

The Idea of Sustainable Development Influenced on Mongolian Paintings

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Abstract

Sustainable development refers to the process of preserving the safety of nature and society at all levels and maintaining the “quality of life” of present and future generations at a normal level. Dozens of social, economic, and educational sectors have been developing ways to ensure sustainable development and improve human-social cohesion. However, in this article, I intend to reflect on how the contents of art and painting are integrated into education for sustainable development. Art is an aesthetic result that aims to bring about change in society by influencing everyone and making the world we live in brighter and more enlightened. That is why today’s art has developed as a call to criticize and praise every good and bad phenomenon of mankind. Painting is the precursor of all art. The research was conducted using the method of hermeneutic interpretation of paintings and comparative methods, and a total of 224 paintings created in 2000-2010 were analyzed and graphs were made with indicators reflecting the idea of sustainable development. In the research: humanity-poverty, equality, -56 pictures; mother earth-natural resources of the mother earth, climate change, -41; peace-society with fair access, -26; prosperity-living in harmony with nature/social-realist paintings, -56. There were 46 paintings that did not reflect the educational perspective of sustainable development. Out of a total of 224 paintings in the national repertoire, 179 or 80 percent reflect the idea of sustainable development, which shows that the conceptual content of the painting reflects sustainable development. According to the above, in the meaning of the painting, social well-being, the ideology of equality, compassion for each other, urban and rural reform, climate change, and humanism are painted in realistic and modern terms. Shows that it occupies a large place in the field of education.

Keywords

Sustainable Development, Painting, Equality, Environmental Awareness, Visual Narrative, Mongolia

1. Introduction

Mongolian painting traces its origins to ancient petroglyphs, totem idols, and animal imagery, which evolved through Sug painting into religious and royal portraits. The art of the Huns, Sambis, and Zhuzhans preserved human relations through sacred monuments. While artworks by Zanabazar and others define Mongolia's classical heritage, the development of modern painting, influenced by social realism and modernism, began in the 20th century. Art historians such as N. Tsultem and L. Sonomtseren categorized this period by stages linked to political transformation.

But the development of modern art and painting is directly related to the 20th century. Art historians L. Sonomtseren and N. Tsultem divided the period as follows, which began in the middle of the twentieth century. Mongolian Fine Art of the 20th century and that period are divided into three main parts (Цүлтэм, 1988).

Fine art during the Democratic stage of the revolution /1921-1940/, Fine art during the struggle for the foundation of Socialism in the Republic of Korea 1940-1960, and 1960-1980 during the construction of the material and technical base of socialism are considered respectively.

The reason for choosing this topic is that the critical depiction of social problems directly and indirectly affects the concept of sustainable development. Today's society is developing a lot of images based on dozens of sustainable development policies, such as treating people with compassion, being friendly to the environment, climate disasters, negative socio-economic effects, and moral disorders. These paintings, which are unique in their colors, shapes, and content in realist and modern paintings, are a phenomenon that has suddenly appeared nowadays. The cartoons, which began to be expressed as propaganda at the beginning of the 20th century, are fully compatible with the goal of sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development is considered as a concept focused only on environmental protection. All members of the society should equally participate in the development of their society and enjoy its benefits, live in a healthy environment, be healthy and educated, this is the main objective of the social framework of sustainable development. There is a history of enlightening the people by portraying the social life of the 20th century, when this idea was in conflict, by depicting it in cartoons.

2. Method

This qualitative study used hermeneutic interpretation and comparative analysis of artworks. A total of 224 paintings produced between 2000 and 2010 were selected from the Mongolian National Art Gallery. Selection criteria included stylistic representation (realism and modernism), thematic relevance to sustainability, and visibility in national exhibitions. Paintings were classified into thematic categories based on their reflection of sustainable development indicators.

3. Basic Research

In the twentieth century, Mongolian painting was more developed in thematic, portrait, nature, and life themes, and modernism flourished. In the late 1960s, abstract and Impressionism began to appear in Mongolian painting. The features of the works varied, and most of them rewrote the Mongolian tradition. Since the 1970s, the development of Mongolian art has been based on many trends, including fauvism, symbolism, surrealism, and cubism. It is gratifying that modern painting has been fully accepted since the 1980s. It can be understood that the competition of modern artists has started with the opening of open and closed paintings in a closed society. This is because it has been difficult to keep up with the evolutionary trend of glass painting since the 1990s. It was unclear who was drawing in which direction. They were considered by art critics to be “mind-boggling” paintings.

