
**Diversity of style in the works of the artist
(Naziha Selim)**

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Abstract:

Iraqi art underwent a significant transformation in the second half of the 20th century, seeking to remove established norms, which led to ground-breaking outputs from artists like Naziha Salim. Her work represents a pivotal shift, rooted in two main aspects: the inspiration from cultural heritage and its contemporary application. Salim's art exemplifies beauty through the use of modern techniques, diverse materials, varying styles, and the interplay of lines and space, alongside the strategic use of color masses. This diversity is the cornerstone of this study.

The research is structured into four chapters. The first chapter addresses the research problem, stemming from the question: To what extent does the diversity of style manifest in Naziha Salim's works? The aim is to explore this diversity, alongside highlighting the research's significance and scope.

The second chapter comprises two sections: the first reviews the multiplicity of styles in modern European art schools, while the second delves into the diversity of styles in contemporary Iraqi painting, particularly focusing on the experiences of various artists, with a special emphasis on Naziha Salim's work.

The third chapter outlines the research methodology, detailing the study population, which includes 15 of Salim's artworks. The sample consists of three works, selected and analyzed based on expert recommendations, employing a descriptive analytical approach to meet the study's objectives and derive conclusions.

The fourth chapter presents the research findings, such as Salim's reflection of the social environment and the juxtaposition of reality's tragedies, forming a stylistic, intellectual, and nationalistic vision. The conclusions suggest that the artistic scene revolves around the genuine impetus behind creating art and its relationship with environment, history, and the artist's introspection. Additionally, the chapter includes recommendations and proposals, concluding with images of the analyzed artworks.

Keywords: diversity, vision, style, stylistic vision.

Received: 04/05/2024**Accepted:** 22/08/2024**Proofreading:** 11/08/2024**Available online:** 01/09/2024**Research Problem:**

Imagining life without art is challenging, as it intricately weaves into the fabric of daily existence. As aptly stated, "Art has been part of the fabric of life itself... It has helped people gain knowledge about the world they live in and understand themselves and those around them." In this context, art serves as a medium through which individuals express their emotions, feelings, and perceptions.

Contemporary Iraqi art is deeply connected to various references, spanning from the ancient civilization of Iraq to Islamic art and folk heritage, as well as modern European art. This European influence significantly shaped the styles of Iraqi painters, who adopted its diverse methods of production, encompassing different forms, ideas, and techniques. Despite this evident influence, contemporary Iraqi artists have remained rooted in their local references and heritage, creating a fusion of these influences with their execution and presentation styles. This blending has enhanced their ability to capture structural transformations and the

aesthetic values inherent in their works, all infused with a distinct Eastern spirit. Since the early 1950s, artistic groups in Iraq have worked to establish the idea of an Iraqi identity in contemporary art, creating new horizons with varied perspectives. This movement began with pioneering groups like the Baghdad Modern Art Group and the Impressionists, continuing into the 1960s with other artistic collectives that diversified the stylistic approaches in Iraqi art.

Iraqi art experienced a period of prosperity, brilliance, discovery, and diversity in styles and advanced techniques that enriched the Iraqi art movement. This period saw the interplay of cultural, social, political, and even economic factors. The 1950s were marked by notable figures in Iraqi art, such as Faiq Hassan, Jawad Salim, Hafidh Al-Droubi, and Shakir Hassan Al-Said. Art during this time underwent rapid transformations, necessitating the emergence of artistic groups dedicated to spreading creative artistic awareness. These groups aimed not only to prevent Iraqi artists from merely following Western cultural and artistic developments but

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also to establish their frameworks that align with their cultural heritage and contemporary needs, serving the Arab and Iraqi society in particular.

This artistic movement led to a diversity of visions, styles, and techniques, prompting us to focus on the achievements of one of the most prominent contemporary Iraqi artists who exhibited distinctive styles. This brings us to the central research question:

To what extent is the diversity of style evident in the works of Naziha Salim?

Research Objective:

To identify the diversity of style in the works of artist Naziha Salim.

Importance of the Research:

The significance of the research is highlighted by the following points:

1. It is a scientific and academic endeavor specifically focused on the study of contemporary Iraqi art.
2. It sheds light on the works of artist Naziha Salim.
3. There is a scarcity of academic research on the subject.
4. It benefits researchers in the field of fine arts and the history of contemporary Iraqi art.

