

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Trends

E-ISSN: 2709-9369

P-ISSN: 2709-9350

www.multisubjectjournal.com

IJMT 2025; 7(7): 121-127

Received: 18-05-2025

Accepted: 25-06-2025

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Manifestations of the Arabic letter in contemporary Iraqi painting

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/multi.2025.v7.i7b.735>

Abstract

The Importance, the Arabic language, as the language of the Holy Qur'an, serves as the foundation for studying the manifestations of the Arabic letter in the works of a selected group of contemporary Iraqi artists. This study stems from the idea that one of the earliest forms of art and beauty embraced by Arabs after Islam was the writing of Qur'anic verses. Writing is a symbolic system of letters that preserves ideas and information; it is a means of preservation and communication. Art, likewise, is a means of expression, similar to movement and speech, allowing the self to be interpreted and enabling individuals to express themselves or their surroundings visually, sonically, or kinetically. Humans can use art to translate their inner feelings and struggles. Art is a talent and creativity bestowed by the Creator on every individual to varying degrees, with artists distinguished by their creative abilities.

Keywords: Arabic language, Holy Qur'an, Arabic calligraphy, contemporary Iraqi artists

Introduction

Chapter One

Methodological Framework

Research Problem

Arabic writing has occupied a significant and revered position among Arabs and Muslims, approaching sanctity due to its spiritual connection with the Holy Qur'an. Perhaps the earliest manifestation of art and beauty that Arabs valued after Islam was the beautification of calligraphy and the refinement of Qur'anic verses. Writing is a system of linear symbols through which ideas and information are preserved; it serves as a means of preservation, communication, and expression, similar to movement and speech.

The art of Arabic calligraphy is closely tied to the Arabic language, as it is the language's expressive tool. Through Arabic calligraphy, the leaders of Arab and Islamic thought documented our glorious heritage in their writings. It is unlikely that any other nation has practiced writing with such dedication, turning it into a refined art with detailed rules, fixed foundations, and established regulations like the Arabs.

Writing relationships do not merely fulfill the function of writing language but also perform artistic functions. Balanced lines can express the highest and deepest emotions that stir the human heart whether joy, sadness, or despair. This is the magic that calligraphers bring to us. Calligraphy expresses what other arts, such as music, also express, while the musician plays a wonderful melody, the calligrapher writes a marvelous text. Just as the musician composes his melodies and harmonies, so does the art of calligraphy create interwoven and intertwined lines that evoke admiration and enthusiasm in the viewer.

Despite this spiritual and intellectual character, the material aspect of calligraphy must not be overlooked. Calligraphy is a form of plastic art, especially when it soars in the artistic composition of written words.

From this perspective, the research problem emerges with the following question:

What are the manifestations of the Arabic letter in contemporary Iraqi art?

Importance of the Research and Its Necessity

The importance of this research stems from the significance of the Arabic letter, which is the subject of the study. The Arabic letter is one of the fundamental components of the Arabic language and serves as a means of intellectual and artistic communication. It plays a crucial role in conveying meanings and ideas in a more impactful and profound way. Moreover, it is a tool for expressing linguistic content and aesthetic dimension. Additionally, this research provides a specialized practical study focusing on the Arabic letter.

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Research Objective

To identify the manifestations of the Arabic letter in contemporary Iraqi art through the works of artists.

Research Boundaries

- **Spatial Boundaries:** Contemporary Iraqi painting
- **Temporal Boundaries:** From 2010 to 2018
- **Subject Boundaries:** Manifestations of the Arabic letter in contemporary Iraqi plastic art

Definition of Terms

Manifestations (Tajalliyat) Linguistically

According to language dictionaries, (Tajalla al-shay') means something appeared or was revealed after being hidden. For example, means the light emerged and appeared clearly. The word is derived from the verb (Jala), which indicates clarification, explanation, and shining.

Definition of "Manifestations" (Tajalliyat) Terminologically

Terminologically, "manifestations" refer to the forms of embodiment or representation through which a specific concept appears in a particular context, whether intellectual or artistic. It indicates the way an idea or a certain spirit is revealed through various expressive tools, such as words, images, or symbols. In art, it means the unveiling of abstract meanings through tangible forms like lines, colors, symbols, including the Arabic letter.

