

# The Symbolic Significance In The Design Of Contemporary Sculptural Models In Saudi Arabia

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## Abstract

The researcher is interested in uncovering the symbolic undertones in current Saudi sculptural models in this study. The study and analysis of the sculptural works of three Saudi artists and two modern sculptors were conducted to disclose the connotations and symbolic meanings in the sculptural forms, as well as the influence of the researcher's subjectivity on those meanings. The researcher focused on sculptural importance and contemporary sculpture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researcher adopted the qualitative method, The research sample consisted of the most prominent contemporary names of sculpting pioneers with academic or personal expertise. The latest results concluded with a set of findings, the most important of which was that this study represented the subjective experience of Saudi sculptors as the basis for deriving and borrowing symbolic significance from local elements and their use in designing sculptural models in Saudi Arabia, and the researcher discussed these research results with the findings of a group of related similar studies.

Keywords: symbolic connotations, sculptural design, contemporary Saudi sculpture.

## Methodological Framework

### 1. Research problem and significant

In recent years, the artistic scene in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed a tremendous and remarkable development in the tools and engines to build new ideas in art

in general and sculpture in particular. This development was manifested by the emergence of the contemporary sculpture movement.

The same sculptor was present in his performance and design, which were subordinated to the logic of personal philosophy attempting to descend into the rhetorical arena aimed at influencing the recipient. Styles and trends have developed diversity and complexity as a result of the aesthetic elements. In this context, the concept of symbolic connotations evolved as an aesthetic concept in creative creation, as well as the process of conscious selectivity in selecting the idea and symbol. Sculpture in Saudi Arabia has seen tremendous transformations at the level of formation based on transformations in the structure of thought and its transformations, which is represented in the ability of sculptors to theorize and innovate processes to design commensurate with the nature of intellectual transformations. And aesthetically, by investing in the available materials, the contemporary Saudi sculptor liberated his imagination as a symbolic employee to showcase his plastic and aesthetic qualities.

We can define the research problem by asking the following question:

What are the symbolic connotations used in the design of sculptural models emanating from the same sculptor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the last ten years, and what is the impact of these dimensions on the Saudi recipient and the renaissance of contemporary Saudi sculpture?

## **2. The Importance of Research:**

The significance of the research is reflected in the study of symbolic forms and their intellectual and stylistic dimensions, as well as their design methods in sculptural models, and the ability of the contemporary Saudi sculptor to deal with the employment of these dimensions in his/her design using different rock materials according to imaginings that serve the purposes of contemporary design, following a qualitative analysis of a group of works by contemporary Saudi sculptors. It should be noted that this research will be one of the first to be employed in the field of precise and comprehensive

specialization for the title of modern sculptural design. The fact that the research did not address it previously as a topic of interest to scholars and researchers in the field of contemporary sculptural design, and those who follow the aesthetic and philosophical developments experienced by the Saudi art movement in general and sculpture in particular.

### **3. Research objective:**

revealing the symbolic dimensions and aesthetic significance, as well as their applications in the design of contemporary sculptural models in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **4. Limitations of the search**

This search is determined by the following:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Temporal boundaries are represented by a group of sculptural works representing a time period between 2010 and 2020.

### **5. Research Samples**

A group of contemporary Saudi sculptors, represented by the sculptors Kamal Al-Moallem, Ali Al-Takhis, and Muhammad Al-Thaqafi.

### **6. Defining the terms**

Terms have been defined and defined as follows:

#### **Idiomatic sculptural design**

The term "design" is a general concept, meaning that every human performance or work for a specific goal is considered a design, and it enters into the fields of design with many disciplines and sciences. HCG, Harrison, B., & Long, R.J. (2004). which is the applied art material that the artist is obliged to apply. It is the planning of a specific goal that is already realized in the human mind so that it can be achieved later using multiple media, depending on the sensory perceptions and the individual skills of the artist. Thus, each design is characterized by the artist's personality, identity, and uniqueness. It is creative work that achieves its purpose. The design includes all aspects of activity and includes all aspects of life. Contemporary

art, as defined by Reed (Reed, 2004) and Arafa Sami Rizk, is creativity and the creation of aesthetic and beneficial works, and it is the complete plan for formation (Rizk, 2018).

### **Procedurally, sculptural design.**

The researcher defines the sculptural design procedurally as the foundations for forming sculptural models using various design elements and vocabulary and employs these elements to form the three-dimensional sculpture by the sculptors. It is an intentional process carried out by the sculptor by using design vocabulary to create an aesthetic shape or body from the materials

used in sculpture. That is, transforming the idea into a three-dimensional model by using design elements is a process expressed by the sculptor when detailing his sculpture, using multiple materials to increase the aesthetic impact of the subject. Molding ideas with an aesthetic sensory template that is subject to design mechanisms and laws.

### **Idiomatically symbolic connotation**

The term "semantics" is a general and broad term, and many cognitive sciences are included in its field, and semantics is what is inferred. As for the contemporary concept of semantics, it is related to the science of sign or sign, if the sign represents something else that it invokes as an alternative to it, and the sign or sign is a specific thing that replaces something for someone, to a certain degree. (Siza Qassem 1986), and the most important definition of the significance of our research is what it says about the philosophy of art. It often depends on the association between general ideas, as the signification seeks to appear as a substitute for its reality or something else. To perform the function of substituting or substituting (Rizk, 1982), in short, it is the realization of the existence of something that is a substitute for something else that replaces or acts on its behalf. In memorizing, recording, and expressing ideas in a way that words cannot express, symbolic significance is a reference to a hidden meaning, which is implicitly inferred through composition.

