

## **The Aesthetic Presence of the Arabic Letter and the Sacred Word in the Works of the One Dimension Group**

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### **Abstract**

The present study investigates the aesthetic presence of the Arabic letter and the sacred word in the works of the One Dimension group. A quick return to the beginnings of the twentieth century shows the aspirations of the creative artists who established many doctrines, movements, and different artistic trends that were associated with philosophical, political, and economic concepts and techniques of artistic work. The bias in contemporary art trends towards the uses of letters and their employment in artwork seems inevitable and logical in changing borders. A group of artists launched in (1971) called the One Dimension Group calling for the establishment of a special method in employing letters and working to remove them from their past, reference, and system To another area is the artistic work. This trend, if there was room for theorizing, criticism, and writing, expanded into different fissures, and then grew until it took its position and formed a current that was termed the one dimension obsessed with exclusivity, and the realization of the contemporary visual achievement indicative of the nation and its great heritage of art is its empowerment From testing the capabilities of the human self and its effort in transforming the written letter that artists relied on in the formation of their works of a special nature as It often attracts the viewer's desire to deal with them visually and try to taste them artistically and enjoy them aesthetically. In addition, the plastic or constructive nature of some of these works raises in the viewer many questions that he/she finds answers to through his/her conscious awareness of the relationship between the letter and the figurative surface.

In light of this, the present study consists of the methodological framework, starting with the research problem, the significance, objectives, and limits. It also includes the theoretical framework and procedures. It ends with the most important results and conclusions.

### **Section one**

#### **The research problem**

Art as a human phenomenon that preceded language, writing, and all other human activities. Art is an image that carries meanings related to life and the practice of existence. That is confirmed the discovered paintings that belong to different human civilizations and date back to thousands of years ago. They do not differ from the paintings that modern era artists

reconstructed. In all its manifestations, art expresses the spirit, civilization, and culture of society at any time and place. The artist is part of the society in which the artist lives and cannot be separated from it or far away from its environmental and human relations influences. Thus, art is the product of the society with all its different situations.

The contemporary artist worked to reveal the energy behind the shapes of letters and their implicit advantages. So, they were taken, reformulated, and installed again according to new standards that made them give an idea that enriched the artistic form with a new template. Arabic letters may be characterized by a shape that facilitates matching the vertical lines with other decorative paintings in a way that shows poise, creativity, and beauty. Westerners admired it and imitated it and quoted some of its phrases honestly without knowing the meanings they convey. Their ignorance of the Arabic language did not prevent them from using these expressions as a tool to decorate their crafts and artwork.

In light of this, this study investigates the features of the aesthetic presence of the letter and the sacred word. (Shakir Hassan Al Said) realized the difficulty of tightening the link between the letter and the word associated with the language of the Glorious Quran (the religious sacred) and the cuneiform syllable or the Mesopotamian decoration that draws from the legendary tributary. He made this connection And the extension of the factor of the structural subconscious, which is the essence of his thesis in the sectors of technical, intellectual, and mystical knowledge.

The research problem of the present study can be summed up in a question about the aesthetic presence of the Arabic letter and the sacred word in the works of the one-dimensional group.

### **The significance of the present study**

It is possible to benefit from this study by researchers in the fields of art, aesthetics, educational and psychological sciences, and researchers in the fields of art education and fine criticism.

### **The Objectives**

The present study aims at recognizing the aesthetic presence of the Arabic letter and the sacred word in the works of the One Dimension Group.

### **The limits**

Objectively: The present study is limited to studying the drawings of the one-dimensional group.

**Spatially:** Iraq.

**Temporally:** From 1971 to 2021.

### **The hypothesis**

In terms of form; One-dimensional painters do not differ in forming the letters.

### **Definition of terms**

## **Presence**

**A. Linguistically:** It refers to the existence of something in a particular position (Al-Tarihi, 2009). Presence refers to speed of mind and speed of perception (Al-Jarjani, 1986).

**B. Terminologically:** (Wahba) defined it as the meaning in which the basic philosophy of (Heidegger) appears to be the analysis of presence.

He also defined it in the philosophy of religion as a feeling of participation in the absolute being in the romantic sense (Wahba, 1974).