Therefore, this study was started in 2017. I analyzed 224 paintings at the Mongolian National Gallery of Art from 2017-2019. The reason for choosing the topic was that most professionals and non-professionals did not know about modern paintings and their classification. Art critics have not studied much about the classification of modern Mongolian art. However, the development of art has been studied extensively. For example, Mongolian and Soviet researchers have done a lot of research. In 1970, the publication of the magazine “Fine Arts” became a major contribution to the study of fine arts in Mongolia. In 1975, he established a research institute and began to develop a brief history of Mongolian fine arts. At that time, not only Mongolian scholars but also foreign Mongolian scholars and researchers studied our fine arts.

The concept of sustainable development is considered as a concept focused only on environmental protection. All members of the society should equally participate in the development of their society and enjoy its benefits, live in a healthy environment, be healthy and educated, this is the main objective of the social framework of sustainable development. There is a history of enlightening the people by portraying the social life of the 20th century, when this idea was in conflict, by depicting it in cartoons.

For example, propaganda cartoons played an important role in promoting the meaning of political life and party policies in a clear and accessible way in a situation where the majority of the population was illiterate.

In our country, which has a vast territory, it was possible to print it in large numbers and distribute it even in the remotest areas. In their cartoons, artists chose topics that touched on the most important issues at that time, aimed at educating the masses with revolutionary ideology. Cartoons were widely published in newspapers and magazines, and periodicals in general played an important role in the birth of modern artists. For example, it can be seen in B. Sharav’s work “Liberation of the Mongolian Soviet” (see **Figure 1**).

B. Sharav “Portrait of V. I. Lenin”, U. Yadamsuren “D. Sukhbaatar”, O. Tsevegjav “The Struggle of the Stallion”, N. Tsultem/Slogans/etc. was created. The work of artist L. Gavaa, “Wandering Monks”, 1933.



Figure 1. B. Sharav “Liberation of the Mongolian Soviet” 1923. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

L. Gavaa painted in 1933 “Ergu Lamas” Photo. The painting is enriched with the idea of monolithic abstract exaggeration. In terms of meaning, he expressed the idea that there are shameless fake Manchu people behind the monks who collect tribute from the people. The work is painted in the manner of a realist painting, but the monolithic composition shows the naivety of a child’s drawing, showing a primitivist character. Perhaps intentionally or unintentionally, it is assumed that modernist styles appeared first. Therefore, it is one of the early works in which modern elements entered.

Figure 1 expressed the 20th century serfdom, the phenomenon of the rich and the poor, or the phenomenon of poverty, in a hidden and critical way. Because the majority of the people were illiterate, it has been said that sensitive social phenomena were depicted in paintings and published in newspapers.

The image of the propaganda was: development of the country through non-capitalist development and the consistent implementation of revolutionary democratic changes in society and economy. At that time, the faster life changes and the social progress, the more quickly the content of the works changed and became richer (Дашбалдан, 1988).

From November 1920 to April 1921, the first issues of the “Mongolian Truth” newspaper were published, and seven pictures were published, expressing the goals and policies of the People’s Party, and conveying its perspectives and ideals to the masses.

From the middle of the 20th century, the main theme of visual art was to depict the figures of workers, herdsmen, and labor leaders working for the great goal of socialism, figures with socialist morals, the fruit of friendship, and the fact that the party’s goals were being implemented in urban and rural life.

Modern art, which is a real painting and contemporary depiction of sustainable development for mankind-poverty, equality, mother earth-natural resources of the mother earth, climate change, peace-society with fair access, prosperity-living

in harmony with nature more or less reflected in the picture. It has been observed from the research that each reflection has made a valuable contribution to Mongolian art education and art studies, and is aimed at providing education for sustainable development in the society through art education.