Operational Definition of Manifestations

Operationally, in this research, the manifestations of the Arabic letter refer to the images, shapes, and artistic methods in which the Arabic letter has been used by contemporary Iraqi artists to express their artistic and aesthetic visions. This includes decorative compositions, symbolic formations, or the abstract use of the letter as a visual element.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

Section One

The Historical Roots of the Arabic Letter

Art was born with the birth of humanity, and since the earliest times, everything produced by humans was driven by necessity rather than ornamental or purely aesthetic purposes. It was a means through which the artist expressed his impressions, emotions, and intense feelings in interaction with the natural environment. Thus, ancient artistic productions serve as evidence that humans were artists above all, skillfully and sensitively expressing their feelings, surroundings, and experiences.

Mesopotamia (the land of the two rivers) witnessed the birthplace of the oldest known writing system, particularly in its southern region. The invention of writing is considered one of the greatest cultural innovations in human history. It was the means that transferred ancient societies from the darkness of prehistoric times to the dawn of history. The Sumerians were the first to know writing in history, and the Sumerian school was the product of the discovery and development of writing, which initially appeared as images and symbols.

The Sumerian civilization, part of the larger Iraqi civilization, is regarded as the original homeland for the emergence of writing. Excavations have revealed early

stages of writing dating back to the third millennium BCE, initially consisting of around two thousand pictorial signs. Due to the abundance of signs and the difficulty of using pictorial signs to express many meanings, the Sumerians began simplifying and abbreviating their shapes.

Moreover, the Sumerians did not stop at inventing a writing style but developed it further, making it a successful tool for recording and transferring ideas. The emergence of writing was primarily driven by the urgent need to preserve records of the increasing temple revenues and the income of the Sumerian city-states, whose economies were continuously growing. These letters went through various stages, which are as follows:

The Pictorial Stage

This stage involved expressing a single word through an image representing it. For example, the word "sheep" was represented by drawing a picture of a sheep. This stage is also called the "proto-writing" era because the emergence of early signs of writing during this period was crucial to the advancement of civilization. Examples from this stage have been found in the fourth layer of Warka, inscribed with economic texts and lists of goods intended to fulfill specific purposes.

The Symbolic Stage

This stage relied on symbolic letters using drawings of tools and shapes to indicate something associated with them. These shapes were actually signs or symbols rather than complete pictorial representations of phonetic meanings. This simple pictorial writing paved the way for the Phoenician alphabetic letters. This demonstrates human ability to derive images symbolizing meanings and simplify writing.

The Phonetic Stage

This stage involved assigning sounds to signs corresponding to their language, abstracted from their pictorial or symbolic meanings. It focused solely on sounds rather than the meanings expressed by the images. This approach allowed the writing of words by sounds. The reason behind the use of phonetic signs is attributed to the Sumerians' recognition that expressing abstract ideas such as life, death, laughter, or sorrow through pictorial or symbolic signs alone was impossible. Therefore, they used the sounds of signs independently of their pictorial or symbolic meanings.

The development and transformation of the origins of writing were accompanied by changes in the forms of these signs throughout historical periods. This was largely due to several factors, especially the nature of the writing material, which was primarily clay tablets and reed styluses with pointed tips. Early writing signs were grouped in small clusters without being arranged into regular horizontal or vertical lines. However, when larger tablets were used, scribes divided them into vertical columns where signs were inscribed from top to bottom starting from the right column. As for the direction of cuneiform writing, it was initially written from top to bottom, then later from left to right, which is the opposite direction of Arabic script.

Section Two

The use of the Arabic letter among Muslims

Under Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gave great importance to writing and recognized its value as a significant aid in spreading the Islamic call. Arabic

calligraphy is considered an integral part of the living heritage of the Arab and Islamic nations. (Arabic calligraphy is one of the elements used by Arab and Muslim calligraphers in their subjects. The blessing of writing Quranic verses was almost always present in any artistic work within mosques or minarets across the Arab and Islamic world, due to the characteristics of the script that allow it to express aesthetic values connected to religious beliefs, making it distinct from any other form of artistic production).

