Art Criticism of Virtual Humans in the Metaverse: An Examination Centered on "Liu Ye Xi"

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Abstract

With the rise of the metaverse concept, the virtual human sector has once again gained momentum, and virtual art is infused with new possibilities and hopes. The emergence of the virtual human Liu Ye Xi has broken through the domestic ceiling for virtual beings, opening up a narrative metaverse that presents new aesthetic changes characterized by immersion, interactivity, and hyperreality. From a rational and objective perspective, examining the new artistic space in the metaverse and engaging in aesthetic reflection reveals two major issues: the invisible control of technology and the "hyperreality" of simulacra.

1. Introduction

The concept of the metaverse first appeared in Neal Stephenson's 1992 novel "Snow Crash," envisioning a virtual world parallel to reality: "By putting on headphones and goggles and finding a connection terminal, one could enter a computer-simulated virtual space parallel to the real world as a virtual avatar." (Stephenson, 2018). Virtual reality technology drives this digital revolution, enabling both real-world mappings and artistic creations. Virtual art, a key metaverse component, transcends traditional expression: "As art, it allows us to immerse ourselves in images through a technological interface and interact with them" (Popper, 2007). Its forms—like 3D painting and immersive experiences—grant new creative and engagement possibilities (Hacmun et al., 2018). Virtual beings further bridge users to this world, enhancing integration and immersion.

On October 31, 2021, an account named "Liu Ye Xi" published its first video on the short video platform Douyin. In this 2-minute and 8-second video, a woman named Liu Ye Xi dressed in ancient attire is seen applying makeup in front of a mirror. Meanwhile, on the brightly lit street,

a curious group of onlookers gathers, holding up their phones with flashlights to film her. Suddenly, Liu Ye Xi turns around, startling the crowd, but a stylishly dressed young boy boldly approaches and asks, "Are you putting on such ugly makeup here to scare people?" Liu Ye Xi then uses a beautiful pen to show the boy the world through her eyes, saying, "Now, the world I see, you can see too."

This short two-minute video quickly went viral after its release, gaining over 1.3 million followers in just 24 hours and exceeding 2.95 million followers and over 5.43 million likes within four days. The topics related to "Liu Ye Xi" and "When Beauty Meets the Metaverse" have reached 350 million and 200 million views, respectively. The creative team behind "Liu Ye Xi" successfully stood out in the highly competitive short video platform landscape, sparking widespread discussion and reflection among netizens. Clearly, the team behind "Liu Ye Xi," Creative Yi Technology Co., Ltd., came prepared. Riding the wave of the metaverse, they leveraged the trend to become the fastest-growing account in Douyin's history and ignited the "Liu Ye Xi phenomenon," sparking a "revolution" in the short video field.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1 The Virtual Human Liu Ye Xi in the Metaverse

The evolution of virtual humans traces back to Japan's 1982 animated character Lynn Minmay, progressing through milestones like Hatsune Miku (2007) and China's Luo Tianyi, who has released 899 albums (QQ Music data). These AI-driven digital personas, simulating human appearance and behavior, have grown from entertainment icons to broader cultural phenomena. The emergence of Liu Ye Xi on Douyin marked a significant advancement - as "the first virtual beauty blogger who can capture monsters in the metaverse," she uniquely blends 2D anime aesthetics with 3D realism. Her team's strategic content creation and precise timing achieved unprecedented engagement, demonstrating the metaverse's potential in short video format while establishing new possibilities for virtual human applications. Figure 1 presents the portrait of Liu Ye Xi that exemplifies this innovative approach.

Figure 1.1 Portrait of Liu Ye Xi

Firstly, Creative Yi Technology strategically positioned Liu Ye Xi with labels like "metaverse," "virtual human," "beauty," and "monster-catching," tapping into the current popularity of the metaverse concept to pique curiosity. They also boarded the "virtual idol" train, gaining a

significant competitive edge in the virtual human field. According to incomplete statistics, in 2021, funding for "digital humans" exceeded 2 billion yuan, with around 20 financing events, and it is projected that by 2030, the overall market scale for virtual humans in China will reach 270 billion yuan. By combining the metaverse with the promising and dynamic virtual human market, Liu Ye Xi is undoubtedly favored by audiences. Furthermore, with the current online popularity of beauty topics, when a beauty blogger shifts from a real person to an almost perfect virtual human, the resulting praise and discussion naturally follow.

