

## ***The contemporary Egyptian Wooden Work Between privacy Symbolism and Aesthetics of Plastic Structure***

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### **Abstract**

The research aims to provide an analytical reading of the visual text in contemporary Egyptian wooden work from the perspective of the artist's personal experience. The research problem is crystallized in the scarcity of writings or scientific studies written by artists in the field of wooden working about themselves or about their personal experiences and plastic visions. The process of understanding and interpreting their ideas remains symbols limited to the interpretations and viewpoints of critics and viewers. This prompted the researcher to seek to find an entrance to understand the contents of some contemporary Egyptian wooden work through the works of its pioneers; To know the symbolic implications of it and the variables it, because each artist retains his personal vision and his own symbols that distinguish him from other artists and the extent of the impact of those visions on enriching the field of wooden work technically and aesthetically. The researcher used the descriptive analytical method in providing a visual analytical reading of selected wooden works for some contemporary Egyptian woodworking artists to determine the aesthetic impact of the specificity of the symbol in understanding the intellectual and philosophical content of building their wooden work.

***Accordingly, the research problem was identified in the following question:***

- Is there a relationship between the privacy symbolism of the artist and the aesthetic enrichment of the plastic structure of contemporary Egyptian wooden work?

**key words:** Privacy, symbol, plastic structure

### **Introduction to research:**

Since ancient times, Egyptian woodwork has undergone multiple stages of formation carried out by successive generations, where each generation provided the next with experience and knowledge. The methods and topics varied according to the nature of each stage, its political and social variables, and its impact on the scientific developments that took place during that stage.

Despite this, the principle of symbolism remains strongly present in the works of those successive generations through different time periods. This is due to the connection of the visual culture and the intellectual stock of Egyptian artists to the past, with its cultural diversity that is characterized by the reliance of its arts on symbols of great richness, depth, and privacy. As a result, the Egyptian artist's use of symbolism in many of his woodworks, regardless of their classification or subject matter, was neither surprising nor difficult. In the ancient Egyptian civilization, we find that the artist was the first to take nature as an inspiration to satisfy his needs. He invented many crafts with which he created artistic models that have a symbolic privacy stemming from his religious faith, and his continuous attempt to explain reality. Woodwork and the furniture industry were among the most important of these crafts, which witnessed remarkable development, especially in installation, drilling, inlays, veneering and paint, and the durability of construction. In addition to the production of fine

craftsmanship; the ancient Egyptian had an ingenious ability to creatively express with wood, achieving the functional and aesthetic values for his woodworking.

We can note that in Coptic art that the artist inherited the secrets of the wood industry and played a significant role in preserving the artistic and industrial traditions of the wood industry, as well as other arts and industries that were prevalent in Egypt at the time, which were rich in decorative elements with an abstract symbolic characteristic expressing the prevailing spiritual concept stemming from the Christian faith's influence. During the second and third centuries, this rendered Egyptian art one of the richest arts of the East, with its own peculiar character. We could observe Christian symbols and the appearance of the cross and angels in the woodworking embellishments, which began with the use of plant branches. This definitely attests to the Coptic artist's high level of accuracy in engraving on wood.

With the advent of Islamic art, we find that the artist benefited from the ancient arts that preceded him in terms of manufacturing and decorating wood. Coptic traditions continued in the decoration and manufacture of wood until the Tulunid period when the features of Islamic art began to dominate over the Coptic influence and woodworking became a prominent feature in religious and civil installations, where Islamic models were employed in the work of ceilings, domes, doors, windows, stalactites, inscription bands, the Qur'an chair, and some pieces of home furniture. The functional purposes multiplied, bearing within it a symbolic privacy that combines realism and abstraction that constitutes the essential truth in ideological philosophical thought in search of the endless abstraction of particles into totalities to transform them into a true, clear-sounding cosmic nature, achieving harmony in the unity of the woodworking.

With the development that that era witnessed, it is crystal clear that the contemporary Egyptian wooden formation has preserved its industrial origins deeply rooted through history. It also combines the classic and the modern in themes through which the artist has indulged into expressive fields that went beyond the traditional and touched different levels of innovation in formation, presentation and thought in light of the successive scientific and artistic developments which have generated new artistic concepts that transformed the woodworking from being merely a formal presence into an idea and a symbolic interpretation that mimics the self, identity and humanity of the artist while preserving his privacy.

In the domain of woodworking, several artistic experiences bore the image of this privacy symbolism with multiple meanings through the variation of the technical methods employed and a good knowledge of the plastic capabilities of wood as well as the use of new materials through experimenting and installing those together to form an artistic achievement imbued with deep vision. Perhaps this is what evokes the dilemmas of searching for that privacy symbolism of the artist and its relationship to the idea, its connotations, and interpretations to interact with the expression and the aesthetic visual vision and what it provokes in the recipient's artistic and psychological perception.

Here arise the significance of the research and the need for it in addressing the concept of privacy through the totality of the worlds presented by contemporary woodworking and deciphering those worlds through interpretation and aesthetic analysis in the context of the structure of the woodworking.

### **Research problem:**

The research problem stems from the scarcity of scientific output or literature written by artists in the field of woodworking about themselves or their personal experiences and formation visions. The process of understanding and interpreting their ideas is still limited to the interpretations and viewpoints of critics and viewers. This prompted the researcher to strive to find an approach to understand the contents of some contemporary Egyptian woodworking by attempting to understand the works of its pioneers; in order to fathom the symbolic implications and the variables provoked in these artworks, in light of the fact that each artist retains his personal vision and his own symbols that distinguish him from other artists. Furthermore, it seeks to understand the extent of the impact of those visions on enriching the field of woodworking technically and aesthetically.

