

Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

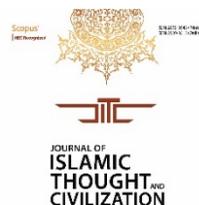
Volume 12 Issue 1, Spring 2022

ISSN(P): 2075-0943 ISSN(E): 2520-0313

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC>



Article QR



Title: The Spiritual Aesthetics of Islamic Ornamentation and the Aesthetic Value in Islamic Architecture

Author (s): Fatima Zahra¹, Safrizal Bin Shahir²

Affiliation (s): ¹University Sains, Penang, Malaysia
²School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.121.08>

History: Received: September 05, 2021, Revised: January 14, 2022, Accepted: January 21, 2022,
Available Online: June 25, 2022

Citation: Zahra, Fatima. and Safrizal Bin Shahir. "Spiritual Aesthetics of Islamic Ornamentation and the Aesthetic Value in Islamic." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 1 (2022): 116–128.
<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.121.08>

Copyright: © The Authors

Licensing:  This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



A publication of

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Sciences and Humanities
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Spiritual Aesthetics of Islamic Ornamentation and the Aesthetic Value in Islamic Architecture

Fatima Zahra*

Universiti Sains, Malaysia

Safrizal Bin Shahir

School of the Arts

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Abstract

Islamic architecture, a form of Islamic art, contributes significantly to portraying God Almighty's supremacy. In Islamic art, there are numerous ways to place emphasis on this architecture; one of which is through high aesthetic value. In Islamic art and architecture, the greatest extent of ornamentation and motifs probably describe aesthetic values. Islamic ornamentation serves as a platform for delivering information about Islam's culture including Islamic values and identity. Additionally, the most distinguishing characteristic of Islamic ornamentation is the richness of meaning behind it that might influence a person's perception of spiritual aesthetics. Therefore, this article explore what spiritual aesthetic means and how it relates to Islamic ornamentation. Furthermore, Islamic ornamentation should be considered a part of the interior of the Islamic architecture rather than just decorations added after the fact or to cover in gaps. Through the interplay of the people and interior space, these ornaments have the potential to engage with human aesthetics. Therefore, this research also focuses on the aesthetics and beauty of ornaments, which satisfy one of human psychological needs: to be in a beautiful environment. Because emphasis of the research is to explore how people perceive the aesthetics of Islamic ornamentation, a semiotics method was chosen because of its capacity to transcend literal meanings. The identification and evaluation of the aesthetic and religious qualities of the Islamic ornamentation brought out in this paper can be very helpful for the artists as well as scholars in understanding the Islamic art.

Keywords: Islamic Ornaments, Islamic Architecture, Aesthetic Value, Spiritual Aesthetics, Islamic Art, Architectural Ornaments

Introduction

Architecture is the most important form of Islamic art. Islamic architecture is a collection of religious and secular architectural styles that have evolved since the foundation of the religion of Islam and influences building in Islamic society. Additionally, Islamic architecture gives a glimpse into Muslim ideas and practises throughout centuries. It adapts and reacts to a wide range of tradition and cultural practises followed by various Islamic generations without sacrificing their spirituality. Islamic architecture is well-known for its innovative and distinctive designs. Islamic architects based their creativity on invoking interior beliefs via abstract shapes, which resulted in beautiful works of art. Gradually created alternative architectural styles that incorporated Islamic art into one-of-a-kind masterpieces. According to a few scholars, the primary goal of the art works was to convey Islamic teachings rather than to provide aesthetic pleasure to the sight.¹

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Fatima Zahra Universiti Sains, Malaysia at fzahra@student.usm.my

¹Jeanan Shafiq, "Architectural Elements in Islamic Ornamentation: New Vision in Contemporary Islamic Art," *Art and Design Studies* 21, no. July (2014): 11–21, https://www.academia.edu/download/35250114/Architectural_Elements_in_Islamic_Ornamentat.pdf

Scholars are currently debating a thorough historical study, purpose, and importance of ornamentation in Islamic architecture, particularly in mosques. The ornamental design, which includes vegetal, floral, geometrical, epigraphic, and figural components, as well as a combination of these, requires some evaluation and refinement. These decorations will represent culture and traditions with a mix of foreign influences, depending on the geographical region of the Islamic world. In short, Islamic ornamentation is the thread that connects design with religion, culminating in art and architecture that is peaceful, understandable, organised, and spiritual.

