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TECHNICAL DIVERSITY IN THE CERAMICS OF HAIDER RAOUF

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ABSTRACT

The current research titled "Technical Diversity in the Ceramics of Haider Raouf" comprises four chapters. The first chapter addresses the research problem summarized in the question: What is the technical diversity in the products of the ceramist Haider Raouf? This chapter also highlights the importance and need for the research, defines key terms, and states the research objective as identifying the technical diversity in the ceramics of Haider Raouf. Furthermore, it outlines the specific research boundaries by studying the artistic works of the artist within the specified time frame. The second chapter is dedicated to the theoretical framework and key indicators, with three sections focusing on the concept and application of techniques, technical diversity in contemporary Iraqi ceramics, and the artist's biography and artistic experience of the ceramist Haider Raouf. The third chapter includes the research procedures, which involved defining the research population consisting of a group of artistic works by the ceramist, selecting the research sample and method, using descriptive methodology, analyzing the research sample comprising three models. The fourth chapter reviews the results, conclusions, and recommendations. Among the key findings of this research are: 1. The technical diversity is evident in the research sample models through construction methods, as well as firing and glazing techniques. 2. Technical diversity is achieved in the research sample models through color display and its impact on the external form. Key conclusions include expanding the ceramist's artistic experience through the diversity of tools and construction aspects for each cognitive achievement, transforming from one position to another through openness and the mechanisms of analysis and reconstruction of various new cognitive and constructional creative texts. This transformation occurs through continuous research and experimentation in cognitive philosophical systems and aesthetic debates on form, content, and style. The list of sources and references follows the recommendations and proposals.

Keywords. Diversity, technical, ceramics, contemporary.

Chapter One

Study Problem

Ceramics art is distinguished as one of the oldest branches of art in most ancient civilizations. It appeared in Mesopotamia since the period of the Stone Ages, where pottery vessels were initially hand-built from coils of clay. This industry progressed significantly over time. During the 10th and 9th centuries BC, ceramic designs were characterized by their geometric shapes relying on lines in construction. Initially, ornamentation covered a known area of the jar's

surface, but it evolved to cover the entire surface of the jar and the ceramic piece, forming a fabric of lines and shapes distinguished by regular geometry and high precision in execution. Over time, these decorations evolved and diversified from one period to another and from one city to another, making Mesopotamian ceramics art one of the most distinctive arts, attracting great interest from both connoisseurs and potters alike. Hence, we find that art in general, and ceramics art in particular, is an affiliation to the environmental place and nature. Mesopotamian ceramics art reflects the skill of the place and the environment from which it emerged, with its deep historical authenticity. As for contemporary Iraqi ceramics, contemporary potters have adopted an art that does not contradict the world of formal diversity and the use of modern techniques in shaping. It was rather an attempt to embark on imaginative freedom and a special expression, with its main goal being to impact the senses of connoisseurs through the artist's innovative techniques and technical diversity, liberating it from the commitment to portraying the external world. Therefore, contemporary potters resorted to evoking cultural heritage and surpassing reality, resorting to using technology as a method representing creativity in shaping ceramic artworks. The works of potter Haider Raouf represent an extension that is almost inseparable from the reality of contemporary Iraqi ceramics in all its manifestations, whether on a technical level or in the structural display of the ceramic achievement. Thus, his works have formed a phenomenon that necessitates research due to the diversity of ceramic products produced by the potter. Based on the above, we can define the current research problem by answering the following question: What is the technical diversity in the works and products of the potter Haider Raouf?

Study Significance

1. Contributes to enriching the cognitive artistic frameworks of contemporary Iraqi art.
2. Assists students, critics, art enthusiasts, and art students in experiencing this diverse artistic experiment.
3. Enriches libraries, art institutions, and all art colleges with the diverse artistic techniques it offers.

Study Objective:

The current research aims to identify: (The Technical Diversity in the Ceramics of Haider Raouf).

Study Scope:

Subjective Boundaries: The subjective boundaries encompass the diverse ceramic products that contain technical diversity.

