



## Philosophy of Art Criticism Between Theory and Practice

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### ABSTRACT

Some philosophical theories Provides us a new scientific visions in the contemporary of art criticism Philosophy. These visions showing a more precise understanding of uncovering truths and analyzing the structures of artworks in a more professional and accurate manner than traditional critical approaches. To avoid confusion between the essence of art criticism and the philosophy of art criticism, we have developed this comprehensive study, bridging the gap between theoretical and practical applications within the academic learning process. It aims to understand art criticism according to both classical methods and modern art criticism, and to examine the differences between these two approaches in the visual arts in general. It is also worth noting that art criticism is currently the dominant approach in art circles and academic curricula across most specialized educational institutions. This approach may appears traditional to describe and analysis of artworks, limited to either impressionistic or contextual methods. The latter approach focuses on the artist's biography and social and emotional life, while the former considers the artwork as a matter with fundamental compositional principles, or the latter is a simplified historical method. Criticism in this way deals with the artwork and the artist equally, and they can't be separated. Even if the modern constructivist method considers the artwork to be self-generated and excludes the role of the artist in it, it is ultimately related to scientific judgment as a fundamental result, not a definitive one, in the critical process as a whole.

## فلسفة النقد الفني: بين النظرية والتطبيق

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الملخص:

تقدم لنا بعض النظريات الفلسفية رؤى علمية جديدة في فلسفة النقد الفني المعاصر. تُظهر هذه الرؤى فهماً أدق لكشف الحقائق وتحليل بنى الأعمال الفنية بطريقة أكثر احترافية ودقة من المناهج النقدية التقليدية. ولتجنب الخلط بين جوهر النقد الفني وفلسفته، قمنا بتطوير هذه الدراسة الشاملة، التي تسد الفجوة بين التطبيقات النظرية والعملية ضمن العملية التعليمية الأكاديمية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم النقد الفني وفقاً لكل من المناهج الكلاسيكية والنقد الفني الحديث، ودراسة الاختلافات بين هذين المنهجين في الفنون البصرية عمومًا. ومن الجدير بالذكر أيضاً أن النقد الفني هو حالياً المنهج السائد في الأوساط الفنية والمناهج الأكاديمية في معظم المؤسسات التعليمية المتخصصة. قد يبدو هذا المنهج تقليدياً في وصف وتحليل الأعمال الفنية، إذ يقتصر على المنهج الانطباعي أو المنهج السياقي. يركز المنهج السياقي على سيرة الفنان وحياته الاجتماعية والعاطفية، بينما ينظر المنهج الانطباعي إلى العمل الفني كمسألة ذات مبادئ تركيبية أساسية، أو كمنهج تاريخي مبسط. بهذا الشكل، يتعامل النقد مع العمل الفني والفنان على حد سواء، ولا يمكن فصلهما. حتى وإن اعتبر المنهج البنائي الحديث العمل الفني نتاجاً ذاتياً، مستبعداً دور الفنان فيه، فإنه في نهاية المطاف يرتبط بالحكم العلمي كنتيجة أساسية، لا نهائية، في العملية النقدية برمتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فلسفة النقد الفني، علم الجمال، البنوية، نظرية المعرفة، الفن المعاصر.

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- 1-1- **Research Issue:** Art criticism represents one of the academic skills in the processes of analyzing, judging, and accurately interpreting artworks of all kinds and across different eras. However, the similarity of interpretations, for example, and the convergence or divergence of critical visions between one critic and another, or even between researchers, has created a certain gap in understanding the critical process in a more objective and scientific way. That is, the issue has become more about the similarity in the processes of describing artworks and their techniques than about their cognitive and philosophical aspects. Perhaps what modern philosophies and theories have brought in the fields of art, aesthetics, history, and the humanities, with their diverse new foundations and theories, has broadened the horizons of analytical vision in the field of art, and has made the artwork not merely a visual icon perceived by the senses or emotions, but rather an important cognitive reality connected to the social spirit, traditions, thought, goals, symbols, and ideological perceptions of the individual and society. When philosophical and epistemological concepts and theories intertwine with criticism, the mechanism of criticism transforms from contextual reading to precise, constructive analytical insights. Herein lies the research problem: to identify and compile the most relevant theories in art with the process of art criticism, apply them to artworks, and study the resulting case studies.

