

View the Modern Interpretation of Chinese Landscape Painting From *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*

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Abstract: The movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*, directed by famous directors Zhou Liya and Han Zhen, produced by the Palace Museum and China Oriental Performing Arts Group, and the creation background of the national treasure-level cultural relic “Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” was launched on major screens this summer, setting a peak in the box office of this type of film in China. The film combines the charm of Song Dynasty landscapes with modern aesthetics, breaks the limitations of paintings and dance dramas, and conveys the emotions contained in famous paintings to the audience from a more free perspective. This article starts from the evolution of “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” to the movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* and summarizes and summarizes the film technology to shift green landscape painting from a two-dimensional plane to a three-dimensional space, which can better reflect the beauty of Chinese painting’s artistic conception, stimulate the emotional resonance of the audience, and promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese traditional culture.

Keywords: Wang Ximeng; *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*; Map of A Thousand Miles of Rivers

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1.introduction

With the development and progress of society, economy and culture, traditional Chinese art has been “chased” by more young people. From the popular “Tang Palace Night Banquet” in the Henan Spring Festival Gala to the theatrical version of “Dream of Red Mansions”, to the national tour of the 2021 dance poetry drama “A Tapestry of a Legendary Land-Dance Painting <Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains>”, all fully demonstrate the important role of dance dramas in the process of “cultural relics revival”. As the first long dance film in China, *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* takes advantage of the technological advantages of film technology to break through various limitations of stage plays, further extends the artistic space and aesthetic artistic conception displayed in paintings, and creates many immersive scenes. Regarding the innovative presentation of the movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* on the stage, domestic research is mostly based on papers, but the differences in expressions between painting and film are still in a blank state. The research in this article begins with classics, aims to inherit, and is intended to be innovative. It adopts a comparative research method to carefully explore the breakthrough of *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* in artistic form, in order to promote the innovative application of painting art in images.

2.Artistic transformation from “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” to *A*

Tapestry of a Legendary Land

“A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” is one of the top ten famous paintings in my country. It was written by Wang Ximeng, a painter in the Northern Song Dynasty. The scroll is twelve meters long and has three volumes, all of which are colored with stone green and stone green. When you unfold the scroll, the first thing that catches your eye is the majestic mountains. The mountains are rolling and undulating, either towering into the clouds, as if they are about to break through the sky; or winding, like a giant dragon circling. Between the mountains, clouds and mists are filled with clouds and mists, and the clouds and mists are light and lively, creating a mysterious atmosphere. The rivers and lakes in the painting are another magnificent beauty. The river water is presented in the white-leaving technique, but it gives people a sense of rippling waves, rushing endlessly, fast or slow, wide or narrow. The river surface is occasionally decorated with a few small boats. The small boats look extremely small in this vast river, but add a bit of leisure and satisfaction, as if the people on the boat are intoxicated by the mountains and rivers. At the end of the painting, there are villages and towns scattered between mountains and rivers. They are a fusion of fireworks and the beauty of nature on earth. The buildings with white walls and black tiles are arranged in a staggered manner. The streets and bridges are clearly distinguishable. In the villages, there are chickens and dogs, and children play. In the towns, people come and go, and it is very lively. With its profound humanistic connotation and historical accumulation, “The Map of the River and Mountains” allows us to feel the fireworks in the lives of urban people in that era.

The movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* is adapted from “The Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains”, which tells the story of “The Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” being about to be exhibited. The showrunners walked into Wang Ximeng’s heart and accompanied him through the precious time of hard work in painting this painting. The film is divided into ten chapters: “Ask seal”, “At first sight”, “Singing silk”, “Listen to the Rain”, “Search for stone”, “Practicing the brush”, “Green”, “Quenched ink”, “Thoughts”, and “Into painting”. Following the perspective of the showrunner, they walked into “Ask seal”, which is a picture of seal carving people flying through steel and stones and engraving famous chapters. They used a knife like a pen, and changed freely in a square inch; the third part “Singing Silk” is taken from “Silkworm Weaving Picture”, which tells the story of silk weaving people weaving canvas with spring silkworm silk. The process is exquisite, and finally ended with Wang Ximeng hiding from the rain, bringing out the fourth part “Listen to the Rain” and dancing alone, which has the effect of connecting the past and the future. “Search for stone” is a story about the grinding stone man visiting mountains and rivers to find stones and grinding pestles and mortars for the colors of stone green, stone green, ochre, etc. The grinding stone man travels through mountains and rivers, grinding the ore into powder, creating the dazzling green green in “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains”; the first paragraph of “Practicing the brush” shows the scene of students interacting with teachers in the classroom, the boy is lively and naughty, and the boys in pink clothes dance lightly and cheerfully. The second paragraph is the scene of the pen-maker making a pen with hundreds of crafts. This brush that embodies the countless efforts of the pen-maker, following Wang Ximeng to paint all over the mountains and rivers; “Quenched ink” is a scene where the ink-maker spends energy to create ink like lacquer, like a piece of film As mentioned, a good ink requires multiple steps such as smoke refining, simmering, hammering, and pestle. As the saying goes, “100,000 light glue, and hang it for more than a hundred days, it will only make a little like lacquer”^[1]. In this section, a group dance of “green” is added, which reflects the sonorous and powerful of male ink makers. The “green” paints the eyebrows of distant mountains and the peak buns, the sleeves are gradually dyed, and the skirts are entangled, dancing gracefully in the landscape painting scroll, like the layers of mountains. The towering peaks formed by the body show the beautiful scenery of thousands of miles of rivers and mountains. Whether it is dragging slowly or moving horizontally, it is slow and powerful. From a distance, you can look at the top of the group jade mountain, look at the charming green mountain up close. The movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* cleverly intertwines and penetrates the extras with the landscape, achieving the effect of dancing in the scenery and the scenery in the dance, allowing the viewer to understand the true meaning of “mountains and rivers are born from me, I am born from me, and mountains and rivers are born from me, and mountains and rivers meet me and transform into traces”^[2]. It can be said that *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* truly portrays “Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains”.



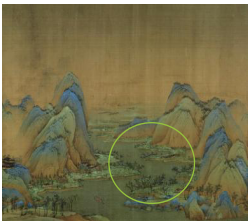
3.The transformation of techniques from “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” to *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*

As one of the top ten famous paintings in my country, “The Painting of the River and Mountains of Thousand Miles” fully demonstrates the aesthetic view of “Tao travels in art, and art conforms to Tao” in terms of technique^[3]. The paintings not only contain vast and distant mountains and rivers, but also subtle figures as dust. The movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* starts with the creative process of “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains”, expresses the images in the painting with film techniques, linking the past and present, so that the viewers can understand the interest in the painting more clearly, and convey the ever-fading green scroll to the world with the lens of the movie.

3.1 Art skills in “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains”

First, in terms of composition, both “high and lofty”, “flat and far-reaching” and “deep” . what is “high and lofty”? Guo Xi said: “From the mountain to the top of the mountain, it is called lofty.” Specifically, the peaks in the middle of the picture are towering into the clouds, and the top of the mountain is covered with mist. The waterfall in the painting falls four times in a row from top to bottom, and the water is vigorous, forming a rare four-stack waterfall. On the right side of the picture, you can see a peak that can almost reach the sky. It is the highest peak of the whole volume, “Tianzhu Peak”^[4], which is contrasted clearly with the two surrounding hills. Looking up from the bottom of the mountain, it forms a “high and lofty” visual effect. “Far-depth” emphasizes the sense of depth, “Far-depth from the mountain to the front of the mountain, it is called far-reaching”. On the opposite bank of “Tianzhu Peak”, there is a tower shadow. Behind the tower is a double-eaved roof building complex located between the mountains. Behind the double-eaved hall, a small path is deeper, leading to a long and steep stairway. Looking at the other bank on this bank can make people feel the transparency and heaviness of the endless mountains of Liao. Finally, there is “flat and far away”, “Looking at the distant mountains from the nearest mountains is called flat and far away”. The “far” here does not refer to the distance, but a special sense of space, which makes people have a vast visual experience. For example, in the third section of the scroll, one “small pan mountain” appears after another^[5]. Under the Xiaopan Mountain, dense reeds, vermicelli and calamus grow. On the other side of the river, more majestic mountains and more delicate flora appear. In this picture, two times are created: one is the coming of twilight and hazy; the other is the long road is far away, and it is the special distance between the near mountains and the distant mountains to create a distant scenery(see table 1).

