

# The History, Status, and Opportunities of Art Village Construction

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the historical evolution, current situation and future development opportunities of art rural construction. With the acceleration of China's urbanization process, rural problems have become increasingly prominent, and the proposal of cultural revitalization strategy provides new ideas for rural development. In this context, art involvement in rural construction has become a possible way to solve rural problems. The article first sorts out the historical context of art rural construction, from the rise of European artist villages in the 19th century to the practice of contemporary China, and shows the evolution of the relationship between art and rural development. Secondly, this paper analyzes the current situation of art rural construction, including social environment, practice mode, development characteristics and challenges. The study shows that Chinese art rural construction is characterized by strong support from relevant departments, diversified practice modes and distinctive development characteristics, but it also faces problems such as sustainability, homogenization and lack of talents. Finally, the future opportunities of art rural construction, including economic and social development, cultural demand improvement, technological progress and other aspects. According to the research, to grasp these opportunities, we need to establish a long-term mechanism, pay attention to cultural integration, strengthen cross-border cooperation, and cultivate compound talents. The article points out that the construction of artistic countryside provides a new idea for China's rural revitalization, but measures should be taken to local conditions

to avoid blind replication. The future development needs the joint efforts of various forces to promote the healthy development of art rural construction.

**Keywords:** Art; Rural Construction; Rural Revitalization; Art Township Construction

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, with the increasingly prominent imbalance of urban and rural development in China, how to promote rural revitalization and narrow the gap between urban and rural areas has become the focus of attention from all sectors of society. In this context, art involvement in rural construction, as an innovative development mode, has gradually attracted the attention of academic and practical circles. Some places have begun to try to introduce art into rural construction. Through artistic creation, art exhibition, art education and other ways, they can activate rural cultural resources, improve the rural environment, and enhance the quality of life of residents [1]. For example, the "Qingtian Paradigm" art township construction project in Shunde, Guangdong, the "Dafen" oil painting art village project in Shenzhen, Guangdong, and the practice of artists in Shangwei Art Village in Shenzhen, Guangdong have all achieved remarkable results. These practices show that art can not only beautify the environment, but also stimulate the community vitality, promote economic development, and provide new ideas for rural revitalization. The research aims to sort out the historical context of art rural construction, analyze its current development status, and explore the future development opportunities, in order to provide theoretical reference and practical enlightenment for promoting the healthy development of art rural construction and

realizing the all-round revitalization of rural areas.

## **2. The History of Artistic Village Construction**

As a practice of combining art with rural development, the history of art rural construction can be traced back to the middle and late 19th century. The evolution and development of this concept went through multiple stages, influenced by social, economic and cultural backgrounds in different periods.

### **2.1 Early Practice of International Art and Rural Construction**

The early practice of the international art village construction can be traced back to Europe in the mid-19th century. At that time, the urbanization process brought about by the Industrial Revolution led many artists to yearn for a rural life far away from the hustle and bustle. The French village of Barbizon (Barbizon) is a typical example of this trend. From the 1830s, a group of landscape painters represented by Thedo Rousseau (Theodore Rousseau) came to The village to sketch, and gradually formed the "Barbizon School of Painting". These artists not only depict the rural scenery in their creation, but also interact closely with the local villagers in their life, providing an early example for the later construction of the artistic countryside. In the 20th century, the concept of the artist community began to rise in Europe and the United States. In 1902, the German German (Worpswede) artist village was founded, attracting many artists, including Paula Modsson-Baker (Paula Modersohn-Becker). These artists not only live and create in the village, but also actively participate in local community activities, promoting the development of rural culture.

### **2.2 The Historical Process of Chinese Art and Rural Construction**

Although the artistic rural construction in China started late, its ideological origin can be traced back to the rural construction movement of the Republic of China. In the 1920s, Liang Shuming, Yan Yangchu and other intellectuals initiated the rural construction movement, which included improving the cultural quality of farmers through art education. For example, Yan Yangchu's "civilian education" in the

Dingzhou Experimental Area includes music, drama and other artistic forms. Although these practices are not artistic rural construction in a strict sense, they laid the ideological foundation for the later development. After the founding of new China, the country vigorously promoted the construction of rural culture, but the artistic intervention in this period was mainly based on political propaganda and mass culture. The construction of cultural centers and libraries, which began in the 1950s, as well as the movement of "sending literature and art to the countryside" in the 1960s, all promoted the development of rural art to a certain extent. However, most of these activities are top-down cultural output, which is different from the concept of contemporary art rural construction. After the reform and opening up, with the development of market economy and the adjustment of cultural policies, the construction of art countryside began to take on a new look. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, some artists began to spontaneously gather in rural areas to form artist villages. The formation of songzhuang, grassland and other art areas in Beijing is the product of this period. Although most of these areas are located in the urban-rural fringe, their development model provides a reference for the later art rural construction of. In the 21st century, some artists and cultural workers began to consciously introduce art into rural construction. In 2002, artist Qiu Zhijie initiated the "Earth Art" project in Fuyang District, Hangzhou city, Zhejiang Province, which is a representative practice of this period. This project explores the possibility of art involvement in rural development by holding art festivals in the village and organizing artists to create in the village. Subsequently, more organized and planned art rural construction practices began to appear everywhere. For example, the "Art Village" project in Songyang County, Zhejiang Province, launched in 2009, has promoted the development of local economy and culture by introducing artists in villages and holding art festivals.