Research Scope:

The research is defined by the following parameters:

1. Subject Scope: The diversity of style in the works of artist Naziha Salim.
2. Spatial Scope: The artistic works located in Iraq and the artist's personal collection.
3. Temporal Scope: The artistic works produced by the artist across various periods.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Section One: The Multiplicity of Styles in Modern European Painting

Style is the qualitative characteristic of an artwork that distinguishes the artist and their individuality from other styles and personalities. Buffon attempted to link the aesthetic values of style to the dynamic and changing thought processes of individuals (Drouish Ahmed, 1998). In essence, style is an act deeply connected with the essence of knowledge and thought. Tchernychevsky viewed style not as self-contained with inherent aesthetics but as a sharp and faithful weapon for ideas (Af Shishirin, 1978).

A distinctive and remarkable style requires intellectual and cultural awareness, often enhanced through learning from nature and the works of other artists. Many artists are influenced by what they observe and by the works of

their predecessors and contemporaries (Shakir Abdulhamid, 1987).

Realism Style: In fine art, realistic style can be identified when depicted close to practical experience and familiarity, focusing on the subjective and mental form of the societal life that produces the artwork. This style aims to present new and accurate perspectives, whether political, social, or moral, reflecting the needs and demands of wide societal classes (Kamal Eid, 1996). In the latter half of the 19th century, Western art experienced a revolutionary movement that objectively described humans and nature, opposing the prevailing ideals and traditions in art, literature, and social customs (Mahmoud Amhaz, 1996).

Impressionism: Emerging from realism to achieve a more comprehensive objectivity based on scientific analysis of nature, impressionists reached subjectivity. Their style is characterized by abandoning shading to highlight depth through varying color tones. This approach created an illusion of nature's general effect rather than a direct copy, emphasizing color over lines and aiming to capture light as a blend of solar spectrum colors without black, which they viewed as a non-color (Amhaz, 1996; Herbert Read, 1986).

Cubism: This movement, which began in early 20th century France, is considered a pivotal artistic revolution. It reacted against Fauvist theories and was pioneered by young artists Picasso and Braque, inspired by Cezanne's works. Cubism sought to reveal the geometric shapes underlying the external appearance of objects. Picasso described cubism as fundamentally dealing with shapes. Herbert Read viewed cubism as the first attempt in art history to achieve pure form in art, laying the foundation for modern art (Amhaz, 1996; Read, 1975).

Abstract Art: Abstract art encompasses diverse styles, balancing intellect and imagination. It did not always follow a purely intellectual path, as seen in Mondrian's precision and Delaunay's genius. Abstract art progressed in two parallel directions: musical abstraction, as in Kandinsky's and Kupka's works, and architectural abstraction, as in Mondrian's works. Despite their stylistic differences, both aimed to achieve the same goal. Abstract art did not fragment the image of the external world but rather revealed its essential truth through a blend of color, reaching a balance reflecting the harmony between the external and internal worlds (Muller & Aiger, 1988; Hasan, 1997).

Surrealism: Breton defined surrealism as expressing the mind's thoughts in their true flow, free from rational control and moral and aesthetic considerations, believing in the absolute power of dreams. Surrealism aimed to

discover new relationships among objects, with artists expressing their unique visions, avoiding influence from others. Ernst pioneered techniques like frottage and collage, using old magazine illustrations to create fantastical shapes combining humans, birds, animals, and shells, creating a mythical world (Sara Neumayer, n.d.; Ismail, 1991).

Section Two: The Diversity of Styles in Contemporary Iraqi Painting

Jawad Salim's Experience

The Baghdad Modern Art Group, led by Jawad Salim, emerged in 1951, deliberately distancing itself from political entanglements and speaking the language of art instead. Salim was recognized not just as a painter but as an artist unafraid of experimenting with various artistic and intellectual directions. He was influenced by numerous global artists. From the early stages of his artistic journey, Salim focused his style on realistic elements, drawing from realistic forms, figures, and symbols, adapting them to suit his artistic vision. His work exhibits a blend of traditional forms with modern artistic techniques, reflecting both his cultural heritage and global art influences. Salim sought to create a distinctive style that defined Iraqi Arab painting, conveying profound humanistic insights and constantly challenging the direct relationship between form and content.

