Qualitative Comparative Analysis in the Emotion of Artistic Creativity:

An Analysis of Isolation in Painting

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Abstract

This paper highlights the outcomes of the use of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of isolation in paintings. A general literature review was conducted to analyze the connection between art, emotion and society in the existing research. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is often used in the organization research of Humanities and Social Sciences and in this study, it is mainly used to analyze the expression of artist's paintings. This paper makes a detailed analysis of the factors affecting the expression of isolation in paintings. Through the researcher's discussion among the selected Artist's paintings, the researchers rely on Boolean algebra and take composition, color, facial expression, body language, atmosphere and the background as factors to analyze the configuration. Finally, the influence of different factor configurations on painting expression of isolation was analyzed.

Keywords: *Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Configurational Theory, Painting, Emotion, Isolation*

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Introduction

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is an analytical approach to social science research for small and medium-sized sample case studies, it is an analytic approach and research tool that combines within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons (Legewie, 2013). Qualitative Comparative Analysis as an integrated dual-orientation research method, it offers the most systematic way to analyze complex causality and logical relations between causal factors and an outcome (Schneider & Wagemann, 2007:41). For one thing, data analysis and findings increase the persuasiveness of argumentation (George & Bennett, 2005:70). For another, QCA helps to focus the attention on key issues of conceptualization and helps to problematic aspects in conceptualizations that might have been overlooked otherwise (Goertz, 2006:37).

Arts research has undergone dramatic changes in the past. Including rich art forms and diverse content expression. Externally, the art market is also affecting the development of art, which has evolved from religious and political control to the middle and upper-class substantive control. And then in an industrialized society, art is divided into two parts that are separated from production and labor, and integrated into the life of the masses. Entering the period of neoliberalism, the circulation of money, resources, and information promote richer choices of art content and more freedom of expression. The connection between art and society has never been interrupted. At the same time, emotions also change with social change. Isolation was once defined as the feeling of being alone, but is now more often defined as a subjective and self-conscious feeling and experience of separation and alienation from others or society that is subjective and varies from individual to another. This emotion is concerned because urban life also carries with it negative emotional influences, which are also reflected in the artwork.

Literature Review

Art is used as an emotional regulator, so art therapy has become popular. Studies have shown that creating art can serve as a method of short-term mood regulation, art therapy can vent and distraction. In the study of Drake, J. E., & Winner, E. through two experiments (Study 1 they induced a negative mood in participants by showing them a sad film clip. Study 2 they induced a negative mood by asking participants to think of the saddest event they had experienced and then assigned them to one of three conditions: venting, distraction, and sitting - a new condition in which participants just sat quietly). In both studies, mood improved significantly more in the distraction than in the venting or sitting condition. They argue that the mood elevating effects of art-making are stronger when art is used to distract than when used to vent (Drake, J. E., & Winner, E., 2012).

The research on the relationship between art and emotion has been paid more and more attention by art researchers, including what kind of emotion art can trigger has always been controversial in academic circles. As Eugène Véron stated, "Art is the emotional expression of human personality" (Eugène Véron, 1882), The reason why art exists is that human emotions need to be expressed in more abundant ways, which is an effective form of our rich emotional experience.

Isolation is one of the complex emotions that people are experiencing. The changing environment around us causes people's emotions to shift as well, so the emergence of isolation is a result of the social environment. The content of artworks is closely related to the environment. As presented by the research of sociologists, works of art reveal the social reality. Rudolf Arnheim advocated that the mind actively structures perception in visual images, and the work of art acts as an equivalent for these images within a publicly observable medium (Arnheim, 1994:111). Jean-François Lyotard was powerful in explaining the way that picture's function, they speak precisely in a way that only painting can, presenting figures that are outside of discourse (Lyotard, 1971). In other words, painting, like other art forms, has its own linguistic features. This kind of artistic features and language are all conveying information, but obviously artistic expression has its own way of expression. The audience can know our society through these pictures, so art reflects the society reality. Vytautas Kavolis argues art reflects not only social reality itself, art content seems to provide expressive reinforcement of its legitimacy (Kavolis, 1964:468). For Kavolis, art content reflects conditions which are culturally legitimated and actually do exist. And that, he highlights contemporary events and cultural values have a way of insinuating themselves into art content. This shows that art has strong social attributes and can arouse people's empathy. In addition to the fact that art will be affected by social reality, art has a role in promoting more reasonable social structures and social cultural orientation.

