

**Interior Design Aesthetics of Reception Foyer " Fountain foyer "  
In the Palace of prince " Mohamed Ali " (Al Manial Palace)**

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**Introduction: -**

The subject of beauty is one of the subjects that has occupied man's mind since ancient times until our modern time, it was taken care of by philosophers, artists, psychologists, mathematicians, naturalists and even beyond the natural.....etc., each according to his direction, inclinations and perspectives, in an attempt to reveal the origin of beauty and the ways of feeling and sensing them in humans.

Scientists' opinions are differed from beauty, and the question was: Is beauty itself considered a reality that exists in the outside world? or is it a psychological phenomenon, felt by human? so, scientists of aesthetics were divided into two teams, the first team sees the objectivity of beauty, i.e. its presence in the same thing first, so it impresses us, but the second team believes in the self-beauty, i.e. beauty is only when the people receives and tastes it, because it exists and depends first and foremost on human's taste.

In any case, thinkers of the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe confirmed the existence of beauty in the object itself, i.e. that it is objective, but the 18th century intellectuals in general gave their opinion in favor of self beauty, i.e. as a result of human's taste for it, as for the 19th and 20th centuries, the thinkers of these two centuries tried to give a scientific basis for explaining the phenomenon of beauty, so a team of researchers and aestheticists were busy studying the beauty of architectural and interior design and furniture, where some of the aesthetic values of historical periods have been derived, and some useful recommendations have been drawn up on which a number of important aesthetic theories of architecture and interior design have been drawn up, which considered to be the most important manifestations of civilization, because they are a mirror reflecting the hopes and aspirations of peoples, their scientific capacity, taste and philosophy, and it is a constant fact that architecture and interior design have always been the true image of human civilization and its development.

Islamic architecture has included several types of architecture (the art of mosque architecture, - the finest art for Muslims- the art of palace architecture, the art of house building, the art of school architecture... etc.) , Muslims excelled in architecture in all its forms, because they understood well the models of architecture and interior design in previous civilizations and then developed them in proportion to their complexity and religion, then they created an Islamic model of their own, and perhaps the exterior and interior designs of the palaces architecture

derived from the art of Islamic civilization in all its historical ages, were and still are a distinctive sign and a prominent value standing for every artist, historian or even an ordinary man who loves arts such as Prince "Mohamad Ali Tawfiq", this prince, who loved art and built his palace to be a masterpiece worth studying, analyzing and touring among its parts, this palace is a living image free from any distortion of artistic and architectural models that we haven't witnessed back then but we inherited it, this reception hall (fountain foyer) in the palace residence building included units and elements summarizing important parts of the history of Islamic art and architecture.

On this basis, the researcher addressed the study and analysis of the aesthetic values of architecture and interior design in the reception hall (the fountain foyer) in the residence building of the Prince's Palace "Mohamad Ali Tawfiq" or as it is known (The Manial Palace).

**Research Aim:** The aim of the research is to identify an analytical study of aesthetic values in the reception hall "Fountain foyer", in the residence building of the Prince's Palace "Mohamad Ali Tawfiq".

**Research Importance:** The historic palaces in Egypt are a living embodiment of periods of time that the country has gone through and there have been periods of great prosperity in architecture and interior design, and Prince's Palace "Mohamad Ali" is one of the most important models with special design aesthetics influenced by Islamic arts.

**Research Hypothesis:** The interior design of the Prince's Palace "Mohamed Ali" carries many meanings and values aesthetics of Islamic art, especially the "fountain foyer", in the residence building, in this sense, preserving and documenting this legacy is a national goal not only for every designer, but also for every Egyptian.

**Research Methodology:** A survey edited approach to a historical study of the Prince's Palace "Mohamed Ali" and a study of the characteristics of Islamic art, as well as a critical analytical approach through the analytical descriptive study of the aesthetic values of the elements of interior design in the reception hall (fountain foyer) in the residence building.

