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The Diversity of the Female Image in Ancient Iraqi Pottery

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Abstract

This research was interested in studying the diversity of the representation of the female image in the pottery of ancient Iraq, where the concept of figurative manifestation was studied in its first study, and it also dealt with the study of the concept of the image and its composition in the human mind and the pressures that resulted in the formation of that image according to the opinions of the most important Greek philosophers as well as modern philosophers, and the extent of the effect of what a person sees on his subconscious mind to form an image printed in the imagination that is later translated into a pottery or sculptural work of art or other types of art. As for the second topic, it identified the types and means of showing the female image in terms of the idea addressed by the artist maker and the essence or content of that idea.

1. Introduction

The diversity of the anatomical representation of the female image was also studied, as the Rafidian artist maker relied on interpreting the symbolism of some parts of the body to present an idea. The research was not based on studying the diversity of the representation of the female image in terms of the idea or the way of its embodiment, but also dealt with the multiplicity of methods of manifestation through the use of artistic rules and foundations such as line, color, shape and so on, as the artist maker relied on using these foundations symbolically to show concepts and images. Others within the same artwork, where we find lines that represent water, or abstract symbolic shapes that represent animals, and we also find the effect of using color to distinguish between one object and another.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 The Concept of Graphic Display

In ancient history, man used to deal with the so-called external appearance of things as he did not see their objective qualities, and feelings of practical use appeared in him, when his aesthetic thought began to grow by imagining shapes and images, so he was unable to distinguish between the function of matter or its properties. The first idea of the image was for the primitive man when the contradiction between the individual and nature around him reached the basis of what was produced by consciousness and action, and that the production process turned bit by bit into an understanding of nature, and this understanding will lead him to the action process that leads to his complete separation from nature, where The images he saw had acquired social functions after they moved away from their natural qualities (1).

The relationship of man with nature around him is a relationship full of variables, but he has gone through various stages that made him deal with it through the function of the form, so the form was not only a reflection of the physical properties, but rather that it has a material value for what it provides of social action, and that this change has helped In showing the first signs of working with awareness of man in understanding the world aesthetically. This is what led to the emergence of a new tool, namely the simulation that gave him power over the things he saw, and cutting stones that had no benefit became valuable when he was able to form them in a new image, and that the way he governed things and transformed them into another product and shaped them into a new image came from during his control of some magical means, namely a purposeful activity aimed at making natural materials suitable for human needs (2).

All these sensations are visualized in the brain when affected by the things around them, and the effect of those senses comes when the sensations are identical to them, on the basis of which impressions and perceptions are constructed, the brain's characteristic and its ability to reflect the physical world arises because human consciousness represents a distinctive feature of a substance with a high structure, which is the brain. And that this transformation came with the different phenomena and their multiplicity, which led to the ingenuity in formulating shapes and the transformation of ideas, and here the emergence of the inner ideas of the image came with its internal contents and in this transformation, the essence was completely drawn into the shape of the thing, so the essence became the form that was given to the thing and whenever that new thing was similar (3). With the essence, the more there is a clearer perception of it, since this perception is carrying the specific and is represented by the general and that this connection was not deep, but gave birth to the abundance of meanings, and instead of the external connection between the abstract and the sensual and between the form and the content in the pattern of the new image, its unity begins to take hold. What man produced at this stage is merely a picture of nature, except that they were works of art in themselves, when he was ceasing to obey his work until he could control it through the transformation of the paradigm into an expressive and sentimental sign that can be perceived in a new way (4).

The image has moved away from its physical and material concept to become an image with a spiritual connotation that carries within it forms determined by the characteristics associated with the thing itself and its nature, and the person has a complete perception of the thing that he is guided to as the idea is not just a simple picture of reality or a reproduction of it, it is a picture of things and phenomena in the world (5).