Secondly, the visual presentation of Liu Ye Xi is also meticulously crafted. A standard Chinese face adorned with a beauty look rich in Chinese elements aligns with the trendy "guochao" aesthetic. The fluorescent elements of her makeup infuse a sense of cyberpunk technology, appealing to the preferences of the new generation and attracting more fans with its visual effects. The team chose to release the video on the night of October 31, Halloween. This holiday, closely associated with ghostly themes, creates a strong connection with Liu Ye Xi's video content, making it easier to evoke emotional resonance among viewers. Thus, Liu Ye Xi's identity as a monster-catcher naturally drew attention during Halloween. The team leveraged the public's deep cultural recognition of Halloween, effectively utilizing this Western cultural phenomenon to refresh user engagement, rapidly expanding their influence on Douyin.

Despite the video being only around two minutes long, it showcases exquisite craftsmanship. Whether it's the special effects, filming, or attention to scenes and details, everything reflects high standards, comparable to a film. The storyline blends mystery and science fiction, with high tension and a rigorous structure that constantly engages the audience's emotions. Through virtual and modeling technologies, the barriers between reality and the virtual world are broken, vividly showcasing the passionate collision of the two realms and delivering an unprecedented visual impact in short videos.

As a relational medium, virtual humans can attract attention based on their attributes and characteristics, but given the intense competition, it is crucial to convey the emotions behind virtual humans, craft compelling narratives, and strengthen content creation as core competitive advantages to stand out. "Although virtual idols are not real, their social and emotional connections can be as valuable as those of real idols. Virtual idols should not be mere shells of code technology, but rather substantial content entities," said Liang Zikang, CEO of Creative Yi Technology, when discussing the method of building the Liu Ye Xi IP in an interview. It is evident that the Liu Ye Xi team is creating a major IP rooted in Chinese culture.

In the first episode of the video series "The Zodiac Labyrinth," the image behind her clearly resembles a crane. In Chinese culture, cranes symbolize longevity and purity, holding significant meaning in Taoism, often seen as companions of immortals and deities. Therefore, Liu Ye Xi's role as a monster-catcher resonates with the crane's imagery, embodying deep Taoist cultural connotations. The identity of the monster-catcher symbolizes the mastery over evil forces and the maintenance of natural order, much like the crane's representation in traditional culture, reflecting respect for mystical powers and the pursuit of harmony and balance. This cultural connection not only enriches Liu Ye Xi's character but also imbues her with new vitality in a modern context.

Liu Ye Xi's series of videos, by subduing the twelve zodiac animals, showcases a strong mythological flavor. The first monster is the rat spirit, referencing lines from "The Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River," conveying the symbolic meaning of "the daughter ignites the lamp's embers, comforting the child to ensure longevity." In the second episode of the Zodiac Labyrinth, she introduces the snake, breaking the cycle and demonstrating the power of humanity. The entire series aims to achieve world peace through the subjugation of the zodiac, traversing through time and space amidst pandemics, floods, and breakups, helping people reclaim cherished memories of

the past and ultimately conveying the hopeful vision that "the long night will eventually end, and dawn will break." From the existing video content, it is evident that Liu Ye Xi's videos possess artistic qualities, and her powerful IP matrix resembles that of "Marvel" in the metaverse.

