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Relationship Between Semantic and Aesthetic Dimensions of Contemporary Iraqi Painting and Modernity Arts

Relación entre las dimensiones semántica y estética de la pintura iraquí contemporánea y las artes de la modernidad

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ABSTRACT

The modern European artists tackle the emergent perceptual realization that is reflected in art through realistic forms to complete the inherent cognitive energies; imagination and intuition. The inner worlds find what produces a comprehensive overall vision that is capable of creating its penetrating cognitive world to the hidden feeling. The present study consists of the methodological framework which includes the problem of whether contemporary Iraqi painting includes modern connotations of intellectual and aesthetic descriptions of modern European schools or not, the significance, the objectives, the limits, the theoretical framework, results, and recommendations.

Keywords: Aesthetic dimensions, contemporary iraqi painting, arts of modernity, iraqi artists.

RESUMEN

Los artistas europeos modernos abordan la realización perceptiva emergente que se refleja en el arte a través de formas realistas para completar las energías cognitivas inherentes; imaginación e intuición. Los mundos internos encuentran lo que produce una visión global integral que es capaz de crear su mundo cognitivo penetrante al sentimiento oculto. El presente estudio consiste en el marco metodológico que incluye el problema de si la pintura iraquí contemporánea incluye connotaciones modernas de descripciones intelectuales y estéticas de las escuelas europeas modernas o no, el significado, los objetivos, los límites, el marco teórico, los resultados y las recomendaciones.

Palabras clave: Dimensiones estéticas, pintura iraquí contemporánea, artes de la modernidad, artistas iraquíes.

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INTRODUCTION

There are many harmonic and contradictory views concerning the arts of modernity. It is no longer possible to agree upon a unified intellectual vision. Rather, modernity has become obligatory to face traditional stereotypes in art. Plastic art plays an active role in human life. The principle of interpretation and debate has matured about matters that do not depend on the conscious mind. Rather, the subconscious is active in the language of imagination and dream, which carries many symbols, (Correia: 2019).

It is stated in the data of the arts of modernity that the human psyche is bound by chains and hidden in the subconscious. The work of art is to liberate it. This liberation takes place without the slightest logical interference.

Accordingly, pure psychological connotations are to be taken in the absence of any mental control outside any teleological purpose. Therefore, the beauty and the process of tasting and judging it refers to many points of view. There is an intellectual dimension that departs from the strict rules. The Iraqi artists have taken the history of the plastic movement in Iraq, especially its broad path among the arts in the Arab world, which demonstrates flexibility in its conscious acceptance of the great transformations. The physical characteristics that matched with reality were not carried out seriously. The aesthetic taste is perceived in a continuous change of psychological and intellectual needs. On this basis, the concept of beauty is problematic in light of the artist's transformed relationship with reality, which relies on imagination, awareness, subconscious, mind, heart, spirit, and religion. From this perception, the problem of the present study focuses on the semantic and aesthetic dimensions of contemporary Iraqi painting and its relationship with postmodern arts by discussing the following questions;

Does the contemporary Iraqi painting contain modern connotations of intellectual and aesthetic descriptions of the modern European schools?

Are there common elements, characteristics, intellectual, and aesthetic connotations at the level of the modern photographic scene of the Iraqi painters?

Through answering these two questions, the significance of the present study is highlighted.

The significance of the study

The present study is significant as it is an attempt to identify the overall intellectual and aesthetic dimensions of modern artistic connotations in contemporary Iraqi painting. This is a comprehensive and multilateral study.

The points of convergence between the European and the Iraqi painting are highlighted. Researchers, postgraduate students, and specialists in the field of art and painting are taken as the database.

The aims of the study

The current study aims at:

1. Identifying the semantic and aesthetic dimensions in contemporary Iraqi painting.
2. Identifying the relationship between contemporary Iraqi painting and postmodern arts.

The limits

The present study is limited to studying semantic and aesthetic dimensions in contemporary Iraqi painting and its relationship with postmodern arts from 1950 - 1990.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Dimensions

Linguistically

Dimension means the area occupied by an object, (Dennett & Steglich-Petersen: 2017).

The plural form of it is dimensions, (Mayran & Drouin: 2018, pp. 13795-13804).

It may also mean distancing, (Al-Bustani: 1986).

Dimension in geometry

It is the true amount that determines itself, or otherwise, a measurable amount or shape such as a line, surface, or size; the dimensions of the object (Botirova: 2020).

In natural sciences, it is the relationship through which the magnitude is determined about the basic quantities; length, time, and mass.

