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CONCEPT OF FIGURE AND GROUND IN ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY, THE KUFIC SQUARE MODEL

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic Calligraphy witnessed through ages abundant creation and production where the calligraphers deal with all its artistic aspects by the abundant creation research aiming at the figure structure that are distinguished by great variance that is based on its multiple types and the went to comply with its artistic rule and origins.

The Arabic calligraphy has been transformed from its signs units that serve the writing in the linguistic structure to aesthetic figure performance towards an image charged with aesthetic dimensions and values.

This concept has developed through the Arabic calligraphy depend on a basic elements in performing it that is calligraphic forming that grant the figure in the Arabic calligraphy its artistic feature and determine its plastic art identity with its privacy among the arts.

As the relation concept between the figure and the ground in the formations of the Arabic calligraphy especially this concept in Kufic calligraphy has not been studied, the researcher aim to study this subject according to critical standards that analyze this relation and expose its secrets in seeking to expose the characteristics of the modern calligraphic performance and to bridge the common relation between it and the plastic art.

The researcher study this subject through samples that were chosen carefully to be representative of his research. The research reaches to results that explain the excellence of Arabic The Arabic calligraphy in general and especially Kufic calligraphy in distinguished image through the privacy of the relation between the figure and the ground through emphasize on studying the space (ground) aiming at determine its value and ability to comprehend the movements and linguistic text. Also the square figure Kufic calligraphy has established a new relation in its formations between the figure and the ground that I based on the objective independence for each of them where they have independent affections energies.

The research importance and need is in the necessary need for biotic and critical studies in The Arabic calligraphy that treat and investigate the figure concepts through the connective relation of its internal structure in addition to the common relation between it and the other arts. The need for traditional and historical studies which fulfill all historical and technical aspects, history of its present times and its men has gone. The study aims at expose the relation between the figure and the ground in formation of Arabic calligraphy within the time limits from (1950-2000) for the calligraphic works of Arabic and Moslem calligraphers.

Introduction in determine the terms the figure and the ground

The terms of figure and ground have continuous interest in artistic studies. The researcher mentions some of these analysis in order to determine his attitude from it where Suzan Langer sees that the art is creation of figures that is sensible in order to express on the human emotions. Thus the art innovate a figure and this figure must express the subject it expresses is human emotion¹. Caserrer recognizes the art within the language and the legend as symbolic figures that determine the thinking construction and we can't aware the reality unless through the privacy of these figures². The figure is not represented as (Astin) said until the plastic artist figures the material, subject, emotion and imagination in organized intensive work that has its potential importance. The figure is organize the organization of the visible figures, masses and ordering them. It is the body that the artistic work to express the content³.

There is a figure for the constructional meaning as (Reed) agree that is certain harmony or relative for the part with the whole and each part with the other could be analyzed and at the end is transformed into number.

There is a figure in the sensitive aware meaning that is necessary condition for the sensory perceptual diagnosis of the content⁴

Meanwhile the procedural researcher definition for the figure is (A figure with harmony organized consistent constructional features by relations that connect their parts and tend to the meaning by sensual conception).

The ground is a medium that is subjected to the principles of visual distinguishing. Before we can receive the vision information we have to be able to distinguish between the figures that transform these information and the background of these figures⁵.

The scholars of figure theory (Gestalt) interested much in the method which the figures appear as distinguished whole units that are separated from the ground and that these figures appear behind (the image in any perception is the figure, is the whole that emerge, is the thing that is percept meanwhile the background is the undistinguished ground that the image appeared from⁶. Ground is that the background of these figures. This theory emphasized on that there is differences between the figure and the ground the most important are:

- 1- The ground is simple than the figure as the ground has some kind of steadiness that gives it the simplicity meanwhile the emergence of the figure and its non-steadiness gives it kind of complexity .
- 2- The figure is determined by the surrounding frontier s that framed the figure that gives it the formula, the writing on this page is the figure and the page itself is the ground that is to say the lines give the word its surrounding limits on this page thus the figure and that how the figure is formed meanwhile the ground has no form or formula.
- 3- If the figure appears the, the ground disappear which mean that the emphasize of the self is only on the figure , it is correct that the ground has objective appearance but in conceptually disappeared in perception zone as the figure appear the ground disappear and when the figure disappeared the ground appeared .
- 4- The figure is coherent and the ground is fluid ,that means the order of the order of the figure is stronger than ground as the figure has internal details and protrusions that make it distinguished in perception process from the ground .For example the surrounding frontiers makes certain process above the ground and grant it a kind of steadiness and stability and we can very easily make whatever changes we want on the ground but not on the figure itself .The changes in the figure require force stronger than thee force that change event required in the ground ⁷.

