

The Inheritance and Development of Mantis Boxing

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Abstract: As an important branch of the traditional Chinese boxing system, Mantis Boxing embodies both combative functionality and cultural symbolism, and its developmental trajectory reflects the multidimensional interaction of technical structure, inheritance mechanisms, and dissemination contexts. Starting with the origin of the boxing art and the logic of its movements, this paper systematically traces the regional dissemination and technical evolution of Mantis Boxing throughout its historical development, revealing the intrinsic unifying mechanism of its movement paradigms, mechanical system, and martial philosophical thought. On this basis, the paper provides an in-depth analysis of the structural disruptions and performative tendencies within traditional inheritance mechanisms, as well as the shift in knowledge transfer methods and the restructuring logic of boxing techniques in the media environment. To respond to the evolving demands of contemporary expression and learning approaches, this study proposes a combative-oriented technical reconstruction pathway, constructing a learning system adapted to modern cognitive structures through modularized instructional design and diversified transmission mechanisms. Furthermore, from the perspective of body culture, it explores the mechanism of meaning reproduction in boxing techniques, thereby providing theoretical support and practical approaches for the systematic inheritance and innovative development of Mantis Boxing.

Keywords: Mantis Boxing; technique inheritance; movement paradigms; instructional reconstruction; body cognition

Introduction

As an important boxing style in traditional Chinese martial arts, Mantis Boxing integrates regional combative experience and cultural symbolic expression, forming a unique technical system and bodily expression pattern. Throughout its long historical development, this boxing style has accumulated abundant combative resources and philosophical connotations, while also facing multiple challenges, including disruptions in knowledge transfer, alienation of expressive forms, and the need to update learning models. Existing studies mostly focus on technical descriptions or interpretations of cultural significance, lacking a systematic research framework that organizes and theorizes the overall structure of Mantis Boxing based on the triple logic of "inheritance–reconstruction–development." Therefore, this paper, grounded in a combative-oriented perspective, attempts to explore the inheritance ecology and developmental strategies of Mantis Boxing from multiple dimensions, including its origin, structural logic, cognitive patterns, and instructional mechanisms, with the aim of providing feasible theoretical foundations and practical approaches for its continuous evolution in the contemporary context.

1. Analysis of the Origin and Construction of Technical Characteristics of Mantis Boxing

1.1 Historical Evolution and Regional Dissemination Pathways of Mantis Boxing

As an important branch of traditional Chinese combative arts, the formation of Mantis Boxing reflects a dual mechanism of multi-source integration and cultural internalization. Its early technical forms were not only profoundly influenced by practical systems of northern boxing styles, such as Cha Boxing and Liuhe Boxing, but also incorporated dynamic simulations and attack logic derived from the behavioral strategies of the mantis, thereby constructing a technical structure centered on "rapid attacks, close contact, and entangling strikes." This simulation was not a superficial imitation but rather a tactical translation of natural strategies; through the transformation of behavioral logics such as "ambush," "borrowing force," and "entanglement," it developed mechanisms of controlling through

constraint, rhythm variation, and spatial engagement, endowing Mantis Boxing with a strong combative orientation and bodily strategization. In its early development, Mantis Boxing gradually evolved from a loose combination of movements into a logically coherent and systematic routine. This evolution was not merely the accumulation of movements but a systematic upgrading of boxing principles and movement organization patterns, marking a cognitive leap from experiential combat to a structured technical system.

Regional dissemination served as a key variable in the development of Mantis Boxing. The native transmission system centered in the Jiaodong region gradually stabilized over long-term intergroup exchanges and oral transmission, and during its dissemination, it generated different branches—such as Qixing, Liuhe, Meihua, and Babu—through mutual penetration with local martial arts. These branches retained the core framework of the parent system in movement structure, mechanical application, and offensive-defensive strategies, while developing distinct regional stylistic features. For instance, Qixing Mantis emphasizes rapid rhythm changes and multi-joint combination strikes, whereas Meihua Mantis focuses more on agile footwork and spatial displacement control. This process of localization demonstrates an evolutionary pattern of “shared origin with diverse forms, unified principles with differentiated methods,” reflecting not only the adaptive developmental capacity of the boxing art itself but also providing a cultural foundation and structural support for the diversity of Mantis Boxing inheritance ^[1].