Temporal Boundaries: The research is temporally defined from the year (2000 AD - 2017 AD).

Spatial Boundaries: The research is spatially defined in Iraq / Babil.

Terminology Specification:

Diversity: Defined by Ibn Manzur as "a type more specific than a genus, and it is also a kind of thing... and a thing may diversify into types."

Defined by (Safa) as: A visual structure composed of formal elements governed by design organization means and linked by structural relationships of extension, symmetry, opposition, division, perforation, harmony, symmetry, and space filling, based on aesthetic and intellectual principles (Ibn Manzur, 1955: 364).

Chapter Two:

Technology between Concept and Application:

Technology has played an active role in various fields of human life and has had a clear and explicit impact on the development of societies in various aspects. Since the dawn of human thought and throughout history, we find technological phenomena that were invented by the first humans and have undoubtedly contributed to managing the wheel of life from that time until the present day. This has been reflected in various arts, including the art of ceramics, where technological innovations have contributed to the diversity of ceramic products, thus reflecting aesthetic values through technical diversity.

Technology is an existential basis that targets life as a means of change and reform imposed by humans on nature to satisfy their needs. It represents the taxes imposed by nature on humans, who in turn impose continuous changes on nature, thus creating a continuous dialectic. The technological trend is the scientific application of scientific knowledge, and this application is capable of bringing progress to society. The technological trend views technology as a tool, with its essence inseparable from the philosophy of science (Ozyas, 1983: 163). We find that both the structure of technology and the system of scientific knowledge move in a dialectic in which positions are exchanged. Technology is employed in the service of science, and science is employed to innovate specific technology. However, in some fields, technology transforms humans into means and tools, suppressing their creative and liberating energies (Habermas, 2003: 52).

The concept of technology is related to performance experimentation, and its goal lies in seeking change and transformation, as previously assumed. It is a means to achieve goals, and this instrumental perception of technology directs all efforts to establish a correct relationship between humans and technology. Proper use leads us to end a means that seeks to deviate from what is conventional and agreed upon. This is the essential point in this attempt (Ahmed, 2006: 114).

The modern era has contributed to giving technologies, materials, and manual performance skills in visual arts a larger space than previously used. Various trends and schools have emerged in the modern and post-modern eras, where materials, execution techniques, and tools used in pottery and glazing have played an unprecedented role in presenting artworks in a new way (Maligi, 2002: 187).

The statement that arts are a form of technology is similar to the production of pottery and tools. This means that all arts are socially and scientifically advanced methods to achieve the execution of works and regulate and organize certain phenomena to achieve desired results. They are derived and acquired skills and processes that are transmitted through culture and involve certain functional tools. Arts and utilitarian technologies share many things, as they often intersect and interact, especially in those arts that involve utilitarian and aesthetic goals (Monroe, 1971: 57-58).

The process of organizing elements or components can be translated through various techniques in artistic work. Through these techniques, the ceramic artist can delve into and control the material to transform it into an artistic subject, aligning with their imaginative concept. Thus, artistic work must result from a systematic and sequential approach, allowing the artist to achieve control over the material. The process of organizing elements, which

includes its internal movement, adds a dynamic character to the artwork, keeping up with aesthetic and conceptual changes in art and technology (Ibrahim, 1966; 69).

Technology, with its emphasis on knowledge, supports its development by enabling the formulation of unique self-knowledge. In the present time, it represents the uniqueness of the field of nature within modern technology. It has become an inexhaustible source of knowledge and possesses a special character that includes aesthetic knowledge. This interchange does not lie in action, usage, or exposure, but rather in the revelation, as it is a product of revelation, not production. In modern technology, revelation is stimulation through organizing and collecting our perceptions (Ghanem, 2013: 46).

Artistic works encompass a wide range of aesthetic achievements, carrying the artist's ideas. However, they also include various forms depending on the technical and technological basis to demonstrate the coherence of the subject or idea pursued by the artist. Technology plays an important role in ceramic works as it represents the accumulation of knowledge and the ability to express and embody ideas through specific treatments. Ceramic works are produced as expected, and only the ceramic artist can use them according to their personal and aesthetic style and expressive goals. Technology is essential for ceramic work (Mahrous, 1978: 90).