Shakir Hassan Al Said's Experience

Shakir Hassan Al Said's work reveals multiple styles and directions, indicating a renewed horizon for his experience that began in the early 1950s with diagnostic foundations. Al Said's vision evolved from a visual experiment to a contemplative view of the world, marking a transition from tangible to abstract, always emphasizing local Arab popular culture. He expressed his ideas through a style characterized by realism while simultaneously striving for a contemporary approach that transcended prevailing concepts, giving his work a modern artistic identity.

Faiq Hassan's Experience

Faiq Hassan's artistic style ranged from realism to abstraction, symbolism, and reportage, encompassing various modern artistic trends. His work went through several phases, each reminiscent of prominent movements in modern painting. He transitioned from impressionism to cubism, and then to abstraction, finally arriving at a form of realism that depicted specific aspects of rural or nomadic life in Iraq. Hassan's extensive academic background and practical experiences were evident in his realistic depictions of nature and other scenes.

Mahmoud Sabri's Experience

Exploring Mahmoud Sabri's career (1927-2012), we observe his focus on visible reality in his subjects, such as the Algerian revolution, workers, and construction.

His works often featured a stark interplay of black and white to express dynamic motion. Sabri's expressionist approach emphasized intimate emotional and self-reflective connections, influenced by German expressionism, socialist realism, and Picasso's dominance at the time. This led to a deconstruction of form in his paintings.

Ismail Shammout's Experience

Ismail Shammout's work demonstrated a geometric simplicity, with faces as circles and eyes as dots, bodies composed of rectangles and squares, blending into a cohesive structure. This geometric abstraction emerged post-World War II, characterized by clear shapes and selected colors, reflecting a controlled and organized visual approach that contrasted with fluid and recessive backgrounds.

Naziha Salim's Experience

Naziha Salim grew up in a creative family that showcased the Iraqi people's artistic capabilities. Her lines drew inspiration from ancient Iraqi heritage, particularly Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian art. Over the past half-century, she contributed significantly to various artistic activities, including the Baghdad Modern Art Group and the founding of the Iraqi Plastic Artists Association. Her role as a teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts until 1982, combined with her dedication to her art, allowed her to address themes of women, work, and childhood, expressing her personality and mood. Salim's style seamlessly merged fertile imagination with precise observations of women, nature, and social themes. Her works displayed a deep empathy for Iraqi women, reflecting their struggles and lives in markets, homes, and workplaces. Unfortunately, most of her works were stolen from the Iraqi Museum of Fine Arts in 2003, with only a few pieces remaining, such as "Reclining Woman," "The Marshes," "Watermelon Seller," "War," "Portrait of a Girl," and "The Grandmother."

Research Procedures:

1. Research Community:

The researcher reviewed available sources related to the current study and used the internet to identify the research community, which includes 15 works by various Spanish artists. These works, created by the artist, varied in form and style, providing a diverse sample for the current research.

2. Research Sample:

Based on the evaluation by the experts listed below, the researcher selected a representative sample of three artworks from different years within the research period. These samples were chosen for their temporal coverage, stylistic diversity, and distinctive aesthetic value.

Experts:

1. Prof. Kamil Abdul Hussein: Professor of Painting, College of Fine Arts, University of Babylon.

2. Assoc. Prof. Aqeel Hussein Jassim: Professor of Design, College of Fine Arts, University of Babylon.
3. Dr. Samer Hossam Ali: Professor of Philosophy, College of Fine Arts, University of Babylon.

Research Methodology:

The researcher employed a descriptive analytical method to analyze the content and substance of the selected sample artworks.

Chapter Three: Research Procedures

The current research community consists of 16 samples selected by the experts listed below to achieve the research objective.

Sample No.	Title	Size	Ownership	Year	Materials
1	Wedding Night	96 x 130 cm	Iraqi Museum of Modern Art	1982	Oil on Canvas



Visual Description of the Work:

The visual scene comprises a group of women in a lively public celebration brimming with joy and vibrant colors. The colors vary among yellow, red, blue, black, and purple, along with their gradients. The presence of Iraqi women of various ages and physiques is prominent, matching the celebratory colors depicted in the work. The painting features domestic musical instruments commonly used by women in their private gatherings or during events like weddings and social nights. It is evident from the work and its figures that the wedding took place in a rural area, as indicated by the women's attire and the black stockings worn by the woman in the purple dress. The absence of the bride from the scene, combined with the yellow frame encompassing the figures and the girl in red in the center holding a veil, clearly signifies that the wedding rituals, including the wedding night, have been completed in a "honorable" manner according to traditional customs.

