

# Twenty-year Strategy for the Construction and Development of Artology (1998-2024)—Analysis Based on Cite Space Visualization Knowledge Mapping

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## Abstract

The discipline of art studies has been developed in China for more than twenty years and has been changing and improving since its construction. After a spiral development, in 2022, the first-level discipline Artistic Theory is renamed as Artistic, and this positioning will open a new chapter for the development process of Artistic discipline. In order to clarify the key points of different periods of time in the discipline of art studies in the past twenty years, we try to utilize the Cite Space knowledge graph analysis software to systematically analyze the traceability, historical development and current status of the discipline of art studies in China, so as to provide a basis for the continued development of the discipline of art studies and the exchange and collision among scholars in the future.

## Keywords

discipline of art, artology theory, Cite Space

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## 1. Introduction

After the theory of art has been elevated to become a first-level discipline, its disciplinary system has been continuously improved and developed. In the past ten years, a number of scholars and experts in China have carried out in-depth research, discussion and suggestions on the establishment of the discipline of artology and the issue of artology theory, and their academic views basically reveal the general appearance of the development of artology theory research in China and the various disciplinary systems included in artology, embodying the basic features of the artology theory research, demonstrating the broad academic dimensions of the artology theory research as well as constructing the discourse system of artology theory research. The State Council Academic Degrees Committee again revised the basic requirements for the awarding of the first-level disciplines and professional degree categories. In 2022, the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council revised the *Basic Requirements for the Conferment of Degrees in First-level Disciplines and Professional Degree Categories* again, and renamed the theory of art as artology, and categorized the original theory of art as an independent second-level discipline of the first-level discipline of art. However, it should be clear that artology theory is still a general term with vague boundaries, i.e., various academic researches of a theoretical nature in the field of art (Guo, 2023). Against the backdrop of

the academic community's frenzy to explore the relationships and definitions between art studies and art theories, as well as the opportunities and challenges arising from the revision of the discipline, we hope to make a systematic visual analysis of nearly two decades of research on art studies (artology theory) through the use of scientific knowledge mapping. Using statistical analysis of data, we strive to show the diversity of theoretical research in art studies, and make a multi-dimensional analysis of the research hotspots and frontiers of art studies in different time periods, so as to show the process of the development and structure of scientific knowledge in the discipline of art studies, and to enrich the connotation and extension of the discipline of art studies (Zhou, 2020).

In summary, this study uses Cite Space and other software to visualize “art” and “artology theory” in the literature data of CSSCI database in the past two decades, and analyzes the classic literature, author groups, issuing institutions, journals, core authors, research hotspots, research frontiers, etc. It aims to discover the research hotspots of art in each period of time, reveal the research development trend of art, discuss the current research situation, develop the summarization method and summarize the ideas. Source, core authors, research hotspots, research frontiers and so on, aiming at discovering the research hotspots of art studies in each period of time, revealing the research development trend of art studies, discussing the current research situation, exploring the induction method and summarizing the ideas, promoting the development of art studies, and striving to build art studies into “one of the disciplines with the most Chinese characteristics in the construction of knowledge and development of disciplines”.

## 2. Data Sources and Research Methodology

On November 23, 2023, the data in this paper were searched in the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) for “art” and “artology theory” respectively, with the time length of “1998-2023”. “A total of 548 data items were obtained, and after screening, the retention types included essays (421 items), cleaning non-academic content reviews (30 items), reports (7 items), reviews (65 items) and others (17 items). The final valid data was 421 articles.

The research in this paper is based on the theory of scientometrics and citation analysis, and supported by Cite Space information visualization and analysis software. After importing the data into Cite Space, select “January 1998 to November 2023” in the Time Slicing function area, and select “1” for #Years Per Slice. “. In the Node Types column, select “Author”, “Institution”, “Keyword”, “Reference”, “Cited Author” and “Reference”. “Reference” “Cited Author” and “Cited Journal”, Selection Criteria The g-index scale factor k in the functional area is 25, and then the visual analysis is carried out.

