

DAMANAT

PLASTIC ART AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

GHADA AL-HADAD



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Introduction

Plastic art is all what is taken from the nature. It is reproduced in new ways, which means that it is reproduced and constituted in a new and different from what it was in the nature. Therefore, it is called (Plastic Art) according to the view of such an artist who takes his thoughts and words that he wants to re-form in a new way from the environment and the surroundings that s/he lives in according to his/her special method.

Between the 13th and 14th centuries, which were the birth of plastic art renaissance during which the artists determined the signs of development in the Italic art. They were drawing the reality to embody certain moments instead of the camera. Artists in that period worked on establishing the Realistic school in the plastic art. It is the school that conveys all that in the nature and the reality into faithful and original artistic work. It was a form of documenting situations according to the reality in terms of political, economic, religious circumstances at that time.

Today, camera records a certain reality concerning the society, the passions and feelings of the artist intervened in documenting these works, so there was the Symbolic Realism and the Expressionism as a new addition, which the artists of the Renaissance era discovered to add a new sensation that is different from what the camera lens does. From this point, the discovery of other schools of plastic art started in order to provide us with new works and imaginative thoughts which camera lens cannot do. They also discovered many schools like Impressionism, Abstract, Romanticism, Brutalism, and Cubism...etc.

Plastic art is like the third lung to the artist through which he can express what it is inside him such as suppression, human or social issues and even political issues. The world of art is so wide and we cannot study it all. The more life develops, the more art develops.

The Artistic Experience

In general, art in our society is a need of no value in the point of view of people or at the best they think it is a secondary thing practiced by people of no jobs or ambitions. When I joined the faculty of Fine Arts, I faced disturbance from my family before others do, and later I faced a lot of troubles in my society. This because the people here know nothing about the plastic art only that silly jokes they hear like: You are an artist complains to me and I am an artist complain to you (the word complain in Arabic has the same letters as plastic artist).

Above all, I got tired nodding my head to get rid of constant questions of some people like: What will you benefit, Where will you go after graduate. They were answering these questions by saying "You will stay at home like the rest that plastic art is not a high paid job or even accepted and You will regret your years wasted on such silly things. But, I tolerated all that troubles and tiredness and considered that a challenge. I struggled and believed in my abilities and my talent. I was so confident that someday certainly I will achieve what I want. I have this dream since I was a child to be a well-known plastic artist and that people would respect what I produce. I used to think that it is going to be easy, but I didn't know that obstacles and troubles are awaiting me like a hard wall prevents me from achieving my dream.

At the time of studying at collage, days were hardly passing. Everyday such a challenge gets bigger, for one moment I feel that I am about to fail and for another moment I feel that I am going to survive. At that time, I remembered that I got an invitation from the Libyan University to attend their anniversary festival being nominated by my university. However, I could not travel because, as a girl, in my country and religion I don't have the right to travel without male guardian (Mahram), so I lost the chance of participating in such anniversary. I had to quit, but with some friends we took the hardest decision, which is to confront the society and to defend our right to travel.

After graduating –as a group of five girls –we established a group that has the name of "Chromatic Auras(Halat Lawneeh)", and we did succeed and later we participated in more than 25 internal and abroad exhibitions. We didn't stop at this point, we came back to our beautiful city "Al-Hodeida", this kind and quiet city, met all its artists, and we established Plastic Art House in Al-Hodeida in 2006 to which more than 100 plastic artist of the province joined as this city is full of a lot of talents. Thus, the Art House constituted a convenient place to those artists, and worked hard to provide them with special requirements that helped the artist to continue his/her artistic life. Constant festivals also made a strong hope and confidence to those artists and I am one of them.

In 2008, I won the State Youth Award. This award made a strong motivation to me. Soon after that, I moved faster and tried to participate in new Arabic festivals, but this time with more confidence.

In 2011, the country moved into a big conflict. In those years I lost hope, but a ray of hope still shines inside of me. During the years of conflict and the changing of circumstances, I was confronting all those conditions with drawing and teaching kids.

I declare my refusal to what happened through my paintings. When things went to worst I made them up with drawing, when the status of the country exacerbates, I make myself patient through drawing.

What makes me happy is the big hope inside me still as it was, and this talent that I have is now bigger than ever.

The Plastic Artistic Movement in Yemen

The form of the plastic art movement has developed in the last three decades in Yemen. We could mention the most important artistic generations, which made an advance and distinction by virtue of the presence of pioneers who contributed in the first formation of the movement, depending on themselves and their artistic issue. This issue was their daily concern to their artistic and stylistic development, and seeking to get a position which carries an objective- plastic privacy.

