



## **Semantic openness in the plastic arts**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The semantic openness constitutes the mirror that reflects the imagination and intellectual creativity through awareness and perception and the openness of the borders between cultures and ideas in the effectiveness of invention that appears between contemporary plastic arts, which gives freedom for artists to express and diversify their artistic trends and their acquisition of experiences, and study the concept of openness and its impact on the formation of artistic achievement and the study of semantics And its multiplicity in the formal structure. The openness of the visual text to multiple readings and different connotations. Therefore, we find interpretation contributes to the production of creative texts, and from here the research attempts to be free from commitment to one meaning; therefore, the semantics varied, and the text became open and transgressive to other texts, which leads to the textual openness through the overlapping of texts and the multiplicity of readings. This research aims to know the semantic openness in the plastic arts (painting, sculpture, and ceramics) that includes an artistic product based on a related text with open connotations.

**Keywords:** Semantic, openness, arts

### **INTRODUCTION**

The multiplicity of artistic trends and the diversity of their curricula and goals in the plastic arts, indicates the development of It is clear about changing the reality of art and presenting other concepts to it; Which presents the products of modernity and renewal in The scope of dealing with it with the aim of change and development, which leads to the emergence of new results through this development To serve the proposals of the artistic stage and give them a principle that is eager to open the concept and ideas presented by art Fine, and this achieves a semantic openness in the nature of the artistic achievement that opens our insight to a group of The pictures, scenes and situations drawn by the artist, and thus pushes us to draw them again through a production meanings and connotations.

#### **The general framework**

##### **The research problem:**

The effectiveness of creative texts in human thought is the result of intermarriage between the cultures of civilized societies that possess a sufficient amount of self-awareness and the ability to imagination and creativity in the formation of artistic achievement to translate what is in the artist's imagination into contemporary texts, as the plastic art was and still is one of the ancient arts that had An important role in embodying the most important aspects of social life, as this art coincided with the launch of human thought, and among the civilized human activity was knowledge of the art of plastic, which witnessed the first foundations, in the construction of ancient Iraqi civilizational thought and in the construction of works that are characterized by semantic openness in their formal systems, as well as the environmental factor has an impact in determining the semantic openness and methods in artistic creations; Diversity in the environment data has created a diversity in the figurative units of fine arts in general, as art everywhere and at all times talks about hidden signs and meanings, searching for connotations that are subject to continuous changes throughout history according to the change in the culture and thought of societies and their social and life circumstances, which leads to multiple readings of artworks, as the openness gives the text a high ability to multiply readings and produce semantics, and for this the researcher tries to shed light on the plastic arts in Iraq and extract what is in it of semantic openness Therefore, the researcher identified her research problem with the following question:

## **What is semantic openness in the plastic arts?**

### **The importance of research:**

The importance of the research are lies in shedding light on the knowledge of semantic openness in the plastic arts and to benefit from its results at the level of academic research for art students in general in enriching artistic and scientific knowledge on the subject of this study.

### **Research objective:**

The current research aims to reveal: Semantic openness in the plastic arts.

### **The research limits**

1. Spatial boundaries / plastic arts produced in Iraq.
2. The temporal boundaries / the period from (1975-1992 AD), that this period is the beginning of local openness and integration with international art and the multiplicity of artistic formations and the diversity of methods used in the artistic productions of Iraqi artists.
3. Objective limits / a study of examples of plastic art in contemporary Iraq that possess semantic openness.

### **The terms and definition:**

#### **1- Openness:**

Al-Futtah (linguistically): (opening) between the two opponents – Fatah: decreed as in Quran ((Our Lord, open between our people with truth and us, and you are the best of conquerors)), and opened the book: he published a fold - "And so-and-so opened his heart: he was reassured by him, and his secret was revealed to him (1).

#### **Idiomatically Openness:**

Openness: "Every artistic work, even if it is complete and closed through the completion of its precisely controlled structure, is open at least through the fact that it is interpreted in different ways" (2).

