

The Connotations of Visual Expression in Contemporary Art

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Abstract

By tracing the history of art and since ancient times, the artist dealt with his artistic achievement with expressive indications of what it is and its content with general and special structural frameworks and formations for those arts to show the technical, psychological and physical aspects and in the form of semantic symbols to realize their meanings by the recipient, as the distinctive values of each type Each of them has expressive connotations in the memorization of visual discourses, especially in the art of painting Witnessed by artistic ages since the era of caves. **The research problem** was determined by the following question: Are the expressive connotations of visual discourse embodied in contemporary painting?**The importance of the research** included the following: Shedding light on the connotations of visual discourse in contemporary Iraqi painting. And this research could be a modest attempt by the researcher to know the visual discourse and its role in contemporary Iraqi painting.**The aim of the research** is (discovering the connotations of visual discourse in contemporary Iraqi painting). **Temporal and spatial limits:** 1960-2000 AD - Iraq. As for the most prominent **resultsof the research:** The connotations of the visual discourse focused in favor of the structures and social variables with formal and color connotations by contemporary Iraqi painters. Contemporary Iraqi visual discourse did not exclude the aesthetic and functional connotations as values added to the artistic value.

Keywords: connotations, visual expression, contemporary art.

Introduction

- **Research problem:** By tracing the history of art and since ancient times, the artist dealt with his artistic achievement with expressive indications of what it is and its content with general and special structural frameworks and formations for those arts to show the technical, psychological and physical aspects and in the form of semantic symbols to realize their meanings by the recipient, as the distinctive values of each type Each of them has expressive connotations in the memorization of visual discourses, especially in the art of painting Witnessed by artistic ages since the era of caves. There are indications of visual discourse, whether at the level of forms, colors, concepts and contents, all of which produced expressive aesthetic concepts as well. Through that discourse, which was created by the artist in his various artistic directions, the images produced varied through their symbolism of the content, and this is what most modern theories in this field referred to, such as the semantic theory and structuralism and semiology and at the level of criticism and philosophy in many cases. The diversity produced by the visual discourse contributed to the diversity of

expressive connotations, which was indicated by many opinions in the theories of the plastic structures of the elements in the visual, social, artistic, and philosophical discourse. All of these variables have been reflected in the contemporary Iraqi painting, which is part of the contemporary international painting. In light of this, the problem of the current research was determined: Are the expressive connotations of visual discourse embodied in contemporary painting?

- *The importance of research and the need for it:* The importance of this research is demonstrated by the following points: Shedding light on the connotations of visual discourse in contemporary Iraqi painting. This research could be a modest attempt by the researcher to know the visual discourse and its role in contemporary Iraqi painting. Informing the students of primary and postgraduate studies and informing them of an important aspect of the contemporary Iraqi art process in general, especially those with expertise in this field. Filling an artistic void with a modest scientific effort is in the specialized technical libraries. In light of the importance of the research comes the need for it.
- *The purpose of the research:* The current research aims to (discover the implications of visual discourse in contemporary Iraqi painting).
- *Research limits:* Objective limits: contemporary Iraqi painting. Time limits: 1960-2000 AD. Spatial boundaries: Iraq.
- *Research terms:*

Connotation: Connotation: It is the language of denoting something in the language. Denote: any clearer meaning. Evidence: Inferring something, pointing it to a place. (Al-Munajjid, 1973)

In terms: Semantics: The science that investigates meaning and its theories and how to give vocabulary a linguistic significance that the reader understands within a linguistic system with other vocabulary. Connotation: the study of meaning, which is one of the branches of languages in various disciplines, and semantics, is the science that studies meaning from all its aspects. (Wehbe, 1973)

Visual Discourse: In the language: It was mentioned in the bride's crown (what people talk about and a rhetorical message such as (the matter and what is wrong with you, that is, what is your business with whom you are betrothed, the matter with which the address takes place) (Al-Zubaidi, 1966).

In terms The Laland Philosophical Encyclopedia defines visual discourse as follows: It is an intellectual process that takes place through partial and sequential primary processes) (Laland, 2011).

Literature review

1. The meaning of the expression

The contemporary Arab artist tried to employ his legends and folkloric tales in art and for the sake of Return Discovery The human From new did a study his references civilization and Islamic and his experiences life And the his cases sentimental and its applications in products the art Away About Return recount it or repetition And soon From Recovery meanings the