Noy P & Noy-Sharav call "meta-emotions." They posit that what people see when immediately looking at a piece of artwork are the formal, technical qualities of the work and its complexity. For example, seeing a perfectly painted chair (technical quality but no complexity) or a sloppily drawn image of Christ on the cross (complex but no skill) would be unlikely to stimulate deep emotional responses. However, beautifully painted works of Christ's crucifixion are likely making people who can relate or who understand the story behind it weep. They cite examples of people being able to listen to and dance to music for hours without getting tired and literature being able to take people to far away, imagined lands inside their heads. Art forms give humans a higher satisfaction in emotional release than simply managing emotions on their own (Noy P & Noy-Sharav, 2013).

Leo Tolstoy explained, "Art is a human activity, consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feeling and also experience them" (Leo Tolstoy:1897). Paul J. Silvia stated that artists will show self-consciousness in their creation. Self-conscious emotions are responses that reflect upon the self and one's actions, such as pride, guilt, shame, regret and embarrassment (Paul J. Silvia, 2009). In Learning through the ancient art and experiencing emotions with contemporary art: Comparing visits in two different museums, the authors claimed "People visit museums to experience 'the pleasure of art' or

'the desire for cultural learning,' but when broken down, visitors of museums of classical art are more motivated to see famous works and learn more about them. Visitors in contemporary art museums were more motivated by a more emotional connection to the art, and went more for the pleasure than a learning experience" (Mastandrea et al., 2007).

Methods

Materials and Procedures

The entire research process follows select artists, select artists' works, analyze the content of the works, and apply Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to the investigation.

Selected Artists

The sample categorizes were selected using both purposive and random sampling techniques, which ensuring accurate representative sample of all the variables. The principles in selecting artists are guided by:

1. These artists were engaged in art after the 20th century, as this research focuses on contemporary art.
2. The works of these artists are predominantly figurative paintings.
3. As representative as possible of artists from around the world.

The below table shows the filtering completed for this study (see table in figure 1).

Artists	Year of Birth	Nationality	Artists	Year of Birth	Nationality
Ai Xuan	1947	CHN	Guim Tio Zarraluki	1987	ESP
Alberto Giacometti	1901	SUI	James Ensor	1860	BEL
Alex Katz	1927	USA	John Brack	1920	AUS
Alice Neel	1900	USA	Jozsef Rippl-Ronai	1861	HUN
Chang Yu	1900	CHN	Julian Schnabel	1951	USA
Chen Danqing	1953	CHN	Maria Lassnig	1919	AUT
Chen Yifei	1946	CHN	Marie Vorobieff	1892	RUS
Edward Hopper	1882	USA	Otto Dix	1891	GER
Elaine de Kooning	1918	USA	Rosalyn Drexle	1926	USA
Erika Lee Sears		USA	Toni Hamel	1961	CAN
Fang Lijun	1963	CHN	Wayne Thiebaud	1920	USA
Frida Kahlo	1907	MEX	Willy van den Berg		NED

Figure 1. Table of the selected artists.

Selected Artist's Paintings

After a selection of artists, this study focuses on the artwork of these artists shown in the following table (see table in figure 2) and (figures 3-26) below.