- The research was conducted using the method of hermeneutic interpretation of paintings and the comparative method, and a total of 224 paintings created in 2000-2010 were analyzed and graphed based on the indicators reflecting the idea of sustainable development (see **Figure 2**).
- As a result of the study: Humanity-poverty and equality, -56 photos.
The Earth-natural resources of the earth, climate change, -41.
A peaceful and inclusive society, -26.
Prosperity-living in harmony with nature-/Social-realist painting/, -56.
The vision of education for sustainable development is not reflected, -46.

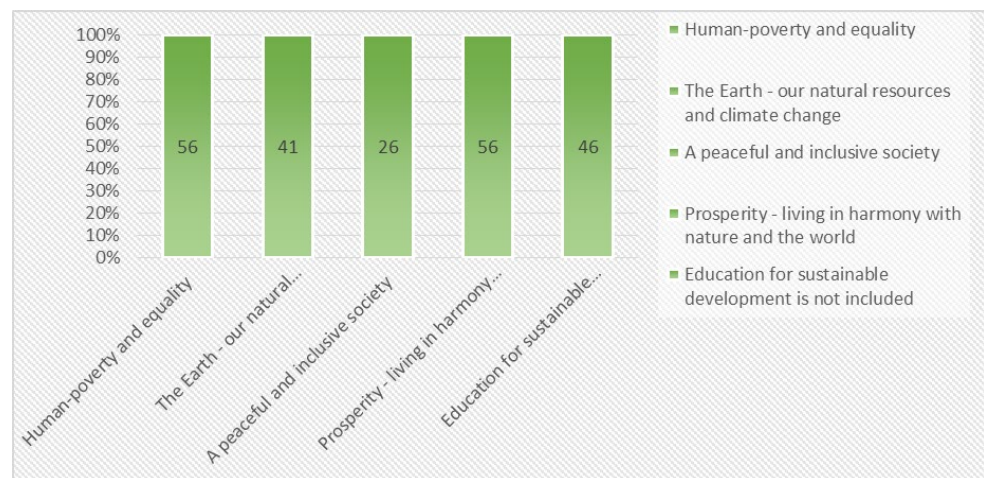


Figure 2. Shows the concept of sustainable development in paintings. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

Out of a total of 224 paintings in the national repertoire, 179 or 80 percent reflect the idea of sustainable development, which shows that the conceptual content of the painting has a lot to do with sustainable development.

According to the above, in the meaning of the painting, social well-being, the ideology of equality, compassion for each other, urban and rural reform, climate change, and humanism are painted in realistic and modern terms. Shows that it occupies a large place in the field of education. Here are some sample descriptions of the illustrations that were part of the study.

D. Amgalan shows the example of human-poverty and equality in the painting “Stepmother” (СЭЛЭНГЭ, 2019) (see **Figure 3**).

The painting, which shows the darkness of human life in a simple context and meaning, has become a prominent phenomenon in the painting of the 20th century. The stepmother’s compassionate and evil phenomenon is shown by her facial expressions, mouth movements, and the suran in her hand, and how the daughter is afraid of her is shown by the movement of her face and hands and the tears

in her eyes. There is a hidden sadness in the eyes of the father who does not know the relationship between his daughter and his wife.



Figure 3. D. Amgalan. “Stepmother”. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

The happiest person in the painting is a little girl sitting on a bed. These four characters can show the lifestyle of a family.

In other words, the work “Northern Mother” which touches on the simple but big problem of Mongolia, is one of the instructive paintings that shows the value of the love and care of the birth mother and father in human life, while showing more the psychology and behavior of the individual.

Ts. Enkhjargal’s 1998 work “House without a Door” exemplified the idea of valuing human unity and equality (see **Figure 4**).

