

**SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION IN VISUAL ARTS:  
OVERLAPPED SPACE BY DIFFERENT IMAGES,  
DIMENSIONS, AND CONTEXTS**

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**SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION IN VISUAL ARTS:  
OVERLAPPED SPACE BY DIFFERENT IMAGES,  
DIMENSIONS, AND CONTEXTS**

by

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**PEMBINAAN RUANG DALAM SENI VISUAL: RUANG BERTINDIH  
MENGUNAKAN PELBAGAI IMEJ, DIMENSI DAN KONTEKS YANG  
BERBEZA**

**ABSTRAK**

Konsep "ruang" Penggunaan konsep ruang mendapat meluas merentasi banyak disiplin akademik, termasuk sosiologi, seni bina, falsafah, matematik dan seni. Dalam seni bergambar, istilah "ruang" biasanya digunakan sebagai lensa untuk memahami pelbagai konsep artistik dan karya seni individu. Selain itu, ramai artis menggunakan ruang sebagai subjek dalam amalan artistik mereka, mencipta karya seni yang unik dan menyumbang kepada memajukan tema dan rumusan spatial dalam lukisan, sama ada secara langsung atau tidak langsung. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan terutamanya kepada ruang bertindih dan penelitian teori teorinya, yang membawa kepada penciptaan kerja amali. Secara khusus, kajian ini memperkukuh dan memenuhi konsep pengkaji dengan menggunakan teori Angkasa Ketiga Edward Soja. Dalam proses kajian, tiga siri karya seni yang berasingan telah dihasilkan secara beransur-ansur oleh konsep teras Derrida iaitu "perbezaan", iaitu pertindihan imej, pertindihan ruang dimensi yang berbeza, dan pertindihan konteks masing-masing, proses keseluruhan akan lima langkah-langkah, iaitu Kenal pasti soalan kajian, Semak literatur dan amalan, Reka bentuk dan kelakuan amalan, Analisis dan nilai amalan dan Komunikasi dan Menyebarkan Amalan masing-masing, supaya pelbagai kemungkinan ruang bertindih dianalisis dari pelbagai perspektif. Tambahan pula, teori simbolik dan metafora menerangkan tiga siri karya, menghasilkan gelung tertutup yang komprehensif. Sementara itu, karya-karya ini memberi amaran kepada manusia, menerangkan bahawa

ruang hidup kita sentiasa terasing. Penemuan penyelidikan eksperimen kajian ini akan menawarkan kaedah baru untuk pembinaan ruang dan memberikan perspektif unik tentang kepelbagaian permainan.

# **SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION IN VISUAL ARTS: OVERLAPPED SPACE BY DIFFERENT IMAGES, DIMENSIONS, AND CONTEXTS**

## **ABSTRACT**

The concept of "space" has gained widespread usage across many academic disciplines, including sociology, architecture, philosophy, mathematics, and the arts. Within pictorial art, the term "space" is commonly employed as a lens to comprehend various artistic concepts and individual works of art. Additionally, numerous artists utilise space as a subject matter in their artistic practice, creating unique artworks and contributing to advancing spatial themes and formulations in painting, either directly or indirectly. This study focuses mainly on overlapped space and its theoretical examination, leading to the creation of practical works. Specifically, this study reinforced and fulfilled the researcher's concepts by utilizing Edward Soja's theory of the 'Third Space'. In the process of the study, three separate series of artworks were gradually produced by Derrida's core concept of "Différance", which are the overlap of images, the overlap of different dimensional spaces, and the overlap of contexts respectively, the overall process will five steps, which are Identify research question, Review the literature and the practice, Design and conduct practice, Analyse and evaluate practice and Communicate and Disseminate Practice respectively, so that the various possibilities of overlapped space are analysed from multiple perspectives, that is, different disciplines. Furthermore, symbolic and metaphorical theories explain the three series of works, resulting in a comprehensive closed loop. Meanwhile, these works warn humanity, illuminating that our living space is

continually alienated. The experimental research findings of this study will offer new methods for the construction of space and provide unique perspectives on the diversity of play.