However, it is not a material one, but a mental image, and the reduction in effect in order to reach the image of the first model has left an impression of what those things are and their nature, and made them a metaphorical basis for reaching various assumptions aimed at revealing new aspects of the image. Philosophically, the image is not considered merely that three-dimensional form, but rather it is the one that sometimes determines the material that makes up the work of art, its characteristics and its essence, and it is the first cytoplasmic act that is characterized by it, uniting with it and having a specific body with it, taking into account that the chaotic and the image are not only two adjacent substances in the body, and if they were so it would have been possible to interpret them separately, and therefore they are two imperfect things that merge essentially to complement one another, so that cytoplasm becomes the essence of the subject of the image and the image is the essence of the subject's introduction and form (6).

We find that Plato took the same approach that his teacher had when he presented the concepts of art in his dialogue, which depend on metaphysical ideas that were an integral part of his general philosophy of excluding the emotional and sensual side and going to the ethical and ideal side of respecting logic and relying on reason, and he certainly did not put it forward. Concepts of contemporary art, but nevertheless, the Platonic dialogues did not concern art only, but included it in mixed fragments on the grounds that they are ethical, educational and political concepts. Virtuous idealism and warned against art that simulates in its various degrees of simulation, as art in the era of Plato was freed from religious and moral restrictions and aimed to achieve pleasure and ecstasy among the recipients, and this is what is known as the real or natural tendency in Greek art (7).

2. 2 Manifestation Diversity in the Arts of Mesopotamia

Since ancient times, man has been expressing his desire and need through the signs he made, and this is what was confirmed by the German critic and researcher Gottfried Herderg, saying that man had a language even in his animal stage, and all the violent feelings of his body, as well as all the passion of his raging soul, were expressing them directly through shouts and appeals, and through brutal voices. Perhaps this is what we find in art in general and plastic art in particular, as the expression of a thing is to express it with a verbal sign, or a model, so the signs and words express the meanings, and the images express things. So the artwork is the result of mental perceptions or realistic facts that may be the result of the experiences that the artist witnessed and the extent of his awareness of them, and a set of intellectual, imaginative and aesthetic elements that he himself adopts because of his own perceptions and ideas, so the artist has the freedom to choose the technique that suits the way of showing his artistic achievement (8).

The technique can be the amount of information that the artist obtains through the practice of making works in order to obtain the necessary experience and apply it in his artistic achievement, as this technique provides the human being able to control nature, in addition to that it is the application of a set of laws and principles for the sake of Reaching a specific pattern through this technique, which can be considered as a set of specific scientific, industrial and technical behaviors that aim to provide many exact results. In the past, technology is a set of experimental data that were collected and installed to achieve a set of goals. In essence, they refer to a set of methods for a profession or art that have been transformed into controlled and codified laws that allow us to obtain beneficial, inclusive results (9).

This confirms the importance of practical - technical - applications of science, knowledge and human thought, as technology shows the amount of applied levels of knowledge and science and the extent to which man is able to subject the forces of nature to his will. They were nothing more than machines and tools that a person made with his own hands to be able to fulfill his various requirements by showing his ideas and depicting them in his artistic work (10).

And that the skill in adapting technology to process and use raw materials requires the ability to understand the essence of the artistic work by combining its internal expression with its external appearance represented by the material, so artists often compete to reach the highest technical quality in the implementation of their artistic works to be the distinctive facade in their work and lie the problem is that the craftsmanship itself confirms the absence of true innovation and that the quality in implementing these artistic ideas is done through the selection of a specific material medium that has the ability to process the material and know its properties and secrets that enables the artist to present those ideas so that the form cannot also be separated from the method of implementation (11). The technical means, that is, through the means of realizing the artistic work, and this means that the method of implementation has a close relationship with the material used in showing the artistic work in its final form and communicating its content to the recipient, so there is no separation between the form and the material that pushes towards adopting a specific means of implementation without other means. And that art is nothing but a representation of reality and its various forms through the use of visual analogues, whether drawing or sculpture, and not a recording of this reality only.