authentic whether recovery partial or Therefore, he invented new methods and methods based on innovation and freedom of expression, rejecting all that is traditional and fixed, and deviating from patterns and traditional by expression. (Ismail, 2011) Expression is related to aesthetic and artistic concepts in the plastic arts in general through expression, whether about form or meaning beyond that form, and that the link between form, meaning and the significance of expression was throughout a long history of art in general. The semantic clarifies the meaning of the concept, especially in the social, linguistic and artistic function, as it is a sign and a sign that is expressed. (Ahmed, 2014) And the concept of meaning is clarified through its connotations that clarify this, especially in art, building an image at the level of expression in the meaning of the forms and their subjects. Express those meaning with different meanings of the achievements of the art of painting. The history of art has carried many systems of expressive significance that express the aesthetic values of forms and meanings, as a result of the diversity in creative values in this field. Contemporary painting with all its directions, types, places and time carried many intellectual, ideological and religious foundations during long decades of time. The expressive significance is an artistic context and its basic concept is that art must express spiritual values and emotional experiences, and should not be restricted to recording visual impressions, but rather reach the reality of the centrality and dominance of the updated self. In front of its cognitive, aesthetic and sensory challenges that have social and value values. (Amhas, 1981) and the sign is looking for About the depths of the human soul and in deduction The same human being, in order to complete the artistic vision It is necessary to evoke what is hidden behind reality and its manifestations, and it is necessary to contain the essential dimension and to undermine the ephemeral manifestation and its embodiment in expressive forms in the light of the data of the expressive artistic surface, in an effort to pay attention to the universal and the holistic rather than the transient and the emergency and to the intentional opposition to the manifested nature by using the simplified form and the color scheme.

2. Contemporary Painting Streams

- *Abstract Expressionism*: It is one of the most influential and powerful movements in the history of contemporary art. It is an artistic trend based on simplifying lines and colors. It is based on recording the features of the body, but rather nature. Expressionism is another aspect. It reconstructs the elements of nature in a way that evokes feelings, but in a tragic style characterized by the anxiety and crises that generations suffer in the modern era. Van Gogh is the most famous artist of this school and its first pioneer. A group of artists who were known as "Abstract Expressionism" and became famous by the painter (Emile Nolde), who touched in his works on the night life in clubs and treated religious issues with a distinct aesthetic, who looked at form and meaning as characterized by multiple artistic characteristics. Abstract Expressionism was also known as (spotism) in relation to the spots that appear on the surface of the painting, as it was called (kinetic photography) or (actual photography), and this movement resulted in two groups -:The suggestive: It includes both (Archile Gorky, and de Kooning) -Pavilion of the visual field in the field of color: It included both (Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko). (Boulsi, 1980) Expressionism gave the artist complete freedom to complete the artwork, unleash creativity and express pent-up motives,

especially putting color on the painting. Thus, it is one of the important methods in the modern era and has brought about a great transformation in all areas of life there in art, culture and politics. Abstract Expressionism is one of the important methods in the arts. Modern era. (Pulitzer)

- *Conceptual art (- art as language- body art- land art):* The artwork is shaped by questions that assume its impact in the time of the presentation and the combination of technology and appropriate space in bringing out the experience. Conceptual art is the case of transforming an idea and making it tangible. Under the stream of conceptual art, there are several artistic trends related to this direction that emphasizes the content, including the art of the earth and the art of the body. And art is a language, to make the recipient play the main role in discovering the idea that the artists tried to express. The conceptual artist prepares objects, materials and raw materials for a precise organization built within (a specific space where he determines a kinetic path for the viewer through which he acquires a distinctive experience within the work, due to his direct interaction with the work, where the audience often becomes part of the aesthetic and technical act Technical transformations in art came as a language: to form in one of its episodes what was expressed by Joseph Kosuth (Bahnesi, 1977) explaining what he wants to express through the interview between the real thing and its representation (the photograph) and its linguistic definition in the dictionary, where he presented and in one place his work, a chair One and three chairs, and Land Art played a major role through documentation in conceptual art. The artist's activity was recorded in a photographic form, and the result was presented as a photograph equivalent to painting, with a title, framing, priced and collected in the same way as Robert Smithson resorted Robert (1938 - 1973) to the ground to make the subject of large circles and spiral shapes arranged from natural stones. (Al-Bassiouni, 1983) While in body art: body art, figurative surfaces come in the context of body art, to deal with the human body, as an aesthetic and artistic production., that body art confirms the idea of life that turns into a work of art, and the artist (Eve Klein) was one of the first artists to turn their attention towards neo-Dadaism. (Bahnesy, 1973)
- *Visual art:* It is a current that appeared in the 1950s, and the visual sense was used in its artistic and physical aspects in the artistic achievement of this current, and it had a close relationship with the technological development, which is related to the visual aspect with a perceptual system, visual illusion, and a self-vision of artworks and combining artistic elements that were not present in previous currents. It contained social, scientific and political topics, especially in the field of physics. This current was called by many names (visual kinetic art, Syriac, kinetic art, programmed constructivism). (Al-Bassiouni, 1965) Visual art dealt with the construction of movement of shapes with visual sensations in it from the scientific side and the goals of the third dimension of shapes and Op Art)) It is nothing but a deliberate exploitation of the phenomena of illusion that appear before the eye, as this art was not a sudden art that appeared at the hands of a group of artists, but rather It is an advanced stage of color concerns and the visual illusions it raises. We find its roots in many artistic currents that accompanied the development in the fields of painting, and it can be clearly felt by the Impressionists who had interests in color interaction. As for the level of meaning, psychology had its own presence in the achievements of this The current, especially

