

ART EMPOWERMENT USING PHOTOGRAPHY AND VITALITY RECONSTRUCTION OF RURAL PUBLIC CULTURAL SPACES—A CASE STUDY OF JIANGSU, ZHEJIANG AND SHANGHAI REGIONS

EMPODERAMENTO ARTÍSTICO POR MEIO DA FOTOGRAFIA E REVITALIZAÇÃO DE ESPAÇOS CULTURAIS PÚBLICOS RURAIS — UM ESTUDO DE CASO DAS REGIÕES DE JIANGSU, ZHEJIANG E XANGAI

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Abstract

Against the background of rural revitalization and the "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" policy, rural public cultural spaces face insufficient vitality. Taking Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai as cases, this paper explores how photography art empowers the vitality of these spaces, analyzes their current status and dilemmas, summarizes empowerment mechanisms, and puts forward targeted paths to provide references for related practice and policy implementation.

Keywords: Photography Art Empowerment. Vitality of Rural Public Cultural Spaces. Jiangsu. Zhejiang and Shanghai Regions. Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art.

Resumo

No contexto da revitalização rural e da política de "Enriquecimento do Campo com Literatura e Arte", os espaços culturais públicos rurais enfrentam uma vitalidade insuficiente. Tomando Jiangsu, Zhejiang e Xangai como casos de estudo, este artigo explora como a arte fotográfica contribui para a vitalidade desses espaços, analisa sua situação atual e seus dilemas, resume os mecanismos de fortalecimento e propõe caminhos específicos para fornecer referências para a prática e a implementação de políticas relacionadas.

Palavras-chave: *Potenciamento da Arte Fotográfica. Vitalidade dos Espaços Culturais Públicos Rurais. Regiões de Jiangsu, Zhejiang e Xangai. Enriquecimento do Campo com Literatura e Arte.*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

The rural revitalization strategy clearly puts forward the general requirements of "prosperous industry, livable ecology, civilized rural customs, effective governance, and affluent life". Among them, the construction of civilized rural customs is the soul of rural



revitalization, and rural public cultural spaces are important positions for the construction of civilized rural customs. The vitality of rural public cultural spaces is directly related to the effect of rural cultural revitalization and the level of rural governance. Rural public cultural spaces include various forms such as rural cultural auditoriums, rural libraries, cultural squares, and rural exhibition halls. They are the core places for villagers to carry out cultural activities, exchange emotions, and inherit local culture. Improving the vitality of rural public cultural spaces is a key starting point for promoting rural cultural revitalization.

In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the construction of rural public culture. Seven departments including the Central Propaganda Department and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs have jointly issued the Work Plan for "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" (2025-2027) (Central Propaganda Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, *et al.*, 2025), which clearly proposes to make good use of various rural cultural spaces, support farmers to independently carry out mass cultural and sports activities, promote the sinking of high-quality cultural resources to the countryside, and empower rural cultural revitalization and enhance the vitality of rural public cultural spaces through literature and art (Xinhua News Network, 2025). As the frontier region of China's economic and social development, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai have a high level of rural construction, but in the process of the development of rural public cultural spaces, they still face problems such as single functions, homogenized content, low participation of villagers, and insufficient excavation of cultural connotation, resulting in insufficient vitality of rural public cultural spaces, which is difficult to meet the growing spiritual and cultural needs of villagers and also restricts the in-depth implementation of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" in this region.

As an intuitive, vivid and easy-to-understand art form, photography art has multiple functions such as recording, expression, communication and aesthetics. It can quickly capture the natural beauty, human charm and era changes of the countryside. It is an important bridge connecting rural culture with the public, and also an important carrier for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and promote the enrichment of the countryside with literature and art. In recent years, a number of practical cases of photography art empowering the countryside have emerged in Jiangsu,

Zhejiang and Shanghai, such as the Qiandao Lake International Photography Festival and the Tongxiang Humanistic Rural Photography Marathon. Integrating photography art into the construction of rural public cultural spaces has effectively activated the space vitality and provided a new path for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and promote the enrichment of the countryside with literature and art. Based on this, this paper takes Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai as examples to deeply explore the path of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, help the implementation of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art", and has important theoretical and practical significance.

1.2 Research significance

1.2.1 Theoretical significance

At present, academic research on the vitality of rural public cultural spaces mostly focuses on policy support, facility improvement, operation and management, etc. Research on photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces is relatively scattered, lacking systematic theoretical sorting and mechanism analysis, and the combination with the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" is insufficient. This paper focuses on the core connection between photography art empowerment and the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, sorts out the internal mechanism of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces combined with practical cases in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, and enriches the theoretical system for improving the vitality of rural public cultural spaces; at the same time, it deeply combines photography art empowerment with the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" and the rural revitalization strategy, expands the application scenarios and research boundaries of photography art, and provides theoretical reference for subsequent research in related fields.