Technology plays a crucial role in various art, science, and knowledge fields throughout ancient and modern times. It has contributed to the development of many techniques in the evolution of ceramic art, changing the quality of the materials used (clay) and their specific functions and preparation methods (purity and temperature) (Ghanem, 2013: 46).

By understanding ideas and methods, leading ceramic artists worldwide strive to conduct artistic experiments based on the required ceramic conditions for shaping dynamic visual surfaces, coloring, firing, and exploring them. In addition to many factors such as water, air, dust, fire, color, and the pleasure of visual connection, the ceramic artist relies on experiments that enable them to make great discoveries in their work. The ceramic process and its mechanism facilitate experimentation and the discovery of new things, enabling the artist to achieve their goals (Wadi, 1966: 67).

To control artistic creativity in ceramics, technology plays a fundamental role in ceramic production. Without technology, the ceramic artist cannot generate their ideas or express their meaning, as technology relies on all levels, especially in ceramics. Its existence cannot be denied or diminished, as without technology, no one can control the material (Ibrahim, 2006: 68).

Ceramic artwork holds a special status as an independent subject that can be presented through various techniques. This is the difference between a ceramic artist and any other person, as the artist can highlight the characteristics of the materials and use them to shape the ceramic subject for interaction in execution (Matar, 1989: 23).

Therefore, artistic performance and awareness are essential in ceramic work. The crystallization of form technique is achieved through the organization of parts, and form is one of the most important aspects of ceramic work. It creates visual patterns in any sense, whether harmonious with social references, aesthetic taste, or in conflict with them (Shubani, 2004: 34).

The potter was striving to research and develop to find new techniques that would enable him to find a channel through which creativity could be achieved, allowing the artist more freedom

and less restriction. Through the diversity of these techniques, artistic creativity is achieved, contributing to the development and diversification of the skills of potters and expanding their field. This diversity and development have increased the number of practitioners in this beautiful art. The creative process has emerged by using various materials, whether foreign or local, and focusing on form. Additionally, the availability and richness of materials have emphasized using local materials during the shaping process, which are characterized by good performance and suitability for use (Heidegger, 1998: 57).

Despite using some concepts related to performance aspects in the field of ceramics, as the work is only done through a series of treatments that require gradual completion of the stages, regardless of ease or complexity. This technique is the basis for measuring performance skills, whether they are artistic works or other practices that require determining the level of performance in order to achieve the skills necessary to establish this connection. The potter must have a certain degree of readiness to deal with the required tools and have the manual skill and artistic experience to bring any artwork to the desired level (Bayati, 2009: 34).

Technology refers to the application of specific scientific data in order to obtain specific results. It also refers to a set of scientific procedures that use knowledge to disseminate results according to the personal behavior of the potter, enabling him to create his own style (Hawser, 2008).

Due to the association of modern technology with science and industrial advancement in the field of raw materials and tools, it has expanded the creativity of potters with their raw materials. These techniques have become open possibilities and options that enrich artistic works in general. Art and science have been two different phenomena in the field in the past period. Art dealt with scientific research according to its own style, using different methods such as numbers, triangles, and stars in different ways. Both have similar goals at times, such as discovering the truth of the world, explaining it to people, and controlling them in certain aspects. Scientific achievements have been appreciated by people, as geometric shapes have appeared in art. The art sciences have also been studied as a harmony with existence (Maligi, 2002: 198).

Technology for the artist is a tool with which he manipulates the employed material and clarifies the artistic work in terms of texture and immediate reactions, such as polishing, adjacent embossing, smoothness and roughness, protrusion and recession, and color contrast, in order to achieve the desired effect and reach the desired beauty. Some artists rely on a combination of technique and materials. This function is one of the characteristics of contemporary ceramics because it uses different materials and techniques that primarily rely on a combination of visually appealing features or a combination of more than one style, just like combining abstraction and geometry to achieve aesthetic effect. The contemporary spirit of people has greatly contributed to achieving the desired effect in this process (Ozyas, 1983: 154).