**Keywords:** Philosophy of art criticism.

- 1-2- **Research Importance:** The importance of art criticism remains a focus of attention for artistic circles and specialized academic and research institutions. It is considered an important academic approach for training researchers and specialists in the field of visual arts and other related fields. The core of this research, in terms of combining philosophy and epistemological theories of art with criticism, is a significant step in raising the efficiency of researchers and critics in the field of art criticism and their studies in analyzing artworks in a precise and objective academic manner that serves the artistic community and future postgraduate research and teaching.
- 1-3- **The Goals:** Applying a new vision in contemporary art criticism based on some humanistic philosophies in art to conduct a more accurate and objective analysis of artworks in a comprehensive cognitive manner.
- 1-4- **Research Scope:** The research scope was distributed within the field of visual arts such as Painting, design and sculpture as the subjective methodological limits, and included the available temporal dimensions to serve the research, especially ancient and even contemporary artworks, as they serve the research process in analysis, representation and application, as well as the open spatial dimensions to integrate different artworks around the world into the research methodology here.

## 2-1- The Theories and Philosophy in the Art Criticism:

For Applying theoretical methods to creating the practical procedures in the philosophy of art criticism requires a precise cognitive process. This process relies on the critic's research, investigation, and information-gathering abilities. Such a process is inherently complex, or it can be described as a cognitive procedure guided by specific philosophical theories. These theories aim to analyze artworks in a way that surpasses traditional or classical art criticism. All elements and fundamentals in this process are viewed differently, and detail within the philosophy of criticism. One of the most important aspects of the philosophy of criticism is the reliance on the scientific interpretation of facts and ideas, independent of the artist's impressionistic and psychological influence. This is the same approach adopted by structuralists critics in the modern structuralize criticism methodology <sup>(2)</sup>. However, other elements, such as investigation, induction, purpose, deduction, correspondences, and internal relationships, are also part of the procedural process of the philosophy of criticism. This is illustrated in Plate No. (1), which shows the structure of the new philosophy of art criticism based on high-level theoretical and cognitive data.

These theories, on which the philosophy of criticism relies in analysis, discovery, and investigation, are an important basis for viewing the artwork in a different way that is more committed and scientific than that of classical art criticism. The task of the philosophy of art criticism today is to build cognitive development in art in a dialectical and fruitful way <sup>(3)</sup>. (This is inevitable and self-evident. It is important to clarify the work of each theory in the course of this type of criticism and its methodological connection in analyzing artworks of all kinds, whether visual, auditory, performative, compositional, and others.).

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<sup>2</sup> ) Jerome Stolnitz. 1960. *Aesthetic and Philosophy of Art Criticism*. Michigan University.

<sup>3</sup> ) Noel Carroll. *Philosophy of Art, A contemporary introduction*. U.S. Psychology Press, 1999, p.17.

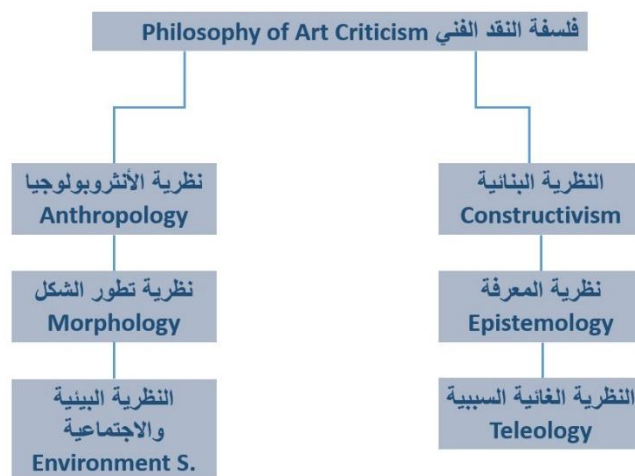


Plate No. (1) Illustrated structure of theories in Art Criticism philosophy based on Academic studies- Design by Author.

2-1-1- **Epistemology:** known as the theory of knowledge, which is based on the fundamentals of revealing the cognitive aspects and their connections to human productions throughout history. This theory works in the search for the source of knowledge that any artwork deals with and cannot be separated from any human production. That is, knowledge is the inner source of the truth of the appearance of the thing throughout history, and it means any intellectual, architectural, sculptural, artistic or scientific achievement. Here, knowledge plays an important role in the priority of the appearance of artworks and their ideas, considering that thought is the important message that translates for us the events of that work, its truth, its philosophy and real and imaginary activities <sup>(4)</sup> and through this we understand art as a source of knowledge.