2. Aestheticism

This term includes the reference to whatever is beautiful, (Manzur: 1997).

Arab scholars define beauty as what makes things look desirable (Leigh: 2020).

3. Significance

Linguistically

Leigh defines it as what is inferred, (Leigh: 2020).

Ismail et al. define it as the science that searches for the meaning, its characteristics, classes, systems, laws, and principles included in the element of a painting by being included in the general form (Ismail et al.: 2019, pp. 1-7).

Terminologically

It means that what signifies is that thing which guides in the right direction, (Al-Bustani: 1986).

4. Contemporariness

It means each time related to the present time of an action or an event, (Globe, 1998: p. 101).

Al-Bustani defines it as a tendency toward whatever is modern; the taste of the era, (Al-Bustani: 1986).

A group of senior linguists defines it as the most recent time attributed to a person, state, or event, (The Arabs, 1989: p. 286).

Modernity in the contemporary Iraqi painting

Since ancient times, art is not intentional. It is the strength of a free dreaming person living in the world of meditations and horizons of the subconscious. That person draws the features of things. He leaves the language of simulation, imitation, and visual objects in their literal form to rush from the deep meaning in the depiction of human nature and the mysterious human spirit. Artists try to shape their world with mathematical equations and spiritual relationships to symbolize the permanence and eternity of the soul. Heritage represents the historical and ancestral roots of language.

In the thirties of the twentieth century, the Iraqi artists got aware of the European schools and their artistic products. This awareness led to the development of artistic life. With the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, it became clear that the artwork in Iraq is in a decisive shift towards a new stage characterized by self-reliance and the search for features of a civilized personality, (Abd Muhammad et al.: 2020, pp. 2234-2255).

The artist often goes through imaginative feelings to draw inspiration from his/her awakening dreams and delusions of his/her perceptions. When the artist spontaneously draws involuntary emotions and unconscious awareness and when the stock departs in the imagination; pictures, visions, colors, lines, and harmonious forms, the artist starts meditating in front of his/her painting as if it were the first time to watch it, (Yi et al.: 2019, pp. 179-187).

The plastic artist evokes inspiration and imagination. When he/she tries to paint without prior notice and without knowing the subject of his/her painting.

Unconscious vision is poured into him/her. Therefore, his/her painting tools flow with great spontaneity. He/she tries to rush with all energies to accomplish the artwork. Therefore, the contemporary Iraqi artist often rejects his/her work for not being convinced with it. He/she omits and adds again and again as long as the effect is there. Whereas, the artist who claims inspiration and imagination does not review his/her artistic

impact after its completion, believing that the effect is the fruit of his/her revelation.

There are continuous debates about how the creation started. The artist tries to rely on imagination to gain more artistic expertise. Psychological tendencies, material impulses, and dreams enable him/her to create forms, symbols, and connotations. This represents the revelation of the Iraqi artist's future in finding movement and reflection, moving away from familiar reality, removing the curtain from the artist's freedom represented by the intellectual and aesthetic dimension through his/her imagination to find the truth in painting and its hidden secrets, and looking forward to the language of imagination.

Contemporary Iraqi art has been influenced by innate art and children's drawings as bear many connotations and symbols extend the connection between feeling and subconscious. Since the fifties the humanitarian trend of Iraqi art has become very clear; the function of social art became clear. This was encouraged by the circumstances after the Second World War that helped blow up artistic energies together (Baram: 2018, pp. 38-51).

From 1951-1955, the Baghdad Group for Modern Art started. The first one to be called an artist was Jawad Saleem. Their goal was to understand the artwork based on being an integrated unit between the artist and the public and reconciling the values intuition in mythological thought, logical values in decorative thought, and raising the concerns and aspirations of the Iraqi intellectual people (Yi et al.: 2019, pp. 179-187).

The essence of the Iraqi plastic art in the early until mid-seventies represents the latest development of the artistic vision in Iraq. This transformation represents the transfer of popular reality from its diagnostic level to its intuitive level (Hussain, 1971: p. 39). It inspires the presence of the past and the reference to the effects of childhood. He/she imagines what was stolen from him/her in the past, what he/she departed from in the present, and what he/she aspires to in the future. The first-generation painters engaged in their traditional works. They did so in response to the same reasons that motivated the footsteps of their predecessors with the time difference that drove them with strong emotions and intellectually and politically repetitive events (Aranda et al.: 2017).

