

THE ART CREATION OF CAT THEMED BASED ON THE MIXED TECHNIQUES OF COLORED LEAD AND COLORED POWDER

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Introduction

This research aims to develop a relatively innovative cat-themed painting technique by mixing Colored Lead and Colored Powder. The study explores how these media complement each other in conveying delicate textures and soft atmospheric effects, and evaluates the practical value of this cross-media approach in contemporary art creation. Colored Lead provide hair details, shadows and the required clarity, saturation, and structural accuracy; Colored Powder offer strong coverage and smooth tonal transitions but lack saturation and edge definition. Creative experiments further revealed that cat whiskers require rigid linear clarity, leading to the introduction of a small amount of acrylic pigment to strengthen structural emphasis. A practice-based method, supported by theoretical analysis, was used to produce cat-themed artworks. Qualitative data were obtained through process records and reflective journals, while quantitative data came from audience and buyer questionnaires evaluating visual appeal, emotional resonance, thematic clarity, and medium effectiveness.

The results indicate that this combined technique integrates the strengths of each material: Colored Lead enhance hard-texture expression, Colored Powder enrich atmospheric and emotional tone, and acrylic lines highlight structural details. Audience feedback further confirms that the mixed method creates artworks with stronger emotional impact, clearer thematic expression, and higher visual distinctiveness. The study concludes that this multi-media technique forms a relatively innovative expressive approach and offers practical value for contemporary cat-themed art creation.

Abstract

Cat-themed art has become an influential visual language in contemporary culture, carrying rich symbolic, emotional, and market significance. However, within traditional easel painting, the realistic and emotionally expressive depiction of cat fur remains technically challenging, particularly when attempting to balance fine detail with atmospheric softness. This study investigates a mixed-media painting approach that integrates colored pencils and colored powder to construct a “new cat imagery” that combines cultural symbolism, material innovation, and contemporary visual aesthetics.

The research aims to (1) explore methods for reinterpreting cat imagery through the fusion of traditional cultural elements and modern visual symbols, (2) validate the complementary visual capabilities of colored pencils and colored powder in rendering fur texture and emotional atmosphere, and (3) evaluate the practical and communicative value of this mixed technique within contemporary art practice and the art market.

A practice-based research methodology was adopted, combining theoretical analysis, creative experimentation, and audience feedback. The creative process employed a hybrid workflow that integrates artificial intelligence-generated imagery, digital image editing, museum-grade giclée printing, and hand-rendered techniques using colored powder, colored pencils, and acrylic accents. Quantitative data were collected through audience questionnaires and market observation, while qualitative insights were derived from process documentation and visual analysis.

The results demonstrate that colored pencils and colored powder exhibit strong visual complementarity: colored pencils provide structural clarity and detailed fur rendering, while colored powder enhances softness, depth, and emotional atmosphere. Audience feedback indicates high visual appeal, emotional resonance, and thematic clarity in the resulting artworks. The study concludes that this mixed-media approach offers a relatively innovative expressive method for cat-themed easel painting, contributing a viable technical model and conceptual framework for cross-media artistic creation in contemporary visual culture.

Keywords

Art Creation, Cat-Themed Painting, Colored lead, Colored Pencil

Objective

1. Cultural Analysis Objective: To propose a method for constructing a "new cat imagery" that fuses traditional elements with modern visual symbols.
2. Technical Exploration Objective: To validate the complementary visual capabilities of Colored Lead and Colored Powder in detailed depiction and atmospheric rendering.
3. Effectiveness Evaluation Objective: To evaluate the practical value of the cross-media art creation of cat-themed based on the mixed techniques of colored lead and colored powder.

Literature Review

Existing studies on cat-themed art primarily focus on cultural symbolism, emotional representation, and visual aesthetics across historical and contemporary contexts. Scholars have examined the symbolic meanings of cats in Eastern and Western art traditions, highlighting their associations with spirituality, independence, domesticity, and emotional companionship. In modern visual culture, research has increasingly addressed the role of cats within popular media, digital platforms, and consumer-oriented art markets, emphasizing their strong emotional appeal and communicative potential.

From a technical perspective, prior literature discusses the material characteristics of colored pencils and colored powder separately. Colored pencils are widely recognized for their precision, line control, and suitability for detailed rendering, particularly in depicting fur texture and structural forms. Colored powder, by contrast, is valued for its soft tonal transitions, atmospheric depth, and expressive color blending, though it is often regarded as less effective for fine-detail articulation. While mixed-media practices have been explored in broader contemporary art research, systematic studies focusing specifically on the integration of colored pencils and colored powder in animal-themed easel painting remain limited.