### **Symbolic significance of the procedure**

The procedural significance is defined as the presence of an implicitly recognized alternative, indicating something else that is recognized, or has a double expression, indicated by the form of the symbol that indicates the meaning within the sculptural stereotype. It has the significance of an icon outside of the sculptural composition.

## **7. The theoretical framework**

### **Symbolic significance**

The convergence and overlap of ideas and design as a result of impact and influence leads in new births, which are nothing more than intellectual meanings molded inside semantic frameworks that we may refer to as the symbolic significance of sculptural forms. Direct meanings, or the intersection of intellectual difficulties and sculptural aesthetic experiences, will result in a creative framework that involves the interplay between meaning and material. (Al-Khafaji, 2006).

The concept of symbolic significance is an old phrase that dates back to the nineteenth century and was known as semiology, where the French Michel Braille worked on the science of semantics and saw language as a designating system that represents concepts (Per Giroud, 2006). On the structural relationships between symbolic or indicative units, and the sign or symbol is the key to what is required to grasp or know the knowledge of something, knowing something else, and the first here is the signifier and the second is the signified. If the signifier is verbal, the sign will be verbal; otherwise, the sign will be nonverbal in most circumstances. (Hossam Othman, 2007).

The sculptural formation, as well as the numerous arts, are examples. It is not concerned with getting at facts, but rather with raising questions and challenging reality in order to stir human awareness and produce a condition of internal critique in the recipient. presenting fresh knowledge to the recipient The creation of sculptural models is a creative endeavor. If the sculptor intends to install and analyze the structure of the designed composition, the sculptor's thought is subjected to the production of a symbolic composition, to begin the stages of intellectual formation, reduction, and addition of formation to deliver symbolic messages bearing meanings that may differ from the past of the real design.

The symbol is one of the creative semantic indicators that encompasses the historical and civilized dimension and depth of society. The symbol is an analog picture that connects abstract and concrete units, with the second acting on the first and taking its place. Symbols are experiences or occurrences that are implicitly embodied, and the symbol and its substance facilitate the passage from the abstract to the physical.

Aside from technical abilities, the major components of sculptural models are their symbolic value and meanings, which represent either the past, present, or future, or emotional connotations that the sculptor wishes to portray via his three-dimensional creative design. The recipient is perplexed by the interpretation once and by the analysis and interpretation many times, resulting in a shock of surprise that enhances the design's beauty.

#### **The Art of Sculpture in Saudi Arabia:**

The twenty-first century reflects the stage of modern Saudi Arabian sculpture's inception and resurrection. After consisting of sporadic attempts or actual activities such as diverse folk crafts, we now observe an artistic rebirth and remarkable openness in numerous domains of art, particularly sculpting, which was formerly a cautious art within the territory of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It should be mentioned here that the Kingdom has long held creative energy in the realm of sculpture. The route of sculpture was carved passionately by a number of sculptors, including the late great master Abdullah Al-Abd al-Latif, who is regarded as the candle that lit the path of sculpture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the 1980s (Manal Al-Harbi). and other sculptural artists such as Muhammad Al-Saleem, Abdul Rahman Al-Radawi, and Daa Aziz.

Today, Saudi Arabia is experiencing a great renaissance in the field of sculpture, with pioneers such as sculptor Ali Al-Takhis, who has the Kingdom's longest artistic biography in the field of sculpture, sculptor Kamal Al-Moallem, who was one of the first in the Kingdom to work on metal casting and sculptural smelting, and sculptor Nabil Al-Najdi, and the art scene is now

full of Saudi Arabian artists. With intellectually and artistically mature artists such as Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Dr. Fahd Al-Jibreen, Issam Jamil, Ali Al-Jasser, and Faisal Al-Numan, the list of renowned names in the area of sculpture continues.

The availability of raw materials, as well as the need to maintain cultural history and religious tolerance, aided in the development of sculpting art within abstract and symbolic borders. As a sculptor, academic, and observer in the field of sculpture, I have witnessed a real renaissance in the land of the Kingdom over the last ten years with the production of large numbers of artistic sculptures that were engraved and formed by skilled artists Saudis who have set a foot and an artistic imprint for them towards the world to compete with the world's top artists in terms of formation and skill. These forefathers did not spare their pupils' knowledge and talents, thus they educated a great number of young artists who became equivalent in skill, craft, and formation, all of which aspired to progress the art of sculpting in the Kingdom and also in neighboring nations. Their creations, on the other hand, have graced the public spaces, institutions, and evidence that still exist in the Kingdom today. All of this resulted in a condition of aesthetic awareness among Saudi youth, some of whom were taught by pioneers and others in specialized institutions throughout the world, and the craft spurred others. Today, the Kingdom has become a compass for sculpture across the world, as well as a lighthouse for international sculptors, who have accepted their invitation to spread beauty and creativity on the Kingdom's rocks and wood. In recent years, the Kingdom has held more than ten international sculpting forums, with hundreds of artists participating.