Arabic calligraphy embodies aesthetic values intertwined with religious values. Consequently, it distinguished itself under the new Islamic creed with a personality that aligns with Islamic thought. The Arab artist began to internalize the principles of monotheism, its philosophy, and its worldview concerning life and the universe. Islamic art, in this context, (Is neither detached from religion nor merely illustrative or propagandistic for Islam; rather, it interprets without directly translating religious stances into an artistic language. This is embodied in its precise geometric designs inspired by the order of nature).

It has unique characteristics that set it apart from other arts as an independent art form. Arabic letters evolved over approximately four centuries into decorative beauty unmatched by any other script in human history, reaching its peak in the 11th and 12th centuries AD. This is because Islam awakened in Muslims the need for civilization and inspired in them a love for goodness. Regarding this, the orientalist Critch states: (The Arabic letter in which the Quran was written was considered sacred throughout all Islamic eras).

In Arabic calligraphy, the value of the form rises with the value of the content. (The form in artistic composition acquires its exalted and sublime value from the exalted and immortal meanings conveyed. Arabic calligraphy continues to strive for the highest artistic refinement in visually expressing these meanings through the performance of Quranic verses, wise sayings, eloquent expressions, and literary masterpieces. Calligraphers thus endeavor to assert their historic role by presenting Arabic calligraphy in an innovative way that balances traditional calligraphic foundations with the abstract trends in modern plastic arts). The researcher views Arabic calligraphy as one of the most important arts inherited from our ancestors and considers it a core element of artistic identity. The art of Arabic calligraphy is deeply connected to our language, serving as its expressive tool. Through Arabic calligraphy, the imams of Arab and Islamic thought documented our glorious heritage in their writings. It is unlikely that any other nation has adopted writing and cared for it to the extent that the Arabs did, transforming it into a precise art with detailed rules, firm foundations, and established standards.

Section Three

Characteristics of the Arabic Letter in Contemporary Iraqi Art

The use of Arabic letters became widespread in modern art, especially in the paintings of contemporary visual artists, to create a rich atmosphere filled simultaneously with symbolic and decorative possibilities. This adds a new dimension to the art. The harmony of Arabic letters in the artwork is regarded as part of the heritage of the Arab nation and one of the most important fine arts inherited from the ancestors, considered a pure artistic identity. (The Arabic script is deeply linked to our language and cultural

development; it is credited with the cohesion and unity of the Arabs. Through calligraphy, their heritage was preserved, documented, and protected from loss. Thanks to it, the world recognized the contribution of Arab thought to building human civilization. Calligraphy, in reality, is the art of precision and creativity without rival).

Baghdad, in particular, cared greatly for perfecting Arabic calligraphy and refining its compositions and styles. Calligraphers there remained committed to the rules and principles of the script. The Baghdad calligrapher Ibn Muqla reached a high level of mastery and genius in calligraphy; he established important rules for developing Arabic script, including measuring its proportions and layout. Ibn Muqla attributed all the letters to the letter Alif, which he took as a fundamental measure. (He is considered the first minister-engineer of calligraphy, creating a method of writing that set standards and regulated the art, believing that perfection and correction must follow a 'golden ratio').

Art and humanity are inseparable; there is no art without humans, nor humans without art. Hence, art has always tracked the dawn of arts and clarified it through image, melody, theater, and literature as a result of skill and mastery.

(Art, in its various forms and shapes, is an inexhaustible, abundant source that nourishes the minds and cultures of societies).

Art, in all its forms, is a type of expression of the layers of the mind, containing diverse desires and urges that may have been repressed or deprived, finding no outlet in daily life. This repression transforms in the artist's life into poetry, prose, painting, dance, or music. Art is distinguished by its deep emotional value, which stems from its connection to the profound emotions and brilliance of the artist.

Art is the movement of the human self within society through various means such as speech, color, melody, movement, and form, among other methods. Art is an expression of all that is beautiful and a pure expression of the essence of humanity and the human self. (The elements of art and the principles of visual composition no visual artwork lacks some of these elements such as line, space, color, shadow, light, texture, and volume.) For example, calligraphy is one of the fundamental elements in book arts or manuscripts and often holds significant importance within them.