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Research Background**

Space construction is one of the primary means of expression in painting. People have always paid attention to and explored the painting space during the development of painting. (Bruce C & Adelheid M, 2011) Throughout the process of development of the artistic history of Eastern and Western painting, regarding the presentation of space in painting, in Eastern painting, especially traditional Chinese painting, the artist takes the pursuit of the organic integration of the subject and the object as the primary task, so as to make the space in the picture have a continuous sense of rhythm, creating a unique aesthetic of space (Bai-Hua Z, 2020); While in Western painting, it has gone through several iterations. For example, Linear Perspective: Originating in the Renaissance, linear perspective uses converging lines and a vanishing point to create the illusion of depth. This technique was pioneered by artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Filippo Brunelleschi, revolutionizing the depiction of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface (Samuel Y & Edgerton Jr, 1899); Atmospheric Perspective: Atmospheric, or aerial, perspective involves changing the color and clarity of objects to suggest distance. Distant objects are depicted with less detail, lighter colors, and often a bluish tint, as seen in the works of J.M.W. Turner (Gareth E & Kate R, 2021); Cubism: Developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, Cubism deconstructs objects into geometric shapes, presenting multiple viewpoints simultaneously. This approach challenges traditional notions of perspective and depth (Gill H, 1993); Abstract Expressionism: This movement, exemplified by artists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, often eschews conventional

spatial representation altogether. Instead, space is constructed through dynamic brushstrokes, color fields, and the physical texture of the paint (Barbara H, 2021); Surrealism: Surrealist artists like Salvador Dalí and René Magritte manipulate space to create dreamlike and fantastical scenes. They blend realistic detail with impossible constructions, creating spaces that defy logic and encourage the viewer to explore the subconscious mind (Brad F, 2013); Modern and Contemporary Approaches: Modern and contemporary artists continue to experiment with space in innovative ways. For instance, installation art incorporates the viewer's physical space into the artwork, while digital art uses virtual spaces and interactive elements. Artists like Yayoi Kusama use immersive environments with mirrors and repeated patterns to create infinite spaces, challenging the boundaries between the artwork and the viewer (Agnes B, 2019); Cultural Perspectives: Non-Western art traditions offer different approaches to space. For example, traditional Chinese landscape painting often employs a floating perspective, where multiple viewpoints are combined in a single composition, emphasizing the spiritual and philosophical connection to nature (Agnes B, 2019); Technological Influences: Digital technology and virtual reality are opening new frontiers in the construction of space. Artists can create entirely digital environments that viewers can explore interactively, blurring the line between physical and virtual spaces (Rush M, 1999). This shows that the construction of space in painting is also developing in a diversified direction (Patricia L, 2020). Based on this trend, the primary purpose of this study is to try to find a new gap from past studies on the construction of space in paintings of the East and the West and then mix the researcher's own unique life experiences and perceptions to create a new spatial relationship, realising a new expansion of the diversification of painting space.

## 1.2 Issues Statement

Human beings have never given up the exploration of spatial construction in painting, especially in Western painting, from the “Representation” in the early medieval period to the “Expression” in the Impressionist period to the “Construction” pioneered in the Cubist period, these several great transformations were mainly due to the constant checking of the so-called "Reality" by the artists (Ernst Hans Josef. G, 1995) . At the same time, from the framework of the whole art history, this is also a shift from “Heteronomy” to “Autonomy.” (Jacques R, 2013) In Jacques Rancière’s book “The Politics of Aesthetics” explained that the so-called “Heteronomy” refers to the influence of external factors on artistic creation and interpretation, including cultural, social, political, and economic backgrounds. In contrast, “Autonomy” refers to the independence of art from external influences. (Jacques R, 2013) In any case, these changes are there for all to see.

With the rapid development of the times, the construction of space in paintings is also discovering itself in a diversified direction (Smith, T, 2010). Before doing this study, the researcher did a lot of research and found that artists who purely depict the theme of the construction of space in the field of painting are scarce. For example, in the West, in Gombrich’s book “The Story of Art", he summarised in detail the development of painting in different periods. Respectively, in the earliest times, the first concern of untrained artists and painters in Ancient Egypt, Crete, India, Islam, and pre-Renaissance Europe was the representation of objects. During the Renaissance period, in the majority of the artists' works, the themes were related to religious narratives and portraits of royalty and aristocracy. In the period of modern art, for example, the Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists, the majority of the artists' works focused on the expression of colour and

brushstrokes and even personal experience. It is worth mentioning that in the period of Cubism, for example, artists such as Picasso, Georges Braque and other artists began to use different ways of observation to construct the space of the picture (Ernst Hans Josef. G, 1995). However, the theme of their paintings is still related to the portraits and objects and is not the exploration of pure space art in the theme. In the East, the main themes of traditional Chinese painting have always been flowers and birds, human figures and landscapes (Michael S, 2000). Although landscape painting is about space, it is not a pure study of space because the landscape contains Chinese people's unique aesthetic and humanistic spirit.

