

Analysis of the Evolutionary Path of Artistic Intervention in Rural Development

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Abstract: This study employs the CiteSpace visualization analysis tool to systematically review the literature on the involvement of art in rural development from 2004 to 2024. It reveals the research trends, knowledge structure, and evolutionary pathways in this field. The research selects the core collections from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Web of Science (WOS) as data sources, collecting a total of 591 valid documents for a multidimensional analysis, including literature characteristics, author collaboration, institutional distribution, and keyword co-occurrence. The visual analysis uncovers the research context and trends regarding art's involvement in rural development, offering significant insights for understanding the evolutionary processes and future directions of art-based rural construction practices. With the deepening of the rural revitalization strategy, research on the involvement of art in rural development will increasingly emphasize innovative practical pathways, collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and the integration of local cultural heritage with innovation.

Keywords: Artistic Rural Development; Rural Development; Rural Revitalization; CiteSpace; Visualization

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, the involvement of art in rural development has emerged as a new practice model and a research focus. In 2017, China officially proposed the 'Rural Revitalization Strategy' and designated it as one of the key national development strategies. Following this, relevant policies issued by China explicitly

highlighted the necessity to 'prosper and develop rural culture,' which provided essential policy support for artistic involvement in rural development. In this context, various regions have actively initiated art-led rural construction practices, promoting the deep integration of art and rural development.

"Art intervention in rural development" is a complex concept that spans multiple fields. In essence, it emphasizes the interactive relationship between art and rural development by organically integrating various art forms and activities into the rural construction process, thereby promoting the comprehensive development of rural economy, society, and culture. Specifically, art intervention in rural development encompasses three key dimensions: first, the dimension of cultural heritage, which revitalizes traditional cultural resources through artistic forms to enhance rural cultural confidence; second, the dimension of economic development, which utilizes artistic creativity to promote the development of rural cultural and creative industries, nurturing new economic growth points; and third, the dimension of social governance, which leverages artistic activities to stimulate the intrinsic motivation of rural communities, constructing a new model of rural governance with diverse participation[1].

Currently, there has been extensive research in the academic community on the role of art in rural development; however, several shortcomings remain: First, regarding research methodology, existing studies primarily summarize research progress at a theoretical level, lacking a systematic presentation of the dynamics of research evolution[2-5]; second, in terms of research scope, the study samples are limited to a single database, making it difficult to comprehensively reflect the research status in countries outside of China[6-8]; third, concerning research content, there is insufficient

attention to the evolution pathways, research hotspots, and development trends of art intervention in rural development[9-15]. Based on this, the present study employs bibliometric analysis to conduct a visual analysis of relevant literature from the CNKI and Web of Science databases from 2004 to 2024, systematically exploring the analysis of the evolution pathways of art intervention in rural development, with the aim of providing new insights for theoretical research and practical exploration in this field.

2. Research Methods and Data Collection

2.1 Research Methods

CiteSpace is a visualization data analysis software developed by Chen Chaomei, designed to assist in analyzing the development trends of knowledge domains. It can perform statistical analysis on information related to authors, keywords, and cited literature within a specific knowledge area, presenting the analysis results in a visual format. This enables macro-level visualization data analysis of big data samples, helping researchers to understand the development trends of a knowledge domain from a holistic perspective. In recent years, CiteSpace has been extensively applied across various disciplinary fields.

This study utilizes CiteSpace software version 6.3.R1, which is currently a relatively new and stable version. Firstly, countries, institutions, and keywords were selected as nodes to generate visual maps. The time frame selected spans from 2004 to 2024, with each year representing a time slice and a threshold set for the top 50 occurrences within each time slice to highlight key nodes. The pruning method chosen was Pathfinder, which simplifies the network and emphasizes key nodes, ensuring a unique solution. The remaining options were set according to the software's default configurations. Visual mapping was generated for records from both China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Web of Science (WOS), followed by cluster analysis and emerging term analysis. Additionally, to interpret the knowledge base of artistic interventions in rural development, references were selected as nodes for co-citation analysis on WOS records, with the threshold set to g-index and k=25, which is advantageous for highlighting highly influential literature based on citation frequency, while other settings remained

consistent with those for keyword analysis.