According to Hakim, ornamentation in Islamic architecture serves a variety of purposes. Giving the architecture the impression of weightlessness and providing articulation and non-limitation to the space are two of its purposes.² On the one hand, Hakim examines the physical purposes of Islamic ornamentation³ and views ornamentation on the other hand as the glue that holds the Muslims and their architectural forms and embellishments together.⁴ Nonetheless, both famous academicians seem to concur that the ornamentations that provide the impression of being within a location via the articulation or decoration of the interior are inspirational as well as noteworthy assets to Islamic art.

Over history, the most distinguishing feature of Islamic architecture has been its ornamentation. It may be found in mosques and other Islamic structures. To elaborate, aesthetics in Islamic art and civilisation includes the appreciation of balance, symmetry and manifestations of a feeling of all-pervading life force that are consistent with Islamic aesthetic principles. The origins of Islamic art and ornaments are based on the principles and philosophy of Islam which brought this art into existence. This art could not have a spiritual purpose unless it was intimately connected to both form and substance of the Islamic revelation.⁵

2. Literature Review

The significance of Islamic art and architecture stems not only from the fact that it was during this period that several of traditional Islam's ethnic, literary, social, religious and artistic characteristics were developed, but also from the fact that it was roughly contemporaneous with Gothic Europe and Romanesque. The issue of the development and nature of Islamic architectural ornaments, like most of the difficulties raised by Islamic art and architecture experts, has never been thoroughly addressed. The idea of decoration in Islamic art is adaptable, regardless of shape, material, or size, and has the ability to change the atmosphere of the whole area. According to kuhnel, it is necessary to categorise the changes in visual forms from the perspective of religion, knowledge and opinion before delving further into specific ornaments in Islamic art.⁶ The categorization will serve as proof of civilisation, with some communal symbolism or themes in the decoration as well as a yardstick for evaluating the technological level of the global Muslim community. For example, mosque ornamentation may vary from one area to the next. However, since they all originate from the same faith and society, there should be some, if not a lot, of impact from the roots. In Islamic art, this is the primary symbolic meaning that expresses unity in variety.

²Besim Hakim, "Urban form in Traditional Islamic Cultures: Further Studies needed for Formulating Theory," *Cities* 16, no. 1 (1999): 51-55.

³Ibid.

⁴Shireen Jahn Kassim, Norzalifa Zainal Abidin, and Norwina Mohd Nawawi, "Criticality, Symbolic Capital and the High-Rise Form," In *Modernity, Nation and Urban-Architectural Form*, (2018): 155-175.

⁵Waheed Ali Farooqi, "Islamic Art and Spirituality," *Idealistic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1992): 240-241.

⁶Ernest Kühnel, Katherine Watson, and Ernest Kuhnel, "Islamic Art and Architecture," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87, no. 2 (1967).

There are a number of studies on Islamic architecture, but only a handful provide a thorough and complete look about this form of art. Rudi Paret and Jacques Waardenburg are the two major studies that concentrate specifically on symbols, signs, and meaning in Islamic culture. According to Oleg Grabar research examines numerous signs and symbols in the Muslim architecture that offer a theoretical assertion about the unity of Islamic architecture. When it comes to understanding the significance of symbols in Islam, Paret confines himself to the position of observer and claims that since the research is limited to a religious perspective, it is more descriptive than interpretive in understanding the meanings of signs and symbols.⁷ The primary and secondary symbols are distinguished by Mach.⁸ Whereas primary symbols convey the topic or thing being represented directly while secondary symbols have inherent meaning and may represent opposing states such as life and death, or darkness and light. Under the influence of mysticism, Paret is inspired by Hellmut Ritter, a German academic, to interpret different symbols and signs in Islamic architecture beyond descriptive symbolism. Paret, on the other hand, does not address the social implications of these architectural signals and symbols. Waardenburg research looks at a variety of ornaments of Islamic architecture. It raises the issue of whether Islam is practised in a religious or ideological sense.⁹ However, its approach for determining acceptable responses to this issue is not robust, and it fails to reach a fair result. It overlooks the aesthetic forms of Islamic architectural ornamental traditions, despite the fact that they are rich in significance and symbolism.¹⁰ Hellmut Ritter's works is the most important Symbols and Signs in Islamic Architecture. He investigates the architectural skill of the Muslim building beyond the religious implications of the symbols employed. Decorations in Islamic structures, according to Conrad, are not related to the structural mechanics of the building, but rather are part of the Muslim traditional structural design techniques.¹¹ The embellishments are meant to give the impression of being weightless. The painters achieved this by using mosaics and paintings on the building's walls and pillars.¹² Geometrical forms, floral patterns, abstract shapes, minute inscriptions, and calligraphy were among the designs utilised. The results are typically one-of-a-kind and out of the norm. The Alhambra, built in Spain in the 14th century, is an excellent example of Islamic architecture that incorporates a variety of ornamental styles.