Secondly, based on the researcher's research, many artists are still only limited by a single cultural background, technique and spatial conception when constructing the space in their paintings, which could be more unfavourable to the diversification of spatial painting. For example, many Western contemporary artists have grown up under the Western philosophical and aesthetic system and have not received other cultures, especially not exposed to the study of Oriental art, which has led to many times, it difficult for them to understand the philosophical thinking of the East, which is what the researcher calls cultural homogeneity; For these reasons, Whereas the researcher, as a contemporary art researcher who grew up learning Chinese landscape painting, was imbued with oriental culture and aesthetics from a young age, deliberately mixed many philosophical thoughts and spatial concepts from the East in this study, hoping to find new opportunities to create more abstract and conceptualised spatial paintings in this organic integration.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The main questions in this project are: What is the feasibility of overlapped spaces in the visual arts? What spatial features and states in contemporary society are reflected in the art form of overlapping space?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The goal of this studio-based research is to address these questions:

- 1: Demonstrate the relevance of consumerist culture to man-made commercial spaces and construct overlapped spaces between man-made spaces and the natural environment by using the image overlap approach.
- 2: Visualizing the overlapped space of multiple dimensions in the painting with using collage based on the study of traditional Chinese philosophy and spatial concepts.
- 3: Contexts as conceptual spaces, were established with artistic behaviour, and the whole process with video.

#### **1.5 Project Outline**

The entire study is divided into three series:

The first series will focus on the overlap of images. Before engaging in this practice, the researcher will demonstrate the relevance between human commercial spaces (e.g., shopping malls and shopping centres) and the culture of consumption and the mechanisms

by which artificial spaces operate in contemporary society through the relevant theories and concepts of consumerism. Practically, the researcher will achieve the visual effect of overlapped spaces by using digital collage techniques in Photoshop to achieve the orderly combination of natural spaces and man-made constructions to ultimately create a surreal landscape.

In the second series, since traditional Chinese philosophical thoughts and spatial views greatly influence the researcher's understanding of spatial painting, the researcher will first reorganise the relationship between Chinese philosophy and Chinese landscape painting and try to find out how to construct multi-dimensional spaces from it. In the practical part, the researcher will abstract the research results in the first series and embed them into creating multi-dimensional overlapped space through collage methods, finally realising a more abstract spatial structure.

The third series will be more conceptualised creations. The researcher will mix the results of the previous two series of works and take inspiration from the linguistic concept of context to construct a more conceptualised space, ultimately presenting the overlapped contextual space as an artistic act.

## **1.6 Limitations of Study**

In terms of the study's limitations, the researcher is mainly concerned with the form and relationship of the construction of the whole space in the visual arts, the visualisation of different spaces, and the symbolic meanings of these spaces. In the following, the researcher will explain one by one.

Firstly, in this study, the construction of overlapped spatial forms and relationships is the theme of the whole research. Also, it is the underlying logic of the construction of overlapped space; it involves the different spatial choices, arrangements, and overall designs in the creation process. The researcher will use years of creative experience and personalised aesthetic preferences as a basis to explore different forms.

Secondly, visualising spaces with different concepts and symbols is another challenge in this study because this process involves the researcher's unique understanding and summarisation of different spaces, the choice of media materials, and the mixing of various artistic techniques. In addition, the researcher will focus on analysing the works of related artists, refining and summarising the methods of visualising space from the creative journeys of these artists.

Thirdly, studying the current cultural context and social situation is a crucial way to clarify the meaning of space, and the researcher concentrates on the social and cultural influences on the formation of space through textual analysis.

## **1.7 Research Significant**

The central significance of this study is the organic fusion of different spatial concepts and the gradual production of the notion of spatial overlap. This concept attempts to change the construction of space in the painting field and establish a new spatial arrangement, relationship, and organisation in visual arts, thus expanding the scope of spatial expression. In addition, artists and artworks reflect current social and environmental conditions through spatial constructs (Heidegger, M., & Hofstadter, A, 1975, pp. 17-81).

Therefore, the researcher plans to enrich this theme with a series of spatial works that reflect these issues to raise awareness and concern about social and environmental problems.

Due to the context of this study set under a consumer-dominated environment, new research implications will be discovered. Most people understand consumerism from the perspective of desire, symbols, products, or brands (Jean B, 2016). However, the researcher observed a shift in space because, in the researcher's daily life, he realised that people must constantly navigate the various human commercial and industrial spaces constructed by consumer culture, such as supermarkets and department stores. In a way, these artificial spaces act as containers for different branded stores and products. The continuous accumulation of these products leads to the constant construction of artificial spaces. In other words, artificial space is a unique product of the consumerism boom, and the popularisation of consumer culture has led to an alternation in space construction. This inferred significance is used as one of the significant implications of this study to explain the frequent appearance of artificial constructions and geometric images in the artworks and why the researcher has set the contexts of the three series of works in the context of consumer culture.

In addition, the study of Chinese philosophy and spatial concepts provides theoretical and practical support for the author's reorganisation of spatial relations and order in his practice. The significance of this study is to reconnect Chinese philosophy with Chinese landscape painting, to find the causal relationship and mutual influence between them, and to use these findings to guide practical creation. More importantly, it is to use these findings to break down the description of single-dimensional space, visualising the overlap of multi-dimensional space.