Artists	Painting's Details
Ai Xuan	Xiao Yingzi 小英子, Oil on canvas, 90×90cm, 1996
Alberto Giacometti	Diego Seated, Oil on canvas, 1948
Alex Katz	The red smile, Oil on canvas, 200×292cm, 1963
Alice Neel	Self-Portrait, Oil on canvas, 1980
Chang Yu	Naked girl with bent legs 曲腿裸女, Oil on fiberboard, 122×135cm, 1965
Chen Danqing	Migrant workers in Beijing suburbs 京郊民工, Oil on canvas, 41×54cm, 2005
Chen Yifei	Mother and son 母与子, Oil on canvas, 140×140cm, 1990
Edward Hopper	Nighthawks, Oil on canvas, 84×152cm, 1942
Elaine de Kooning	The Burghers of Amsterdam Avenue, Oil on canvas 223×421cm, 1963
Erika Lee Sears	Bubbles, Pop Tarts, And Of Course Wine, Oil painting on cradled birch wood panel, 16 x 16in, 2021
Fang Lijun	1994.2, Oil on canvas, 130×160cm, 1994
Frida Kahlo	The Broken Column, Oil on Masonite, 39.8 × 30.6cm, 1944
Guim Tio Zarraluki	Field II, Oil on linen, 55×46cm, 2018
James Ensor	Mask, Oil on canvas, 57 × 52.5cm, 1921
John Brack	Collins St., 5 p.m. 1955, Oil on canvas, 114.8 x 162.8cm, 1956
Jozsef Rippl-Ronai	Woman with a Birdcage, Oil on canvas, 185×130cm, 1892
Julian Schnabel	Untitled (Claude Picasso), Oil, plates and bondo on wood, 72×60in, 1987
Maria Lassnig	Lady with brain, Oil on canvas, 125×100cm, 1990
Marie Vorobieff	Marika with a bouquet of flowers, Oil on canvas, 91 x 74cm, 1970
Otto Dix	Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden, Mixed technique of oil and tempera on wood, 121×89cm, 1926
Rosalyn Drexle	Home movies, Acrylic, oil and paper collage on canvas, 48 1/8 x 96 1/8in, 1963
Toni Hamel	The watch, Oil and alkyd on cradled panel, 24×24in, 2017
Wayne Thiebaud	Clown with Suitcase, Oil on canvas board, 19.94 x 15.88in, 2017
Willy van den Berg	Between walls Painting, Acrylic on Canvas, 13.8 x 17.7in, 2018

Figure 2. Table of the selected artist's paintings.

Figure 3. Xiao Yingzi 小英子, Oil on canvas, 90×90cm, 1996.

Figure 4. Diego Seated, Oil on canvas, 1948.

Figure 5. The red smile, Oil on canvas, 200×292cm, 1963.

Figure 6. Self-Portrait, Oil on canvas, 1980.

Figure 7. Naked girl with bent legs 曲腿裸女, Oil on fiberboard, 122.5×135cm, 1965.

Figure 8. Migrant workers in Beijing suburbs 京郊民工, Oil on canvas, 41×54cm, 2005.

Figure 9. Mother and son 母与子, Oil on canvas, 140×140cm, 1990.

Figure 10. Nighthawks, Oil on canvas, 84.1×152.4cm, 1942.

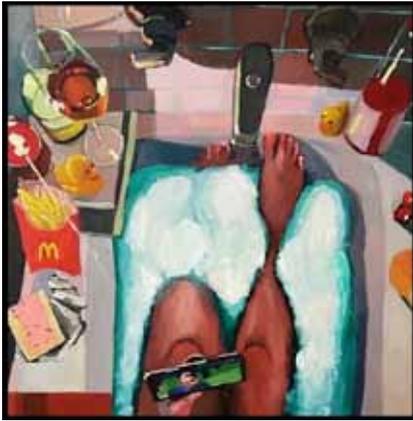Figure 11. The Burghers of Amsterdam Avenue, Oil on canvas 223.5×421.6cm, 1963.

Figure 12. Bubbles, Pop Tarts, And Of Course Wine,
Oil painting on cradled birch wood panel, 16in sq, 2021.