After studying the nature of the technique and the artist's ability to deal with it appropriately, the thought turns to the mechanism of receiving the artistic achievement with its other elements for the technique is one of the evaluative elements of the artistic achievement. When investigating the elements of the artistic achievement, their identity is not clearly defined without defining the technical technique used. Techniques are the main axis that brings form,

material, and content into existence. Through them, these elements take their final form in revealing the language of the artistic achievement. Thus, we see that the technical process is always an integral part of the artistic achievement, not a subsequent addition. When we interrogate the artistic achievement, it responds to us with the sensations of the material according to its great specificity and with the gestures of the form through the language of the content that calls for the taste of the recipient (Ghanem, 2013: 46).

The material is significant in its expressive value, as its potential for appearance cannot be limited to a specific framework or under specific methods. This is because it is unlimited in its offerings through its different nature, forms, colors, and textures. The beauty of the material is the foundation on which the ultimate beauty is built. However, regardless of the material, does it have the audacity to depart from its material nature and transform into a creative state without any mentioned technique? Surely, this would be difficult. The material, regardless of its form, color, or texture, will not transcend its material realm until it is selected by conscious thought with intentionality, after skilled hands have touched it to gain experience in its nature. This is achieved through suitable techniques and technical methods for each material (Read, 1983: 89).

The diversity of materials in artistic production is evident. Clay, glass, and oxides are fundamental materials for ceramic production, while oil and the pictorial surface, whether it be canvas or otherwise, are materials for pictorial production. Sculpture materials also vary, such as clay, plaster, stone, bronze, wax, and other materials that require their use. These materials are not easy to handle in their raw nature, as each material requires the artist's effort to tame and subject it to various acquired and derived techniques, thanks to experience and skill that transform it into a pliable material that suits the style, form, and content of the artistic production. The artist selects the materials not only for their ease of use or out of necessity but rather because they are materials that require special treatment and because they provide a specific effect (Ibrahim, 1966).

The process of selecting raw materials is only achieved through the technique that guides the movement of the material within the ceramic production until the final steps in artistic production are completed. This allows the artist to present their structural materials with the highest technical and aesthetic value when they appear in the ceramic production. This process begins with the first stage of preparing the materials, which is the selection of ceramic clay. This stage, on which the success of ceramic production depends technically and aesthetically, is crucial (Shubani, 2004: 41).

Technology, to the extent that the principle of knowledge prevails in it, supports its launch with the possibility of formulating unique self-knowledge for its own knowledge. In the present time, the uniqueness of the function of natural science within modern technology is represented, in addition to its unlimited dominance that is difficult to resist. It has become a mutual source in the act of knowledge, with a special character that includes the characteristics of aesthetic knowledge. This mutuality does not lie in the act and use, nor in the use of means, nor in revelation because it is a product in the sense of revelation, not a product in the sense of manufacture. In modern technology, revelation means stimulation, through organizing and collecting our perceptions (Shubani, 2004: 46).

Therefore, the ceramic subject is shaped by the artist according to technical performance and the artist's consciousness, both of which are integrated in their artistic work. In this work, the artist's role in crystallizing the form through organizing the parts is crucial. The external form in which the artistic work appears is a connection between the artist's self and what they know and have acquired from technical artistic techniques that contribute to the execution of their artistic work. Thus, "form is the most important part on which the construction of the artistic work is based, and form and structure or the arrangement of parts."

Contemporary Technical Diversity in Iraqi Ceramics:

Ceramic art is a modern art form despite its roots extending thousands of years. Despite its relatively short history, it has approached the movement of visual arts, both locally and globally, by establishing objective equations between concepts and interpretations regarding the establishment of signs and meanings in the art itself and the grounding of its achievements. It has indeed been a compressive and stylistic borrowing direction (Zubaidi, 1986: 45).

