

The philosophy of Islamic thought as an approach for contemporary art and apply it in beautifying public squares as distinctive environmental signs

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Introduction:

The philosophy of Islamic thought is considered to be the philosophical heritage which was produced by the Arab-Islamic civilization, during one of its greatest periods of scientific, cultural, and civilizational prosperity and its active interaction with other civilizations. Which made this philosophy to become compatible with any era, any time and place, which contributes to its application in a form consistent with contemporary art for any period. Where contemporary art is the outcome of creative artistic works that were produced and included in this period more than twenty years ago, that preceded the moment of talking about this art today, and the relationship of the contemporary artist with his artistic creations and the surrounding world, such relationship that adds new horizons to his works, the surrounding world with the contemporary artist today are considered an integral part of the contemporary artwork. Rather, its elements are living particles that add vitality to the rest of the components of the contemporary artwork. Because the external decorative works at public squares are effective and influential acts, directly and indirectly, informing the public identity of the place, and helping to face life's problems with some objectivity, acceptance and interaction, as they are also employed in publicity to achieve an economic return, and from the point that contemporary art plays the required role of it on time, tracking the future and finding ways that may appear alongside them with a new meaning in the history view. So, it can be benefited from the philosophical thought in Islamic art as approach for contemporary art, thus it can be applied in public places such as squares, which can be exploited environmentally or commercially as distinctive environmental signs that add visual value to the environment in which the artwork is located, with environmental and economic impact. Accordingly, the research aims to benefit from the philosophy of Islamic thought as an approach for contemporary art and apply it in beautifying public squares as distinctive environmental signs. The research is divided into three main parts, the first is entitled " Philosophical Thought in Islamic Art and Heritage", the second is entitled "Contemporary Art between Concept and Characteristics", the Third is entitled " Public Squares as Distinctive Environmental Signs ", and the research ends with the fourth part entitled "An Applied Study".

Part 1: Philosophical Thought in Islamic Art and Heritage:

There are several methods and characteristics that entrench the art of the Islamic heritage and its basic idea, which is the link between the Qur'an and Islamic art, but also it is embodied in the aesthetic characteristics that Muslims invented in order to create the impression of infinity and transcendence that the Qur'an demanded, the doctrine of monotheism, how was this belief emphasized through aesthetic content and form to stimulate the impression of infinity and sublimity?

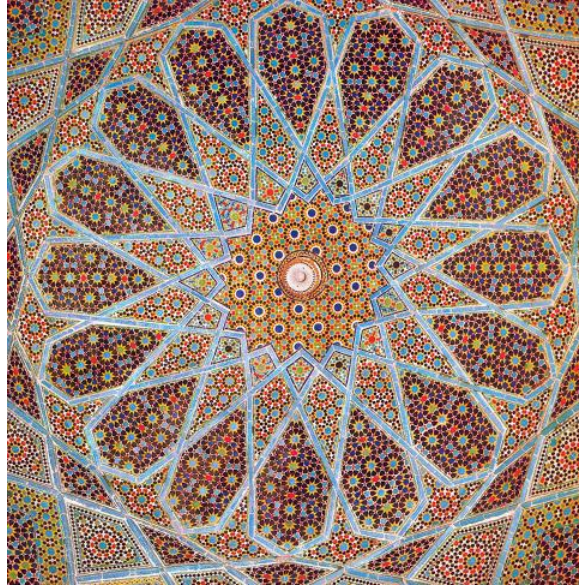
Abstraction: The infinite patterns of Islamic art are, first of all, abstract, while figural representation is not totally absent, there is generally little argument that naturalistic figures are rare in the Islamic arts. Even when figures from nature are used, they are subjected to denaturalization and stylization techniques that render them more suitable for their role as deniers of naturalism than as faithful depictions of natural phenomena.



Modular structure: Islamic art work is composed of numerous parts or modules which are combined to produce the larger design, each of these modules is an entity carrying a measure of climax and perfection which allows it to be perceived as an expressive and satisfying unit on its own as well as an important part of the larger Complex.



