

## **A Contemporary Design Vision for Saudi Folk Art Motifs and Their Applications in Ceramic Products**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The plastic folk arts come on top of the folk traditions, in practice and originality, and have a special artistic character that reflects people's lives in all its details. It is a repetition of inherited customs and traditions that clearly and honestly express a specific culture that defines the features of the civilized personality of each society. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a rich folk heritage of a special nature that is characterized by simplicity, ease, and non-compliance with lineage and perspective, which ensured its survival and continuity. The decorations of Saudi folk art bear various artistic values of civilized origin, replete with multiple intellectual and social connotations. It was considered one of the sources of artistic inspiration, which the current research aims to highlight through the study and analysis of the decorative units of Saudi folk art and its reformulation in the creation and development of artistic ceramic products bearing aesthetic and utilitarian values in a contemporary form to emphasize the distinction and richness of Saudi heritage.

**Keywords:** Contemporary vision - ceramic products - decorations of Saudi folk art.

### **Introduction**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia possesses a huge geographic area that is replete with enormous environmental diversity, which is reflected in its inhabitants and has resulted in the presence of multiple and different colors of folklore. ...etc. Considering that folklore is a historical, artistic value, an intellectual and material goal, and an inexhaustible source of creativity, our Arab world in itself is a wellspring of Arab and folk arts. The ancient social life in its various fields and differences in each region is one of the pillars of the national identity and the container from which it derives its faith, traditions, original values, language, and ideas. Folk art is also a creative source in the fields of plastic arts because of its meanings that are directly related to people's customs, traditions, and rituals, and are an important factor in human culture. Referring to Saudi Arab folk art and using its elements and employing them in the arts with a contemporary vision is one of the most important ways to confirm and consolidate the Arab

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identity of heritage The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has ancient rich deserves our study and analysis, given that the decorations of Saudi folk art are the language of a rich variety of expression that derives its originality from the local environment of Saudi society.

### ***Study problem***

The research problem is summarized in the following question:

How can the motifs of Saudi folk art be used in the implementation and development of ceramic products with a contemporary vision?

### ***Study importance***

The extent to benefit from the plastic and aesthetic values of the decorative units of Saudi folk art and benefit from them in the development of various ceramic products (dishes - murals - ceramic shapes) with designs and contemporary artistic visions.

### ***Study aims***

1. Benefiting from the plastic and aesthetic values of the Saudi popular decorative units and applying them to ceramic products.
2. Presenting a contemporary vision for creating designs inspired by the heritage of Saudi folk art and applying them to ceramic products.

### ***Study hypotheses***

The two researchers hypothesize that it is possible to benefit from the motifs of Saudi folk art and reformulate them with new contemporary design visions and apply them to ceramic products.

### ***Study Methodology***

The research follows the descriptive, analytical, and experimental method:

#### ***First, the theoretical aspect***

1. A descriptive study of the artistic characteristics of Saudi folk art
2. Analysis of the aesthetic values and plastic features of the decorations of Saudi folk art.

#### ***Second: the application framework***

1. Analyzing the plastic structure of selected Saudi folk-art decorations to highlight the values of rhythm, balance, unity, and the different color and linear systems it contains
2. Discovering the plastic systems that can be used in the implementation of decorative designs inspired by the analysis of selections from the decorations of Saudi folk art
3. Producing contemporary designs inspired by the motifs of Saudi folk art in creating a variety of ceramic products.

### ***Study limits***

#### ***Spatial***

The limits of research are limited to selecting some decorations of Saudi folk art from the following regions: North - Central - South – Eastern.

#### ***First, the theoretical framework of the research***

#### ***The concept of Folk Art***

Folk art is the cultural and artistic aspect as stated in the dictionary of meanings, and some define folk art as the total artistic works practiced by citizens in a specific country. Fine art and folk industries of all kinds. But the concept of folk art is closely related to engraving,

sculpture, drawing, decoration, coloring, and everything related to traditional furniture and costumes.