### 2.1 Literature Publication Volume Analysis

This study analyzed the distribution of annual literature volume of art studies in China from 1998 to 2022. From a macro point of view, there are two peaks in the distribution of annual literature, which can be divided into two phases according to the peaks, the first phase is the budding period centered on 2002 (1998-2008), with an average of 6.73 articles issued annually. At this stage, artology is still in the gestation period, and the development is slow and unstable. The second stage is the boom period (2009-2022) centered on 2015, with an average of 28.1 articles per year. From a microscopic point of view, there is an overall trend of germination (1998-2002)-development (2003-2008)-boom (2009-2015)-decline (2016-2018) - secondary boom (2019-2020) - secondary decline (2021-present). 2000 and 2002 had the lowest amount of literature, with 2 articles each. 2020 had the highest amount of literature, since the establishment of the discipline of artology theory, so in the context of the construction of new liberal arts, experts and scholars have expressed their views and blossomed to express their opinions on the ten-year history of the discipline of artology theory.

The development of art studies in China has gone through a long process of acceptance, transplantation and integration. In the embryonic stage, the discipline system of art is still unformed, and the branches of aesthetics, music, theater, film and so on exist independently, each into a whole. Before and after the twentieth century, in addition to the above branches, the literature content of the discipline, mostly based on comparative art studies, from the specific analysis of small disciplines to the overall level of artology theory.

After the initial construction of the discipline, the literature shifted to the systematic positioning of the nature and construction of the discipline of art, laying down the theoretical foundation and putting forward suggestions, concepts and prospects for the future development trend.

As the system of art studies evolved and matured, various related literature reviews and annual reports came out, and then scholars began to explore the localization and globalization of Chinese art studies, to think about the construction of the disciplinary system of art studies as well as the conceptual problems and dilemmas of various fields, and to apply the theories of art studies to real life and production industries. In recent years, art studies is no longer just a discipline, but is based on interdisciplinarity, interacting and integrating with other fields, exploring and innovating. It is probably because art has begun to branch out into other different fields that the number of pure art studies has decreased in the past three years. This does not mean that there is a decline in art studies, but rather highlights the fact that the field has become more in-depth, broader and more expansive.

## **2.2 Research Cooperation Networks Analysis**

Research collaboration is the act of scholars or institutions working together for the common purpose of generating, researching, and innovating in a particular field of knowledge. The larger the font size of the node name in the collaboration network graph, the more the scholar/institution has published. The connecting lines between the nodes indicate the existence of cooperation between the authors, and the more connecting lines, the closer the cooperation between the scholars/institutions.

### **2.2.1 Author Collaboration Network Analysis**

After analyzing author by node types, we can see that node is 359, and the connecting line is 116. There are two author cooperation groups, the group with a larger number of people around the exhibition of Ma and the seminar of collecting works; the other research group headed by Li belongs to the China Academy of Art, which is committed to summarizing and reflecting on the theoretical disciplinary development of art and to making the prospect of the art. The other research group, headed by Li, belongs to the China Academy of Art and is dedicated to summarizing and reflecting on the development of the discipline of artology theory, and making a direction for the future of art. From the point of view of individual scholars, the number of publications greater than or equal to 6 is regarded as high publication authors. Zhang believes that China needs to establish the theoretical self-consciousness of art studies, the discourse in the theoretical level of art studies in the academic mainstream dominated by Western culture transformed into our own theory. Li combines his personal academic perspective and the research of art in the new period to summarize his personal construction of the disciplinary system and academic system of Chinese art. Zhang starts from the research of art morphology, reviews art morphology, researches the current situation and reflects on the existing problems nowadays, and discusses the important value and academic significance of art morphology to the construction of art studies. Ling proposes that after the theoretical discipline of artology is recognized, artology theory researchers should strengthen their discourse on aesthetics and literature. Sun Xiaoxia is good at interpreting the issues of artology theory, aesthetics, and philosophy, and interprets the humanities during the Renaissance to give the humanities a proper name (Sun, 2020). Zhou elaborates on the four characteristics of media artology theory and its echo of the times and the expansion of the discipline in the context of the construction of the new literature-science. Xia takes “Chinese painting” as a theoretical study of art, and explains in detail its historical transformation and value reconstruction, hoping to make a significant contribution to the study of classical artology theory in China. Meanwhile, Zhou and Xia will work together in 2022 to clarify the relationship between Chinese art theories and art theories of different disciplines, exploring the relativity and self-containment of both. Peng Feng, because the secondary discipline of artology theory is not yet clear, breaks down the basic problems of artology theory into three, and proposes solutions for the construction of the emerging discipline.