Calligraphy undoubtedly adheres to the prevailing compositional and aesthetic values in the artistic environment. (On this basis, the distinct artistic elements of composition in Arabic calligraphy are linear formal elements deriving their artistic identity from the specificity of the linear system, its principles, and rules).

The concept of creativity is associated with extraordinary works often linked with mystery and defying explanation even by their creators. (Creativity is a concept in psychology that includes cognitive readiness traits and emotional characteristics interacting with environmental variables to produce an ordinary outcome accepted by a society at a particular time for a benefit or to meet a prevailing need).

Towards sound aesthetic education, advanced societies are keen to raise their generations with solid aesthetic upbringing based on the great importance it holds in creating a new, conscious, and enlightened generation capable of interacting with life. (This includes appreciating its aesthetic aspect through refined human artistic taste.)

The ability to perceive beauty and respond to aesthetic stimuli causes human emotions to stir, bringing enjoyment and engagement. Aesthetic appreciation (Represents the pulse of interaction between us and life, perceiving its relationships with a form of awareness, understanding, and aesthetic sensibility in everything we see, hear, or perceive, and every aesthetic experience is accompanied by pleasure.) The Arabic letter is a formative element.

All advanced artistic forms in Arab and Islamic civilization are conscious expressions of the Arab-Muslim artist's vision through arts such as decoration, architecture, painting, or any other applied and decorative arts. The practice of using letters generally in artistic formation is an attempt to return to true values in art, especially after abstraction achieved the final forms of artistic development initiated by modern artists, who realized their freedom in forming the objective relationships within the artwork.

Expression through the Arabic letter is essentially a legitimate attempt or a historical development of art that transcends the superficial reality limited to natural conditions as the setting of the artwork. The letter has been used in many artworks as an element of composition in paintings, sculptures, or other works. This can be seen in the works of Iraqi artists such as Shakir Hassan Al Said, Jamil Hammoudi, Qutaybah Al-Sheikh Nouri, Faiq Hassan, Jawad Salim, Muhammad Ghani Hikmat, Madiha Omar, and others. The "Hurufis" (Meaning the artists who made the Arabic letter a source of inspiration and a formal subject in their artworks) began to appear in Arab countries starting from the mid-1950s in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere. Initially, their attempts were scattered but soon became a widespread trend in the 1970s, to the extent that it took an organized form in Iraq when a group of Hurufi artists held an exhibition of their works in Baghdad under the title "Art Inspired by the Letter". They called themselves the "One Dimension Group" and published books presenting their perspectives in this field. These books sparked many discussions in the Iraqi press and other Arab countries. This movement sought to absorb the aesthetic and semantic goals that the artists aimed to achieve and to establish an artistic direction that develops a contemporary understanding of the heritage. At the same time, it aspired to fulfill all the demands of modernity in terms of vision, comprehension of the era, and anticipation of the future. The objective was to highlight the uniqueness of this artistic experience within the Arab plastic arts scene, demonstrate how it contributes to defining the identity of Arab and Islamic visual art, and to establish a position for this art on the global stage.

Theoretical Framework Indicators

- The manifestations of the Arabic letter represent an important part of human interactive achievements and the adaptation of natural life.
- The process of employing the letter in forms relies on mechanisms of formal metaphor and the transformation of these forms in a way that allows rediscovery of energy and expression, enabling their integration within a comprehensive intellectual system consistent with the intellectual reality.
- The design of the artwork is an intellectual act one might say sacred since the ceramic art depends solely on its artistic-formal understanding and the

processes of composing and analyzing the artwork.

- The realization of drawing letters in the arts, in general, is connected to the meanings generated by formal systems of signs, which carry the content derived from the artistic impact of the Arabic letter.
- Focus has been placed on how ideas and emotions are expressed through Hurufi (letter-based) art, and on how letters are creatively used to convey a message or a specific idea via the artwork.
- The letter is considered one of the important structural and expressive compositional units that establish visual relationships in visual arts, organized according to a specific composition aimed at creating a unity with exceptional artistic expression and aesthetic methodology.

Chapter Three

Research Procedures

Research Population

The research included 25 artworks by Iraqi artists from the period 2010-2018. The researcher aimed to describe the framework of the research population based on images available through accessible channels.