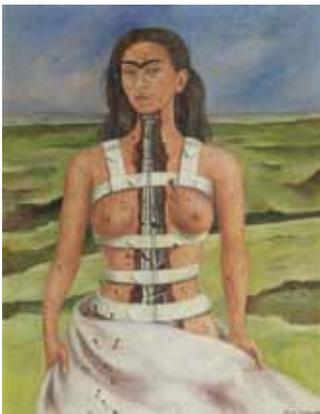Figure 13. 1994.2, Oil on canvas, 130×160cm, 1994.

Figure 14. The Broken Column, Oil on Masonite, 39.8cm × 30.6cm, 1944.

Figure 15. Field II, Oil on linen, 55×46cm, 2018.

Figure 16. Masks, Oil on canvas, 57.2 × 52.5cm, 1921.

Figure 17. Collins St., 5 p.m. 1955, Oil on canvas, 114.8 x 162.8cm, 1956.

Figure 18. Woman with a Birdcage, Oil on canvas, 185.5 ×130cm, 1892.
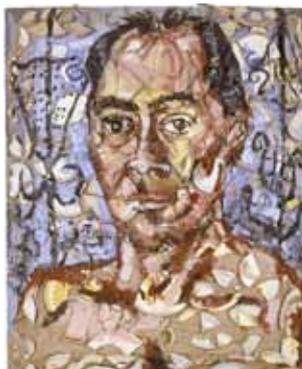

Figure 19. Untitled (Claude Picasso), Oil, plates and bondo on wood, 72 × 60in, 1987.

Figure 20. Lady with brain, Oil on canvas, 125×100cm, 1990.

Figure 21. Marika with a bouquet of flowers, Oil on canvas, 91 x 74cm, 1970.

Figure 22. Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden, Mixed technique of oil and tempera on wood, 121×89cm, 1926.

Figure 23. Home movies, Acrylic, oil and paper collage on canvas, 48 1/8 x 96 1/8in, 1963.

Figure 25. The watch, Oil and alkyd on cradled panel, 24×24in, 2017.

Figure 26. Clown with Suitcase, Oil on canvas board, 19.94 x 15.88in, 2017.

Figure 26. Between walls Painting, Acrylic on Canvas, 13.8 x 17.7in, 2018.

Selected factors
There are two ways of analyzing painting. For the painting languages, composition, color and background are the most basic factors. For this research main in

figurative painting, researchers advocate that facial expression, body language and atmosphere are the three most important ways to express emotion in painting.

Composition
The art of painting has evolved in a variety of compositions, and artists advocate contrasting compositions, symmetrical compositions, central compositions and counterpoint compositions as some of the best ways of highlighting emotions in painting. Contrasting and central compositions both highlight the subject and express a more intense emotion; symmetrical compositions mostly express a calm and tranquil emotion; counterpoint compositions are mostly found in modern contemporary art and can express different emotions and the personality of the artist.

Color
All the color has some degree of emotional value (D'andrade & Egan, 1974:49). For example, red can appropriately be described as "enthusiastic" and "exciting," blue can appropriately be described as "melancholy" and "depressing." Cutietta, R. A., & Haggerty, K. J. (1987) conducted an experiment in which people of different ages were asked to choose colors to express their emotions when they heard certain music, and basically concluded that red was associated with enthusiasm, yellow with liveliness, blue with sadness and green with nature.

Background
The background in a painting refers to the scene that sets off the subject, and although it plays a secondary role in the painting, it is also one of the important components of a painting. In most cases, the background and the subject matter are often expressed in a way that is emotionally consistent.

Facial Expression
Facial expression as a more direct way of expressing emotions, it is offer especially rich information include art content and how the artworks were created (Tian et al., 2020). Facial expressions are the residual actions of more complete behavioral responses (Darwin, 1998). For example, when people are sad, they cry and frown, and when they are happy, the corners of their mouths turn up - these expressions reflect real emotions.

Body Language
The external body language actually reflects the internal biological motivation, that is, the brain processes various important information from real life and expresses it through body language. The relationship between emotion and behavior might depend on the specific emotion (De Gelder, 2006:248). For example, when people encounter something that is afraid, the emotion of fear may arise and they may move to hide or hold themselves tight. In this research, body language refers to movements other than facial expression (including the upper and lower limbs and the trunk).

