



جمعية أمسيا مصر (التربية عن طريق الفن)

المشهرة برقم (٥٣٢٠) سنة ٢٠١٤م

مديرية الشؤون الإجتماعية بالجيزة

Organic Abstraction as an Introduction to the Development of Contemporary Artworks in the Field of Plastic Art

Zahrah Ahmed Alghamdi

Assistant. Professor of Visual Art and Design
College of Art and Design

King AbdulAziz University, Saudi Arabia

Introduction:

Art is associated with human life, given that man has always been keen to add a touch of beauty to all the things surrounding him. Combining the concept of art with workmanship as beliefs are related to religion until the Renaissance came. According to Banaamah (2013), doctrines of art emerged in Europe after the renaissance art, which encouraged the individuality of the artist, rather than his engagement in the society, therefore several schools of art emerged.

Nakhila (2014) indicates that abstract method does not rely on the simulation of materials, but it simulates the harmonious relationship between spaces, dimensions and colors characterized by artistic foundations, given that abstract art results from the integration of surfaces, shapes, colors and degrees in a consistent manner. In order to appreciate and react to this kind of art, one must be aware of the interrelationships between such surfaces, colors and shads.

Abstractionism has emerged in Cubism, when artists became alienated from nature, and trended to create their artworks in their own stile without relying on the forms available in nature (Nakhila, 2014).

Organic abstraction considered one of the applied artworks that significantly focuses on the industries and techniques of performance during the process of formation. Recently, cultural philosophies, in particular, tended to use this type of art, which focuses on the expression, while not neglecting subjective emotions and ensuring the compatibility between the material's potentials and methods of its formation.

The creative artist presents his ideas in experimentation style to reach excellence and innovation. Sometimes, the artist hides the sources of inspiration that drove him to abstraction. In such cases, we see colors and shapes only without visual connotations. Thus, the creative artist stands out in this age through his ability to appreciate the art, his extensive experience and the use of sources of inspiration in the artworks.

Problem:

As stated above, plastic art requires a kind of isolation, given that art no longer affects all people. The nature of abstraction is difficult and requiring a high degree of experience and knowledge to achieve artworks creativity and esthetics (Banaamah, 2013).

The researcher considered the great importance that organic abstraction attaches to creating artworks using raw materials. This type of art adopted in art education due to its elements that help art students think creatively and innovatively within a form of experimentation based on abstraction through omission, addition, or distortion. Therefore, the researcher found that the employment of organic abstraction in artworks led to the development of creative thinking and the promotion of distinct and renewable ideas using several raw materials.

Questions:

-What is the role of organic abstraction in the development of contemporary artworks through material-based formation?

This question includes the following points:

1. What are the organic abstraction and organic art?
2. What are the most prominent philosophical concepts of organic abstraction and what did they add to contemporary artworks?
3. Understanding some examples of organic abstraction.

Objectives:

The present study attempts to identify how to employ organic abstraction in contemporary artworks through material-based formation based on the following steps:

1. Identify the meaning of organic abstraction and organic art.
2. Identify the significance that abstractness adds to the artist.
3. Identify philosophical concepts of organic abstraction added to contemporary artworks.

Hypotheses:

The researcher assumes that organic abstraction has a great and positive effect on the development of contemporary and modern artworks characterized by artistic organism.

Significance:

The significance of the research lies in enhancing the field of teaching contemporary art using abstract construction methods that depend on the principle of organic abstraction for creating new and modern art. In addition to benefiting from modern concepts in the investment of time and effort to create innovative mental processes in the design of organic artworks, in addition, developing students' ideas about creative thinking to acquire unconventional plastic ideas for constructing artworks in an organic form. The research also emphasizes the role played by the organic meanings in creating unconventional innovations artworks in the final stage.

Terms:

Abstraction:

Abstraction as defined by Saloom and Shaira (2013) does not differ from the idiomatic meaning defined by Elwan (1997) which is removing the natural form from its partial elements and relying on the forms expressing the moral thought of the

object to be formed. This meaning is not different from that defined by Oxford Dictionary as a symbol of the elements present in the visible contour, or a way of representing material elements of faded importance and neglected details (Osborne, 1981).