**Research limits:** The research is determined in an overview of the building of the Prince's Palace "Mohamad Ali Tawfiq" - then the limits of the research move to address the elements of the interior design of the reception foyer (fountain foyer) in the Residence building and the analysis of its aesthetic values from the perspective of Islamic arts.

### **A brief overview about the Prince's Palace "Mohamad Ali Tawfiq": -**

The Prince's Palace is located in a beautiful spot of land on the East Nile branch of Al-Rawda Island, its total area (61,711 square meters) of which (five thousand meters) is the area of buildings and about (34 thousand meters) for gardens, remaining approximately (22711 meters) which are internal roads and others, Prince "Muhammad Ali Tawfiq" had chosen this land and bought it from a foreigner, then he began to build his magnificent palace on it in (1319 Ah / 1901 A.D.) starting with the residence building and then the other buildings. He contributed in putting geometric and decorative designs, and himself supervised the implementation of their architectural and artistic details.

## A brief Study about the Palace Building: -

The building of this palace is one of the most beautiful buildings of the historical palaces in Egypt. It is unique in its magnificent architectural design, where it was built in a modern Islamic style that was borrowed from Fatimid and Mameluke buildings. The spirits of Persian, Syrian, Moroccan, Spanish and Ottoman styles were popularized in it, until later they became an art school with various Islamic styles and elements, which the owner of the palace loved and worked to revive and preserve it. This palace consists of nine main sections.

**1-The palace fence and entrances:** This fence was built in the style of the forts in the Middle Ages. The main entrance fig. (1) to this palace is located in the north-eastern corner of the main facade, and on either side of this entrance are two towers that resemble minarets, and are centered at the top of the entrance, the Egyptian-Ottoman flag fig. (2) represented in a marble panel with three crescents with a star in the middle of each of them.



fig. (1) the main entrance

**2- Reception building:** Which includes a reception hall in the form of a rectangular hall whose walls are covered with marble ribbons and tiles of blue ceramic tiles, it was also covered with a wooden ceiling decorated with astral dishes, and from down wooden ribbon with prominent kufic inscriptions gilded on a brown floor.



fig. (2) Egyptian-Ottoman flag

**3- Mosque and Clock Tower:** The clock tower is located between the reception building and the mosque and is designed in the style of the Spanish-Moroccan towers to be used for observation on the one hand with a large clock placed above it, and the small mosque attached to this facade is a masterpiece of art and artistic beauty.

**4- Fishing Museum:** This museum includes his collections that was collected from the palaces and restrooms of King "Farouk" and Prince "Yusuf Kamal", who were known for their love of hunting.

**5-Throne Hall:** It is designed in the Ottoman style, it is a large rectangular hall and the ceiling of this hall is centered with the disc of the sun, from which golden radiation emerges, fig. (3).



fig. (3) the Throne Hall

**6-Private Museum:** It consists of fifteen rooms, each one of them is containing various types of collectibles (Holy Quran, metal artifacts, ceramic objects, rare carpets, ..... and others).

**7- The residence building (which have the fountain foyer):** It is the main building of the palace and its oldest architectural buildings, it was the prince's residence, and it consists of two floors and it have a tower overlooking the views of Cairo and Giza. This building is accessed by a private staircase, which leads

to a lobby where on its east side there is a wooden door studded with copper flakes, and opens on to the foyer centered by a fountain of Albatter Marble, and its floor and walls are covered with colored marble.