The contemporary ceramic artist expresses the human emotions through their material, which can be observed through psychological and direct visual motives in the imitation of nature, giving diverse signs and symbolic codes in their own technical style. Some philosophers of beauty argue that art is the effective ability to refer everything to expression. By this statement, they mean that any subject touched by the artist's hand cannot remain a mere subject, but it becomes a phenomenon that carries within it expressions that make it inclusive of symbols, values, meanings, and connotations filled with emotions and feelings (Zubaidi, 1986: 46).

Since ceramics, in general, is one of the important branches of visual arts, its significance lies in its intrinsic value, which is directly related to its execution mechanisms as an artistic work with distinctive features and values that make it a difficult art form that cannot easily change its vocabulary. This is due to the technical processes involved, such as firing, colors, chemical and physical reactions, as well as measurements and balance in proportions. All these factors have made it heavily reliant on itself, fearing slipping into the pitfalls of imitation and reproduction from others, as well as the fear of falling behind the global march of visual arts as a whole.

As an Iraqi artistic experiment, ceramic art has gained distinguished recognition in the art community, not only in Iraq but also in the Arab and global world. Despite the novelty of this experiment, it has historical roots and artistic cultural depth. Under the guise of this artistic experiment, works by artists who played a significant role in establishing scientific, cultural, and artistic foundations in various artistic directions, notably the contemporary abstract expressionist movement, have emerged.

Ceramic work is the result of a series of intellectual and mental inspirations born from the contemporary ceramic artist's perception of the objects they interact with. When ceramic work in Iraq operates within the framework of intellectual context, it is not a deduction from ordinary facts but rather assumes a new world by referring back to a comprehensive reality influenced by the environment. The impact of the Iraqi ceramic artist is collective rather than individual, as they work to embody the distinctive conditions that the environment has distinguished for them and attempt to reflect those ideas in their ceramic achievements

through their interaction with the environment. This allows them to comprehend its data, factors, and the aesthetics of the artwork. This comprehension, within its environmental framework, is associated with various intellectual references that give the context wide and influential meanings. This is because the artist's primary challenge has always been the environment, from ancient times to the present.

Therefore, art in general, and ceramic art in particular, does not contradict the real world. Instead, it is an attempt to embark on imaginative freedom and absolute expression. Its goal is to influence the senses of the viewers through the artist's various or innovative techniques and to liberate itself from the obligation to depict reality as it appears in ordinary vision. It now presents an abstract content that goes beyond tangible reality because it is a genuine addition originating from the artist's consciousness (Matar, 1989: 22).

Thus, contemporary Iraqi ceramic art, which emerged from an abstract touch, has somewhat continued to interact with other modern trends through renewed perspectives by prominent artists who have distinct characteristics and significant contributions to the journey of contemporary ceramics. This does not mean that the Iraqi ceramist was born with the birth of these modern trends in art, but rather, they possessed the awareness that qualifies them to be contemporary artists carrying a great artistic heritage. They are the heirs of Mesopotamian sculpture. Therefore, artistic and technical expression of form has appeared significantly in the works of important Iraqi artists in the field of contemporary ceramics.

The biography and artistic experience of the ceramic artist Haider Raouf:

Haider Raouf Saeed Al-Tahir was born in Baghdad in 1964. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics from the University of Baghdad in 1986-1987, a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Babylon, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts at the University of Babylon. He is a member of the Iraqi Artists Syndicate and the Iraqi Artists Association, as well as the Vice President of the Iraqi Artists Association in Babylon. He holds the title of "Professor" and teaches Ceramic Techniques for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. He has supervised numerous doctoral theses and master's theses in the field of ceramics both nationally and internationally. He has participated in group exhibitions since 1992, including exhibitions at the College of Fine Arts at the University of Babylon, the Iraqi Artists Association, and the Iraqi Artists Syndicate. He has held personal exhibitions both within and outside the country, having organized 7 personal exhibitions. He has received numerous awards and certificates in various exhibitions, including the Creativity Necklace in 2020. He has created murals and sculptures in various government departments, institutions, and public squares in several cities in Iraq. He has published several research papers in scientific conferences and on the internet regarding the aesthetics and techniques of contemporary ceramics. His research has been published in academic and peer-reviewed scientific journals, as well as in journals indexed in Scopus, and presented at scientific conferences both nationally and internationally. He has established a private laboratory and a large ceramic studio equipped with all the necessary facilities for producing his diverse artistic works (Haider Raouf, 2024, Jan 5).