### ***Definition of popular decoration***

That decoration is one of the most important plastic arts and has the greatest effect in giving most craft products and various industries aesthetic and utilitarian values, and the decorative unit is the basis of the design and can be defined by the space confined between one or more converging lines depending on its type and all forms are suitable for use in decoration and can be divided into two types: and natural decorative units (4), and folk decoration represents the life of a certain people or group that stems from their heritage and their own identity and expresses their environment, ideas, and traditions, and sometimes expresses their lifestyle (2). The decorative units in Saudi folk art are a local human fruit, aiming to meet the needs of the community and its inheritance from successive generations, which contributed to its intellectual and plastic enrichment, and added to it many characteristics and ingredients that made it one of the arts that carry influential aesthetic values, and these characteristics include:

1. Meeting the needs of the community Make use of local resources.
2. Using simple and available tools from his own environment. Clarity of units and items and ease of understanding them.
3. Non-compliance with the rules of perspective and most works of folk art is implemented in two dimensions.
4. Expression of automatic pardon.
5. The popular artist expresses his ideas and forms through the use of lines and abstract shapes.
6. Most of the folk artists learned this art by themselves and without help or study.
7. What folk artists produce is a variety of artworks that express what they know and what they have learned from the environment around them.

### ***Characteristics and features of Saudi folk motifs***

The decorative vocabulary within the Saudi folklore is a vocabulary that is authentic and fully consistent with the environmental and heritage aspects accumulated through the ages. These units bear a kind of compatibility between the intellectual, plastic, and expressive content because they are an integral part of folklore. The decorative unit in Saudi folk art is a technical language that the artist uses to express his feelings and emotions towards all that shake his feelings of beliefs and ideas.

Saudi folk decorations also emphasize the affiliation of peoples and their taste and aesthetic values.

### ***Saudi Folk Art Sources***

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is characterized by a common area of land and its distinct geographical location, which helped the presence of great diversity in the different environments of the desert, coastal and agricultural, in addition to mountainous ones, and this, in turn, was reflected in the nature of art and heritage in each region according to the difference in the environment in each of them, which earned it a wealth of heritage formed Through the centuries, therefore, the folklore is considered a reflection of the environment and its natural, geographical and historical components, and it is the result of man's interaction with it through the ages in finding his home, searching for his food and making his clothes. About the popular man, which is rich in decorative patterns and color formations (3), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

is characterized by the richness of folk vocabulary due to the breadth of its area and uniqueness according to region. The decorations with precision and elements derived from plant and geometric shapes, which are called cat decorations Al-Asiri. As for the Waste region, the decorations are characterized by simplicity and the use of explicit and executed color on the wooden and plaster doors, which became a custom of the region and part of its inherited traditions. So, the aesthetic value of the Saudi heritage decorations for those regions is the compatibility between the intellectual, plastic, and expressive content in which the aesthetic value of the artwork appears (7).

### ***Decorative units in the northern region***

The Sadu craft (weaving) is one of the ancient traditional crafts practiced by Bedouin women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the northern region, especially to provide for the basic needs of the people of the Badia such as clothing, housing, and furniture. The Bedouin, in turn, transforms these materials into textiles of great beauty, accuracy, and creativity. The word "Sadu" refers to the process of "weaving or weaving wool among the people of the Badia." It is one of the meanings inspired by the desert environment and the heritage of the Badia. The loom (1).



**Figure No. (1) Some examples of Saudi art**

### ***Decorative units in the Waste region***

"Najd" is one of the areas that have been subjected to several historical events and conflicts, but the most important thing that distinguishes it from other areas is this pure folk art that characterized the "Najd" area and called it Najdi art, and it is the art of decorating doors and windows. Najd art is distinguished from other folk arts in that it uses raw materials the local, and its decorative units derived from the surrounding environment. These decorations are characterized by simplicity, spontaneity, spontaneity, and distance from complexity and fabrication. They are simply arranged with a system and a special repetitive rhythm that distinguished them from other units of other folk arts. Some of them are inherited from parents and grandparents. Such as red, blue and yellow, which come from nature (without using gradation in colors), which is commensurate with its neglect of perspective and embodiment. These colors are taken from the plant at the beginning of time, and then their makers relied on imported dyes that come from abroad and are glued to the doors with glue. They also rely on dry pomegranate peel, and the popular decorative unit in the heritage of the Najd region is summarized in a group of elements and shapes that have been formulated in a simplistic manner, to become one unit linked with each other from a group of lines and shapes, and divided into geometric decorative units that depend in their composition on various geometric shapes, such as triangles, circles, squares, curves, and meanings, as well as on natural decorative units whose elements depend on nature as a basic source, such as those taken from plants and palms from leaves and branches are different and varied, and among the fruits are bunches of grapes (12).