Research Sample

The researcher extracted a sample of 3 artworks. These were selected intentionally (Purposive sampling).

Research Method

The researcher followed the descriptive method, using content analysis. The sample was described and analyzed according to structural and compositional aspects, as well as their relation to the artists' religious beliefs, aiming to reach a summary analysis for each work.

Research Tool

To achieve the research objectives, the researcher relied on intellectual, artistic, and aesthetic indicators derived from the theoretical framework, using them as an initial research tool.

Analysis of Research Sample

Sample (1)

Artist Name: Jamil Hammoudi

Artwork Title: "The Human God"

Material: Oil on cardboard

Ownership: Private collection

Date: 2012

Dimensions: Width 1 m × Length 1.5 m



General Description and Analysis

In the overall composition of the painting, the written words appear clear and readable, specifically the phrase ("The Human God"). The letters of the words are drawn freely without strict adherence to the traditional rules and principles of Arabic calligraphy. The calligraphic composition results from the intersection of words through their curved and arched outer lines, producing multiple shapes. Among these shapes is a dome of a mosque visible in the upper half of the painting, featuring a circular dot on its surface and two connected squares at its peaks representing the dots, which relate to other lines in the artwork. These include Kufic, Naskh, and Thuluth scripts intertwined with the letters of the word ("The humans").

Another dome-shaped arch occupies the lower right quarter of the painting, showing a large circle that also represents a dot in Kufic script. The movement of the letters and words follows a horizontal direction, organized within a systematic calligraphic design. The dominant blue color covers most of the painting's surface in gradual adjacent shades, asserting dominance over other colors; this blue tone is a hallmark of Islamic and Arab art. Also notable is the circular dot painted inside the letter (The "h" sound) in the divine name ("Allah").

All the words, with their connected and disconnected letters, cover approximately 80% of the painting's surface, making the spaces almost closed through the interconnected calligraphic formations. The painting's texture appears smooth, achieved through the use of oil paints on canvas with varying colors, gradients, contrasts, and visible harmonious blending.

The expressive connotations of the calligraphic formations in the painting are evident through their linguistic script symbols, formal compositions, and even religious symbols. The visual relationships convey the viewer's spiritual connection between humans and the Creator. The fluidity of the Arabic letters and geometric shapes has generated diverse aesthetic forms through their colors and arrangements, contributing to the overall aesthetic composition of this calligraphic artwork.

Sample (2)

Artist: Diyaa Al-Azzawi

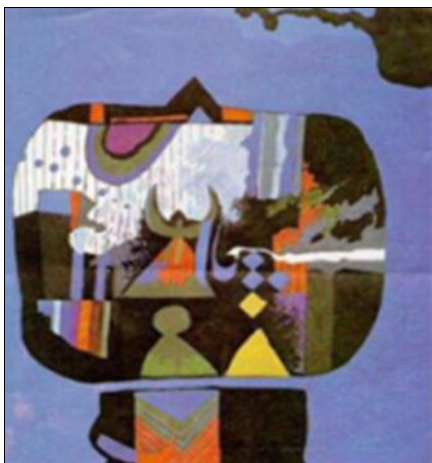
Title of Work: Harufiyat (Calligraphies)

Medium: Acrylic

Year: 2015

Ownership: Private Collection

Dimensions: 75 cm × 75 cm



General Description and Analysis

Diyaa Al-Azzawi, through artistic experimentation, seeks to create innovative stylistic forms inspired by the local Iraqi environment on one hand and the strength of contemporary civilizational suggestion on the other. In this work, he draws from the aesthetics of heritage by employing the Arabic letter and artistic shapes found in traditional rugs, presented in a decorative ornamental style achieved through the simplification and reduction of color fields, which appear as flat, solid paint areas.

The artist demonstrates mastery in the use of planes to create an oriental image through the expansiveness of the picture, the simplicity of form, and the spaciousness of the composition, which greatly enhances the artistic form and gives it a greater presence. This expansive space plays an aesthetic role equal to that of the design elements themselves, making the relationship between space and form a purely aesthetic one.