2.2 Data Collection

This study selects the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database and the Web of Science (WOS) core collection database as the retrieval databases, which can largely represent domestic and international research outcomes, respectively. The retrieval date is August 11, 2024, with a time frame set from August 1, 2004, to August 1, 2024. The specific retrieval strategy is as follows:

Using the 'retrieval' method employed in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), a search was conducted on topics such as 'artistic rural construction,' 'rural revitalization,' and 'rural development,' which yielded a total of 929 documents. After manually removing documents unrelated to the theme of 'art design,' and following data cleaning and deduplication, a total of 503 valid documents were obtained.

Web of Science (WOS) is one of the largest citation databases in the world and currently serves as the primary database supporting knowledge graph analysis. This study uses the Web of Science Core Collection as the data source for foreign literature, conducting searches with literature types specified as 'Article' AND 'Review Article', and keywords 'Topic=Art' AND 'Topic=Rural development'. A total of 460 documents were collected, and after manually excluding documents unrelated to the topic, 84 valid documents were obtained. Additionally, searching with literature type 'Article' and keywords 'Topic=Art' AND 'Topic=Countryside development' yielded 24 documents, from which 14 valid documents were retained after manually excluding irrelevant ones. After deduplication, a total of 88 valid documents were identified from these 84 and 14 valid documents.

3. Analysis of Literature Characteristics

3.1 Characteristics of the Quantity of Literature

To clearly understand the output of research related to the artistic intervention in rural development at home and abroad, this article utilizes the visualization mapping function of CiteSpace to statistically organize and analyze the publication times of the sampled literature retrieved. A trend chart depicting the quantitative change of publications has been

created, as shown in Figure 1, illustrating the annual publication volumes in the WOS English database and CNKI Chinese database from 2004 to 2024. It is evident that the volume of Chinese publications (indicated by the orange line) has surged dramatically after 2017, suggesting that research in this field has entered a phase of vigorous exploration, indicating the presence of high-level scholars and institutions in the country that continue to focus on this area. Why did 2017 become a turning point for research in this field? According to literature, this is closely related to relevant policies issued in China. In 2017, the 'Rural Vitalization Strategy' was first introduced in China's relevant policies, stating that 'the issues concerning agriculture, rural areas, and farmers are fundamental problems related to the national economy and people's livelihood.' Furthermore, the Rural Vitalization Strategy was included as one of the six key tasks for implementing a new development concept and building a modern economic system; it was also categorized as one of the seven strategies for the new era. This indicates that, under the relevant policies issued in China, a considerable number of scholars began to pay attention to the field of rural development. Subsequently, in 2018, China implemented related policies that comprehensively deployed the Rural Vitalization Strategy. This was followed by the issuance of additional related policies in 2019. The continuous introduction of rural revitalization policies led to a remarkable increase in research in this field during 2018 and 2019, as reflected in the publication volume in CNKI shown in Figure 1. Although no new policies were introduced in 2020, the enthusiasm in this field remained unabated, as evidenced by the publication volume remaining on par with that of 2019. In 2021, the Rural Vitalization Bureau was established, and the relevant policies issued by China were formally promulgated. The introduction of this significant legislative protective policy further deepened the research in this field and caused the publication volume to soar. The relevant policies introduced in China in 2022 and the joint issuance of related policies by five departments of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2023 have once again heightened the research enthusiasm in this field. Particularly, the emphasis on empowering the cultural industry in 2023 has drawn greater academic attention to research on the role of art in rural development, with the volume of

publications in this area reaching a peak in (110 papers). This indicates the significant influence of national policies on research in this field. In contrast, the development of research in this area within WOS has been relatively stable; although the overall publication trend (as indicated by the black line) shows a gradual upward progression, the growth rate is weak. The early publication volume remained at low levels with considerable fluctuations, particularly notable in 2020, when the research field experienced a significant decline due to the pandemic. A noticeable rebound began in 2021, peaking in 2022; however, compared to China, it still lags significantly behind. Overall, international research commenced earlier, and early studies by foreign scholars provided important insights for domestic researchers. In recent years, the practice and study of the role of art in rural development have gradually gained recognition from both academic circles and the general public, which may face a trend of further segmentation.