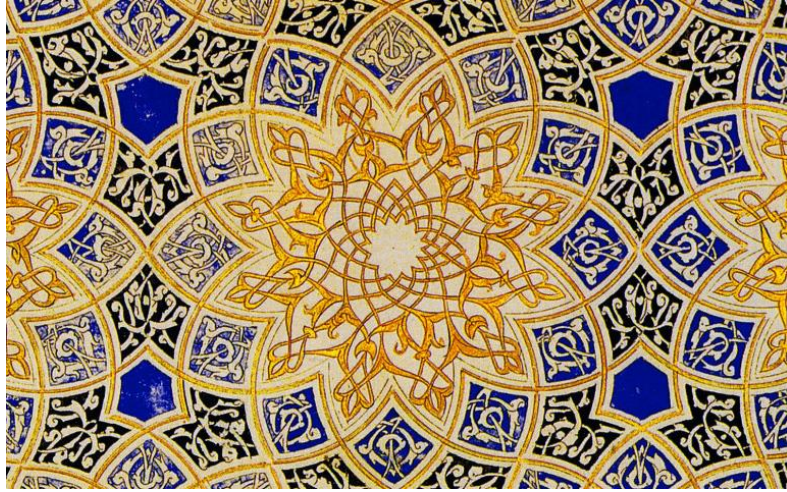
Successive combinations: The infinite patterns of sound, sight, and movement are evidences of successive combinations of the basic modules and/or their repetitions. In this way, larger additive combinations are formed which carry their own independent status and identity. The successively larger combinations in a work of Islamic art, there is in no way that can destroy the identity and character of the smaller units of which they are made. Even such larger combinations may, in turn, be repeated, varied, and joined to other smaller or larger entities in order to be formed.



Repetition: A fourth characteristic which is demanded in order to create the impression of infinity in an art object which is a high level of repetition. The additive combinations of Islamic art use repetitions of motifs, of structural modules, and of their successive combinations which seem to be continued infinitely. Abstraction is enhanced and reinforced by this curbing of the individuation of the constituent parts, it prevents any one module in the design from taking precedence over the other.



Dynamism: The Islamic design is “dynamic,” that is, it is a design that must be experienced through time. Boas has described art works as being based either on time or on space, for him the time- based arts include literature and music, while the arts of space are those of the visual arts and arcs.



Part 2: Contemporary art between concept and characteristics

Over the past decade critics within various disciplines have increasingly drawn attention to the category of the “contemporary.” This interest is notable particularly within the art world as various institutions, periodicals, critics, and art historians have boldly posed the question, “What is contemporary art?” The question is tricky, for those who pose it do not merely ask about what kind of art is being made today. In fact, the term “contemporary art” has accumulated multiple meanings, becoming a catchall phrase that, depending on the context in which it is used, may refer to many different things: a certain kind of art-making, a particular aesthetic sensibility, an art historical period, a way of exhibiting, a particular department within a museum of art, or even certain habits, tastes, and prices in the higher echelons of the art market. Within art critical circles an interest in the contemporary seems to have overlapped with a fading of interest in the “postmodern,” a category that dominated critical debate over previous decades. This fading away, along with a gradual substitution of umbrella terms often deployed to perform tasks of periodization, may suggest a certain readjustment of the art critical apparatus.





Characteristics of Contemporary Art

Contemporary art, to be put simply, is art of today, from a painting to a sculpture and from photography to a performance, it can be anything as long as it is produced in today's era. With no specific medium or apparatus, Contemporary Art has been interpreted differently in different times and different regions. This genre of art is believed to have started in the late 1960s by the end of modernism art era.

The most prominent feature of contemporary art is the fact that it has no distinct feature or a single characteristic. It is defined by the artist's ability to innovate and bring out a modern masterpiece. Here are a few of the technical characteristics:

Innovation in Art: Contemporary artists have been the pioneers in introducing new forms of art to the world. Different art forms have been combined or newer ideas have been employed to bring out newer types of art.

Collage art is an example of innovation that proved to be a great example of modern contemporary art. Likewise, mixed forms of assemblage, different variants of kinetic art as well as different categories of photography, animations and land art are a result of bringing together newer ideas.



Using New Materials: Another characteristic that was employed to bring about modern art was the employment of different objects, materials that looked useless to the common man but were brought to great use by modern artists. For instance, painters used pieces of newspapers as a backdrop to their canvases and created masterpieces of modern art from it. It was unprecedented to use something like a newspaper in a painting. Similarly, sculptors used pieces of junk to produce what is now known as junk art. Also, common items like cars, chairs, boxes have been used masterfully to create assemblages.