Theoretical Framework Indicators:

1. Technology in ceramics is one of the most important aspects of creative activity, as it demonstrates the genius of the artist and his creative ability.
2. The techniques used in ceramic products varied according to the time periods experienced by the artist.
3. The shapes of ceramics varied and their importance according to their intended form.
4. Most ceramics addressed themes from ancient heritage that corresponded to the form and function of the ceramic.
5. Ceramic artists addressed themes practiced by ancient humans such as the forces of nature, symbols, human, animal, and plant forms, where there was a clear connection between them and the aspects of the universe to illustrate religious ideas and the growth of awareness through understanding their conceptual imagery.
6. We notice that contemporary products represent expressive forms of the hopes, aspirations, and beliefs of contemporary humans, where the ceramist created diverse products that addressed various contemporary and traditional themes technically.
7. The ceramist works on transforming the objects and shapes surrounding him into symbols with expressive significance and a specific function, as natural forms, abstract forms (geometric or botanical), and even the objects he produces all may reflect his diverse reality.

Previous Studies:

The formal and technical diversity in Greek ceramics products / Waad Mohammed Husseini Al-Obaidi / Journal of Sustainable Studies / Fourth Year / Volume Four / Issue One / 2022.

The study included four chapters as follows: The first chapter addressed the research, its importance, objectives, and limitations, then defining the terms. The second chapter included two sections, the first section addressed the formal diversity in Greek ceramics, while the second section was titled the technical diversity in Greek ceramics. As for the third chapter, it included the research procedures, which consisted of the following: A. Research community: It included contemporary ceramic works completed within the specified research period, followed by the analysis of three purposive samples. The fourth chapter included the discussion of results, conclusions, and recommendations.

Al-Obaidi's study differs from the current study by addressing the technical diversity in ancient Greek ceramics, while the current research addresses the products of the contemporary ceramist Haider Raouf, which represent contemporary ceramic products and are an extension of Mesopotamian art.

Chapter Three

Research Community:

The research community included a collection of contemporary ceramic works by the ceramic artist Haider Raouf, totaling fifteen ceramic works, after reviewing what was published on the internet, books, and magazines, as well as the artist's personal collection.

Research Tool:

The researcher relied on the indicators resulting from the theoretical framework as references in analyzing the research sample.

Research Sample:

The research sample was selected intentionally, consisting of three contemporary ceramic works, based on the following criteria:

1- The selected works contain a technical diversity of executed forms.

2- The research community was presented to a group of expert professors.

Research Method:

The researcher adopted a descriptive-analytical method in analyzing the research sample to achieve the objective.

Sample Number (1)
Work Name: Woman and Man
Measurement: 30 × 50 cm
Production Date: 2004 AD
Ownership: Private collection

Through visual observation and analysis of this work, we find that it consists of two oval-shaped pieces with symbols, lines, and marks that have historical and civilizational references. The first piece is positioned horizontally, while the second piece is placed vertically, and both pieces are supported by a wooden base. The artist used multiple pieces in this arrangement to achieve balance and ensure clear visibility for the viewer. We can observe the technical diversity of the ceramic artist Haider Raouf, as he deviates from the conventional contexts of ceramics, such as vessels and vases, and seeks to establish a new aesthetic vision by using diverse materials during the firing process. This is done within the framework of a new intellectual perspective that stems from the artist's new perception of nature, his continuity, and his civilizational dialogues. Additionally, the artist strives to keep up with technological advancements in the field of sculpture by using the raku technique in firing these works.