Despite the celebratory atmosphere in the painting, the artist does not overlook the woman's struggles. A notable figure is a woman in black, curled up in the upper left corner of the painting, attempting to join the festive mood through a shy clap.

The artist created this work drawing on authentic Iraqi traditions, employing an expressive realistic style with some abstraction. This approach reflects her intellectual influences from modern European art schools and contemporary Iraqi art.

Here is the information for Model No. 2 formatted into a table:

Model No.	Title	Size	Attribution	Year	Materials
2	Baghdadias	96x130 cm	Modern Iraqi Art Museum	1982	Oil on Canvas



Visual Description of the Work:

The artwork presents a scene with three women in different positions dominating the main view of the piece, along with a dove. The colors of the scene range between shades of brown, black, blue, and others. The artist addresses issues of women, work, and childhood with a style that reflects her mood and personality, maintaining a balance between imaginative creativity and accuracy in depicting women, nature, and social themes. The painting depicts several expressive female images with tragic features, organized within a single visual perspective to break away from classical patterns and to emphasize interconnected intellectual importance. On the left, a mother embraces her child, in a state of contemplation and waiting for her absent husband. At the top of the painting, a young girl adorns herself before a small mirror, waiting for her dream lover. At the bottom, a woman with a sad expression, dressed in black, appears to be the wife of a martyr, indicated by the damaged military helmet during the war, painted near a tall Iraqi palm tree. A white dove symbolizes the awaited peace.

Thus, the painting is expressive of wartime themes: the past as the martyr, the present as waiting, and the future as the wedding, with the homeland as the place where women await. The artist has approached the theme of the painting using an expressive abstract style with elements of Romanticism.

Here is the information for Model No. 3 formatted into a table:

Model No.	Title	Size	Attribution	Year	Materials
3	Martyr's Wife	88x62 cm	Private Collection of the Artist	1982	Oil on Canvas



Visual Description of the Work

The artwork depicts a single character, a woman, seated with a hand movement. The dominant colors in the scene are black and yellow, with some red and green and their gradients. The artist has portrayed an important theme that is almost ubiquitous in Iraqi society: the widow of a martyr. This condition has persisted through generations, and the woman in the artwork represents this enduring presence.

The artist has clearly conveyed deep sorrow through the woman's facial expression and hand gesture directed towards a heart colored red. This imagery reflects the grief and longing experienced by the widow of a martyr, highlighting the emotional pain. The artist's personal experience with this sorrowful situation is evident in the work.

The artist used a realistic style to depict this tragedy, maintaining a connection with the Iraqi reality that serves as her primary source of inspiration, while also

incorporating modern touches she studied and experienced. This combination results in a work that differs from her previous pieces. The woman's prominent position in the artwork underscores the artist's significant focus on the widow of a martyr, conveying a subtle message about the neglect faced by this group of women through successive generations by governments and society.

Chapter Four

First: Research Findings

1. The artist Nazihah Saleem employed various artistic styles in her works, as seen in the research samples.
2. The artist primarily used the realistic style in most of her works, as in samples (1, 3).
3. The artist also employed the expressive style in most of her works, as in samples (1, 2, 3).
4. The artist experimented with modern art styles, including realism, abstraction, expressionism, surrealism, and others.
5. The artist highlighted the Iraqi woman and represented her using different styles, as in samples (1, 3).
6. The image of women was a fundamental element in Nazihah Saleem's works, as seen in works (1, 2, 3).

Second: Conclusions

Based on the research findings, the researcher reached the following conclusions:

1. The artist Nazihah Saleem was influenced by the modern art movements she experienced.
2. Most of her works were based on scenes from Iraqi society, where she was born and raised.
3. Her older brother, Jawad Saleem, a pioneering artist, had a noticeable impact on her work in terms of ideas and content.
4. The artist's diverse styles in her works reflect her adaptation to artistic development while retaining her original influences.
5. The variation in styles used in her works distinguishes her from other artists of her generation.

Third: Recommendations

In light of the results obtained, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Archive the artworks of artist Nazihah Saleem to serve as a resource in the Arab library and benefit researchers and specialists in modern art.
2. Focus on translating Western art sources to facilitate access and utilization.

Fourth: Suggestions

The researcher suggests conducting the following studies:

1. The aesthetic vision in the works of artist Nazihah Saleem.
2. The creative features of the works of artist Nazihah Saleem.

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