

# Materiality, Imagery and Spatial Narrative in Jin Ke's Porcelain Panel Paintings

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## Abstract

This paper takes Professor Jin Ke's porcelain panel paintings *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, *Castle in the Sky*, and *Fragrant Blossoms* as the research objects and analyzes their artistic language from the perspectives of material, imagery, and space. Through the combined use of overglaze enamel and colored glaze techniques, the works integrate the fluidity and unpredictability of ceramic materials with painterly expression, creating visual spaces characterized by poetic atmosphere and contemporary aesthetics. *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon* presents the poetic expression of life through the imagery of withered lotus, *Castle in the Sky* constructs a spiritual space between reality and fantasy, while *Fragrant Blossoms* emphasizes the visual tension of living forms through lines and abstract structures. The study argues that Jin Ke's porcelain panel paintings transcend the traditional decorative mode of ceramic painting by integrating Eastern artistic conception, material experimentation, and contemporary painting concepts, reflecting the transformation of contemporary porcelain panel painting from craftsmanship to artistic language, and demonstrating important theoretical and practical significance for modern ceramic art research.

## Keywords

Porcelain Panel Painting; Overglaze Enamel; Colored Glaze; Artistic Language; Imagery Space

## 1. Introduction

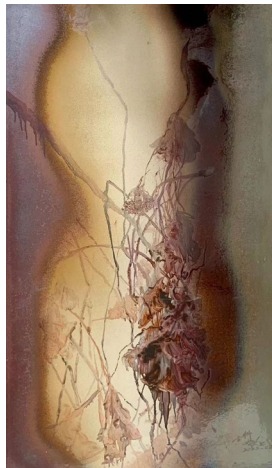
Contemporary porcelain panel painting has gradually moved beyond the traditional decorative function of ceramic art and developed into an important medium for artistic expression and experimental visual language. With the continuous integration of painting concepts and ceramic materials, artists have begun to explore new possibilities in material texture, spatial construction, and emotional expression. Among these explorations, the combination of overglaze enamel and colored glaze techniques has provided contemporary porcelain painting with richer visual effects and stronger expressive potential, allowing ceramic art to establish closer connections with contemporary painting practices.

Professor Jin Ke's porcelain panel paintings demonstrate a distinctive artistic language that combines ceramic craftsmanship, painterly expression, and poetic imagery. His works *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, *Castle in the Sky*, and *Fragrant Blossoms*, all created in 2022, reveal different approaches to the construction of imagery and space through the use of overglaze enamel and colored glaze materials. Rather than focusing on realistic representation, these works emphasize atmosphere, abstraction, emotional resonance, and the spiritual qualities of visual form. The interaction between controllable brushwork and the unpredictability of glaze flow creates a dynamic visual tension that reflects the contemporary transformation of ceramic art.

This paper analyzes Jin Ke's porcelain panel paintings from the perspectives of material, imagery, and space. By examining the relationship between ceramic techniques and visual expression, the study explores how contemporary porcelain panel painting integrates Eastern artistic conception with modern abstract aesthetics. The research aims to reveal the artistic characteristics and contemporary significance of Jin Ke's works, while also discussing the broader development of artistic language in contemporary ceramic art.

## 2. Material Language and Medium Characteristics of Porcelain Painting

This chapter investigates porcelain painting from the perspective of its material constitution and medium-specific properties. As a composite form combining ceramics and painting, it is shaped by clay body, glaze materials, and high-temperature firing processes that determine its irreversible material structure. These conditions generate a distinctive image-production mechanism that differs fundamentally from traditional painting practices. By examining the active role of material behavior and technical constraints, this chapter establishes the foundational material logic for understanding its visual language.



**Figure 1.** *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, 120 cm × 60 cm, overglaze color on porcelain panel, 2022.

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## 2.1. Material Composition and Technical Foundations of Porcelain Painting

Porcelain painting is fundamentally grounded in the physical and chemical properties of ceramic materials, including clay bodies, glaze layers, and mineral pigments. These materials undergo irreversible transformation during high-temperature firing, which determines the final stability and visual appearance of the work. As a result, image production in porcelain painting is not purely dependent on manual depiction but is deeply shaped by material behavior and thermal reactions.

In Jin Ke's work *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, the interaction between glaze flow and firing temperature produces subtle variations in tone and surface texture, demonstrating how material processes actively participate in the formation of imagery. (Figure 1) .

## 2.2. The Integration of Porcelain and Painting Media

Porcelain painting represents a hybrid medium that merges the logic of painting with the material constraints of ceramics. Unlike canvas or paper, porcelain surfaces impose strict physical limitations that influence brushwork, layering, and compositional strategies. This integration results in a visual language shaped simultaneously by pictorial intention and ceramic materiality.