From the aspect of cooperation, the intensity of cooperation among scholars is insufficient, the connection is not close, and there is a lack of adhesion. In terms of research content, various scholars have been checking and filling in the gaps in various aspects of art studies, and have innovatively put forward some unique concepts for the construction of the discipline of art studies. Although scholars are shining in

different places and producing different excellent works, it would be more marvelous if they could join forces.

### 2.2.2 Institutional Cooperation Networks Analysis

There are 148 nodes (N), the number of connecting lines (E) is only 19, and the density of the network (Density) is only 0.0017, which indicates that although there are many research institutions, from the point of view of the degree of cooperation, there has not yet appeared a cluster effect on the research of the discipline of artology theory, and it is mostly an independent exploratory research. From the perspective of geographical distribution, there are institutions researching the discipline of art studies in all parts of the country, with a relatively even distribution, and the main strength is concentrated in Beijing and Nanjing.

The total number of institutions with more than or equal to 10 publications is 9. Southeast University is the research institution with the highest number of articles, totaling 63 articles. Southeast University studied artology theory earlier, and its research field tends to be systematic and mature, mainly focusing on reviewing artology theory and correcting the orientation of artology theory. The next ranking in order is, Nanjing University of the Arts (42 articles), Beijing Normal University (25 articles), Chinese National Academy of Arts (21 articles), Peking University (21 articles), Nanjing University (18 articles), Communication University of China (12 articles), and Chaohu University (10 articles).

Both the authors and the inter-institutional collaborative networks show a high number of researchers but a low density of collaboration. The research areas are also concentrated within the discipline of art, with very few studies stepping out of the field to achieve disciplinary cross-over.

## 3. Co-citation Analysis

There are three types of co-citation analysis, the first is author co-citation analysis, the second is journal co-citation analysis, and the third is literature co-citation analysis. Co-citation analysis means that two or more authors or literature or journals are cited by a piece of literature at the same time.

### 3.1 Author Co-citation Analysis

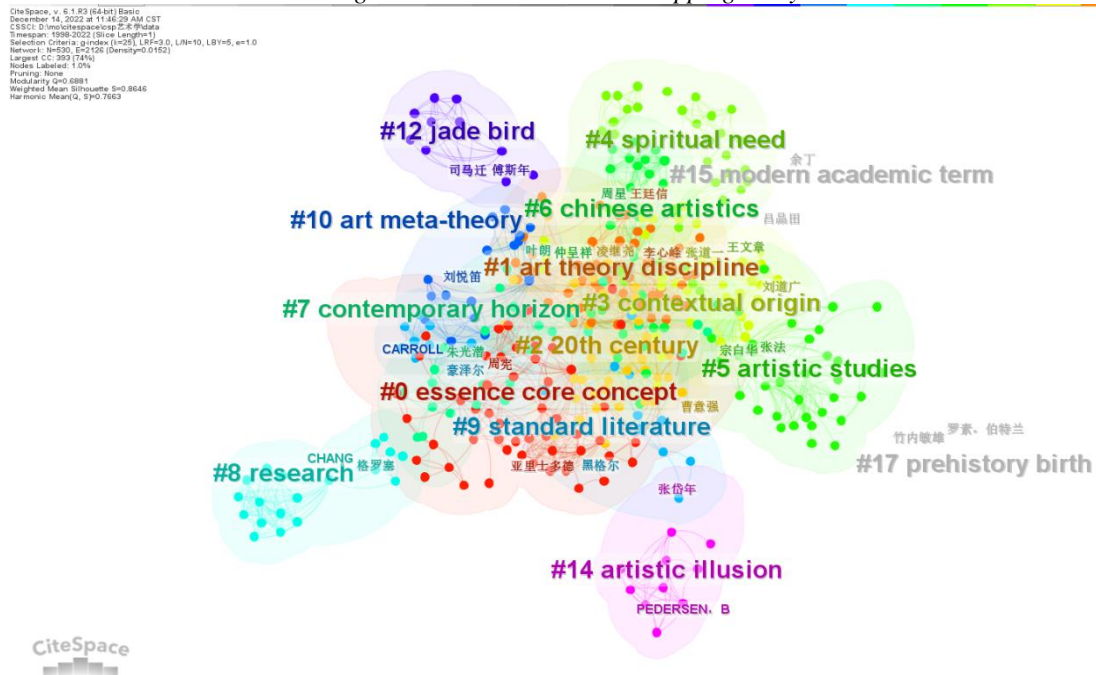
Author co-citation analysis is when two or more authors are cited in one piece of literature at the same time. The more the cited authors are cited in the literature, the more significant the scholar's achievement in the field is proved. The higher the number of co-citations between different authors, the stronger the connection between the authors. Through the authors' co-citation analysis, we can see how many clusters there are in a certain research field, which clusters are represented by which influential scholars, and we can also analyze the common research points of different groups of scholars and the frontiers they represent accordingly.