We must admit that the Arab world is witnessing a true artistic renaissance of sculpture, owing to Saudi Arabia's ability to embrace art and artists, provide care, and recognize the importance of this art, and this awareness is not limited to its borders, but extends beyond them to a state of general awareness felt by the Saudi people and the artistic connoisseur. The most important issues addressed by the Saudi sculptor in recent years were a blend of civilizational, heritage, and Renaissance themes that Saudi Arabia is currently experiencing. In addition to the variety of materials that the

Saudi artist employed or willingly used from his natural surrounds, the shadows all make an appealing image of the sculptures in Saudi Arabia.

Abstraction was a major theme in Saudi artists' sculptural creations. Abstraction was frequently addressed as a topic rather than as an artistic direction in Saudi sculpture, as the abstract trend with a general vision, as described by Dr. Muhammad Al-Rasis, was one of the "weakest trends in terms of knowledge and artistic treatments in his early years, but with the increase in scientific expertise and the growth of scientific and cultural backgrounds among a number of artists, this trend has become diversified and serious in his artistic bids in a variety of media." (Al-Rusais 2010, p. 193)

Abstraction as an aesthetic style is an intrinsic school of certain Saudi sculptors, yet academic sculpture is not missing from the Saudi sculptural landscape. There are rich names, weight, and mature experiences, such as the Saudi sculptor Kamal Al-Moallem, who succeeded in merging academic style with his intrinsic background during his apprenticeship at Italy's most prominent international sculpting college. The purpose of this study was to examine the works of a group of Saudi sculpture pioneers and to investigate the symbolic connotations in their sculptural models and their impact on the recipient, the recipient's ability to explore symbolism in sculptural models, and the aesthetics of Saudi sculptural works. Abstraction as an artistic style is an innate school for some Saudi sculptors, and this does not mean that academic sculpture is absent from the Saudi sculptural scene. Sculpture in Italy.

This study came to address the works of a group of Saudi pioneers in the field of sculpture and explore the symbolic connotations in their sculptural models and their impact on the recipient, the recipient's ability to explore symbolism in sculptural models, and the aesthetics of Saudi sculptural works.

## **8. Search procedure**

### **1. methodology**



Based on the nature of the current study. And in order to achieve the objectives, the qualitative approach was mainly used to discover the formal and symbolic Indicators, or both. in modern sculptural models to reach the desired research outcomes. sculptural model unit itself was the main criterion. The main Goal of the current study, it is the unit of analysis, which is the sculptural model itself. As a result, the Author identified the sculptural models intentionally, that reflect concepts and tenor to express social and cultural issues. In this methodology, the Author will employ an analytical tool to decipher the symbolic dimensions and their aesthetic significance in sculptural artifacts. Afterward, the researcher will proceed to present a critique of this analysis, based on the social environment of the sculptors. This will aid in uncovering the aesthetics and connotations of the sculptural artifacts, which are predominantly influenced by the social context experienced by the Saudi sculptors in the current study.

**2. Research community:** The research community included 8 Pieces done by a group of Saudi sculptors

**3. Research model:** models were purposefully chosen from a research community of three sculptors.

## **9. Research models**

### **1.9 Kamal Al Moallem**

The sculptor Kamal Al-Moallem was born in the city of Saihat in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1954, and obtained a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts with distinction from the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy, Department of Painting, Saudi.

He excelled in the art of sculpture locally and internationally and participated in many local and international exhibitions. He is a consultant for fonts and drawings for the International Arab Encyclopedia and a founding member of the Saudi Society for Fine Arts. He participated in the exhibition of the College of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran in 1974. He represented Saudi Arabia in the third youth exhibition in Libya and won first place in 1975. He participated in the Gulf Club Exhibition in

1975, became a member of the Tuscany Equestrian Club in 1981, participated in the Qualvira International Exhibition and won one of the prizes, participated in the Autumn Exhibition in Florence in 1982, and the Balgo Exhibition and won first place with a diploma of honor in 1982.

He supervised and organized many art courses through the studio of the main office for youth welfare in Dammam since 1983, and organized all exhibitions and cultural activities held by the main office for youth welfare in the eastern region since 1983, and supervised and organized the Saudi Cultural Festival that was held in New Delhi, India in 1984, and participated in, organized, and supervised the Fine Arts Exhibition for the artists of the eastern region under the patronage of His Highness, the prince of the eastern region in 1985.

He was chosen as part of the jury in several exhibitions and artistic competitions. He designed and wrote many literary, artistic, and scientific books, pamphlets, and the annual calendar. He supervised and organized the Saudi-Bahraini Joint Exhibition (Saudi Arabia, 1986) and the collective exhibition of the Saudi Arab Society for Culture and Arts in 1987.