1.2.2 Practical Significance

The rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have a good foundation, but the problem of insufficient vitality of rural public cultural spaces is still prominent. By analyzing the practical experience and deficiencies of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces in this region, this paper puts forward targeted vitality improvement paths, which can provide practical guidance for the vitality construction of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions; at the same time, the photography art empowerment model has strong replicability, and its experience can be promoted to other regions of the country, helping the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, 2018), promoting the in-depth implementation of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art", and promoting the high-quality development of rural public cultural services. In addition, the research of this paper can also promote photography art to be close to the countryside, serve the countryside, explore the value of rural culture, promote the inheritance and dissemination of local culture, and further enhance the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

1.3 Research status at home and abroad

1.3.1 Domestic research status

Domestic research on rural public cultural spaces began in the early 21st century. With the advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, the vitality of rural public cultural spaces has gradually become a research hotspot. Scholars have mainly carried out research from the aspects of space function, operation and management, vitality evaluation, and empowerment path. For example, Zhang Jie (2018) discussed the connection between Republican photography societies and rural cultural communication in her doctoral dissertation, providing historical reference for contemporary photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces; Gu Zheng (2012) systematically sorted out the connection between early photography art and the countryside in "A

History of Chinese Photography 1840-1949", providing theoretical support for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

In terms of art empowering rural public cultural spaces, existing research mostly focuses on traditional art, performing art, etc. There is relatively little attention to photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and the research on the combination with "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" is insufficient. Some scholars have explored the role of photography art in rural cultural inheritance and rural tourism development. For example, Zhan Weizhen *et al.* (2024) proposed in "Research on the Spatial Narrative Strategy of Documentary Images for Rural Revitalization" that rural documentary images can enhance the public's understanding of rural revitalization and stimulate rural cultural vitality through the construction of lens space, narrative space and embodied space; Lin Ci (2012) analyzed the role of photography societies in rural cultural communication in "The China Photographic Society and the Shanghai Photography Ecology in the 1920s", providing practical reference for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces. However, most existing studies lack systematic analysis of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, especially the targeted research on Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions combined with the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" is insufficient.

1.3.2 Foreign research status

Foreign research on rural public cultural spaces started early, forming a relatively mature theoretical system and practical model. Scholars pay attention to the multiple functions of rural public spaces and villagers' participation, and emphasize the combination of cultural inheritance and space vitality. In terms of art empowering the countryside, foreign countries mostly focus on the integration of visual art, public art and rural space. For example, the "Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale" in Japan integrates art forms such as photography and sculpture into rural space, activating rural vitality; in the practice of rural cultural revitalization in the United Kingdom, it also pays attention to the recording and dissemination of rural culture by photography art. Through photography exhibitions, image creation and other forms, it excavates rural cultural value,

enhances the vitality of rural public spaces, and attracts public attention to rural development.

Foreign scholars' research on photography art mostly focuses on art ontology, communication mechanism, etc. The research on the integration of photography art and the vitality of rural public cultural spaces mostly starts from the perspectives of rural tourism and cultural heritage protection. For example, scholar Hobsbawm (2013) discussed the role of photography art in the preservation of rural traditions in "Country and Tradition", believing that photography can record rural changes, inherit rural culture, and indirectly enhance the vitality of rural public spaces; scholar Smith (2015) proposed in "Visual Art and Rural Revitalization" that photography art can build a bridge between the countryside and the outside world, enhance the visibility and influence of the countryside, and provide support for the vitality improvement of rural public cultural spaces. However, the development background and cultural context of foreign rural areas are quite different from those of China, and their research results cannot be directly applied to the vitality construction of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions of China. They need to be learned from and innovated in combination with China's national conditions, the actual situation of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions and the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

1.4 Research methods and research framework

1.4.1 Research methods

This paper adopts a combination of multiple research methods to ensure the scientificity and pertinence of the research: first, the literature research method. By consulting documents, policy documents, academic papers, monographs and other related fields such as rural revitalization, rural public cultural space vitality, photography art empowerment, and "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art", it sorts out relevant theories and research results, laying a theoretical foundation for the research of this paper; second, the case analysis method. It selects typical cases of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, such as the Wu Zongqi Photography Art Museum in Qiandao Lake and the

Photography Exhibition in Shimen Town, Tongxiang, to analyze their empowerment models, effects and deficiencies, and summarize experience and lessons; third, the field investigation method (combined with virtual investigation and existing case data). Combined with the actual situation of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, it sorts out their vitality development status and prominent dilemmas to ensure that the research is close to reality; fourth, the inductive summary method. It summarizes the mechanism and path of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and puts forward targeted countermeasures and suggestions in combination with the requirements of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

1.4.2 Research framework

This paper is divided into six parts: the first part is the introduction, which expounds the research background, research significance, research status at home and abroad, research methods and research framework, focusing on the four cores of photography art empowerment, rural public cultural space vitality, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, and "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art"; the second part is the definition of relevant concepts and theoretical basis, clarifying the core concepts of rural public cultural space vitality, photography art empowerment, and "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art", and sorting out relevant theoretical supports; the third part is the current development status and dilemmas of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, analyzing the advantages and existing problems of space vitality construction in this region combined with cases; the fourth part is the mechanism analysis of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, exploring the empowerment mechanism from four aspects of scene construction, cultural inheritance, villagers' participation and brand building, and expanding in combination with the requirements of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art"; the fifth part is the path of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, putting forward targeted countermeasures and suggestions combined with practical cases and the policy of "Enriching the Countryside

with Literature and Art"; the sixth part is the conclusion and prospect, summarizing the research results of this paper, analyzing the research deficiencies, and looking forward to the future research direction of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and promoting "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