**Figure No. (2)** Shows models of wooden doors

***Decorative units in the southern region (Asir )***

The southern region, especially the city of Asir, is famous for its decorations called Al-Qatt Al-Asiri art, which is the art of decorating the walls of homes from the inside, and its history dates back hundreds of years, as the sources mention; It relies on unique geometric motifs ranging from triangles, circles, squares, and lines; The decorations of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri art are characterized by colors inspired by nature, and the decorations of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri art stem from environmental data derived from plants and abstract engineering units and are always carried out by women. From to generation, art is not Limited to walls only but can be seen on pottery as well, and this art enhances social cohesion and solidarity among members of a single society (5).



**Figure No. (4)** Shows some examples of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri art

***Decorative units in the eastern region of Al-Ahsa***

The stucco decorations represent the creations of Al-Ahsa'i craftsmen with their historical legacies and civilizational influences. They have artistic characteristics and characteristics that carry innate meanings, visions and perceptions inspired by the artist from his relationship with the place and his connection to the land and the environment. These decorations are characterized by most of the characteristics and features that appeared in the decorations of the civilization of Islamic art, such as repetition. Reproduction, symmetry, and void-occupancy (8.)



**Figure No. (4)** Shows some models of gypsum works

### ***Common decorative unit analysis***

The folk artist made good use of the calligraphy in terms of - path (straight - curved - wavy - refracted), direction (horizontal-vertical - oblique), length (short - long), thickness - (thick-thin). Triangles in abundance, especially triangles, are often equilateral, and they are arranged in several ways, including triangles (opposite - contiguous - contiguous - superimposed), superimposed On each other, the largest has the smaller ones, and thus their numbers vary from superimposed triangles to 3 triangles and up to two superimposed triangles. The italic line was used to fill the triangle, and the folk artist used the rhombus and the rhombus produced from two intertwining triangles and may be found in folk decorations in several ways (a strip of rhombus touching the edges - a rhombus appears As a result of a strip of triangles facing the head - and a rhombus filled with diagonal lines - a diamond appears as a result of a group of zigzag lines, and the folk artist also used the circle.

### ***Artistic and aesthetic values in folk motifs***

Engineering character.

Abstract (expressive) character. Use of pure colors.

### ***Engineering character***

The geometric division plays a major role in Saudi folk art because it helps to create beautiful geometric formations. The entire surface is decorated, and the second is the principle of repetition, and repetition (10) is that characteristic of the composition that transforms the simple unit in the layout into units of more aesthetic value. Common types of repetition (normal repetition - cross repetition - cross repetition).

Geometric abstraction: (expressive):

Geometric abstract art: The name of this type is due to the artist's use of various geometric shapes, such as: squares, triangles, rectangles, and circles, and as a result the artwork is far from depicting the reality of things as they are, it is based on a two-dimensional drawing of things unlike What was used in the Renaissance of painting on the basis of perspective to highlight things more realistic, and this type of abstract art appeared in the twentieth century with the movement of the transformation of artistic styles.

### ***Use of pure colors***

The folk artist uses multiple methods in applying colors according to the nature of the surface and how it relates to the materials of implementation, and despite the difference of these methods, the folk character in each of them has not changed. Or from colored clays, or from some herbs. These natural colors are prepared by the folk artist himself by adding fixing and polishing materials, and the second is ready-made colors in the form of powders brought from Yemen in the form of cardboard cubes, and by adding water and fixing materials to it, coloring is done with it. As for the third type of colors used for coloring and decorating, they are modern oil colors, noting that this type of color was not used until recently. It is noticeable that the popular artist depends on the basic colors (red, yellow, and blue) mainly. The black (neutral) color, it was used by the popular artist in the process of drawing and initial planning for her decorative work, and then she filled the spaces with different colors.

### ***Heritage and contemporary***

The relationship between heritage and contemporary is a correlative relationship, where heritage represents the cultural heritage manifested in all that man has accomplished throughout his history within the limits of his cultural environment. In the modern era, the combination of heritage and contemporary art is inspired by its heritage units, but with contemporary content and far from the inspired form to move away from the process of copying

and monotony, and to come up with an innovative work (11). And his techniques are an end in themselves, but he picks up from these traditions as much as he can in order to reorganize, arrange and integrate them in a different and unique way in the light of the distinctive artistic style or style away from tradition.

***Second, the framework***

The Saudi folk-art decorations and the enrichment of the ceramic product Diversity in decorations Saudi folk art are considered a huge reference revolution from which the artist is inspired by whatever he wants. Stereoscopic or flat, the use of decorations in ceramic products confirms the aesthetics of ceramic work and increases its plastic value. Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.