In this work, Al-Azzawi abandons all dramatic and mythical content, focusing solely on pure aesthetic concerns, considering this to be the highest virtue of the artwork here. The work is inseparable from its rational (mechanical) performance in its aesthetic presentation, as the artist carries out preliminary compositional studies based on the idea. He designs the composition based on the idea's components, benefiting from artistic heritage to create new formulations that adhere to a design methodology rooted in fundamental principles and elements. Al-Azzawi reaches an abstract form through the simplification and pruning of traditional artistic forms, which remain culturally present, without fully embracing absolute abstraction. The design elements, although highly abstract, retain their eastern references: the Arabic letter forms, rug patterns, and their colors combine in a delicate rhythm and beautiful structure within an abstract design bearing clear eastern features. Thus, he adds new formal proposals to those of Jawad Salim, reflecting his awareness of the significance of both past and present.

Regarding the functioning of elements on the pictorial surface, the line is formed through the meeting of two colors without blending or fading into each other. It does not serve as a contour surrounding the shapes, as each design unit is independent and isolated from its neighbors. However, to soften the rigidity of the shapes, the artist lets some spontaneous lines flow freely in the middle of the white color, which represents the center and dominance of the composition, contrasting sharply with the black. Additionally, some scribbles and brush strokes are added to give the work a spontaneous spirit that enhances its emotional depth, blending with the sharp elegance to compose a harmonious aesthetic rhythm with varied dynamics.

Regarding color, Al-Azzawi excelled in combining dark and light, warm and cool tones in a harmonious and rhythmically balanced distribution. The compositional structure of the space in the work consists of two spaces: a blue space surrounding the main composition of the painting and a black space containing its formal elements. These two spaces are positioned within the painting one occupying the center in a large size, and the other located at the bottom in a smaller size. Both spaces hold aesthetic and formal significance for each other, evident through contrast, opposition, simplification, and flattening within the spatial extension. This grants the formal element a strong visual and color tension as it floats freely within the painting's

spaces without crowding the other elements.

Although the work lacks tactile modulation on the surface, the artist conveys this sensation through finishing touches and scribbles that suggest an aesthetic roughness, giving the pictorial surface its tactile rhythm. The directions of the strokes vary within the painting's boundaries, ultimately leading the viewer's eye toward a central focal point.

Al-Azzawi's works from the 1980s represent a distinctive design phenomenon in Iraqi painting, adopting a decorative ornamental curve with a contemporary Arab vision that remains inseparable from the artist's personal creativity and spontaneity. The design characteristics of the work are clear through the flattening and simplification of spatial extension, the solid edge, the isolation of shapes, and the mechanical approach in construction with a decorative vision.

Sample (3)

Artist: Rafea Al-Nasiri

Title of Work: Aligning the River

Medium: Silk screen printing

Date: 2017

Ownership: Private collection

Dimensions: Height 60 cm × Width 120 cm



General Description

Analysis

The compositional structure of this artwork is based on color fields connected by a geometric system consisting of three parallel, overlapping levels. At the top, a red semicircular shape floats in a white space, followed by a wavy blue area separated from the central part of the composition by a black wavy stripe. Dominating the lower half of the work, nearly half the piece, is a square piece of fabric affixed conspicuously onto the red area.

A clear focus on the horizon line is evident in many of Al-Nasiri's works, transforming it into other cosmic elements, creating a formal structure with mostly absolute abstract connotations. In this piece, the horizon (a purely formal horizon here) undulates, manifested at the top by a red semicircle, half of which is obscured, minimizing its visual weight and emphasizing the lower half and the inscription thereon. Although the linguistic content of the inscription conveys a common religious phrase understood within Iraqi society, the artist transcends this by concentrating on the formal, aesthetic value represented by the letterforms and the scattered ornamentation around it.

By appropriating this printed design element, Al-Nasiri blends the local Iraqi heritage (The Arabic letter) with mimetic connections aimed at infusing renewal and contemporaneity into Iraqi art, which despite its varied artistic transformations, remains connected to tangible reality. The artist's use of collage a technique from modern

European art gives his work a contemporary framework rooted in Eastern heritage sources.