1.2 Structural Logic and Movement Paradigms of the Mantis Boxing Technical System

The construction of the Mantis Boxing technical system is based on rigorous mechanical logic and dynamic control mechanisms, with its movement paradigms centered on a highly organized combative structure that demonstrates refined bodily coordination and rhythm manipulation. In the design of its techniques, the strategies of “using speed to overcome slowness,” “using skill to defeat clumsiness,” and “using the small to overcome the large” are emphasized, aiming to achieve spatial pressure and rhythm dominance within rapid, high-frequency offensive-defensive cycles. The application of techniques stresses sequential connectivity and the integration of hand and foot movements, achieving multidimensional power generation through the coordinated control of movement nodes such as the shoulders, elbows, and wrists. A composite striking system is constructed around core techniques such as “mantis hook,” “piercing-arm hand,” and “tucked-elbow force.” On this basis, the training pathway of Mantis Boxing generally follows four stages: “fixed-form imitation, rhythm mastery, structural deconstruction, and applied reconstruction,” aiming to transform bodily cognition into tactical execution capabilities.

In terms of movement expression, Mantis Boxing does not merely replicate static routines but instead relies on an advanced scheduling mechanism for movement generation. Its movement system is characterized by high strategic adaptability, enabling flexible combinations of techniques in dynamic combat scenarios. For instance, in offensive-defensive transitions, commonly employed strategies include “combining feints and real attacks” and “concealing strikes within guidance,” reflecting a dynamic perception of force relations, spatiotemporal rhythms, and opponent intentions. This movement organization logic, which emphasizes “adaptive generation” rather than “fixed patterns,” provides Mantis Boxing with strong systemic resilience and tactical expansibility in complex confrontations. Meanwhile, its structural logic also supports multiple functional integrations, such as aesthetic demonstration, physical fitness training, and bodily cognition in non-competitive contexts, showcasing the openness and diverse evolutionary potential of the boxing system ^[2].

1.3 Symbolic Significance and Martial Philosophy of Mantis Boxing

As a form of bodily technique, Mantis Boxing embodies not only a high emphasis on combat effectiveness in its boxing principles and techniques but also a profound system of cultural symbolism and philosophical concepts. The frequent use of object-imitative terminology in the naming of its techniques, such as “probing hand,” “hooking hand,” and “silk-coiling hand,” reflects a cultural tendency to adopt natural creatures as cognitive paradigms for the naming and classification of techniques. These terms provide not only vivid guidance for combative operations but also construct a culturally symbolic linguistic system, enabling the process of technical execution to function simultaneously as both technical instruction and meaning generation. On this basis, Mantis Boxing, by simulating the behavioral logic of the mantis—predatory movements and borrowing force to subdue opponents—constructs a philosophical image of “the weak overcoming the strong” and “agility defeating rigidity,” demonstrating the traditional martial arts’ high regard for adaptive wisdom and the

unity of body and mind.

From the perspective of martial philosophy, the technical structure of Mantis Boxing embodies the traditional Chinese conceptual unity of “momentum (shi), form (xing), and energy (qi).” The mastery of “momentum” in practice does not rely on the accumulation of absolute force but is achieved through internal bodily structural adjustment and the transformation of muscular tension into continuous combative power fields. This operational mode, grounded in bodily structural coordination and kinetic energy conversion, emphasizes the dialectical relationship of mutual generation between motion and stillness, as well as the interplay of the real and the feigned, reflecting the martial philosophy’s notion of “formlessness surpassing form” and “no fixed move prevailing over fixed moves.” The principles of “moving with the momentum” and “responding to changes with changes” advocated by Mantis Boxing are not merely combat strategies but also philosophical projections of a bodily cognitive model, essentially realizing cognitive awakening and structural optimization in confrontational states through continuous regulation of the movement system and bodily perception. This dual mechanism of bodily and symbolic generation renders Mantis Boxing not only a technical system but also a concrete expression of a bodily cultural paradigm.