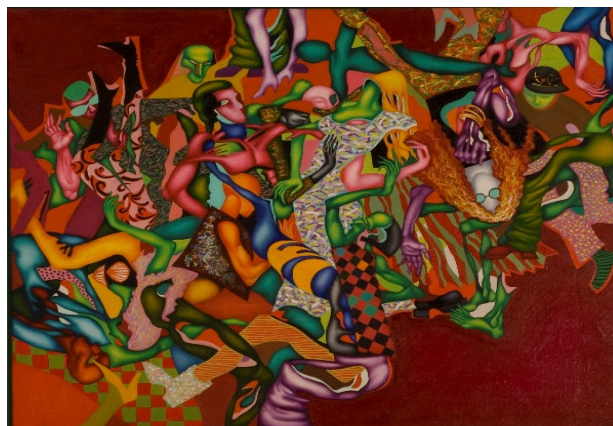


Figure 4. Ts. Enkhjargal’s 1998 work “House without a Door”. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

The artist’s works such as “Doorless House”, “Baygal” 1999, “Conflict”, etc., have made a valuable contribution to the history of modern Mongolian art.

In a free society that is too open to human life, disorder increases, just as malaria dust and tornadoes can directly enter a house without a door. It seems to aim to show the positive and negative aspects of a free society from many angles. Characterized by colorful contours of people huddled together on a warm background.

In sharply criticizing modern social life, he was able to show the ability to closely analyze the appearance, interests and nature of each individual. People here and there are not known who is where, and some figures are cut out, it looks like chaos, but if you look closely, it seems to deny that situation. In some parts, obscenity is contained in a hidden form. In other words, the complexity of human life is shown with exaggeration and hidden meaning, and it can be understood that the psychological problems of mankind are touched upon. Because the behavior and situation of each individual were considered in detail. The figures of the work are designed as if flowing towards the upper right and lower left corners, implying an endless continuation. The strangely designed picture can be classified as surrealism. Whether these people are on purpose or not, the unexplained reason why they have gathered here will capture the attention of the audience and create a feeling of a little fear as they contain mental phenomena that are not subject to human consciousness and hidden meanings that do not exist in real life.

L. Gava's 1971 work "The Lazy Two" shows the ideology of compassion for each other (see **Figure 5**).



Figure 5. L. Gava's "The Lazy Two" 1971. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

The painting "Lazy Two", mocking and criticizing the moral education of today's youth, occupies a large place in the watercolor works of artist L. Gavaa. Even though it looks like a caricature, the idea it expresses has been able to be criticized by society. In the 20th century, when an equal society was valued, everyone had a sincere desire to study, work and create a lot, which was reflected in the younger generation.

In the center of the picture, a mother struggling for life is depicted holding a cane and a trowel tending her sheep. A homeless girl combing her hair and a young man reading a book sitting on top of the mother seem to directly confirm the morality of the youth mentioned above. On the other hand, it is a work that praises the spirit of a mother who comes without asking for anything, but it is also a work that criticizes the too naive behavior of modern youths who do not leave their

homes behind. In terms of the method, the characters are written in a simple yet intense line drawing and a rhythm of light colors mixed with it. The compositional solution of the work, which shows the tone of oriental painting, is characterized by the ability to solve the space in a small format of 29×26 .

The Earth—the natural resources and climate change of the Mother Earth can be seen in Ts. Tsegmid’s work “Lake of Tears” 1987 (СЭЛЭНГЭ, 2019) (see **Figure 6**).



Figure 6. Ts. Tsegmid’s work “Lake of Tears” 1987. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

Artist Ts. Tsegmi’s work “Lake of Tears” seems to evoke a sense of silence and unsettling sadness. Judging by the name, the composition of the picture, which is too pathetic, is seen from the visual level and expressed with hidden meaning. When depicting a woman buried in the ground, a yellowish lake was drawn behind her face, and it was called the lake of her spit. Just as ancient scientists believed that art is an expression of truth, the world’s happiness and suffering are created through artistic exaggeration. That’s why the color of the picture was mixed with dark colors of cold tones in the brown composition, which showed the meaning of the picture. When creating the nature of the night of the full moon in accordance with the girl’s grief, the trees were left bare and the earth was blackened and withered. On the one hand, the picture looks like a surrealist painting, but on the other hand, it is a very realistic painting with a deep meaning. The distance of colors and images is determined by nature from the girl’s head to the full moon. The fact that a butterfly is drawn on the head of the main character may be because it is a symbol of mourning for the deceased in Eastern culture. Because the description was another image of the picture that gave the impression of crying after someone until the lake. The work “Nulimsan Nuur” is characterized by expressing the darkness of human life with hidden meaning, irony, strange solution, and simple design.