### **Accordingly, the research problem is defined in the following questions:**

- Is there a relationship between the privacy symbolism of the artist and the aesthetic enrichment of the plastic structure of contemporary Egyptian wooden work?

### **Research hypotheses:**

#### **The research hypothesizes that:**

- There exists a positive relationship between aesthetic enrichment of the plastic structure of contemporary Egyptian woodworking and the privacy symbolism of the artist.

### **Research Objectives:**

#### **The research aims at:**

- 1- Determining the aesthetic impact of the privacy symbolism on the plastic structure of the Egyptian woodwork.
- 2- Giving the woodwork an aesthetic dimension through the privacy and significance of the symbols.

### **Research Significance:**

**The significance of the research can be due to the following points:**

- 1- It highlights the aesthetic and semantic dimension of symbolism in the Egyptian wooden plastic structure.
- 2- It traces the privacy symbolism of the artist in the contemporary Egyptian wooden formation.

### **Research limitations:**

**This research is limited to:**

- Describing and providing a technical analysis of some Egyptian woodwork that was produced in the period between 2010 and the present time.

### **Research terms:**

#### **1. Privacy**

The word "*khsosia*" or privacy" appears in the contemporary Arabic lexicon as the noun of the verb "*khass*", whose feminine word of "*khsosi*" which refers to what belongs to a person, group, or a specific thing solely; that is, it has an importance that distinguishes it from others. (Omar. Ahmed, 2008, p. 652) .

(Al-Farabi defines it as "the identity of a thing, its specificity, unity, characterization, and uniqueness. Through this definition, Al-Farabi made a connection between privacy and identity as he saw that the uniqueness of a thing entails a reference to its identity and privacy where no commonalities exist). (Ali. Saeed Ismail, 2005, p. 23).

Joseph Kufer sees that privacy may be seen as a state that fosters personal growth, a process integral to the development of self-identity. He thus agrees with what Hyman Gross suggested when he said that, without privacy individuals would be unable to freely express themselves and to engage in self-discovery and self-criticism, because self-discovery and self-criticism of self contributes to one's understanding of oneself and shaping their sense of identity. (Kufer, Joseph, 1987, p.81)

#### **2. Symbol**

As in the al-Mu'jam Al Waseet, the word "*ramz*" or "symbol" is defined as gesture, or a sign, and in rhetoric it refers to hidden metonymy, and the plural word is "*romoz* or symbols). (Anis, Muntasir, Al-Sawalhi, and Ahmed, 2004, p. 372)

Terminologically, the word "*ramz*" or "symbol" there has been always a controversy amongst thinkers and philosophers over setting a specific definition for the "*ramz*" or "symbol" to be adopted by them all. The general meaning of the term "*ramz*" or "symbol" can be stated as (the realization that something stands as a substitute for another thing, or replaces or represents it so that the relationship between the two is the relationship of the specific to the general or the tangible to the abstract, on the grounds that the symbol is something that has a real existence; however; it symbolizes a specific idea or meaning). (Ganoush, Walid, 2019, p. 46)

#### **3. Symbolism**

(The term symbolism has a general meaning and a special meaning in the history of art, in its general or broad sense, it means the use of forms or objects that do not mean themselves, but symbolizes something else, and the effectiveness of the symbol lies in the assumption that it means an understanding through viewing. (Al-Sinan, Maha and Al Issa, Fatima, 2018, p. 53).

#### **4. Symbolism Privacy**

In this work of research, the term " privacy symbolism " refers to (features or properties that characterize the contemporary Egyptian woodwork, which gives it its uniqueness and differentiation, and bears the imprint of the artist himself in expressing himself by selecting the themes, symbols, materials, and technical methods of forming the work in his own way).<sup>(\*)</sup>

#### **5. Contemporary Wooden Works**

(It means every artwork produced in our present time using wood, including plastic treatments and technical methods in the domain of woodwork, through organizing and forming the elements of the artwork in reciprocal plastic relations, to create a unique achievement that has a purely aesthetic value or a utilitarian function). (Rabea, Sayed, 2010, p. 19)

#### **6. Plastic Structure**

(The word "*benia*" or structure, as it is listed in al-Mu'jam Al Waseet dictionary, is derived from the trilateral verb "*bana*" or build. It means building or a manner of building, as well as having the meaning of

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(\*) An operational definition by the researcher.

construction and architecture and how the building will be, or the way it is built upon). (Anis, Montaser, Al-Sawalhi, and Ahmed, 2004, page 72). Zakaria Ibrahim views the term "*benia*" or structure as a regular concept, with its own image and self-unity; because the word (*benia* or structure) in its origin carries the meaning of the total and the whole that is composed of coherent parts, each of which depends on the other, and is determined through its relationship with the other. (Ibrahim, Zakaria, 1990, p. 32).

As a result, the plastic structure in the current study can be characterized as the sum of the parts and components of the overall structure of woodwork, as well as their interplay.

#### **Research Methodology:**

In terms of the theoretical study, this research follows the descriptive analytical method as follows:

#### **• Theoretical framework and clarification of terms:**

#### **First: the concept of symbol between significance and aesthetic value.**

##### **1- The concept of symbol and its philosophical significance:**

Nashwa Sadiq (2012) views that (the symbol represents a moral idea and a mechanism for determining the resemblance between what is emotional on the part of the artist and what is physical when integrating images of sensory things "forms of symbols" and between morals "the symbolized content").