Clustering co-cited authors by Cite Space yields a network with 530 nodes and 2126 connections. As Figure 1 shows, the upper color bar indicates that the further left the year is, the further forward, and the further right the year is, the closer to the present day, while the range circled by the color indicates the different clusters, the smaller the number after the # sign on each cluster indicates that the theme of the cluster is more valued in the research, the English name after the number is the theme of the cluster, and the color of the cluster name corresponds to the color of the region in which it is located. Each dot represents a scholar, and a different color means that the author is in a different cluster.

According to Figure 1, the cited authors in the discipline of art are categorized into 17 clusters, the first one is essence core concept, the second one is artology theory discipline, and the third one is 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the first cluster, Zhou is the leader, with a citation frequency of 16, and the content of the citations mostly focuses on how to build the theoretical discipline of art and the literature review of artology theory. In the first cluster, Zhou is the leader, with a citation frequency of 16, and the cited contents are mostly based on how to build artology theory discipline and artology theory literature review. The second category is artology theory discipline, and the scholars represented in this cluster are Wang and Li. Wang's citation frequency is 20, and his citations focus on the mission and status of artology theory and the origin, controversy, and consensus on the upgrading of artology theory to a discipline. According to Wang, there are still barriers in

the discipline of artology theory, and it is the mission of artology theory to break down the barriers and promote the development in its original status. In addition, Wang has made important contributions to the theory of how to categorize art studies. Li is ranked first in terms of citation frequency, with 35 citations, and the main cited documents are Conceptualization of Art Studies and Meta-Art Studies. As early as 1988, Li saw that artology was in a hazy state in China and needed to establish the status of artology as soon as possible and carry out the research of artology. After reviewing the history of art studies and analyzing western literature and art, Li lists the basis for the creation of the discipline of art studies in China and envisions the system, structure and basic framework of art studies. The third category is 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the most cited authors are Ling and Cao. Ling is ranked first in terms of citation frequency, with a total of 35 citations, and the most cited documents are Art Studies: Birth and Formation and The Second Level of Artistic Theory Setting up of Artistic Disciplines. After the establishment of the discipline status of artology, Ling started from the three dimensions of the formation process, research history and research method of artology, systematically re-established the object, scope and research method of artology, and elaborated on the establishment of the second-level disciplines of artology theory. Cao's citation frequency is 12, and the highest cited document is Recent Development of Art Disciplines in Foreign Countries, which summarizes the academic achievements and theoretical innovations made in the development of art disciplines from 2007 to 2009.