2. Paradigm Evolution and Disruption Logic of Traditional Inheritance Mechanisms

2.1 Internal Structure of the Master-Apprentice Relationship and Knowledge Transfer Pathways

The traditional inheritance model of Mantis Boxing relies heavily on a “mind-and-body oral transmission” mechanism of bodily interaction, with its underlying logic deeply rooted in the knowledge community formed by the master-apprentice system. Within this structure, knowledge transfer is not accomplished through textualized or standardized systematic instruction but rather through informal processes such as experiential accumulation, situational guidance, and bodily imitation. The inheritor stimulates the learner’s bodily perception through movement demonstrations, verbal guidance, and situational feedback, allowing boxing knowledge to be internalized and generated in the body through a “knowing–practicing–understanding” pathway. This knowledge transfer method is based on individual experience, with bodily coordination, movement rhythm, and mental guidance at its core. Its advantage lies in the high degree of coupling between technique and personality, as well as between technical skills and cognitive development. However, its limitations are equally evident: it relies excessively on interpersonal interaction and physical co-presence, making it difficult to establish a standardized and transferable knowledge structure^[3].

In the face of the reconstruction of modern social structures and learning rhythms, this highly context-dependent inheritance mechanism is undergoing systemic failure. Changes in learners’ learning methods, the functional transformation of educational structures, and the decline of bodily experience have made it difficult for the traditional knowledge transmission pathways of Mantis Boxing to maintain stability and depth. With the weakening of the master-apprentice relationship and the increasing specialization of social division of labor, the inheritance of boxing techniques has become fragmented and discontinuous, leading to the disintegration and reorganization of original movement logic, combative principles, and training rhythms. In the absence of deep guidance and contextual construction, learners are confined to superficial imitation of the boxing form, unable to establish cognitive connections with the systematic logic and practical intentions of the techniques. This results in “knowledge idling” and “cognitive disjunction” in the inheritance process, posing a substantial threat to the systemic continuity of Mantis Boxing.

2.2 Phenomenon of Boxing Form Alienation under the Tendency toward Performative Display

In the current context of dissemination, Mantis Boxing exhibits an increasingly evident tendency toward performative display, with its form gradually shifting from a functional combative system to a symbolized and spectacle-oriented movement demonstration. This shift is not only reflected in the adjustment of movement amplitude and rhythmic arrangement but also deeply influences the generative logic of the boxing system itself. During performance-oriented demonstrations, movements are often excessively “aestheticized,” emphasizing symmetry, continuity, and visual rhythm while neglecting the original combative structures and strategic intentions for which the techniques were designed. This “visual-priority” reconstruction mechanism detaches Mantis Boxing from its combative context, gradually transforming it into a stage-oriented form centered on aesthetic symbols, thereby causing the original semantic system of its movements to become superficialized and divorced from practical

application ^[4].

The alienating effect of performativity on the boxing structure is not merely a reorganization of external form but also a replacement of cognitive models. In traditional combative training, the integrated relationship of “momentum (shi), intention (yi), and form (xing)” underpins the strategic and practical generation of movements. In the performative context, however, this internal mechanism is replaced by formal uniformity, rhythmic templates, and fixed structures, causing boxing training to incline toward “movement templating,” “rhythmic sequencing,” and “procedural operation.” Learners within this system often aim to replicate standardized movements, lacking a deep understanding of the strategic logic, combative motives, and practical rhythm underlying the techniques, thereby forming a misleading cognition of “substituting form for technique and movement for intention.” Consequently, the inherent structural flexibility and tactical diversity of Mantis Boxing are weakened, and its inheritance pathway shows trends of superficialization, homogenization, and functional degradation, obstructing the system’s capacity for self-renewal and expansion in complex contexts.