#### **The procedural openness:**

Openness is the possibility of changing from one structure to another in artistic achievement after the mind is liberated from a closed realistic structure to a symbolic structure through the expansion of thought and interpretation.

#### **Semantic:**

Semantic ((Guidance and - what the utterance requires when it is released, is a name for the work of the indicator, (indicate) is the state in which a person is in calmness and dignity in appearance, form, attributes, and so on. A woman with indicating is said: a woman with a form that detects it (3).

#### **Idiomatically Semantic:**

Semantic: The Semantic sometimes refers to a verb (signification as a process) and sometimes to a state (what is signified); hence, it reveals a dynamic or static conception of the implicit theory. From this perspective, the significance is considered (as a production of the meaning) or (as a productive meaning) (4).

#### **The procedural connotation:**

It is a sign that indicates purposeful meanings and dialogues and issues its connotations to the mind of the recipient through the structure of the artistic achievement and the artist's multiple techniques.

#### **The procedural semantic openness:**

It is the multiplicity of connotations in a single plastic achievement through reading the artwork and the meanings it carries embodied in plastic expressive forms and their synergy together to serve the artistic idea to reach the stage of integration in terms of meaning, which leads to a broadening of the horizon of interpretation and reception of texts with overlapping and open approaches that depend on different concepts within a culture Contemporary recipient in openness of views.

#### **Semantic openness in the plastic arts:**

The semantic openness is characterized by the development of the methods of knowledge, technology and actual practice that work on a basic idea which is the multiplicity of readings and the infiniteness of the artistic work through its interpretive reproduction by the recipient, which leads to showing the general meaning of the artistic achievement, and allows openness to "creative freedom, difference, plurality and heterogeneity, the infinity of knowledge disclosure (5), the openness of significance is one of the basic elements in plastic art, as it has received great importance in the plastic arts, and the artists paid great attention to the mark, because the artistic achievement is "a structure of signs complete and self-sufficient, which performs a special cognitive and aesthetic purpose" ( 6).

Since the plastic artist works his formations through the selection and coordination of lines and colors that highlight the significance of the meaning and symbol embodied in the plastic work with vocabulary that the artist brings out with a new vision that has concepts and an independent entity and that the plastic arts are symbolic images of the human conscience based on the creation of forms capable of sensory perception (7) Accordingly, the formation of the plastic artistic achievement depends on the stylistic tools that combine to build it, as these tools carry expressive energy capable of creating meaning that leads us to interpretation and after intervention in the signs and symbols, which leads to the semantic openness that characterizes the artistic achievement to the plurality of art. Readings (8). Fine artistic achievement begins with personal experience, and emotion is not just

a feeling of simple expression but must activate these emotions in the same recipient and provoke a contemplative state (9).

That is why plastic art is the language of communication through the ideas that characterized it in all ages, and the artist was able to express the world through different arts and has reflected his culture and society in terms of intellectual, aesthetic, and symbolic implications (10).

Accordingly, we note that Iraqi painting witnessed openness to modern painting through forms and its formulation. Every visual painting in Iraqi art represents a natural icon, whether (human, animal, or plant), transformed by the methods of (simplification - reduction - abstraction - flattening) into a symbol, and we understand that the text is an open structure on a symbolic interpretation with a cultural space open for reading (11).

The Iraqi painter was influenced by Western artistic methods transmitted by the pioneers who conveyed the Western experience in the art of painting such as (Jawad Selim, Akram Shukri, Hafez Al-Droubi, Faeq Hassan, and Atta Sabry). European (12), and that contemporary plastic art included new trends at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century and into the beginning of the twenty-first century. On the cultural, civil, and social level (13), the plastic artwork is a text based on diversity and its basic rules of pluralism and openness to all sign transformations and patterns; "Postmodern art is a cognitive art that refuses to have a superficial or deep meaning in its various forms, but rather is a dialogue text based on the plurality of meaning" (14).