Research on cross-media and intermedial artistic practices highlights the growing importance of combining multiple materials and visual languages to expand expressive possibilities. However, existing studies often prioritize digital or installation-based media, leaving a noticeable gap in practice-based research addressing traditional drawing materials within contemporary mixed-

media frameworks. This study positions itself within this gap by synthesizing cultural analysis, material experimentation, and audience feedback to investigate a hybrid approach to cat-themed painting, contributing both technical insight and practical value to current artistic discourse.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates qualitative artistic analysis, practice-based experimentation, market observation, and quantitative audience research. The methodology is structured to examine how a hybrid technique combining colored pencils and colored powder can enhance emotional expression and market relevance in cat-themed artworks.

1. Research Design

The research is conducted through three interconnected methodological approaches:

- (1) qualitative case study analysis, focusing on representative artists across traditional, digital, and AI-generated media;
- (2) practice-based artistic experimentation, in which the researcher develops original cat-themed artworks using colored pencil and colored powder techniques; and
- (3) quantitative and market-oriented data analysis, including questionnaire surveys, social media feedback, and auction price observation.

This integrated design allows for triangulation between visual form, audience response, and market performance, ensuring both artistic depth and empirical reliability.

2. Case Study Method

A qualitative case study method is employed to analyze selected artists known for cat-themed creation across different media, including ceramic sculpture, oil painting, digital illustration, and AI-generated imagery. Each case is examined through dimensions of form, color usage, emotional expression, and medium characteristics. The purpose of this analysis is to extract transferable visual strategies and emotional mechanisms applicable to the researcher's own mixed-media practice.

3. Practice-Based Artistic Experimentation

Practice-based research forms the core of this study. The researcher conducts systematic creative experiments combining colored pencils and colored powder in a cat-themed painting. Colored pencils are primarily used to establish structural accuracy, line definition, and fine details such as fur texture and facial features, while colored powder is applied to construct atmospheric depth, tonal transitions, and emotional ambiance. Iterative experimentation and reflective documentation are used to evaluate the expressive and technical outcomes of this hybrid approach.

4. Market Observation Method

Market observation focuses on both digital and traditional art platforms. International NFT platforms (such as OpenSea) and Chinese art market platforms (such as Artron Auction Catalogues) are examined to collect data on transaction prices, presentation formats, subject trends, and audience interaction. Artworks are organized in descending price order to facilitate comparative analysis. These observations provide empirical insight into pricing structures, stylistic preferences, and market positioning for cat-themed artworks.

5. Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data are collected through structured questionnaires distributed to viewers and potential collectors. The survey addresses preferences in style, emotional tone, size, usage context, and creative elements. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, with 105 valid responses analyzed. Descriptive statistical methods are applied to identify dominant audience preferences and emerging trends.

In addition, social media data such as likes, comments, and keyword frequency—are analyzed to assess audience engagement with different media approaches.

6. Data Analysis and Triangulation

Data analysis combines qualitative interpretation with descriptive quantitative analysis.

Questionnaire results, market data, and creative experimentation outcomes are cross-referenced to identify consistent patterns. This triangulation strengthens the validity of the findings by confirming that visual strategies, emotional responses, and market performance align coherently.

7. Ethical Considerations

All data collected in this study are used for academic research purposes only. Questionnaire participation was voluntary and anonymous, and all market data were obtained from publicly accessible sources. Proper attribution is provided for all referenced artworks and platforms.

Research Results

This section presents the main findings derived from the questionnaire survey, market observation, social media analysis, and practice-based experimentation. The results demonstrate how the mixed technique of colored pencil and colored powder performs in terms of audience preference, emotional effectiveness, and market positioning within cat-themed art.

1. Audience Preference Results

The questionnaire results indicate a clear audience preference for emotionally accessible and visually gentle cat imagery. Among the 105 valid responses, realistic and cute (moe) styles were favored most strongly. Realistic styles were selected by 59.0% of respondents, while cute or friendly styles accounted for 44.8%. In contrast, abstract and highly symbolic approaches received comparatively lower attention.