In this way, the symbol is generated by combining the artist's imagination and perceived reality r, as well as the necessity of utilizing a symbol with emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic sense). (Sadiq, Nashwa, 2012, p. 636)

In the same vein, the researcher points out that the symbol is frequently expressed as an aesthetic expression bearing significance and meaning, and it communicates with the mind through the senses. Images, drawings, and signs are used to express the aesthetics. Its goal is to gain a profound understanding of emotional truths, which implies that the symbol allows us to intuitively explore the underlying meanings in nature. It is also exemplified by its ability to reveal hidden meanings through concrete objects, thereby transforming the abstract into the tangible. It is also represented in its ability to show the hidden meanings through what is tangible, thus changing the abstract into tangible. Accordingly, symbols take the form of sensual aesthetic manifestations that depend on addressing the mind and drawing inspiration from connotations and meanings in order to fathom the essence of life with its deepest connotations and its most comprehensive abstract meanings.

If the symbol is a form of artistic intersection between the beauty of sense and the beauty of meanings, then philosophically speaking it takes the value of the truth and its implications, because the symbol is an essence in its philosophical manifestations; in this form it presents itself at the origin of the formation of the world where idealists do not hesitate to look at the symbol as analogous for the psyche and the soul.

Thus, the ideal view of symbolism arises from the denial of tangible truths, in which all you perceive are images that signify ideal facts far removed from reality. The function of the unconscious in the process of attaining those ideal realities also arises, given the limitations of the conscious human mind. The unconscious may influence our behavior and deeds, yet we owe it the process of creation and artistic creativity.

According to Hegel, the symbol is (a sign that lies beyond the subject that bears the substance of the image that you conjure from it... The symbol does not have to be identical to its meaning, unless it has a twofold meaning (for example, it appears as a direct-existing shape and then appears before our eyes as a subject or an image of it). (Al-Khatib, Ibrahim, 2016, pg. 2659).

When it comes to the concept of symbol and its significance in contemporary philosophy, we discover new horizons of knowledge that have made their way into literature and art, and the study of symbols' connotations in artistic work appears to be linked to the possibilities offered by sensory perceptions and the concepts associated with them within the confines of experience and the ability to think and interpret. This can be found in the studies of Susan Langer and Charles Morris Paul, Michel Foucault, and Ernst Cassirer, who view (that what distinguishes a symbol is the existence of certain connections between sensory signals and meanings; for them, symbolic forms are defined by the function they serve in achieving an objective understanding of the contents of artworks that are influenced by their formative and historical context.). (Issa and Al-Amiri, 2016: p. 1338).

##### **2- The concept of the symbol and its aesthetic significance:**

Artistic symbols are inextricably linked to the culture they represent. The meaning of a symbol is usually determined by society, or it is society that gives material elements meaning, so that its entity includes symbols that are compatible with society's components, social customs, and culture.

As a result, the symbol is mostly connected with privacy and identity. No symbol may exist without having civic and historical allusions to a nation or nations and their people, especially if the symbol has communicative features, namely a clear communication language, goals, and objectives, as well as defined and directed functions. People may accept and agree with a symbol, yet they may have differing perceptions of it.

Because the artist decides the value of the symbol and gives material things a certain meaning so that they become symbols, it is unusual to come across a plastic work in which the symbol barely represents its worth and brings it closer to the public's taste. The artist has the potential to modify facts when he imagines the

surroundings and translates them into symbols. In his mind, apparent materialism is reduced to mere symbols, which he understands and translates in accordance with his psychological state and social status. He also customizes them to his preferences and here he achieves the close relationship between the symbol and the aesthetic values derived from the content and the idea and from his emotions and feelings. This is what Al-Nashar points to when he said (The aesthetics of the symbol entails a meaning connected with feelings and conscience, provided that that meaning is realized in a form an image to become a tangible reality by itself, extracted from the idea or reality, contained in the melting pot of ideas) (Al-Nashar, Abd al-Rahman, 1972, p. 15)

Similarly, the researcher argues that the aesthetic values of the symbol change depending on the many artistic domains, thus we sometimes discover the symbol means what it represents rather than what it is, and sometimes it is utilized to replace something else. Because the symbol traces the invisible and weaves its combinations, as well as its aesthetic, sensory, and intellectual aspects, it remains the foundation of the idea and the engine of the notion.

Based on what has just been said, we can deduce that the symbol is created from a collection of images accumulated in the artist's mind, and that the process of reshaping the artistic reality is accomplished through multiple artistic formulations, which is how the symbol will be embodied in his artistic output. This is due to the fact that symbols are semantic signs with meaning and significance. The first is seen in the artwork, but the second is associated with the recipient and his aesthetic preferences.

## **Second: The privacy symbolism in contemporary Egyptian woodwork.**

### **1. A historical overview of the symbol's manifestations in Egyptian woodwork:**

Woodwork in Egypt varied with the diversity of successive civilizations on its land, which led to its prosperity and development through special technical methods which expressed the spirit of the age. (The ancient Egyptians' brilliance was manifested in the creation of woodwork from natural materials found in their surroundings. He opted for wood as a raw material and began to use it only after gaining a thorough understanding of its physical, mechanical, and chemical capabilities. He used it for both worldly and religious objectives.) (Gänsicke, S, 2010, p. 67). He excelled at excavating, decorating, and inlaying ivory and ebony into wooden coffins and other wooden objects, relying on elements and items that carry his own individuality, inspired by the forms of humans, animals, birds, and plants. Characterized by artistic maturity and sensitivity, woodworks carried various symbols depicting the scenes of his daily life and recording events, rituals, and conquests of kings.

Woodwork in Coptic art was prized for its excellence. The Coptic artist painted and carved wood through drawing religious imagery and scenes from Coptic life, as well as geometric and botanical shapes and symbols intermingled with representations of birds and animals. Amongst the wooden works in Coptic art that catch the eye (delicate doors and wooden partitions in churches called "iconostasis", which consisted of small pieces of conical or carved wood). (Abd, Samuel, 2015, p. 45)

The particular symbols of plant motifs utilized in the form of knots and ribbons in the form of wavy plant branches, from which diverse bouquets of flowers emerge, show the grandeur of these artifacts. They were employed as a symbol of the monks in Coptic art, just as the narcissus blossom which was used as a symbol of the annunciation and a sign of victory.