Thus the figure acquires the subject privacy meanwhile the ground has nothing of that Thu the researcher conclude to determine his procedural definition of the ground as the general fame in which the subject exist in the external world is determined and it I the one which determine its position in the place and it main fame. Thus it is a special state of general time fame and the zone in which the subjects we perceived exist. While the concept of ground and figure is determined, we must indicate that its concept in the research subject must take a different way from what comes in the research references on this relation as this type of calligraphy establishes a new relation between it as a figure and the ground which the research shall explain in its following procedures and enquiries.

An entrance to the formation and texture that establish the figure and the ground in the Arabic calligraphy

Although the Arabic calligraphy is much used in the affairs of Islamic life but its role was a writing role or decoration role that add to the field it used in a holly and aesthetic feature until the beginning of the thirteen century for Hijrathat dated the beginning of the conception for the calligraphic formation and texture or calligraphic painting by the Turkish calligraphers⁸.

The formation is considered the advanced stage in the history of the Arabic calligraphy and the pioneer stage that put it in the field of the plastic arts , deepening it artistic and aesthetic purpose in addition to it semantically dimension .The meaning of the formation in the Arabic calligraphy I explained through imbrication of the letters upon each other , interlock the letter in ode to reach to what is named the writing inscription (These inscriptions comprehend more number of texts than it is com-pared with individual letters)⁹.It is understood from that that the need to bigger space to comprehend the texts that cause to that and as a result it appears that the deal with the space i.e the ground represents a careful deal that is not accounted on the figure in the Arabic calligraphy or on the account of the ground that uplift the figure .

The formation in the Arabic calligraphy is considered one of the important and emergent features in it which give the calligraphy the flexibility and wide capability to form , variance and innovation and deepening the concept of the figure , ground and their expressional and inferences dimensions that are taken from the text or other .Also it resolved the problems of the figure organize of the letters and the words and facilitate innovative¹⁰ calligraphic figures .The calligraphers worked on innovate new formations that consisted of one or more layers of the letters and words that existed above each other according to the order of it reading in the text in innovative dealing in the text and it ground .The formation type in the calligraphy formation are summed up in the following type :

The first

The straight line (one level) :It is the simplest type of the line formation as in it the words and letters in one level in the ground space and the word and letters are sequenced in non-directed way and in this formation the depend is only on the reciting abilities of the calligraphy type without interest in dealing with the ground in complex way .The interest in the balance between the ground and the figure and fill the vacancy in the diacritical marks and aesthetic figures of the Arabic calligraphy.

Figure 1



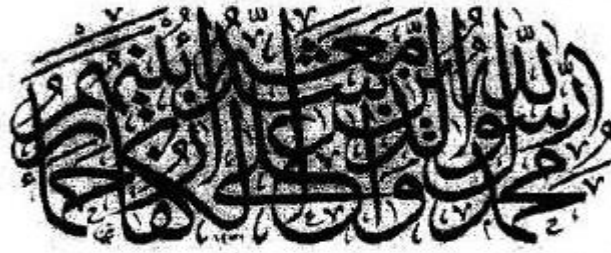
The double line system (dual levels) : In it the words are organized in the figure of double line that is formed of two interlocked lines where the upper line appeared as formed on the lower line in a kind of interlock and overlap that representing on account of deal with the balance between line mass and spaces resulted from the movement of the letters and the words .Thus this formation comprehend the double of what the individual line comprehend of the words that are limited between the two horizontal delusional lines in the writing line ground¹¹.

Figure 2



The multiple line system (tripartite line formation) : is an advanced image of dealing with the ground in the Arabic calligraphy through the horizontal formation containing three interlocked and overlapped lines appeared in the result as one line of letters harmony and the difficulty of this type of formation appears from the difficulty of dealing with the ground and the difficulty to make space conformity between it and the letters and words .In this imbrication the potential capabilities of flexibility in the Arabic calligraphy appears through making visual balanced scene between the figure and the ground that arouse the feeling of the figure and its affirmed power.