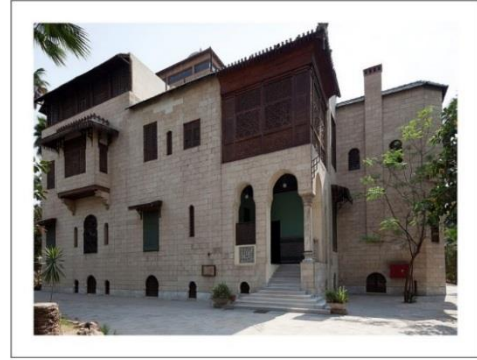


fig. (4) The residence building

### **Aesthetic values of the arts of Islamic civilization:**

#### **Aesthetic values of the arts of Islamic civilization:**

Islamic intellect is interested in many topics including beauty, and it has addressed it based on the ideological perception of Islam as a religion of life that discussed all its affairs and aspects. Qur'an has led Muslims to pay attention to adornment and beauty, which can be considered a fundamental and radical change of aesthetic thought, and these solutions are based on the principle of "abstraction", so the mathematical engineering system was one of the means of expressing abstraction as an aesthetic philosophical principle, hence the point, line, area, circle, square, triangle and octagon, etc... and endless complications of geometric shapes were direct visual means of expressing the invisible. The Islamic aesthetic approach came as a rise in creativity inspired by the doctrine of tawhid) unification (and through the forms of units and architectural elements and geometric and natural decoration appeared the art of abstract, and even not just abstract of them but the created formulations, that were incorporated into compositions. It is a target not direct form of design creation, but rather the underlying abstract system expressed by this design.

#### **Characteristics of Islamic art:**

Islamic art is one of the purest and most accurate expressions of Islamic civilization and being the expression of this civilization is what gives them this characteristic (Islamic characteristic), Islamic art in Egypt, India or Iraq is ultimately an "Islamic art", even if the artist is sometimes not Muslim, because in addition to expressing himself and his environment, this is necessary and it expresses the authentic, established and important aesthetics in the civilization to which the artist belongs, regardless of his ethnic or religious affiliation.

#### **The most important characteristics of this authentic art:**

**1- Abstraction and musicality:** They are two of the most prominent qualities of Islamic art, the intrinsic value inherent in Islamic art is its rhythm and abstraction and the accompanying distinctive musical sense in which no other art has matched, the function of Islamic art was not to convey the visual, but to show what is not visible, and to try to feel the mathematical laws that govern this existence.

**2- Hatred of the depiction of living things:** This is due to the desire to stay away from the idolatry, Islam has come to eliminate the faith represented in the worship of people and idols. However, this hatred gradually faded as awareness of the realities of the Islamic faith increased and murals appeared on many works of art, such as various artifacts, what is striking however, is that the decorations of the Qur'an and mosques remained free of human and animal elements.

**3-Contrary to nature:** Islamic art is not interested in the transfer of life, but its general tendency is to strip the living scenes in nature so that only geometric lines remain, some believe that the departure of Islamic photography from the origins of the human body stems from a stable intention of nature, which is based on the disregard for the absolute greatness of human.

**4- Convert vile to precious:** It is recognized in the Islamic faith that it refrains from extravagance in the joy of life. Muslim artist was able to make mosque niches using the cheapest materials such as clay and wood after enriching them with decoration and engraving ,which made these niches the pinnacle of beauty and majesty.

**5- Incredible creation:** The violation of nature has created new forms that are totally unparalleled in nature. Models of birds and complex animals of fairy forms that do not exist in nature have emerged in Islamic Art, so Muslim artist when his imagination overlooks the world, we find him tackling his topics in depth, looking for new forms of imagination.

**6-Attention to the decoration of surfaces and fill the void:** The Arab-Muslim artist was very interested in the decoration of the surfaces of objects, whether in the exterior architecture or the elements of interior design and furniture ,so he doesn't leave a void unadorned.

### **An analytical study of the aesthetic values of the elements and components of the reception hall (fountain foyer) in the residence building in the prince's palace "Mohamad Ali Tawfiq " through the features of Islamic art - :**

The fountain foyer is the main distributor in the residence building, which is the main building of the palace and the oldest building ,and the residence building is accessed after enjoying a part of the palace garden, where we can meet a range of marble staircases .Which, after its ascent, we stand in front of a wooden door studded with copper foil to open on the lobby with a central fountain from Albatter marble.

