

The Use of plastic waste in Contemporary European Sculpture

By

Zain El-Abdin Mohammed Kadhim

zionalabedeem1990@gmail.com

Asst. prof. Dr. aqeel hussein jasim

University of Babylon \ college of Fine arts finoon1976@gmail.com

Prof Dr. Mohammed Hamza Al Mamouri

University of Babylon College of Materials Engineering Mhalmaamori1959@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research is concerned with study (the use of plastic waste in contemporary European sculpture), it is located in four chapters: the first chapter is allocated to clarify the research problem, importance, the need for it and its goal. This chapter is also limited to know (the use of plastic waste in contemporary sculpture). This chapter has contained the limits of research and defining its terms.

While the second chapter included the research theoretical framework which included two topics: the first one dealt with (modern sculpting techniques), and the second topic dealt with (the material in modern Western sculpture). The second chapter ended with the conclusion.

The third chapter included the research procedures, which started from the research community, and ended with what has been analyzed as research samples.

Finally, the fourth chapter dealt with the results and conclusions that the researcher has gained, which answered the goal of the research and summarized as follows:

- 1 The use of plastic waste in contemporary European sculpture has become a protest revolution against the culture of consumption that has overrun western society.
- 2 The huge diversity in the colors and shapes of plastic waste has made the contemporary European artist in front of many options to reformulate and use in his sculptural achievement to serve his idea

Research problem

Art is a creative product, and it is one of the human culture colors in self-expression and transforming the emotions and rising ideas into innovative forms. As the fine arts are ancient practices which practiced by man when they used the tool and engraved on the walls using stones and animal bones, which made the materials the most important elements of the fine artwork.

In fact, in early of the 20th century, the progress witnessed by the Western world in all fields and the revolutions that human has reached in transportation, communications and industry, and what the technological revolution that has resulted in new techniques, materials and methods that characterize the era. It is not surprising that artists begin to look at industrial waste in a new way. Creating powerful artworks that are not only beautiful. But, it also became as an astonishing reminder of the waste impact on the planet and its inhabitants which inspires us to rethink our consumption.

Actually, no matter what topic or particular environmental issue a complex artwork (of which there can be many) which is based on the simple act of using materials for the first, second or third time. It is a strong message that highlights the urgent need to raise awareness and change behavior on individuals in the way we deal with the world we live in. Since plastic is one of the most important secretions of the technological industry revolution, this material has become a source of concern and a major challenge to the world today. It has become a global issue because of its harmful effects on both humans and the environment which has created a new and available material that can be used as an artistic medium because it provides an interesting texture, shape and color that can be mixed with other materials to create durable works of art, as sculpture has become no longer discuss with the material for its formal value and sensuality. but the material has become an expressive values and conceptual socio-cultural contents.

From what has been mentioned above, the research problem can be formulated by the following question : What is the use of plastic waste in the contemporary sculpture?

The importance of research

Nowadays, plastic waste is one of the novel materials in the world, which has become available in various and multiple forms and has properties that can be benefited from and used in contemporary sculpture works.

The aim of research

To identify the use of plastic waste in contemporary European sculpture.

Scope of the research

Objective scope : sculptural works which are completed with plastic waste

Spatial scope : Europe

Time scope : 2000-2020

Defining And Identifying Terms:

Sculpture in the language : (The core is a sculpture which has been sculpted by using fractures) (Ibn Manzur)

Sculpture idiomatically: According to Al-Bakdash who has defined it as (every mass or size that motivates one to rotate around it and enjoy its beauty and taste. (Al-Bakdash, 2008)

The researcher defines sculpture procedurally: one of the types of fine arts that is characterized by anthropomorphism, Which means it is three-dimensional, which can be obtained by using hijacked tools.

Leftovers: singular leave-over, what remains after use, bequest, inheritance, what is left over and left by the dead person.

Waste: What a person (or group) leaves behind. (Ben Manzur, p. 211)

Waste in Idioms : Waste: It is all that remains after extracting what is good, profitable, and useful. It is exist in everything without exception and it is the nihilism which the form escapes from, as it is denied, hidden and worthless (Scalan, 2017).

Plastic [singular]: (flexible) and (elastic) plastic material, an organic or composite of origin that can be molded under the influence of heat or pressure, has formation ability and

various tools are made from it. (Omar, 2008)

Procedural definition of plastic waste: It is the remains of plastic materials that manufactured and no longer needed and became unused or undesirable materials.

