

Collective Behavior Representations in Contemporary Iraqi Ceramics (An Analytical Study)

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Abstract

The self-governs a set of dynamic controls that establish its existence and are reflected in the form of outcomes crafted by society within systemic mechanisms in its movement. These have an impact and engagement on the structure of the artistic achievement, as the self is a significant driver that transmits and receives (intellectual, societal) elements and relationships. Hence, the research title emerged: "Collective Behavior Representations in Contemporary Iraqi Ceramics (An Analytical Study)." The research comprises four chapters, with the first chapter dedicated to elucidating the research problem, defined by the following question: What are the mechanisms of collective behavior? The significance of the research and the study's objective were then identified as: understanding "Collective Behavior Representations in Contemporary Iraqi Ceramics" within the time frame of 1980 to 2010. The second chapter comprised two sections: the first section, with its axes, addressed: The concept of the self in thought. The concept of collective self. The pressures that establish collective behaviour. The factors influencing collective self behaviour. The characteristics of collective self behaviour. The second section explored the creative process between the individual and the collective in art, followed by the key indicators derived from the theoretical framework. The third chapter focused on analyzing the research samples, consisting of three samples, with the researcher adopting a descriptive method for sample analysis to achieve the results. The fourth chapter included the research findings, conclusions, and sources and references.

Keywords: *Collective Behaviour, Ceramics, Contemporary Art, Visual Arts, Iraq.*

INTRODUCTION

The essence of the self crystallized through existential movement, which etched its characteristics and features into humans within the law of action and reaction, distinguishing them from lesser beings. This distinction manifests as a symbol and uniqueness from the other. These transformations led to the formulation and reshaping of the self through internal needs and desires, and external pressures and their references. This established systemic patterns affecting the nature of movement within the dynamics of struggle, resulting in cultural and civilizational products. The perceptions of the self vary despite the same event, thus its existence is defined by its internal and external presence and their integration, expressing its nature in various ways, whether consciously or unconsciously.

The essence of Iraqi society forms part of the artist's essence through the collective unconscious and its structure, which resulted from cultural accumulation, political conflicts, sanctions, and wars, as well as the impact of globalization in displacing grand narratives regarding values, beliefs, truths, and principles. This imposition of non-existence (equating existence with nothingness) prompted the formation of a unique psychology and epistemology through individualism and collective imagination, marked by the unity of contradiction. Consequently, Iraqi visual art movements have exhibited experiences that carry Iraqi identity, character, and uniqueness, inherent in the Iraqi self. In this context, the current research problem is defined by the following question: What are the mechanisms of collective behavior?

Second: Importance and Necessity of the Research

It highlights the study of collective behavior in the field of arts and its expression in ceramics.

The current research benefits those interested in the movement of visual art criticism by providing insights from the research results.

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It sheds light on the factors that influence the self towards the collective, and examines the impact of this issue on the cognitive and artistic dynamics within the context of modern art.

Third: Research Objective

The current research aims to understand how collective behavior is represented in the structure of contemporary Iraqi ceramic art.

Fourth: Research Boundaries

Temporal Boundaries: 1980-2010

Spatial Boundary: Iraq

Subject Boundaries: Collective behavior - contemporary Iraqi ceramics

Definitions

Representations: It is the perception of common sensory images and the movement of thought in the tangible, representing the thing in the mind due to the association of some attributes of the represented object, so the context of the speech indicates the meaning (Tahouni, 1996, 400).

Operational Definition: It is the manifestation and recollection of ideas before the artist's self, reflecting and reformulating them through various stylistic mechanisms in his artistic achievements.

Behavior: It is any activity performed by a human being that can be observed or whose results can be observed. In other words, it encompasses all responses—mental, physical, social, and psychological, whether apparent or hidden. Gestures, hand movements, and head nods are behaviors and a language studied by linguists, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists alike (Khalil, 1983, 190).

Collective Self: Al-Khafaji views it as an individual's orientation and perception towards their self through societal judgments, values, and customs (Al-Khafaji, 1993, 10).

Operational Definition of Collective Self Behavior: It is the collective action pressure on the individual self that shapes the artist's behavior as a comprehensive activity involving a series of detailed partial activities, intertwining with other selves and social references to establish collective self behavior.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Section One: Concept of Collective Behavior

First: The Concept of Self in Thought

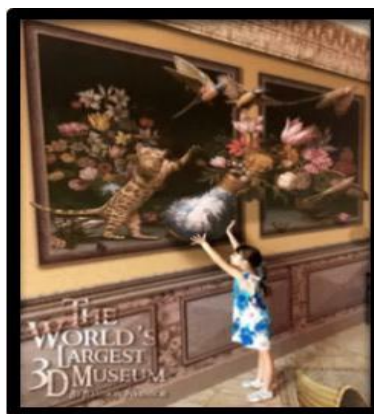
Behavior lies within the intertwined context of physiological foundations and psychological bases with social reference, appearing as an outcome based on the ability to adapt and align with changing stimuli conditions to satisfy existential requirements. In other words, it serves a function, acting as a tool for the self, driven by its needs.