According to Amhaz (1981), abstraction is defined as: the rejection of image and photographic representation, and the non-adherence to vision or nature from which it has become necessary to move away instead of delving deeper into it.

Organic:

As stated by Hijazi (2012), it is the extraction of ideas from the components of nature, whether plants, animals, humans or rocks. That is to say, it is looking into the depth of the elements and their essence. Since ancient Egyptian times, artists inspired the idea of making legs of chairs from animals' legs. However, in the present, the organic trend has become larger and more extensive.

Organic Abstraction:

Is the abstraction, which enlivens the structure of abstract shapes regardless of visual connotations (Nakhila, 2014).

Methodology:

In light of the nature and objectives of the study and the data required in order to identify the role of organic abstraction in the development of contemporary artworks, the study adopted the analytical-descriptive approach due to its compatibility to the nature of the present study.

Assaf (2005) points out that the analytical-descriptive approach aims to identify some of the detailed facts about the phenomenon under consideration, which enables the researcher to provide a comprehensive description and accurate diagnosis of that reality, thereby issuing judgments on a certain reality. It also aims to analyze specific experiences with a view to benefit from them in making decisions regarding similar issues in the future.

Theoretical Framework:

Organic Theory:

- **Concept**

The organic theory is defined as the concept of an art school in architecture that emerged in the west and was founded by the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. It coincided with the emergence of the German Bauhaus in the 20th century and built on the principle of inspiration by nature (Muhammad, 1999).

▪ **Organic Art**

According to Herbert Reid, the organic way is the way attracted to nature. It includes organic principles and shows its vitality in a strong and attractive manner. However, the more art separates from the tradition of natural elements, the more vital it becomes. In other words, artists mainly focus on the meaning included in organic natural models, not just the external appearance (Hashim, 2000).

▪ **Organism in Artistic Design**

All organic designs are organisms and every element of the design is a coherent extension of that organism. Basing design on the nature of the relationships between the parts and the design as a whole as well as between design and the surrounding environment. Functional requirements become an integrated and developed design, producing rare and original forms that reflects an impression of personality. Given that, the design extracted from the environment through natural forms and elements (Nakhila, 2014).

▪ **Pillars of Organic Thought**

As indicated by Hijazi (2012), the organic trend aims at highlighting beauty through natural forms. Characterized by transitional continuity, structuralism and formality, which reflects organisms' interdependence in carrying out their organic concept.

Moreover, Nakhila (2014) clarifies that organism in the philosophic concept of ancient artists is the methodology that integrates with simple and soft lines. The more organic thought in artworks based on the development of creation, the more it becomes interdependent and appropriate for human needs and requirements.

The shape that includes organic lines with curves has intrinsic properties as it approaches nature in a greater manner. In addition, it has hidden forces, reflected by the nature of the material. Thus, the shape appears to have resulted from processes beyond artist's intention. Accordingly, inanimate objects considered human products that emerge from those intrinsic forces (Muhammad, 2002).

The researcher views that the concept of organic theory in artworks call for the creation of internal spaces in materials, not focusing on the elements of design only, but on the function and methods of application. Thus, such spaces become kinetic elements that render the design movement and organic growth.

Then, Frank Lloyd Wright used the regular form as well as the upward pattern of motion in the design of the Guggenheim Museum in New York City, giving it the dynamism that rendered the constructive material movement, form, and entity (Muhammad, 2002).

▪ **Foundations of Organic Art**

Among the key foundations of contemporary art are balance, unity, color, composition, movement and proportion. Identifying such foundations through five concepts, namely organic unity, diversity, development, domination of the main idea and balance in artworks (Nakhila, 2014).

In order to achieve artistic thought, the artist must be as creative as nature because nature is the source of inspiration and innovative ideas. The artist also must have the talent and capabilities of abstract imagination and induction. With such abilities and skills, the artist can be inspired by nature and identify its principles, laws and systems. Inspiration made by a quick glance at the essence of things, thus the artist recognizes the system of nature, develops his relationship with reality, and learns the sense of inevitability (Reda, 2003).