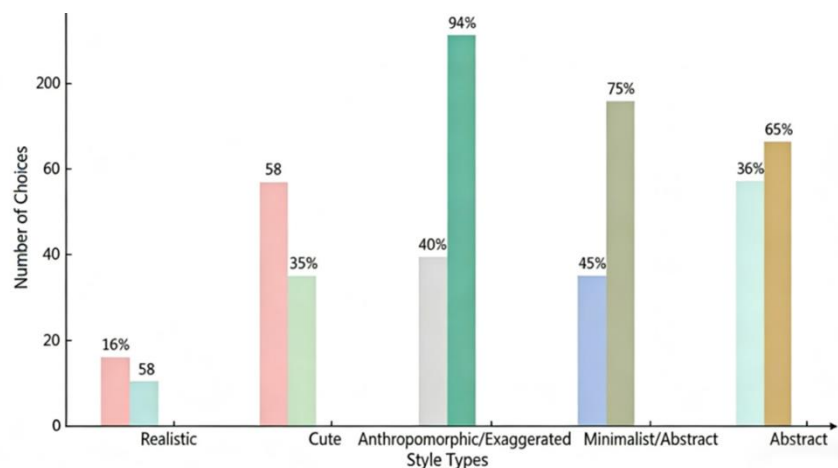


Figure 1 Bar Chart of Column chart of cat-themed painting style preference distribution

Regarding emotional preference, respondents were allowed to select multiple options. The results show that “warm and friendly” emotional qualities received the highest support (64.8%), followed by “lively and spirited” (49.5%). Emotional categories such as “mysterious and dreamy” (25.7%) and “spiritual or symbolic” (17.1%) attracted smaller yet meaningful niche interest. These findings suggest that emotional warmth and approachability are dominant drivers of audience acceptance in cat-themed artworks.

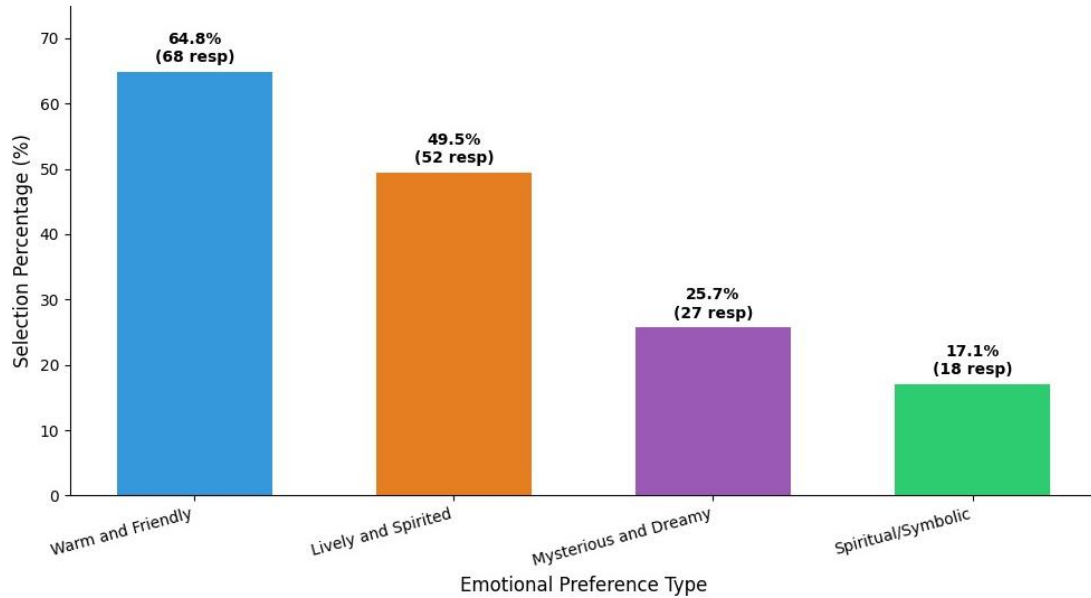


Figure 2 Pie Chart of Distribution of cat-themed painting themes and emotional preferences

2. Size and Usage Preferences

In terms of artwork size, medium-scale works (approximately 600 × 800 mm) were preferred by more than half of the respondents (53.3%), indicating suitability for domestic interior display. Small-scale works also showed stable demand, while large-scale formats were less favored. Usage context data further confirm that cat-themed artworks are primarily perceived as daily decorative objects. Living rooms and office spaces were the most common intended display environments (68.6%), followed by bedrooms and study areas (39.0%). Gallery or collection-oriented use accounted for a smaller proportion, reflecting the practical and emotional orientation of audience demand.