2 DEFINITION OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1 Definition of core concepts

2.1.1 Vitality of rural public cultural spaces

The vitality of rural public cultural spaces refers to the attractiveness, cohesion and vitality of rural public cultural spaces, which is reflected in the core dimensions such as the perfection of space functions, the richness of content, the participation of villagers, and the activity of culture (Zhao, 2018). It is an important indicator to measure the effect of rural public cultural space construction and reflect the level of rural cultural revitalization. As the core carrier of carrying rural culture and serving villagers, the improvement of its vitality is inseparable from multiple empowerment. The empowerment of photography art and the implementation of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" are important paths to activate the vitality of rural public cultural spaces. The rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have the characteristics of Jiangnan culture, focusing on the integration of nature and humanity, providing a good space foundation for photography art to empower space vitality and promote "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

2.1.2 Photography art empowerment

Photography art empowerment refers to combining the technology, concepts and forms of photography art with the construction of rural public cultural spaces. Through various forms such as photography creation, photography exhibitions, photography training and image communication, it activates the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, excavates the value of rural culture, promotes the inheritance and dissemination of rural

culture, and improves the cultural literacy and participation enthusiasm of villagers (Gu, 2012). It is an important means to promote the implementation of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" and enhance the vitality of rural public cultural spaces. Photography art empowerment has the characteristics of intuitiveness, inclusiveness and interactivity. It can quickly capture the natural landscape, human style and era changes of the countryside, convert abstract rural culture into intuitive visual works, which are easy for villagers to understand and accept, and at the same time can build a bridge between the countryside and the outside world, further enhancing the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

2.1.3 Enriching the countryside with literature and art

"Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" is an important measure for rural cultural revitalization in the new era. Its core is to beautify rural space, enrich rural culture, improve rural taste and stimulate rural development vitality through the creation of literary and artistic works, the carrying out of literary and artistic activities and the sinking of literary and artistic resources (Central Propaganda Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, *et al.*, 2025). One of its core goals is to activate the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and make rural public cultural spaces an important position for "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". As an important part of literature and art, photography art is an important carrier of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". Through photography art empowerment, it can promote the sinking of literary and artistic resources to the countryside, enrich the content of rural public cultural spaces, enhance space vitality, and realize the in-depth integration of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" and the construction of rural public cultural spaces.

2.2 Theoretical basis

2.2.1 *Theory of enriching with literature and art*

The theory of enriching with literature and art emphasizes the beautification and empowerment of social life and public spaces by literature and art. It advocates improving the cultural connotation and aesthetic value of public spaces through the creation and dissemination of literary and artistic works, and meeting people's spiritual and cultural needs, which is highly consistent with the core requirements of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". The Work Plan for "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" (2025-2027) (Central Propaganda Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, *et al.*, 2025) clearly proposes to give play to the important role of literature and art in rural cultural construction, promote the sinking of literary and artistic resources to the countryside, enrich rural cultural content, improve rural cultural quality, and activate the vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Xinhua News Network, 2025). As an important part of literature and art, photography art can beautify rural public cultural spaces through the presentation of light and shadow art, endow spaces with cultural connotation and aesthetic value, promote the implementation of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art", and help enhance the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

2.2.2 *Spatial production theory*

The cultural inheritance theory emphasizes the continuity and innovation of culture, advocating the excavation, protection and dissemination of traditional culture through various forms to realize the living inheritance of culture. Rural public cultural spaces are the core carrier of rural cultural inheritance. As a recording and dissemination means, photography art can accurately capture cultural elements such as rural folk culture, traditional architecture and production and living methods, convert them into visual works, and realize the recording, protection and inheritance of rural culture through exhibitions, dissemination and other forms (Zhan, Liu, & Zhang, 2024). At the same time, photography art can combine the characteristics of the times to innovatively express rural

culture, enrich the content of rural public cultural spaces, stimulate space vitality, promote the progress of rural culture with the times, and help the implementation of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

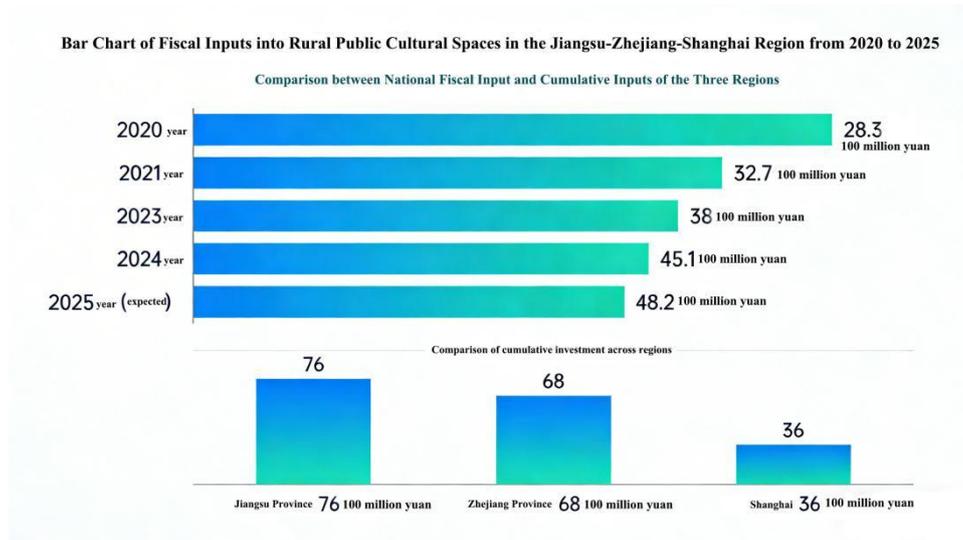
3 CURRENT DEVELOPMENT STATUS AND DILEMMAS OF THE VITALITY OF RURAL PUBLIC CULTURAL SPACES IN JIANGSU, ZHEJIANG AND SHANGHAI REGIONS