The researcher also believes that the contemporary Iraqi formation had an artistic impact with the artist (Jawad Selim 1919-1961 AD), whose artworks were characterized by diversity through neighboring cultures surrounding the artist's identity through analysis of reality and reformulation embodied in his drawings that are subject to interpretation and openness by reading free from relationships. The singularity with aesthetic values full of semantics for the cultural and artistic scene is indicative of Baghdadi personalities and their identity, implemented in the form of simplification and reduction of features, as following figures (1), (2), and (3).



**Figure (1)**



**Figure (2)**



**figure (3)**

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**Jawad Selim artworks**

Also, the works of the artist (Jawad Selim) were characterized by a style that combines artistic methods and local and ancient civilization and its integration with the modern style, characterized by geometric dimensions embodied through his thought, environment and history with a human and artistic significance rich in symbols and connotations as in Figure (1) represented in the topic of the melon seller with significance The human social and expressed the symbol of peace represented by the dove. Thus, the artist achieved semantic diversity with messages that formed a subject open to reading. For figure (2), which expresses the subject of sewing with a real sign that indicates the authenticity of the Iraqi artistic heritage? The painting was characterized by the beauty of colors, lines and shapes with honest expressions of aspects of The era of the artist .

As for the Al-Baghdadiyat painting in figure (3), it is represented in the theme of the city with a cultural and expressive significance with a heritage vision and in a popular style that was derived from the customs of his society and the traditions of his time, achieving forms with open and many meanings that come to mind, so it is a theme that embodies life in society (15).



**Figure (4): Faiq Hassan**

As for the artist (Faeq Hassan, 1914-1992 AD), his paintings were characterized by the mutated natural forms, stripping the forms capable of sensory perception and expressing the human conscience. To indicate the heritage and the village environment, the artist touched in his paintings on topics that are indicative of the Iraqi environment with its earthy colors (16), as in Figure (4), where he expressed life in the village in a realistic manner with clear connotations through the delicacy of the line, the sensitivity of color and the forms of large areas, The color was distinguished by a static connotation. This feature characterized the life of villages in Iraq (17).



**Figure (5): Faiq Hassan**

A different technique characterized the artist's mural (Faeq Hassan) in terms of using colored ceramic pieces that embodied the theme of peace by removing the pigeons from the cage. The text contained a group of people and symbols of women and children, and the empty cage referred to freedom and was characterized by its aesthetic value through strong color and calligraphy. Harmonious and harmonious with his thought, the mural expressed the significance of joy, peace, freedom, and the interdependence of the homeland by openness to all spectrums from the north to the south (18), as in Figure (5). it included an openness in meaning and the construction of its elements in a combination indicative of the multiplicity of patterns through the signs of various systems (19).

As for sculpture, it was characterized by the growth of methods and methods that express both knowledge and experience and the development from contemplation to technical knowledge. This art (20), since contemporary sculpture in Iraq has a modern vision with expressive significance in our modern artistic history and the availability of the element of creativity in sculpture through the nature of the material used, the environment, technical readiness, general culture and intellectual response (21); That is why we find the experiences of sculpture in Iraq always looking for creativity and knowledge through new features of communication whose goal is to prove the Iraqi identity through a plurality of methods in order for the sculptor to reach the formulation of a form and content that carries a meaningful vision that embodies the cultural, social and economic reality for the connoisseur of art and achieve the artistic impact in the process of civilized construction. Pioneering sculptors who contributed to creating a continuous movement for sculpture in Iraq, such as (Jawad Selim, Muhammad Ghani Hikmat, Khaled Al-Rahhal, Amer Al-Obaidi, Nidaa Kazem, Makki Hussein, Idan Al-Sheikhly, Ittihad Karim) (22).