These different visual analogues are in intensity similar to reality according to the type of this expression, from pure abstraction and various means of display to different degrees of realistic representation. And that our judgment on this expression is related to the extent of the difference in art's visual equations and their representation of reality. Each raw material has a different nature, characteristics, and technical capabilities than other raw materials, and that the artist's success in choosing the appropriate material depends on the type of relationship between the form to be shown in the artwork and the raw material, and thus making the artwork always consists of building, sculpting, drawing and authoring a play or a symphony and organizing the steps of a dance or ballet, it becomes tantamount to dictating a specific image to a specific material. When starting to build a work, we need a visual interpretation through

which the appropriate material is chosen by adopting its appropriate material and aesthetic properties in making the visual counterpart that a particular design and a specific content can find the best expression (12).

They have it if a specific substance is used alone, as if there is a close relationship between a specific content and the material that is best achieved with it, and there are many different ways to represent the visual equations of real things through expression, and these equations are often invented by organizing the plastic elements used in the formation of the form. Space, material, texture, line and color are the formative elements of art by entering them within a system of various aesthetic relationships to reach the expression that is there are two types, the first is the expression that depends on the inner experience of the artist, i.e. the tangible truth, and the second is the expression of the truth as it is in reality (13).

The photographer starts with an idea and then proceeds with a speed and confidence that increases as much as he knows what he wants to do, but this idea is not in any way a mental image or a mental model printed in advance with all its characteristics and minutes of the statue or painting that is being executed (14).

2. 3 The Most Important Arts in Mesopotamia

2. 3. 1 Stereoscopic Sculpture

The first sculptural works were simple and somewhat abstract in the way they were shown, and they were used as funerary statues to be buried with children, or statues with specific symbolism such as fertility, motherhood or worship, and most of them were made of pottery (burnt clay) for easy formation and others made of marble Or limestone, which did not bury statues of children alone in their graves. Rather, the contents of the graves included several accompaniments whose function was to activate the magical ritual to revive them again in the world after the promised hypothetical death, and this huge system of symbolic forms varied to include statues of graceful women, each of whom played the role of mother.

2. 3. 2 Relief Sculpture

The art of sculpture flourished in the arts of Mesopotamia, including the prominent sculpture, which varied in its subjects and what was carried out on it, whether it was stone votive panels, heads of stone scepters or stone obelisks, and some of them date back to the first stage of the era of the dawn of the dynasties, which is considered the oldest stone sculpture From this era it was found in the city of (Kursu, now after), and it is of limestone and its height is (18 cm).

2. 3. 3 Metal Industries

The art of mining developed significantly during the Sumerian and Babylonian eras. This is what we can see through what was found of technical finds in many sites dating back to that period, where we notice through what was found in the manufacture of some types of metal pieces and the heads of axes And that is due to the constant need for it, and whether in the stairs or as a weapon,

there we find many statues that were found on a hill site, from which I try what is in the form of a two-wheeled cart made of bronze and a height of (7.2 cm) pulled by four animals driven by a driver with a beard and long hair He holds the reins in his left hand, and he wrapped the part hanging from it around a middle piece that was fixed to the axis of the cart wheel. His right hand remained free, and it was likely that it was holding a whip.

2. 3. 4 The Art of Crafting

One of the most beautiful arts that grew and developed in Mesopotamia is the art of drafting and grafting, as many beautiful examples were found during the excavations that took place in the Sumerian, Babylonian and even Assyrian archaeological sites. Among the most important of these examples is a statue of a woman found in the temple of Inana in the city of Nefer, dating back to the first half of the third millennium BC, height (15 cm), the head made of gold and the body of green wax stone while wearing a robe that covers the whole body, and the right shoulder is left bare, with her hands up to her chest.