2-1-2- **Constructivism:** The modern theory in art criticism and contemporary philosophy, the concept of constructivism here comes from the fact that all intellectual, artistic and other products arise from basic structures that are the same that create from the artwork a coherent constructive force in terms of its internal relations to broader and more comprehensive relations, and it represents belonging in the origin <sup>(5)</sup>, and it views artworks and other things as an independent existence far from the role of the artist, author or maker, and this is what they called the death of the author, considering that the artwork or any human achievement is a pure representation of the self and thought of the artist or author, and in order to analyze these works in a neutral and valuable way, the artist's personality is separated from them and only the secrets of the artwork are examined to show its strength or weaknesses.

2-1-3- **Teleology:** It is based on causal research, meaning that everything has a cause. The proponents of this theory believe that works of art and other things originate from different causes, including the reality of existence and nature <sup>(6)</sup>. The cause is the most important event for the emergence of such works throughout ancient and modern history. This theory is based on research and deduction, and knowing the nature of the cause and its relationship in the artwork, as if we said that there are social causes, political causes, spiritual causes, intellectual causes, and emotional psychological causes.

2-1-4- **Anthropology:** One of the fundamental aspects of historical and contemporary research concerning the lives, activities, and diverse cultures, arts, and customs of individuals is the search for the true influences that shaped these cultures for peoples in all their various forms and varieties throughout history to the present. Artistic works are intellectual repositories that carry the cultures, ideas, and beliefs of these peoples. While anthropology explores the role of humankind as an active and transformative force in the cultures of societies, art has a significant and extensive role and represents an inevitable and genuine reflection of all these activities. Thus, anthropological knowledge or theory helps the critic uncover the true meaning of certain symbols and forms in artworks and their

<sup>4)</sup> Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resource. IEP. <https://iep.utm.edu/art-and-epistemology/>.

<sup>5)</sup> Calhoun Carig. Structuralism. In Dictionary of Social Science. Oxford University Press. 2002,p.27.

<sup>6)</sup> James Wood. The Nuttall Encyclopedia of Universal Information. London: 1901.P.55.

relationship to the reality of contemporary humanity and some of its social activities, such as dance, fashion, sculpture, religious practices, artistic styles, hairstyles, laws, languages, magic, and chants (7).

**2-1-5- Morphology:** Theory of the evolution of form or Shape. Perhaps what the philosophers of history and contemporary scientific theories have done in searching for the truth of the evolution of form within the biological structural system of the cell, plant, organism, engineering, arts and language (8) to create a scientific conception of the system of the evolution of form throughout history or in different time periods, has given many conclusions about interpreting and studying the reasons for the change of form across different time periods. In art, an accurate description can be made of the truth of the evolution of form through the transformations of the stylistic structure to imitate the geometric form or the human form and others as is the case in primitive art up to contemporary art today. The concept of the change and evolution of this form is often related to the intellectual and spiritual concepts arising from a people or civilization throughout history (9).

**2-1-6- Sociology and Metrology:** It operates along two lines. The first concerns the effects of climate and environment on art and people, in terms of habitat, materials, and their nature in art, and their impact on changing thought and beliefs. Among the pioneers of this theory are (Joshua C. Taylor) and (Hippolyte Taine). The second line is based on social interpretation within the socio-historical framework, studying artworks as influential social phenomena between the individual and the group. This line is also close to anthropological theory.

The critic, in his scientific Tasks of analyzing artworks within the philosophy of art criticism, will need a deep and diverse study to understanding and studying historical and contemporary artworks accurately and philosophically, relying on all that has been presented above of intellectual theories that would reveal the truth of artworks in terms of their structures, the reasons for their emergence, their social and spiritual effects, and the change in artistic styles within them. What concerns us in this aspect is that any artwork should be analyzed within the new philosophical critical path in the university curriculum for postgraduate studies and others, and that the method of working in it will qualify the researcher and critics to build a more advanced and professional vision in analyzing artworks and writing specialized research and articles in this field.

## **2-2- The Practical Vision of Art Criticism Philosophy:**

We can begin to establish the empirical dimensions of the philosophy of criticism and apply it practically to various works of art. We must first recognize that the philosophy of art criticism here will be treated as a methodology with important academic foundations that can be followed in the processes of analysis, judgment, construction, investigation, study, and the validation of outputs and results.

The philosophy of constructivist art criticism does not treat the artwork as a descriptive reality, a superficial sensory representation, or a moment of spontaneous emotion and creation. Rather, it goes beyond that. The artwork must be viewed as an independent phenomenon born of the mind, knowledge, and soul. In this context, artworks can be analyzed objectively, independent of the artist's personality and biography, just as in the constructivist approach. Moreover, the artwork is considered a significant and comprehensive cognitive construct encompassing aesthetic qualities, ideas, style, and social, spiritual, and psychological influences. Given the necessity of transforming this new type of criticism into a scientific methodology for postgraduate studies, we must consider the most important steps as fundamental principles that will make this criticism a basic scientific methodology with an effective impact on contemporary studies and the rapid development in the field of visual arts.