Therefore, ceramics no longer remain confined to the replication of natural forms, but in this model, it represents a sculptural and diverse mass with multiple meanings and connotations, colored with oxide pigments. The technique has had a significant impact on shaping this beautiful product. Thus, it possesses a compositional and structural capacity beyond the usual experiment. The subject of "Woman and Man" has been tackled by many artists, drawing inspiration from society, its movements, and emotions. The ceramic artist aims, through his aesthetic discourse, to reveal the purest emotions of the viewer towards human feelings in life,

engaging the mechanisms of perception to uncover the structural pattern of his visual creation. The diversity in the aesthetic discourse is expressed through the solidarity between the parts, forming the fundamental structure of the artwork according to the established design, which can be reached and discovered through the connotations derived from the content and the colors that have created aesthetic implications on the surface of the ceramic, allowing for various interpretations. The artwork has been constructed with a structural system controlled and integrated by the technique. The ceramic artist has succeeded in creating chromatic relationships with aesthetic values based on sensory perception by introducing the technique. Furthermore, the aesthetic concepts have crystallized in the transformation of things superficially, by investing in the realized spaces to shape symbols or attempt to achieve a contrasting texture between the recessed and protruding on some of those spaces.

Thus, we find that the ceramic artist has worked on creating diversity through the presence of content and has worked on an independent structural mechanism, that is, a moment of rapid disappearance, relying on the binary structure (form-content) and the binary (color-meaning). Therefore, the meaning no longer emerges from the content itself but from the color relationships themselves. Additionally, we can see that the artist Haider Raouf insists on the processes of technical diversity in his ceramic works to achieve a formal organization characterized by composition, diversity, and interplay between its parts.

Sample number (2)
Artwork name / Nuzari Panel
Artwork dimensions / 40x40
Year of production / 2014
Artwork's significance / Private property:

The artwork consists of a ceramic panel that somewhat resembles the Nuzari panels from the Mesopotamian civilization in terms of shape. In the upper right corner, there are rectangular geometric shapes in various colors, while the upper left and lower right corners have walls. On the left side, there is a white dove with drawings of geometric shapes (triangles, straight lines, and ears of wheat) on its surface. Additionally, there are plates on the top and the right side containing cuneiform writings. The artist used white glass for the dove and cuneiform writings, and oxide technique for the rectangular and square geometric shapes in the upper right, which are colored in shades of blue, red, yellow, gray, white, and orange. These colors are distributed in a harmonious manner, resembling visual art to a great extent.

The use of realistic ceramics for these shapes represents a deliberate diversity by the ceramic artist. Placing the dove, which is a universal symbol of peace, carries agreed-upon connotations due to its inherent qualities (gentleness, beauty, fertility, love). The artist has moved his work from its environmental reality to diversity by incorporating religious and sacred aspects inspired by Mesopotamian thought and contemporary Iraqi art, as the color white carries symbolism associated with social thought and its connection to sacred places in the Mesopotamian civilization. Furthermore, the movement has a human dimension that seeks freedom, despite one of its wings being attached to a wall, resembling a prison. The dove is depicted in a state of anticipation, as if it is seeking and singing for peace to preserve peace in the land of Iraq. Additionally, the artist has engraved shapes on the wings of the dove, such as the triangle, symbolizing fertility in the ancient history of Iraq, as well as the ear of wheat, representing fertility, life, growth, and giving. The straight lines symbolize continuity and work. Moreover, their white color symbolizes goodness, purity, and cleanliness. Thus, the symbol of the dove here has been embodied by the artist with excessive effectiveness. This artistic form has dominated the overall components of the ceramic achievement, and through this active presence of the dove in this form and within this space of the artistic work, it has achieved what the artist aspired to through his artistic vision and its clear and explicit reflection and its visual attractiveness. As for the cuneiform writings in this work, as forms, they represent a diverse and varied image derived from Mesopotamian heritage. The letters, with their cuneiform or vertical form, symbolize strength and rise, adjacent to the strength of the dove. Thus, the cuneiform writings have been inspired as a heritage that interacts as visual units, but it goes beyond that. The cuneiform writings have become a new content that plays a different role from its role in the past, as they used to work as a document for recording the daily life of ancient Iraqis. Therefore, the technique in this sample worked to display the shapes and symbols in a diverse and different manner, carrying important and diverse connotations that represent an important stage in the history of ancient Iraq.