Human beings are governed by a set of dynamic pressures that establish their selfhood. Through their interactive relationships with the self, these pressures lead to the creation of civilizational outcomes within a systemic evolution. The human self is a homogeneous weave of systems, moving like interlocking gears in an engine, each driving the other. Art, as a systemic entity within this dynamic weave, operates under the rules of self and societal regulation. Change can only occur through external forces aligned with its internal transformations.

The concept of the self corresponds to existence, the essence and nature of humanity, with clear influences on philosophical thought. Notably, the Pythagoreans viewed existence as composed of numbers and harmonies, seeing it as a harmony among conflicting opposites. They regarded art and the creative process as part of this numerical harmony (Haider, 2021, 19). In contrast, the Sophists considered the internal existence (conscious self) as the center of existence, with sensory tools being the basis of the external existence within its scope and

context. Existence belongs to humanity (the self), as it is the measure, purpose, and means of everything, with differences perceived through individual sensory perception (Badawi, Vol. 1, 2006, 589). Thus, art is a subjective attribute, part of the human-related existence.

Gorgias believed that the purpose of existence is pleasure, and the artist masters the art of deception aimed at evoking feelings of pleasure (Haider, op. cit., 20). This involves the process of reconfiguring controls (reduction and metaphor) and presenting them in an inclusive relationship that guarantees the desired pleasure, interpreting them in externalities that condense relative reality, as seen in postmodern art and its applications in optical illusion arts (Fig. 1a, b). Socrates, who grasped the profound meaning of the inscription on the Temple of Delphi, "Know thyself," introduced the concept of the soul as a self-existing entity with a goal it seeks to achieve (Globe, 1986, 7).



Each self has a goal it strives to achieve through existents. Art serves as a tool to express the self's purpose and its reflection on others in form and composition. Plato perceives the self as moving according to a psychological framework (the working, the spirited, and the appetitive) (Suwaif, 1966, 128). In the world of sensibles (existents), it operates based on the structure of its sensory tools. However, this world remains a mere copy of the fundamental essence of all existence. The existents reflect on the self like illusions and shadows cast on the cave wall.

Aristotle, on the other hand, believes that the self possesses an intrinsic essence that moves, changes, and influences it. The soul represents a reflection of the existential image (objective representation). Hence, Aristotle emphasizes the harmony and integration between the soul and nature, asserting a reciprocal relationship between them. He suggests that external circumstances in the world affect the individual. Aristotle also insists on the existence of a priori knowledge within the mind, enabling us to perceive existence and things. Nonetheless, he advocates for the empirical observation of existents (Haider, op. cit., 32), implying a psychology of transmission and reception.

The major transitions from the Renaissance era, the French Revolution, to the Industrial Revolution emphasized the self as a human tendency and a fundamental element in driving existents. The shattering of all epistemological and metaphysical rules, relegating icons to secondary tools, affirmed its identity with full force. Descartes logically articulated this in the cogito, "I think, therefore I am," analyzing it in several areas:

The cogito can be called the metaphysical self.

The ontological self, which refers to spirits and deities.

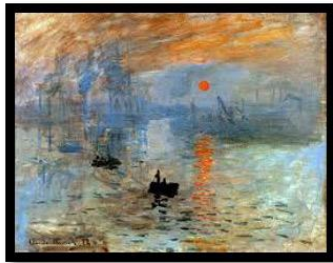
The existential self, where the self experiences emotion within the scope of "I think."

The identity between "I think" and "I exist" immediately leads to the isolation of the self from itself, transforming the relationship into conflict and contradiction (Al-Hamdani, 2011, 98). Kant, on the other hand,

argued that the human mind is the essence of the self and is incapable of knowing the truths of existents by itself, but only knows phenomena. This implies that anything subject to time and space, and thus sensory perception, has meaning for the mind (Matar, 1998, 89).

The self is propelled by knowledge established by consciousness through experiences and knowledge that establishes the self through innate knowledge. Impressions sought to dissolve the heavy sensory form, break the spatial isolation of things, and make them coexist with the elements of existence, especially the visible and invisible. Its visual perception was not just representational but captured the moment of impression and recorded it in a way that gained legitimacy in durability and continuity, whether related to its sensory entity as a material existence, as in figure (2) (the creative act extends beyond the limits of the artist to the recipient) (Ghanem, 2024, 543).