2. 3. 5 Pottery

Pottery is one of the most important finds that was found during the archaeological survey of the site or during excavations, and due to the local characteristics of pottery, especially in Mesopotamia, especially the pottery that was found in the sites of the Diyala region and the sites of the Hamrin Dam Basin, Samarra, Halaf, Ubaid and others. One of the places after the excavations were made and the types of pottery known as Diyala pottery or are still the basis for the identification of pottery making. The art of pottery, despite its formality, is described as one of the important genres of plastic art, as it carries the culture of its time, and is defined by systems of references and ideas in the form of pressing intellectual forces in the structure of civilization, so that the system of expression in the way of showing the Mesopotamian pottery images as an intellectual phenomenon did not find his interest in transient or sensual and material manifestations, but rather his creative peculiarity in its analysis and composition by expressing the invisible with evident rhetorical signs, as the creative Rafidian mentality in the field of pottery was moving to mold the mechanisms of religious thought in its abstract structure into systems of images, as it is considered as a system of signs that are linked With the general idea and how it is manifested and represented, and with the type of intellectual discourse that is full of abstraction and symbolism directed towards the absolute and the infinite.

2. 3. 6 Murals

The Mesopotamian thought has been interested in color frescoes, as it is one of the techniques of graphic display in Mesopotamia, since the dawn of the first date, human thought in the settlement of Umm al-Dabbagh near Hatra has presented a beautiful example of wall painting.

As archaeological discoveries have shown that there are other wall paintings dating back to the era. The early Sumerian depicts various forms of animals guarding the façade of a temple in the settlement of Uqair, north of Babylon. However, the harsh Iraqi environment and its underground water, high

humidity and salinity damaged these colorful frescoes. Thus, we find that the art scene of Mesopotamia was replete with all kinds of arts such as sculpture, painting, pottery, metalworking and other such arts that produced many artistic achievements with different concepts, ideas and visions, so no one matched them and left no one's shadow over them (15).

3. Data Analysis

Model: 1

Theme: Dish - Women Dancing

Material: Proud clay

Time period: Samarra 5300 BC

Aidi: Berlin Museum



Source: Zuhair Sahib, History of Art in Mesopotamia, Al-Rafidain Printing and Publishing, Beirut, Edition 1, Part 1, 2019, pg. 57.

General Description: The pottery piece represents a fossilized clay dish on which drawings of human and animal figures were executed using oxides. The drawings executed on the dish are four opposite female figures whose feet almost meet in the center of the plate, with long hair scattered as if they were in a state of rotation and movement counterclockwise.

It is surrounded on the outside by eight animal figures representing hands, and it is also moving in the same direction, i.e. counterclockwise, and then a light color frame surrounds the dish on the outside to close the scene to its patterns.

Analysis: The female image in this pottery dish on the method of building a formative structure with a design aspect that is based on the compositions of the figures (the scorpion and the woman) in a symbol that indicates the permanence of the continuous movement and in the meaning of fertility through the indication of the four seasons, considering that the sign of the swastika (Swastika) counterclockwise indicates the permanence of fertility in the four sides as is the prevailing belief, and thus the permanence of life as well, as the artist / maker focused on the content in a remarkable way through the full exploitation of the space of the vessel. The decorative diversity in the embellishment of the saucer appears visually gradient when the gaze leads us from the center point to the outside and from the outside to the center. That the visual treatment in the design was in itself a wave movement due to the movement of the female wavy hair of the naked women, which accompanied the wave of legs in the scorpions, as if they were moving in their environment of the desert pattern. By activating the visual movement, the eye moves between the human and animal body masses to extrapolate their apparent and hidden contents, which are adopted by his successive messages in the content

of showing the female image and the movement of hair over the head with the hands spreading to achieve the form of the cross with the woman's stature alone. The female and animal figure to carry a single statement to appear in a relationship similar to one that is accustomed to continuing life and fertility, and if we interpret the symbolism of the shapes.

Model: 2

Subject: Naked Goddesses

Material: Proud clay

Measurement: 50 x 37 cm

Time period: Babylon I 1800 BC

Al-Aidi: The British Museum



Source: Zuhair Sahib, *The Kingdom of Art, A Study in the Iraqi Civilization*, Dar Al-Jawahiri, Baghdad, 1st Edition, 2014, p. 313.