The woodwork industry evolved significantly greatly in Islamic art (particularly during the Mamluk era due to the flourishing urban activity witnessed the woodwork industry, so it was essential to pay attention to wooden artifacts to complement what establishments needed, such as windows, doors, ceilings, and mashrabiyyas<sup>(\*)</sup>, as well as what mosques needed, such as chairs and boxes, Qur'an stands, minbars, and mihrabs.

As a result, Islamic artists produced industrial and ornamental methods, as well as decorative units such as star dishes, which peaked in popularity during that time, particularly the mixed fillings inlaid with ivory, seashells, and Zarnshan<sup>(\*)</sup>. (Al-Mulla, Youssef, 2017, p. 4).

When we take a closer look at these pieces of work, we discern that abstraction and symbolism are two of the most prominent characteristics. The Islamic artist was less concerned with the details of the objects he

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(\*) Mashrabiya is that part that protrudes from the walls of the buildings that overlook the street or the middle courtyard of Islamic houses.

This protruding part rests on stone or wood struts connecting the protruding part of the building, while the three vertical sides of this protruding part are covered with intricate wood turning inserts that are assembled in an artistic way, resulting in geometric and floral motifs or Arabic inscriptions.

(\*) "Zarnshan" is emptying the area to be decorated, then stacking small pieces of different types of wood such as ebony, Indian teak, sandalwood and ivory and covering this area to form a shape. The spaces between the small triangles are filled with adhesive putty and in this way the surface of the lower quality wood can be hidden under the precious wood that covers the surface of the filling.

depicted or drew, preferring instead to focus on their essence and what they meant or symbolized. This is evidenced by his use of decorative plant, animal, and written symbols in an artistic relationship based on repetition, contrast, symmetry, and overlap, with a dash of modification and inspiration from nature, rather than representation.

## **2. The aesthetics of the plastic structure in the contemporary Egyptian woodwork:**

Sinclair, Goldie(2007) noted that (the plastic structure is the set of properties that make a thing what it is, as the sensory qualities gather and give the final form; and if this thing is a composite of several forms, then the organization is what is called the sum of the parts and their relationship to each other. It is the basis that determines the distinctive character of the form). (Goldie, Sinclair, 2007, p. 25).

It's worth noting that (the structure's organization and arrangement vary from one artist to the next, as does the choice of certain forms over others, how to utilize, processing methods, presentation, and determining the link between them. This is also tied to the creative process in the production of any work of art, and the diversity of forms must be matched by a diversity of understanding and awareness of the aesthetic values that the various forms impart). (Lutfi Abdel Amir, Safa, 2016, p. 122).

As a result, the Egyptian woodwork structure system, like any other piece of art, is dependent on the interacting links between the composition's elements and foundations, as well as the artist's technical and performing methods. This is the general body for the bounds of the plastic structure in its function and in the field in which it is positioned; therefore, the work's structural concept is determined by the privacy of the accomplishment as well as the inevitability to which the stages of completion are subject. Therefore, the piece structure is crystallized, and its aesthetic values are manifested in the visual text.

As a result, the researcher believes that when it comes to the structure of a wooden workpiece, we are confronted with a tangible phenomenon: the form through which we see the workpiece, despite its symbolism and diversity of manifestations and plastic treatments, and its link to aesthetic taste. This constitutes a connection between the artist and the recipient in his taste for the aesthetics of the work to comprehend the artistic process and its inception for the artist, resulting in a fresh and modern aesthetic and artistic vision.

Considering this, we find that the shapes, items, and symbols in the plastic structure of the woodwork are the ones that determine the artistic existence of it by determining the value of the idea and its realization, which denotes a mental process in which the form is linked to the content in a reciprocal relationship that ultimately focuses on forming the artistic style and tasting the work's aesthetic values.

## **3. Privacy symbolism in contemporary Egyptian woodwork:**

In the field of contemporary Egyptian woodwork, the artist has a unique and inspiring experience that has become legacy rich in plastic treatments and technical methods. For instance, the Coptic artist benefitted from and expanded on his ancient Egyptian predecessors' arts, and the Islamic civilization benefited from its artists and built on the Pharaonic and Coptic heritage, as well. This all gathered in a melting pot resulting in the emergence of folk art. Even though each experience had its own privacy, originality, and personality that set it apart from the others, it conveyed to us an artistic message rich in symbols and themes. (Hamed, Thorya, 2018, p. 174).

Contemporary Egyptian woodworkers, like their forefathers, were able to capitalize on the arts' plastic advances. There are also people who have made use of modern technology in works that are marked by privacy. Furthermore, there are those who have benefited from the aesthetics of the location and transformed it into special symbols of the artist, expressing his distinct personality, through formations conceptualized in performing methods for a group of sober interdependent relationships, which requires some skill and imagination.

In the domain of woodworking, when an artist selects his artistic production and the items of structure formation that combine symbols with specific meanings, he realizes the mechanisms of linking his works to his own vision, and then works to adopt performance methods to show that vision and remove any complexity in the work itself, which naturally necessitates certain operations beginning with the selection of materials and the identification of structural elements, reaching to molding the final form of the workpiece.

Here arises the significance of combining these variables in finding a new plastic context within the woodwork that demonstrates its aesthetic values, allowing for highlighting details capable of transforming into indications that are formed according to the pattern and system of the work during its presentation. (Rabea, Sayed, p. 12).