3.1 Current development status

Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have developed economies and a high level of rural construction. The government has invested heavily in the construction of rural public cultural spaces, forming a relatively complete system of rural public cultural spaces, laying a good foundation for improving the vitality of rural public cultural spaces. During the period of 2020-2025, the national financial investment in rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions has continued to grow, with a total investment of more than 18 billion yuan, of which about 2.83 billion yuan was invested in 2020, increasing to 3.27 billion yuan in 2021, exceeding 3.8 billion yuan in 2022, reaching 4.25 billion yuan in 2023, increasing to 4.51 billion yuan in 2024, and is expected to reach 4.82 billion yuan in 2025, with an average annual growth rate of 12%-15%. The investment in the three regions shows a differentiated and coordinated development trend. Jiangsu Province has invested a total of about 7.6 billion yuan, Zhejiang Province about 6.8 billion yuan, and Shanghai about 3.6 billion yuan, focusing on the construction, renovation and facility renewal of rural cultural auditoriums, rural libraries, cultural squares and other spaces. Up to now, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have built more than 10,000 various rural public cultural spaces such as rural cultural auditoriums, rural libraries and cultural squares, realizing full coverage of administrative villages. At the same time, this region has a profound cultural heritage, with abundant resources such as Jiangnan water town culture, Wuyue culture and folk culture, providing sufficient cultural support for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and promote "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". Fig1

Figure 1

Shows Bar Chart of Fiscal Inputs into Rural Public Cultural Spaces in the Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Shanghai Region from 2020 to 2025



In recent years, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have actively responded to the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" (Central Propaganda Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, *et al.*, 2025), promoted the integrated development of photography art and rural public cultural spaces, and emerged a number of typical practical cases of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, effectively promoting the implementation of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". For example, the Wu Zongqi Photography Art Museum of Qiandao Lake Alpha City Contemporary Art Center in Chun'an County, Zhejiang Province, with the theme of "Home in Qiandao Lake", connects the local memory and era mirror of Qiandao Lake through nearly 100 photography works, and is open to the public free of charge. It has become an important part of the local rural public cultural space, promoting the leapfrog upgrading of Qiandao Lake from "scenery tourism" to "cultural in-depth tourism", and significantly enhancing the space vitality (Xinhua News Network Zhejiang, 2025); the Feng Zikai Cartoon Humanistic Space in Shufeng Village, Shimen Town, Tongxiang City, Zhejiang Province, held a tour exhibition of the achievements of the humanistic rural photography marathon, trained a team of farmer photographers, and displayed the ecological beauty and human charm of the countryside through photography works, activating the vitality

of rural public cultural spaces and practicing the policy requirements of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" (Zhejiang Provincial Federation of Social Sciences, 2025).

In addition, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions are rich in photography art resources, with many photography enthusiasts, photography societies and photography institutions, providing talent support for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and promote "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". Various places have carried out photography training, photography exhibitions and other activities to guide villagers to participate in photography creation, excavate rural cultural value, enrich the content of rural public cultural spaces, and promote the diversified improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

3.2 Vitality dilemmas

3.2.1 Single space function, homogenized content, and insufficient vitality support

At present, some rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions still focus on traditional cultural activities, with single functions, mainly focusing on basic services such as book lending and literary performances. They lack the integration of emerging art forms such as photography art and visual art, fail to give full play to the empowerment role of photography art, and are also difficult to meet the diversified requirements of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" for space content. At the same time, the space content is seriously homogenized. The activity forms and display contents of public cultural spaces in different villages are quite similar, lacking personalized content combined with local rural characteristics and cultural heritage, which is difficult to attract the continuous participation of villagers, resulting in insufficient vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Zhao, 2018). For example, some rural cultural auditoriums are only used for holding festival activities and are idle at ordinary times, failing to give full play to their public cultural functions and difficult to support the continuous improvement of space vitality.