General Description: A pottery tablet with an almost square shape, it was shown very infinitely that it was almost stereoscopic, containing a number of realistic and mythological figures, which were depicted in a realistic style with symbolic metaphors, where the work is mediated by a human figure of a naked female with two wings on both sides extending from below Shoulder almost to the hip area, and she wears a crown decorated with four horns, and hanging from under her crown and on both sides of the head are two tufts of hair resting on the upper chest area, carrying in both of her raised hands a scepter and a ring, and although she was depicted realistically, her feet were on the clutches of a bird of prey were formed as they stood on two interconnected lions with two sides and a front face, with two owls symmetrically on either side of the board and a scaly-shaped floor that resembles two owl feathers in shape and design.

Analysis:

The means of showing the pictorial text in this artwork confirms the existence of a new intellectual vision, as the outward form indicates that the dominant element of the structure of this figurative text is the female form that is placed in the middle of the board and intellectually linked with the rest of the forms of the work executed in a realistic and symbolic style that depends on The ideas that can be broadcast depend on the symbolic icon such as the horned crown, the ring and the scepter, a symbol of sovereignty and authority, which indicates that they are gods. In addition, the wings of a woman refer to another intellectual sign that depends in their concepts on their freedom of movement and their rapid movement from one place to another, such as birds, and what confirms this is Its feet, which it turned into a sign of a bird of prey, to be another indication of its strength and ability to hunt and catch its prey, or it may be an indication of its ability to move from the upper world to the underworld, and this is what he indicated in his other symbol in the presence of

the two lions interlocking in the body penetrated laterally, which It represents the symbol of the underworld and also represents the annihilation of all creatures. As for the two birds on both sides of the board, which are the owls, which disappear during the day and appear at night, which makes it a specific symbol of evil, according to what came in some myths. Who sees and hears everything at night. The artist relied on achieving a new intellectual vision related to the forms of the subject (a woman, a lion, his owl) to give a clear impression of the concept of human existence, as the owls are a doomed bird that represents the black world or the world of magic and sorcery because it lives in deserted areas by day and flies at night, so the artist baptized To make the two owls large to indicate the broadness of the mysterious secrets of the night, and the two lions are a sign of courage and strength and a symbol of the underworld.

It can be said that the artist emphasized the gods' control over the concepts of good and evil, as for the idea of showing the charms of the body and the movement of the hands, it indicates power and control, which is therefore an indication of the extent the domination of the mythical religious reality over existence (the earthly world) or non-existence (the metaphysical-metaphysical world). The world of sensual existence is the light that shines on humans and displaces darkness. As for death, it is what displaces life and comes in the darkness symbolized by animal forms, which in turn is considered the basis for a transformation. My thought is different from its predecessor than it was prevailing, so the new Babylonian thought was able to project it to the products of his artistic works, which were accepted by society, and several models came to depend on depicting the gods with this thought.

Model: 3

Topic: Water Gods

Material: Proud clay

Size: 7.3 cm

Time period: New Sumerian era 2100 BC

Al-Aidi: The Louvre Museum



Source: Zuhair Sahib: History of Art in Mesopotamia, Mesopotamia, for printing and publishing and Distribution, Beirut, First Edition, C1, 2020, p. 160.

General Description: A small-sized pottery work embodying a feminine form from the prominent sculpture of a woman who was known as a goddess while standing facing in front of her, carrying between her two hands resting in front of the center of her body a bowl overflowing water on both sides of her body.

She has long hair on which she puts a hood with two horns, which are the symbol of divinity, her body covered with a long robe Decorated with lines in the form of waves suggesting water, and it is complementary to what is found

on the floor of the pottery plate from that water that flows from the vessel, it was built in a realistic style directly with the symbolism of water.

Analysis:

Although there are different variations of the indications of human forms in the various pottery works of male figures, we also find that there is another variation of the method of figurative display in female forms as well, whether those female forms are of gods or worshipers, and what is striking in this female pottery work is the form that Refers to the water, its method of execution which seemed not only to flow from the vessel or jar that carries it, but rather as to burst and forcefully upward to reach the top of the shoulders and then return to descend towards the bottom with that wavy movement that connects the floor of the pottery work or the work space and the female dress It may be the first beginnings of the glorification of water, which appeared with the Sumerian writings after the flood of the gods (growth), meaning mother's water.