From this perspective, the researcher seeks to shed light on contemporary Egyptian wooden artists' approaches to achieving privacy symbolism, as it is a broad system of activities that possesses rich visual items that distinguish its owner through his selection of topics and presentation of them in his artistic achievement as a plastic feature that is unique to others, not far from his current nature on which he was raised and nurtured. Such a nature has opened the way for him to get acquainted with the merits and details of the visual symbols in which

his personality emerges, laying the groundwork for a firm foundation that will later allow for formulating a rich and aesthetically expressive plastic structure.

Despite the artists' constant disagreements about the ideas and themes they address in their works, they all agree that the woodwork, its aesthetics, and its creative and semantic richness are achieved through the artistic symbol and its privacy, which allows it to live on and be passed down through successive generations. The approaches to achieving the privacy symbolism of the contemporary Egyptian woodworking artists can be identified in the following points:

- A. The intellectual and philosophical content of the artistic heritage.
- B. The aesthetics of the place and the surrounding environment and its formulation in a contemporary manner.
- C. The philosophical thought of contemporary artistic trends.
- D. The experimental practice and performative techniques of the artist.
- E. The cultural heritage and the artist's feelings toward events.

• **Technical and aesthetic analysis of wooden works.**

In this section of this research, the researcher will analyze the technical and aesthetic aspects of some selected works of the contemporary Egyptian woodwork to find out the privacy symbolism variables of the artist and their connotations as well as their aesthetic impact on the plastic structure of the work. The items of description and technical analysis of these artifacts will be as follows:

- The artist's name.
- The name of the artwork.
- Dimensions.
- Date.
- The materials utilized.
- An illustration of the idea combined with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist.
- Technical and aesthetic analysis of the woodwork structure.

In the following lines, the researcher provides a description and technical analysis of the selected woodworks:

**The first workpiece - Figure No. (1).**

- **Artist's name:** "Elhamy Sabbah" (\*)
- **The name of the artwork:** Untitled.
- **Dimensions:** 50×70cm.
- **Date:** 2010.
- **Materials utilized:** a variety of natural and local woods.
- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

The workpiece is a wall hanging whose plastic idea is based on the artist's expression of the gracefulness of the human torso of a woman in a semi-anthropomorphic form using natural and local wood. The workpiece is a rectangular frame containing the torso of a woman with an abstract body that has been plastically treated using the prominent engraving technique. The woman is sitting in a squatting position on a rectangular, tiered area, and she appears ready to move and set off, her arms outstretched in a diagonal orientation, ready to move and set off to contain a gaping abyss above a solid floor. The works of Elhamy Sabbah take us to a purely aesthetic world in a unique way. They are inseparable from scenes from reality in figurative relationships of abstract bodies full of expressionism and vitality because they reveal a distinct ability to create an organic relationship between reality and dream, and between dream and artistic symbol that forms the essence of the case treated by the artist and its human roots. In most of his output, the artist does not dispense with the human or his symbol, which has evolved into a form or a sign. The human being, particularly the abstract body of a woman in his work, is the entrance, and here lies the secret of the work, which has become the artist's distinctive style.

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(\*)Elhamy Sabbah is an Egyptian artist, born in Cairo in 1967. He serves as a professor of woodwork at the Faculty of Art Education, Helwan University. He has extensive studies and various perspectives on modernizing plastic structure. His style is characterized by expressive abstract tendency in treating woodworks, seeking the inspiration of his symbols from the human reality combined with imagination.

- **Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

The workpiece is characterized by achieving a set of aesthetic values highlighted by the variables of plastic antithesis which exists when combining hollow and solid forms, and organic and geometric bodies for the sake of achieving the artist's own vision in breaking the barriers of the familiar signs of the symbolic and aesthetic presence of women, their world and the features of their form. He focused on her entity, which refers in his perceptions to the emission of the universe, formation, and life that filters with love and the desire for complete life in freedom and fullness with her presence being a complete, abstract body without features to ascend to the body as an idea not as a physical concept where the state is built and simulated both mentally and sensually. The presence of the woman in this structure dominates all the workpiece and integrates into it without any restrictions. The overlapping between shapes and forms led to a diversity in the levels of formation, which achieved a different rhythm that gave the work a lot of dramatic effects, and its effectiveness was promoted by the color diversity of the wood used between light and dark, which added a degree of integration and consistency between the parts and shapes used in the work.

The tight distribution of the workpiece building elements in color, space, and size played a significant role in attaining balance and compatibility between its parts inside a proportional framework. This boosted the aesthetic worth of the workpiece by giving it a sense of power parity.



Figure No (1): One of Elhamy Sabbah's works, untitled, 2010, where he depicts his own aesthetics of the privacy symbolism of women in the structure of the woodwork as quoted from the artist himself.

• **The second workpiece - Figure No. (2).**



- **The artist's name:** "Abdel Moneim Al-Hagan" (\*)
- **The name of the artwork:** Untitled.
- **Dimensions:**60×60 cm.
- **Date:** 2012.
- **Materials utilized:**Natural woods, plywood, MDF, mahogany veneer, natural cork, genuine leather.
- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

The workpiece is a wall hanging whose plastic concept is to use an Islamic star "mafrukah" with the word "Allah" using geometric distributions calculated using a mathematical system for creating Islamic grids. The artist's use of technical procedures, such as the unloading method and natural veneer to cover the surface of the hollow plywood, demonstrated his resourcefulness. He also used a variety of colors in a literal and appealing way, in addition to the natural leather combination. Abdel Moneim Al-Hagan's style of crafting his woodwork is distinguished by paying attention to the natural wood as an expressive substance to reveal its artistic potential and aesthetic secrets, through many plastic treatments of wooden surfaces within a repetitive composition based on a deep understanding of the structure of the grid system in Islamic art, and a balanced distribution in tight terms of items and symbols, with a contemporary vision as absolute abstract elements, in the form of fillers for murals of a creative character that takes us to a world of pure aesthetics in a style that has a distinctive privacy.