The first Foundation: Curriculum Description - Every curriculum, its basic principles, and its application must be described in a standard academic manner so that the researcher and student understand what type of curriculum they are dealing with.

The second foundation: Curriculum goals. Basically, every academic curriculum has goals that it aims to achieve through the teaching process. The type of goals here is linked to the curriculum's content and its

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7 ) Many studies were conducted by Franz Boas, including field studies to examine, for example, the origins of Primitive Art and its relationship to the beliefs of peoples, through his book *The Primitive Art: 1927*. Likewise, the Frenchman Lévi-Strauss, in his book *The Way of Masks*, studied the changes in the form of masks between different regions – for more information:  
Franz Boas. *The Primitive art*, u.s. 1927,pp.37-41.

Claud Levi Strauss. *The Way of the Masks*, 1982,p.55.

8 ) Stephen Anderson. *Morphology* "Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science. U.S.A: Yale University, 2013.P.47.

9 ) Max Rieser. *Form and Style in Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetic Morphology*. *Journal of the History of philosophy*, Vo.12,(1) U.S. Johns Hopkins University press. January 1974.P.122.

scientific method of explanation, elaboration, and research. The researcher must compare the strength of the goals with what is achieved in the final analysis of the curriculum.

The third foundation: Curriculum content. Content represents the fundamental principles of any scientific curriculum or study plan that the researcher works on. These principles, described as content, are the constants that must be studied within the core of this curriculum in a sequential and clear manner, as we mentioned previously. (Structuralism, anthropology, teleology, epistemology, and the theory of evolution in form and style) All these theories constitute the content and fundamental principles of the philosophy of art criticism curriculum.

The fourth foundation: Methodology. The most important aspect of this is how the researcher or university teacher can correctly follow and apply the Methodology method during the study process. Here, the Methodology method will be the main core for working on studying the contents of the curriculum and applying them according to analytical and constructive contexts for studying artistic works of all kinds (visual, auditory, literary, design, and architectural).

The fifth foundation: Implementation. Here, the researcher is obligated to apply everything he has studied in detail to a practical application of the artwork—that is, a practical attempt at explanation and analysis—based on one of the theories within the content of the philosophy of criticism methodology. In doing so, the researcher has built a valuable cognitive awareness through his previous study of research theories in the critical methodology. Practical application in analysis is one of the most important ways that qualifies the researcher and the student to build his own method of analyzing artworks in a respectful and cognitive manner, as well as in writing the research or critical article.

The sixth foundation: Learning outcomes. Modern curricula rely on the importance of what is measured in the outcomes of each curriculum and its importance in early or higher education. The scientific or cognitive outcomes are to prove the success of this curriculum in the educational process and what it achieves in terms of importance for students and artistic circles, with new measurements that are not subject to the personal inclinations of any artist or far from the vision claiming that the artist is the foundation and that praise ends.

The seventh foundation: The References. It's worthwhile for every scientific study method to contain important basic sources that are relied upon in structuring and building the method in terms of its scientific content and descriptive contexts within the lines of this method. When we mention the philosophy of art criticism as a new and developed method, it is customary for us to mention the scientific sources that have priority in establishing the foundation of this method, such as the structural theory in art, theories of the philosophy of art and aesthetics, the philosophy of sociology and art, anthropological theories, the philosophy of evolution, and the philosophy of art history. All these sources provide the method and the researcher as well with scientific facts according to different theories within various knowledge, since the artwork, whether old or new, is not devoid of ideas, influences, and concepts, including social, aesthetic, environmental, spiritual, and psychological ones.

#### **2-2-1- The Practical Procedure of the philosophy of art criticism (structural theory):**

Let's moving to contemporary art today, and where abstract art has reached a stage of expansion and fame in most artistic circles around the world, many wonder about the usefulness and importance of abstraction in art, and how it is understood, studied, or even played with in a valuable artistic and aesthetic way. Is abstraction one of those arts that needs interpretation and investigation into the origin of truth or the emergence of the idea and the style of the artwork? Here, for example, (the constructivist theory in knowledge and art) can be applied to analyze the artwork according to the path of the philosophy of art criticism.