In psychology, it has been approached from several psychological perspectives and directions. The writings of William James marked a turning point by adding a dimension to the self characterized by inclusivity, not limited to the organic aspect in the biological sense but extending beyond to include everything the individual shares with others. This is referred to as the extended self (Reflected Self), and it was mentioned that an individual has as many selves as the number of people who know him, so he has a specific self for his wife, another for his children, a third for his colleague at work, and a fourth in his worship, meaning that the components of the self are divided into four parts: the material self, the social self, the spiritual self, and the private self (Ghanem, 1975, 675). We see its reflections in the Realist school as in figure (3).



Mead escaped that the self is a mirror reflecting images from its surroundings (Bakr, 1979, 14). However, proponents of psychoanalytic theory * argue that the human self constantly seeks to satisfy its biological motives, which conflict with societal values and traditions. This creates a state of conflict between what the individual wants to achieve due to the pressure of the components of the Id in order to express itself, and the resistance of the Ego to these motives. Individual activity seeks to defend the personality and adapt it to social situations. There is a third aspect of

the self, the Super Ego, which stands as a vigilant guardian over both the Id and the Ego. The individual's involvement in the circle of psychological conflict as a result of the inability to satisfy their needs leads to various types of conflicts (Al-Awsi, 1990, 189). The surrealists translated this in their works as a war against the laws, systems, and contexts of feeling, as seen in figure (4A, B, C).



The behavioral school, by emphasizing concepts that can be experimentally verified, interprets self-movement in light of the excessive generalization of stimulus and response (Bakr, previous source, 15). Thus, the self is nothing but habits learned as a result of shaping by a set of environmental factors and rules. However, humanistic psychologists argue that the behavior of the self cannot be explained solely based on reinforcement.

The cultural pressure, represented by the structure of beliefs, habits, traditions, and tastes, is in a state of continuous change and alteration, controlled by humanistic standards and behavioral desires, as well as environmental variables within temporal and spatial limits. This leads to the emergence of class affiliations, as culture shifts as a dynamic social product based on variables and ideologies, leading to conflicting tendencies at times that affect the mechanisms of individual self-adaptation with the collective and their selves. This impact is evident through love, affection, belonging, rejection, dominance, and neglect, forming the primary sources of self-behavior (Hussein, 1987, 108).

These concepts lead to classifications that determine the nature of human self and its rituals imposed by its needs. The changing and evolving needs exercise roles and centers of excitement and anxiety to estimate the self, especially when the fundamental pressures of openness, compression, and accumulation shifts lead to losing value, pushing it to fragment according to the market's structure and laws. Al-Khalidi sees that the self has two meanings: "the self as a subject (self-as-object), by defining it as directions that determine its feelings, perceptions, and self-evaluation as a collective subject, the source of society's mechanisms, laws, and standards through symbols and signs. The second meaning (Al-Khalidi, 1975, 175), as the transformations in the structure of the external pattern reconstruct the internal patterns. The sociological view is that the individual's self is nothing but a collection of selves, subject to the laws and reflections of societal conditions and living patterns. The self is a cognitive structure formed as a result of human consciousness about its various aspects (shape, formation (personality)), its mental construction, and its social behavior (collective self), which evolves structurally (Hull, 1969, 617).

Social relationships, as a self-practice with its compressive elements influencing the individual's internal collective construction, and its culture, from which its aesthetics stem and guide them to perceive their needs. The sociologist Emile Durkheim believes that self-behavior results from social values and cultural standards, which he called normative anomie. He believes that the self and its behaviors are produced by social cohesion among individuals who usually share common goals, leading to the spread of a state of social formation (Barakat, 2006, 44). The self is influenced by society and affects it. It is not just a reflection of production conditions but a constructive force. It is determined by social determinants and has determinants for it.

Secondly: Concept of Collective Behavior

In the context of the group, the self is a reflection of the community and an expression of their aspirations and beliefs (Al-Asfar, 2001, p. 35).

The self, in its orientations, whether rejecting or responsive to stimuli of instinctual urges or environmental stimuli surrounding its references and determinants, thus becomes a coherent reading of a picture expressing the impact of pressure directed from stimuli and reinforcements on the individual that is reflected in the form of a behavioral pattern exercised by the self, whether in harmony or in contradiction with the standards and controls of the reference community to which it belongs. It may rephrase it according to its stereotypical images of its society, with its personal motives and needs, or the collective self-awareness may be in harmony with the

individual, thus exerting pressure on the individual self to establish a comprehensive activity that involves a set of detailed partial activities that relate to other selves with their references and value judgments, to establish a behavior with an imaginary image of the community's goals. "Man achieves existence within the environment in which he exists, as perceptions and values arise from these class environments" (Qabari, 2000, p. 474).