He participated, organized and supervised the exhibition of plastic arts for the artists of the eastern region under the patronage of His Highness, the Deputy Governor of the Eastern Region in 1988, and organized many plays for the Youth Theater in the Main Office of Youth Welfare in the Eastern Region since 1989, including the play of the photographer, The Destruction of the Monastery, Crosswords, Souls and Money, Winner Defeated-Gharbeh Ibn Al-Ward at the Fourth Exhibition of Fine Art in Jubail Industrial City in 1993. He designed clothes and decor for theatrical regressions, which participated in the Fourth International Experimental Theater Festival in Cairo in 1992 and the Third Theater Festival of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Abu Dhabi in 1993. Participated in many local and international exhibitions and forums, including the Ninth Changwon International Sculpture Symposium in China in 2008, the Misk International Sculpture Symposium in 2019, and Tetouan 2019, where he was honored in 2019 with a group of Saudi pioneers by Misk Art.



### **Sample (1) wild**

General Description:

(333 x 166 x 113 cm) Omani marble

Red Sea Symposium, Jeddah

2019

### **Technical Analysis**

The marble material and the ability to emphasize its three dimensions at different levels to demonstrate the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition defined the sculpture within the apparent model of the formation. Because of the importance of the breath, they appeared to look upwards, and the nose appeared to be the center of the horse's head, as the living being can feel others when he loses sight, hearing, and even taste, but he cannot feel others when he loses the soul where he is in the preparation of the dead. Al Mualim attempted to reaffirm the significance of air, the source of life.

Al Mualim also emphasized the symbolism of the horse, which expresses Arabism and originality, so the horse's head appeared lofty to the top, and the carved center of the seashell, which is found in the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, and the symbolism it bears, which expresses the goodness in it and from which the formation of the two heads of the Arabian horse comes out. Here, Al Mualim tried to highlight the good things: the goodness of the sea, represented in the shell, and the good of the land, represented by the spike, which advances in front of the horses with lofty heads, and here the master sculptor expresses the contradiction in this life between day and night, good and evil, white and black, tenderness and

cruelty, joy and sadness, love and hate, considering this is a homogeneity between hormonal and dissonance, all the previous and inspired elements from the land of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the connotations and meanings they bear, expressing the originality of meaning and composition. The sculptor tried to break the prevailing restrictive rules about sculpting souls. He was one of the first Saudi sculptors to try to embody this spirit with his own vision. He is the first Saudi artist who has created a sculpture that calms the spirit while preserving Islamic doctrine, customs, and traditions. Internationally, in complete anatomy, he encountered a lot of opposition, despite existing views, but this, he felt, was "the oxygen" to continue executing his vision and concepts that show the individuality and contemporariness of Saudi Arabia. This artist attempted to affirm various symbolic connotations in his sculpture by expressing vitality, renaissance, originality, and modern existence through a set of direct formative factors.



### **Sample (2) Sakha'a**

General Description:

Dimensions:

Material: Saudi marble stone

Place of the sculpture: Symposium inscriptions in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, 2018

### **Technical Analysis**

The composition of the sculpture was distinguished within the apparent model of the formation by the marble material and

the ability to highlight its three dimensions at different levels to show the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition. In his sculptural works in stone, he did not use the raw stone before the date of this carving, which was characterized by the use of this material later. The symbolism of the decorative elements is taken from the sculptor's memory of the houses of the ancient Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which adorned the houses both internally and externally. The master sculptor tried to highlight this memory and the memories it carries from childhood and boyhood by creating formations with the heart of the carved to cross simply with side openings that embrace the stone from the front with a smooth and rough surface, which it bears the symbolism of childhood life and the misery and prosperity that the days brought, expressed in regular and irregular formations through soft and rough touches, and through mass and emptiness to create unity and diversity of sculptural formation, straightness and curvature as the artist calls it.



### **Sample (3) Improvisation**

General Description:

240 x 220 x 100cm

Saudi marble and wood

Misk International Symposium

Riyadh, 2019

### **Technical Analysis**

The sculpture's composition was distinguished within the apparent model of the formation by the marble and wooden material, as well as the ability to highlight its three dimensions at different levels to demonstrate the aesthetics of shadow and

light in the composition, where the sculptor divided the sculptural mass into different levels varying in formation, textures, and tonality. By throwing an improvised phrase after the written word has been lost on the paper, the artist means when the artist is creating a drawing or design for its execution and then goes against it by producing an improvisation due to the nature of the material.

### **2.9 Ali Muhammad Al-Takhis**

He was born in the city of Dawadmi in 1956 and obtained a diploma from the Institute of Art Education in 1979. He worked as an art education teacher (retired) and is currently dedicated to art.

He is considered one of the founding members of the Al-Dara' Club studio in Al-Dawadmi 1980, a founding member of the Al-Dawadmi Plastic Artists Group in 1995, a member of the House of Fine Artists in Jeddah 1998, a member of the Saudi Arab Society for Culture and Arts 2003, a member of the Omani Society for Fine Arts 2002, a member of the Forum of Arab Sculptors Jordan 1998, and a member of Maht Roshana Lebanon 1999, a member of the Arab Sculptors Forum - Muscat - Oman 2001, a member of the Arab Sculptors Forum Dubai UAE 2002, a member of the Emaar International Art Forum Dubai UAE 2004, a member of the Alwan Group for Fine Arts Riyadh 2004, a member of the Arab Creativity Festival (Aton Group) Cairo 2004, and a founding member of the Arab Plastic Artists Festival (Without Borders) Cairo 2004, the Canadian Consulting Membership CMC CO 2006, the founding member of the JSFT Association, the Canadian Consulting Membership CUIG 2007, the Canadian Consulting Membership 2008 CUIG, and a member of the First International Suwayda Forum Syria 2008. He has many internal participations, as he participated in most of the exhibitions organized by the Youth Welfare Sub-Office in each of the tattoo offices (Dawadmi-Central) and participated in most exhibitions organized by Youth Welfare and the Saudi Society for Culture inside and outside the Kingdom.