The hall in its horizontal plan is rectangular in shape ,but it was divided into the square part with central fountain ,and another rectangular part by Iwan comprises three arches, raised on a couple of marble columns and from the edges the arches are based on the walls.

**1- Repetition:** - The methods of repetition varied in Islamic art, the artist used regular simple repetition. Reciprocal units and symmetric repetition, whether in decorative pattern or geometric compositions. Repetition in Islamic art did not cause any kind of boredom or monotony in the psyche of the viewer where the ingenuity of artistic innovation and the agility of its lines, the diversity of colors and the beauty of its relationship.

The element of repetition is evident in the interior design of the fountain foyer, where we find a repetition of the arches above the doors and its decorative elements and color spaces and also repetition in using wooden corbel of upper corridor, in addition to the repeated use of glazed tiles decorated with abstract floral motifs, fig. (5)

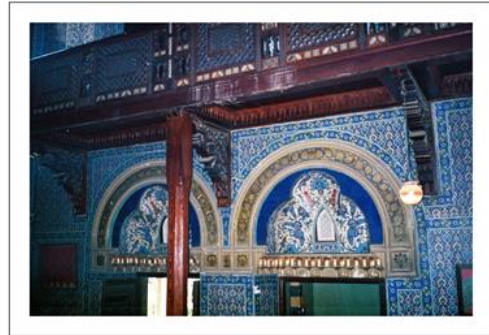


fig. (5) Repetition of Aches and corbels

**2- Rhythm:** -Rhythm is defined as repeating an element at equal time distances or linear, or regular, gradient, ascending or descending. Muslim artist knew the rhythm through the constant repetition of a particular system during his lifestyle.

The rhythm in the reception hall (the foyer of the fountain) appears in the various elements of the hall, where there is a regular rhythm through columns and arches where they are found on equal dimensions of each other and the irregular rhythm also appears in the design of the floor, where the marble decorations vary but are repeated at constant distances, in addition to what is achieved by the sequence and climbing of wooden stairs steps from a sense of regular rhythm fig. (6).

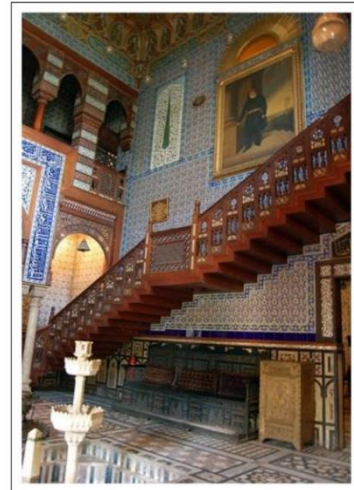


fig. (6) the wooden stair

**3- Abstraction:** - This principle has spread in the works of Muslims and their artistic effects, the artist did not turn to the transfer of nature literally, but he stood in front of nature to follow its hidden system and its absolute laws in composition, coloring, growth and regularity. Thus, the Muslim artist developed the natural form and subjected it to the forms of geometry with axes, which stem from the basics of symmetry, and therefore it does not express its literal form and its natural details, it expresses the spirit and essence of this form, thus Islamic arts have achieved a distinctive feature that has prevailed throughout the Muslim countries.

The abstraction is clearly visible in the foyer of the fountain where abstract of floral motifs are used to adorn within the arches at the top of the doors ,in addition to that, the artist used blue color as a frame for these motifs to show and distinguish the transition to another type of gilded decoration.

**4-Unity and diversity:** - One of the principles of the aesthetic values of Muslims is the principle of "unity with diversity, this unity may include several elements, including the unity of form, the unity of style, the unity of thought, the unity of purpose, and the unity of Islamic art always stems through monotheism and orientation (the Islamic concept of unity).

**A- Unification:** - unity is almost like a coalition or the compatibility of decorative elements between them, where it is the overall relationship to the forces and the attractions of the rest of formative elements, whether similar or different, which gives a sense of the whole.