Thirdly: The Pressures that Establish Behavior

Role Definition: The individual's perception of himself through the social roles he performs is one of the important factors contributing to the formation of his self-concept, and it has been found (Kuhn and his colleagues) that this self-perception grows with the growth of the self and that the performance of the role in the past led to the emergence of the self, where the self emerges from the roles, not vice versa (Zahran, 1971, p. 227). In what Mead calls taking on the role, and the growth of self-awareness about the image of women and their integration in the formation of the artistic achievement, the movement of the role is one of the criteria that reveal the formal text of the achievement in accordance with the internal psychological influences to create a special balance born with it all its needs and experiences.

Center: It is the artist's sense of self and his perception of it, and others' perception of him. The centering around the self, as Carl Rogers sees it, is that the self is the center and pivot around which things and phenomena revolve (Jalal, 1959, p. 128). The artist's self deals with and evaluates itself according to the outputs of social standards. The artistic achievement, with its units and structural formations, is nothing but self-outputs, an expression and fulfillment of its internal needs reflected in the external reality. The self in its behavior is unique, with an external existence resulting from its integration with others, the artistic achievement is a feedback for that internal structure. Freud sees that the artist's self and his personality structure are the result of highly intense disturbed conflicts between the id (desires) and the superego that controls its dealings, as it possesses awareness of reality. It is in a state of continuous emergence and continuous ascending levels, it is a feedback to what the artist understands from social inputs and internal processes according to the conflict and its various levels, addressing the suggestive psychological meanings in the text, transformation centers resulting from the feedback of structural transformations of self-behavior (Abbas, 2016, p. 26), as in the works of Picasso and his transitions (blue, pink, cubist in its stages) (Figure 5A, B, C). We notice that colors change their meaning depending on the situation and context.



The psyche in which it exists. The community has an impact on carrying meanings, connotations, and colors. The interpretation of a color depends on the characteristics of the community in which it originates, and it reflects the collective and symbolic imagination that gives it its significance. Modern art movements have worked on representing achievements as a social-psychological concept in an extreme trend, revealing itself by venting the increasing anxiety in its depths with its psychological crises. This is directly related to the objective (social) data (Al-Bayati, 2024, p. 130).

C) Self-Regulation: "The control exerted by the individual over his feelings, motives, and actions, as he is capable of controlling and directing them according to his will" (Al-Jubouri, 1990, p. 126). This means that the self relies on the individual's ability to plan his behaviors and anticipate the results of them. Thus, self-regulation works on maintaining internal laws, through its systems and references that determine the behavior performed and its results. Through the ability and desire, cognitive organizations are achieved that are created through its components (self-monitoring) differentiation, self-evaluation, commitment to stability, planning, and self-

enhancement). It is a cognitive method through which the individual controls his behaviors, actions, and reactions by self-monitoring, self-assessment, and self-enhancement, and then employs this method in various situations (Al-Khawaja, 2013, p. 58). The self is a product of a permanent dialectic (exchange and conflict) between (the ego as existence) and the other as (a stimulus) from another perspective, meaning that it is a derivative of the control factors (self and objective), which "is expressed by the pressures, controls, and rules imposed by the community" (Al-Khawaja, cited above, p. 81), to generate from it the self's self with its unique formative characteristics, representing it as the result of an interactive action and reaction that plays a role in the theater of society as a coordinator in structure, taking a certain direction according to its functional tools. The reference pressure leads to diversity and contradiction in the motives of needs in the self, thus the self-regulation is formed from three layers (internal, intermediate, external) (Abu Riash, 2007, p. 37).

Fourth: Characteristics of the Self in Its Collective Behavior

Spontaneous and preceding individuality (selfness) for the individual.

It compels the individual and obliges him to submit to it.

It is general because it is social and exists in every corner of the self.

It has properties independent of individuals' perceptions; when collective mental impressions prevail, the individual loses his self-independence.

The limits of collective self-behavior (compliance, conformity, collective thinking (collective mind), collective transformation) (Al-Saadi, 2010, pp. 29-30).

Second Section: The Creative Process Between the Individual and the Collective in Art:

Art, as a human issue, with its perceptions and emotional specificity, results from the interactive integration between the self and the other (art is a form of the conflict and struggle between social groups).

(English, 2007, p. 7), as shown in figure 6.



Ahmed Mahoud's use of the attribute of absence in the presence highlights the image of conflict through the symbolism of man and woman (Youssef, 2012, p. 27). The creative process contains codes in the shaping and reshaping of social and intellectual structures (self and collective), operating according to the pressures of needs and their variations within the circle of time and place. Thus, the concept and idea evolve within social standards that regulate and direct the potter to present his artistic vision, which may involve societal treatments or shedding light on a social situation (Al-Bayati, 2023, p. 188).