- **Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

The artist presented the work in a unique contemporary picture that was inspired by objects from an Islamic aesthetic history. The artist used the Islamic mafrukah as a structure for the flow of the work's elements, which are all portrayed in the regular, repetitive distribution of items bearing the name "Allah" in order to raise awareness and a sense of the One and Only Creator's magnificence. The artist's use of Islamic embroidered fabric may suggest several things from a symbolic standpoint, such as the original four sides, or the four doctrines of the Islamic faith, or, as some have interpreted it, the square in the middle symbolizing the Kaaba and its four arms symbolizing the constant movement of the crowds who gather around it. All of which are symbolic indications that the artist emphasizes the same through the surrounding elements, in which the kinetic characteristic of the mafrukah is highlighted, which is employed in the work of a tightly organized composition and a good distribution of geometric units of various shapes, color and texture, in addition to the word "Allah" in reference to the presence of a visual driving force emanating from the center, which he filled with the Islamic star that gives indications of greatness and giving in an endless kinetic sequence, symbolizing the cosmic process distinguished by the spread of an infinite number of endless divisions.



(\*) A. El Haggan is an Egyptian artist born in 1939. He serves as a professor emeritus of woodwork at the Faculty of Art Education, Helwan University. He is well known for his superior skill in treating the surfaces of woodwork within contemporary repetitive compositions of absolute formations in the form of fillings with a creative character inspired by the national heritage using the word "Allah" and the Islamic Mafrukah as quoted from the artist himself.

• **The third workpiece - Figure No. (3).**

- **Artist's name:** Hisham Samir<sup>(\*)</sup>
- **The name of the artwork:** Untitled.
- **Dimensions:**92 × 38 cm.
- **Date:** 2014.
- **Materials utilized:** Natural wood veneer, Gilding paper, Mucin, pine wood, plywood.
- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

The workpiece is a wall hanging whose plastic idea is to express one of the themes inspired by the Coptic heritage in a contemporary way using wood veneer and gilding paper with a degree of spontaneity. The workpiece is a rectangular frame containing two overlapping, visually oriented faces riding a large fish facing downward.

The works of Hisham Samir take us to a spiritual world dominated by technical metaphor in the rules of the organized image, to present synthetic principles that make visual contradiction a form of conscious expression mixed with an innate sense of the features of life. The academic formation allowed him to employ many visual items, enabling him to use dual techniques and to present contemporary artifacts with the scent of heritage that combines free personification and symbolism.

- **Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

The aesthetic values of the workpiece are represented in a good understanding of the rationale for its general composition, which is based on specific technical treatments in veneering and gilding, an unconventional vision to express the artist's idea in an abstract fantasy, taking advantage of the color diversity of the veneer and its tactile effect to emphasize the aesthetic dimension and create a clear impact on the recipient's sight, which remains attracted by the staring gazes of both faces that appear to be in a state of frenzy.

The researcher discovers that the work contains an indication based on referring to the symbolic significance behind the shape of the fish, which represents Jesus Christ and a number of miracles in Coptic art, where fish was an essential feature. The Virgin and the Child are shown in the work in the form of two faces as symbols of the oppressed during the early stages of the spread of Christianity

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(\*) Hisham Samir is an Egyptian artist, born in Cairo in 1967. He works as a professor of woodwork at the Faculty of Art Education, Helwan University. He is a member of the Fine Arts Syndicate, a member of the Art Education Alumni Association, and a member of the Coptic and Egyptian Heritage Lovers Association. He has numerous studies and research in plastic structure. His works are featured by a contemporary style by handling elements of heritage and benefiting from the overlap of Coptic art and Islamic art in the production of innovative woodwork.



Figure No. (3) One of Hisham Samir's works; untitled, 2014, where he depicts his own aesthetics of privacy symbolism of both the fish and the face in the structure of the workpiece, as quoted by the artist himself.

**•The fourth workpiece - Figure No. (4).**

- **Artist's name:** (A. El Aa'sar)<sup>(\*)</sup>.
- **The name of the artwork:** dynamic dialogue.
- **Dimensions:** 72 × 21 × 14.
- **Date:** 2015.
- **Materials utilized:** beech wood.

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(\*) A. El Aa'sar is an Egyptian artist born in Cairo in 1964. He serves as an assistant professor of woodwork at the Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University. He has numerous studies and various perspectives regarding modernizing plastic structure. His style is characterized by being constructive coupled with his abstract tendency in handling the surfaces of woodworks.

- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

The workpiece is stereoscopic, treated with engraving, and it represents an abstract vision of a rooster bird in a state of movement and crowing. It is a small wooden block with multi-level organic details punctuated by different spaces. The eyes are engraved in relief, and the general status of forming the workpiece follows the abstract plastic approach. Also, its outer surface is smooth and polished.

The style of Ashraf El Aa'sar is characterized by the symbolism of the subject and the strength of artistic expression through his stereoscopic formations, which were constructed with a constructive formulation and an abstract tendency. As we note that he tended to adopt reduction and simplification of the body, giving himself the freedom to dispose of those works, but according to aesthetic rules that gave the Egyptian wooden formation a contemporary concept. As a result, we may deduce that he developed his semantic signals as a language and a communication instrument, in which he integrated his inspiration for life topics with their impact on modern art. We also discover that he has taken a conciliatory approach, which necessitates a combination of recognized technical approaches in the field of woodworking on the one hand, and the conciliatory approach on the other.