Atmosphere
Atmosphere refers to the ambience and mood of the surroundings. In this research, researchers are concerned with whether the atmosphere of the painting is consistent with the isolation, that is, whether the painting as a whole shows the isolation.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)
In this research, QCA is used to analyze the factors that influence the expression of isolation in the artworks of selected artists. Researchers use Arabic numerals to define the expression of isolation in artworks. "1" represent the use of this factor expression isolation in the artist's work. "0" represent the absence of this factor expression isolation in the artist's work. To facilitate the calculation, researchers labeled the 6 factors (Composition, color, facial expression, body language, atmosphere and background) as A~F and the outcome as Z. QCA solutions where "*" represent logical "and," "+" represent logical "or," "~" represent logical "none."

Results
After the analysis of each artwork, the following analysis results are shown in the tables in figures 27 and 28.

Artists	Factors						Outcome (Z)
	Composition (A)	Color (B)	Facial Expression (C)	Body Language (D)	Atmosphere (E)	Background (F)	
Ai Xuan	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Alberto Giacometti	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Alex Katz	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Alice Neel	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
Chang Yu	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Chen Danqing	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Chen Yifei	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Edward Hopper	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
Elaine de Kooning	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Erika Lee Sears	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fang Lijun	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Frida Kahlo	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Guim Tio Zarraluki	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
James Ensor	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
John Brack	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Jozsef Rippl-Ronai	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
Julian Schnabel	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Maria Lassnig	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Marie Vorobieff	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Otto Dix	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Rosalyn Drexle	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toni Hamel	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Wayne Thiebaud	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Willy van den Berg	1	1	0	1	1	1	1

Figure 27. Table of the factors and outcomes of the selected artist's paintings.

Artists	Implicants	Solutions
Alberto Giacometti, Elaine de Kooning, Marie Vorobieff	~A*~C*D	
Fang Lijun, James Ensor, John Brack, Alex Katz	A*C	
Chang Yu, Fang Lijun, James Ensor, Guim Tio Zarraluki, Toni Hamel, Edward Hopper, Jozsef Rippl-Ronai, Willy van den Berg, John Brack, Alex Katz	A*E	
Alberto Giacometti, Elaine de Kooning, Marie Vorobieff, Ai Xuan, Chen Yifei, Maria Lassnig, Alice Neel, Guim Tio Zarraluki, Toni Hamel, Edward Hopper, Jozsef Rippl-Ronai	B	
Ai Xuan, Chen Yifei, Maria Lassnig, Fang Lijun, James Ensor	C*~D	
Otto Dix, Frida Kahlo, Julian Schnabel, Ai Xuan, Chen Yifei, Maria Lassnig, Alice Neel, Fang Lijun, James Ensor, John Brack, Alex Katz	C*E	C*~D + D*E
Otto Dix, Frida Kahlo, Julian Schnabel, Alberto Giacometti, Elaine de Kooning, Marie Vorobieff, Alice Neel, Chang Yu, Guim Tio Zarraluki, Toni Hamel, Edward Hopper, Jozsef Rippl-Ronai, Willy van den Berg, John Brack, Alex Katz	D*E	C*E + D*E
Frida Kahlo, Julian Schnabel, Edward Hopper, Jozsef Rippl-Ronai, Willy van den Berg, Alex Katz	F	

Figure 28. Truth table.

Discussion

According to the table in figure 27, researchers use the relationship between the above factors (A~F) and Outcome (Z) for the twenty artists we think of expressing isolation in their works. Rely on Boolean algebra to analyze the configurations, researchers use QCA Add-In [Version 1.1] to calculate and get the optimal solutions, which are composed of two formulas as shown in the table in figure 28.