**Figure (6): Jawad Selim**

The artist (Jawad Selim) presented several works of sculpture with a symbolic significance far from direct or explicit expression, as he worked to transform the form into symbols and signs indicating the important issues that occupied the artist during his life, which achieved the semantic openness that expresses human freedom, destiny, destiny, and poverty. Where he embodied it in various artistic forms as in his works (The Freedom Monument) and (The Unknown Political Prisoner) (23), and the (Freedom Monument) as in Figure (6) expressed the artist's artistic insight and openness to the wide imagination and culture that he embodied in fourteen pieces inspired by the forms of art. Cylinder seals, which are printed on clay in intertwined stylistic directions, are executed by the artist in the form of an Arabic sentence that you read in his multiple texts with a full-meaning sentence from right to left (24). The level of construction is paralleled by another openness to textual structures that have become part of it, and thus he interacts with them and dialogues with them and, through this interaction, produces a new significance and a new position on the text and its time and history" (25), and the work of (political prisoner) as in Figure (7) was executed.



**Figure (7): Jawad Selim**

In the form of abstraction of what was born, the expansion of the openness of its significance, it expressed the transcendence of the realistic form into symbols and signs. The iron bars are a symbolic sign of the prison surrounding the prisoner, who was expressed by the symbol ball; Because the ball is indicative of continuous but constrained movement; Therefore, the significance of the human form embodied by the artist (Jawad Selim) came from the real state to the state of the sign, which led to a semantic openness with a coherent idea between the shape signifier of the bars and the signifier containing the prisoner, and distinction through technology and construction of the work and its concept of private and public (26); For this reason, the works of the artist (Jawad Selim) were distinguished in general, based on the familiar formulas of forms, with an emphasis on partial distortion and the emergence of mental symbols indicating the specificity of the subjectivity achieved in his works (27).



**Figure (8): Mohamed Ghani Hekmat**

As for the sculptor (Mohammed Ghani Hikmat 1939 - 2011 AD), his sculptural works expressed the suggestiveness of the composition of the artistic text with a diverse significance that does not stop at the limits of the surface structure, as in his work (Monument to the Rescue of Iraq) (28), as in Figure (8) the example of the work in the form A cylinder seal on which was written cuneiform letters with a symbolic significance that carry a semantic meaning of the language in its formal significance. The line appeared as signs and symbols bearing aesthetic values (29); That is why we see the artwork expressing a historical significance with an expression for the Iraqi culture so that the culture does not fall based on the hands and arms surrounding it from the side, and the symbols and writing crossed in the cuneiform script and its meaning (from here the writing began).

As for the ceramic achievement, it appeared in a variety of ways as a special tool for displaying meanings, as it contains in its content a certain significance, and through the openness between the ceramic performer and the recipient, a language appears in this achievement, which is the sign, and for this reason, the sign is an indication of a desire to convey a meaning (30). Through the multiplicity of methods and the multiplicity of techniques as a result of openness, communication, and delivery of the new thing to the recipient; The artist who tries to continue has to use a special system in formulating according to relationships and formal elements that carry symbols and connotations symbolizing him through the use of a style of expression specific to him (31), and accordingly, Iraqi ceramics used several methods to achieve the semantic content as a product of the potter's ability and understanding of reality. The one who achieved his own style, and that this style is consistent with the arts and has its implications, which generates openness in expressing one idea with implications, and the style of the potters is in one form, but with multiple expressive connotations consistent with the meaning (32).

And one of the characteristics of expressiveness may be indicative because each author has a linguistic lexicon and his method of constructing the text and linking its elements through the use of some structures and tools that differ from others in their mental, intellectual and emotional features. From this, some concepts were presented, including:

- 1- Style is an expression of the artist's way of thinking.
- 2- The style is the artist himself.
- 2- Style is a choice by the addressee of a specific linguistic characteristic that imposes the expression of a situation, and this is an aspect in determining the status of the style that is the semantic criterion for the content of the text (33).

This is consistent with what was stated in Begon's BUFFO theory: "The meanings alone are the embodiment of the essence of style, so the style is nothing but what we impart to our ideas from the pattern of movement" (34). That is, what goes on in the artist's thinking through his view of things and his interpretation of them within the emotions, i.e. the style is the philosophy of the self in existence (35).