- **Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

The general body enjoys the movement and the harmonious rhythm of intertwined linear relationships between the entry and exit of the figure in volumes represented by a clear rotation and convexity, as if there is a movement that pushes the volumes from within themselves, moving from bottom to top through the organic parts that confine multiple spaces with different bodies that allow the penetration of light into the heart of the structure and its spread in a different way between the dark and the light in the flat planes that make up the work. This lightened the physical weight of the mass, as it represents a whole which interacts with the space, revealing the existence of the other. At the same time, the continuous space between the inside and the outside makes it all connected in the place and full of a sense of multi-modal movement. The composition of the work helps to support this sensation by forming prominent and sinking heights and depressions. This demonstrates the artist's concern in the general formulation of the volumes, rather than the anatomical specifics of their surface, and focusing on the mass with expressive skills and creativity.

• **The fifth workpiece- Figure No. (5).**

- **The artist's name:** "Sayed Rabea"<sup>(\*)</sup>
- **The name of the artwork:** Germination 2.
- **Dimensions:** 75 x 28 x 10 cm.
- **Date:** 2015.
- **Materials utilized:** Mahogany wood, black granite.
- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

The work's plastic concept is based on activating the delusional movement of an abstract plant body inspired by the idea of budding and germination, which is a leaf with thin lines and graceful movement that grows from a branch that takes a quiet streamlined shape in the vertical direction, penetrating the leaf of a circular void in a mutual relationship between the whole and the parts. It's easy to detect the leaf's little vacuum area and its potential inadequacy for the top of the penetrating component. This demonstrates inventiveness in execution and performance precision, and the work earns a deliberate excitement that draws the audience in. The work is mounted on a circular base of black granite.

Sayed Rabea employs a unique philosophy in the creation of his woodwork, which is informed by current events and trends. He gets his inspiration from nature's rich structures, which he employs to develop his ideas and substance. In addition, his work is distinguished by a departure from the stereotypical and traditional in the field of woodwork; that is, from simulation and direct personification, as he focused on the symbolic abstract dimension in his wooden compositions with the goal of revealing the secrets behind the forms, whether

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(\*)Sayed Rabea is a contemporary Egyptian plastic artist, born in Fayoum in 1980. He serves as an assistant professor of woodwork at the Faculty of Specific Education, Fayoum University. He has several studies and diverse visions with contemporary connotations and trends, whose inspiration is derived from the formations of nature which rich in shapes. He is well noted for his abstract style in crafting woodworks.

the abstraction is complete or partial, by simplifying arcs and curves. As a result, it suggests the content of the notion that the artwork is founded on without sacrificing its visual appeal.



Figure No. (4) One of Ashraf El Aa'sar's works, a kinetic dialogue, 2015, where he depicts his own aesthetics of privacy symbolism through using the human element, as quoted from the Artist's Gallery titled "Kinetic Dialogues", Round Hall, Fine Arts, Egypt.

**- Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

Despite the simplicity of the structural limits of the work, and the artist's conviction not to exaggerate in terms of building materials, and methods of treatment, the work expresses a harmonious and balanced use of the spatial spaces, and the stereoscopic forms expressing its subject, achieving a great deal of expressive and symbolic connotations between its borders and its different plastic levels. The technique used in its construction, the compatibility and coexistence of the permeable spatial space in the structure of the workpiece with the infinite space surrounding it in a framework of artistic harmony, in addition to achieving the proportion between the component parts of the workpiece and the moderate distribution of the dimensions and plastic levels that make up its structure.

The space here is clearly useful in highlighting and exhibiting mobility, as it connects the workpiece to the surrounding area, gives a sense of expansive horizons and freedom of movement, while also easing the heavy weight of the materials that make up the workpiece.

Through analyzing this piece of work, the researcher could realize that the work has suggestive values in highlighting the symbolic content of the tree as the enigmatic esoteric axis of the cosmos and the element of unification between the earth (the stem), the bottom of the world (the roots), and the heavenly dimension (leaves and branches).



Figure No.5: One of Sayed Rabea's works, Germination 2, 2015, Private collections, where he depicts own aesthetics of privacy symbolism through using items from the nature in an abstract style as quoted from the artist himself.

• **The sixth workpiece - Figure No. (6).**

- **The artist's name:** "Hani Al-Feki"<sup>(\*)</sup>
- **The name of the artwork:** The journey.
- **Dimensions:** 150 × 75 cm in two parts.
- **Date:** 2020.
- **Materials utilized:** natural and consumed wood.
- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

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(\*)Hani Al-Feki is a contemporary Egyptian plastic artist, born in Cairo in 1978. He earned his Ph.D. in Installation Art. He earned his master's degree in wood arts. He served as both a researcher and lecturer of wood arts, Faculty of Art Education in Zamalek from 2006 to 2015. He organized several individual and group exhibitions, public exhibition, youth salon, and the agenda of the Alexandria. His collections are given to institutions and individuals inside and outside Egypt; other collections can be seen at the Museum of Modern Art and the Egyptian Opera House.

The workpiece represents a wall hanging consisting of two parts that complement each other, depicting a group of human bodies that migrate and move from one direction to another.

Hani Al-Feki has a unique philosophy when it comes to creating woodwork that has contemporary connotations and trends influenced by art education, such as the formation, collection, and synthesis of many relics of old houses and furniture, antique and worn pieces of wood, and adapting them into modern moulds, crystallising the idea of art that is based on the artist's relationship with life and existence, and always striving for revealing solutions for how to deal with wood and using various forms of items stemming from the Egyptian environment and from the artist's character and instinct. That is, it contains new symbols and items that are based on the simplicity and spontaneity of working with materials and focusing on formation as an important aspect, as well as approaches to the concept of sustainability philosophy and how it is related to existential philosophy as a language of art.



Figure No. (6): One of Hani Al-Feki's works, the Journey, 2020, collection of Alexandria Library, where he depicts his own aesthetics of privacy symbolism through focusing on formation as a philosophy for sustainability as quoted from the artist.