The artist was interested in the interior design of the fountain foyer to achieve the idea of diversity while retaining the unity of composition, this is evident in the diversity in the lines, geometric and floral motifs, in addition to the diversity in the levels. and achieve the element of unity through diversity due to the coordination, uniformity and organization of the parts.

**B- Direction:** - Unity in Islamic art arises from the principle of monotheism, and it is not only determined to converge around the axis of geometric repetition, rather, the emptiness of it is like the "Kaaba" or the center of the courtyard or the fountain in the nave of a mosque around it, all consists of a repetitive unit with a dynamic force that drives it to unite with all, without losing its vacuum autonomy to integrate with public order and overall structure, in all configurations and formations, the concept of direction inward dominates, which is an Islamic concept that directs the feelings of the Muslim human being into the invisible and it is full of calmness and peace.

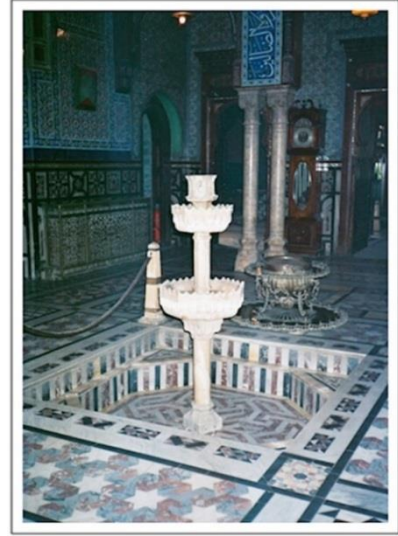


fig. (7) Central and direction

The fountain fig. (7) appeared in the reception hall of the residence building as a central element to direct the movement to the various spaces.

**5-Use of color:** - Color has a clear value to the Muslim artist, despite the lack of a wide range of colors used in Islamic architecture and arts, it is commonly used in works of art such as mosaics, carpets and arabesques, colors of Muslims had meanings and connotations, where the blue colors expressing the sky and water, the yellow color expressing the desert, as well as the white color expressing the purity and according to description of things colors were used.

The color was used as a link between the elements of the interior design in the reception foyer " fountain foyer" in the residence building of the Prince's Palace, "Mohamad Ali," where the blue and white color prevailed on the treatment of the walls with the glazed tiles, brown in its various shades was used in the wood, and there are many colors were used in the marble floor .

**6- Ratios and proportionality:** - The Arabs were very interested in ratios and proportionality, and they found in following it in their works of art an adaptation to the plan and wisdom of the creator in his creation, the ratio and proportionality may be in quantity, which is said to be numerical, and may be in a way that is said to be a Geometric ratio, and It may be both together, so it will create musical composition ratio.

The artists of Islamic architectural works, discovered that the best works , which was built and its parts composed on the best ratio, and the virtuous ratios are (one, one and half, one and third, one and quarter, one and eighth) and these are the ratios that the Arab taste has been pleased with, which came through the image and structure of the human body, therefore it can be said that the artists of the Islamic ages used the aesthetic ratios deduced from the proportionality of the human body.

In the reception hall (fountain foyer) of the residence building, the designer's consideration of the ratio and proportionality is clearly visible between all the component parts of the space, as a ratio of columns for arches on both sides, and the ratio of the mass of the fountain itself to the total emptiness of the foyer. The reception foyer space itself is small, so the designer intended

not to inflate the fountain's body in order to achieve agility and consistency in the ratios between the surrounding space.

**7-Formal stability:** The oldest way to design stability is formal balance by the symmetry element around an axis as a design goal, the designer may reach formal stability without symmetry, so stable architectural forms can be divided into shapes (with a symmetric balance - asymmetric balance).

There are many models of formal stability in the reception foyer (fountain foyer), which appeared in many elements. The wooden partition is one of the models of symmetry that comes through the symmetry around the vertical axis of the design, thus achieving the formal stability of the composition, and configuration that combine design excellence with precision of execution, and it also carries the meanings of diversity and unity, where diversity in the form of the turning from the narrowness at the top to the breadth of the eyes of the turning at the bottom.

