

Revival of Using the Mosaic Craft within The Contemporary Furniture Design with an Islamic Identity

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Abstract:

The Mosaic craft was used in the formation of various designs that express religious, cultural and artistic values in an effective artistic manner. The largest evidence of this is the Islamic art, it carried out with precision and craftsmanship, which appear in the design of floors, walls and ceiling of old mosques and houses. However, the Mosaic craft has ceased to exist, it is no longer as important as it was in Arab Islamic countries, and the role of mosaic craftsmen is retreated. This may be due to the changes in public taste and the trend towards simplicity and contemporary designs. Therefore, it is necessary to find an innovative solution, to preserve creative workforce in mosaic art throw presenting new designs of mosaic that will be accepted by the public taste all over the world.

The Arabic furniture designer bears the responsibility of emphasizing the Islamic cultural and religious identity in a way that blends with the spirit of the present age by presenting new ideas and designs. It is possible for the furniture designer to revive the mosaic craft by employing it in contemporary furniture designs that maximize Islamic identity. The aims of this research are: First, to describe and analysis some old and new mosaic works to get acquainted with its philosophy, values, features, and the materials used in its manufacture. Second, monitoring the phenomenon of the disappearance of the mosaic craft, its causes, and obstacles in some Arabian Islamic countries. Third, innovating contemporary furniture designs that depend on the use of mosaic and merging it with Islamic formations, lines and motifs in a manner that is commensurate with the thinking, culture and taste of the current era.

The research focuses on emphasizing the vital role the Arabian furniture designers play in creating designs with Islamic identity, and focusing on the flourishing of traditional handicrafts that were led to extinction, especially the mosaic craft. The research is concerned with getting out of the traditionalism in the mosaic and providing a contemporary touch to use it in the modern furniture industry. The researcher designed some contemporary furniture designs ideas with an Islamic identity and were applied with mosaic. As well as analysis of the philosophic vision of these designs and discusses the designs values, such as aesthetic, heritage, religious, environmental, and technological values.

Key Words:

Mosaic Art – Islamic Art – Contemporary Furniture Design –Islamic Identity.

Introduction:

Mosaic works appeared in many ancient civilizations as a graphic art that narrates myths and events that express the culture of these civilizations and highlight their identity, leaving a rich very beautiful and accurate heritage of art works. Since the era of the Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia mosaic art was used in many decorative works, the Roman civilization throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and the Greek civilization in southeastern Europe,

up to the Islamic civilization. The mosaic craft had a great prosperity in Islamic civilization, Muslim artist was able to translate the philosophy of this civilization with various designs and multiple colors, especially inside the mosques, through small pieces of marble, porcelain, glass, brick, or crystal. The mosaic craft also appears in the modern era in some of the artistic, sculptural and architectural works that are adopted by some artists of the modern art schools. Despite the different cultures, beliefs and artistic nature of civilizations, the mosaic craft has preserved its aesthetic laws throughout the ages.

The different requirements of the current era make the general taste turns towards simplicity, abstraction and decrease in details, which decline the role of some handicrafts especially mosaics. The mosaics were limited to some works on the walls houses, palaces, swimming pools, toilets, frescoes, and garden furniture, but in a minimal form not like before. Also, modern technology has provided executive means that have taken the place of the workforce. Man has moved from the manual manufacturing to automated manufacturing according to the economic and social changes that have swept the world. Dependence on machinery has largely replaced crafts.

Handcrafts and heritage crafts receive a lot of interest from international and local organizations, especially those which are based on the human and material capabilities available within each country. Small enterprises tend to support handicrafts that are at risk of extinction, with the aim of supporting the economies of developing countries and solving the problems of poverty and unemployment. The global trend leads to stimulation to find solutions for reviving handicrafts, because of their artistic, religious and cultural values, which carry the identity of countries and express their civilization. Some attempts, projects and ideas were launched, including those related to mosaic craft works, which were appeared again through new designs in a contemporary style, including works that entered into the furniture design that added a special character and aesthetic value. However, it is noted that these designs came as a reflection of the mosaic craft as an artistic value only in a typical manner that does not carry a philosophical intellect, and it does not have the religious and cultural value that this type of art has always carried through different ages.