3.2.2 Low participation of villagers, unprominent subject status, and insufficient source of vitality

The core source of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces is the participation of villagers. However, the construction and operation of some rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions are mostly led by the government, with low participation of villagers, lack of awareness and channels for active participation, failure to give full play to the main role of villagers in improving space vitality, and a gap with the requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to "support farmers to independently carry out mass cultural and sports activities" (Xinhua News Network, 2025). On the one hand, the planning and carrying out of space activities have not fully solicited the opinions of villagers, which do not meet the spiritual and cultural needs of villagers; on the other hand, there is a lack of training on villagers' photography skills and cultural literacy, resulting in villagers being unable to participate in photography creation, exhibition planning and other activities, and difficult to play the main role of villagers (Zhan, Liu, & Zhang, 2024). In addition, many young people in some villages go out to work, and the left-behind villagers are mainly the elderly and children, who have low enthusiasm for participating in cultural activities, further reducing the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

3.2.3 Insufficient excavation of cultural connotation, unobvious brand effect, and insufficient influence of vitality

Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions are rich in rural cultural resources, but in the construction process of some rural public cultural spaces, the excavation of local rural culture, folk culture, traditional architecture and other resources is insufficient. They fail to organically combine them with art forms such as photography art, and also fail to fully combine the requirements of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to create characteristic content, resulting in the space lacking cultural connotation and characteristics. At the same time, most rural public cultural spaces lack brand awareness and fail to create photography cultural brands with local characteristics. The visibility and influence of the space are low, making it difficult to attract the attention and participation

of the outside world, and also difficult to realize the sustainable improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Gu, 2012). For example, although some villages have unique natural landscapes and human styles, they have not been systematically recorded and disseminated through photography art, failed to form an influential cultural brand, and are difficult to drive the improvement of space vitality through the brand effect.

3.2.4 Imperfect operation and management mechanism, insufficient guarantee, and unsustainable vitality

The continuous improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces requires a sound operation and management mechanism and sufficient guarantee. However, some rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have imperfect operation and management mechanisms, which are difficult to support the continuous promotion of photography art empowerment and "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". It is worth noting that although the national and three regional governments have invested a total of more than 18 billion yuan from 2020 to 2025, the investment structure is obviously unbalanced, of which about 75% of the funds are used for space construction and facility purchase, and only about 25% are invested in later operation and maintenance links such as space operation, activity carrying out, and photography training, and the proportion of operation and maintenance funds used for photography art-related empowerment activities is less than 8%. On the one hand, there is a lack of professional operation and management talents. Most spaces are managed part-time by village cadres or volunteers, who lack professional knowledge in photography art, cultural activity planning, etc., making it difficult to carry out high-quality cultural activities and improve space vitality through photography art empowerment; on the other hand, the fund guarantee is insufficient. The government investment is mainly concentrated on space construction, and the investment in space operation, activity carrying out, photography training and other aspects is relatively small, resulting in the space being unable to continuously carry out diversified activities and difficult to maintain the vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Chen, 2008). In addition, some spaces lack effective incentive mechanisms, making it difficult to mobilize the

enthusiasm of villagers and social forces to participate in space construction and operation, further restricting the continuous improvement of space vitality.

4 MECHANISM ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHY ART EMPOWERING THE VITALITY OF RURAL PUBLIC CULTURAL SPACES IN JIANGSU, ZHEJIANG AND SHANGHAI REGIONS

4.1 Scene construction mechanism: beautify space environment and lay a foundation for vitality

Photography art can beautify the environment of rural public cultural spaces, enrich the functional forms of spaces, lay the foundation for the vitality of rural public cultural spaces through the presentation of visual art, and practice the requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to "beautify rural space". On the one hand, photography works have the characteristics of intuition and vividness. Displaying photography works of rural natural landscapes, human styles, folk culture and other aspects in rural cultural auditoriums, cultural squares, rural libraries and other spaces can beautify the space environment, improve the aesthetic value of the space, allow villagers to feel the beauty of the countryside and art while relaxing and entertaining, and enhance the attractiveness of the space (Xinhua News Network Zhejiang, 2025). For example, through the open layout, the Wu Zongqi Photography Art Museum in Qiandao Lake introduces the natural landscape of Qiandao Lake into the exhibition hall, combining with nearly 100 photography works, creating a public space with both aesthetic and cultural connotation, which has become a check-in place for local villagers and tourists, significantly enhancing the space vitality.

On the other hand, photography art can expand the functions of rural public cultural spaces, promote the transformation of spaces from a single cultural service to a diversified cultural experience, and enrich the supporting carriers of space vitality. By building rural photography exhibition spaces, photography creation bases, etc., it provides a platform for villagers and photography enthusiasts to create, exchange and display photography; by carrying out photography exhibitions, photography salons and other activities, it enriches the activity forms of the space, meets the spiritual and cultural needs

of villagers, and further activates the space vitality (Zhejiang Provincial Federation of Social Sciences, 2025). For example, Shimen Town in Tongxiang City held a photography exhibition in the Feng Zikai Cartoon Humanistic Space, set up multiple photography exhibition areas, and carried out photography training, face-to-face communication with masters and other activities, enriching the functions of the space, improving the attractiveness of the space, and promoting the implementation of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