Figure 1: Author co-citation mapping analysis



### 3.2 Journal Co-citation Analysis

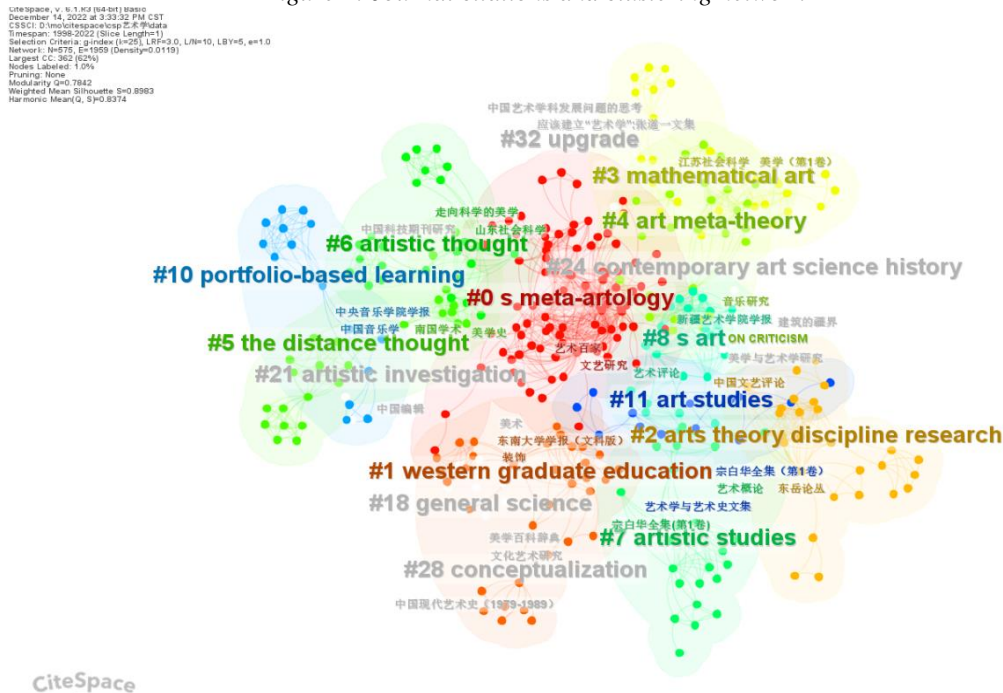
Journal co-citation shows which journal has high influence and authority. Journal co-citations are analyzed by clustering the different cited journals under which cluster they are focused.

As Figure 2 shows, there are 32 clusters of art studies, and the first cluster is meta-artology. In this clustering, Art 100 and Literary Studies are dominated. The composite impact factor of Art 100 is 0.645, and the content of its columns covers 8 secondary disciplines under the first-level discipline of art, emphasizing the artistry, ideology, academics, and theory of the content. In the past ten years, the literature distribution of the first three disciplines of fine arts, calligraphy, sculpture and photography, theater, film and television art, literary theory. The compound impact factor of literary research is 1.102, covering various disciplines of literature and art, mainly including research on the general theory of literature and art (aesthetics and literature and art), research on art theories and creative practices in the departments of literature, drama, film and television, and plastic arts, as well as research on foreign literary theories, literary trends, literary schools, and other contents of literary theory publications. The second cluster is western graduate education, and the

first journal in this cluster is Journal of Southeast University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition), with a compound impact factor of 1.925. Literature in the discipline of arts theory accounts for 4.9% of this journal, philosophy for 4.1%, and Chinese literature for 4.7%. The third clustering is arts theory discipline research, whose main cited journal is Dongyue Lecture Series.

These high-frequency cited journals have a certain discourse power in the art academy, they lead the development direction of art research, provide novel research ideas and theories, and create a favorable academic atmosphere.

Figure 2: Journal citations and clustering network



#### 4. Keyword Clustering Network Analysis

Keywords can reflect the core content of the literature, and keyword clustering can show the different knowledge structures and scope involved in the field of art studies in China.

##### 4.1 Keyword Co-occurrence Network Analysis

There are 32 clusters in the keywords of arts research. The top three most representative clusters are #0 arts theory, #1 new era, and #2 application turn.

Among the keywords of art studies, those with a frequency greater than or equal to 10 are listed. The highest frequency of “art” is 144 times, the frequency of “discipline construction” is 51, and the frequency of “discipline system” is 17. The development and spread of western art theories have a certain influence on the germination of art studies in China. The development and dissemination of western artology theory has a certain impact on the germination of art studies in China, but “if you want to seek a long wood, you have to fix its root; if you want to flow far, you have to dredge its spring source”, the construction of art discipline system can learn from the classification of western art disciplines, but the fundamental thing is still to rely on China's traditional art theories, and to summarize and distill the scope of the construction of art disciplines and the system of art disciplines. system.