In this sense, painting and ceramics are not separate systems but interdependent structures that jointly construct the final visual outcome. The material surface becomes an active agent that reshapes pictorial expression.

## 2.3. Material Texture and Visual Expression

Material texture plays a crucial role in shaping the visual identity of porcelain painting. Variations in glaze thickness, pigment diffusion, and firing conditions generate unpredictable surface effects that directly influence color perception and image clarity. These textures are not merely physical residues but constitute an integral part of visual expression.

In *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, the layered glaze surface produces a sense of depth and atmospheric variation, transforming the pictorial surface into a textured visual field that merges material process with aesthetic perception.

## 2.4. Material Experimentation in Jin Ke's Porcelain Painting Practice

Jin Ke's artistic practice demonstrates a strong emphasis on material experimentation, particularly in glaze behavior, firing outcomes, and surface transformation. Rather than controlling materials completely, the artist allows controlled unpredictability to become part of the creative process. This approach highlights the active role of material agency in image formation.

Through this experimental logic, porcelain painting becomes a field of negotiation

between artistic intention and material autonomy. The resulting works embody a dynamic balance between control and accident, structure and emergence.

### **3. The Generative Mechanism and Cultural Connotation of Imagery**

This chapter explores the formation process of imagery in porcelain painting and the cultural meanings embedded within it. Beyond thematic selection, imagery is co-constructed through material properties and firing processes, resulting in an open and often indeterminate visual structure. At the same time, symbolic systems and cultural references embedded in the works carry historical memory and aesthetic traditions, continuously reshaping meaning in contemporary contexts. The chapter aims to clarify the transformation from visual form to cultural signification.

#### **3.1. Thematic Sources and Image Selection in Porcelain Painting**

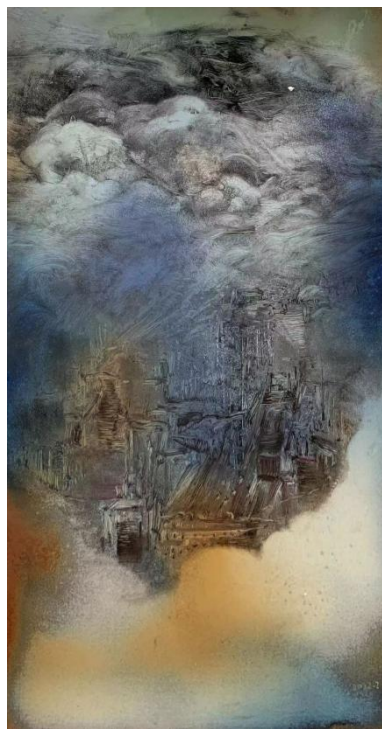
The imagery of porcelain painting is derived from a combination of natural observation, cultural symbols, and the artist's subjective experience. This multiplicity of sources results in an open and hybrid visual system. In Jin Ke's practice, images are not simple reproductions of external reality but reconstructions based on cultural memory and visual cognition.

In the work *Sky City*, the image selection departs from conventional natural representation and constructs an imaginative spatial narrative. The floating architectural forms suggest that image generation is not restricted to realism but shaped by conceptual reconstruction.

#### **3.2. Visual Logic of Imagery Construction**

Imagery in porcelain painting is constructed through symbolic abstraction and structural reorganization rather than strict representational accuracy. As a result, visual elements become flexible signifiers that allow multiple interpretations. This openness contributes to the ambiguity and richness of pictorial meaning.

In *Sky City*, spatial elements are reorganized into a non-linear visual system, where architecture and environment are merged into a floating structure. This compositional strategy strengthens the conceptual dimension of imagery. (Figure 2)



**Figure 2.** Sky City, 120 cm × 60 cm, overglaze color on porcelain panel, 2022.

### **3.3. Contemporary Expression of Traditional Cultural Symbols**

Porcelain painting often incorporates traditional Chinese cultural symbols, including natural motifs and aesthetic archetypes. However, in contemporary practice, these symbols are not simply reproduced but reinterpreted through visual transformation. This process enables cultural continuity while generating new meanings.

In the work *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, floral motifs are reorganized into a decorative and structural visual system. The traditional symbolic meaning of flowers is transformed into a compositional element that contributes to spatial rhythm and visual balance.

### **3.4. Symbolic System in Jin Ke's Works**

The symbolic system in Jin Ke's porcelain paintings is not fixed or code-based but operates as a dynamic network of meaning. Visual elements interact through composition, color relationships, and spatial hierarchy, generating continuously evolving interpretations.