2.2 New Aesthetic Changes in Virtual Art

The metaverse, by its intrinsic properties, represents a comprehensive new digital medium that integrates reality and the virtual, constructing a simulated world that transcends real life. With the development of electronic information technology, electronic art based on computer graphics and sensing technology combined with internet technology in the 1990s, giving rise to new media art that embodies both technological invention and artistic creation. These works exhibit a strong sense of realism, showcasing the artistic characteristics of virtual reality. In the "second media age," the culture of "digital modernism" emerged, marking a new stage for human network civilization as media technology transformed. Marshall McLuhan famously proposed that "the medium is the message," emphasizing that social relationships rely on the intermediary role of the medium (McLuhan, 2000). Innovations in media reshape the ecosystem, influencing thought and lifestyle. Additionally, arts and crafts have long been intertwined; as Wang (2001) notes, "The methods and means of technology dictate the modes and dynamics of artistic operation, thus determining how people perceive."

Virtual technology has cultivated new aesthetic experiences. In 1993, Philip Kauffman and Bodhi highlighted virtual reality's "3I" characteristics: interactivity, immersion, and imagination. Virtual art disrupts traditional aesthetics, transcending technology's intrinsic value. For example, Liu Ye Xi's videos utilize virtual reality for sci-fi effects and time-space transitions. Chuangyi Technology's metaverse-inspired short videos, though conceptual, offer glimpses into virtual art's new aesthetic paradigms.

2.2.1 Immersive Interactive Aesthetics

Virtual reality technology introduces a new artistic language to works. In the virtual world, human perceptual activities are magnified, sensory capabilities are enhanced, and the extension of the senses liberates individuals from the constraints of time and space, breaking the physical limitations of real life and allowing entry into immersive spaces created by virtual technology. In this context, technology returns to the body, enabling it to showcase its full capabilities, uniting mind, body, and environment in a shared temporal and spatial experience. Klaus Schwab describes this new interactive interface as follows: "The human eye and vision, as effective media connecting the internet and digital devices, create a broader, more realistic sense of presence through a series of adjustments and enhancements to human sensory experiences" (Schwab,2016). Virtual technology constructs a real world, providing users with a strong sense of enveloping and presence through sensory immersion. Unlike the simple perception provided by previous media, virtual reality technology maximally engages multiple human senses, including vision, hearing, touch, taste, force sensation, and smell, enabling users to obtain a genuine sense of experience. By providing a three-dimensional immersive experience, VR technology aims to highly reproduce the simulated world, bringing users an aesthetic and physical experience comparable to traditional cultural activities. This technological foundation enables creations like Liu Ye Xi's virtual persona to achieve unprecedented verisimilitude, allowing viewers to explore artworks from multiple perspectives while potentially endowing artworks with higher value in virtual reality (Usui, Sato & Horita, 2018). The full-sensory immersive experience gives users a greater sense of freedom and autonomy, enabling them to travel through time and space, closely appreciate artworks and interact with them, thus experiencing the "aura" of art and the spiritual nourishment

it brings more profoundly. This immersive experience not only realizes the "visual perception" (intuitive feeling) and "mental resonance" (spiritual resonance) of aesthetic experience but also further enhances the appeal of art, making the connection between the audience and artworks closer and deeper.

Although Liu Ye Xi is a "virtual person," she presents a remarkably realistic anthropomorphic demeanor in her narrative-driven videos involving life-and-death choices. Upon entering her virtual narratives, users can freely choose a unique identity, stepping into the society constructed in the metaverse and becoming part of its civilizational framework. At this moment, the virtual identity becomes an essential aspect of personal consciousness, allowing individuals to immerse themselves mentally and gain a sense of "existence." Through Liu Ye Xi's curated virtual scenarios, people can pursue their desires, shaping their personas as they wish, yearning to live a second life within that realm.