4.2 Cultural inheritance mechanism: excavate cultural value and enrich the connotation of vitality

Photography art has a recording function, which can accurately capture rural natural landscapes, human styles, folk culture, production and living methods, etc., providing an important carrier for the inheritance and dissemination of rural culture, enriching the connotation of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and conforming to the core requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to "enrich rural culture". On the one hand, photography art can record the process of rural changes, convert rural traditional architecture, folk activities, production scenes and other into visual works, form a rural cultural image archive, and realize the living inheritance of rural culture (Zhan, Liu, & Zhang, 2024), making rural public cultural spaces an important position for rural cultural inheritance and enriching the cultural connotation of space vitality. For example, in the "Thousands of Villages and Scenes, My Photography Show" activity, grass-roots masses recorded the cultural development, industrial revitalization, people's livelihood improvement and other aspects of the countryside through the lens, forming a large number of photography works, which provided precious image materials for rural cultural inheritance, enriched the content of rural public cultural spaces, and improved the space vitality (People's Network, 2025).

On the other hand, photography art can promote the dissemination of rural culture. Through the combination of online and offline methods, rural photography works can be spread to a wider range, improving the visibility and influence of rural culture, and further expanding the radiation range of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Gu, 2012). Online, rural photography works are displayed and rural stories are told through WeChat

official accounts, short video platforms and other channels; offline, more people are made to understand rural culture through photography exhibitions, tour exhibitions and other forms, attracting more people to participate in rural public cultural space activities. For example, the Qiandao Lake International Photography Festival has been certified by international authoritative institutions, attracting the participation of photography enthusiasts from all over the world. Through photography works, it shows the natural beauty and human charm of Qiandao Lake, promotes the international dissemination of rural culture, and further enhances the vitality of local rural public cultural spaces (Xinhua News Network Zhejiang, 2025).

4.3 Villagers' participation mechanism: stimulate participation enthusiasm and activate the source of vitality

Photography art has inclusiveness and interactivity, which can stimulate the participation enthusiasm of villagers, strengthen the main position of villagers in improving the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and activate the core source of space vitality, which is in line with the requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to "support farmers to independently carry out mass cultural and sports activities" (Xinhua News Network, 2025). On the one hand, photography art has a low threshold and is easy to learn and master. By carrying out regular photography training, photography creation workshops and other activities, it can improve the photography skills of villagers, enable villagers to participate in photography creation, record their own lives and the changes of their hometown, enhance the sense of belonging and identity of villagers, and stimulate the enthusiasm of villagers to participate in space construction (Zhejiang Provincial Federation of Social Sciences, 2025). For example, Shufeng Village in Tongxiang City has trained a team of farmer photographers through photography training. Farmer photographers take materials on the spot to shoot the natural scenery and human style of their hometown, becoming the main body of rural cultural communication and the core force for improving the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

On the other hand, by holding villagers' photography exhibitions, photography competitions and other activities, it provides a platform for villagers to display their

works, enhances the sense of accomplishment and self-confidence of villagers, and further stimulates the enthusiasm of villagers to participate in the construction of rural public cultural spaces (People's Network, 2025). For example, in the "Thousands of Villages and Scenes, My Photography Show" activity, more than 3,000 works were all created by grass-roots masses. Villagers participated in the evaluation of works, which enhanced their sense of participation and subject consciousness, promoted villagers to take the initiative to participate in rural public cultural space activities, and injected continuous motivation into the improvement of space vitality. In addition, photography art can promote communication and cooperation between villagers. Through joint participation in photography creation, exhibition planning and other activities, it enhances the emotional connection between villagers, condenses rural joint efforts, and further activates the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

4.4 Brand building mechanism: create characteristic brands and expand the influence of vitality

Photography art can excavate the characteristic cultural resources of the countryside, create rural public cultural space brands with local characteristics, expand the influence of space vitality, and promote the integrated development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" and rural cultural industries. On the one hand, combining the characteristic culture of rural areas in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, such as Jiangnan water town culture, folk culture, traditional architecture culture, etc., through innovative expression of photography art, create photography cultural brands with local characteristics (Lin, 2012), improve the visibility and influence of rural public cultural spaces, attract more people to participate in space activities, and further enhance space vitality. For example, Qiandao Lake has created an international photography festival brand with the characteristics of "landscape photography", and the Wu Zongqi Photography Art Museum has created a photography exhibition space with local characteristics with the theme of "Home in Qiandao Lake", which has improved the influence of rural public cultural spaces and promoted the brand development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

On the other hand, through the integration of photography art with rural tourism and cultural industries, promote the industrial development of rural public cultural space brands, realize the sustainable improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Chen, 2008), and provide sustainable financial and resource support for "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". For example, Qiandao Lake has attracted a large number of tourists to visit through the photography festival and photography art museum, promoted the development of rural tourism, and at the same time driven the development of related industries such as photography creation and cultural and creative product development, provided financial support for the operation of rural public cultural spaces, and further improved the vitality and influence of the space (Xinhua News Network Zhejiang, 2025).