The artist has many personal and bilateral exhibitions, such as the first exhibition of photography in 1985 in Al Dawadmi, the first personal exhibition of sculpture in 1988 in Riyadh, and the second personal exhibition of sculpture in 1989 in Jeddah.

The third solo exhibition of sculpture in 1997, Jeddah; the fourth solo exhibition of sculpture in 2001, Riyadh; the first duet exhibition with the artist Ibrahim Al-Nagheither, the

French Embassy in 1979; the fourth duet exhibition with the artist Ibrahim Al-Nagheither, Salalah Amman, 2003; the duet exhibition with the French artist Monique Lacuare, the French Embassy in 2001, Riyadh; and the bilateral exhibition with the Italian sculptor Bibino Konto, 2002, Riyadh.

He received many local and international awards, such as the Applied Art Award and Sculptures in the Ninth Acquisitions Exhibition 1406 AH, the tenth 1408 AH and the twelfth 1410 AH in Riyadh, the Applied Art and Sculptures Award in the first ceremony 1403 AH in Riyadh, the third 1408 AH in Abha and the sixth 1415 AH in Riyadh, and the eighth Saudi Applied Art Exhibition 1408 and the ninth prize 1409 AH, the Applied Art Prize in the 11th District Exhibition of the Kingdom in Dammam 1412 AH, the First Sculpture Prize in the Fifth Feather Friends Competition 2005, Dammam, the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Qasabi International Competition for Fine Arts 2013, the International Arbitrators Award at the First Ankara Biennale 1406 AH 1986 in Turkey, and the Third Prize for Sculpture in the second Muscat 1411 AH, 1991, Oman, the Appreciative Medal in the GCC Periodic Exhibition 1999, Riyadh, the Appreciative Prize in the First Sharjah Biennial 1413 AH, UAE, the Al Dana Prize at the 25 February Exhibition, Kuwait 1417 AH 1996, the International Professional Prize Rashana Lebanon 1999, and the Appreciative Medal in the Fifth Periodic Exhibition of the Countries the Cooperation Council, 2000, Qatar, and the medal an Appreciation in the Sixth Periodic Exhibition of the Gulf Cooperation Council 2002, Muscat, the Honorary Award at the Alexandria Arab Creativity Festival 2004, and the Gulf Creativity Award 2012.

The artist has many works of art acquired from different sources, such as holdings in the care of youth, the Saudi Arab Society for Culture and Arts, and some prominent personalities in Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam, Amman, Morocco, and the Abdul Raouf Khalil Museum in Jeddah, which includes 14 sculptural pieces, and has 11 sculptures acquired by the Ministry of Education Al-Aali 2011 and has holdings in the Omani Society, Muscat, and Salalah 2003.

In 1998, there was a field model in Al-Montazah Park in front of the National Museum in Amman, Jordan; in 1999, there was a field model in Roshana, Batroun Governorate, Lebanon; in 2002, there was a field model in Media City, Dubai; in 2003, there was a private model for a businessman in Dammam; and

in 2008, there was a field model in the field of the Burj Khalifa, Syria. And a field model in Dhahran, Saudi Aramco 2010, a field model in front of the guesthouse in Dawadmi 2011, a field model at the main entrance to the Saudi Center for Arts, Jeddah 2012.

A field model in front of the Dawadmi Governorate in Dawadmi 2012, a field model for the Dubai Culture Symposium 2013, a field model for the Hadd Bani Malik Festival 2014, a field model in the lobby of the Grand Regency Hotel Doha 2014, a field model at the eastern entrance to the city of Al-Ruwaidah 1437, 2015, a field model in the public park in Muscat 2015, and a model for a field model at the Khobar Inscriptions Symposium 2018\*18-a field model at the Madinah Sculpture Forum 2018, a field model for the first Tuwaiq Symposium 2018, and a field model for the second Misk Symposium 2019 and the Dialogue Symposium 2020.

He supervised many training courses in the field of stone and marble sculpture in Jeddah 2006, Riyadh 2007, Dawadmi 2008, Jeddah 2008, Riyadh Buraidah (2010), Najran 2010, Doha 2011, Buraidah 2011, Al Baha 2014. Salalah 2020 and supervised the Dhahran International Symposium in 2010, and hosted the Sixth Arab Plastic Forum in Dawadmi, with more than 69 artists from the Gulf and Arab countries in 2011. He supervised the first Symposium for Marble Sculpture in Dawadmi in 2012, and supervised the Akadh Sculpture Forum in Taif in 2018, and supervised the Misk Symposium in 2018 and the National Dialogue Symposium in 2020.

The composition of the sculpture was distinguished within the apparent model of the formation by the marble and wooden material and the ability to highlight its three dimensions at different levels to show the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition, where the sculptor divided the sculptural mass into different levels varying in formation, textures, and tonality. By throwing an improvised word after the written word has been lost on the paper, meaning when the artist is preparing a sketch or design for its implementation, and then contravenes that by making an improvisation due to the nature of the material.