Abstraction Theory:

▪ **Concept**

The abstraction doctrine gives indications through symbolizing what is beyond nature to reach the art that transforms from natural forms in the transverse image into latent and immortal images, showing the transition from partial to total qualities and from individual elements to generalization. Therefore, abstraction requires taking nature from its organic state to show its mysterious secrets and hidden meanings. Whatever the type of abstraction, it shows the content of the idea that is considered the basic of the artwork (Jerdak, 1975).

▪ **Abstract Art**

Abstract art is an informal art. It is not based on imitating nature; it works on grounding art in the modernity that emerges from the transformation of the artistic perspective in the concept of the painting, through which new methods and technologies can be devised in order to allow the artist to portray the internal subject freely. Thus, the picture becomes a projection of the subject (Ismail, 1974).

The title in the abstract painting is not only a pivotal title; it is a title that the artist reflects an impression within himself. It does not deal with subjects of dimensions, but rather deals with the original idea in nature in order to obtain a special perspective that becomes closer to reality through thought, feeling and imagination (Al-Rabiei, 2002).

▪ **The importance of abstraction to the artist**

The artist expresses abstraction through a method of his own. This method may depend on a number of approaches such as omission, addition, distortion, modification and change in the existing structure forms. Abstract art is based on the

o

complete and total abstraction of the original idea, where the objectives and perspective of the artist are focused on abstraction rather than objective perception. (Ismail , 1974).The classical artist, who conveys the reality as it is and agrees as Al-Basuoni (2001) presents it "in the fact that abstraction is a very difficult process where space, point, line, shape, rhythm, color and balance must be identified to create beauty"? According to the classical artist, he does not present the idea to be introduced through the expression of virtual connotations, but through the nature of relationships and their strength. It is not important whether the idea approaches reality or completely stayed away from it and emerged as strong relations that include visual connotations.

Philosophical Concepts of Organic Abstraction of Contemporary Artworks:

The researcher concluded some philosophical concepts related to organic abstraction of some artworks as follows:

- Breaking the barriers between all fields and art movements, thus the artwork becomes an art entity that expresses itself. The artist highlights his ideas and creation using working methods of his own. In the twentieth century, several doctrines, movements and various trends of art emerged, as a result, changed the barriers separating arts. This kind of overlap made it difficult to categorize according to traditional methods. Several concepts related to fine arts in all its various departments changed to larger and more complicated concepts and terminology in the form of plastic arts (Stangos, 1981).
- It is the content of the artwork, not the form, which constitutes the basis, given that such content is constituted through free abstract initial meanings of organic nature that can be employed by the artist in his works. Such meanings may not exist in nature and may contain design lines that are compatible with the artwork within the framework of the industrial functions that relates to the art field. According to Arrgson (1977), the process of induction from free forms to abstract ones containing colors are determined systematically. Arrgson adds that the geometrical reality emerged through such process by using some forms, such as the circle, as a central idea of the artwork.
- Experimentation through construction and deletion through new and contemporary methods, through which the artist identifies various artistic concepts and values for the artwork. It is not important that the work simulate real concepts, given that the idea arises from the deep meaning of the relationships. It is also not important whether the idea approaches reality or completely stayed away from it and emerged as strong relations that include visual connotations (Al-Basuoni, 2001).The most important meaning of organic artwork is giving greater flexibility to design non-traditional and contemporary works characterized by lightness and stereotypical styles adopted by the constructive school. Such school worked on the development of artworks from the concepts of mass and weight to spatial forms that carry

values, meanings and plastic art relations. One of its most famous ideas and trends is the avoidance of simulation, and discovery of new forms and non-traditional patterns (Nakhila, 2014).