Abd Muhammad et al state that the period of discovery, amazement, and expectation was the middle of the twentieth century. Artists began analyzing color and realizing its secrets and areas in search of the new topic of color (Abd Muhammad et al.: 2020, pp. 2234-2255).

The artist Faek Hassan was one of those who invented this. He is considered one of the first in the experience of color, in search of new elements, and color has become for him an end and a means, to represent himself and that color represents movement through his strength adjacent to other colors. He searches for the imaginary image in nature (Yi et al.: 2019, pp. 179-187). A group of artists who were dispatched outside Iraq established an art gathering called the Baghdad Group for Modern Art in 1951. They represented the artistic movement in Iraq.

The names of several artists who contributed to the modern art movement and had dreamy connotations in creating the subject through a subconscious vision represented by the surrealist movement in contemporary Iraqi painting are shown.

Contemporary Iraqi artists

They experienced everything painful through the ravages of the eightieth war, struck by delirium and subconscious in expressing pain and deprivation. Khalid Haidar, Iman Abdullah, Hanaa Mal Allah, Sattar Kawash, Mahmoud Al-Obaidi, Amer Khalil, Hussam Khudair, Walid Sheet, and others represent the most famous figures of this period. Many of them used emotions in paintings, which have surreal connotations (Bozarlsan: 2012, pp. 403-406).

METHODOLOGY

The original community

The community of the present study is limited to the artistic works of painting for Iraqi painters from 1950 – 2000.

The study sample

The research sample was chosen using the intentional method from the oil paintings, which the researchers found to have modernity connotations. The researchers sought the opinions of experts in this field. The research sample was chosen according to the following justifications:

1. These artists had a distinguished presence as activists in the contemporary Iraqi plastic movement.
2. They depended on their difference in artistic ideas and methods.
3. The works of each artist represent the period in which they lived and consequently reflect their nature.

The tool of study

The researchers prepared a form containing the indicators developed in light of the theoretical framework for approval when analyzing the sample.

The validity of the tool

Having identified the items and placing them in a special form, the researchers presented the form to a group of experts. Using the Cooper formula, a percentage of agreement of 84%) was obtained. Such a percentage is good to adopt in such cases. Many modifications were made to have the form in its final form.

The method of study

The method of interpretation in analyzing the sample is adopted in the present study according to the following:

- A. Consistency among analysts, which means that analysts who work individually reach the same results when analyzing the same content using the same classification according to the same steps and rules of the analysis.
- B. Consistency over time, which means that the researchers reach the same results after analyzing them again after a certain period.

By using the same procedures when performing the analysis, the researchers used the two methods together. The researchers randomly selected two oil paintings from the original sample which consists of 10 oil paintings. They asked the analysts to analyze these panels separately after introducing them to the analysis procedures and controls and training them on how to use the tool. The researchers analyzed the same sample twice with an eighteen-day time interval between the first and the second analysis to find the consistency of the researchers with themselves over time. Having estimated the agreement factor using the Scott equation, the researchers found out that the agreement rate is 87%.

The study methodology

The descriptive-analytical method is used in analyzing the sample of the present study.

RESULTS

1. Jawad Saleem; playing children. Oil on Canvas, 1953.

This painting was drawn in an abstract geometric style that adopts the diagnosis confirmed by the shorthand character of the color, the font, and the shape in the construction of the painting, whether in terms of lines or on the color level to embody the semantic and aesthetic dimensions. The painting is a group of characters distributed irregularly on the surface of the plate in a geometrical construction that inclines from reality. Bodies are painted in a triangular way with additions of some geometric frameworks that reflect the nature of the place. Despite the deliberate attempt by these constructive acts, the perspective was dealt with exclusively towards flattening, formally and colorfully. The artist adopted the modification of most shapes towards the crescent shape. He began to mutate the hands and the movement of the legs to take the shape of the crescent. He painted the eyes in a way that is close to the match. Colors depict the games of the children as well as nature. There are four girls. The mother stands next to her shorter son wearing a headscarf with a cloak. The perspective was treated in a way that relied on flatness that overshadowed the appearance of the painting. It constitutes a kind of perspective through the variation in the sizes of the characters and the color contrast. These eyes refer to an old Iraqi reference; Sumerian. Painting the eye in this way and emphasizing it in its almond shape may be a kind of metaphor. In addition to focusing on painting this number of people according to a traditional reference in a clear way in terms of line and color and creating the final balances for the painting through them, they grew according to geometric spaces but by varying sizes and avoiding symmetry except in a few cases as it is in the top of the board. However, the two areas are not equal. It was not the dominant line on cutting the plate as much as he took this task of color, as transgressions of color difference or subtle color contrast were the ones that gave the impression of the parts of the painting while preserving the spirituality of flatness and excluding the perspective to the maximum degree possible. But, it was not completely lost, which added to the abstraction. This is an expressive dimension. To embody the semantic and aesthetic dimensions, there are types of metaphors that refer the subject to its eastern identity. The family reveals the Islamic character because it was painted in a way that carries the spirit of meaning as seen by Muslims.