The master sculptor relied on the deliberate omission to highlight and evoke the gypsum decoration formations that were rich in the houses of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and which adorned the houses and gave feelings of pleasure. The



geometric decoration known to man in the past, which is the geometric shape of a six-sided flower, consists of overlapping and repetitive circles of equal two-dimensional radius arranged regularly in a symmetrical pattern in the form of a flower with symmetrical corners, and this decoration adorns the ancient houses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

These decorative formations date back to many ancient civilizations, and they are called the "flower of life" (the sacred circle) because they were considered a symbol that indicates the beginning of creation and the universe, as they were associated with many scientific and philosophical aspects as well. On the nose (consisting of one nose) to confirm his philosophy of life that we mentioned earlier, and the sculptor teacher added to the sculptural model in some parts of it gold leaf meaning, carrying meaning, no matter how hard and soft the stone is, in its guts is what carries precious metals, including gold. Going here for the meanings A deep philosophy that the inside of things is more valuable than their appearance. The sculptor added at the top of the marble sculpture a piece of wood in the form of a simplified horse's head and in an abstract style different from his previous method of carving horses, emphasizing his visual identity once again in his works.



**Sample (1)**

General Description:

200 cm / 100 cm / 50 cm

Saudi white stone

The First News Inscriptions Symposium

Riyadh, 2018

### Technical Analysis

The sculptural work within the model was distinguished by the ability of Al-Takhis, to form with the marble material and the ability to highlight its three dimensions to show the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition, where the sculptor divided the sculptural mass into different levels varying among themselves in formation and touching, where Al-Takhis shows his skills of sculpting by deleting the carving of a letter (خ), which is one of the Arabic letters that appeared explicitly within the composition. Al-Takhis relied in his previous sculpture on manipulating the textures of the decorative composition, highlighting the aesthetics of the carving through the symbolic meanings of texture, so we see the soft and coarse texture at the same time, where the apparent contradiction between the regular and the irregular shows the aesthetics of the sculptural composition of the letter (خ).

The sculptor relied mainly on the manipulation of the textures of the sculpture to highlight its three-dimensional composition. We find what is expressed by the rough texture to show the commendable state of contrast, and the soft side of this contrast does not show the aesthetics of sculpture, form, and composition.



### Sample (2)

General Description:

220cm / 120cm / 60cm

Saudi white sedimentary stone

Tuwaiq the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium.

Riyadh, 2018

### Technical Analysis

The sculptural work within the model was distinguished by the ability of Al-Takhis to form with the marble material and the ability to highlight its three dimensions to show the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition. The sculpture bears the meaning of meeting or embracing, which Al-Takhis expressed through his design of a block embracing another block at the top of the composition, despite the different textures used to express this state of contrast. Through Al-Takhis, who tried to express the state of harmony, convergence, and brotherhood among the members of Saudi society with their different ideas and orientations.



### Sample (3)

General Description:

100x50 x170

Italian white marble

First Symposium of Dawadmi, 2012

### Technical Analysis

The capacity of Al-Takhis to shape with the marble material and emphasize its three dimensions to exhibit the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition separated the sculptural work inside the model. Despite the diverse textures employed to convey this condition of contrast, the sculpture has the concept of meeting or embracing, which Al-Takhis expressed by his design of a block embracing another block at the top of the composition. Through Al-Takhis, who attempted to express the state of peace, convergence, and fraternity among Saudi society's many beliefs and orientations.

### 3.9 Muhammad Al-Thaqafi

He was born in 1975 in the city of Taif, Saudi Arabia, and he is one of the pioneers of the Saudi art scene. He excelled in the art of sculpture both locally and internationally. contemporary in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His style is characterized by his

ability to change raw materials while highlighting their inherent beauty. He expands space of form and creates the value of abstract beauty through the diversity of materials. He believes that the role of the artist is not only to create beauty, but also to be a reflection of the senses and humanity. Its topics deal with intellectual and psychological issues, and the state of contradiction that begins with the man and the woman and even life and death.

His work has been widely shown in local and international group exhibitions, including UNESCO Austria 2007, Anamel Exhibition in Germany 2008, Misk International Symposium in Riyadh 2018, Mono Gallery at Misk Art Symposium in 2019, and many other exhibitions in Egypt, Syria, Kuwait, Oman, Morocco, and Russia, and a set of solo exhibitions: The "Legendary" exhibition at Shubra Palace in Taif in 2007, and the Desert Heritage Exhibition in Al-Khobar in 2016. He is also the head of the plastic arts committee at the Association of Art and Culture in Taif, and an active member of the Artists' House in Jeddah, as well as the Association of Arab Talents in Morocco.

Al-Thaqafi received a number of awards, including: Oscar Sculpture at the Biennale of Culture and Arts in Cairo in 2011, and first place in the Al-Qasabi Fine Arts Competition in 2013. His works can be found in a variety of national and international organizations.