The potter evokes environmental images and readjusts them to suit his own identity to achieve goals he seeks, to depict reality with its coded standards within the boundaries of social culture. "The fundamental meaning of art is to reveal existence by giving shape to what we perceive" (Macquarrie, 1982, p. 384).

The creative process and its mechanisms do not adhere to fixed standards due to the variables in the cultural structure of society and human behavioral aspects and perceptions that correspond to its culture, as well as the contradiction between the individuality system (individual self)* and the group system. The dialectical

relationship between them is responsible for the process of transformation in structures and institutions through their various systems. "Artistic activity initially appears as an integral part of sensory activity (material and productive), gradually acquiring an independent character as a qualitative field of social useful work and its function is to meet human needs" (Toufmasian, 1981, p. 48).

The relationship between the creative process with its axes (the artist, the receiver, the artistic achievement, and the presentation media) is controlled and driven by variables and determinants (social systems, environment, time, and place). The transformation in performance is due to societal pressures and its systems that the artist transmits with a binary between thought and reason at times and between emotion and feeling at other times (Kazem, 2020, p. 109).

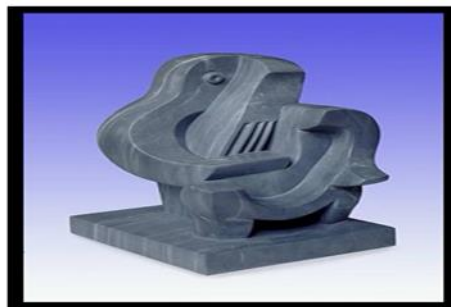
The concept of time, place, and their philosophy of existence varies according to the self's behavior in different directions. Time in art (internal sensory conditioned by contemplation, we feel the before and after, any artistic work always involves an element of time that distinguishes it with main characteristics being a dimension of the artistic achievement and as the temporal formula for it) (Al-Douri, 1998, p. 40).

While place is the space in which the event of the vision occurs, which exists outside consciousness through the movement of the event and the result subject to the conditions of the self with its dimensions, i.e., it is a symbolic organization that moves social institutions between the circle of compulsion and authorization. Time and place present an organization that falls within the framework of experience, through which the self falls into the nature of collective regulation (Harvey, 2005, p. 254).

This means that the spatial units (social structures) and the necessary time press on the self to establish individuality and community, placing artistic taste between them.

Firstly, the artistic achievement between the individual and the collective:

The artistic achievement: The artistic achievement is always a work that is reproduced (Harvey, previous source, p. 397). This means that the formulation of the artistic achievement corresponds and intersects with the structure of social references and is determined by its visions, reflecting its dominant culture. Its forms, themes, and methods are determined according to that formulation. With the multiple structural formulations of society (its intellectual, moral, economic, political, and legal standards, etc.), there is a plurality within the artist who is situated within a fragmented culture. The structure of the self reflects the process of evolution in the productive behavior mechanisms of the artist, responding to needs. In other words, the self and the other generate a structure with directed compositions towards constructing a holistic unity, merging according to its constructive mechanisms to achieve a dialectical harmony within the mechanisms of satisfying the collective, meaning the self is prioritized over the other. The other is understood only through its relationship with the self. The self does not recognize its true nature except through its relationships and interactions with other selves, each becoming complementary and a means for the other (Al-Ammar, 2000, p. 217)



The needs define the ideas as they form the basis of consciousness and are reflected within it. "Meed" argues that individuality merges with the collective system based on the functional characteristics of its structure according to the criterion of functional differentiation for openness and closure. The interaction between internal structures and their unique individual characteristics as an internal psychological factor, and the external social structures surrounding the individual as an external factor, combine to form the individual's social self.

This is affirmed by Al-Hasan (2005, p. 82). Pavlov also asserts that an artist's self is a conditioned reflection of environmental influences (external elements), announcing its conceptual ideas within its social system. This is evident in Jack Lipchitz's guitarist sculpture (Figure 7), leading to sensory outputs through its reconfigured formations. The artist's self is a result of multiple compelling changes with their particles and integrals, linked to their interactions and stimulations, establishing elements (static, dynamic) with their symbolic connotations to achieve its individual system.

The collective communication contract leads the artist to give familiar meanings as a relationship between things, conflicting with their culture, to convey a definition message to the other, integrating with technology in its expressive terms as a language and visual discourse. The artist seeks to contradict reality through his distortive tendency, transforming reality to express his anxieties for aesthetic communication purposes (Al-Bayati, 2010, p. 239).