In Plate No. (2), a distinct abstract work of art is presented, featuring a dark blue background with a minimalist, luminous-colored composition at its center. The work explores the concept of light and darkness in abstract thought. One of its defining characteristics is that the presence of light, as a theme or concept, appears only within this central composition. However, questions arise regarding the nature of this structure:

- Why does the composition appear to be composed of geometric elements such as triangles and rectangles of varying dimensions?
- Why do the straight lines appear, but not perfectly vertical or horizontal, instead appearing slanted?
- Why are the colors limited to dark and light blue, yellow, and orange?

One of the priorities of research into the core of the work is analyzing the structural composition that mediates it. As we mentioned before, the structural composition consists of geometric elements such as rectangles, triangles, and straight lines. This does not preclude the repetition of these elements or their combination to convey a particular idea. However, the practicality will clarify the value of these geometric shapes as structural building blocks and their presence within the work. We must recognize from the outset that abstraction encompasses multiple currents, such as Expressionist abstraction, Purism, Geometric, and Constructivist abstraction. Each current has its own distinct proponents. It is clear that the structure of this work is geometric, and therefore the current is geometric, as illustrated in the analytical model numbered (2-A). This is quite possible within geometric abstraction. Let's say, for example, that the end justifies the means—according to the pragmatic approach. Why is the structure geometric and not expressive or purist?

If we place the concept of light within the framework of scientific physical measurement—what does light mean to us?—it is undoubtedly radiant energy emanating from a source and transferred to other surfaces and sources. This transfer process is actually carried out by rays, and these rays are straight, not convex or curved, as I would describe them in abstract expressionist drawing. It is more appropriate for the current to be purely geometric to give a powerful representation of those rays. As for the remaining geometric shapes, such as triangles and rectangles, they are simplified representations of the surfaces of stationary or moving materials, such as the earth, water, and mountains. Here, they appear in different colors and are luminous, indicating the projection of light upon them. It is as if the artwork here is revisiting the theory of light, solid surfaces, and reflection.

It remains for us to understand the geometric structure within a critical philosophical perspective. Is it a new innovation in the work, or is it a pre-existing future in existence, inherent in any artwork? In other words, geometric form is part of the existing structural framework, not something new and innovative that enters the realm of art. Rather, art here is a process of creating and assembling all these forms within a small space or physical content—the canvas itself. The process is not so much about innovation as it is about creating and assembling elements that exist in the universe and in life. The slanted lines represent the sun's rays on the earth and surfaces, and the warm colors, such as yellow and orange, are a metaphorical representation of the value of light. This is the first contradiction, which is countered by the second: the dark colors at the edges of the work are a symbol of darkness.



Plate No.(2) Geometric Abstract-Acrylic on canvas. Titled" the light"

Reference of Image: [:https://blumenfeldart.com/artist-profile/](https://blumenfeldart.com/artist-profile/)

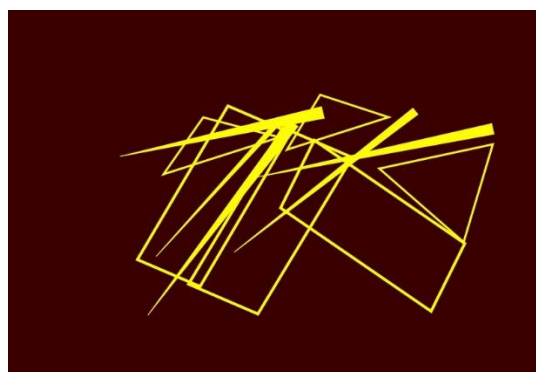


Plate No. (2-A) Analyzed sample of work design by Author.

The philosophical perspective of art criticism in this abstract work focuses on the power of the idea and its execution within the transformations of abstraction, which is considered a form of reduction and the disappearance of representation in the visual arts. Light is the fundamental value in the content, and the concept of light only arises in the presence of its opposite, darkness. To clarify further, the work is an eternal dialectic between light and darkness—a dialectic that represents the reality of existence and life by all scientific, physical, and cosmic standards. As for the artistic style, it also represents a transition in the process of reduction, depicting a scene composed of a horizon and light, followed by twilight and the onset of night, reminiscent of the natural scene of the setting sun on the sea horizon.

The details are not as important as the underlying idea of light and its true interpretation in abstract art. If we reversed the equation and imagined that the artwork would revert to a realistic style, the details of reality would inspire the viewer more than the idea of light—as an independent fact of life. This work would then become a mere imitation of the elements of reality within the natural setting of a sunset, with the concept of light becoming an integral part of the naturalistic elements. This would bring us back to the style of traditional landscape painting. However, the process of reduction within the values of abstract art resolves this issue, eliminating all details and transforming the work into a philosophical concept about the realities of cosmic phenomena and their relationship to the human mind. All details are reduced to two components: the structural, geometric mass represented by the center of light, and the dark background of the work, which is a reduction of darkness—night. The entire process can be summarized, according to the procedures of modern art criticism, in Figure (2-B).