**Sample (1)**

General Description:

250cm x70cm x 60cm

white marble stone

Saudi Arabia, 2020

### **Technical Analysis**

The sculptural work within the model was distinguished by the ability of the cultural sculptor to form with the marble material and the ability to highlight its three dimensions at different levels to show the aesthetics of shadow and light in the composition. Where the sculptor divided the sculptural mass into different levels, varying among themselves in formation, textures, and tonality. In the previous model, Al-Thaqafi relied on highlighting an Islamic geometric decorative composition based on the dodecahedron, whose birth occurred in the Arabian Peninsula.

Al-Thaqafi was also able to highlight the aesthetics of shadow and light through the disparity of blocks and their divisions that overlapped to highlight the mass of the dodecahedron and bear in its symbolism that the flowers open in order for the nectar to come out, which the artist tried to highlight through the intersections and overlaps in the levels and layers of the sculptural model.

The sculptor manipulated the color tones of the stereo, trying to delude the recipient of the disparity or multiplicity of tones within the marble block to emphasize the idea of the blooming flower, from whose core the geometrically decorated block emerged. influence the recipient locally and globally.

Through the sculpture, the sculptor was able to highlight three symbolic meanings of the sculptural figure, starting with the use of the dodecahedron and the meanings of sanctity that have existed since ancient times in our Islamic civilization, the orientation towards the qiblah, the sanctity of worship and prayer, and its connection with the Saudi environment. Layers through which Al-Thaqafi crossed on the opening of flowers and the exit of nectar represent beauty and love, and thirdly, the disparity of color tones for the power of delivering the symbolic message.

This sculpture came as a kind of empowerment, especially in the use of heritage, civilization, or religious symbols that may not be easy to modify or use by reducing many of the real details that were found in them on the ground. With his strength. The colors used in the sculpture represented a kind of consistency in the Saudi environment, where the colors that indicate sand and purity, all the visual elements participated in conveying the sculptor's message in a skilled manner through sculptural formation.



### **Sample (2)**

General Description:

260cm x100cm x70cm

white marble stone

Saudi Arabia, 2017

### **Technical Analysis**

The composition of the sculpture was distinguished within the apparent model by the presence of a center in the middle of the sculpture, to highlight the birth of a new composition within the lower composition of the sculpture, the relationship of shapes and their interrelationship.

In the lower part of the sculpture, Al-Thaqafi tried to present the architectural environment in the ancient kingdom and the intertwining and intertwining of its styles and its traditional and heritage styles, dividing the sculptural composition into three main parts, each bearing the symbolism of traditional architecture that passed through the Saudi state, starting with the first state that was the basis for the development of Saudi architecture, Mecca. Moving to the second state, which was the product of the development of the first state, this intertwining and interdependence between the first and second states appeared through the symbolism of traditional and heritage architecture in the Kingdom.

Al-Thaqafi deliberately highlighted the birth of the third state from the heart of the two states, where the center of the center indicates moderation, moderation and stability, so the renaissance and development of the third state came in a great

way, which Al-Thaqafi referred to through the large sculptural composition that clearly appears medium-carved and stands with pride and strength in the middle of the sculpture and also bears the symbolism of architectural development. As for the great renaissance in the Kingdom in recent years, so the formation bore hollows and zigzags that carried the symbolism of the great architectural and development renaissance in Saudi Arabia, taking into account the aesthetics of shadow and light and the refraction of rays to give the strength of the third dimension in the sculpture.

In the sculpture, Al-Thaqafi succeeded in highlighting a group of symbols that carried strong meanings, such as the strength and durability of the Saudi state, passing from the first state to the third state, and also the great development in the third state and the renaissance that appeared on the ground. All of this was within the intertwining of the three Saudi states.

#### **10. Results**

According to sculptures analysis, the Author reveals that the personalities of the sculptors and their relationship with Saudi society, as well as the progressive state that Saudi Arabia is experiencing, have served as a significant source of inspiration in shaping their visual identities. Clearly, within the contexts of their personal experiences, there is a noticeable response towards the social and cultural heritage, which is reflected in their sculptural works.

Based on this, the personal experience of Saudi sculptors fundamentally embodied their utilization and derivation of symbolic meaning from elements of their local environment, which they employed in the design of sculptural artworks in Saudi Arabia. Deconstructing these elements into both symbolic representations and realistic forms, we observe the Saudi sculptors' endeavor to depict elements drawn from their contemporary living in the kingdom through engineering concepts in their designs. This artistic expression reflects the intellectual maturity of the sculptors, aligning with the ongoing transformation experienced by the kingdom. It can be interpreted as a symbolic deduction of the renaissance and civilizational shift. It is imperative to highlight that the current state of civilization and developmental progress in the kingdom has directly influenced the artists' ideas and aspirations,

consequently contributing to the production of contemporary sculptural creations.

Furthermore, the sculptors also derive some meaning from elements of social heritage, such as horses and ornamentation, with which the Saudi people interact on a daily basis, especially ornamentation, which they constantly encounter in their traditional homes. The artistic works of the sculptors have interacted creatively with the symbolic meanings, evoking the personal memories of the sculptors and evoking the aesthetic beauty of the Saudi identity, both past and present. In the explicit use of elements like horses, which reflect the true anatomy of the animal, positioned with its back turned, symbolizing religious beliefs of avoiding anthropomorphizing souls, this vividly demonstrates the state of liberation experienced by the Saudi artist in the present time, accompanied by the ongoing progress in the kingdom.