The formal construction reveals the artist's grasp of a technically inclined design aesthetic underpinning his visual vision. The painting exhibits a high degree of elegance resulting from meticulous execution and a deliberate avoidance of spontaneity. The color fields, with their contrasts and harmonies, are consciously planned. The process is precise, characterized by an absence of unnecessary details, reflecting refined sensitivity and deep expertise culminating in a contemplative, mystical approach embodying universal, absolute concepts.

Despite the contrasts in color, shape, and texture, the design features dominating the work are apparent: color simplification of shapes and areas, evident flattening, and a lack of variation in the application of individual colors that results in a rhythmless, somewhat rigid visual impression. The overall color palette is restrained, limited to blue, red, and neutral black and white tones. The abstract shapes are also reduced, their spatial divisions balanced and harmonious.

The sharp edges of the shapes grant a design quality that regulates the artist's spontaneity within defined boundaries. The geometric aspect plays a key role in the compositional system, particularly in the emergence of the square form with three of its sides clearly delineated by rigid lines, lacking softness, and the straight line descending from the center of the circle.

The integration of the fabric piece printed with the inscribed words is a deliberate aesthetic choice that transforms the fabric from an independent element into an integral part of the unified artwork with its own aesthetic identity. Here lies the artist's skill in adapting a pre-designed component onto his pictorial surface so that it does not remain a detached part but rather is fused within the overall composition. This fusion strengthens Al-Nasiri's ability to present his artistic vision innovatively and distinctively. Consequently, the collaged fabric represents an additional design feature complementing the other visual characteristics expressed in the piece.

Chapter Four

Research Results

Through the study of the artworks, the researcher reached several conclusions

1. **Manifestations of the Arabic Letter in the Work of Jamil Hammoudi:** The artist Jamil Hammoudi used legible, intersecting, and overlapping words in his letter-based compositions, producing forms with religious, civilizational, and social themes that have a formal relationship to the written linguistic content. At the same time, they express the subject of the painting in its realistic and contemporary form, as shown in Model (1).
2. **Manifestations of the Letter in the Work of Maher Al-Samarrai:** The contemporary ceramicist in Iraq incorporates written symbols, texts, or letter formations to emphasize his formal transformations and artistic vision as his style evolves. The formal metaphor of folk heritage adds an aesthetic dimension distinctive to ceramic works, linked to the aesthetic concept of popular heritage, such as arches, vertical constructions, marks, and calligraphic forms, as demonstrated in Model (2).

3. **Manifestations of the Letter in the Work of Dīā Al-Azzawī:** Abstract shapes dominate the paintings of this decade, with an attempt to render the letter unclear and only perceptible from some scattered points that form words across the painting surfaces, as illustrated in Model (3).
4. **Manifestations of the Letter in the Work of Shaniar Abdullah:** The ceramicist relied on drawing from the civilizational heritage and reintroducing it, attempting to reproduce ancient artistic works in a new manner subject to contemporary factors. He used written elements in various forms and predominantly in blue, a characteristic color of the Islamic era. His ceramic works reflect diverse references, including religious, environmental, political, and natural themes.
5. **Manifestations of the Letter in the Work of Rafī' Al-Nasiri:** The letterforms in Al-Nasiri's work represent expressive values, giving high aesthetic quality to the overall composition of the painting. The beauty of the composition varies according to the specific design treatment of the artwork, which is based on an abstract construction, as exemplified in Model (5).

Conclusions

1. The cultural background, personal experience, and creative imagination of the artists played a significant role in the manifestations of the Arabic letter in their works.
2. Color treatment had an impact on highlighting expressive features by embodying the characteristics and traits of the Islamic era.
3. Contrast appeared clearly in the artists' works and played an important and primary role in the aesthetics of any artwork; the various techniques used in the paintings attract the viewer and draw their attention to specific parts of the work.
4. The artworks contained a rich heritage that the artists drew upon to create a sort of cultural bridge connecting different historical periods.
5. Calligraphic artists were influenced by artistic movements such as abstraction, cubism, and surrealism, which was reflected in some of their completed works.
6. Their influence by Arab heritage and Islamic art motivated the use of Arabic letters and their formations in an inspirational way with philosophical readings, resulting in letter compositions with formal relationships and constructive themes.

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