Research Problem:

The research problem is summarized in the following question:

How to revive mosaic works by using them in designing contemporary furniture that carries an Islamic identity and fits the spirit of the era?

Research Hypotheses:

There is a positive relationship between the intellectual creativity of the furniture designer in presenting contemporary furniture designs that carry an Islamic identity, and the revival of the mosaic craft.

Research Aims:

1. Descriptive analysis of some works of mosaic craft from past to present.
2. Monitoring the disappearance of the mosaic craft, its causes and obstacles in some Arab Islamic countries.
3. Presenting proposed designs to revive the mosaic craft in contemporary furniture design to asserting Islamic identity, and descriptive analysis of some aesthetic, heritage, religious,

environmental and technological values related to the cladding of contemporary furniture surfaces with mosaics.

Research Importance:

1. Emphasizing the vital role that the furniture designer plays in creating a design imprint to maximize Islamic identity through the use of mosaic in covering the surfaces of contemporary furniture.
2. Focusing on the flourishing of traditional handcrafts that lead to extinction, especially mosaic craft.
3. Emphasizing the aesthetic, heritage, religious, environmental and technological values that mosaic craft adds to contemporary furniture designs.

Research Methodology:

The research is based on:

1. The historical approach through studying the history of mosaics.
2. The descriptive and analytical method in describing and analyzing mosaic works, and analyzing the phenomenon of the mosaic's extinction.
3. The experimental approach by using mosaic works in contemporary furniture designs that carry the Islamic identity out of the theoretical framework to the applied framework.

Research Results:

1. The mosaic craft turned from being an ornamentation to different surfaces as an ornament or as a way to tell stories, depict daily life and embody symbols and icons in ancient times into a single art in its own carrying aesthetic values and became a design tool in the modern era.
2. The status of Arab and Islamic countries has retreated from being mosaic art schools in the past, to be centers and small units risen up in order to protect their mosaic heritage in our time.
3. The problem of reviving the mosaic craft and accessing a contemporary furniture design with an Islamic identity that requires the furniture designer to take advantage of modern technology, presenting the mosaic craft in a new style and technology, and creating designs with lines and intellect that are compatible with the taste of the age as the axes of the design process.
4. The research hypothesis is achieved, as the furniture designer is able to present a philosophical view of contemporary furniture design that carries an Islamic identity through achieving a set of design values such as aesthetic, heritage, religious, environmental, and technological values to revive the mosaic craft. It was also evident in the design experiment carried out by the researcher, which reached clear design limitations, as follows:
 - The use of different design methods such as abstraction, overlap, repetition, centralization, golden ratio, deletion and addition in three-dimensional configurations, and the use of various raw materials in a harmonious way to give a distinct aesthetic value to the designs.
 - Use elements of the decorative composition of the heritage of Islamic art in covering the surfaces of the furniture pieces and also draw their design idea from Islamic elements and motifs to achieve the heritage value.
 - Representing some religious values in designs such as monotheism, cooperation and distance from the representation of living things.
 - The use of natural materials such as wood, marble and glass have added an environmental value to the furniture.

- The use of modern machines and tools in cutting raw materials to form them in the surface of designed furniture.

Recommendations:

1. Governments should take positive steps on reviving crafts related to the furniture industry, such as straw chairs, stained glass, and Arabesque, and placing them on the list of developing small heritage industries that are at risk of disappearing.
2. Emphasizing the establishment of industrial centers that will be led by furniture designers and the role they play in studying crafts problems associated with the furniture industry and protecting it from extinction, and searching for innovative solutions to return it to the local market in a way that is compatible with the requirements of contemporary taste.
3. Applying the proposed designs in governmental establishments, especially those related to heritage and tourism services.
4. Studying the necessary mechanisms to achieve the appropriate economic values that there are traditional furniture pieces implemented with modern technologies that match those of furniture pieces in quality in the global market and their price or similarity to ensure their popularity locally and globally.

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