- The third dimension of the artwork appears in stereoscopic artworks that can be seen from all directions, or may demonstrate the importance of the vacuum in finding its dimensions. Through the vacuum, the artistic dimension of the artwork can be shown. The two-dimensional space reflects shapes, while the three-dimensional one refers to the mass, which can be physically perceived as a solid body (Preble (1973).
- The value of the work itself, which does not suggest any subject External but is a goal in itself, has a value The art gained from its interior construction, woodwork Whose elements are organized and divided in strength and cohesion; Achieve aesthetic appeal through elements and outputs Membership is its constituent form.

Applied Framework:

Some artists are selected through research and analysis in a manner that serves the research objectives to reach results related to the research problem:

1- First Artist: John Proario

With his eagerness for sculpture, John Proario started to bring design masterpieces. The notion he adopted was mainly concerned with wood as being a symbol for the form. In fact, wood will bend comfortably to a point, then break. Similar to the bone(s) or muscle(s), wood has its point of yield. What Proario attempted to do in was to push that point of yield with the aim to create a sense of strain in the wood's gesture. Conceptually speaking, he was trying to allow beauty to be the product of strain. Terms such like precariousness, harmony, balance, stress, and fluidity were among the terms Proario employed in order to describe his aesthetic aspects. His furniture and sculptural luminaires are made up of bent wood. Most of his pieces of had been done made in such a way that no single piece can be similar to the other. He does not use forms to bend and control the shape. Rather than this, he likes to allow this idea of letting the wood do as it pleases a bit, making the process something like a collaboration between the craftsman and the wood's personality (Bryant, 2013).

The outcome can be depicted as something pretty good and organic. *“I’d describe my work as having a heartbeat,”* says Proario about his custom-made bent-wood luminaires. *“Each one has so much personality and as you move around them, the*

forms look like they are changing.” Unsurprisingly, Procario to anthropomorphize his work; it’s something the Cold Spring native has been doing since studying sculpture at State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase. In the SUNY, he began to think according to the concept of wood as being a metaphor for the human body. “*Just as we push the limits of our bones and muscles, I enjoy pushing the limits of wood to create a sense of strain in the material’s gesture,*” he elucidated. With, at most, only a rough sketch in his mind, Procario soaks or steams the wood then freeform bends it into one of his signature undulating shapes. The process is a pretty-delicate one. Nevertheless, thanks to periods of time spent intentionally breaking wood—whether through over steaming, a hydraulic press or simply his own strength—the designer acquired a deep understanding of its structure and learned where exactly to draw the line prior to hitting that breaking point. “*Wood doesn’t always want to work with you when you are freeform bending so you have to work with it,*” he says. “*But I really enjoy that. Sometimes it takes you in new directions that would never have happened if everything was planned out.*” (Bryant, 2013).



This represents a piece of art that employed the oak-wood through which organic formation is used. More than this, lighting is included. In this piece of art, Procario employed the bending of the wood in a flexible and comfortable manner through the steam. Afterwards, he placed thin strips of wood inside a steam box, which, in turn, led to the curvature of wood.

2- Second Artist: Joseph Walsh

“**ENIGNUM**” is a series of work wherein wood has been stripped into thin layers in a bid to manipulate and reconstruct them into free form of compositions. Afterwards, shape has been made through these layers to reveal not only the honesty of the

^

(AmeSea Database – ae – July - 2018- 0376)

structure but also the engraved form – a matter that clearly represents the unique collaboration between man and material. The title derives from the Latin words Enigma (*mystery*) , while the word ‘Lignum’ refers to (*wood*). To me, the series is summarized as follows: ‘*Mystery of Composition lies in Material*’ (Thornton,2009).



Such piece of art represents the beauty of abstract wood chips. The artist demonstrated the beauty of wood thru the use of wood chips, which are inspired by the curved shape.

3- Third Artist: Eric Tardif

Inspired by nature, Tardif had been so sensitive to the expressive possibilities of wood. As a matter of fact, his passion for birds, their elegance and grace in movement was considered as one of the abundant sources that had inspired him for creativity and imagination. Similarly, his sculpture masterpieces have been viewed as a metaphorical way of capturing the essence of a bird movement in a realistic form. Tardif adapted an ancient technique in order to realize his visions and make them come true – i.e., steam bending. Steam Bending can be defined as a process wherein thermal vaporizations are used to make wood slats pliable for builders. Magnificent wood sculptures and wood masterpieces of Tardif were incredibly innovative and unique; and had received numerous awards from all over the world (Gatineau,2013).