Table1

high and lofty		The peaks in the middle of the picture are towering into the clouds,and the top of the mountain is shrouded in mist. The waterfall in the picture falls from top to bottom for four consecutive times.Water is vigorous, forming a rare four-stack waterfall.
deep		Behind the tower is a double-eaved building complex located between the mountains.Behind the double-eaved hall,a small path is deeper and leads to a long and steep staircase.
flat and far-reaching		Below Xiaopan Mountain, dense reeds,watercress and calamus grow.On the other side of the river,more majestic mountains and more delicate flora appear.

Second, in the creation of artistic conception, “The Map of Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” emphasizes the viewer’s mentality and feelings. The opening line includes both tall and tall “long pine”, as well as “different pine” with staggered branches, and “ancient pine” with old and scalloped skin ^[6], symbolizing the painter’s proud and upright spirit. The pavilions, towers and thatched cottages standing in the forest remind us of a passage in “Carefree Wandering”: “If a person who rides on the rightness of heaven and earth and controls the debate of the six qi to travel infinity, is he evil to be with him?” ^[7] Wang Ximeng used this to show his state of mind: a gentleman lives in the mountains and forests forever, is not bound by the world, and comes and goes freely, and goes back as he goes, then he can spend his free life.

Third, in terms of scene dynamics, every time I pass by a bamboo forest, I have to continue to show the scroll and look back and walk along the winding path. The pedestrians on the road provide us with the perspective of observing this painting. For example, along the footsteps of pedestrians, you can judge where the road blocked by mountains passes through, where the water stops, follow the light boat on the river, and naturally come to the “Peach Blossom Land” written by Wang Ximeng - Taoyuan Villa and Oulu Villa ^[8]. At the same time, the viewer seems to be the people in the painting, walking with them, observing from their perspective, truly achieving “changing the scenery”.

Fourth, in terms of color, it inherited the green and green painting method since the Tang Dynasty, seeking changes in the simple and unified blue and green tone. Against the backdrop of ochre, the stone green and stone green in the mountains appear more bright and dazzling, and the brown color is also reflected in the painting. It is used to express mountains, rivers and trees, making the picture more vivid and realistic.

3.2 Innovative expression in *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*

Although in the art genealogy, painting and film are considered to be two mediums far apart. For example, painting displays objects in a flat manner, while films have three-dimensional and three-dimensional spaces; paintings have a unified observation point, while films can be experienced in immersively from multiple angles. The movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* has made a media attempt to integrate this innate attribute barrier. Although it is a concrete imitation of two-dimensional pictures, it gives the picture a new life, making Wang Ximeng’s story regain its glory after thousands of years.




First, from the perspective of scene construction, the movie adopts a stage design of “concentric circles” to express the “change of scenery” in painting: a four-layer rotating platform is installed on the ground, which sometimes rotates in the same direction with the drive of the motor, sometimes reverses, and sometimes interlaced, forming a constantly changing stage space. When the “green” slowly lowers its waist on the circular stage, it cleverly forms a rotating Bagua array, combined with the changes of mountains in the background, forms a dynamic scene space, leading the viewer into the cycle of time. The creative rules of the “Three Far Methods” are reflected in the construction of the character scenes in *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*. In the flat field, the director uses the water waves at the front of the stage to create a vast and open picture - the foreground is three tilted female dancers, the middle scene is the starring “Green” looking sideways and sleeves, and the distance is three or four groups of staggered ridges, which clearly present a continuous and winding atmosphere of thousands of miles of mountains. The lofty and faraway are most suitable for depicting mountains and ridges. The shots are often placed at the lower end of the group of characters to highlight the green and green color of the strange peaks and the cliffs that are steep and tall. In the “deep”, the director used a stage scheduling with a single sleeve covering his face and tilting his back to mop the floor to complete the deep visual effect performance (see table 2).