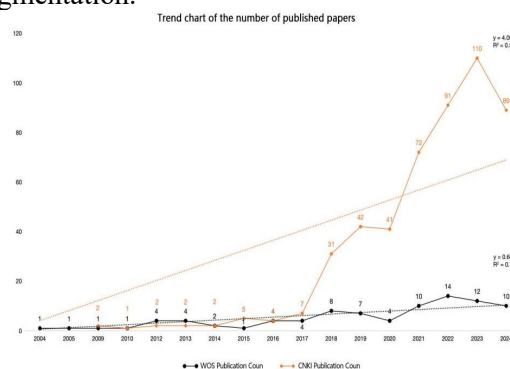


Figure 1. Trend Chart of Publication Volume by Year (2004-2024)

3.2 Main Research on the Distribution of Authors and Research Institutions

3.2.1 Analysis of Author Collaboration Network

Co-authorship analysis can identify the core authors in a particular field as well as the intensity of collaboration among the authors. The number of published works is represented by the size of the nodes, with larger nodes indicating a greater number of publications. The collaboration relationships among authors are depicted by lines, with thicker lines indicating stronger collaborations. As shown in Figure 2.

For domestic CNKI literature on the subject, a visual analysis yields 221 network nodes, 139 connecting lines, and a corresponding network density of 0.0057. Among all the nodes, several larger nodes are prominently visible, indicating

that the core authors in the field of artistic intervention in rural development in China include Qu Yan (21 publications), Pan Lusheng (14 publications), Fang Lili (9 publications), An Lizhe (6 publications), Zhang Ying (5 publications), Wang Yongjian (4 publications), and Xiang Li (4 publications). These prolific authors have played a crucial role in the development of this field. There is evidence of both collaboration and independent research among the authors. From the connecting lines depicted in Figure 2, it is clear that the most prominent representative author collaboration group is centered around Qu Yan's research team. Additionally, there are smaller collaborative teams, such as those led by Pan Lusheng, Fang Lili, and An Lizhe. However, the connections between the nodes in these smaller collaboration teams are limited to one or two lines, indicating that their networks have not expanded and are confined to two or three individuals, resulting in relatively weak collaborative power. Different collaboration teams focus on different research emphases. The team centered around Qu Yan primarily concentrates on the theoretical construction and practical exploration of artistic intervention in rural revitalization. Their theoretical research includes cultural identity, spatial reconstruction, industrial upgrading, and social governance, while their practical paths encompass models like art festivals/art seasons, artist residency creation models, and public art creation models. Qu Yan's team particularly emphasizes the protection and renewal of rural cultural landscapes, advocating for the concept of "cultural symbiosis," which highlights the importance of innovatively updating landscapes through artistic intervention while preserving traditional cultural landscapes. The team centered around Pan Lusheng mainly focuses on the revitalization of traditional crafts and the protection of intangible cultural heritage, specifically exploring how to integrate traditional crafts with modern design to promote rural revitalization. Their research priorities include the modern transformation of traditional crafts and the establishment of a talent cultivation system for crafts, while also emphasizing the concept of "living heritage" in intangible cultural heritage, proposing a balance between protection and development, a combination of tradition and innovation, as well as cultural and economic integration. The team

led by Fang Lili analyzes artistic rural construction from an anthropological perspective, investigating the types, ecology, practical status, and future development paths of contemporary artistic rural construction. Overall, the diagram reveals many relatively isolated points, with almost no network connections between the various teams, exhibiting a phenomenon of concentrated collaboration among a few while most remain decentralized. This indicates that academic cooperation among authors in this field has not yet formed a scale and remains in a relatively dispersed state.