Individuals use their symbols in social practices, transitioning from individual to collective self to build a cultural capital, which leads to a transformation seen in contemporary art, especially in using their symbols to create a cultural capital with their transformations to become a center of creativity reflected in their era. The value of the achievement reflects prevailing values.

Artistic Taste and Its Impact on the Artist's Self

Artistic taste is a communicative process, with many of its characteristics depending on the quantity, type, and characteristics of the information presented by the stimulating or artistic subject, referred to as the object of taste. The self is driven by its desires and needs, either consciously or unconsciously, maintaining the ability to think and produce what the artist wants to achieve his personal desires. Evaluating the artistic product changes its value and nature, extracting it from its individual existence to generalize it to its collective existence. "Every concept and tangible meaning represents a crystallization of experiences for a particular group." (English, 2007, p. 7). Thus, opinions about an artistic product are closely related to the tastes and preferences of dominant social groups with influence, as the artistic product is a reflection and follower of the community's movement. As taste and aesthetic preferences are the result of perceptual processes that sense the product's values and what it conveys, conforming to the reference regulations of the social structure, Norbert Elias affirms that complex, intertwined social networks of power affect the artist, surrounding him with restrictions to produce products based on the

tastes and preferences of the dominant community, not the creativity he desires in his innermost being (English, cited, p. 7).

Taste and reception psychology are the moment when the product is born, reception is reproduction, adaptation, and evaluation of the product, as well as an active process in understanding and evaluating the product. The artist Marcel Duchamp says that the viewers are the ones who create the artistic paintings, as the admirers of the magician make his magic effective by believing in it. (Eynik, 2011, pp. 89-91).

Tastes and preferences in dealing with one artistic achievement over another differ with the social environment in terms of motivations, values, traditions, and customs that drive the individual and the group, dealing interchangeably with the artistic achievement. Cultural or social influencers (reference groups and their regulations) or personal psychological factors influence the recipient with codes and opinions about the achievement. The functional direction sees that behavior is a form of feeling that appears when reflex actions fail to satisfy the individual's needs, and behavior appears according to the need mechanism as a result of development. This means that function is the basis of the recipient's behavior structure.

The artist realizes the artistic achievement as a result of gathering and analyzing information according to the mechanisms of benefit (pressures of reference groups), determining the causes of taste transformations and their diversity in two ways: first, the quality of taste according to need (psychological, material), and second, taste is linked to satisfaction units

Theoretical Framework Indicators

Self-references practiced by humans in response to their instinctual stimuli and references influenced by the environmental surroundings, which conflict with their social systems and laws.

The community system is dynamic elements of the self dramatically changing its boundaries according to variables.

The self moves in its constituent field due to experiences as a whole, as it is part of the virtual field consisting of perceptions, values, and standards as a source of experience and behavior.

Collective behavior represents the individual's position within the context of the community. The self is a reflection of the community and an expression of their aspirations and beliefs.

Art as a human issue with its perceptions and emotional specificity, resulting from the interactive integration between individuals.

Space is the space in which the vision event occurs, existing outside consciousness through the movement of the event and the result, subject to the conditions of the self with its dimensions, i.e., it is a symbolic organization that moves social institutions between the cycle of authority and delegation.

Previous Studies

No scientific study has addressed the research topic and its objectives or approached its general field (visual arts) and the specific applied field of ceramics. However, the researcher reviewed efforts made by researchers and writers who addressed the topic of behavior in other fields of knowledge, benefiting from them in the research.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

First: Research Methodology

The researcher relied on the descriptive method in analyzing his samples.

Second: Research Community

The current research community included ceramic works published in the media and art exhibitions by Iraqi potters produced during the time period (1980-2010). Works closely related to the current research objectives were identified and employed in chronological stages.

Third: Research Sample

The research sample consisted of (3) samples, selected purposively to serve the current research, with one work for each potter. The selection of research models was based on the following justifications (or criteria):

Adoption of ceramic products that underwent internal changes due to political and social transformations.

The extent to which ceramic form was influenced (specifically and generally).

Repetition as a language of reference and collective interaction within the community to achieve collective behavior.

The selected products represented specific time periods.

Fourth: Research Tool

The researcher relied on the theoretical framework's concepts and indicators as a tool for analyzing the models, in addition to interviews with specialized artists and potters. The researcher also examined the opinions of the community members who do not have artistic expertise but possess visual and social insight through social interaction. The researcher described this approach as stable and exploratory, involving scientific and meticulous observation related to the contents of contemporary Iraqi ceramic sociology.