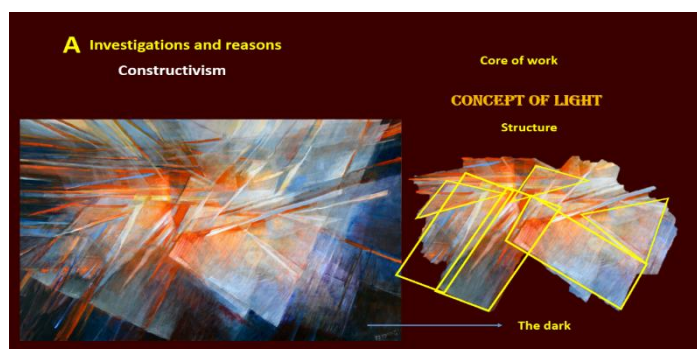


Plate No. (2-B) Analytical sample- designed by Author.

**2-2-2- Psychological Emotion theory in Art:** We must understand the theory of emotion, as interpreted by some specialists and psychologists such as Sylvan Tomkins and Jean-Paul Sartre, in a clear and scientific manner. They described the emotional states of individuals as expressions of feelings from the self, even if some of these feelings represent satisfaction, anger (or love. Tomkins, for example, classified these emotional states into two main categories: the first is what is called positive emotion—such as joy, happiness, elation, love, dancing, and pleasant surprises; and the second is negative emotion—such as anger, tension, sadness, longing, and rejection<sup>(10)</sup>. Sartre, in some of his theories (a diagram of the theory of emotions), sees emotional states as passing through three basic components: positive, negative, and neutral, such as surprise, astonishment, and shock<sup>(11)</sup> <sup>(12)</sup>. That is to say, the neutral component is what he added to the states or theory of psychological emotion.

Expressionist art can be somewhat complex, and viewers often feel a sense of wonder and a desire to explore the rapid movement of colors and lines. But is it a state of unconsciousness, chaos, or absolute spontaneity that is sometimes difficult to interpret? Or is it a phenomenon that reflects or expresses something external? This type of questioning has been frequently raised in visual arts institutes and academies by students and researchers seeking to understand the true nature of expressionism in painting, not in the conventional way—spontaneous expressionism, as some describe it. The matter is more nuanced and requires deeper, more critical analysis.

The Plate No. (3) presents an abstract expressionist work where details are reduced and color fields are transformed into specific psychological connotations. The color combinations appear in a homogeneous vertical

<sup>10</sup> ) P.Hynes and Others. Stability of Emotion Experiences and their relations to traits of Personality. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*. Issue 64, 1993, p67.

<sup>11</sup> ) Katarina Elam. *Apprehension, Magic and Incarnated beliefs: A Discussion of Sartre's theory of the Emotions*.p.8.

<sup>12</sup> ) Jane Paul Sartre. *Sketch for a theory of emotions*.France:1939.pp.97-102.

pattern, ascending from red to white against a pale blue background. This prompts us to question the meaning of these colors and their relationship to the vertical composition. To understand this abstraction, we must first identify the current of abstraction itself, the nature of the composition, and the core idea as a significant element within the work. Based on the stylistic technique and the intensification of colors in a manner resembling a cascade or flow, coupled with the necessity of reduction, this work can be described as expressionist abstraction, a cornerstone of contemporary abstract (<sup>13</sup>). What inspires us in all of this is why this particular current stands out among other abstract movements.

In fact, the abstract expressionist movement is based on a state of emotion or, more precisely, the theory of psychological emotion, since expressionist art is the art of emotional self-discourse—that is, the self's imitation of the outside world. When the work is abstract and includes expressionism, this means that the process has combined what is emotional with what is a reduction of the phenomenon to be achieved as an idea in this work. Here, the process appears to be transcendent in creating a subject that cannot be measured realistically or characterized in a clear way. The connotations of the colors here have a psychological or perhaps even spiritual appeal.