psychological theories that dealt with the form without a part such as the Gestalt theory. (Tesdol, 1989) Visual art was the first building block from which many artistic trends were launched, as this art represented a development of the abstract trend in terms of its interest in finding values based on contrast, depth, rhythm and abstraction, by the most prominent pioneers (Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich). Cubism and futurism, which were concerned with showing the element of movement on the pictorial surface with new dimensions and horizons.

- *Kinetic art*: Kinetic art arose in the post-1945 period Because of its origins in constructivism and in the movements and schools associated with it, such as de Stael and the Bauhaus, where geometric abstraction was initially associated with revolutionary attitudes to art and society. It is art that moves or contains an element of movement. Artists who make kinetic art may use motors to produce movement, or they may construct the work so that it responds to the natural movement of air currents. It is a term that refers to actions that involve real or apparent movement, and is derived from the Greek word for movement. (Golden, 2004)
- *Folk art*: It is an art based on close interdependence with other currents that used abstraction in artistic production and attention to aesthetic values of high unfamiliar value that came into existence at the beginning of the fifties of the last century. Artistic direction Describes a group of independent works by new artists who expressed the manifestations of life and popular cultural means, and pop) is a name derived from the word (popular) meaning popular, and this label was associated with the art critic Lawrence Lowe. Iron in celebration of the use of heavy raw materials in art and propaganda. (Hegazy, 1988) The artwork is more realistic when its forms and meanings are from the elements of the real world, as the art painting absorbs many elements and meanings. The creative pattern in which non-objective mixing was used in an artistic production and the embodiment of the triple dimensions with rules in which there is a lot of freedom and in terms of meaning, it dealt with a realistic world and a marginalized aesthetic production similar to the aesthetics that are popularly circulated.

3. Research procedures:

- *First: The search community*: The current research community contained the artworks of the Iraqi painters in the pioneer and contemporary stage, which were reviewed by the researcher, in addition to the global internet network, and what is available from those works, with 80 artworks, in which the goal of the research is achieved.
- *Second: the research sample*: The researcher chose (4) artworks from the research community, two artworks from the pioneer stage and two artworks from the contemporary stage, and the selection was made according to the following justifications: Consultation with some specialists * in the field of current research. The selected artworks represent contemporary Iraqi painting of the pioneer and contemporary stages. The researcher saw that the selected sample shows the semantics of the visual discourse with clear signs.
- *Third, the search method*: The researcher adopted the descriptive method in the way of analyzing the content of her research samples, as this method fits with the topic of the research.
- *Fourth: the analysis tool*: The researcher relied on the indicators of the theoretical framework as a tool for analyzing samples in an accurate scientific and technical manner.

- *Fifth: Sample Analysis:* The researcher analyzed the research samples as follows: A visual description of the artwork. Aesthetic analysis of artwork.

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Model (1)

Work name: *Repression.*

Artist name: *Mohamed Mehr El Din.*

Production date: *1973.*

Al-Aidiya: *Baghdad Art Center.*

Material: *wood*



Visual description: This artwork is formed in brown colors for the component elements showing a group of geometric shapes with squares and circles with dangling locks, but they are from a distant past. White indicates the invalidity of repression.

Work analysis: The work suggests social accumulation, long-term suffering, and cultural and social muzzling. It has several socio-psychological signs that lead to the fact that society is subjugated by this harsh measure on people, which is continuous repression through the revival of the content before the form, which raises the feelings of the recipient and gives him a complete perception of this work and the subject that societies suffered from. Many at this time. Here the painter referred to the esoteric sociological content with signs and icons related to the essence of the subject and a clearly defined visual discourse. This artwork presented an interpretative content of a reality that peoples have suffered greatly, and thus the artist wanted to translate the intended meaning through the form as the recipient perceives it as well, where the coupling between form and content at the same time and by reading A visual character that was characterized by human behavior in which society without borders suffered. In this work, indicative functionalism was embodied in all its directions, and the color visual discourse contributed to realizing the reality of this work.

Model (2)

Work name: *Folklore.*

Artist name: *Rakan Dabdoub.*

Production date: *1976.*

Material: *Oil on canvas.*

Ownership: *a private group.*



Visual description: A square-shaped artwork that suggests heritage forms from the history of Iraq. The work consists of two halves, the upper half colored in dark blue, with a reference to the sky at night. On the right side of the work, a crescent image, and on the left side below the work, a picture of a dome from which people returned after visiting. The forms were more expressive than they are Realistic images with a classic perspective where the bottom part is orange.