Fifth: Sample Analysis

Model (1)*



The mural consists of a variety of artistic arrangements, drawing on references from the Baghdadi heritage and its symbolic meanings. The artist employed a method of simulation to convey local heritage, reinterpreting it in a contemporary style that aligns with local taste and specificity. The artwork shows diversity in its vocabulary and decorative units, characterized by the artist's focus on repeating decorative and ornamental tendencies within a geometric framework. This repetitive trend in composition implies a generalization and appropriation of the overall image of the ceramic scene within the formal and ornamental movement levels of linear, color, and dimensional units in the total work space, related to its summoning of the image of the place as a "repetitive theme."

The repetitive trend adopts a method for its formations as it resonates with the collective imagination, particularly in terms of the formal construction technique dominated by Islamic vocabulary such as domes, minarets, and arches, which incorporate a range of crescents, doors, and windows in their formal structure, in addition to Baghdadi symbols with a heritage and ornamental character. The visual vocabulary activates Islamic connotations, enhanced by the presence of color structures of gradations of azure and blue shades (domes, geometric decorations, palm trees, and design tendencies).

The color diversity, which serves the mechanisms of the reference standards, came as a chromatic treatment for the subject and its compositions. The artist employed the rest of the colors to create functional balance, aiming to convey harmony with the output. The spatial depth is achieved through the mechanisms of working the clear space of the place's vocabulary, with the structural nature of the achievement touching upon the surrounding environment, evoking the procession of ancient places (heritage and contemporary) as symbolic mechanisms intertwined according to its design proposition. The contrast and variety of the use of colors and their techniques in glazing are in line with the intellectual and cultural diversity of that era. The ceramic accomplishment takes an aesthetic ornamental trend within the data and engines of the community and its color mechanisms, as the artist's self taste is imitated by employing it with icons and vocabulary, extracting it from its individual existence to generalize it to its collective existence.

Model 2*



The majority of the ceramist's works fall within a systematic framework, where collective standards and rules interact. Her collective discourse acts as a pressure to captivate the recipient's mind, leading it towards widely circulated forms and socially encoded models. This drives the ceramist to produce specific styles of pottery to achieve that connection between the recipient and the artwork.

A ceramic mural depicts a scene featuring two women wearing abayas, with arches displayed in all directions and a moon symbol laden with symbolic meanings. Its repetition underscores its structure as a symbolic code, accompanied by the Hand of Abbas above the arches, crafted by the ceramist according to contemporary stylistic movements. The compositional style is characterized by the fluidity of lines and an internal space filled with elements that flow with the movement of forms. The artwork emulates a folkloric custom with a mythological and dramatic dimension, referring to the lunar eclipse, which stimulates the intellectual aspect of human thought, prompting mythological interpretations and weaving various legends. One such legend suggests that the moon's retrieval requires specific rituals, including the chant "Oh Carved Fish, return our lofty moon."

The ceramist borrows these elements from mythological folklore, infusing the work with narrative meanings and symbolic connotations, creating a contractual system among those familiar with these tales. These references are embedded as encoded symbols within the artwork, governed by popular traditions. The ceramist establishes a formal relationship through the symmetry of forms and the diversity of structural movements. Social discourse serves as a crucial pressure in the feedback process between the ceramist and the audience, guiding the production of pottery in specific styles influenced by commonly circulated forms and socially encoded models.

The artist possesses the ability to borrow and invoke elements, adhering to the logic of freedom in crafting artistic components. By extracting elements from social standards and subjecting them to the creative process, the artist's self-perception dominates the structural material of heritage, transforming it into a continuously evolving communicative act, shaped by self-imposed necessities in formal and compositional proposals. The artist dynamically reconfigures these elements based on openness and closure, reshaping them in accordance with their connection to his own identity.



Model 3*

A semi-geometric ceramic sculpture of an architectural structure features a solid wall, shattered at the upper edges, occupying the entire space of the artwork. The ceramist utilized simple carving and engraving techniques on the clay before firing to depict the appearance of bricks, subsequently covering the piece with colored oxides. The frontal view of the piece reveals a Sumerian devotee, gazing sharply from behind the wall with wide eyes and a long beard covering his chest, looking with reverence and contemplation. The back of the ceramic text is dominated by Kufic script of Quranic verses in light brown on a rectangular plaque, seemingly hung on the wall, with a cuneiform seal imprint in gray below. Adjacent to the script stands the devotee, merging the references into a balanced creation.

The mechanism of the artwork, suggesting contemplation, enhances the static quality of the borrowed element, which the ceramist reintroduces through innovative techniques, emphasizing the clay's color post-firing to enhance the brick-like appearance as an expressive value. The drama of the text is established through the interplay of shadows within the sculpture, revealing the material's overall value as a symbolic and informative element. The antiquated quality of the piece underscores its origins and reinforces its connection to Mesopotamian civilization, transforming inherited cultural concepts into forms perceptible through contemporary aesthetic principles.