5 PATHS OF PHOTOGRAPHY ART EMPOWERING THE VITALITY OF RURAL PUBLIC CULTURAL SPACES IN JIANGSU, ZHEJIANG AND SHANGHAI REGIONS

5.1 Optimize space scenes, lay a foundation for vitality, and practice the requirements of enriching with literature and art

Combining the natural and human characteristics of rural areas in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, integrate photography art into the scene construction of rural public cultural spaces, optimize the space environment, enrich the space functions, lay the foundation for the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and practice the requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to "beautify rural space". First, create rural photography exhibition spaces. Set up photography exhibition areas in existing spaces such as rural cultural auditoriums, rural libraries, and cultural squares to display local rural photography works, including natural landscapes, human styles, folk activities, etc., beautify the space environment, and improve the aesthetic value of the space (Xinhua News Network Zhejiang, 2025). For example, drawing on the experience of the Wu Zongqi Photography Art Museum in Qiandao Lake, create an open photography exhibition hall in rural public cultural spaces, organically combine rural

natural landscapes with photography works, improve the attractiveness of the space, and lay the foundation for space vitality.

Second, expand space functions, build rural photography creation bases, photography training rooms, etc., provide a platform for villagers and photography enthusiasts to create, exchange and train photography, promote the transformation of rural public cultural spaces from a single cultural service to a diversified cultural experience (Zhejiang Provincial Federation of Social Sciences, 2025), and enrich the supporting carriers of space vitality. For example, on the basis of Shufeng Village in Tongxiang City, further improve the photography training facilities, carry out regular photography training activities, improve the photography skills of villagers, and provide talent support for the improvement of space vitality. Third, combine the natural landscape and cultural characteristics of the countryside to create photography check-in points, integrate photography art with rural tourism, attract tourists to visit, activate space vitality, and promote the integrated development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" and rural tourism.

5.2 Excavate local culture, enrich the connotation of vitality, and promote cultural inheritance

Relying on the abundant rural cultural resources in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, excavate the connotation of local culture through photography art, promote the inheritance and dissemination of rural culture, enrich the connotation of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and conform to the core requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to "enrich rural culture". First, carry out the rural cultural image recording project, organize professional photographers and village photography enthusiasts to systematically shoot rural traditional architecture, folk culture, production and living methods, folk artists, etc., establish a rural cultural image archive, realize the living inheritance of rural culture (Zhan, Liu, & Zhang, 2024), enrich the cultural connotation of rural public cultural spaces, and improve space vitality. For example, systematically photograph the ancient towns, ancient villages, folk activities and other in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, form complete rural cultural image materials, and inject cultural motivation into the improvement of space vitality.

Figure 2,3,4

These photographs are provided by the Shanghai Pudong Photographers Association. They showcase the village traditions, intangible cultural heritage shadow puppetry in Pudong's rural Xintang Town, Shanghai.



Second, hold characteristic photography exhibitions. Combine local rural cultural characteristics to hold themed photography exhibitions, such as Jiangnan water town photography exhibitions, folk culture photography exhibitions, rural change photography exhibitions, etc., display the unique charm of rural culture (Gu, 2012), enrich the content of rural public cultural spaces, attract villagers and tourists to participate, and improve space vitality. For example, drawing on the experience of Shimen Town in Tongxiang City, hold a humanistic rural photography exhibition to display the ecological beauty and human charm of the countryside, and practice the requirement of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". Third, promote the integrated online and offline dissemination. Online, display rural photography works and tell rural stories through WeChat official accounts, short video platforms, Douyin and other channels; offline, promote the dissemination of rural culture through photography tour exhibitions, cultural exchange activities and other forms, improve the visibility and influence of rural culture (People's Network, 2025), and expand the radiation range of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

5.3 Strengthen villagers' participation, activate the source of vitality, and highlight the subject status

Establish and improve the villagers' participation mechanism, stimulate the participation enthusiasm of villagers through photography art, strengthen the main position of villagers in improving the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, activate the core source of space vitality, and conform to the requirement of "Enriching the

Countryside with Literature and Art" to "support farmers to independently carry out mass cultural and sports activities" (Xinhua News Network, 2025). First, carry out regular photography training, invite professional photographers to provide photography skills training for villagers, including photography skills, post-production, etc., improve the photography level of villagers, enable villagers to participate in photography creation (Zhejiang Provincial Federation of Social Sciences, 2025), and enhance the sense of belonging and identity of villagers. For example, regularly carry out photography training activities in rural public cultural spaces, train a team of farmer photographers, encourage villagers to record the changes of their hometown, and take the initiative to participate in space construction.

Second, hold villagers' photography competitions, photography salons and other activities, provide a platform for villagers to display their works, enhance the sense of accomplishment and self-confidence of villagers, and further stimulate the enthusiasm of villagers to participate in the construction of rural public cultural spaces (People's Network, 2025). For example, hold a photography competition of "My Hometown, I Shoot", encourage villagers to shoot the natural scenery, human style, production and life of their hometown, select excellent works for display and reward, and further mobilize the enthusiasm of villagers to participate. Third, establish a villagers' participation mechanism. Fully solicit the opinions and suggestions of villagers in the planning of space activities and the organization of photography exhibitions, make villagers the main body of space construction and operation, enhance the sense of belonging and identity of villagers, and inject continuous motivation into the improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces.