Work analysis: The artist Rakan Dabdoub dealt with Islamic forms, features and fashion with a reference to the religious social dimension through the cultural heritage that people used to and expressed by the artist in this way, as the social and religious dimensions formed an

important place for members of society. This work focused on the popular social symbols of the civilized heritage, especially the Islamic heritage, which was drawn in this work. It can be said that the forms here are experimental, symbolic and expressive. They refer to the sociological direction of society, individuals, customs and traditions, especially in the Iraqi society, since Islam does not permit anthropomorphism in the images of shapes, according to the laws Unwritten position.

Model (3)

Work name: *A child and a toy.*

Artist name: *Fakher Mohamed.*

Production date: *1980.*

Material: *oil on canvas.*



Visual description: An artistic composition of irregular geometric shapes, straight lines and curves with multiple color spaces, where this work is an expressive form of a child consisting of two parts, the upper part of the child's head in a semi-circular shape and the lower part in the form of such other triangles and circles, the color of the head is in light green and the color of the lower part is in white. The den and the black and this shape provide a blue area semi-square.

Work analysis: This work suggests children's drawings, and the artist implemented it with a primitive and innate psychological mechanism through symbols that the recipient understands in Iraqi society and inherited from Mesopotamian arts. The composition is a symbolic and expressive formation with a close relationship with the heritage of the society and its civilizational heritage. The general form suggests in the eyes of society that it is the image of a child playing in a wide public space and it has the inherited aesthetic of these geometric shapes. Here, the artist dealt with the general sociology of society when he referred to the subject through the general concept of society and its relationship to the social heritage, in which the content and content came within a single mechanism that society has known through the ages and was employed according to the social mechanism understood by society through what the artist created and brought it from his own memory to put it forward. On the public memory with a visual, cultural and heritage discourse.

Model(4)

Work name: *The Magic Carpet.*

Artist Name: *Karim Resan.*

Production date: *1985.*

Material: *Oil on canvas.*

Return: *a private group*



Visual description: The work depicts an artistic composition of several squares that contained traditional forms of the Mesopotamian and Islamic heritage with symbolic vocabulary of human, animal and iconographic shapes, signs, numbers and letters colored in several colors according to the symbol's shape and civilization, where the shape is predominantly brown and black.

Work analysis: This work constitutes a compact composition of squares burdened with traditional shapes from the cultural heritage, in addition to the lines, letters and multiple shapes that appear to be engraved and not drawn as icons, as it showed the sociology of this

work through the complete whole without the parts. The artist focused here on the instinctive tendency towards these forms, which was inspired by the Mesopotamian, Islamic, modern and contemporary heritage, which he gathered into a complete one and when looking at it before diving into the details of the artwork.

These forms are an expressive visual discourse that refers to artistic dialogues and social desires that the artist realized and took out with this unique creative image and European modernity.

Research results

The connotations of the visual discourse focused in favor of the structures and social variables with formal and color connotations by contemporary Iraqi painters. Contemporary Iraqi visual discourse did not exclude the aesthetic and functional connotations as values added to the artistic value. Visual discourse represented symbolic connotations in some of the achievements of contemporary Iraqi painting, and idealistic abstract connotations in other artworks. The visual discourse included the expression of interpretation according to the influence of painters in contemporary European schools, which have their own privacy. The connotations of the visual discourse were represented by works of art in which the imaginary and the unreal, according to the internal psychological reflections of some painters. The semantics of the visual discourse came as an ideal kinetic act through the use of some scientific aspects such as pure geometric shapes in the artwork. The contemporary Iraqi painter, through the connotations of the visual discourse, touched on political, social and economic issues, in addition to the artistic construction of that discourse, with interpretations that reflected beyond what the painter wanted.

Conclusions

1. The connotations of visual discourse in contemporary Iraqi painting indicated the mechanisms of replacing form with content and content with interpretative painting of subjects.
2. The political aspect had a wide scope in contemporary Iraqi painting through the connotations of the visual discourse embodied on the painting.
3. In addition to the expressive connotations of the visual discourse, there was a presence of the clear and distinct aesthetic discourse in contemporary Iraqi painting.
4. The semantics of expression in the visual discourse focused on feelings, feelings, psychological aspects, and interpretation and interpretation according to the subject of the artwork.

Recommendations:

1. Shedding light on the contemporary Iraqi artistic achievement because it is of great importance among the international arts.
2. The need to include in the curricula of the relevant colleges the achievements of contemporary Iraqi painting.
3. Providing sources that document the march of contemporary Iraqi art in general.

Suggestions:

1. The researcher suggests conducting the following study:
2. The connotations of symbols in the visual discourse in contemporary Iraqi art, the art of painting, the art of sculpture, the art of ceramics)

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