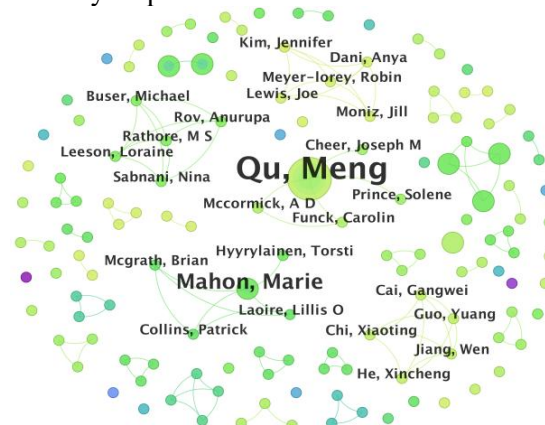


Figure 2. Co-Authorship Map of Literature Authors

In Figure 2, a visual analysis of the Web of Science literature presents 192 network nodes, 190 connections, and a consequent network density of 0.0104. From the analysis of the prominent larger nodes, the core authors in the field of foreign artistic intervention in rural development include Qu Meng (4 publications), Zheng Danni (4 publications), Gkartzios Menelaos (2 publications), Mahon Marie (2 publications), Crawshaw, Julie (2 publications), Benckendorff, Pierre J (2 publications), Liang, Jianhui (2 publications), and Ritchie, Brent W (2 publications). In terms of connections, there is significant collaboration among foreign literature authors, resulting in various collaborative networks, particularly highlighted by the research teams centered around Qu Meng and Mahon Marie. The team led by Qu Meng primarily examines how arts festivals and holiday tourism can promote the resilience of rural communities, as well as the challenges and opportunities related to the relationship between arts festivals and rural sustainable development. Conversely, the team led by Mahon Marie focuses on the impact of rural arts festivals on rural development and resilience, as well as the

transformative potential of art and culture in sustaining the future development of rural areas.

3.2.2 Analysis of Institutional Collaboration Network

The presentation method of institutional collaboration mapping is consistent with that of authorship collaboration mapping. From the analysis of the domestic CNKI literature mapping, a total of 200 nodes and 108 connections were identified among domestic institutions, with a network density of 0.0054. Statistical analysis of research institutions revealed that the core institutions in related fields include Shandong University of Arts and Crafts, the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association, the Institute of Art Anthropology at the Chinese Academy of Arts, the Urban-Rural Art Construction Research Institute at Guangdong University of Technology, the Chinese Academy of Arts, the College of Arts at Yunnan University, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art Circles, the College of Arts at Southeast University, the Institute of Art Studies at the Chinese Academy of Arts, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts, among others. These institutions engage in mutual collaboration and have formed a strong inter-institutional cooperation team, particularly involving Shandong University of Arts and Crafts, the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association, the Institute of Art Anthropology at the Chinese Academy of Arts, the Chinese Academy of Arts, the College of Arts at Yunnan University, and the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art Circles. Beyond the three distinct clusters of collaboration highlighted in the figure, there is relatively little academic exchange among other institutions. This reflects a situation similar to that observed in collaboration with domestic authors, indicating a state of independence and dispersion. It is evident that there is significant potential for improvement in collaborative exchanges among research institutions in this field in the future.

The Web of Science literature map, as shown in Figure 3, is characterized by 135 nodes, 92 connections, and a network density of 0.0102. The core institutions in the relevant fields include Newcastle University - UK, Hiroshima University, Yulin Normal University, University of Queensland, Universidad de Almeria, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe-University of Galway, Macau University of Science & Technology,

Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Griffith University, and California State University System, among others, all of which occupy significant positions in the institutional collaboration network. They have formed multiple close cooperative relationships with domestic entities. From the overall perspective of the domestic and international research institutions' map, research on artistic intervention in rural development exhibits a research model predominantly led by universities, complemented by research institutes and associations. In contrast, the comparative results indicate that international inter-institutional collaborative research is more closely-knit and more mature than that conducted domestically.