### **2.3 Evolution of the Concept of Artistic Rural Construction**

The concept of artistic village construction has undergone a transformation from a simple artistic creation to an emphasis on community

participation. The early artist villages mainly focused on the creative needs of individual artists, while the construction of contemporary art villages paid more attention to the interaction between art and the local community. This change reflects people's deepening understanding of the function of art society. With the development of The Times, the main body of art rural construction has expanded from a few elite artists to a wider social groups. The contemporary art rural construction not only includes the creation of professional artists, but also encourages local residents to participate in artistic creation and cultural activities, reflecting the trend of cultural democratization.

Early art village construction was mostly focused on a particular art form, such as painting or sculpture. The contemporary art rural construction presents diversified characteristics, covering visual arts, performing arts, folk crafts and other forms, and pays attention to the integration with the local traditional culture. The concept of art rural construction has also shifted from focusing on short-term art projects to pursuing long-term sustainable development. Contemporary art rural construction pays more attention to how to promote the sustainable development of rural economy and culture through art, rather than just holding one-time art activities.

The history of art rural construction reflects the evolution of the relationship between art and rural development. From the spontaneous formation of European artist villages in the 19th century to the organized and planned practice of art village construction in contemporary China, this concept has experienced the development process from spontaneous to self-conscious, and from individual to society. In this process, the concept of art rural construction has been deepened and expanded, and its social function and value have been more widely understood and valued.

### **3. The Current Situation of Art Rural Construction**

As an innovative rural development model, art rural construction has received rapid development and wide attention in China in recent years [2]. Under the dual promotion of cultural revitalization strategy and rural

revitalization strategy, the construction of art countryside shows a vigorous development trend, but it also faces many challenges.

In terms of policy environment, in recent years, the national and local governments have introduced a series of policies and measures to support the construction of art countryside. In 2018, the Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan (2018-2022) clearly proposed the "prosperity and development of rural culture", providing a policy basis for the construction of artistic countryside. In 2021, the Opinions on Promoting the Revitalization of Rural Culture further emphasized the important role of art in the construction of rural culture. The introduction of these policies has created a good institutional environment and development space for the construction of art countryside. In this context, local governments have incorporated the construction of art villages into their local development plans, and promoted the deep integration of art and rural development by means of financial support and policy preference. For example, the rural wall-painting project carried out in a number of places is a typical case of promoting artistic rural construction throughout the province through government guidance and social participation.

In terms of practice mode, the current art rural construction shows a diversified development trend. According to the different leading forces, it can be roughly divided into four modes: government-led, artist-led, enterprise-led and community-led. The government-led model mainly systematically promotes the construction of art countryside through government planning and financial support, such as the "Art Village" project in Songyang County, Zhejiang Province mentioned above. The artist-led model is organized spontaneously by artists to promote rural development through artistic creation and cultural activities, such as the artist community in Anren Ancient Town, Sichuan Province. The enterprise-led model is that enterprises invest in the construction of art villages, combining art with tourism, real estate and other industries, such as the art town in Dali, Yunnan Province. The community-dominated model emphasizes the subjectivity of local residents and promotes rural development by exploring and inheriting local art and culture, such as the Dong Village Art Village in

Qiandongnan Prefecture, Guizhou Province. These different models have their own characteristics, and in practice, they often integrate with each other, forming a rich and diverse forms of artistic rural construction.

From the perspective of development characteristics, the current art rural construction presents the following remarkable characteristics: first, the participation of multiple subjects. In addition to the government, artists and local residents, there are also enterprises, NGOs, universities and other forces to participate in it, forming a multi-party collaborative development pattern. Secondly, the trend of cross-border integration is obvious. Art rural construction is no longer limited to simple artistic creation, but is deeply integrated with rural tourism, cultural and creative industry, ecological agriculture and other fields, forming a "art + " development model. Thirdly, it is to focus on local cultural inheritance and innovation. Many art rural construction projects emphasize the protection and innovative transformation of local traditional culture, avoiding simple cultural transplantation. Finally, there is the wide application of digital technology. With the development of new technologies such as 5G, VR and / AR, new forms such as digital art and network live broadcast have been widely used in the construction of art countryside, which has expanded the development space and communication channels of art countryside.