The last important significance of this study is that the authors have focused on contextual overlap. By studying the definition and components of context, their findings are used as theoretical support for the practical part. The significance of this is to conceptualise the author's artwork more, and the meaning of the artwork is more open-ended, which leaves room for imagination in interpreting the artwork. Through these three series of works, stimulating human concern for spatial issues has also become the central theme of this study, and it is hoped that the results of this study will allow people to reflect on space from different perspectives and on current environmental issues.

## **1.8 Research Framework**

The entire framework of the study consists of two parts. One is the researcher's real-life experience in a printing press a few years ago, where two layers of different images were found overlapping on discarded posters. The second is the discovery of Edward Soja's theory of the third space in reading, which provides the theoretical basis for this study, namely the overlapped space.

Specifically, Edward W. Soja (1940-2015), a postmodern political geographer and urban theorist, redefined “Third Space” based on his academic background. In his writing, he posits that the physical built environment constitutes the first space, which is mappable, quantifiable, and observable in the real world. This space results from planning laws, political decisions, and urban changes (Edward S, 1996). The second space is the conceptual space, which pertains to how individuals perceive this space in their minds. Soja's Third Space, however, is where disparate elements converge, including subjectivity

and objectivity, the concrete and the abstract, and the real and the imagined, among others (Edward S, 1996). Thus, the Third Space is a synthetic and inclusive space that merges diverse spatial dimensions, such as subjects and objects, reality, and imagination. The researcher conceived multiple spaces from his real-life experience linked with Soja's thinking on the Third Space, finally forming the researcher's concept, namely, overlapped space.

Based on Soja's Third Space and the researcher real-life experience, the researcher will expand overlapped space by using the concept of Différance (Jacques D, 2004) by Jacques Derrida (1930—2004), which is the overlap of images, different dimensional spaces, and contexts, respectively. Each series of works will incorporate distinct theories and concepts to guide the creation of the artwork. The first series will examine the development of consumerist culture and the construction of artificial space under its influence. The second series will focus on spiritual space, drawing on traditional Chinese philosophical views. The third series will explore the relationship between context and space and how multiple overlapped contexts can offer new feasibility for space in visual art. Finally, the significance of this study will be presented through a theoretical analysis of symbolism and metaphor to explain the three series of works.