Tardif's piece of art, thru use and employment of wood chips, demonstrated its organic abstraction aspect. This sample does not adopt any ready-made mold. Rather, the shape was inspired by nature and wood chips were used in curves to clearly demonstrate the organic side.

Results:

1. Nature has a significant influence on the work of artists in recent times, where many artists devise several ideas and inspiration from nature.
2. The artist works on the use of many natural materials to employ the concepts of abstraction and organism in artworks, given that materials play a large role in highlighting the form and content of such artworks.
3. Organic abstraction of works is considered an applied artwork that focuses heavily on the industries and techniques of performance during the process of formation.
4. In organic abstraction, the artist focuses largely on the meaning included in organic natural models and not only on the external appearance.
5. Abstraction does not work on imitating nature literally, but works on making art stems from the modernity that emerges from the shift in the artistic perspective of the painting's concept.
6. Organic abstraction introduces artworks characterized by modernity, which shows the third dimension of such works.
7. Using Curves in the study samples renders artworks the abstract advantage that artists added to their artwork.
8. Abstraction helped the artist to unleash his creative ideas and stress his mind to reach excellence in his works.

Recommendations:

The researcher recommended conducting an in-depth study of the philosophical meanings added by organic abstraction to the contemporary artworks for their role and significance in the development of new artworks due to the recent trend towards using nature-inspired ideas.

References

Arabic References:

- Al-Rabiei, F. (2002). *The Problem of the Absolute in Modern Drawing*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Faculty of Fine Arts, Babel University.
- Al-Basuoni, M. (2001). *Art in the Twentieth Century*. The General Egyptian Book Authority. Cairo: Family Library.
- Assaf, S. (2005). *Introduction to Research in Behavioral Sciences*. Riyadh: Obeikan.
- Amhaz, M. (1981). *Contemporary Plastic Art*. Beirut: Dar Al-Muthalath.
- Banaamah, H. (2013). *A Comparative Study between Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art*. Department of Art Education. The Faculty of Education. Umm Al-Qura University.
- Elwan, F. (1997). Abstraction in Pre-Islam Arab Arts. *MA Thesis*. Faculty of Fine Arts, Baghdad University, p. 100.
- Hashim, O. (2000). *Integration between Organic Architecture and Interior Design and its relation to the Egyptian Urban Environment*. PhD Thesis, Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University, 116-117.
- Hijazi, H. (2012). *Inspiration by Natural Components in the Environmental Interior design of Tourist Resorts*. Department of Household Administration. Faculty of Arts and Interior Design. Umm Al-Qura University.
- Ismail, E. (1974). *Art and Man*. Beirut: Dar El-Qalam.
- Jerdak, A. (1975). *Transformations of Font and Color: Introduction to Modern Art*. Beirut: Dar El-Nahar.
- Saloom, S. & Shaira, A. (2013). The Problem of Non-Objectivity (Geometrical Equivalent) in the Abstraction of Kandinsky's Lyrics. *Damascus University Magazine for Geometrical Sciences*, 29 (2), 663-674.
- Muhammad, O. (1999). *Organism and its Use in Interior Design and Furniture for the Service Area of Swimming Pools in Sport Clubs*. MA Thesis, Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University, P. 1.

Muhammad, O. (2002). *The Basics of Organic Furniture Design and its Association with Old Egyptian Furniture*. PhD Thesis, Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University, 2-5.

Nakhila, Y. (2014). *Philosophical concepts of organic abstraction and its role in the field of woodwork*. Faculty of Specific Education, Cairo University.

Reda, N. (2003). *The Application of Functional and Aesthetic Foundations of Frank Lloyd Wright's Thought in the Field of Interior Design and Furniture*. MA Thesis, Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University, p. 7.