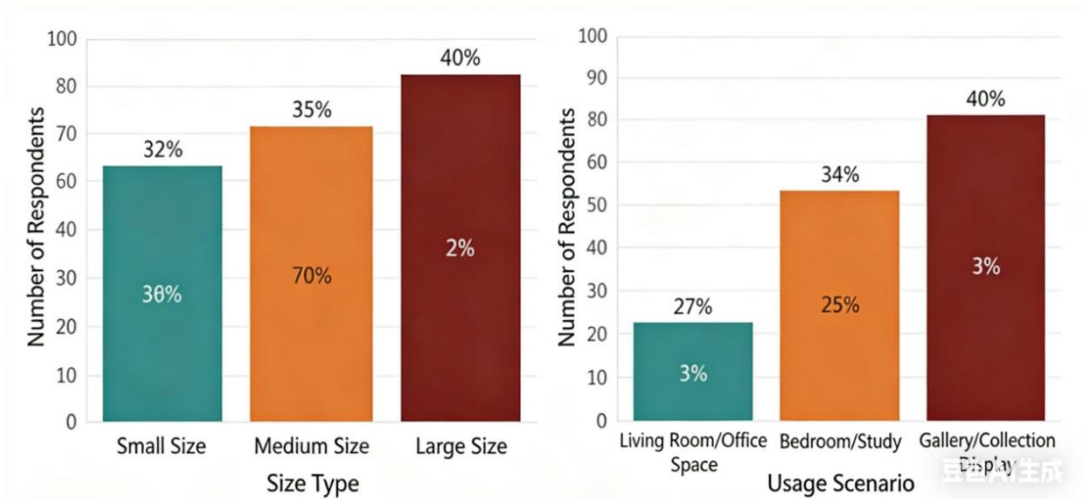


Figure 3 Bar Chart of Size preference distribution and use placement preference distribution of cat-themed painting

3. Key Creative Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

When evaluating creative elements, respondents placed the greatest importance on color coordination (70.5%) and emotional expression (66.7%). Storytelling and composition also played significant roles, while investment value and academic background were considered secondary factors. This indicates that emotional resonance and visual harmony are more influential than speculative or institutional considerations for most viewers.

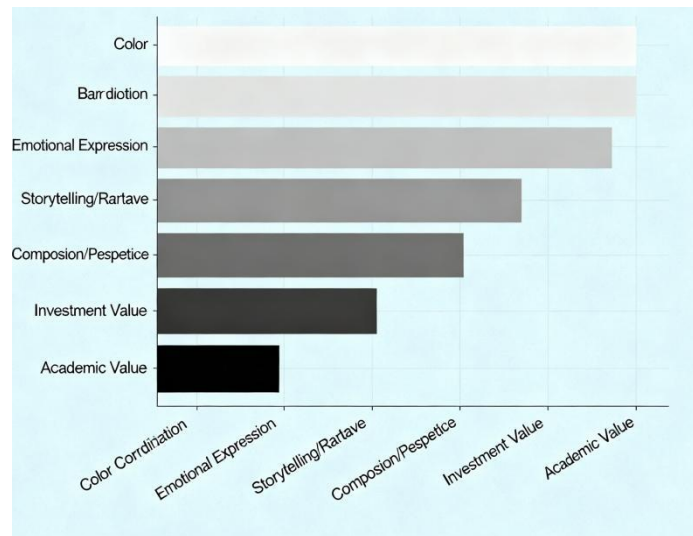


Figure 4 Bar Chart of Column chart of the distribution of attention of cat-themed painting creation elements

4. Social Media Feedback Analysis

Analysis of social media engagement reveals that mixed-media works combining colored pencil and colored powder achieved significantly higher interaction levels than single-medium works. On average, mixed-media cat artworks received approximately 850 likes, compared to 520 likes for colored pencil-only works and 610 likes for colored powder only works. Frequently appearing keywords in user comments included “healing,” “delicate,” and “atmospheric,” highlighting the emotional effectiveness of the hybrid technique.

5. Market Observation Results

Market data from auction platforms and digital art marketplaces demonstrate a clear segmentation of price ranges. Traditional cat-themed works by established artists occupy the high-value segment, while contemporary colored pencil and colored powder works by emerging artists are primarily concentrated in the mid-range market (RMB 5,000–30,000). This segment shows strong demand yet relatively limited innovation, indicating potential for differentiation through mixed-media techniques.

Digital cat-themed artworks (NFTs) show high transaction frequency and strong community interaction, although prices are subject to market volatility. These observations suggest that mixed-media cat artworks may effectively bridge traditional craftsmanship and contemporary visual culture.

6. Integration and Triangulation of Results

By synthesizing questionnaire findings, social media data, market observation, and creative experimentation, the results reveal a high degree of consistency across data sources. The mixed colored pencil and colored powder technique demonstrates clear advantages in balancing structural precision and atmospheric softness, directly aligning with audience emotional preferences and mid-market demand. This confirms the feasibility and applicability of the mixed-media approach as both an artistic and market-oriented strategy.