The ceramist targeted abstract meanings and their symbolic associations, incorporating them into the ceramic text, signifying temporal and spatial relationships where the event occurs to achieve the concept of "immortality." The ceramist aimed to address societal needs through discourse laden with clear-cut meanings, employing elements within the text's structure and invoking visual forms to establish cultural context through explicit metaphor and intertextuality, particularly referencing the Sumerian devotee linked to Mesopotamian heritage.



The movement of elements in their mutual relationships that forged the concept of the work and the symbolic significance of "immortality" as a metaphorical discourse conveys messages (cultural, civilizational, political). It

is a text that articulates the mechanisms of conflict that have accompanied the land of Shinar since the dawn of history until now. The notion of immortality is embodied in conflict, symbolizing the continuity of life in the dichotomies inherent in Iraqi culture. The ceramic text, with its integrated features, represents abstract forms and symbols detached from their realistic phenomena. The ceramist employs these forms to interpret the sectarian conflict in society, a struggle deeply rooted in social psychology, creating a semantic openness the ceramist seeks in his tool as a formal discourse and borrowed texts (the Sumerian devotee and his figure within the wall and the Quranic text as a fixed pattern). The structural composition of the work reveals its content through form, aligning with the temporal and spatial dynamics of societal behavior influenced by conflict mechanisms. These codes aim to provoke the deep structures affecting the recipient, which serve as a target in the marketing dynamics within the social relations market.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of Results

Through the study and analysis of contemporary ceramic works and their operational mechanisms, the researcher, in alignment with the research objective, reached the following conclusions:

Social discourse is a significant pressure in persuading the ceramist to satisfy the audience, directing him towards commonly circulated forms and socially encoded models (Examples 1, 2, 3). The ceramist's use of uniquely Iraqi elements and icons aims to describe his ceramic works according to the Iraqi identity's needs and desires, influenced by societal taste shaped by folk heritage (Examples 1, 2). Social pressure sometimes influences the ceramist to produce specific styles of pottery to enhance the relationship between society and ceramic art.

The dynamics of social relations have established a movement of contradiction and conflict due to the problematic intersection of roles and centers clashing with the self and its nature. This dual collision arises from the conflicting demands of the pressing community and the value composition of heritage and self. The ceramist presents these contradictions as interpretations of social action in modern forms (Examples 1, 2, 3) using symbolic icons and elements to align with the reference community's needs.

Various pressures shape and define the collective product, such as the limits of compliance, collective imagination, and degree of conformity (Examples 1, 2, 3). Hence, the mechanisms of taste differ over time due to event outcomes rather than artistic outcomes, meaning that taste changes not because of shifts in societal values but to align with evolving standards.

CONCLUSIONS

The artist embodies two perceptive, dynamic, and interactive selves. The first is unique, aiming to assimilate and internalize objects (inner movement) to create individuality through integration (making objects part of the self through repetition). The second self reflects collective behavior, emulating and aligning with the community's behaviors, harmonizing with its layers and directions under various pressures (environmental, heritage, legacy) to achieve a stable ego positioned between desires/needs and the collective pressure of the superego driven by collective imagination.

Changes have influenced the movement of ceramic art in Iraq, with each stage marking a different transformative construction, establishing a successive phase (a progressive context). The necessity tool alters the behavior of the self (individual and collective) according to changes in reality, interpreting events as products of conflict dynamics in various directions, creating diverse new structures for each historical phase of society based on the nature of production forces, which determine the type of appreciated and followed artistic direction.

The shift from traditional folk styles to contemporary artistic directions (from individual to collective) has gained rapid momentum due to changes in the social system and the alteration of societal roles and positions. The ceramist's behavior adapts to the social system and its institutions, with ceramic works serving as a tool for promoting and marketing a particular cultural and ideological approach, evident in the eighties and nineties through the prevalence of ceramic installations aligned with collective references.

Wars and political crises significantly influence the balance between individual and collective production due to prioritized needs and changes in the cultural framework of customs and traditions. These crises have markedly altered the directional structure of Iraqi ceramists, affecting them technically and existentially. Political crises have reflected in the thematic orientations and messages of their works, used as cultural pressures, impacting the type and exchange value of the product, shaping it as either a promotional or dissenting tool.

The self's ability to extract and reconfigure elements and structures into new forms follows the behavioral rhythm of the self (unique, collective). These are employed through various performance and expression mechanisms, representing the rebellious self as part of the communicative power of visual discourse under collective pressure.

Recommendation

The researcher proposes conducting a study within the same field, titled: "The Psychology of Creativity between the Individual and the Collective in Contemporary Iraqi Ceramics."

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Collective Behavior Representations in Contemporary Iraqi Ceramics (An Analytical Study)

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