Artology in China itself has a huge and complex system with a long history and a wide variety of categories, and the construction of a disciplinary system for artology is a huge project. Our experts and scholars have spent several years to name and categorize art studies. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the systematic confusion of art in our country has existed for a long time, and the inconsistency of

the knowledge system and disciplinary system has brought great trouble to scholars. After constructing, reflecting and revising time and again, the discipline of art studies was gradually improved, and in the 1990s the first-level discipline of art studies was added to the list as a “second-level discipline” of art studies. But this is not the end, in February 2011, the discipline of art from the “first-level disciplines” upgraded to “disciplines”, thus entering a new stage of development. During this period, art academics have been warmly discussing the significance of the upgrading of art, the history, status quo, problems and countermeasures of art research, and the future direction and development trend of art after the upgrading of art, etc. (Li & Sun, 2014). As one of the first-level disciplines under the category of artology theory, the research is not bound to the existing mature artology theory in the West, from focusing on the subjectivity of the discipline, the content and goals of discipline construction, personnel training standards and other issues to the theory of a more localized, in-depth, modernization, and at the same time, the integration of cross-cutting disciplines, in the cross-border in the vitality. As a first-level discipline, artology theory has traveled for more than ten years and made great progress.

Due to the long tradition, colorful history and mature conditions, the road of its development has become smoother and smoother. Until now, the discipline construction and system development of artology theory are still progressing and updating. Against the background of the trend of change in the construction of new liberal arts, the interdisciplinary integration of research, and the demand for multidisciplinary talents, the knowledge spectrum of artology theory needs to be systematically sorted out to promote the development of the discipline.

## 4.2 Timeline Analysis of Keywords and the Clusters

The keyword timeline for the period 2000-2022 with every 5 years as a time unit. From the vertical axis, it indicates the high-frequency keywords that appeared in a certain time period, and the larger the font size of the keywords indicates the higher frequency of appearance; the horizontal axis indicates the clustering category where the keywords are located, and the more keywords appearing in the clustering indicates the higher heat of the clustering. The solid line on each cluster always points to the time period when the category mainly exists, and the position of the point where the keyword is located indicates the year when the keyword first appeared. The keyword clustering timeline shows which hotspots appeared during which time periods and which research areas the hotspots belong to.

The history of art studies has always been closely linked with the fate of the country. 2000-2005 is the budding period of art studies, after a long period of gestation in the late nineteenth century when Chinese scholars such as Zong and Ma came into contact with and studied western art studies, domestic art studies began to take off, and even though art education has always been carried out slowly, the academic community's thinking on the construction of the discipline of art studies and the system, its positioning, direction of development, and method of development are still unclear and at a debatable stage. The academic community's thinking about the construction of the discipline and system of art, its positioning, direction and method of development are not yet clear and are in the debating stage. Fang Yi puts forward the division and connection between the disciplines of “literature” and “art” and emphasizes the necessity of giving art the status of an independent discipline. Zhang Fa puts forward a series of systematic problems that need to be solved in the discipline of art. “Discipline construction”, “art discipline”, “discipline system”, “artology theory”, “disciplinary education” and other related terms became synonymous with art studies at that time.

A long way to go, 2005-2010 is a period of exploration, the road of art studies is gradually clear, and the content of the study is also moving from single to multiple. At this stage, not only the positioning, system and classification of art and its theories are improved, but also the suggestions of theory construction and conceptualization of the course flourish, the status of traditional aesthetics, philosophy and folk art is highlighted, the name of Zong, a big name in the field of academia, appears frequently, and the related articles and journals flourish. In the art of film and television, Jia and Wu published their own artistic perceptions. Guo and et al. offered insights into the nature, history, conception, framework, and prospects of the system of art studies. During the 60th year of the founding of the nation and the 30th year of reform and opening up, the study of art studies has been subjected to a reflective review. However, at this time, the

research still remained in the domestic perspective, and the cross-fertilization between various disciplines and art studies had not yet appeared. At this stage, “philosophy of art”, “journal evaluation”, “aesthetics” and “art history” became synonymous with art studies. research.