2.3 Shift in Martial Arts Dissemination Methods in the Contemporary Media Environment

The rapid development of digital media has significantly expanded the dimensions of martial arts knowledge dissemination, particularly for Mantis Boxing, which has broken through geographical and temporal constraints to achieve extensive dissemination and reconstruction. In the new media environment, martial arts transmission no longer relies solely on face-to-face physical instruction but is instead decentralized through short videos, online platforms, and virtual communities. The presentation of knowledge has shifted from linear transmission to visualized reorganization, while teaching resources have transitioned from closed texts and individual experiences to open data streams and shared templates. This transformation stimulates learners’ autonomy and exploratory motivation, facilitating a broader expansion of martial arts knowledge.

However, media-based dissemination has altered cognitive models of martial arts learning. In the absence of bodily participation and contextual construction, learners tend to reproduce movements only at a superficial level, limiting their understanding of the internal logic, tactical intentions, and rhythm control of martial arts to mere visual perception. This reflects a broader social demand for “rapid knowledge consumption” and an educational psychology that neglects deep learning. In two-dimensional media environments, the practical mechanisms of Mantis Boxing—relying on micro-level power generation and rhythm displacement—are difficult to reproduce accurately, resulting in superficialized knowledge and unstructured execution.

Additionally, algorithm-driven content recommendation mechanisms on digital platforms accelerate the standardization of routines, reducing the space for individual variation and technical innovation. The popularity of short videos further diminishes the depth of knowledge, leading learners to focus more on superficial skills rather than the underlying connotations and practical applications of martial arts. Although this media logic improves dissemination efficiency, it also challenges the restoration of authenticity and structural complexity in martial arts, compelling a search for balance between media adaptation and technical reconstruction ^[5].

3. Development Strategies and Pathway Construction for Mantis Boxing in Technical Reconstruction

3.1 Combative-Oriented Reconstruction and Systematic Refinement of Core Techniques

The contemporary expression of Mantis Boxing should return to a combative orientation, systematically refining and reorganizing the boxing system based on functional orientation and practical combat value. In the current transformation of martial arts cognitive paradigms, it is necessary to break free from superficial reliance on routine performances and repetitive forms, re-evaluating core techniques according to the threefold objectives of “movement strategy, combative structure, and output efficiency.” Key techniques such as “silk-coiling piercing hand,” “tucked-elbow interception,” and “sticking-collapsing strike” should be extracted as modular units of combative application. These units should be analyzed parametrically in terms of movement elements, mechanical transmission pathways, and spatiotemporal rhythm, in combination with contemporary combative concepts, to construct a structural system of technique combinations adapted to complex confrontational environments, thereby achieving efficient adaptation and precise execution of techniques.

The reconstruction of the technical system involves not only the reshaping of movement structures but also the embedding of cognitive orientation into instructional mechanisms. By establishing a hierarchical progression system of “cognition–movement–strategy,” the generative logic of movements can be clarified, functionalized, and operationalized. In training organization, situational training units should be designed to integrate combative tasks and tactical guidance, enabling learners to move beyond mechanical imitation into a cognitive progression channel of dynamic generation and adaptive judgment. Through a cyclic system of “strategic configuration, movement iteration, and feedback correction,” learners’ understanding of the essence of combat and their ability to integrate bodily resources can be strengthened, providing a solid foundation for the growth and evolution of Mantis Boxing’s core techniques in the modern combative context.