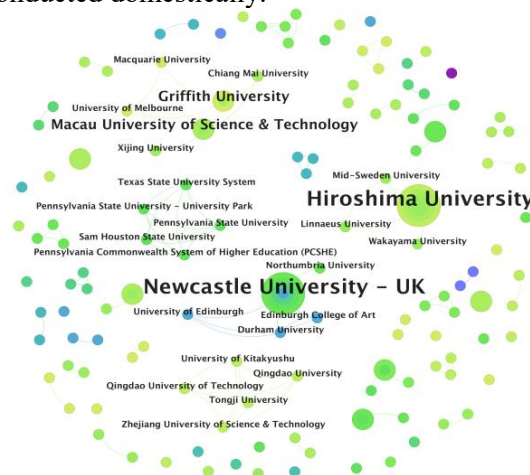


Figure 3. Institutional Collaboration Map

3.3 Distribution of Major Countries, Distribution of Disciplines, and Co-Citation Analysis

In the national co-occurrence map of literature from the Web of Science (Figure 4), there are a total of 32 countries represented. The top ten countries by publication volume are: China, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, Japan, South Africa, Denmark, India, Ireland, and Canada. Among these, China has the highest number of published articles, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia. In terms of centrality rankings (Table 1), the top three are China, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Australia, ranked third in publication volume, and the United States, ranked fourth, both have a centrality of 0, indicating that while these two countries have a high volume of publications, their influence in the research field of artistic intervention in rural development is relatively weak and requires improvement.

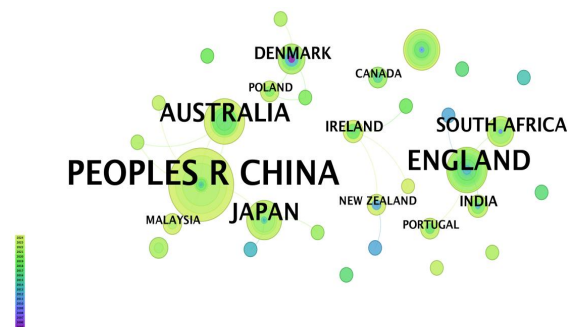


Figure 4. National Institutional Cooperation Map

From the subject distribution map in Figure 5, the literature in Web of Science extensively covers 53 disciplines, demonstrating a strong interdisciplinary nature. It involves fields such as GEOGRAPHY, AGRICULTURE, MULTIDISCIPLINARY, REHABILITATION, COMPUTER SCIENCE, and SOFTWARE, which is a phenomenon rarely observed in domestic literature. Therefore, it highlights a significant difference in disciplinary distribution compared to domestic literature.

In the co-citation analysis map of the Web of Science literature, the literature with more than four occurrences of co-citation (Figure 6) is ranked as follows: Balfour B, Crawshaw J, Florida Richard, Qu M, Mahon M and Waitt G. The authors with more than four occurrences of co-citation (Figure 7) are ranked as follows: BELL D, GIBSON C, CRAWSHAW J, MCHENRY JA, BALFOUR B, QU M, WOODS M, DUXBURY N, KLIEN S, MAHON M, MARKUSEN A, and GKARTZIOS M. This indicates that these pieces of literature and authors have a significant influence in the field of artistic intervention in rural development, with a high level of recognition for their research outcomes. The journals with more than six occurrences of co-citation (Figure 8) are ranked as follows: J RURAL STUD, SOCIOL RURALIS (32 times), SUSTAINABILITY-BASEL (17 times), ANN TOURISM RES (15 times), URBAN STUD (13 times), J SUSTAIN TOUR (12 times), INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CULTURAL POLICY (11 times), PROG HUM GEOG (8 times), TOURISM MANAGE (7 times), CITIES (7 times), and RURAL SOC (7 times). These journals demonstrate a high level of attention to the field of artistic intervention in rural development, with in-depth research. They are also journals that scholars in this field should continuously monitor and prioritize.