Theoretical framework

Modern sculpting techniques: the revolution of information and its impact on the future of sculpture art:

The world today is witnessing rapid developments in all fields of life. Technology was able to affect all fields of creativity because of the materials and tools it provided to facilitate the artist's creativity process. Some artists introduced technology into new conceptual and informational works while others remained adhering to traditional methods. This, in fact, did not distinguish one artist over the other. Each artist has absolute freedom of expression without restrictions. As long as he is able to communicate his feelings to the recipient easily and honestly.

It is worth noting that the contemporary man is casting his bucket, flying towards a fast changing future, leaving behind the remains of the previous era and looking forward to the new thought with all its components and changes that occurred in the other half of the century (Ali, 2021). Social and economic changes during the 20th century have forced the sculptors to use different methods and materials than those used by their predecessors. Most sculptors working alone and quickly given the high costs of staying in a large studio with expensive tools and materials. They were educated in schools not workshops. They had to accomplish the art by holding organized periodic exhibitions to display and introduce his production and to attract attention and sell part of his achievements.

Today, we find few sculptors who carve in wood or stone, because it is an arduous process that takes a long time, so the work does not end before the artist performs the final polishing process on it with his hammer and chisel. In addition, the sculptor needs more money to spend on expensive materials. Therefore, the process of forming models is much faster and easier because they are also able to change designs in the process. This is faster and more convenient than the engraving process and becomes acceptable to the style of the modern artist (Ali, 2021, p. 41).

It has aesthetic values and exemplary properties that the sculptor must take upon himself in the art of displaying (the noble materials of sculpture such as marble and bronze) and the subjects of sculpture are neo-classical that restore moral symbols, national themes, figures of great men and classic female nudity. The appreciation is for the work elaborating even if it is lacked of spirit and manual skill and even if it's summarized only by the talent of the sculptor (Klap, Elham, Journal of Arab and World History, Sculpture in the Twentieth Century from Rodin to Tingley to Heiser, No. 36, d. 1 1981, Arab Publishing House, Beirut, p. 13.)

The Material In Modern Western Sculpture:

The sculpture as seen by the critic (Nathan Knobler) is a coordinated organization of the existing blocks in a real space and the plastic elements in the sculpture are: form, space, line, material, and fabric. Therefore, the sculptor tries to organize these elements into a

unified composition. The organization of the sculptor begins with the materials, stone, wood, metal, clay and other materials go through multiple processes before it takes the shape of the accomplished work (Nathan, 1992).

Since the late eighteenth century until now many philosophers, politicians and scientists have moved towards the revolution of modernization in a specific field or in several fields, which is a reaction against the old contexts and among these philosophers : Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Weber, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, etc. All these philosophers agreed on the principle of renewal and rejected traditional work but each of them dealt with a certain aspect of modernity as the case for the philosopher (Marx) in his treatment of economic and political organization and (Heidegger) in his treatment of psychological progress conditions.

The views of these philosophers did not meet all the modernity manifestations as (Avaya, b t) says (George Santayana) “This material influence which is found behind the effect of form, increases its strength and gives on the beauty and perfection of the subject and that subject could not achieve without it (Santayana). The material with its characteristics reflected negatively or positively in the sculptural work, and this depends on the experience of the sculptor investing that material as it imposes its characteristics on the sculptural production, this is what (Robert Gillam Scott) went to when he said, “The material and the method of implementation have imposed on each of them a different set of restrictions and possibilities expressionism. Therefore, the process in the case of wood is not the process of building the shape but the process of liberating the imagined form within the mass by cutting the wood. In this case, the way of cutting and the way of fibers are considered as important factors affected on the form of the shape” (Scott, 1968). The statue by the sculptor is not subjected to his/her freedom and imagination completely because the properties of the material and its resistance make the sculptor take a suitable path for the development of that material.