Second, from the perspective of color, *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* abandons the use of strong colors and selects simple and quiet tones for two reasons: First, it highlights the unique simplicity and elegance of Song-style aesthetics. The Song people were extremely rigorous in color matching. They usually used nature as inspiration to integrate elements such as landscapes, flowers and birds into it to form a fresh, refined, elegant and noble style. At the same time, the idea of “preserving the laws of nature and eliminating human desires” ^[9] made people feel a sense of restraint and abstinence in their clothes; the second: coordinate the matching relationship between the environment and the characters. If the character’s clothing is blue, then the environment is correspondingly green; if the environment is a slightly quaint and calm color, the character’s clothing should be matched with warm colors such as ochre. For example, the female official wore a vermilion round neck robe, held a white long scarf, and the doors and windows behind her were painted red to show the appropriateness of her clothes. In

addition, the background of the film uses the inherent color of “Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” on a large scale and spreads it with this base. The picture completely simulates the texture of silk. When Ximeng and Qinglu appear at the center of the picture at the same time, the boundary between the characters and the painting gradually blurs, achieving an artistic space where people and paintings are united.

Third, in terms of artistic conception, the film leads the viewer into an ethereal and peaceful state through a combination of background music and dance performance. For example, the guqin at the beginning is the main melody, with a deep and melodious tone and a long echo. The key scenes are “into the painting”, with Western music as the main melody, with guqin and guzheng as auxiliary, and different instruments are intertwined and integrated, showing Wang Ximeng’s complex mood when he created it. When music and dance are combined, the melody changes from weak to strong, which stimulates emotional resonance. Chimes, konghou, zhu, xun, xiao, pipa, etc. add a simple and freehand atmosphere to the film ^[10]. With the blessing of a variety of instruments, the movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* makes up for the shortcomings of the theater version’s only traditional instrumental music, and is full of modernity. In terms of dance performance, the most outstanding thing in the film is the “green waist”. It expresses the ruggedness of mountains and rocks through dynamic pitch and ups and convergence, and combines the changes in mountains and rivers in the background to indicate the changes in time and space, making the static picture three-dimensional and dynamic. The green waists of the extras are neat and orderly, and at this time the endless mountains and rivers are beginning to become lively, leading the viewers into a state where clouds float, waterfalls fly, and human figures fall.

Table2

high and lofty		The lofty and lofty are most suitable for depicting mountains and ridges. The lens is often placed at the lower end of the group of characters to highlight the green and green color of the strange peaks and the high cliffs.
deep		The director used a stage scheduling with a single sleeve covering the face and walking backwards to mop the floor to complete the visual effect expression in depth.
flat and far-reaching		The prospect is three tilted female dancers, the middle scene is the starring “Green”gazeing sideways and lowers her sleeves, and the distance is three or four groups of staggered ridges.

4.The unique cultural meaning expressed in *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*

The origin of Chinese landscape painting is that it has spirit first and then substance, integrating the essence of nature, the elegance of heaven and earth, the yin and yang and the five elements, with infinite fun. Literary and hermits use landscape painting to write about the leisure in their hearts, while court literati and hermits give landscape painting the connotation of “forever in the mountains and rivers”. “Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains” is a courtyard painting, reflecting the rulers’ expectations for the country and the country. In the painting, there is not only the ingenious nature of nature, but also the cultivation and creation of countless people. It can be said that this prosperous era belongs to both the people and the world. Along this idea, we can naturally deduce a brand new concept -“people’s landscape”. This concept can be regarded