Figure 3



Second: The Calligraphic Formation which Includes:

The Formations of Geometrical figures: They are one of the most formations that the calligraphers are trying hard in order to presentation of their skills and abilities in the figure dealing with the ground in the field of geometrical determined figures (square, rectangle, triangle, oval)and the emphasize is on the artistic aspects aspect i.e the calligraphy recite and the balance of the letters bodies with the ground and study of figures space resulted from the letter movement in painting it.

Figure 4



Characterizing Formation (iconic): They are formations that take figures and figures of (human ,animal, plant) or figures take inferences and implications of the texts in formation that are distinguished by innovation and creation¹²and that depends on the calligrapher imaginations and abilities of wide comprehend of limited ground limited figure without breach the figure nature or surpassing the linguistic text.

Figure 5



The opposite formations : These formations are consisted of geometric and non-geometric figures and they are opposite in all their figure units of words ,letters and diacritical marks which led to the complete concord between the first half on the right and the second half with the opposite left representing the principle of the similarity and the opposition of the figure and its ground .The designing bases in this type of formation make an emergent and important role in organizing these calligraphy terms through its resulted relation such as unity , concord and balance in order to achieve the harmony and consistency in it ¹³.In these calligraphy formation the complex relation between the figure in the Arabic calligraphy and its ground in how to create calligraphy line without breaching the deep calligraphy rules and bases.

Figure 5



According to the thoughts come in the theoretical frame of the research the researcher conclude to the following:

- The figure is the base that the visual art is based on.
- He figure can't be perceived without existence of material medium which is the ground that transform the figure information
- The figure organize in in the Arabic calligraphy is stronger than the ground as the letters are distinguished by they have visual protrusions and detail that distinguished it from the ground.
- The formation and the texture in the Arabic calligraphy is among the elements of care for the ground and figure because of the Arabic calligraphy transported from semantically reality to artistic reality that necessity to care for the innovative performance.
- The concept of formation release has established several types of formations and textures that required deepening in the artistic research for the argument of the relation between the formation and the ground for each type.

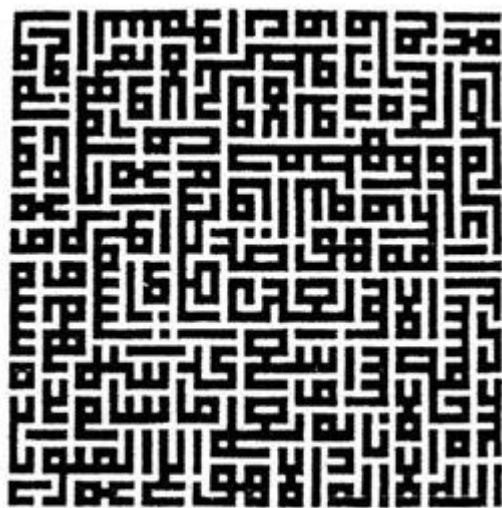
THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

It includes chose of the sample from the formations of Kufic square calligraphy in intentional method represented for the classes of the research population and that is because of the similarity of each figures with its analogues in the relation between the ground and the figure. The research depends on what has appeared of indications in the theoretical frame as a mechanism and bases of the analysis form according to serial steps that guarantees the help to analysis of the samples.

Example No. 1

The figure represent text of Alkursy verse "Allah is the only God, the living and custodian and not taken by snap or sleep and has all that in the heaven and earth who can intercede for him unless by his permission and knows what are between their hands and hat behind them and they know not of his knowledge only by his well his chair comprehend the heavens and earth and not tired by maintaining them " The text is opened from the lower right angel and rotate in axial way. Which represent a trouble to the Quran sequence for the recipient and arouse the pleasure when expose the text that is achieved by following the lines movement in one path closed in the center in two features of Allah (the Greatest the Highest).

Figure 7



This figure deals with the ground in positive way i.e there is no absolute domination for the figure on the account of the ground .If the formation is introduced on a person who does not know Arabic language he will not understand if the white ground is the writings of the black figure is the writing ,that because the body of the letter in this calligraphy does not exceeds the space between it and between the other letter in the ground .That mean it is doubled and not reduced and so the ground because of the figures evolution in the ground that are similar to the figures of the letters and the words .Thus the essential difference between the figure and the ground is lost .The ground here is no simple than the figure and steadiness that the ground is distinguished by the figure is also distinguished by and they are equal in the complexity.

Alkhatiby argue that this law I depended on change that impose the instant pleasure and the clever emotion during the practice of the calligraphic writing through following the phenomena that hide the linguistic text until it reaches its private evidence to write down its origin and its difference through another law which is the(radiated rhetoric) that transformed the language into a subject that is pushed in its private structure in the language to achieve its

existence and excellence in the same time to the far inference where the calligraphic writing is not of linguistic nature –at a whole – but it exceeds to what is geometric inference acoustic subject .