### **Research Framework**

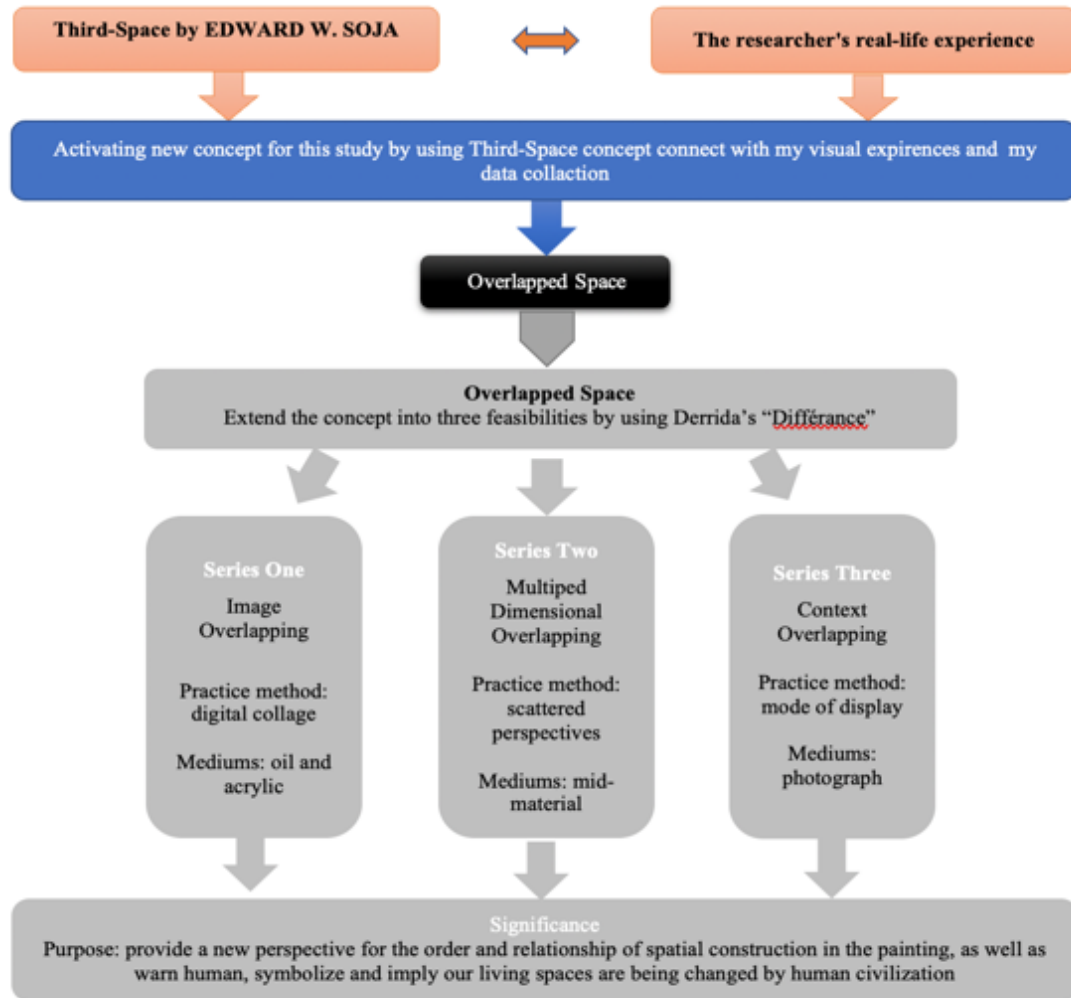


Figure 1.1 Research Framework

## 1.9 Project Development

The development of the whole project was divided into three phases: the first phase was the source of inspiration, the second phase was the search for theory, and the third phase was the expansion of concepts. The researcher will expand on this in detail next.

The real-life experiences of the researchers caused this study. Specifically, it stemmed from an unexpected experience. The researcher had to go to the printing house to proofread the colours of the catalogue for an upcoming exhibition. The researcher accidentally noticed a discarded poster in a pile of discarded posters printed twice with different images. This prompted the researcher to consider what special visual effects would be produced if a painting's different spatial scenes were juxtaposed or overlapped.

The researcher gradually started the study according to this inspiration. Still, the researcher encountered many theoretical problems and began searching and exploring the theory. After careful searching, the researcher found the theory of Edward Soja, "Third Space," this discovery found an opportunity for the researcher's painting theory. Soja's theory defines the "Third Space" as a comprehensive space related to the overlapping and juxtaposing spatial scenes studied by the researcher (Edward S, 1996). In this situation, the researcher integrated Soja's theory with the researcher's real experience and finally produced the researcher's concept, the overlapped space.

However, the overlapped space can only be a mother topic in the researcher's study. Hence, the researcher discovered Derrida's theory of "Différance" in one of his readings, which made the researcher's study rapidly generate several different directions, namely, the overlapping of images, the overlapping of different dimensions of space, and the overlapping of contexts. The creation of this direction made the researcher's study richer and more convincing. With these ideas in mind, the researcher launched the theoretical research and the practice exploration in the relevant directions. This is the discovery process of the project, which the researcher will elaborate on in detail in the subsequent paper.

Therefore, the project's development has gone through three stages: the source of inspiration, the combination of inspiration and theory to produce the concept, and the concept's expansion through theoretical research on this idea.

### **1.10 Definition of Keywords**

#### **Overlapped Space:**

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2010), to overlap means to cover something partly by extending beyond its edge or to cover part of the same space. Therefore, to form an overlapping relationship, two or more spaces must exist in the same plane to constitute 'overlapped space.' In this study, each space layer has its connotations, such as natural and artificial space, real and inner space, and positive and negative space. New meanings are activated when different spaces overlap. This new producing meaning is what the researcher wants to express.

#### **Third space:**

The third space comes from Homi K. Bhabha, which is defined as a postcolonial sociolinguistic theory of identity and community through language (Karin I and Gerhard W, 2008). That is, the uniqueness of each person, actor, or situation is interpreted as a "hybrid." The term was later further conceptualized by Edward W. Soja regarding social science and critical urban theory. He defined Thirdspace: *"Everything comes together... subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency,*

*mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history."* (Edward W. S, 1996, p. 57)

### **Différance:**

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) was a deconstructionist who challenged logocentrism. His core concept, Différance (Jacques D, 2004), refers to the “difference and deferral of meaning.” Différance indicates a state in which the final meaning is constantly deferred. Texts never reach the meaning they indicate, and the meaning of texts is constantly flowing, changing, and dynamic. The truth may exist, but it cannot always be present. Meanings are not fixed and are always partially concealed (Jacques D, 2004). Therefore, Différance is an activity constantly postponed in time, producing differences. By applying the concept of Différance to my methodology, I split overlapped spaces into different possibilities during my candidature.