The method of placing the colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, dark blue, and then violet) in vertical order corresponds to the concept of the chakras in the human body. This is something that was referred to in the sciences of bioenergy and meditation in the sciences of yoga in ancient times. The idea is a concise expression of the concept of those chakras, which have no physical form or measurement, except for symbolizing them through the means of colors. Red is a representation of the power of the root, and therefore it will be first in the ascending order, then orange for the sacral chakra, yellow for the navel chakra, green for the heart chakra, blue for the throat chakra, dark blue for the inner eye chakra, and then violet for the crown chakra, which is the power of inspiration and divine giving) (<sup>14</sup>) (<sup>15</sup>) as in the illustrative Plate No. (3-A). The power of colors in this abstract work is an inner representation of the strength of the chakras in the meditating individual. This representation has transformed into expressive abstraction, as it is the closest analogy to other art schools when it comes to the subject of chakra power. If we were to say, for example, that the work had become symbolic art, unlike other artistic schools, then the subject of the chakras would inevitably be reduced to the symbols that appeared in ancient energy sciences and yoga. However, abstraction here inquires into the power and meaning of the chakras, rather than merely offering analogies or symbolic representations. This inquiry delves into the very essence of the work and into a revolution of colors that appear like a fountain or a vanishing explosion. This is precisely what the chakras do to the vital energy of a person during meditation. From this, we understand that the expressive style within abstraction is more effective for such subjects that pertain to the power of the human spirit and soul.



Plate No. (3-A) Expressionist Abstract-Acrylic on canvas.

<sup>13</sup>) David Anfam. *Abstract Expressionism*. 1<sup>st</sup>. Published. London: Thomas and Hidson. 1990.

<sup>14</sup>) Colin G. Smith. *Chakras for beginners*. Guide book. 2014.

<sup>15</sup>) Anodea Judith. *Wheels of life*. 1987.

Source of image: Indian center for Ayurveda-Oman.

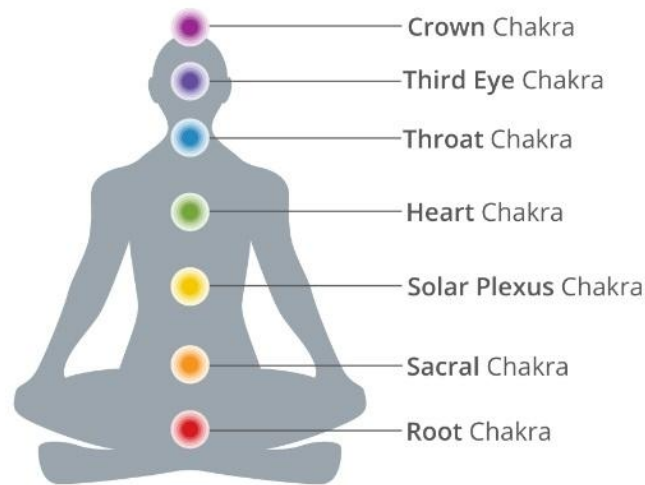


Plate No.(3-B) Illustrated sample of Chakras of body.

Source of image: <https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness-exercise/7-chakras>.

2-2-3- - **Applying Epistemology and teleological theories:** Investigating the function of knowledge and its relation to art requires understanding the perception of ancient works of art, which conveyed diverse knowledge, and the methods by which this knowledge was acquired. Most of these works throughout history reflect the reality of society and its modes of thought in all aspects—social, spiritual, and philosophical. Perhaps the historical-epistemological approach places the reality of human creations within the context of knowledge and its evolution from one generation to the next. Literature arises from an event or story, whether realistic or mythical; ultimately, it represents significant knowledge within the literary work (<sup>16</sup>). Epics, myths, and political events have all been transmitted through timeless works of art. Thus, the artwork can be classified as the primary vehicle for conveying these events and facts. Let us recall, for example, the figure of Gilgamesh, the legendary Sumerian hero who, according to ancient Sumerian narratives, is the central figure and hero of the story. However, the very existence of Gilgamesh is linked to the imagination and the world of ancient Sumerian myths and gods. Even so, he represents a reality present in the Sumerian literary landscape of that time, and they may have considered him a real figure in their thoughts and beliefs, rather than a figment of the imagination. Those same clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform script contain relief sculptures representing the hero Gilgamesh. This depiction originated from the realm of fantasy and epics, and the image of this hero remains characterized by strength, divinity, and the conquering of lions and beasts of the forest. This is why he appears muscular and possesses horns on his head, symbols of his divine power.

If we look at the artwork in Plate No. (4), it is an ancient portrait dating back to the Christian era in Egypt. It is meticulously drawn, with all features clearly defined and realistically proportioned, which is both intriguing and surprising. When we realize that a large number of such portraits were drawn in the same style and technique, during the same period in Egypt, on the same wooden surfaces and using the same colors, it prompts us to question and investigate the truth behind these drawings and the reasons for their creation during that historical period. This relates to the concept of teleology, which seeks the cause or reason, and consequently, the concept of knowledge behind each work.