**Figure (9): Saad Shaker**

As in the works of the potter (Saad Shaker), the shape of a woman is similar to her with geometric meanings with connotations that transcend reality for the contemporary woman's form with its symbolic connotations, indicating femininity, motherhood and passion, between the forms and their contents through an in-depth translation of the meaning and reduction, as in Figure (9). Thus, the formal structure is distinguished by an abstract and formal form far from reality, as we cannot know the form except through the title; that is why art is the arrangement of the elements of the form to be a tool for expressing the diversity of meanings that the artist wishes to convey to the recipient (36).

The potter seeks to open up the structure of the form to the more reductive forms with the artist's preservation of giving the artistic production (its identity and its contents), which are "organizing relations of the foundations and formal elements that simulate a new reality that carries in his life symbols that are the link between the relationship between the ancient inherited with the contemporary modern, leading to a new formal organization. It penetrates the ancient era to reach a new formal contemporary" (37). Therefore the semantic openness of the plastic ceramics is from the significance of the shape, color and style of the potter, embodied in the feelings of the potter through the special color emanating from the meanings of the forms that organize his artwork through the relationships involved in the work. Which generates multiple reading of the artwork (38).



**Figure (10): Siham Saudi**



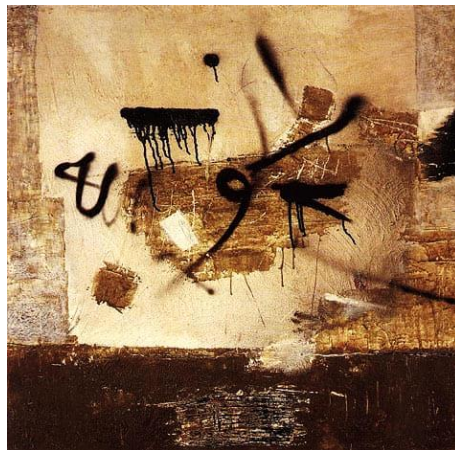
**Figure (11): Siham Saudi**



This is what we observe in a ceramic mural for the potter (Siham Al-Saudi 1941-1994AD) that expressed the structural structure with open symbolic connotations between the forms of domes, arches and palm trees mediating work and realism in the structural composition of linear, color and formal relationships, which achieves an artistic architectural significance with contemporary stylistic developments, as in the form of (10), as the potter (Seham Al-Saudi) expressed in another achievement about (the flow of the river) as in Figure (11) through artistic formulations towards representing a scene of nature in terms of line and color to express the inner, subjective and emotional content of the potter through a meaningful visual discourse An expressive aesthetic of the scene of the abstraction of nature, the river, and what it bears of connotations and suggestions for expressing a symbolic energy that suggests life and growth, or about alienation, sadness, enrichment of semantic beauty, and the extent of the pottery's openness to this natural signifier and its realization in the ceramic achievement (39).

### Research Procedures

#### Sample analysis:



#### Model (1)

**Work name:** Lines on the wall

**Artist name:** Shaker Hasan

**Completion year:** 1975 AD

**Material:** Drawing different materials on the wood

**Size:** 120X120cm

**Source:** Osama Nouri Nasser, Intellectual and Performing Dimensions in Shaker Hassan Al Said's Paintings, Master's Thesis, University of Basra, 2013, p. 112.

The artistic achievement expresses a drawing consisting of two surfaces, one of which is a dark color, representing a strip containing scratching and indentation. A never-ending thought, and that the letter and the word are symbols of the thought of monotheism. That is why the achievement constitutes a semantic openness about a self-translation that carries values, features, signs, and indications that indicate a one-dimensional knowledge that meets the idea of openness.