### **Overlap of Images:**

In a general sense, the overlap of images refers in the field of fine art to a technique that creates a sense of depth and three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface (Alan P, 2003). Overlap occurs when an artist fails to include parts of an object hidden by another, closer object. This technique adds depth to a work of art by placing some objects behind others (Bethany D, 2020). However, the overlapping of images in this study is not a mechanical or rigid relationship of occlusion but rather a conceptual spatial layout and choice resulting from subjective processing. As in Series one, the overlap of natural and man-made commercial spaces is a collection of visually filtered spatial relationships.

**Overlap of Multiplied-Dimension:**

The overlap of different dimensions of space has a variety of definitions in the field of fine arts. In this study, the researcher defines the overlap of different dimensions as the overlapping and juxtaposition of the external objective world and the individual's inner world. The so-called external objective world is the world people observe through their eyes (Radder, H, 2006), while the inner world is the imaginary space that individuals subjectively imagine (Kirby, K. M, 1996).

**Contextual Overlap:**

In this study, Contextual Overlap is not a fixed or objective concept but rather a subjective and interpretive one that depends on the perspective and criteria of the viewer (De-Chun W, 2020). Different viewers may find different degrees and types of Contextual Overlap between artworks, depending on their knowledge, interests, and preferences.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Painting has long captured the world's attention because it allows access to imagined spaces and visual narratives. Throughout history, the ability to create space has been essential to becoming a painter (William V. D, 1991). Artists have manipulated space using various forms, perspectives, and presentations to produce unexpected scenes to engage the viewer. From the prehistoric civilisations of Egypt and Greece to the revolutionary Renaissance to the emergence of modern and contemporary art, the construction of space in painting has changed over time, reflecting each era's cultural, social, and technological conditions (Gombrich, E. H., 2007). In this investigation, the researcher will delve into the developed direction and cultural contexts of the construction of pictorial space in both the East and the West, appreciating and understanding the incredible artistry behind the painting by studying the techniques, concepts, and insights into the transformative forces of space construction, so that discover its cracks and guiding the researcher's creative direction. Next, the researcher will start with the strategies and forms of spatial construction, and then practice review, metaphor and symbol as a guide for studio practice to carry out a holistic theoretical review.

#### **2.1 Evolution of Spatial Features in Realistic Scenes**

Given that the study of space is based on the institutions of consumerist culture, in other words, the idea of spatial overlap was born out of the researcher's understanding of



consumerism and in conjunction with the researcher's personal experiences. so, it's crucial to elucidate the evolution of consumerism because space changes can't escape the imprint of the times (Henri L, 2003). For example, what is the relationship between natural space and man-made commercial space? How is the man-made commercial space built, step by step? How does it gradually invade and expand into natural space? The researchers will solve these problems by looking back at history, which will become the expressive contents of this study.

In terms of research strategies, this study describes and investigates spatial features from both natural and man-made perspectives, so researchers divide multiple spaces into two layers. The first level of space, known as natural space, primarily aims to provide a theoretical review, study, and analysis of the transformation of natural space. The second level of space, known as artificial space, aims to study the correlation between human commercial space and commercialism in modern consumerist culture and to understand why artificial space continues to appear in the researchers' artworks. Next, let's start by examining the first level of space, natural space, to explore what it is and the relationship between nature and human beings.

### **2.1.1 Transformation in Natural Spaces**

In ancient Greece and the Middle Ages, "Nature" was mainly used to refer to an "Innate Quality" (Roger F, 2005). In Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.E.) work, "Physics," he defines nature as the root or cause of the motion and rest of the things to which it originally belonged by nature (not by chance) (Aristotle, 2008): In ancient times, "nature" was

believed to have created everything. He was considered a divine and intimidating supreme being who could not be disobeyed. This gave rise to primitive nature worship and nature-centeredness (Aristotle, 2008). According to this concept, humanity could only obey nature, thus effectively curbing man's arbitrary trampling on nature. Karl Marx (1818-1883) did not extensively discuss the topic of nature itself in his works. However, his ideas on social and economic systems indirectly touch upon our relationship with nature. He mentioned in "Capital: Critique of Political Economy" that nature began as a completely alien, infinitely powerful, and unconquerable force in opposition to man, with which man is related precisely as the animals are related to it and to whose power man submits like a sexual animal (Karl M, 1992). Therefore, humans could only rely on, submit to, and conform to nature with other types of dependence. By worshipping and revering nature, humans dissolved the conflicts between man and nature and maintained harmony (Peter M, 2015). These are the "First Nature" in Neil Smith's book *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Neil S, 2008). "First Nature" is the natural space researcher mentioned, it was defined as the original, unaltered natural environment, including its landscapes, ecosystems, and biodiversity (Neil S, 2008).