The art of the Christian era and the Roman occupation of Egypt had a clear influence on the emergence of a distinctive and sophisticated collection of highly realistic wooden paintings. Due to the importance of this considerable collection, these paintings are classified among the rare examples of art history in major museums such as the Metropolitan, the Louvre, and the Cairo Museum. In any case, these paintings represent an important historical period in Egypt, and a social and, especially, religious necessity. From this, we can investigate the origins of these works, the motivations behind the emergence of what is called "portrait art" within them, and the essence

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<sup>16</sup> ) David Novitz. "Epistemology and Aesthetics" *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. Vol.2. New York: Oxford University, 1988, pp120-123.

of the idea and its realistic source. Therefore, we can pose important questions about these paintings for epistemological and teleological purposes:

Why the similar features?

Why did the realistic style persist?

What is the origin of the idea?

What is the language of the faces and eyes?

The appearance of jewelry and clothing?

These five components or indicators form the basis of the constructivist critical investigation of these paintings, which we will follow in the analysis process within the framework of constructivist philosophy, not to mention any other influences or technical aspects that may be mentioned later.

All of these Portraits bear similar features, for example - the facing pose - the language of expression of the faces - and the half-portrait pose. Why were they placed and drawn in this similar way, and what is the point of showing the features of the face only without the rest of the body? In fact, the similarity in poses and the language of faces is a doctrinal necessity arising from the belief in life after annihilation or after death, and that the funerary doctrine is the main motive in turning the form of deceased people into paintings on coffins<sup>(17)</sup> and the artist is obliged to perfect the features of the faces in the same manner - silence and facing the viewer - as this is a metaphorical projection of the ancient Egyptian belief in the idea of the soul's immortality in the underworld (eschatology) and the belief in the soul's return to the body once again in the world of annihilation<sup>(18)</sup>. All these depictions on the upper wooden panels of the coffins, at the head of the deceased, correspond today to the portraits we use in official documents such as passports and identity cards. The image must be of high resolution, facing the camera, and free of expressions of anger, laughter, or any alteration of features to be a true likeness of the real person. This same similarity appears in the portraits of Egyptian mummies from the Christian era, but only at the time of death. The researcher Rebecca noted that these portraits were painted after death, indicating that the deceased were of varying ages, some very old and some very young. According to the analytical view, they were painted after death, as evidenced by their different ages. But what about the open eyes, the jewelry, and the silent expressions on the faces? See Plates (5-6).

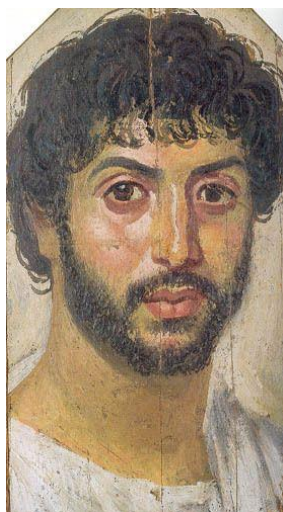


Plate No. (4) Half portrait on coffin. Realism

Source of Image: Susan Walker: *The ancient faces*. Book 1997.

The meaning of opening eyes, coupled with a state of silence and tranquility in facial features and expressions, is a complement to the belief that the soul returns to the body after death to recognize the deceased through his eyes<sup>(19)</sup>. This characteristic of calmness and dignity in facial expressions is a metaphorical representation of readiness to enter the afterlife. Upon closer examination, we find that all eyes are directed towards the observer—that is, towards us directly. This semiotic use of the eyes reinforces the role of spiritual connection between body and soul in the afterlife, and these gazes are not merely realistic, metaphorical icons, but rather a powerful force for communication between the two dimensions—the physical and the ethereal.

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<sup>17)</sup> Lorelei H. Corcoan. *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt (I-IV Centuries A.D.)*. Chicago. 1995.

<sup>18)</sup> Majidi, Khazal. *Study in Immortal myth before death and after in ancient civilizations*. Jordan. 2002. p.28.

<sup>19)</sup> Susan Walker and Morris Bierbrier. *The ancient faces*. Mummy portraits from Roman Egypt. U.S.A. p.65.



Plate No. (5) Funeral portrait of young boy. Plate No.( 6) Young women Portrait.  
Source of Images: Susan Walker. *The Ancient Faces*.1997.

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