- **Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

The artist used a one-of-a-kind system in the creation of the piece, which relies on achieving a set of aesthetic values to combine the variables of formal diversity associated with rhythm, which is based on distinct technical treatments, and a unique method of assembly and synthesis with assemblies that appear random but indicate awareness and intent of a tight distribution of square-shaped geometric spaces at the top of the composition contrasted with the geometric clusters below and in the middle of the busy people. Human organic bodies are organized in a symbolic way that indicates that despite the crowding of life, the journey to the other world will pass and everyone will pass by it. The workpiece, as a whole, contains a richness of contrasting texture that gives it more movement and dynamism, and achieves a dramatic and interactive form in a clear balance confirmed by the unity of the materials used in building the workpiece and the proportion between the parts for plastic treatments based on overlapping and harmony, making visual reading of the work exciting and enjoyable.

**The Seventh workpiece- Figure No. (7).**

- **The artist's name:** "Mohamed Adly" (\*)

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(\*)Mohamed Adly is a contemporary Egyptian plastic artist, born in Sohag in 1984. He serves as a lecturer of woodwork at the Faculty of Specific Education, South Valley University. His style is characterized by emphasizing the aesthetic dimensions of natural wood, through the structural approach in crafting woodwork

- **The name of the artwork:** Untitled.
- **Dimensions:** 90 × 40 cm.
- **Date:** 2020.
- **Materials utilized:** natural wood.
- **An illustration of the idea coupled with a clarification of the features of the privacy symbolism of the artist:**

The workpiece is a wall hanging inspired by folk symbols, and it includes a group of overlapping faces that have been arranged in different positions in a compositional style using natural wood of various colors. The workpiece has been plasticly treated using drilling.

Mohamed Adly, has a special vision in crafting his wooden crafts, drawing inspiration from his items and symbols from the folklore, in an attempt to show what is inside by making use of natural wood as a sensory mediator that highlights the artist's aesthetic vision to enter into the different levels of interaction of the form expressing the intellectual system, to appear all the time with an absolute vision and aesthetic meanings in infinite abstraction in a woodworked structure.

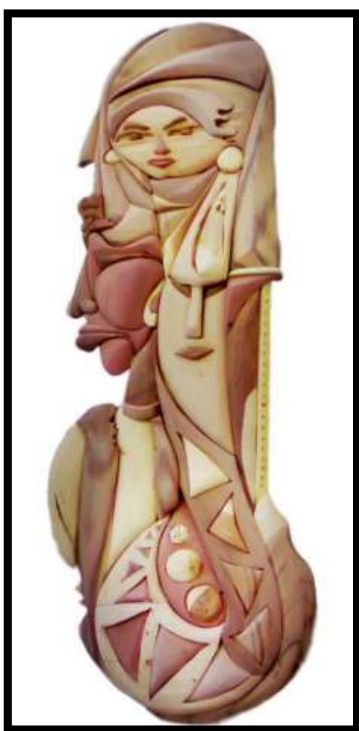


Figure No. (7): One of Mohamed Adly's works, untitled, 2020. Private collections, where he depicts his own aesthetics of privacy symbolism through utilizing the

- **Technical and aesthetic analysis of the structure of the workpiece:**

The artist adopted a unique system in the formulation of the work that depends on achieving a set of aesthetic values to combine the variables of formal diversity associated with rhythm, which is based on distinct technical treatments, and a distinctive style in formulating its symbols and items using plastic exaggeration on the one hand, and on the other side resorting to simplicity, and this diversity earns The workpiece is aesthetically rich and makes the viewer's eye move through the work pieces tirelessly.

In terms of the unity of the material and the ways of its creation, the unity and interdependence of the occupied borders has helped to achieving balance and compatibility between the dimensions and levels of formation through the unity of the items and formation bodies.



Through examining this piece of work, the researcher found out that the work has indicative values that highlight the symbolic content of women as a sign of fertility and development by examining it. He also employed the circle and triangle to create decorative homogeneity, as well as to symbolize goodness and good omen.

### **Findings and recommendations:**

#### **First: Results:**

- 1- The study achieved the research hypothesis, which is that there is a positive relationship between the aesthetic enrichment of the plastic structure of the contemporary Egyptian woodwork and the privacy symbolism of the artist.
- 2- The field of contemporary Egyptian woodwork retained its industrial origins deeply rooted in history and combined the old and the modern in topics through which that the artist could introduce expressive fields of a modern and unconventional vision.
- 3- The researcher revealed that the privacy symbolism of the contemporary Egyptian woodwork artists is a broad system of activities containing rich visual items that distinguishes its owner through his choice of subjects, materials, and technical methods to express his personality through the creation of rich and aesthetically expressive woodwork.
- 4- The researcher manages to limit the approaches used for achieving the privacy symbolism of the contemporary Egyptian woodwork artists, as follows:
  - The intellectual and philosophical content of the artistic heritage.
  - The aesthetics of the place and the surrounding environment and its formulation in a contemporary manner.
  - The philosophical thought of contemporary artistic trends.
  - The experimental practice and performative techniques of the artist.
  - The cultural heritage and the artist's feelings toward events.

#### **Second: recommendations:**

- 1- The researcher emphasizes the importance of incorporating the approaches of privacy symbolism into the formulation of their wooden crafts in a manner that enhances their aesthetic appeal.
- 2- The researcher recommends the need to take advantage of the findings of the current research in teaching the field of woodwork in technical colleges.
- 3- The researcher recommends that more research and studies be conducted in order to provide more conscious analytical and critical studies of the methods of gaining experience and activating their role in society in order to benefit from them in a way that adds a new dimension to art education and teaching methods, particularly in the field of woodwork.

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