Use of Color: Traditionally, color was used as means to bring reality to paintings and art pieces. However, modern artists experimented with colors and used it unconventionally to make new textures and themes and used them in their pieces of art. Expressionism was mostly based on the vibrant and expressive use of colors as a tool to innovate their paintings.

Newer Techniques: Modern art is not only about playing and experimenting with colors and objects, rather it has also given birth to newer techniques that form the basis for contemporary art today. Chromolithography is a prime example of a technique that was developed by Jules Cheret. Similarly, surreal artists introduced automatic drawing to the world of art. Decalcomania and Frottage are also vital techniques that were developed with time and are employed to produce contemporary art.

After the Second World War, several movements by artists began that gave the world newer forms of art that shaped up to be known as contemporary art, today.

Abstract Expressionism, Tachisme, Pop Art, Op Art, Minimalism are parts of the art movements that changed what was known before.



Part 3: Public squares distinctive environmental markers

one of the main characteristics of livable city is about the quality of public spaces; which provide a place for gathering different community groups. Squares as one of these spaces that play a vital role in enriching the quality of everyday life where people can meet, stay and exchange their ideas, a sociable square is where people interact and participate with each other, and also it provides a great deal of freedom, it provides people to experience 'physical attributes' and 'social activities', which reinforce the 'sense of community and sense of place' in residents.

The notion of place has an important role in environmental psychology. The moment which a place is recognized from a space makes 'sense of attachment'. Studying place identity clarifies the dynamic interaction between people and place. So in following, different definition of space

and place will be addressed from human perspective; which helps for further study of people's reaction to the environment and interaction with each other in public spaces/squares.



Part 4: an applied study

In this topic, the researcher presents an applied study to employ the philosophy of Islamic thought in beautifying a public domain with the characteristics of contemporary art, making the fields a distinctive environmental mark for a commercial enterprise, and then realizing the two elements of aesthetic art and at the same time utilitarianism by strengthening the mental image of a commercial institution.

The researcher follows a set of steps to achieve this, which are as follows:

- Exploring the institutional identity and employing it within an Islamic template.
- Study the field in place of design in terms of potential architectural spaces and blocks and its relationship to the visual vision of the place and the environment around it.
- Forming a virtual reality from contemporary art to design the square so that it achieves aesthetic values that elevate the architectural visual texture of the place, as well as achieving

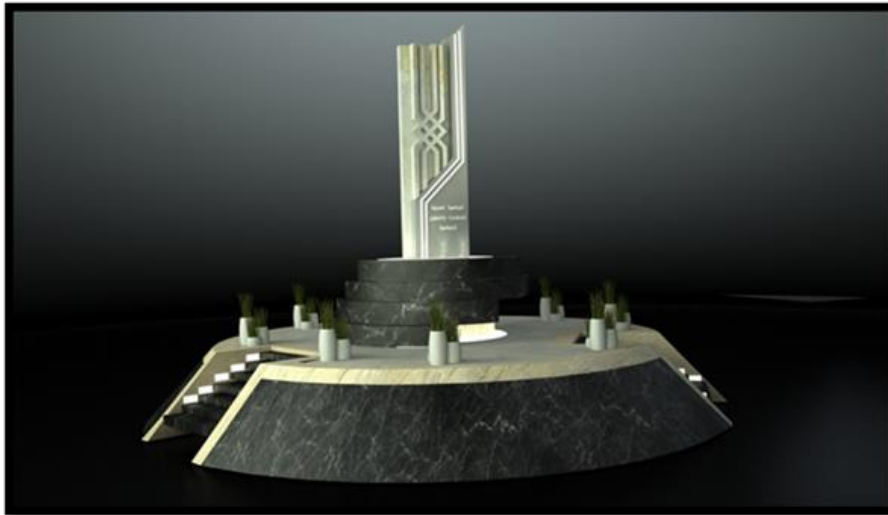
values related to improving the psychological aspect of the audience visiting the field in question.