When I was at college, we studied that there are plastic art pioneers in Yemen such as Hashim Ali, Abduljabar Noa'aman, Fuad Al-Fotaihand Abduljaleel Al-Surori. Those pioneers were classified as the First Generation who made the start point of the artistic movement in Yemen. They had big and distinguished presence where each one presented the plastic art in his own way

Then the Second Generation appeared who was taught by the First Generation. They include Talal Al-Najar, Amnah Al-Nosiri, Motahar Nizar, Hakem Al-Aqil, Hani Al-Aghbari and others. However, they were not introduced enough just we heard about them in some media. Due to the lack of possibilities that we have -Youth Artists- we just we heard about this generation only through gatherings in the artistic exhibitions in Sana'a. The financial situations do not make the artist to travel from one province to another. During the period.

In Sana'a the Capital of Arab Culture, the Third Youth Generation appeared who were from different provinces. The conditions were possible to travel and move. When I participated in Tihama Caravan, I was astonished with the number of youth artists there from different provinces including Dhamar, Ibb, Al-Mahweet, Al-Hodeida and other provinces. Great artists praised the appearance of this Generation with such strength so numerous workshops and meetings were held at that time.

There was a great plastic art movement because the concerned parties as Ministry of Culture then had strong financial possibilities. As a result, new horizons were opened to the artists through establishing a House of Art in each province in order to keep the artistic movement going. Of course, it did continue for a reasonable time. Meetings and artistic workshops were held in the Houses of Art at the provinces until financial support granted by the Ministry of Culture was cut. Thus, they became mere ruins which make us recall the days of such prosperity and the days of big artistic exhibitions.

Freedom of Expression - Plastic Art in Yemen:

The freedom of expressions in the plastic art depends on the cultural flair and also the dominating customs and traditions. There are restrictions that prevent this art, for instance: as a woman I cannot express what I feel inside of me; and if I dare to do that, the majority will scold me proving that this is prohibited and as a woman I do not have the right even to think or dream to reach this because as a plastic artist we express what we can't achieve in the reality.

Speaking about creativity and its freedom drives us necessarily to think about the creative person as he is the basis of creativity. Allah has distinguished him from others with a different ability. With constant curiosity searching and polishing his experience, s/he needs a real freedom to liberate from the capture of reality, customs, traditions, solidity and the boring routine that came along with most of the artists and the freedom of expression.

A real artist is a person who endeavors and sail into an unknown direction and does not let the obstacles and challenges that he come across with to prevent or frustrate him from what he wants to express through his artistic works or to fear of receptor's reaction which would kill his creativity.

We need to break all customs, traditions and surface thinking to which the society or the environment that we belong to restrict us. This would not happen unless we insist to express freely. The constant stylization and subjection to follow the model of old generation and the prevailing style of life, all kill the spirit of creativity of the real creator and the creative work as well.

Creativity in our country as in the Arabic world is really in a crisis. All know the reality of Arabic creativity and all know about thousands of talents who left our country to achieve what they could not achieve here in our country. All we need is real culture and we need the concerned parties with culture to understand what culture does mean and what creativity does mean. Unfortunately, all who are in charge of culture are of no relation to culture, and this is what stopped our progress.

Recommendations

1. Artistic galleries should be provided from the concerned parties in the various provinces because the galleries make a wide space between the plastic artist and the followers. These galleries would be a place of connection and contacting between the plastic artist and the artistic flair.
2. Marketing the plastic product through galleries, artistic experiences as media programs have the ability to promote the product of the plastic art.
3. All concerned parties should encourage talents and creative artists while the artist should have the responsibility to work diligently and persistently to improve his abilities by all available means.
4. Concentrating the classes of artistic culture especially among youth in order to have a society that tastes, values and respects art.
5. Media means should cast light on plastic arts effectively to reflect positively its state among the society.

6. Concentrating artistic cultural background to school students correctly in order to establish the bases of plastic art among talented students.
7. Conducting artistic workshops and artistic forums to educate people about the importance of plastic art for the society.
8. Promoting and marketing the artistic product properly and there must be a cultural behavior caring of art and beauty to attract the segments of the society of different ages and thought and that would be through the support of concerned parties.
9. Allocating support from the Ministry of Culture, the Fund of Heritage and Cultural Development and from the concerned parties to supporting the cultural movement through coordination and sponsoring their innovations each in his field. For example, the plastic artist should have an exhibition held every month as a support for him, that is, equivalent to 12 plastic exhibitions in a year as well as the literary fields should care for plastic artists through literary publications and theatrical scenes...etc.