**Procedurally:** The researchers define presence as the conscious existence of someone at some place.

## **Section two**

### **The aesthetic presence of the Arabic letter**

The contemporary artist has become free from the constraints of a certain school in controlling his/her thinking. So, he/she can draw from various colors as long as they are based on foundations of innovation and creativity, which is a new creation stemming from his/her own different origin from preceding and contemporary time.

The letter stream does not live in isolation from other the artistic trends and schools prevailing in the world, but it interacts with them, especially after the state of similarity and repetition experienced by artistic currents and trends and the dominance of Western visual arts over them. Arabic calligraphy is one of the visual vocabulary capable of responding to the plastic artist and helping him/her to revive a new and unique plastic architecture due to its characteristics and qualities that allow this artist to accurately express movement and mass according to visual aesthetic plastic systems. In the fields of architecture, plastic and applied arts, crafts and handicrafts, formative calligraphic texts played a major formative role in the arts that were accomplished with different materials and raw materials. The greatness of Islam has gone beyond the limits of its legislation. It is able to change people and to create civilization and glory to reach the subtleties of art and the aesthetic sense (Sheikh Othman, 2007).

Artistic formation in Arabic letters or writings is subject to graphic standards and foundations that play a purely aesthetic plastic role that carries Islamic heritage contents and in new plastic forms away from the readable language (Ashmil, 2008). The artist resorts to heritage in order to give it new formations of an effective and influential nature in the recipient. It is a source of inspiration for the artist in the intertextuality of his/her themes and forms expressing the spirit of the age and the environment. So, the modern does not imply destroying the traditional, but it is a recreation of the traditional in light of the modern experience (Allaq, 2005).

What concerned this group was to rely on a theoretical base that makes the search for the Arabic letter an entry point to reveal the aesthetics of the letterforms while trying to take refuge and renew the Arab Islamic heritage. It worked to destroy the contents in favor of the

form bearing an ideal aesthetic tendency, and to adapt the form according to an updated view (Al-Asam, 1997).

With the beginning of modern art, the literal trend began to appear and receive attention from some European artists. So, they used the letters of writing as a new and distinctive plastic element in some of their works. Calligraphy became an image that has its beauty regardless of its content (Ashmil, 2008).

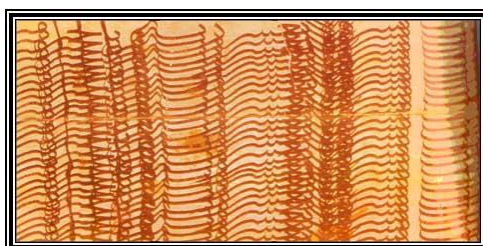
Arabic calligraphy is a formative art because its letters are characterized by the ability to rise and fall. Arabic letters are also characterized by flexibility in changing the shapes of the letters themselves due to their latent qualities that allow them to express movement and mass, producing a self-movement that makes the font dance in a block of independent luster, achieving a beautiful rhythm and a visual and psychological sense (Fawzi, 1980).

In this way, the aesthetic form in calligraphy is derived from the displacement of the letter from its original, formal, and fixed sides to new directions in the plastic art. Thus, it acquires a new artistic and aesthetic presence by which every static aesthetic does not depart from the surface of the linear effect and its fixed area (Ula, 2008).

The artists of the One Dimension group aim to reveal the features of Arab civilization and to urge the artist and the audience together to delve into the core of the internal entity of the artwork to draw inspiration from the data of intellectual crafts being the link between all the countries of the Arab and Islamic countries and bypassing the interest in technology in art and deepening the content so that it becomes part of the form, or that the form is part of the content. Thus, the functional principle in the interpretation of the artwork ends (Saleem, 1977).

The works of (Al Said) are connected to the idea of artistic advancement in Iraq, linking the past with the present, and realizing that the present is part of a future project so that it is not separated of the cultural heritage, which spread in Baghdad, major cities, and the holy shrines (Kamil, 1988).