In the new media era, the development of digital technology transforms cultural carriers into digital forms, composed of 0s and 1s, thus offering more possibilities for artistic engagement. Virtual technology further narrows the distance between subjects and objects, bridging the gap between artistic creation and real life. Liu Ye Xi's cross-dimensional interactions demonstrate how individuals can break through limitations, no longer observing things from a "certain distance," but rather intervening in the creation of art as active participants. Full-sensory stimulation and hyper-realistic virtual reality, through immersive settings and atmospheres, encourage individuals to actively interact with the virtual environment. In this moment, the immersive bodily experience unconsciously transforms into cognitive experience; "We exist in the world through our bodies... because when we perceive with our bodies, the body is a natural self and the subject of perception," provoking associations and emotional resonance that yield a highly integrated, dynamic embodied experience (Merleau, 2001). The relative isolation and independence between art, subjects, and audiences are dissolved, and the aesthetic process evolves from a linear to a nonlinear one. "The artist, user, and work together constitute a potential symbiotic relationship, shaping an aesthetic of process in interactive experience" (Shang, 2020). Liu Ye Xi's collaborative storytelling exemplifies how modes of presentation and creation become increasingly diverse and open; individuals in the same virtual space can interact freely, and spectators can engage in secondary creation according to their aesthetic pursuits and bodily intentions. This allows for journeys into distant pasts, dialogue with authors, and internal spiritual interactions, while also placing users in those temporal settings through dynamic models, resulting in interactions akin to those in the real world, collaborating with artists to complete the work, thus making art more genuine and accessible.

In Liu Ye Xi's signature works, she, as a virtual being, seamlessly transitions from her original world into the real one, interacting with real-world individuals through augmented reality interfaces. In her debut video, she connects two distinct worlds using a calligraphy brush imbued with digital symbolism, facilitating a journey from "here" to "there," allowing a young boy to see her perspective, arriving at another parallel world, and engaging in "reality-equivalent" activities.

2.2.2 Hyper-Realistic Aesthetics

From the earlier technological revolutions to the current era of information explosion and image-driven society, imagination has consistently provided inexhaustible impetus for the development of human civilization. In ancient times, humans possessed little material wealth and perceived the world through their own experiences, lacking a clear distinction between subject and object. They believed in the spirituality of all things and their interconnectedness, experiencing freedom and vitality in harmony with nature. This innate creativity allowed them to

empathize with the world around them, transferring subjective emotions to objective entities, imbuing them with human feelings and sensations. Based on this emotional logic, they created a world that belonged to humanity. "The original and most fundamental metaphysics is a sensed and imagined one... primitive people are imbued with powerful sensory capabilities and vivid imaginations... this is a function they possess from birth (since they are born with these senses and imaginations)" (Vico, 1987). Poetic metaphysics laid the foundation for the unique mode of primitive art. For instance, in primitive shamanism, specific "sympathetic" mediums—props, costumes, locations, dance, drama, mimetic actions, and sounds—are utilized to create a "heart-matter field" (Koffka, 2010) that evokes mysterious sensations in participants, allowing them to experience excitement, intoxication, ecstasy, and overwhelming emotions, achieving a spiritual elevation to communicate with deities. The same imaginative logic drives Liu Ye Xi's world-building, where symbolic objects and rituals bridge virtual and physical realms. The interactions between objects and thoughts in shamanism rely on the power of imagination. Primitive individuals utilized the realms created by shamans, harnessing their imagination to construct vivid virtual scenarios that offered a genuine sense of existence, representing the earliest forms of virtual reality.

Today, with the advancement of VR, MR, and AR technologies, the scope of human imagination has significantly expanded, with the gates of thought flung wide open, allowing imagination to roam freely in the non-material virtual world constructed by technology. Liu Ye Xi's cross-dimensional narratives exemplify how art and culture are no longer pre-defined; they are generated. People no longer engage with art passively but create actively, moving from "restoring" the meaning of art through imagination to proactively creating outcomes based on their sensory perceptions in virtual spaces, rather than passively receiving experiences. The virtual space fills up with artistic practice. Art is no longer merely the "soul" of spirit existing outside the body; it is rooted in sensory experiences derived from bodily engagement (Zhou, 2022).

In this new artistic space, a completely different aesthetic landscape emerges. Liu Ye Xi's interactive storytelling allows anyone to establish their connections and actively imagine narratives, transforming everyone into authors and narrators of stories. Individuals infuse their lived experiences and emotional journeys into technology, giving rise to an alternative reality where art and life become one, and life is art. At this juncture, space is no longer a container for objects but a residence of human consciousness (Bachelard, 2013). For instance, in the second episode of Liu Ye Xi's "The Zodiac Labyrinth," she traverses four different temporal realms in her quest to locate the snake, each of which coexists uniquely, embedding the creativity and sensory memories of individuals.