This intersects with the findings of researcher Abdullah Khurshid (Khurshid, 2019) in his study "The Problematics of Meaning in Contemporary Iraqi Sculptures." His research reveals that Iraqi artists express their inner thoughts through their sculptures, especially after the fall of Baghdad in 2003 and the events that followed. He observed that the sculptural artworks carried meanings encapsulating pain, grief, and the human suffering caused by war. This contrasts with our study, where contemporary Saudi artists expressed a sense of renaissance, development, and preservation of heritage elements cherished by Saudi society. The reflection of the artists' personalities was dominant in both cases, illustrating that humans are inseparable from their emotions and feelings, whether joy or sorrow, pain or comfort.

The personal experience of Saudi sculptors in designing sculptural artifacts demonstrated their significant capacity to influence local and global recipients by employing symbolic elements derived from the Saudi local environment and its visual distinctiveness. On the other hand, Khurshid's findings show that objective thoughts emerged in the works of some Iraqi artists, addressing society and viewers with ideas that represent the Iraqi living reality.

Saudi sculptural works, on the other hand, appeared as a symbolic narrative representing the Saudi renaissance while preserving the social heritage. They genuinely expressed the identity of the place and the spirit of the time. Here, we find



that Saudi sculptors turned to their inner thoughts about social issues and folk heritage, influenced by their surroundings, to incorporate them into the design vocabulary and shape the sculptural composition.

all the sculptural artworks in the study sample share the same style concerning execution, technique, and the nature of symbols derived from the Saudi environment. The Saudi sculptor excelled in executing these works, regardless of the artistic schools they belong to. Some artists were driven by their personal experimentation in sculpting, while others were primarily inspired by academic studies. This aligns with the views of the writer Hossam Othman in his research on the symbolic meanings in the works of sculptor Murtada Haddad (Hossam Othman, 2017). Othman highlighted how Murtada Haddad's academic knowledge enabled him to employ symbols in his works in a meaningful and aesthetically pleasing manner. This academic distinctiveness, combined with skill, was the main reason behind the creation of Murtada's creative sculptural works. Similarly, Manal Al-Harbi's research on the history of Saudi sculptural art (Manal Al-Harbi, 2019) confirmed that most Saudi sculptors predominantly practiced three-dimensional sculptural forms, with a notable emphasis on techniques like prominent and recessed sculpting. Moreover, they frequently utilized subtraction and assemblage techniques, showcasing the high sculptural skills of Saudi artists. All the sculptural models were executed using traditional methods and manual dexterity in a consistent style, which truly demonstrates the Saudi sculptor's ability to convey direct and indirect meanings through symbols.

The entire sculptural artworks, as a whole, authentically express the sculptors' inner strength and their impact on shaping the visual landscape in Saudi Arabia. Saudi sculptors deliberately draw inspiration from the symbolism of elements in the local environment, such as the symbolism of architecture, horses, ornamentation, calligraphy, and other elements that embody the authenticity and civilization of contemporary Saudi society. The artistic works bear the narrative of the Saudi cultural identity. Top of Form

In the contexts of the sociology of arts and within the diverse Arab societies, we find that the colors and textures in sculptures possess their distinctiveness and symbolism, which the sculptor

expresses through both regular and irregular patterns to complement the aesthetics of the composition. This has contributed to the dissemination of aesthetic values and the improvement of the visual beauty in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These findings align with the results of Manal Al-Harbi's comparative study, "Encounters of Sculpture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (Manal Al-Harbi, 2019), which indicates that sculptural artworks have played a role in introducing Saudi society to the art of sculpture and leaving a visual and aesthetic impression on the recipients within the Saudi community. Here, we observe that the sculptural models directly aim to simulate the recipient through the application and utilization of symbolic elements and their direct expression. Consequently, the communicative scope of sculptures is extensive and direct, simulating the recipient and making them an integral part of the reality.

The results obtained in the foregoing reflect the influence of the Saudi sculptors' receptivity to the current state of renaissance, openness, and development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This influence is directly or indirectly manifested in their presentation of contemporary artistic ideas and sculptural works that mirror the personal and societal contents experienced by Saudi society at present. Moreover, this impact is evident in the public's appreciation and acceptance of sculptural artworks, a form of art that was once timid or absent in the 1980s and 1990s. This underscores the researcher's earlier assertion in the introduction that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing a renaissance in the realm of contemporary arts.

The concept of designing sculptural artworks is considered a contemporary notion, and it should be noted that this concept takes on a different dimension when applied to Saudi society, transforming into a cultural act aimed at disseminating societal culture through the art of sculpture and harmonizing with it. The current sculptural creativity in Saudi Arabia is nothing more than one form of expressing identity, and it is a project of expression within the community in general, leading, when respected, to increased awareness among different generations and enhanced social cohesion.

From a broader perspective, Saudi sculptors have been able to create a phenomenon of beauty, which can be referred to as

"Saudi Aesthetics," through their relatively short journey. Their path has extended through diverse aesthetic ideas. As the expression of Saudi identity in the 21st century remains a modern cultural act for Saudi artists, the design of Saudi sculptural artworks can be presented as a contemporary aesthetic research with significant scholarly implications. This relationship between the art of sculpture and social ideology has formed various representations according to the current global and local cultures.

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