However, with the development of capitalist economics, the natural space was shaped by human activities (Neil S, 2008). For example, after the Middle Ages, with the development of productive forces, the autonomy and independence of human beings significantly increased. However, because people's knowledge of nature was minimal, they needed to transform and change nature fundamentally. It was still challenging to master nature (Peter M, 2015). The impact of human production and living activities on nature was still relatively small, and the scope of changes to the natural essence was localised. The damage to the ecology can be restored through the regeneration and adjustment of nature,

so man and nature maintain an essentially harmonious relationship (William R. J & George M. L, 2011). In modern times, the concept of nature has been mainly developed to refer to "a collection of natural things." (Peter M, 2015) In a broad sense, nature is the cosmic world of various forms of material movement and existence, including human society. In the narrower sense, the material world is distinct from human society (Adam K, 2002). Nature is divided into two parts: natural essence and humanised nature. As man's attitude toward nature changes, the relationship between man and nature changes from essential harmony to antagonism and conflict (David H, 1993). Hegel (1770-1831) was the first to propose the idea of "humanised nature" from an epistemological point of view, arguing that natural things achieve greater integrity when a man carries out his will in the external world (Simon H, 2012).

Therefore, man humanises the environment, and the humanised environment is humanised nature. In this way, in Hegel's view, nature becomes something material that is distinct from spirit, and there is a dichotomy between matter and energy, subject and object (Miller A. V, 2004). From the days of the old slave trade, the relationship between man and nature has undergone significant changes (David B. D, 2006). The anthropocentric concept evolved into the fundamental value concept of modern man (David B. D, 2006). This change in concept reflects the historical process of transforming agricultural civilisation into industrial civilisation. Under the guidance of this concept, human beings no longer fear nature. Instead of living in harmony with nature, people have plundered and seized natural resources on a large scale without restraint (David B. D, 2006). As a result, the ecological balance has been severely damaged, the human living environment has deteriorated, the conflict between man and nature has deepened, and the global environmental crisis emerged in the middle of the 20th century.

Although in the next half-century, more and more people began to pay attention to the ecological crisis and reflect on the relationship between man and nature, it has yet to be able to stop the pace of human development. The desire for more capital investment has led to rapid changes in our living spaces (Sharon Z, 1989), leading to the next problem the researcher wants to study: the establishment of artificial space. Namely, “Second Nature”, also is in Smith’s book *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, he defined “second nature” as the environment as it has been modified and transformed by human activities, particularly through capitalist economic processes (Neil S, 2008), and he argued that nature is not only a backdrop for human activity but is actively produced and transformed through social and economic processes. This is why researchers study natural space as the first level of space. On the other hand, studying natural space from the theoretical level clearly explains why natural landscapes appear in the works of researchers. However, in the researcher's concept, space change is linked with consumerism. Next, the researcher will study the relationship between consumer culture and space, which is why the researcher takes artificial commercial space as the second layer of space for theoretical research. At the same time, the researcher also tries to explain why commercial space or geometric shapes and lines appear in his artworks through the study of consumerism.

### **2.1.2 The Relevance Between Consumerism and Spaces**

The prevalence of consumerism directly influences the spatial structure of our daily lives (Ricky B & Deyan S , 2008). In other words, the prevalence of consumerism affects the researchers' judgment to spatial change. For example, consumerism has driven the

development of urban spaces to accommodate shopping malls, shopping centres, and business districts. Cities expand and change their spatial layout to meet the needs of consumers (Harvey D, 2019). This includes building large retail spaces, entertainment complexes, and necessary infrastructure such as roads and public transport. Due to the pressures of consumerism, cities and towns often change their zoning laws to allocate more space for commercial use. This can include transforming residential areas into mixed-use developments that include retail and office space and changing the spatial dynamics of the community (Harvey D, 2019). Therefore, analysing consumerism is the key to uncovering spatial changes, and it is also an important cornerstone of contextualising researchers' concepts, namely, overlapped space.

Review the academic history of consumer culture, the earliest roots can be traced back to Marxism. Firstly, in his work "Capital: Critique of Political Economy", Marx redefined a new social phenomenon called "Commodity Fetishism" (Karl M, 1993). Marx explained that commodity fetishism describes production and exchange as social relationships among things (money and merchandise) and not as relationships among people. As a form of reification, commodity fetishism presents value as inherent to the commodities, not arising from the interpersonal relations that produced the commodity (Karl M, 1993). This was followed by György Lukács (1885-1971), who advanced a new conception called "Materialization." this is Lukacs' theory of the centre of the discourse but also his critique of contemporary capitalist society, the primary ideological weapon. The materialisation of the essence of human activity, the product of labour, has become different from control, domination, and repression of those things; people become the servant of the matter, asserting that almost all people were attracted to commodities because they played a significant role in contemporary society (György L, 1972). Later, Herbert