There are many sculptors who depended a lot on the properties of material in their artistic production, such as the American sculptor (Raoul Haig), as he worked on using huge wooden pieces, and most of his works had the names of the wood from which his sculptures were made, so in his sculptural work (Jos Sokal) Figure (32) also notes on the sculpture (The Head of Christ) as shown in Figure (34) by the American sculptor (William Zorach). the variety of texture that appears in the sculpture made of hard black foam while the face was polished until it became smooth on the surface and left traces of his tools in the places of the beard and hair (Nathan, 1992, page 188). In addition, there are sculptors who are inspired by the image and idea of his sculptural work from the material and this is what is observed in many of his works of Henry Moore and Picasso. As Berthelemy said about one of Picasso’s works (Did not we see Picasso... he portrayed an animal with amazing realism from an inverted bicycle seat) (Berthelemy, 1963).

The material has features that can be invested in favor of the artwork and it has been noticed in many sculptors’ works, among the most important of these features (color, texture, line, space). Reed confirms that he began his research in modern sculpture from Rodin's impressionism saying that "modern sculpture began with Rodin and that scientific development and accelerated explorations in the technical industrial field accompanied by intellectual and social development. it was reflected in the totality of human cultural and living activities and this led to a change in the aesthetic pattern taste. The old and prevailing artistic and aesthetic costumes no longer met the ambition of the Western artist. Therefore, he constantly searched to create new artistic methods that fit his own ambition first, and between the new reality among

the tremendous development in the science and technology fields. Therefore, impressionism was the first to benefit from scientific development in the field of new laws of optics, light physics and the development of chemistry and to benefit by artists in applying this practically in art (Newmar, 1999).

The attention of sculptors, critics and philosophers to the importance of this matter is considered the most important component of modern sculpture and the critic Berthelemy believes that each material has its own beauty, which reflected in the beauty of the artwork performed on it, and for this was the artist's love of material, and we learn through it about the skill and artist's taste in choosing materials of his work and the extent of the pleasure he feels when he transforms it and produces a work of art (Bertlemy, 1963, p. 177).

The cubist sculpture is branched into many directions with its adherence to the cubist origins. As the case with (Umberto) and this is how Picasso is the most prominent cubist artist in the first half of the 20th century, as he was also the leader of the cubist school. His painting (Three Dancers) in 1925 has marked the end of cubism as a living style (Fry, 1991) and the future movement relied on technological development and the speed and movement companied as the basis for its art philosophy. The artist invested various materials especially those that inspire speed such as iron and metal wheels and other materials associated with movement. The futurism relied on traditional formalism and tried to describe the dynamism that characterizes the modern industrial world (Venturi, 1991).

The tragedies of the First World War played a massive role in the birth and spread of dadaist ideas in the world rapidly. This artistic gathering is a reaction to all the prevailing values at the time, including art. In the field of sculpture, the sculptor deliberate on using materials that seemed strange in the field of sculpture such as waste and even displaying some types Provocative to the public taste (Reed, Main Trends in Modern Art, 1973).

As for Surrealism was born from the Dada's womb, it was less extreme in its view of various types of life than Dada including art, and this is the difference point between the two. This movement has produced many sculptors and sculptural works. The movement is to invest different types of materials in their sculptural productions. (Reed, Main Trends in Modern Art, 1973, pp. 75-76), while the art of abstract sculpture exceeded some problems that faced the art of painting by investing in a variety of new materials. some of which were unfamiliar to use in sculpture. that sculpture during the 20th century passed by collecting artistic trends and the creative sculptors produced new forms and invest whatever materials they liked rejecting all the old restrictions and standards. The sculptors with photographers has collaborated to develop new laws to invest the material in the artwork.

Indications resulting from the theoretical framework

- 1- Imagination is the ideas and images creation in the absence of direct sensory facts, but this creation is linked or contains or parts of previous sensory experiences.
- 2- Many different techniques and trends emerged in the 20th century, their emergence was linked to some social, economic and political factors.
- 3- The sculptor took advantage of the freedom he gained to pursuance various topics according to the imagination he/she had and the wanted subject.

- 4- The modern industrial technology provided a lot of resources with the new materials that the sculptor prepares, giving him the opportunity to experiment and create works of art with them.
- 5- The sculptor exceeded the traditional concepts and was able to develop an innovative vision of reality and move into sculptural work with the physical world in a direct way.
- 6- Economic and social changes have forced sculptors to use new methods and materials that never used before in the 20th century.

Chapter Three : (Methodology)

The research community

The research community consists of sculptural works that performed with plastic waste in Europe, the researcher was unable to fully count the sculptural works completed with plastic waste due to its capacity and diversity, and he contented himself with choosing the research sample of (2) models.