Drawing under glass is an advanced stage for its similarity with the European art of painting acquired by the men of the Ottoman Empire. At the forefront of the Iraqi artists at the time is the multi-talented Iraqi artist in drawing, decoration, and calligraphy (Niazi Mawlawi Baghdadi), who reached a technique between the drawings of Eastern miniatures and the Western style in the plastic art that he was familiar with. Among His techniques in the decoration and calligraphy is that he draws prior to his colored drawings in Chinese ink prepared for calligraphy as in figure (1), which is a calligraphic panel in the Thuluth Niazi script.



This group relied on a theoretical base that made the research in the Arabic letter an entrance to reveal the aesthetics of the letterforms with an attempt to take refuge and renew the Arab and Islamic heritage in a continuous attempt to find relationships between the old and the new. It took the Arabic letter as a starting point to reach the meaning of the font as a purely formal value (Al-Sarraf).

Since the late forties and early fifties, (Madiha Omar) made the letters themselves a complete painting. It was the first attempt in Iraq to transform the alphabet into a pretext for the graphic and color constructions that create an atmosphere of fantasy and movement (Jabra, 1986).

The one dimension occupied the form that (Madeha Omar) connected it with the formal value of the Arabic letter. She declared this by stating that each Arabic letter as an abstract image leads to a special meaning. These letters, with their different expressions, become a source of inspiration. She made the Arabic letters the bases for drawings. She gradually transformed them from simple superficial forms to expressive moving images of thought (Al Said, 1972) as in Figure (2).



### **The research Methodology**

The descriptive approach (content analysis method) was used in order to achieve the research objectives of revealing:

The aesthetic presence of the Arabic letter and the sacred word in the works of the One Dimension Group.

The research community and sample

The present study included models of drawings of (8) Iraqi one-dimensional artists as shown in Table (1).

In order to determine the research sample properly, the researchers intentionally determined it according to the following justifications:

1. Due to the vastness of the research community and the difficulty of accurately enumerating it, the researchers took a number of measures:

A . The researchers conducted a preliminary survey of books, research, studies, and the global information network related to the subject of the present study.

B. After examining the above-mentioned research community, an Iraqi website (<http://www.artnet.com/>) was found. It collects (405) one-dimensional artworks that were

deliberately chosen as a research sample due to their direct relationship with the objectives of the present study in identifying the aesthetic presence of the Arabic letter and the sacred word in the works of the One-Dimensional group. (205) models were excluded from them because they did not contain the written letter. Thus, the number of models subject to analysis became (200) as shown in Table (1).

**Table (1) The research sample**

No.	Artist's name	Number of Artworks	Excluded	Included
1	Shakir Hassan Al-Saeed	90	59	31
2	Dhiyaa Al-Azzawi	76	45	31
3	Raf'I Al-Nassiri	80	50	30
4	Jameel Hammoudi	40	10	30
5	Hanaa Malullah	35	10	25
6	Nouri Al-Rawi	32	9	23
7	Madiha Omar	30	10	20
8	Qutaiba Sheikh Nouri	22	12	10

### **The research tool**

To obtain the objectives of the present study, the researchers used the (content analysis tool), which was built according to the following procedures:

1. Collection of items; (87) items were collected based on the contents of the indicators of the theoretical framework. After classifying the items and excluding the repeated ones, their number became (51) that were then classified in terms of:

A. The function of the letter.

B. the formation of the letter.

### **Validity of the tool**

Validity is one of the important conditions that must be met by the tools used in various studies as the loss of this condition means that the tool is not valid and its results are not approved. Validity means that the tool actually measures what it is designed to measure, and not something else (Al-Dhahir, 1991). Therefore, the researchers relied on the validity of the

content as the items of the tool centered on analyzing the function of the written letter and its formations. This was done according to the following steps:

1. Presenting the tool to experts; The tool was presented to (30) experts from among the specialized professors, accompanied by a request in which each expert is requested to express his/her opinion on the validity of each of its items. In case of any of the items need modification, the experts were given the freedom to suggest modifications or add other items. This took place between (15/11/2021- 30/11/2021). Then, the researchers collected questionnaires from experts and noted their opinions on each item of the tool.

### **Analysis steps:**

The researchers followed several steps during the analysis process as follows:

A thorough reading of the models of each artist's drawings as reading contributes to determining the content that includes the idea of representing one dimension and clearly reveals the number of those ideas.

