

دور الحرف العربي كوحدة تصميمية في المخطوطات الإسلامية واثره على الفنون العالمية

Arabic letters as units of artistic design in Islamic manuscripts the influence of Arabic calligraphy on arts across the world

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Abstract

Arabic letters as units of artistic design in Islamic manuscripts: the influence of Arabic calligraphy on arts across the world

Objectives of this Research Project

1. To shed light on formulations of Arabic letters as units of design with examples from Islamic manuscripts
2. To describe and analyse works by various western artists whose works include letter formulations of calligraphy.

Arabic script has been used to embellish images, and decorate architecture by artists in an outstanding creative craftsmanship that is unprecedented across the world, so much so that this art remains unique to this day, and time. Letters of the Arabic alphabet evidently show design units that have been used in decorative artistry throughout the Islamic world.

The Arabic calligraphy constituted a medium for learning, a manifestation of beauty in Arab Islamic culture, and evolving into eighty distinctive schools so far.

Moslem artists brought life to the otherwise inanimate letters, embellishing them with vivacious plants, and geometric shapes to make masterpieces of their penmanship. Exalting the quest of learning is embedded in Moslem culture, as the verse in the Glorious Quran urges people to learn” Read ! Allah is the most Generous, He had taught man by the pen what man had never known”.

It is because of this deep respect for learning symbolized by the pen that artists of calligraphy enjoyed high social status down the ages in the Muslim world.

No wonder, they continue to develop, beautify, and upgrade their art as well as the techniques of this highly appreciated craftsmanship.

Arabic script with letters as units of design has been prominent throughout the world through the interplay and intertwining between drawings, calligraphy and decorations in wondrous styles of design as is the case of Maqamat Al Hariri stories, and Yahia Al Wasiti manuscript. The Islamic artistic trend of using Arabic calligraphy in harmony with geometric shapes, images, plants, and formats influenced the western world as we can see in the works of many western graphic designers who have been developing the Latin script using decorative styles that remind us of the golden era of the various Arabic calligraphy arts of the Islamic culture, and civilization.

The significance of this research project derives from the artistic schools of our Arab Islamic cultural heritage evolving and added to by western artists using various techniques to form script in their distinctive works in modern styles.

This research project focuses on how Arabic calligraphy influenced works by European artists:

The forms, symmetrical designs and flow of the Arabic script which created distinctive visual art in every sense.

On many occasions, complex Arabic calligraphy designs would be included as decorative themes only, and not an actual reading material. As much, the design would function a complimentary themes incorporated in works of art such as posters, flyers, and even sculptures.

The influence of Arabic calligraphy with its distinctive dynamics on European art was never researched from this perspective before, although home research was conducted on the art of incorporating Arabic letters in European works.

This project will also shed light on various aspects, mechanisms, designs and dynamics of Arabic calligraphy work by sampling works by European artists who used Latin script in their art.

The hypothesis of the research:

European artists made use of formulating techniques specific to Arabic letter formations by Muslim artists shown in Islamic manuscript. It is quite fascinating to see how they distributed Latin letters, linked that to the general theme of the work, with the image, and design forms.