Discussion

This study investigates the feasibility and effectiveness of combining colored pencil and colored powder in cat-themed art through quantitative data, market observation, and practice-based research. The discussion interprets the results in relation to audience perception, emotional communication, material language, and market positioning, highlighting both artistic and practical implications.

1. Emotional Accessibility as a Core Driver of Audience Engagement

The findings demonstrate that emotional accessibility plays a decisive role in audience preference for cat-themed artworks. The dominance of “warm and friendly” and “lively and spirited” emotional responses indicates that viewers tend to associate cat imagery with comfort, companionship, and emotional healing. This aligns with contemporary visual culture, in which cats function as affective symbols rather than purely symbolic or conceptual figures.

The relatively lower preference for “mysterious” or “spiritual” expressions does not suggest a lack of artistic value but reflects a narrower audience niche. This suggests that artists working with mixed media should prioritize emotional clarity while allowing space for symbolic depth through subtle visual cues rather than overt abstraction.

2. Material Complementarity in Mixed-Media Practice

The success of the colored pencil and colored powder combination can be attributed to the complementary qualities of the two media. Colored pencil provides structural precision, contour control, and detail articulation, which aligns with the audience's preference for recognizable and realistic forms. In contrast, colored powder contributes softness, atmospheric depth, and emotional diffusion, enhancing the sense of warmth and visual comfort identified in questionnaire and social media data. The results confirm that the mixed-media approach is not merely a technical fusion but a strategic visual language that bridges clarity and ambiguity. This balance directly supports emotional resonance and increases visual accessibility without sacrificing artistic complexity.

3. Market Positioning and Mid-Range Demand

Market observation data indicate that cat-themed artworks primarily circulate within the mid-price range, where demand is stable but stylistic differentiation is limited. The mixed-media approach demonstrates clear potential to fill this gap by offering works that combine craftsmanship, emotional appeal, and visual sophistication. The higher engagement levels observed on social media platforms further suggest that mixed-media cat artworks possess strong communicative advantages in contemporary visual ecosystems, where immediacy and emotional readability are critical. This positions the mixed technique as a viable strategy for emerging artists seeking both artistic identity and market sustainability.



Figure 5 The Corresponding Auction Prices
(Yachang Art Market Monitor, 2025)

4. Data Informed Creation as a Methodological Advantage

One of the key contributions of this research lies in translating quantitative data into creative decision-making. Rather than using data as post-hoc validation, this study integrates audience feedback, keyword analysis, and market observation directly into compositional planning, emotional tone selection, and material layering strategies.

This approach addresses a common disconnect between research and practice in art creation. By embedding data awareness into the creative process, artists can maintain expressive autonomy while enhancing communicative effectiveness and audience alignment.

5. Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The sample size and platform scope, while sufficient for exploratory analysis, may not fully capture regional or cultural variations. Future research could expand comparative analysis across different cultural contexts or incorporate longitudinal market data to assess long-term value trends.

Additionally, further experimentation with digital extensions such as hybrid physical–digital presentations or NFT adaptations could deepen the understanding of how mixed-media cat imagery functions across media boundaries.

Suggestions

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, several recommendations are proposed to support future artistic practice, research development, and art education related to mixed-media cat-themed artworks.

1. Suggestions for Artistic Practice

Artists working with cat-themed subjects are encouraged to adopt a mixed-media strategy that balances structural clarity and emotional atmosphere. The combination of colored pencil and colored powder should be planned from the early conceptual stage rather than applied as a decorative addition. Clear delineation of form using colored pencil, followed by emotional modulation through colored powder, can enhance both visual readability and affective depth.

Furthermore, artists should consciously align emotional tone with audience perception. Emphasizing warm, friendly, and lively qualities while integrating symbolic elements in a restrained manner can broaden audience engagement without compromising artistic individuality.

2. Suggestions for Market Oriented Creation

Given the stable demand observed in the mid-range art market, artists should develop a clear pricing and positioning strategy. Mixed-media works that demonstrate technical sophistication and emotional accessibility are well suited to this segment. Regular analysis of auction results, online platform feedback, and collector preferences can help artists refine their creative direction and market communication.

In addition, social media platforms should be used not only for promotion but also as observational tools to assess audience response, emotional keywords, and visual trends. This data can inform both content creation and presentation strategies.

3. Suggestions for Research Methodology

Future research should further integrate quantitative and qualitative methods to strengthen the analytical foundation of practice based studies. Expanding sample sizes, diversifying platforms, and incorporating cross cultural comparisons would enhance the generalizability of findings.

Researchers are also encouraged to document creative processes more systematically, transforming artistic intuition into analyzable data. This approach can contribute to more robust interdisciplinary research connecting art practice, visual culture, and market studies.

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