as the ideological cornerstone of *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*. For example, the silkworm breeders, silk weaving people, pen makers, ink makers, students and teachers in the painting academy all hold Xi Meng's "parents". Although the painters are of extraordinary talent, they also need the help of the times and the people. As atoms, the masses are organically connected by Xi Meng, which creates this famous painting. At the beginning of the film, the scroll is not signed, but the screenwriter put all the "spotlight" on these "anonymous people", which further shows that the people are the creators of history and the signature of art should belong to the people. When the ending shot returns to the modern era, the theme of the film becomes clear: despite the alternation of seasons and the times change, the country and the people will always stay in the world.

The famous historian Chen Yinke said: "The culture of the Chinese nation has evolved for thousands of years and was created in the Zhao and Song dynasties." The 319-year history of the Song Dynasty created an extremely elegant era. In his notes, Wu Zimu, a Song Dynasty man, recorded: "Burning incense, sing tea, hanging paintings and flower arrangements, four kinds of idle things are not allowed to be ignored."^[1] These four kinds of idle things - burning incense, sing tea, hanging paintings and flower arrangements were called the "four arts of life" in the Song Dynasty. They are art of enriching cultivation and cultivation through people's sense of smell, taste, vision and touch. People in the Song Dynasty believed that burning incense can relieve worries, and making tea can bring physical and mental enjoyment. Hanging paintings has the charm of elegance, and arranging flowers can experience various life. In the movie, we can see that literati and scholars in the Academy of Calligraphy and Painting gather to enjoy the fragrance, while reading the scriptures, talking about paintings and Taoisms, elevating daily life to the realm of art, recreating the relaxed lifestyle from the Song people, and integrating the exquisite Song style four arts into a cheerful dance atmosphere. The viewer can realize the poetic and picturesqueness in a peaceful life, which is very similar to the ideal life that people use all kinds of means to constantly pursue. These life pictures are presented by the exhibition artists traveling through time and space to approach the 18-year-old boy behind "The Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains".

From "A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains" to *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land*, from the vast map of the country to the ancient Song style four elegances, the "National Team" Literary and Art Troupe insists on upholding the truth and innovation, strengthens cultural confidence, condenses the ambitions of eternal life, and gathers thoughts for thousands of years, promoting the dusty historical picture to reproduce the future generations, creating new literature and art belonging to our era, allowing more people to feel the profoundness of Chinese culture.

5. Conclusion

The movie *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* relies on the power of technology to create a unique "national aesthetic". In terms of its innovation, the author summarizes the following breakthroughs: First, the innovative expression of the classical landscape spirit. The film is deeply rooted in the elegant Song-style aesthetics, allowing the poetic scenes in "The Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains" to the stage, presenting unique oriental Zen and philosophical thoughts. Secondly, the widespread application of modern technology has enabled the film to successfully transform the static picture of "A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains" into dynamic scenes through realistic special effects and scenes, so that the audience can immerse themselves in it; the musical effects of Chinese and Western cultures have also broken the limitations of traditional stage performances, seamlessly connecting ancient paintings with modern stages, realizing the audio-visual effect of the relationship between reality and reality; the montage film technique intertwines reality and dreams, carefully expressing the inner world of the characters, and sharing the artistic charm that spans thousands of years with the dancers. Again, in terms of cultural implication, the film put aside the grand social themes and focuses on ordinary little people, regards them as witnesses of historical development, creates a media channel connecting the people of ancient and modern times, stirs up strong cultural confidence, and is a truly undeserved "people's landscape". To sum up, *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* uses the medium of "image" to convey the images in the painting to the world in a relatively complete way. When the viewer is in it, he can immerse himself in the artistic beauty of Chinese landscape paintings. He successfully shifted "Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains" from a two-dimensional plane to a three-dimensional space, allowing thousands of years of famous paintings to enter the homes of ordinary people and become works of art that the public likes, opening up a new path for the

return and rebirth of ancient civilizations.

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Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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