Artistic structure has shifted from a branched model to a networked model, and artistic forms have evolved from primarily two-dimensional images, videos, and texts to three-dimensional designs centered on physical landscapes, sculptures, and architecture. Liu Ye Xi's holographic presence demonstrates how, when artistic creation reaches a certain level of development, reality expands beyond mere existing nature to include "realities" recreated by human intervention. The relationship between art and reality is redefined, blurring the boundaries between the two. Art no longer depends on reality but stands independently as its own reflection. The pursuit of similarity and consistency between art and reality in the era of mirror imitation has transitioned to a phase where technology intervenes, causing the lofty status of art to waver. Art descends from the sacred "altar" to the realm of digital holographic spacetime, where the distance between art and reality continually expands, dismantling the aesthetic structure of "imitation" — "representation" — "authenticity." Liu Ye Xi's presence does not evoke a sense of dissonance; rather, she is perceived as a genuinely existing individual. She represents a humanly recreated "reality," and her activities constitute a continuously evolving artistic work, embodying an artful life.

2.3 Aesthetic Reflections on the New Literary and Artistic Space of the Metaverse

The rapid transformations in digital media play an indispensable role in shaping the order and structure of emerging literary and artistic spaces. While people celebrate the convenience of technology, it is essential to return to real life and analyze this potential future literary space with objectivity and rationality. When the metaverse truly arrives, will literature and art be co-opted by the "hegemony" of the metaverse as symbols of control, or will they genuinely integrate with the metaverse? Will the metaverse's future be fleeting like yesterday's flowers, or will it unfold like a vast sea of stars? With this in mind, we can identify several potential issues and challenges by examining virtual art from the perspective of metaverse aesthetics.

2.3.1 Invisible Control of Technology

Rodin once lamented, "Our age is the age of engineers and manufacturers, and certainly not of artists" (Rodin, 1987). The digital economy inspires us to view art from a broader perspective. However, as digital technology rapidly advances, the elements of technological sophistication and excitement have been increasingly adopted and complexly employed by artists. In projects like Liu Ye Xi's production, some artists, in pursuit of digital effects, seem to over-rely on and cater to technology, often skimming the surface of the literary and artistic core, resulting in art that is hollow, superficial, and overly entertaining. The immersive nature of virtual technology inevitably influences artistic creation, leading users to shallow "reading" experiences, where creation is limited to sensory stimulation and the release of desires, focusing on physical pleasure. "Contemporary literature and art increasingly merge into mass culture, becoming part of daily consumption, and its spiritual quality is almost entirely lost" (Yu, 2000). Artistic creation has become a process of "digital encoding—encoding—decoding," where the pre-programmed nature of digital systems and the systematic control of data output diminish the genuine emotional expression of users. For example, even in Liu Ye Xi's performances, the use of voice replication and synthesis technology can lead to a loss of authentic human emotion in the sound. As large-scale cognitive intelligence technology continues to advance, there is a growing emphasis on the interactive experiences among people. This shift not only highlights the importance of human connection in the digital age but also presents both new opportunities and significant challenges for the evolution of virtual humans, "The interaction between virtual humans should not be just cold conversations, but should be humanized and emotional" (Kong, 2025).

The same holds true for literary appreciation. In the virtual realm, it seems the author is "dead," and the spiritual and transcendent nature of the work is weakened, its emotional depth diluted, leading to a lack of individuality and depth. The unique "halo" of art gradually fades, and works that lose their "authenticity" become lifeless, uniform, and devoid of vibrancy, reducing them to the products of mechanical replication. Liu Ye Xi's narrative depth contrasts with such homogenized outputs, yet this liberation of aesthetics risks being overshadowed by standardized trends. More concerning is when technology becomes monopolized by capital and becomes a tool for profit, transforming users into subjects controlled by digital systems rather than experiencing true freedom, resulting in deeper alienation. Entering Liu Ye Xi's virtual universe requires a smart wearable device, and creating one's world requires purchasing virtual currency. Daily life can easily become commodified as the logic of capital subtly infiltrates every aspect of life, rendering texts as consumable fragments and reducing literature and art to commodities, becoming more commercialized, technical, and capital-driven. Art loses its intrinsic meaning, becoming a game for capital and a purely technological endeavor.