Across the three works—*Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, *Sky City*, and *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*—a progressive logic can be observed, moving from natural imagery to spatial imagination and finally to cultural reinterpretation. This progression reflects an open system of meaning production shaped by material, image, and cultural interaction.

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## 4. Spatial Structure and Visual Narrative Strategies

This chapter focuses on spatial organization and visual perception in porcelain painting. It analyzes how compositional arrangements, visual hierarchies, and viewing pathways construct layered spatial experiences on a two-dimensional ceramic surface. Unlike traditional linear perspective systems, porcelain painting develops alternative spatial strategies conditioned by its material surface, producing dynamic perceptual effects within a static framework. The chapter seeks to uncover the logic of spatial construction and visual narration embedded in the works.

### 4.1. Spatial Transformation between Plane and Depth

Porcelain painting constructs its spatial logic on a two-dimensional ceramic surface, yet it often generates a perceptual sense of depth through compositional arrangement and visual layering. Unlike traditional linear perspective systems, its spatiality is not based on optical accuracy but on structural relationships between visual elements. This allows the image to operate simultaneously as surface and perceived depth.

In Jin Ke's practice, spatial transitions are often achieved through overlapping forms, tonal gradients, and controlled fragmentation of compositional units. This approach transforms the pictorial surface into a dynamic field where spatial perception is continuously negotiated.

### 4.2. Compositional Structure and Viewing Pathways

The compositional structure of porcelain painting plays a decisive role in guiding the viewer's perceptual trajectory. Instead of a fixed visual center, images often encourage multiple entry points, allowing the viewer's gaze to move across different spatial zones. This results in a non-linear viewing experience that emphasizes temporal perception within a static image.

In the work *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, floral elements are distributed across the pictorial space in a rhythmically structured manner. The viewer's gaze is guided through alternating dense and sparse visual zones, producing a sequential yet non-linear reading of the image.

### 4.3. Spatial Hierarchy and Visual Rhythm

Spatial hierarchy in porcelain painting is constructed through variations in scale, color intensity, and structural emphasis. These hierarchical relationships organize visual elements into layered systems that guide perception and interpretation. Rather than a uniform pictorial field, the image becomes a structured spatial order.

In *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, the rhythmic distribution of floral forms creates a visual cadence that alternates between expansion and concentration. This rhythmic structure enhances the aesthetic coherence of the composition while reinforcing spatial depth through repetition and variation.

#### 4.4. Narrative Construction within Visual Space

Although porcelain painting is a static medium, it often produces a sense of narrative progression through spatial organization and visual sequencing. Narrative in this context is not linear storytelling but a perceptual unfolding guided by spatial relations.

In *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, the arrangement of floral clusters suggests a movement of visual accumulation and dispersion. This creates a narrative-like rhythm in which the viewer experiences shifts in intensity, density, and spatial focus across the pictorial field. (Figure 3)



### 5. Color System and the Construction of Aesthetic Style

This chapter examines the chromatic system of porcelain painting, with particular attention to the interaction between glaze behavior, firing conditions, and material responses. Color in this context is not merely an applied visual element but a product of material transformation, characterized by partial unpredictability and expressive variability. Within Jin Ke's works, the organization of color reveals a distinctive stylistic approach that strengthens the individuality and recognizability of his visual language.

#### 5.1. Chromatic Characteristics of Porcelain Painting

Color in porcelain painting is not simply an applied visual element but a result of material transformation under high-temperature firing conditions. The interaction between glaze composition, mineral pigments, and kiln atmosphere produces complex chromatic variations that are partially controllable and partially accidental. This gives porcelain painting a unique color system that differs significantly from conventional painting media.

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In this sense, color should be understood as an outcome of material behavior rather than a pre-designed visual decision. The unpredictability of firing processes allows chromatic effects to emerge organically, often exceeding the artist's initial intention.

### **5.2. The Relationship between Firing Process and Color Variation**

The kiln firing process is a decisive factor in shaping the final chromatic outcome of porcelain painting. Variations in temperature, oxidation, and reduction atmospheres directly affect pigment stability and glaze transformation. As a result, even minor technical adjustments can lead to significant visual differences.

This technical uncertainty introduces a productive tension between control and accident. Artists must anticipate possible outcomes while simultaneously accepting the unpredictability inherent in ceramic processes.

### **5.3. Color Expression and Aesthetic Language in Jin Ke's Works**

In Jin Ke's porcelain paintings, color functions as a central component of aesthetic construction rather than a secondary decorative element. His works often employ subtle tonal transitions and layered glaze effects to create a sense of atmospheric depth and visual continuity.