### **The results**

The researchers analyzed (200) artworks of one dimension group artists and after unloading the results with a special form that was statistically analyzed using (chi-square), the following results were obtained:

First: In terms of form, the research tool dealt with two areas of letter formation:

The shape of the letter in the paintings of the one dimension group.

A. Function in terms of identity:

First: Representations of the shape of the letter in terms of (the identity of the letter) in the drawing of the one-dimensional group was represented by three items, including (Arabic, foreign, old).

The item (Arabic letter) occurred (140) out of a total of (200) and using the CHI square with a degree of freedom of (2), the calculated value of chi was (80.65). By comparing it with the tabular value of (5.9), it became clear that there is a statistically significant difference at the significance level of (0.05).

Second: The item of the (foreign letter) occurred (17) out of a total of (200) using the CHI square with a degree of freedom of (2), the calculated value of chi was (37.00). By comparing it with the tabular value of (5.9), it became clear that there is a statistically significant difference.

Third: The item of (old letter) occurred (43) out of a total of (200). Using the CHI square with a degree of freedom of (2), the calculated value of chi was (8.40). By comparing it with the tabular value of (5.9), it became clear that there is a statistically significant difference at the significance level of (0.05) as shown in Table (2).

B. The function in terms of the readability of the letter

First: The (readability) of the letter was represented by two items(readable and unreadable). The item (readable) occurred (147) out of a total of (200). The results in this field are shown in Table (2). There is a statistically significant difference at the significance level of (0.05). The calculated CHI value was (8.41), which is higher than the tabular CHI value of (3.84) with a degree of freedom of (1) that is statistically significant.

Second: The item (unreadable) occurred (53). The results in this item are shown in Table (2). There is a statistically significant difference at the significance level of (0.05). The calculated CHI value is (8.41), which is higher than the tabular CHI value of (3.84) with a degree of freedom of (1), which is statistically significant.

Table (2) The Chi-Square values of one-dimensional representations in letter formation

Major items	Minor items	Actual Frequency	Expected frequency	Calculate Chi value	Degree of freedom	Tabular	0.05
Letter identity	Arabic	140	66.67	80.65	2	5.9	Significant
	Foreign	17	66.67	37.00	2	5.9	Significant
	Old	43	66.67	8.40	2	5.9	Significant
	Total	200	200	126.05	2	5.9	Significant
Letter readability	Readable	147	100	8.41	1	3.84	Significant
	Unreadable	53	100	8.41	1	3.84	Significant
		200	200	16.82	1	3.84	Significant
	Total						Significant

1. Regarding the null hypothesis (the one-dimensional painters do not differ in the formation of the letter); The null hypothesis is rejected from the following functions in terms of shape of the letter in the paintings of the one-dimensional group.

A. Arabic letter identity.

B. Foreign letter identity.

C. Old letter identity.

D. The letter readability.



E. Unreadability.

### **Conclusions**

1. The inspiration of the Arabic letter and the craft in general in the Iraqi artistic formation is an attempt to return to the real values in art after the abstraction tendency achieved the latest forms of artistic development that the modern-day artist employed in terms of achieving his/her freedom in the field of forming objective relationships for artistic work.

2. When the artists of the One Dimension group drew inspiration from the letter in their works, they were interested in the permanence of heritage as it is the heritage of nations as it is the human heritage in general. It was expressed through the processes of expression and coding as it had a communicative aesthetic dimension on the one hand and a historical and documentary dimension on the other.

3. The Arabic letter and Arabic calligraphy has an important role in conveying and expressing the emotions inherent in the human soul as it expresses and conveys the inner world of the person. Thus, it led to highlighting the importance of Arabic letters by transmitting and embodying expressive values within the artwork.

4. The works of the artists of the one dimension were characterized from the beginning by creating artistic visions according to an artistic style of a heritage character to the inspiration of the crafts, dating back to the Sumerian and Assyrian use of letters. What they achieved from the style is nothing but the result of this mixture between heritage and contemporary time.

5. The artists of the one dimension emphasized that the Arabic letter has plastic and aesthetic components that are not available in any other letter through the possibility of these ingredients within the artwork, which gives the artwork a plastic feature in addition to highlighting the Arab identity.

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