C*~D + D*E->Z: Facial expression* ~Body language+ Body language* Atmosphere->Expression isolation
C*E + D*E->Z: Facial expression* Atmosphere+ Body language* Atmosphere->Expression isolation

From two new formulas, researchers can have the following discussion:
First, the three main factors of the expression isolation in the painting are facial expression, body language and atmosphere. At least two of these factors are required to create the painting that expresses the isolation.
Second, researchers advocate that color, facial expression and body language are direct ways of expressing emotions, background, atmosphere and composition are indirect ways of expressing emotions. So one direct way and one indirect way is suitable for the expression of isolation.

Third, composition, color and background are relatively rarely used to express isolation in painting. So researchers assume that in post-20th century works, the way in which isolation is represented is becoming more and more direct. Fourth, as a consequence of researchers' discussion, researchers propose that both facial expression and body language have at least one factor in expression isolation.

Based on the limited amount of data in this study, the researchers are currently unable to draw conclusions that apply to the broader field. Looking back at contemporary painting since the 20th century in Expressionism, Surrealism, and Dadaism, the emphasis on subjective feelings and sensations is the focus of many artists' attention when making. Munch often uses shadows and rings of color around his figures to emphasize an aura of fear (Eggum, 1984:305), Dalí created a vast human body tearing at one another in a delirium of auto-strangulation (Ian, 1997:334), Picabia painted figures in a garish style which appears to subvert traditional. Contemporary painting has become more expressive in terms of body language and atmosphere. Thus, the two new formulas are references and worthy of further investigation and practice.

Conclusion

By analyzing the artworks of twenty-four contemporary artists leads up to the general discussion that the isolation in painting. According to this discussion process, researchers first realized that many artists have chosen expression isolation in painting. After the reign of religion and politics, painting entered a phase where it focused on the real existence of people from different social classes. People's real feelings were reflected in such artworks and resonated more. Secondly, isolation is caused by the contradictions between our current social life and the population. At the present stage, global society is in a period of rapid development and there is a contradiction between the growth of material conditions and the psychological needs of people. Artworks that focus on people's psychological changes have emerged. Thirdly, the development of society and the art have a mutual influence on each other. From the history of the development of painting, people can see the social characteristics of a specific period in the artworks, reflecting the living conditions and emotions of people in that period; artworks from different periods also have different artistic styles. At the meantime, artworks also reflect the social problems of different periods and contribute to the rational resolution of social problems. The negative effects of isolation are not only personal psychological problems, but also lead to the production of more extreme social problems. Artworks express such emotions and make them known to a wider audience, with the ultimate aim of supporting the catharsis of people's emotions and the beneficial development of society.

In the existing studies, the most general social function of art content may in fact be to facilitate the achievement of such emotional relatedness to impersonal sociocultural reality (Kavolis, 1964:471). Art expresses the emotions and struggles of society and inspires society to cope. Art plays two important roles in society. Firstly, art reflects the current cultural values. There are different cultural values in each period, except for the direct use of language, works of art indirectly and vividly reflect a series of social cultures produced in the development of society, such as the relationship and contradiction between humans and society. Art also plays a role in the recording. Secondly, artistic language promotes the solution of social problems. The reason why the social phenomenon reflected in the works of art is called social phenomenon is that it is a group behavior, not an individual's emotional catharsis. As a social group, the opinion tendency not only needs more

people to understand, but also needs to discuss with a wide range of people, so that the art content and social problems can be standardized.

The truth table obtained by Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of isolation in painting, a main analytic step still lies ahead: making sense of the cases with the help of the recipes suggested by the truth table analysis (Legewie, 2013:18). The outcomes of uses QCA formalized cross-case comparisons, it helps researchers to analyze the way in which the artist chooses to express the isolation. Make complex relationships in art research more transparent and consistent through the formalization of concepts. Thus, it is a powerful addition to classic qualitative research methods. Such a hands-on introduction to applied analysis with QCA in art faces many challenges as well as the need for more practice and analysis. It hopefully helps other researchers to utilize the full potential the method offers for art research.

Acknowledgements

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