In works such as *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, *Sky City*, and *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, color plays a key role in differentiating spatial zones, guiding visual rhythm, and reinforcing thematic atmosphere. The chromatic system thus becomes an integral part of image construction.

### **5.4. Color and the Formation of Artistic Style**

The aesthetic style of porcelain painting is largely determined by its chromatic system, which reflects both material conditions and artistic intention. In Jin Ke's practice, a preference for restrained tones and layered glaze textures contributes to a distinctive visual identity.

Through the interaction of color, material, and composition, his works establish a coherent stylistic language that balances traditional ceramic aesthetics with contemporary visual sensibilities. This synthesis reinforces the individuality and recognizability of his artistic expression.

## **6. Artistic Value and Innovative Pathways of Porcelain Painting in the Contemporary Context**

This chapter situates porcelain painting within contemporary artistic and cultural frameworks, discussing its potential for cross-media expansion and cultural reinterpretation. In the context of globalization and the transformation of visual culture, porcelain painting not only continues the technical traditions of ceramic art but also expands its expressive capacity through material experimentation and image innovation. Based on Jin Ke's artistic practice, this chapter further reflects on

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its positioning within contemporary art systems and its possible future trajectories.

### **6.1. Contemporary Context and the Transformation of Porcelain Painting**

In the context of globalization and the diversification of visual culture, porcelain painting has gradually shifted from a traditional craft-based practice to a hybrid artistic form. This transformation is driven by changes in aesthetic perception, material experimentation, and interdisciplinary artistic practices. As a result, porcelain painting now operates within both artistic and cultural production systems.

In Jin Ke's practice, this transformation is reflected in the integration of traditional ceramic techniques with contemporary visual language, positioning porcelain painting as a medium that bridges historical continuity and modern expression.

### **6.2. Cross-Media Expansion of Artistic Language**

The development of porcelain painting in contemporary art increasingly involves cross-media experimentation, including the integration of painting, ceramics, installation, and digital technologies. This expansion breaks the traditional boundary of medium specificity and opens new possibilities for visual expression.

In this process, porcelain painting is no longer confined to a fixed material identity but becomes a flexible platform for artistic experimentation. This flexibility allows artists to explore new visual structures and conceptual frameworks.

### **6.3. Artistic Significance of Jin Ke's Porcelain Painting Practice**

Jin Ke's porcelain painting practice demonstrates a synthesis of material sensitivity, visual experimentation, and cultural reflection. Through works such as *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, *Sky City*, and *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, his artistic language reveals a continuous negotiation between tradition and contemporary expression.

His works are not merely aesthetic objects but visual systems that integrate material behavior, symbolic structure, and spatial logic. This integration enhances the conceptual depth of porcelain painting as an artistic medium.

### **6.4. Future Development Pathways of Porcelain Painting**

The future development of porcelain painting lies in its ability to continuously integrate material innovation, cultural reinterpretation, and technological advancement. As contemporary art increasingly values interdisciplinary practices, porcelain painting has the potential to expand beyond traditional studio-based production.

In this evolving context, porcelain painting may further develop into a more open and experimental medium that engages with new materials, digital technologies,

and global visual discourses while maintaining its ceramic foundation.

## 7. Conclusion

This study systematically investigates Jin Ke's porcelain panel paintings through three interrelated dimensions: material language, imagery construction, and spatial organization, further extending the analysis to chromatic systems and contemporary artistic value. The findings suggest that porcelain painting is not merely a visual representation on ceramic surfaces, but a complex outcome of interactions among material behavior, firing processes, visual structures, and cultural encoding. In this sense, the medium itself actively participates in the formation of artistic language rather than serving as a passive support.

Through the analysis of representative works such as *Autumn Lotus Dream Moon*, *Sky City*, and *Fragrant Blossoms in Abundance*, this study demonstrates that Jin Ke's artistic practice constructs a dynamic visual system in which material unpredictability, symbolic transformation, and spatial reconfiguration are continuously negotiated. His works reveal a shifting boundary between control and contingency, tradition and contemporaneity, as well as representation and abstraction.

Overall, porcelain painting emerges in this research as a hybrid and evolving artistic medium that bridges craft and contemporary art. Its future potential lies in its openness to material experimentation and interdisciplinary expansion. Jin Ke's practice provides a significant case for understanding how traditional ceramic-based art forms can be reactivated within contemporary visual culture, offering both theoretical and practical insights into the ongoing transformation of porcelain painting.

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