Table 1. National Centrality Rankings

	Nation	Quantity	Centrality	Year
1	PEOPLES R CHINA	24	0.07	2014
2	ENGLAND	13	0.03	2012
3	AUSTRALIA	10	0	2015
4	USA	9	0	2009
5	JAPAN	8	0.05	2013
6	SOUTH AFRICA	5	0	2010
7	DENMARK	4	0.01	2004
8	INDIA	3	0	2013
9	IRELAND	3	0.01	2018
10	CANADA	2	0	2016
11	MALAYSIA	2	0	2022
12	NEW ZEALAND	2	0.01	2012
13	POLAND	2	0	2020
14	PORTUGAL	2	0	2018
15	SPAIN	2	0	2021
16	AUSTRIA	1	0	2022
17	BRAZIL	1	0	2022
18	COLOMBIA	1	0	2023
19	FINLAND	1	0	2019
20	FRANCE	1	0	2017
21	IRAN	1	0	2017
22	ITALY	1	0	2019
23	NETHERLANDS	1	0	2024
24	NORWAY	1	0	2020
25	SCOTLAND	1	0	2012
26	SOUTH KOREA	1	0	2023
27	SRI LANKA	1	0	2012
28	SWEDEN	1	0	2021
29	SWITZERLAND	1	0	2017
30	THAILAND	1	0	2022
31	WALES	1	0	2014

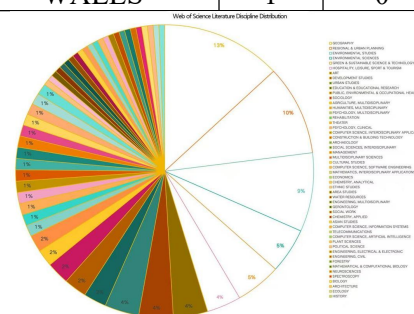


Figure 5. Subject Distribution

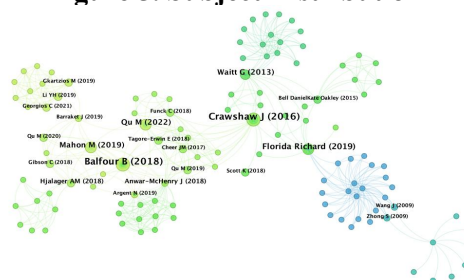


Figure 6. Cited Literature

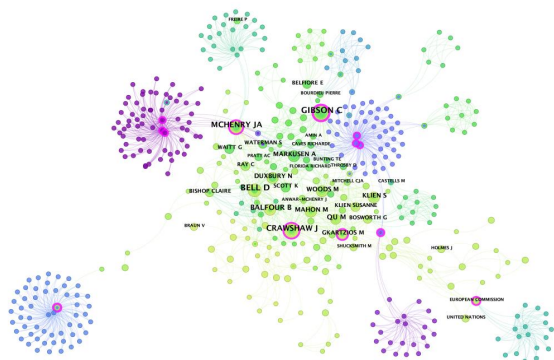


Figure 7. Co-cited Authors

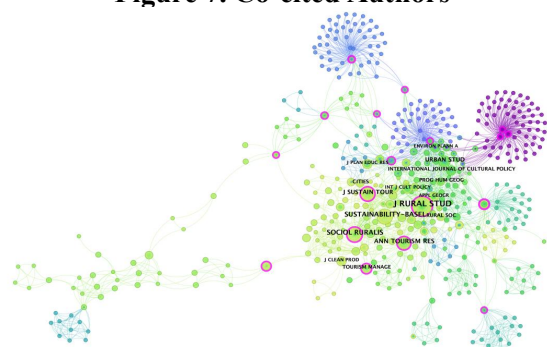


Figure 8. Journals with Co-citation

5. Conclusion

This study systematically reviews the literature on the involvement of art in rural development in both China and abroad through the visualization analysis tool CiteSpace, revealing the research trends and evolution pathways in this field. The findings indicate that the involvement of art in rural development, as an emerging practice model and research hotspot, is experiencing vigorous growth against the backdrop of the rural revitalization strategy, while also facing multiple challenges and opportunities for development.