The team behind Liu Ye Xi—Creative Yi Technology Culture Co., Ltd.—is primarily controlled by five stakeholders: Xie Duosheng, Liang Zikang, Li Ning, Shenzhen Creative Yi Technology Cultural Partnership, and Zhejiang Zhongying Rights Equity Investment Fund.

Notably, Zhejiang Zhongying is a prominent investment firm that has funded multiple large-scale projects, including ZBJ.com, Pop Mart, and Kuaidi. The company also invests in real estate development, with projects like Zhongying International, Zhongying Jinchengli, and Zhongying Kangkanggu among its assets (Shan, 2008). Liu Ye Xi's high-cost production model—each video reportedly costing nearly one million yuan—exemplifies how capital's invisible hand has effectively pushed the IP to the forefront, making capital and power inseparable from its development. "The media increasingly amass capital, becoming powerful entities and a form of capital themselves." To fully leverage the benefits of technology and open up new spaces for literature and art, Liu Ye Xi's case urges us to improve the technology itself, refine creative approaches, and construct a new aesthetic "realm" within virtual reality. This realm should embody the order of literary beauty, recreating the "halo" of art, immersing users in the spiritual world of beauty and allowing them to experience the intrinsic value of art.

2.3.2 Hyperreality of Simulacra

When virtual technology reaches a certain level, it achieves a "no-interface" state: "In a dematerialized digital image era, subjectivity gradually transforms into a precarious interface between rational communication systems and information networks" (Crary, 2017). Liu Ye Xi's seamless integration into real-world contexts exemplifies this—the anthropomorphism of virtual humans has reached a level that is almost indistinguishable from reality. From facial expressions to movements, they are virtually identical to real people, and in Liu Ye Xi's case, they can even simulate human emotions, making it hard for people to believe that they are not real (Lee & Kim, 2025). The virtual and real worlds are becoming increasingly intertwined, blurring the boundaries between online and offline life. Liu Ye Xi's cross-dimensional narratives amplify this ambiguity: people no longer know when their dreams begin or when they end, as reality and fantasy have become indistinguishable. Technology obscures perception of the real world, making it harder to distinguish truth from illusion, and as we near the technological singularity, a series of "cyber disorders" may arise. In the virtual space, everything is a game, and everyone is a player, following predefined rules to freely express and rebuild a virtual self, often as a means of escaping unsatisfactory realities. Liu Ye Xi's fans, immersed in her constructed universe, face an invisible wall that isolates them from real life. When choosing IP identities and shaping virtual personas, users already enter a closed psychological space, reducing the need for face-to-face social interaction and resulting in a lack of authentic, "present" soul-to-soul exchanges. Behind the digital veil, users soar freely. Those who are frustrated in reality can achieve greatness in Liu Ye Xi's virtual narratives, attain the status they long for in their dreams, and experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction they have never felt in real life. The "paradise" constructed by virtual technology is highly likely to become a digital drug that harms people's physical and mental health. There have already been reports of frequent occurrences of harassment, bullying, and other violations of personal rights in the metaverse (Karácsony, 2025).

Upon returning to reality, prolonged virtual living through experiences like Liu Ye Xi's content can make real-life adjustment difficult, creating a sense of detachment from the phenomena of real life. This can diminish subjective initiative, weaken interest in the real world, foster feelings of doubt and unreality about one's actions and thoughts, impair memory, and induce dizziness, daydreams, and hallucinations. Such a disconnection can lead to severe mental health issues, including a crisis in identity, as individuals oscillate between real and virtual identities, unable to distinguish their true selves. Liu Ye Xi's audience, torn between her hyperreal persona and mundane existence, embodies the difficulty in balancing virtual and real identities, blurring self-recognition.