Example No (2)

The figure represents the text of the Holly verse "And if all the trees on earth were pens and the ocean (were ink), with seven oceans behind it to add to its (supply), yet would not the words of Allah be exhausted (in the writing): for Allah is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom." (Lukman 27).

Figure 8



The calligrapher dealt with the text in inspiring deal through direction structure in which the figure interact with the ground to imply the waves and movement of water .The ground in this figure represents non negative permanent element and it is coherent as the coherence of the figure and appear in its appearance and disappeared with it that means that it has a subjective existence that is similar to the existence of t5he figure .This imagination is concentrated through the figure of the circle in the center of creation and the oval figures inside it that overlapped the relations but even delete the ability of distinguishing between the figure and the ground .It refer this overlapping to symbolic image like the affection of a stone on the surface of still water which generate little waves as it spout from the center of the formation outward and made it difficult to distinguish between one wave and other because of the act continuity .It is the same difficulty in distinguishing in this formation between the figure and the ground .This type of Arabic calligraphy established a new relation between it and the ground that is based on the participation in the affection and thus the ground acquired as the figure acquires the privacy of the subject.

Abdulridha¹⁴ argues that the calligraphy structure must be studied as a visual unified field and as self –efficient system and all the terms that formed achieve

its semantically act through the harmony of the relations where each figure feature is justified in the light of its relations as much as its fulfillment for the semantically required objectives. Thus the relation of the elements with each other is strengthened thus the figure relation with the ground relation is strengthened in this formation where each element in the artistic necessary for its value as the artistic work does not contain any element that is not necessary on this matter and each necessary must be existed in it so the formation elements must be with it because it is necessary for each other as each of them strength the semantic and the value of the other ¹⁵. That appeared in this example in the element relation and necessary for each other .

Example No .(3)

After the formation including two words are Muhammad (P U H) in the light color and the word Ali (PUH) in the black color in the figure of six triangles consisted of intersection of the strings of the hexagon in its center .This formation represents a challenge for all the relation concept between the figure and the ground .The figure overlapped with the ground in non-separated way .If you considered the ground in black the figure that forms the word Muhammad appears and otherwise if you considered the ground in white color the word Ali appears in black color .



Figure 9

Thus the figure and the ground are objectively exist .If this theory of the figure (Gestalt) recognized that the image in any perception is the figure that appear is the (thing) that is perceived .The background in the undistinguished ground that the image emerged .Thus this formation comes to impose a new concept where the where the ground and the figure shall emerge , aware and there is no difference between them and no difference in the organization between the figure and the ground .Each one of them is distinguished that it has prominence and internal detail .The surrounding frontiers become interchangeable between the figure and the ground and thus the acquire the stability and constancy .No changes can be made on this formation neither on

the figure nor on the ground because there is no difference between them .thus the square Kufic calligraphy established a new argument between the figure and the ground based on the exchange of objective balanced influence among them .Thus each of them has its independent self-dependent entity .

THE RESEARCH RESULTS

By the investigation in the theoretical frame and the following research procedures the researcher reaches to the following results:

- 1- The Arabic calligraphy in general is distinguished in the privacy of the relation between the ground in their formation through the study of space (ground) in order to determine its ability on comprehend of the linguistic texts .
- 2- Square Kufic calligraphy is distinguished by it is establish a new relation in its formation between the figure and the ground which based on the independence of each of them in the objective influence where the figure and the ground in it has equal influence energy
- 3- The relation nature between the figure and the ground in Kufic square calligraphy must be referred to a new thinking vision that establish for a new concept of the relation between the figure and the ground in the artistic performance when each of them has dependent existence from the other .

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the results that the research reached, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Expand the dependence of the figure theories in studying the types of the Arabic calligraphy and another aspect of Islamic arts such as the various types of constructions and ornamentation.
- 2- Openness on of the critical technical methodologies to study the Arabic calligraphy and its figure secrets in order to stand upon its aesthetic and innovative construction.

SUGGESTIONS

- 1- In order to complete the benefits from the research the researcher suggests to make the following studies:
 - 2- The figure and the ground concept in the Diwani calligraphy.
 - 3- The relation dialectic between the figure and the ground in geometric ornament.
 - 4- The correlation between the figure and the ground in Islamic arts.
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