**Model (2):**

**Work name:** Monument of the Martyr

**Artist name:** Ismail Fattah

**Completion year:** 1983

**Diameter:** 190m, Height: 40m

**Source:**

[https://ar.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A8\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF](https://ar.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF)

The artistic achievement represents a sculpture represented in a monument of two domes that appear as one hanging value. However, it begins to split into two halves and something emerges: the Iraqi flag rises to the top ready for eternal life, and the flag is (5) feet above the ground. There is a spring that flows water into the earth to symbolize the blood of the martyr, and that is why it is formed to express the openness of the gate of heaven to receive the martyr, that person who gave up his soul for his cause and his lofty principles. The sanctuaries and the tombs of the martyrs and the righteous, the monument also expressed an apparent visual language with the names of the martyrs and an inward intellectual one that was distinguished by an open and continuous significance between generations and between different civilizations and included multiple readings about the meaning of the soul that came out of the mass carrying a mixture of ideas, cases and emotional attitudes towards the martyrs, they are alive when god bless them.



**Model (3):**

**Artist Name:** Sajida Al-Mashaikhi

**Completion year:** 1992

**Size:** 45X35cm

**Source:** Qureshi. Muthanna Riyad Ali, Indications of heritage and natural vocabulary in contemporary Iraqi ceramics, Master's thesis, Babylon University, 2015, p. 100

The artistic achievement represents a ceramic wall formation consisting of two women, one of them is larger than the other, and there are eight crescent shapes above their heads, and the work includes the shape of a hand and an eye in the middle.

The masterpiece expresses the shape of a woman with an ancient cultural heritage while wearing the Arab cloak. Wide eyes and a round face distinguish the two forms of women. The pottery presented a wonderful example of semantic plurality through the crescent. Pottery represents a deeply religious, and spiritual connection and thus represents the semantic openness embodied through the effect of pottery in semantics. The Mesopotamian and Islamic arts and the connotations of color generated a diversity of readings and a multiplicity of connotations, and achieved the formal intertextuality of the artistic effect.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

1. Openness is in essence, a mental process, and every mental process is subject to growth and openness. The feature of openness as a study is included in critical analytical studies in knowing art and its projection in the art plastic movement; that is why openness is a measure of research embodied through the multiplicity of connotations that we see in the artistic productions of plastic arts in Iraq, and this applies to all models.
2. The formal metaphor of the heritage, in both its cultural and popular aspects, is an intellectual environment that has not been lost on the contemporary Iraqi artist by employing the structural aesthetic elements of the

heritage of his body through Sumerian symbols, cuneiform writings and signs derived from the heritage of ancient Iraq, as it embodied the artistic interaction between the past and the present, which achieves multiple readings of semantics. Fine achievement through communication between other texts within the phenomenon of intertextuality, as in models (1-3).

3. The text is an openness to the meaning associated with time and history of the reader, which makes the reader search within the text to open the issue of the absent meaning through deferment and postponement to produce differences of significance within the deconstruction of the meaning of the text to open up to the different through the reader's practices in activating the mental ability in revealing the secrets of the text, as in all models.
4. The connotation of color is a means of expression that embodies the phenomenon, sign or sign that achieves the content of the artistic achievement based on the signifier and the meaning of the values and connotations of color through the connection of the shape with the rest of the elements, forming symbolic and color connotations in the expression of multiple ideas with semantics through the possibilities of dialectical interaction of arts. The plasticity may be in the structure of the style or the structure of the subject or the technical structure of the oxides of colors or the method of presentation, which achieves the semantic openness of the artistic achievement as in all models.

#### THE CONCLUSIONS:

1. The form of color is a very important effect that transfers the form from an ordinary to an innovative form. Color and form contribute to renewing the artistic values that it transmits to the recipient with the diversity of human emotions and feelings.
2. The semantic openness in the formal system through the use of letters in the plastic arts has formed a formal synthetic phenomenon that leads to the plurality of different formations, aesthetics, and abstract creative arts, embodying the Islamic character to the merging of linguistic thought with artistic thought.
3. The semantic openness in the Iraqi plastic arts is to reveal the relationship between the external form of the work and its essence, and it is done by confirming the contemplative and emotional vision, that is, the openness of the expressive meaning in the structure of the artwork.

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