**8- Contradiction:** - The realization of the shapes is the result of differences in the visual field, so when we realize the shape of the body, it means that there are differences in the visual field, and when there are differences, there must be a disparity. Perhaps the simplest way to reach a clear creative effort, is a trend toward design that carries the difference between two or more contradictions, out of this struggle and conflict, the viewer makes sure of the object and its opposite.

In the interior composition of the fountain lobby, there was a contradiction between the refracted straight line in steps of the wooden stair, and the wrapped curved line in the shape of the arches.

**9- Diversity and pluralism:** - Whereas, the artist's and art's mission is to reveal to us aspects of beauty, which do not contradict with plurality and abundant diversity, which in turn does not contradict and does not affect the unity of this art, and this is what we find clear in the decorative form in Islamic art, which does not deal with a single method in the formation of decorative units.

Diversity is a characteristic of the cosmic system which is full of many species (animals, fish, birds, ....). This is in addition to the organic diversity in texture, color, size and shape, and with this diversity, the design should be a coherent composition, it does not suffice to be merely clear and aware forms.

The architectural elements and decorative units have varied in the reception foyer (fountain foyer), the artist used two different and adjacent styles of units that make up the wooden stair handrail, and despite this diversity, the design did not lose its unity.

## **Results: -**

- 1- The Prince's Palace," Mohamed Ali Tawfiq, is an art school of various Islamic styles and artistic elements.
- 2- Islamic art is the embodiment of the knowledge vision of Islam about art ,and an important milestone in the culture of Islam.
- 3- The aesthetics of the interior design in the reception hall "Fountain foyer" of the Prince's Palace "Mohamed Ali" are defined by a subjective vision stemming from a sense of beauty in its own self, and even the self of the owner of this palace and his internal sense of the aesthetics of Islamic Art,



objectivity of beauty was also demonstrated by the artist's commitment to the distinctive elements of aesthetic values in Islamic arts, which was achieved through:

- **Repetition:** - Where the use of wooden corbels bearing the upper pass, in addition to the repeated use of glazed tiles decorated with abstract floral motifs, this repetition did not create a kind of boredom or monotony where the ingenuity of innovation, the agility of the lines, the diversity of colors and the harmony of their relationship.
- **Rhythm:** - The lines of wooden stair that gracefully move to the upper floor added a regular rhythm, and the decorations of the floor varied but were repeated at constant distances, creating an irregular rhythm.
- **Abstraction:** - where all the floral motifs appeared in abstract form, the artist stood before nature to imitate its hidden system and its absolute laws of formation, coloring, growth, and regularity.
- **Unity and diversity:** - The value of diversity has been strongly realized while maintaining unity, the decorations varied between floral and geometric in the arches above the entrance doors of the foyer, and its levels also varied, while the composition as a whole preserved the unit value.
- **Direction:** - The fountain, with its water space, interposed the hall of the foyer, becoming central element, it also acted as a guidance element within the space ,and between the adjacent spaces .
- **Use of color:** - The color was used as a link between the design elements in the lobby, the blue and white color prevailed in the treatment of the walls with glazed tiles, while, the brown color in its various shades was used in the wood, and there are many colors were used in the marble floor.
- **Ratios and proportionality:** - The fountain block itself has been matched to the total emptiness of the foyer, the space of hall reception itself is small, so the designer did not inflate the body of the fountain in order to achieve agility and consistency in the ratios between the surrounding space.
- **Formal stability:** The symmetric balance of the wooden partition design overlooking the reception foyer has added to the value of formal stability.
- **Contradiction:** - The apparent contrast in the refracted lines of wooden stair steps appeared with the curved line of arches, which were transmitted on column.
- **Diversity and pluralism:** - Diversity and pluralism appeared in many models of the lobby's interior design elements. Among of them is the artist's ability to use two different and adjacent patterns of the units that make up the stair railings while retaining the design unit.

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