Research sample

After the current research community is being categorized into different formats in terms of the used raw materials and the technique for the diversity in the sculptural works. Two models were chosen by the intentional technique in order to achieve the goal of current research represented by (knowing the use of plastic waste in contemporary European sculpture).



Sample (1)

Subject : sea animals.

Location : London.

Material: Various plastic waste.

Method : assemblage art.

Dimensions: 5m x 5m.

The work is horizontally semi-stable which contains of two compound shapes with some light bends. From the vertical side, there is a curved movement from the right and left sides, and there is a space on the upper left side (a space between the upper fin and the tail) from the head to the bottom of this art work. There are seven colors in curves form from right to left, as there are spacers between the head and the fins and there is one unit in the middle of the right part of the work (the eye) contains of several colors. There is also a space on the left side below the art work between the tail and the body, this inspires balance of work with a slight appearance of the under fin. There are several triangular shapes are found in the tail in a

repeated decoration form with different directions. There are also repeating round units at the base with different sizes in addition to the shape of a starfish. This work is characterized by several colors including blue, green, orange and yellow. In addition to the colors of transparent plastic bottles, holographic texture is not soft because there are different of materials with different sizes and shapes which are fixed in a sensible and recessed way.

This artwork is differentiate from other works that it has employed the plurality of color and texture to give the viewer a kind of attraction and draw attention. in addition to the size, which led to the appearance of the artwork in the required image. This work can be classified as a type of modern work that depends on the materials of modern industrial outputs and their secretions. the employment of these outputs is an important employment from a technical and aesthetic point of view which adds a new type of employment and benefit from modern industrial outputs.



Sample (2)

Artist : Ji Young Ho.

Subject : Horse.

Location : Armenia.

Material : Waste rubber (car tires).

Style : direct weaving art.

Size : real horse size.

The work contains a collection of car tire parts cut in different sizes and installed in a coordinated manner in a direct weaving art method, containing different surfaces and textures, assembled and fixed on an iron frame and base. The work is in a movement state closer to the reality of the real animal from the right side of the work. The head is in a semi-circle motion with the neck raised from the rest of the body. The front legs are in motion with putting the right leg first which creates a gap between them and the rest of the legs. The hind legs are completely consistent with the movement of the front legs with the progression of the right leg, which creates a natural movement. The upper part of the tail is connected to the body in the upper part and there is a slight space at the top of the tail with the rest of the tail sticking with the legs. The texture is rough because of the presence of spaces between the blocks and the units of small tires made in a regular manner. The artist benefited from the pieces of car tires that may not be of any importance to us and we hurry to get rid of it, but the artist was able to take advantage of this waste and amaze the world with his artwork. So the artist makes metal

structures for the subjects he wants to, and then he pastes the melted tire material until it becomes a sculpture that amazes everyone.

Research results

The researcher reached to a number of results by analyzing the models of the research sample, as an addition to what was stated by the theoretical framework in order to achieve the research goal represented by (recognizing the use of plastic waste in contemporary European sculpture), which are as follows:

- 1- Plastic waste is one of the most inexpensive lightweight materials compared to other materials.
- 2- The variety of colors in the plastic material made it a material with characteristics, connotations and aesthetic values that stimulated the imagination of the contemporary European sculptor.
- 3- The use of plastic waste in contemporary European sculpture came as a protest revolution against the culture of consumption that swept Western society.
- 4- Contemporary European artist used the experimentation deliberately with the new industrial materials and employed them in the completion of the sculptural work, taking advantage of the new innovations and technical developments.
- 5- The huge diversity in the colors and shapes of plastic waste made the contemporary European artist in front of many options to reformulate and use it in his sculptural achievement in order to serve his idea.
- 6- The use of plastic waste in art in general and in sculpture in particular contributes to reduce environmental pollution and raise awareness of the dangerous effects of this substance on the seas, oceans and land.

Conclusions

From the results of the research, the researcher concluded the following:

- 1 There are many new industrial waste that can be benefitted from to enrich the sculptural work.
- 2 The new industrial waste used in contemporary European sculpture has directly contributed to express the spirit of the era, and the scientific and technological development it carries with.
- 3 Using waste in sculpture artwork is a demolition, rejection and rebellion against the slogans called by modernity and the earlier classical regulations of art, by inserting reality as it is into the context of contemporary artwork.

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