The topic of children playing was not familiar with Iraqi art. It is an attempt to reveal a new pattern in Iraqi art. Simplification is not technical simplification, whether it is in color or font, but rather it starts with choosing the topic that was established according to the painting. Playing Children represents looking at things in a way that belongs to modernity. The painting resorts to Islamic or eastern atmospheres. At the same time, it represents a popular Iraqi reality through the identity of the decree.



Fig 1. Playing Children.

2. Faeq Hassan, Musicians, 1956.

The series of experiences achieved through the works of Jawad Saleem in the early fifties have a major impact on transformations of the literary experience of Faeq Hassan with a shift in concepts from an academic realist reality towards modernity diversity and complete conviction in forming a new formulation of the visual language and presenting the plastic speech as an Iraqi speech.

After the stage in which Faeq focused on being an impressionist, the objective necessity was to make the painting take a more subjective nature and search for a stylistic identity to achieve the identity of the stage or work on aesthetic revelation and the beginning of the offering stage whose creativity and modernity feature. Thus, he took a path of his own, starting from his capabilities in his performance as a colorist and as a skilled maker who reflects his visions through that rhetorical dimension of color. But, he remained faithful to reality. His expressions had a direct relationship between localism and modernity. This painting focused on a pure eastern theme. But, it took its color reality through realistic items. The reduction and modification in painting lines and features did not deviate from the effects of the Baghdad school. But, the color spaces imposed their modern reality. Valeant belongs to the Iraqi environment as its presence in the local heritage is common. But, turbans and the way to draw faces take to the Islamic environment. Therefore, the identity of this painting must reflect a popular reality that has direct implications in public life.

But, it is these color distributions that impose the self-dimension and the literary properties through which the aesthetic dimension is achieved. These are common experiences between what is conscious and personal and what is not conscious in merging the two realms with abstract to reflect the spirit of contrast between what is free and what is geometric. Then, the color equation begins with the task of revealing the meaning.

DISCUSSION

In light of the analysis, a set of results are reached:

1. The contemporary Iraqi artists are interested in dreams and symbols in most of their artworks. Thus, the intellectual and aesthetic dimensions are present in activating modernist connotations that are full of symbols and signs.

2. The old heritage refused the plastic movement considering it a collective awareness that evokes the subconscious. The intellectual and aesthetic dimension has been represented by some kind of innocence and honesty.

3. The contemporary Iraqi artists adopted the direct formations of the topic and showed their emotions through deep imagination of the mental image.

4. The contemporary Iraqi artist acted with all spontaneity and strangeness, through the movement of the line, which increased more automatically in the accomplishment of artworks.

5. There is a common link between European painting and contemporary Iraqi painting.

6. The contemporary Iraqi artists' creativity of modernist significance in their plastic works gave them an aesthetic trend and wide intellectual dimension.

7. The works of the contemporary Iraqi artists are distinguished by an Iraqi specificity in the artworks. Yet, it failed to comply with Western trends in absolute terms.

8. There is a state of harmony in most of the contemporary Iraqi artists' artworks by returning to the state of setback.

9. The contemporary Iraqi artists freely express their concerns to break the barrier of fear through spontaneous behavior of artwork.

CONCLUSION

In light of the results, the researchers conclude:

1. The modern Iraqi artists look for their freedom and reveal themselves through surreal signs.
2. Honesty should be there in expressing using symbols or connotation and venting its unconscious emotions and capabilities.
3. The modern Iraqi artists show the aspiration of wealth, respect, and existence.
4. Most artists are influenced by Freud's psychological analysis theory.
5. The unconscious may prompt the artist to find a style of his/her own and express his/her privacy.
6. The lack of general taste of the recipient makes modernity weak in its spread.
7. The modern Iraqi artists resort to the primitive heritage to serve their artworks.
8. The modern Iraqi painters feel that imitating modernist forms, symbols, or connotations exhaust their meaning and charm frequently, which prompted the search for new, effective influences of what the painters want to express.

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