5.4 Improve operation and management, strengthen guarantee, and maintain sustainable vitality

Improve the operation and management mechanism of rural public cultural spaces, strengthen the guarantee of funds, talents and other aspects, and ensure the continuous promotion of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". First, strengthen the construction of talent teams, introduce professional photography talents and operation

and management talents, and at the same time cultivate local photography enthusiasts and volunteers to form a professional talent team responsible for space operation and management, photography training, activity planning and other work (Chen, 2008), improve the quality of space operation, and promote the implementation of photography art empowerment work. For example, cooperate with local universities and photography institutions to introduce professional photography talents, carry out photography training and guidance work, and provide talent guarantee for the improvement of space vitality.

Second, increase capital investment, optimize the capital investment structure, and establish a capital guarantee mechanism led by the government, participated by the society and supplemented by the market. On the basis of the national financial investment of more than 18 billion yuan in rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions from 2020 to 2025, further increase the proportion of operation and maintenance funds, raise the proportion of later investment in space operation, photography training, activity carrying out and other aspects to more than 40%, of which no less than 15% of the operation and maintenance funds are clearly used for photography art-related empowerment work, including photography training, photography exhibitions, creation base construction, etc. The government increases investment in rural public cultural space operation, photography training, activity carrying out and other aspects, and at the same time encourages enterprises, social organizations, photography enthusiasts and other to participate in space construction and operation, providing financial support for the improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces (Xinhua News Network, 2025), and promoting the continuous development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". For example, encourage local enterprises to sponsor photography exhibitions, photography training and other activities, and attract social capital to participate in the construction of rural public cultural spaces. Third, establish and improve the operation and management mechanism, formulate space operation and management systems, activity plans, etc., standardize the operation and management of the space, and at the same time establish an incentive mechanism to mobilize the enthusiasm of villagers and social forces to participate in space construction and operation, ensuring that rural public cultural spaces can continue to radiate vitality.

5.5 Create characteristic brands, promote integrated development, and expand the influence of vitality

Combine the characteristic culture of rural areas in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, create photography cultural brands with local characteristics, promote the integrated development of photography art with rural tourism and cultural industries, realize the sustainable improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and promote the brand and industrial development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". First, excavate local characteristic cultural resources, combine Jiangnan water town culture, folk culture, traditional architecture culture, etc., create photography cultural brands with local characteristics, such as "Qiandao Lake Photography" and "Tongxiang Humanistic Photography", improve the visibility and influence of the space (Xinhua News Network Zhejiang, 2025), and expand the radiation range of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces. For example, further build the Qiandao Lake International Photography Festival brand, improve its international influence, attract more photography enthusiasts and tourists, and activate space vitality.

Second, promote the integration of photography art with rural tourism, include rural photography exhibition spaces and photography check-in points into rural tourism routes, create a rural tourism model of "photography + tourism", attract tourists to visit and create, drive the development of rural tourism, and at the same time provide financial support for the operation of rural public cultural spaces (Lin, 2012), realize the sustainable improvement of space vitality. For example, include the Wu Zongqi Photography Art Museum in Qiandao Lake, the photography exhibition area in Shufeng Village, Tongxiang and other into rural tourism routes, create characteristic photography tourism products, and promote the integrated development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" and rural tourism. Third, promote the integration of photography art with cultural and creative industries, develop cultural and creative products such as postcards, picture albums, and ornaments with rural photography works as materials, extend the industrial chain of photography art, improve the added value of rural culture, provide sustainable financial support for the improvement of the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and promote the industrial development of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art".

6 CONCLUSION AND PROSPECT

6.1 Research conclusions

Taking Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions as the research scope, this paper focuses on the core connection between photography art empowerment and the vitality of rural public cultural spaces, and explores the path of photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces in combination with the requirements of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". The following conclusions are drawn: First, the rural public cultural spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions have a good construction foundation and abundant photography art resources, which have favorable conditions for photography art to empower the vitality of rural public cultural spaces and promote "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art". However, they also face vitality dilemmas such as single functions, low participation of villagers, insufficient excavation of cultural connotation, and imperfect operation and management mechanisms; second, photography art can effectively activate the vitality of rural public cultural spaces through four mechanisms: scene construction, cultural inheritance, villagers' participation and brand building, enrich the connotation of space vitality, expand the influence of space vitality, and provide important support for the implementation of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art"; third, according to the actual situation of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions, combined with the requirements of the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art", the vitality of rural public cultural spaces can be improved through paths such as optimizing space scenes, excavating local culture, strengthening villagers' participation, improving operation and management, and creating characteristic brands, promoting the high-quality development of rural public cultural spaces, and helping the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" to be implemented in depth.

6.2 Research deficiencies and prospects

There are still some deficiencies in the research of this paper: first, due to the limitation of research conditions, the field research on the vitality of rural public cultural

spaces in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai regions is not comprehensive enough, and the analysis of some cases is not in-depth enough; second, the quantitative research on photography art empowering the vitality of rural public cultural spaces is insufficient, and it is impossible to quantitatively analyze the empowerment effect of photography art through data; third, the research on the path of photography art empowering vitality for different types and different development levels of rural public cultural spaces is not detailed enough, the pertinence needs to be further improved, and the depth of combination with the policy of "Enriching the Countryside with Literature and Art" can still be strengthened.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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