Although the construction of art countryside has made remarkable achievements, it also faces some problems and challenges in practice. The first is the sustainability issue. Some rural art projects rely too much on government financial support or foreign artists, and lack endogenous motivation and long-term mechanism, leading to unsustainable projects. The second is the tendency of homogenization. Driven by the successful cases, some places blindly imitate and ignore the local characteristics and needs, leading to the homogenization of the construction of artistic villages. The third is the lack of talent. The construction of art countryside needs compound talents who understand both art and the countryside, but such talents are relatively scarce, which restricts the in-depth development of art countryside construction. In addition, the integration of artistic intervention and local culture is also worth

paying attention to. Some art projects pay too much attention to visual effects and short-term benefits, ignoring the organic integration with the local culture, leading to the phenomenon of "not adapting to the environment". Finally, the absence of evaluation systems is also a common problem. At present, there is a lack of scientific and systematic evaluation standards to measure the effectiveness of art rural construction, which is not conducive to experience summary and continuous improvement.

In general, the current art rural construction in China is in the stage of vigorous development, showing the characteristics of strong policy support, diversified practice modes and distinctive development characteristics, but also facing many challenges. Future art of rural construction, need to continue to play a positive role in the rural revitalization at the same time, pay more attention to solve the problems existing in practice, explore the actual development path, which requires us in policy formulation, project implementation, personnel training to take more systematic and long-term thinking, promote art rural construction to the direction of more mature and sustainable development [3]. At the same time, it is also necessary to strengthen theoretical research and practical summary, build a scientific evaluation system, and provide theoretical guidance and practical reference for the healthy development of art rural construction [4]. Only in this way can we truly give full play to the unique value of art in rural revitalization, promote the all-round development of rural culture, economy and society, and realize the symbiosis and co-prosperity of art and countryside.

#### **4. Opportunities for Art and Rural Construction**

Under the background of China's social and economic development, the construction of art countryside is facing unprecedented opportunities for development. These opportunities stem from the support of national policies, social and economic development, rising cultural needs, and the new possibilities brought about by technological progress. An in-depth analysis of these opportunities is of great significance to promoting the healthy development of art rural construction and realizing rural revitalization. First of all, the

strong support of national policies provides a good development environment for the construction of art countryside. With the further implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, the importance of culture in rural development has become increasingly prominent. Policies such as "developing rural cultural industries" and "building beautiful villages with distinctive cultural characteristics" have provided a clear guidance for the construction of artistic countryside. At the same time, the policies such as "implementing the digital strategy of cultural industry" and "promoting the integrated construction of urban and rural public cultural service system" have also created favorable conditions for the construction of art countryside. These policies not only provide institutional guarantee, but also bring opportunities for financial support and talent introduction, laying a foundation for the rapid development of art rural construction. Secondly, the development of economy and society provides a solid material foundation and a broad market space for the construction of art countryside. With the continuous growth of China's economy and the improvement of urban and rural residents, people's demand for cultural and artistic products and services is increasing. Especially in the post-epidemic era, people pay more attention to the quality of life and spiritual and cultural needs, which has brought new development opportunities for the construction of art countryside. At the same time, the rise of rural tourism also provides a new development space for the construction of art countryside. According to statistics, in 2019, China's rural tourists received more than 3 billion tourists, and their revenue exceeded 1.7 trillion yuan. Despite the impact of the epidemic, the rural tourism market still has huge potential in the long term. As a unique cultural tourism resource, the art countryside is expected to occupy an important position in this market. Thirdly, the enhancement of cultural confidence and cultural demand have created a good social atmosphere for the construction of art countryside. In recent years, with the improvement of China's comprehensive national strength and the enhancement of cultural soft power, people's cultural confidence has been continuously enhanced. This cultural confidence is not only reflected in the importance and inheritance of