Sample number (3)
Work name / Prayer
Work measurements / 40 × 50
Production year / 2004
Work profitability / Private property:
A ceramic work consisting of three separate intersecting blocks in the direction of a semi-square shape, executed in a manual construction method and hollowed from the inside,

resembling (the human face) with its details and featuring diversity in symbols related to the Mesopotamian civilization engraved on those faces with black hair in moving waves at the second half of the square (the face). Its outer lines are soft curved geometric lines, and it is evident that the ceramist (Haider Raouf) affirmed his connection and love for the ancient Iraqi heritage, where the large Mesopotamian eyes that accompanied most of its various civilizations in the Sumer period, but the ceramist here also distinguished himself in achieving technical and engineering diversity of the form as well as high expressive ability despite the simplicity of the representation represented by its organization. The ceramist worked on refining the texture here and worked on utilizing the technique used, which is Raku ceramics, to show us symbolic elements in its visual composition. Therefore, he tried to make it match the shape of the sculptural piece of a human head (portrait) or a rotated pebble piece with contrasting color and texture, to show his desire to represent elements of reality. The ceramist (Haider Raouf) presented a diverse artistic text, but within a new mechanism in which he did not forget his references also returning to ancient Iraqi art, in which this type of ceramic composition in sculpture was abundant, especially the prominent ones. Therefore, we see that the contemporary Iraqi ceramist, when he resorted to drawing inspiration from the past, did not mean the pictorial icon itself, but rather the spirit that moved it through the geography of transition and the adoption of diverse terrains and pulling it into our extended time within the debates of creative controversy. The past is part of the present, and the present has not reached its current state without that previous history. Therefore, the ceramist resorted to interrogating the ceramic achievement through the texture of the ceramic body and its color and by virtue of clay preparation techniques and the technique of coating the outer surface with pots, colors, and glass, in addition to engraving and adding techniques. Thus, the ceramic achievement became a surface qualified to accommodate the material's capacity and the glass techniques added to the ceramic composition surface to reveal the aesthetic and expressive energies, in addition to the color that did not deviate from the iconographic environment system of Iraq.

Chapter Four

Results:

The diversity in these ceramic works can be divided into two main categories:

A. The diversity is evident in the external form, as seen in all sample models.

B. There is diversity in the technical level, where the ceramist used different techniques for each type of ceramics to suit the nature and subject of the executed form.

1. Technical diversity is evident in the research sample models through construction methods, as well as firing and glazing techniques.
2. Technical diversity is achieved in the research sample models through color display and the impact of color on the external form.
3. The diversity of the relationship between functional dimensions in contemporary ceramic products confirms the dominance of aesthetic themes and the expressive significance of form in all sample shapes.

4. The ceramist has moved towards occupying spaces with various shapes, sometimes with a coherent story and a single dimension, as in model number (2), and other times with conflicting stories and two faces, as in model (3).
5. The diversity in form is reflected in the content and has had an impact on most sample shapes.
6. The sample models demonstrate richness in the details of shapes, ornamentation, and coloring.
7. Diverse firing techniques enhance the aesthetic values of ceramic form, in addition to the color effects of oxides and pigments.

Conclusions:

1. Attention should be given to the construction of ceramic works and their technical and artistic functions, as well as the focus on formal diversity.
2. Going beyond the conventional and breaking the silence and stagnation of forms, achieving harmony between function and diversity, and emphasizing aesthetic, psychological, and social dimensions. This, in turn, has realized the technical diversity, which is reflected in the ceramic form.
3. The diversity of ideas has changed the structure and diversity of ceramic composition and the imaginary image in contemporary ceramic products.
4. The diversity of structural appearances in artistic works comes from accumulated knowledge that moves from one site to another through exposure to various cognitive and structural tools. This transformation moves through continuous research and experimentation in cognitive and aesthetic systems within form, content, and style.

Recommendations:

The researcher recommends organizing study circles and critical seminars to explain the mechanism of working with technical diversity and the extent of their benefit in daily life.

Suggestions:

The researcher proposes conducting the following study: Technical diversity in modern American ceramics.

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