English References:

Osborne, H. (1981). *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*. Oxford, University Press, p. 18.

Stangos, N. (1981). *Concept of Modern art*. Thomas & Hudson London, p.29.

Arngson H. H.(1977) . *A History of Modern Art*. London : Thomas & Hudson , P. 237.

Kandinsky , W. (1999). *The journey two abstraction*. N.Y: teaching coll,p.56.

Preble, D. (1973). *Art form*, Harpet of Row. publisher, INC, U.S.A., p.56.

Electronic References:

Bryant, R (2013, july 8). *Lamps by John Procario*.Retrieved November 26,2016 from <https://www.dezeen.com/2013/07/08/lamps-by-john-procario/>

http://www.ericardif.com/gallery_ovo_eng.html#6.

<https://www.dezeen.com/2013/07/08/lamps-by-john-procario/>

Joyce Thornton, "Joseph Walsh: bridging art and design", Arts Thread Blog, December 12, 2009, <http://www.josephwalshstudio.com/>

<http://www.waterfowlfestival.org/project/eric-tardif/>

ملخص:

تناولت هذه الدراسة الاستلهام من المكونات الطبيعية في تصميم الاعمال الفنية للحصول على القيم العضوية التي تتبنى فكرة استخراج الأفكار من الواقع الطبيعي ،بالإضافة إلى التجريد الذي يرفض الصورة والتمثيل وعدم التقيد بالأشكال الطبيعية ،وإعطاء نبض الحياة للأشكال المجردة بغض النظر عن الدلالة البصرية ، واستخدام الفنان الخامات لتشكيل العمل الفني الذي يوحي بالتجريدية العضوية عن طريق التجريب. وهدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على الفن التجريدي والعضوي والأهمية التي يعطيها التجريد للفنان ، بالإضافة إلى استخدام التجريد العضوي لاستحداث أعمال فنية معاصرة . وللوصول إلى أهداف الدراسة استخدمت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي ، وتم تحليل بعض عينات لأعمال فنية لفنانين استخدموا التجريدية العضوية فيها . وخلصت الدراسة ببعض النتائج والتي كانت أهمها أن للطبيعة تأثيراً كبيراً على أعمال الفنانين في الآونة الاخيرة ، ويعمل الفنان على استخدام العديد من الخامات الطبيعية لتوظيف مفاهيم التجريد والعضوية في الأعمال التي يقوم بعملها ، بالإضافة إلى أنه في التجريدية العضوية تمكن الفنان بشكل كبير على المعنى المتضمن في النماذج الطبيعية العضوية وليس فقط التركيز على المظهر الخارجي . وأوصت الباحثة بدراسة المعاني الفلسفية التي تضيفها التجريدية العضوية إلى الأعمال الفنية المعاصرة لدورها وأهميتها في استحداث أعمال فنية جديدة نظراً للتوجه الحديث في الفن المعاصر نحو التجريب في استخدام الخامات واستلهام الأفكار من الطبيعة لإستحداث أعمال فنية تحاكي الجوهر والمضمون للعناصر البنائية من خلال ذلك.

Abstract:

This study is inspired by the natural components in the design of works of art to obtain the organic values, adopt extracting ideas from the natural reality, in addition to abstraction. Thus rejects the image, representation, and non-adherence to natural forms, and give the pulse of life of abstract forms regardless of visual significance. The artist used materials to form the artwork that suggests organic abstraction. The study also aimed to identify abstract and organic art and the significance given to abstraction by artists, in addition to using organic abstraction in the development of contemporary artworks. The descriptive-analytical approach was adopted and samples of organic abstraction artworks were analyzed. The study concluded that nature has a recent significant impact on artworks and artists use several natural materials to employ abstraction and organic concepts in their works. The study also concluded that, in organic abstraction, the artist mainly focuses on the meaning included in organic natural models, not just the visual appearance. The researcher recommended conducting in-depth study of the philosophical meanings added by organic abstraction to the contemporary artworks based on their role and significance in the development of new artworks due to the recent trend towards using nature-inspired ideas.