From the perspective of research time distribution, 2017 became an important turning point in domestic research in this field, closely related to the relevant policy in China known as the "Rural Revitalization Strategy." The continuous introduction of various rural revitalization policies following this, especially the joint notice issued by five departments in 2023 regarding the pilot program on empowering rural revitalization through the cultural industry, has continuously promoted the in-depth development of artistic rural construction research, demonstrating a significant policy-driven characteristic in this field. Although international research began earlier, its development has been steady, contrasting sharply with the rapid growth of

domestic research, reflecting China's high attention to and practical innovations in rural revitalization.

From the perspective of research subjects, a core research team has emerged domestically, represented by figures such as Qu Yan, Pan Lusheng, and Fang Lili. Each team has its own distinctive research focus: the Qu Yan team concentrates on the protection and innovative renewal of rural cultural landscapes, the Pan Lusheng team is concerned with the revitalization of traditional crafts and the 'living inheritance' of intangible cultural heritage, while the Fang Lili team analyzes artistic rural construction practices from an anthropological perspective. However, the collaboration network among research institutions is relatively scattered, and a large-scale academic community has yet to be formed. Compared to international standards, there is still room for improvement in the density of collaboration.

From the perspective of research content, the artistic intervention in rural development exhibits characteristics of interdisciplinary integration. International studies involve a diverse range of fields such as geography, agriculture, rehabilitation, and computer science, while domestic research is more focused on the perspectives of art studies, cultural studies, and sociology. This difference reflects a broader international research vision and deeper interdisciplinary integration. Future domestic research can draw on international experiences to expand disciplinary boundaries and promote multidimensional and multilevel interdisciplinary research.

Based on research findings, the future research and practice of artistic intervention in rural development should focus on the following directions: (1) Innovation of localized pathways for artistic rural construction. Artistic intervention in rural development should not simply replicate urban cultural and creative models or international experiences, but should be rooted in the cultural soil of the countryside, respecting local knowledge systems and exploring artistic rural construction practices with local characteristics. This requires an in-depth excavation of rural cultural resources, an understanding of rural social structures and cultural logics, and the construction of artistic intervention mechanisms that align with local societies. (2) Building a collaborative participation mechanism among diverse

stakeholders. Artistic rural construction practice requires creative input from professionals such as artists and designers, as well as active participation from villagers, and it also necessitates support and collaboration from multiple parties including government, universities, and enterprises. Future research should focus on how to establish a participatory mechanism that fosters equal dialogue and effective collaboration, balances the interests and demands of all parties, and forms a concerted effort to promote sustainable rural development. (3) Long-term mechanisms and evaluation systems for artistic intervention. Existing artistic rural construction practices often exhibit a characteristic of "short-term projectization," lacking sustainability and systematicity. Future research should explore long-term mechanisms for artistic intervention in rural areas, design scientifically reasonable evaluation indicator systems, and assess the actual effects of artistic intervention from multiple dimensions such as cultural inheritance, community empowerment, industrial revitalization, and ecological protection, providing evidence for policy formulation and practice optimization. (4) Integration and innovation of digital technology and artistic rural construction. In the context of digital transformation, how to leverage digital technology to empower artistic rural construction and promote the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional rural culture is a subject worth in-depth discussion. This includes, but is not limited to, building digital documentation, designing immersive experiences, and establishing online creative platforms as diverse practical pathways.

In summary, the intervention of art in rural development, as an important practical path for rural revitalization, is currently in a vibrant phase of theoretical exploration and practical innovation. Future research should strengthen international exchanges and interdisciplinary cooperation, deepen the positive interaction between theoretical research and practical reflection, and build a theoretical system and practical model of artistic rural construction with Chinese characteristics, contributing intellectual strength to the revitalization of rural culture and sustainable development.

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