2011-2015 is the boom period, art studies is still an immature child, scholars and experts continue to make improvements. Zhang puts forward the challenges faced by art under interdisciplinarity, Jia throws out the problems about the discipline degree system and its catalog setting, Zhong puts forward the dilemma of the discipline construction and development, and Gao clarifies the connotation, extension and basic structure of the system of art. With the support of the national government and the implementation of relevant policies, art studies is closely related to the national situation, closely following the ideological guidance, focusing on the current cultural context, highlighting “contemporary China” and “cultural construction”. Xia clarifies the history of Chinese modern and contemporary art, and outlines the overall appearance of the history of Chinese modern and contemporary art (Xia, 2020). Li and et al. present the opportunities and challenges of art studies against the background of the current stage of China's development. Fu Caiwu puts forward the new tendency of art studies in the face of “disciplinary construction” and “modern transformation of the traditional disciplinary system”. Since “art studies” became an independent academic discipline in 2011, the term “discipline construction” has become a prominent term.

From 2016-2022 to the present, art studies have blossomed. With socialist culture with Chinese characteristics as the premise, excellent foreign thinking and our ideas are intermingled and intercommunicated, and our scholars are standing in the international perspective or learning Western art, or overlooking and comparing the similarities and differences at home and abroad (especially the neighboring country of Japan). Cross-learning between domestic disciplines makes art a non-pure liberal arts discipline, and the combination of science and technology to enhance the practicality and operability of art. Therefore, the keywords “global”, “new liberal arts” and “Japan” appear frequently.

The content of art research has changed in different periods of time, from the initial construction of the research discipline system to the wide application of specific disciplines to the cross-application of different disciplines, from the single development for the national situation to the composite research bordering on the international level, with a wide range of keywords, but all of them are inseparable from the mission of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the research of art has always been walking in the right path, either tightly or slowly moving forward.

## 5. Conclusion

Through the China Social Science Citation Search Database, the literature and journals about art studies in the past two decades were used as samples, and the Cite Space knowledge mapping tool was used to visualize the interactions between the knowledge units of the discipline of art studies in China. The following conclusions were drawn:

(i) Artistic research needs more collaboration and exploration. Since the 20th century, art studies and its theoretical research have grown from sprouting to development, with periods of prosperity and decline, but overall possessing numerous outstanding achievements. For a variety of reasons, the cooperative networks of scholars, institutions and others are not close and lacking in connection, which can lead to the development of each alone and the existence of communication barriers, hindering the systematization and specialization of art studies.

(ii) The discipline system of art still needs to be clarified. Compared with the western art discipline established in the 19th century, China's art science is obviously very “young”. In addition, China's art discipline has extensive resources, deep connotation, difficult to organize, and this year's artology theory named art, the repositioning of the disciplines is still unclear, the theoretical framework of the knowledge spectrum and the establishment of the discipline is not mature enough to perfect, so the establishment of the discipline of the professional system, the study of the discipline of the rationale for the methodology, the establishment of the spectrum of knowledge has a very important role.



(iii) Insufficient interdisciplinary research capabilities and methods. Although there are various branches in the discipline of art studies, the overall study is centered on fine arts, design, music, literature, drama, cinema, dance, etc., and there is no real interdisciplinary, cross-category, cross-regional research, lack of interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, and insufficient efforts to connect with the reality. Therefore, the research method can be developed from the aspects of “influence research”, “parallel research”, “cross-cultural research” and “comparison of unique art styles”. Therefore, research methods can be developed from “influence research”, “parallel research”, “cross-cultural research” and “comparison of unique art styles”. Therefore, as the discipline of art changes, new problems and situations are still extending, so strengthening the research of art discipline still has important theoretical value and urgent practical significance.

(iv) The need to build a discourse system of art studies with Chinese characteristics system. The collision and conflict of nationalities in literature and art in the global era is changing day by day, and the cultural exchanges between the East and the West are getting closer and closer. Prior to this time, most of the research content was based on Western theories and methodologies, and there was a lack of exploration of China's own system. Under the principle of “harmony and difference, beauty and commonality”, China's art studies need to be correct and innovative, with a firmer cornerstone, trying to highlight the beauty of local art in a diverse world, presenting a discourse system of art studies with Chinese characteristics, and enhancing national self-confidence and pride.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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