3.2 Modular Design of the Teaching System and Construction of Diversified Transmission Mechanisms

The modern reconstruction of the Mantis Boxing teaching system should be based on a framework of “content structure optimization, clear cognitive pathways, and diversified execution methods.” Modular design, as the core strategy, requires differentiated teaching objectives and training modules tailored to different learning levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced). Teaching content should be categorized according to movement complexity, application scenarios, and rhythm-control difficulty into “basic striking module, offensive-defensive transition module, and strategy integration module,” arranged progressively in line with learners’ cognitive development. At the beginner level, training focuses on fundamental striking and rhythm perception; intermediate learners are required to strengthen offensive-defensive transitions and strategic applications to enhance flexibility in combat; advanced learners focus on strategy integration and innovative tactical training to improve adaptability and tactical versatility. Each training module should incorporate multi-sensory perception exercises to enhance learners’ control over movement structure, power transmission pathways, and rhythm regulation.

In terms of teaching methods, it is essential to move beyond a single face-to-face model and establish an integrated teaching ecosystem combining physical instruction, online resources, and intelligent feedback to enhance both extensibility and interactivity in learning. By introducing intelligent tools such as high-frequency motion capture, visualized trajectory analysis, and real-time rhythm tracking, spatial deviation, rhythmic discrepancies, and mechanical deficiencies in learners’ movements can be dynamically detected and accurately fed back. These tools provide data support for teachers’ structural guidance and learners’ autonomous corrections, offering personalized training feedback for learners at different levels and facilitating an effective transition of knowledge and skills across training stages.

The essence of modular teaching lies in reshaping knowledge transmission and competence-building methods. It transforms Mantis Boxing instruction from “skill infusion” to “cognitive activation,” providing a solid methodological foundation for the deep integration of martial arts teaching within the modern educational context^[6].

3.3 Cognitive Structure Reconstruction of Mantis Boxing from the Perspective of Body Culture

The sustainable development of Mantis Boxing should shift from “movement imitation” to “bodily understanding.” Learners need to move beyond repetitive movements toward a deep comprehension of bodily perception, structural adjustment, and kinetic energy generation, integrating combative intentions, strategic thinking, and cultural connotations into their movements. The body is not only the carrier of movement but also the field where meaning is generated; weight transfer, rhythm regulation, and muscular control within movements constitute a “cognitive circuit,” which is continuously internalized through training.

Within this new cognitive structure, teaching should strengthen the tripartite integration of “body, language, and culture,” promoting the cognitive reconstruction of martial arts. Through coordinated training in movement perception, structural decoding, and semantic comprehension, learners should not only master “how to do” but also understand “why it is done” and “what it signifies.” Martial arts should be regarded as a dynamic cognitive process, facilitating a transition from experiential perception to cognitive reflection and from technique to culture.

With the implementation of the Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage and the “Strong Sports Nation Strategy,” Mantis Boxing, as an intangible cultural heritage item, holds significant cultural and

educational value. Cognitive reconstruction and educational transmission will provide momentum for its sustainable development.

Conclusion

The inheritance and development of Mantis Boxing constitute a complex process that spans bodily practice, knowledge generation, and cultural representation. Its structural stability and generative vitality depend on the systematic maintenance of core techniques, the dynamic adaptation of dissemination mechanisms, and the continuous updating of cognitive structures. Research shows that Mantis Boxing has developed a highly organized movement system and a rich symbolic language throughout its historical evolution. However, its traditional master-apprentice transmission pathway can no longer support systematic dissemination in the contemporary context, necessitating a comprehensive transformation through modularized teaching, integrated media dissemination, and cognitive reconstruction. Future research may further focus on intelligent training mechanisms, personalized movement feedback systems, and cross-cultural dissemination models. On the basis of preserving the essential characteristics of the boxing style, such research should expand its adaptability and innovativeness in multiple domains, including technical expression, cultural communication, and physical education, thereby promoting the deep transformation of Mantis Boxing from a traditional technique to a modern knowledge paradigm.

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