traditional culture, but also reflected in the appreciation and tolerance of contemporary art. The construction of art countryside is just at the intersection of tradition and modern, countryside and city, which can meet people's demand for cultural diversity and artistic innovation. At the same time, the "homesickness" complex generated in the process of urbanization also provides the emotional basis and cultural identity for the construction of artistic countryside. In addition, technological progress has brought new development possibilities for art rural construction. With the development of new technologies such as 5G, artificial intelligence and virtual reality, the ways of art creation and dissemination are revolutionizing. These technologies can not only improve the efficiency and expressiveness of artistic creation, but also break through the geographical restrictions and connect the artistic countryside with the wider world. For example, through live streaming, VR exhibitions and other ways, the art countryside can show its unique charm to the global audience, and expand its influence and market space. In addition, the application of big data technology also provides the possibility for precision marketing and personalized services in the art countryside, which helps to improve operational efficiency and tourist satisfaction. The deepening of international cultural exchange provides a new perspective and opportunity for the construction of art countryside [5]. In the context of globalization, China's cultural exchanges with other countries are increasingly frequent. As an important carrier of Chinese culture, the art countryside has the potential to become an important platform for international cultural exchanges. By introducing international artists to create in villages and holding international art festivals [6], art villages can become a window for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, which can not only show the charm of Chinese traditional culture, but also absorb international advanced experience and promote artistic innovation. This will not only help to enhance the international influence of art villages, but also to inject new vitality into rural development [7]. However, we should also see that both opportunities and challenges coexist. How to grasp these opportunities and overcome the difficulties in development still

need us to think and explore deeply. First of all, we need to establish a long-term mechanism to ensure the sustainable development of art rural construction [8]. This includes establishing diversified investment and financing mechanisms to reduce the dependence on government funds; cultivating local artistic talents and enhancing the internal impetus of development; establishing a scientific evaluation system and timely summarizing the experience and lessons. We should also pay attention to the organic integration of art and local culture, and avoid the simple cultural transplantation and homogenization tendency. This requires in-depth study of local history and culture, respect for the wishes of villagers, and making art truly rooted in the countryside. Cross-border cooperation should be strengthened to promote the deep integration of art and other rural industries [9]. For example, we can explore new models such as "art + agriculture" and "art + health care" to expand the development space of art countryside. Attention should also be paid to the training and introduction of talents, especially the cultivation of compound talents. The construction of art countryside requires compound talents who understand both artistic creation and rural development, and are familiar with modern management and marketing. Universities, governments and enterprises can jointly cultivate such talents to provide intellectual support for the construction of art countryside. In short, the construction of art countryside is facing a rare historical opportunity. To grasp these opportunities requires the joint efforts of the government, artists, enterprises, villagers and other forces [10]. Only by fully recognizing and taking advantage of these opportunities and overcoming the challenges in development can we promote the development of art countryside and make greater contributions to rural revitalization and the construction of a strong cultural country.

## 5. Conclusion

As an innovative rural development mode, artistic rural construction shows a vigorous development trend under the background of China's rural revitalization strategy. Through a comprehensive analysis of its history, current situation and opportunities, we can draw the following conclusions: the historical context of

art rural construction reflects the profound evolution of the relationship between art and rural development. From the spontaneous formation of European artist villages in the 19th century to the organized and planned practice of art village construction in contemporary China, this concept has experienced the development process from spontaneous to self-conscious, and from individual to society. At present, China's art rural construction is in the stage of rapid development, showing the characteristics of strong policy support, diversified practice modes and distinctive development characteristics. The participation of multiple subjects such as the government, artists, enterprises and communities has promoted the development of art village construction to a more systematic and comprehensive direction. The characteristics of cross-border integration, focusing on the inheritance and innovation of local culture, and the wide application of digital technology have injected new vitality into the construction of art countryside. However, we should also see that in the process of development, art rural construction is facing multiple challenges, such as sustainability, homogenization, lack of talents and cultural integration. To solve these problems, it need us to take more systematic and long-term thinking in policy formulation, project implementation, talent training and other aspects.

Looking forward into the future, the construction of art countryside is facing unprecedented opportunities for development. The strong support of national policies, the sustainable development of economy and society, the enhancement of cultural confidence, the new possibilities brought by technological progress and the in-depth of international cultural exchanges have all created a good external environment for the construction of art countryside. However, both opportunities and challenges coexist. How to grasp these opportunities and overcome the difficulties in development still need us to think and explore deeply.

In general, as an innovative rural development model, artistic rural construction provides new ideas and possibilities for China's rural revitalization and cultural construction. However, we should also realize that the construction of art countryside is not a

universal "panacea". Every village has its own unique historical, cultural and social and economic conditions, and the specific practice of art village construction must be adapted to local conditions, starting from the special situation of each village. At the same time, the success of the art village construction also largely depends on the creativity and initiative of the participants. Therefore, instead of simply copying a success case, we should encourage diversified exploration and innovation. In the future, to promote the healthy development of art village construction, it needs the joint efforts of academia, government, artists, entrepreneurs and villagers. Only by fully recognizing and making use of the current development opportunities and overcoming the challenges can we promote the continuous development of artistic rural construction, make greater contributions to China's rural revitalization and the construction of a cultural power, and provide Chinese wisdom and solutions for the global rural development and the protection of cultural diversity.

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