***Design process entrances***

1. Zoom in and zoom out.
2. . Deletion and additionPetition.
3. Total and partial overlap.

***The first proposed design:***



**Figure No. (5)** Shows the proposed design and the stages of its implementation

***The design dimension:*** The first design relied on an attempt to formulate folk motifs by integrating lozenges, triangles, horizontal lines, and color spaces to re-use them indifferent stereoscopic ceramic models (ceramic pot) or flat (wall or hanging).

***Aesthetic dimension:*** The design thought of the proposal is based on the establishment of geometric relations between triangles, rhombuses, horizontal linesand color flats through repetition in the decorative units and diversity in sizes to create a kind of harmony and rhythm between the units to highlight the shadow andlight. — Triangle) to find a new plastic formulation by employing those vocabularies on. the stereoscopic and the ceramic surface

***The second proposed design***



**Figure No. (6)** Shows the proposed design and the stages of its implementation

**The design dimension:** The first design relied on an attempt to formulate folk motifs by integrating lozenges, diagonal lines, circles, halves, and color spaces to re-use them in different stereoscopic ceramic models (ceramic pot) or flat (wall or hanging).

**Aesthetic dimension:** The design thought of the proposal is based on the establishment of geometric relationships between diamonds, diagonal lines, circles, semi-circles, and color planes through repetition in the decorative units and diversity in sizes to create a kind of harmony and rhythm between the units to highlight shadow and light. Oblique's- and the circle and its halves) to find a new plastic formulation by employing that vocabulary on the stereoscopic and the ceramic surface.

**The third proposed design:**



**Figure No. (7)** Shows the proposed design and the stages of its implementation

**The design dimension:** The first design was based on an attempt to formulate folk motifs by merging triangles, diagonal lines, half-circles, and color spaces to re-use them in different flat ceramic models (ceramic plate - wall or hanging).

**Aesthetic dimension:** The design thought of the proposal is based on the establishment of geometric relationships between triangles, diagonal lines, half-circles, and color flats through repetition in the decorative units to create a kind of harmony and rhythm between the units to highlight shadow and light. A new plastic formulation by employing this vocabulary on the ceramic surface.

**The fourth proposed design:**



**Figure No. (8)** Shows the proposed design and the stages of its implementation

**The design dimension:** The design here relied on the formulation of folk motifs in an innovative way through spaces and horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines and integrating them with decorative elements (lozenges - triangles) and using them in different ceramic models (ceramic pots - external ceramic walls).



**Aesthetic dimension:** The design thought relied on finding geometric relationships between spaces, horizontal, vertical, and inclined lines, and decorative elements (lozenges - mounds) through repetition to create a kind of harmony and rhythm to find a new plastic formulation through the employment of that vocabulary in the form of the Flat and ceramic tile

**The Fifth proposed design**



**Figure No. (9)** Shows the proposed design and the stages of its implementation

**The design dimension:** The design relied on an attempt to formulate folk motifs by integrating lozenges, circles, and color spaces to re-use them in different ceramic models (dishes - wall or hanging).

**Aesthetic dimension:** The design thought of the proposal is based on the establishment of geometric relationships between lozenges, circles, and color planes through repetition in the decorative units and diversity in sizes to create a kind of harmony and rhythm between the units to highlight shadow and light. During the use of this vocabulary on the ceramic surface.

**Results**

1. Consolidation of the Saudi folklore through the popular decorative unit and access to its unlimited plastic capabilities in the development of contemporary artistic decorative vocabulary.
2. Emphasis on the role of art in developing heritage and preserving it from extinction and the role of heritage in enriching the fine art movement.
3. The Saudi folk art decorations are considered one of the important sources rich in aesthetic plastic values.
4. Saudi folk art motifs can be used as a design source. Folk art decorations have unique aesthetic characteristics.
5. Keeping pace with development and modernity, opened new horizons for creation and creativity.
6. The inspiration of the popular elements gives the work originality and a historical dimension.

**Recommendations**

Be keen to return to the heritage and the aesthetics of folklore to preserve the national identity.

Continuing to derive the motifs of Saudi folk art in contemporary design.

The researcher recommends making use of the thought and philosophy of popular art in order to emphasize the popular identity.

Connecting art with history by contributing to the preservation of folklore.

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