Marcuse (1898-1979) criticised capitalist society in his book “One-Dimensional Man” and said that “*False needs are those needs that are imposed on the individual from the outside for the specific social interests of a specific class, the needs that make hardship and aggression, pain and injustice eternal.*” (Herbert M, 1991, p. 103) and Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) thought about consumption from a higher metaphysical level. In his book “The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures,” he mentioned that consumption, as a new tribal myth, has become the morality of our present world. It is currently destroying the foundation of the human being. (Jean B, 2017) The scholars, thinkers, and economists mentioned above-criticised consumer culture at various levels. Since cultural phenomena are formed by human subjectivity, and the spatial environment is based on human subjectivity, culture and space are the products of human subjectivity (Kathleen M. K, 1996). The shift and formation of space are also bound to be related to the current culture. Thus, in this study, explaining and analysing civilisation is an effective way to understand the contemporary spatial structure, and it is also an available method for describing artificial space in the researcher’s creative works. In other words, in this section, the researcher will construe the construction of artificial space in contemporary society by studying consumerism culture. In the next part, the researcher will research and explain the influence of consumer culture on space.

Firstly, the researcher will briefly introduce Jean Baudrillard, one of France’s most influential thinkers and sociologists. His avant-garde thoughts often challenged traditional propositions in various philosophy, economics, and sociology fields, earning him the nickname “The Terrorism of Knowledge.” (Codeluppi V, 2017) Scholars in multiple areas follow him closely, and his French works are quickly translated into English upon release.

Baudrillard's philosophical thoughts have had a significant impact on various fields. For instance, the theme of the movie *The Matrix* is based on his work *Simulacra and Simulations* (Sven L , 2006), and *Consumer Society* (1970) is one of his famous works. Baudrillard opened up a new model of social criticism in Western academic circles by exposing the essence of capitalism from the perspective of symbols (Jean B, 2016). Understanding the essence of capitalism is also essential to unravelling what the researcher calls spatial alienation.

Next, the researcher will analyse Baudrillard's theory of consumption in detail. In contemporary society, consumption has become a significant social phenomenon (Jean B, 2016). Scholars have long introduced the concepts of consumerism and the consumer society in Western society, and the prevalence of these concepts in academic discourse illustrates the enormous impact of consumption. When we discuss consumer culture and consumption patterns, the book “*Consumer Society*” is often the first to come to mind. Baudrillard posits that since the 1960s and 1970s, we have entered a consumer society where consumption is the central focus (Jean B, 2016). In this society, everything, from objects and people's bodies to psychology and concepts, has become commodified and subject to consumption. (Jean B, 2016)

According to the book *Consumption and the Consumer Society* by Colin Campbell, the second industrial revolution in the late 19th century developed rapidly, and the productivity of capitalist countries led by the United States significantly improved. However, the high output brought by high efficiency did not make the bourgeoisie happy for too long because the production of products was too fast, and there was no time to sell them. As a result, they piled up in the warehouse, causing an economic crisis. So, capitalism began trying to find ways to cultivate new consumers, driving more consumer demand

(Richard S, 2007). In "Fordism Transformed: The Development of Production Methods in the Automobile Industry," the Ford Motor Company in the U.S. developed an effective strategy by targeting both the upper class and working families. Ford introduced the concept of an eight-hour workday with a five-dollar daily wage, which aimed to save time, reduce costs, increase production, and raise workers' wages, making cars more affordable for their own employees. This also allowed workers to enjoy cars in their spare time, boosting vehicle sales (Haruhito S & Kazuo W, 1995). Fordism, characterized by mass production of standardized products, was widely adopted by other industries. However, from the 1960s and 1970s, the rise of a new middle class composed of professionals like engineers and doctors, who preferred personalized products, led to the emergence of Post-Fordism or "Flexible Accumulation." (Gosta E. A, 1993). This approach shifted from large-scale production to small-scale, customized production for specific consumer groups, necessitating more complex labor to meet personalized demands. The transition from mass production to customization reflected changes in consumer behavior, shifting the economic focus from manufacturing to services (Haruhito S & Kazuo W, 1995). Fordism drove consumption by lowering costs and prices, while post-Fordism promoted consumption through personalized services and small-scale production. (Haruhito S & Kazuo W, 1995). This shift contributed to the rise of a consumer society, further fueled by policies encouraging consumption to overcome economic crises, leading to the development of consumerism and artificial commercial spaces.

In addition, in the book *The Consumer Society* (1998), Baudrillard summarised and believed that the consumer society has four distinct characteristics. The first characteristic is material abundance, the second is symbolic consumption, the third is mass media drive, and the fourth is the infinite cycle of consumption behaviour. (Jean B, 2017) All these have