Through the significance of the potter's text that indicates diversity in showing the female image while carrying a jar connected to it by a group of wavy lines heading towards the top and then returning to go down the recipient comes to the mind of the recipient of the symbolism of those lines as water, which he found in other works It carries the same symbolism, including the votive vessel, so it has become agreed upon between the imaginary and imagined realistic form of the person or the recipient.

These zigzag lines are a constant symbolism of the significance of water and its movement upward and then downward is another indication of the force of the exit of that water from that jar and its effervescence. And that this movement is nothing but a formal indication process that refers to the change in place and the movement caused by certain forces that may take a certain time, which is known as (the delusional movement or the perceptual movement) and both work through what the mind can explain to what it sees from the phenomena In kind or accumulated in memory, the symbolic linking of water with the female deity has another indication of fertility and life that emanates from the female herself or from what comes from her or from her hands.

In another symbolism we find in this pottery work is the position of the hand or the palm of the hand, where the arms meet in the middle of the body and the palms surround those vessels from underneath and from the neck in a natural movement, perhaps but it is very similar to the position of the hands of the Sumerian devotees where the palms meet at the chest to hold that The jar, perhaps in a sign the maker wanted it to say that your own worship is what gives you goodness and life. Or perhaps that movement of the arms is just an artistic movement adopted by the makers in order to give the artwork soul and life with its geometric formation that suggests movement, lack of rigidity and stability, if the arms extend downward while they are holding the jar, there may be a sign of fatigue, perhaps, and if the hands are raised Upward, it may refer to the high position of the water and the difficulty in obtaining it, but placing the hands in the middle always indicates giving.

The code adopted by the artist in this work is to create diversity in showing the image of the (female) deities, who are considered the center of goodness and giving in everything. A person cannot live without her because she alone is able to give him what he can live with in terms of water or food. And the female is the gods' means to achieve fertility, a prosperous life and continuous growth, for she is from the man's knowledge of agriculture, and from his knowledge of settlement and from her hands comes goodness, and that goodness can only be achieved through worship, worship and obedience to God who gives whoever obeys overflows with his goodness.

4. Conclusions

1. The diversity of the visual display in the artistic formation of Mesopotamia, including the pottery sculptures, was governed by a group of dominions, including the environment, religious and political belief, and socio-economic status.
2. Pottery works in Mesopotamia took various directions in showing the female image, through the representation of realistic (diagnostic) and non-realistic (abstract) concepts in their artistic and aesthetic dimensions.
3. In his Rafidian pottery works, the artist / maker took a middle ground between realism and abstraction by pure (realistic) representation with abstract connotations to show the female image with a new symbolism.
4. The hip was distinguished in many female pottery models by its enormous size, as a symbolic indication of the natural response of the female in the concept of labor and childbirth.
5. The artist emphasized his ability to organize the interconnected space between the shapes and the unity of the relationship between them. These spaces had formal, kinetic or aesthetic values based on a sense of time and place, so the shapes appeared and spread in space in order to perceive the temporal and spatial dimension in the pottery works, as this indicates Temporal and spatial manipulation of perspective.
6. The emergence of some transformations within the artistic structure of the pottery sculptures, including the disappearance of the female organ, which was the result of the atrophy of ritual, mythological or religious expression. The female member was excluded in order not to activate the ritual character, and that this shift in the concept was a social shift from reverence for fertility to social symbolism.
7. The technique of showing the female image in ancient roles was distinguished by the enormity of the bodies, due to the environmental stability and the abundance of work, and this is what drives the artist in Mesopotamia to the necessity of declaring the integrated body that emphasizes the human physical muscle function.
8. The natural environment and mythological ideas imposed the entry of some forms into the structure of artistic thought in Mesopotamia, so they were employed at different artistic levels according to the symbolic connotations that were designed for them, such as the crescent and the eight-pointed star, the horned crown, the reed bundle, and other symbols.

9. The inspiration for animal figures was not based on a direct reflection of reality, but rather on symbolic connotations that were inspired by the artist concept of them.

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