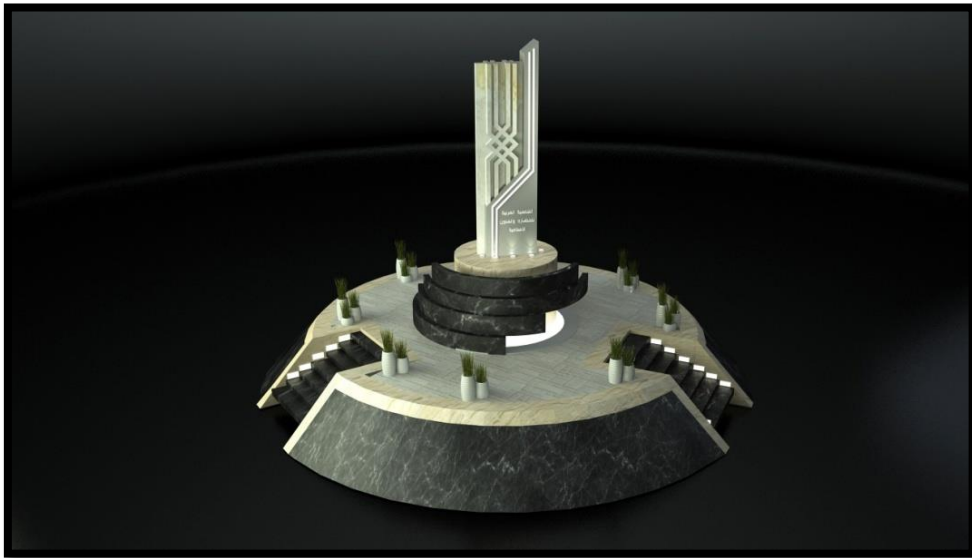
-Dyeing the design of the square with an Islamic character with a clear philosophical thought, to revive the Islamic heritage in a contemporary way that is compatible with the modernity of the urban surroundings of the square.

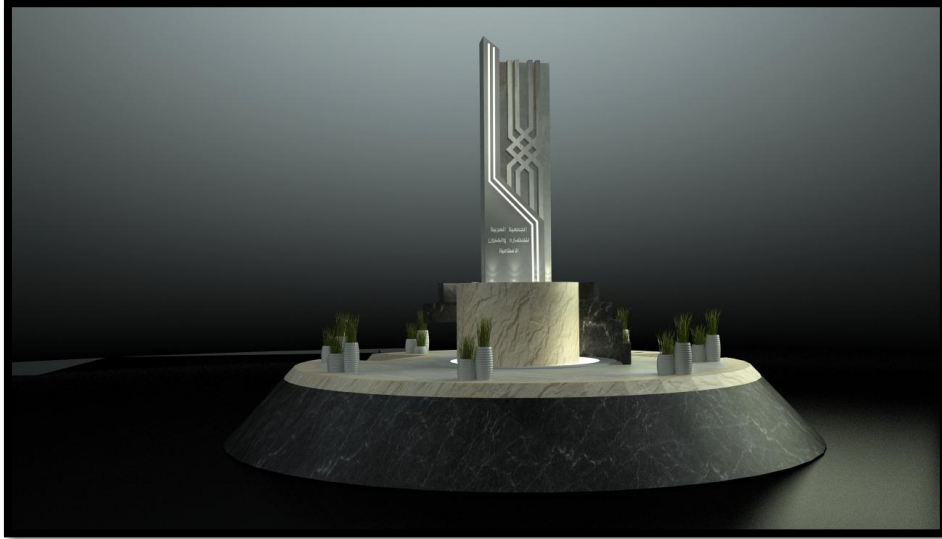
-Forming a successful design relationship between the philosophy of Islamic thought and the identity of the institution in contemporary artistic design and the selection of appropriate materials for use and the comfort of the field-goers.

The following illustrates the application of the steps suggested by the researcher:

The researcher chose the institutional identity of the Arab Association for Civilization and Islamic Arts as an application to focus the identity of the association which is characterized by a modern Islamic character that suggests the continuation of the civilization flow with the blending of heritage and contemporary, which is what the researcher benefited from in employing the design proposal.







Research results:

1. Philosophical thought in Islamic art can be used as an entry point for contemporary art, and thus it can be applied in beautifying public places such as squares, which can be exploited environmentally or commercially as distinctive environmental signs that add visual value to the environment in which the artwork is located, and have an environmental and economic impact.
2. There is a possibility to employ the philosophy of Islamic thought in beautifying public fields with the characteristics of contemporary art, making the fields a distinctive environmental mark for a commercial enterprise, and then achieving the two elements of aesthetic art and at the same time utilitarianism by strengthening the mental image of a commercial institution.

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