P. Baldandorj’s modern painting “Khuvs gul Lake” 1968 reflects the love for nature and the pollution of rivers and water (see **Figure 7**).



Figure 7. P. Baldandorj. “Khuvsugul Lake” 1968. (Source: Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery.)

Artist P. Baldandorj’s work “Hovsgul Lake” is one of the innovative works that participated in the “First Exhibition of Young Artists” held on July 20, 1968. In the 1960s, the images of workers, herdsmen, and leaders of labor working for the great goal of art socialism, characters with socialist morals, the fruits of friendship, party goals, and the themes of urban and rural life were mainly developed by young artists studying abroad and domestically at that time. Came into art with a burst of images. Although it was criticized as bourgeois art at the time, the government later accepted it. P. Baldandorj, a son of Khuvsugul region, who was a student of the School of Art and Industry in Prague, Czechoslovakia, sought to introduce the abstract thinking of infinity into the world of built art. That’s why the above work is written in the history of art by painting the Khuvsugul Sea, which is the main sight of the native land, with a hidden meaning and innovative methods. The work “Huvsgul Lake” was written by researchers in many schools, including abstract, symbolist, orthism, etc.

Researcher O. Sosor explained the Ortism movement as: “the most simple ones seek to depict a new reality with carefully organized color harmony.” (Cocop, 2008)

The fresh clarity of Khuvsugul Lake is depicted with hidden concepts through symbols of images and colors. In the center of the composition, by depicting the method and the ritual, on the one hand, it symbolizes the fish and shrimp in the lake, but on the other hand, it shows the flow of life. Because both methods are a symbol of eternal movement, and the contrast of cold colors with white color shows the natural scenery of Khuvsugul Lake.

4. Discussion

This analysis shows that 80% of the selected works reflect one or more dimensions of sustainable development. Art has served not only as critique but also as a ped-

agogical tool. From caricature to surrealism, Mongolian art has evolved into a visual language supporting education for sustainability.

5. Conclusion

From early propaganda to contemporary visual narratives, Mongolian painting has increasingly integrated themes of sustainability. The study concludes that painting significantly contributes to promoting equality, environmental consciousness, and humanistic values within the framework of sustainable development.

- At the beginning of the 20th century, propaganda pictures and illustrations and social-realist paintings that reflected the life of society developed within the framework of party government policies. Artists sang the praises of Mongolia's industrial future and the working class, and depicted rural scenes in a realistic manner. Close relations with the Soviet Union within the framework of party government policy did not bypass the visual arts sector. It is commendable that they were praised and the paintings that strengthened their cooperation were widely exhibited, and that they created the conditions to become professional artists. With the increase of educated professional artists in the Soviet Union and Western countries, the colors, images, and styles of paintings have been changing.
- At the end of the 20th century, the beginning of the 21st century, in order to keep pace with global art, artists are introducing new methods of theory and practice in a more sophisticated way, which has directly affected Mongolian modern and contemporary art. The majority of our artists who have escaped from the stereotypes are working to develop the trend of modern or contemporary art, which is evident from the fact that the majority of the best works of the year in the Mongolian Art Gallery are modern art. From those works, 224 paintings created between 2000 and 2010 were analyzed and studied to see how they reflect the idea of sustainable development.
- As a result of the research: humanity-poverty, equality, -56 images; mother earth-natural resources of the mother earth, climate change, -41; peace-fair and inclusive society, -26; prosperity-living in harmony with nature/Social-realist paintings, -56. There were 46 paintings that did not reflect the idea of sustainable development education. Out of a total of 224 paintings in the national repertoire, 179 or 80 percent reflect the idea of sustainable development, which shows that the conceptual content of the painting has greatly influenced the concept of art.
- According to the above, in the meaning of the painting, social well-being, the ideology of equality, compassion for each other, urban and rural reform, climate change, and humanism are painted in realistic and modern terms. Shows that it occupies a large place in the field of education.
- Finally, it is believed that this study will show that sustainable development will be integrated into all types of research, not in a specific research group, and thus it will have a special place in art studies and art education.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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