When art fills the virtual space, Liu Ye Xi's holographic performances exemplify how the boundary between virtual and real art blurs. In appreciation, distinctions between "object" and "image" fade, creating an aesthetic era of hyperreality as described by Baudrillard: "Today, when reality and imagination are mixed in the same manipulation of subjectivity, aesthetic awareness is omnipresent. It is a subliminal feeling towards replicas, montages, and movie scripts—an excessive exposure of reality in the model" (Baudrillard,1994). Technological simulation presents an ever - "constructed truth" that surpasses reality, forming a hyperreal world where symbols organize according to their own order, blending dream and reality into one. Liu Ye Xi's curated virtual personas become "perfect crimes," where reality is determined by the simulacrum itself, which, through its replicative power, forcefully integrates into our reality, establishing its own discourse. As Plato's Cave theory reveals, when people become familiar with the "shadows" on the cave wall—or Liu Ye Xi's digital projections—they become captivated by them, rejecting the real world. With a vast amount of virtual art permeating everyday life, the boundary between life and art increasingly fades. Life is reshaped and created by art, no longer purely imitating life.

In classical aesthetics, the aesthetic experience is traditionally connected with spiritual and transcendental self-awareness, creating products of beauty according to aesthetic order. These were once regarded as having eternal human values, separated from the imperfections of everyday life by a sacred artistic mission. However, as the trend of "technological objectification" in art continues to expand—epitomized by Liu Ye Xi's commodified virtual identity—the range of aesthetic objects extends far beyond classical aesthetics. Everything in life becomes subject to aesthetic consideration, and aesthetics is no longer exclusive to art but pervades daily life itself. Individuals engage in aesthetic activities through their lifestyles—eating, dressing, shopping, and decorating become artistic acts. This sensual excess provides aesthetic pleasure, leading to an aestheticization of everyday life. However, Liu Ye Xi's brand collaborations highlight how consumer passion and aesthetic enthusiasm in daily life replace spiritual fulfillment with material desires and sensory enjoyment. Art struggles to evoke a longing for the spiritual world, as "the phenomenon of aestheticization refuses to undertake the spiritual obligations of daily life; aestheticization becomes a form of consumer enjoyment, an impulsive and emotional existence" (Wang,2018).

People immerse themselves in the diverse manifestations of life, marveling at the allure of technology embodied by Liu Ye Xi's innovations, yet feeling burdened by an overloaded aesthetic realm. The myriad aesthetic objects may induce fatigue, leading to indifference or weariness toward aesthetic objects, resulting in an emptiness of the spirit and a pervasive sense of void and detachment. Breaking free from this sensory prison requires improvements in the broader aesthetic environment and enhancements in individual aesthetic qualities and spiritual capabilities.

3. Conclusions

Virtual technology allows people to transcend limitations and enter a simulated space parallel to the real world, engaging in unprecedented artistic and aesthetic activities, providing immersive, interactive, and hyperreal aesthetic experiences. However, with the excessive influence of technology, the "halo" of art fades, artistic activity trends towards "technologization," and the blurred boundary between virtual and reality may very well lead to a prolonged disconnect from reality—a situation akin to being "unaware of Han, let alone Wei and Jin," potentially resulting in societal problems. This includes the "aestheticization" of daily life, among other phenomena. These issues call for profound reflection. We must address these challenges with a critical awareness of art, carefully examining the direction of future art, leveraging the critical role of

literary theory, safeguarding a pure space for the arts, and guiding the development of art toward a healthy, positive path. We must remain vigilant against potential pitfalls that may accompany technological leaps and be prepared to embrace a new golden age. Although Liu Ye Xi's videos are still far from a true metaverse, we already see glimpses of its possibilities. Regardless of whether the metaverse becomes our tomorrow, we should look forward to the future and be prepared to embrace it.

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