promoting the inheritance and development of art. For artists and their works, it helps encourage interaction and communication between artists and the public. Interaction, sharing, commenting, and other forms of engagement increase the artistic influence, driving the diversification and globalisation of art.

Value of Aesthetic and Experiential

The dissemination of art through short videos highlights the significance and influence of artists like Xu Beihong in the field of visual arts in contemporary society while also promoting the development and innovation of the art industry. On the one hand, art creators utilise new media channels to promote and showcase their works, experiencing fulfilment through transcending time and space, as the infectious power of artistic aesthetics can still be experienced through the internet (Zhou & Ren, 2022). On the other hand, the art content disseminated through short videos allows the public to access and appreciate art quickly, experiencing the unique charm of art through the scenarios, expressions, and knowledge created by artists.

Value of Behavior and Records

From the perspective of art economics, exploring the concept of "value" is the starting point and motivation for human economic behaviour (Throsby, 2000). Human and financial behaviour patterns permeate every corner of short video art dissemination and the art market. Short video platforms provide a virtual space for behaviour records for the public, respecting and maintaining art's independent and original nature. It facilitates diverse behavioural records of different viewpoints, comments, and insights, promoting the diversity and innovation of artworks and cultural activities. At the same time, it digitises valuable materials such as artists' paintings, old photos, daily life, and film and television content. These precious materials serve as behavioural records that reflect the artistic mindset, social environment, and spiritual connotations of artists, providing important references for historical investigation (Wang, 2010). The artistic records in the form of short videos fulfil the psychological needs of the audience to understand the artist's creation and showcase the diversity of comments and viewpoints from short video bloggers, demonstrating the significance of short videos in the secondary dissemination of artists' work.

CONCLUSION

Through a multi-dimensional analysis of content about renowned artists on short video platforms, researchers have found that short videos significantly promote art education and participation. A substantial proportion of accounts related to artists on these platforms are engaged in commercial activities. Short video content also involves commercial actions such as auctions, collections, and shops. Positive evaluative words about artists are more likely to enhance the commercial value of their works. In the word cloud of short video titles, high-frequency words predominantly revolve around the artist's creation, life, and culture. From the perspective of art economics, short video platforms provide a virtual space for recording public behaviour and participation. These records reflect the aesthetic essence of the artist's creations and offer diverse historical and cultural research viewpoints.

This research primarily analyses the artistic dissemination value of highly rated short videos by renowned artists. However, this study has limitations and areas for improvement. This study only explores the artistic dissemination value of Xu Beihong's highly rated short videos, while research on other artists or artworks remains to be further investigated. Future research can compare and analyse the artistic dissemination values of different artists or artworks, revealing the dissemination characteristics and mechanisms of other artists and artworks, further enriching and expanding the research field of art economics.

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