2.1. Research Objective and Questions

This research address two objectives that further lead to the questions to be answered:

1. To elaborate the Aesthetics values of Islamic ornamentation.
2. To explore the Spiritual aesthetics of Islamic ornaments.

Relating to the objectives, research questions are:

1. Why is it essential to give attention to aesthetic values of Islamic ornamentation?
2. How Islamic ornaments contribute to the spiritual aesthetic of a person perception.

⁷Rudi Paret, Johann Christoph Bürgel, and Franz Allemann, *Symbolik des Islam*, Hiersemann, 1970.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Jacques Waardenburg, *Islam studied as a Symbol and Signification System* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2020).

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹George Conrad, *Art in the Round* (1967): 49-49.

¹²Ibid.

3. Semiotics: A Research Method

The aim of adopting a theory in this research is to understand how people perceive Islamic ornamentation and how they may use that perception to enhance the spiritual aesthetics in Islamic architecture. There is yet no theory of aesthetics that specifically addresses decor, although there is a vast corpus of ideas from adjacent areas that may be applied to interior design. Existing theories, such as semiotics, gestalt, narrative theories, phenomenology, may be adopted from different disciplines, especially fine arts, architecture and, to a lesser extent, social sciences and philosophy.¹³ As a result, to comprehend symbolic meaning as part of the design phenomenon, a semiotic approach has been employed.¹⁴

Semiotics is the knowledge of signs as well as the exploration of sign systems and how they communicate and organise meaning.¹⁵ Semiotics may also provide insights on the meanings underlying human behaviour and communication.¹⁶ Semiotics, a Greek word *sēma*, which meaning sign, traced back to Plato, who was the first to examine the meaning of the language, and Aristotle, who examines nouns in Poetics and On Interpretation.¹⁷ Adding to this, semiotics is defined by some authors, such as Eco and Peirce, as the knowledge of signs relied on logic, while some others, such as Barthes and Saussure, define semiotics as semiology, a study of signs based on linguistics within society. According to Charles Sanders Peirce, a philosopher logic seeks to comprehend and interpret signals, as well as the connection between perception and semiotics.¹⁸ Peirce's research focused on the construction of meaning in the context of the entire human experience. As a result, he coined the word "semiosis" to describe the verbal and nonverbal sign system of signifying and interpretation.¹⁹ The cosmos, according to Peirce, is "perfused with signs if it is not entirely constituted of signs."²⁰ As a result, a sign not only means something to you, but it also means something to someone else.²¹

4. Islamic Ornamentation and Islamic Architecture

There seems to be a strong link between Islamic ornamentation and Islamic architectural embellishment. Using Islamic ornamental patterns embellished with highly intricate decorations to decorate religious structures, such as mosques, may draw the attention of passers-by. One issue to consider is how Islamic ornaments is linked to Islamic architecture. Another issue that has to be addressed is how important it is in Islamic architecture to use attractive and complex ornaments, shapes, and patterns on the surface of religious structures, such as mosque walls and domes?

¹³Jennifer Loustau, "A Theoretical base for Interior Design: A Review of Four Approaches from Related Fields," *Journal of Interior Design* 14, no. 1 (1988): 3-8.

¹⁴Mathew Holt, "Semiotics and Design: Towards an Aesthetics of the Artificial," *The Design Journal* 20, no. sup1 (2017): 332-341.

¹⁵Robin Kinross, "Semiotics and Designing," *Information Design Journal* 4, no. 3 (1984): 190-198.

¹⁶Charlotte M. Echtner, "The Semiotic Paradigm: Implications for Tourism Research," *Tourism Management* 20, no. 1 (1999): 47-57.

¹⁷P. Copley, "The Routledge Companion to Semiotics," *Choice Reviews Online* 47, no. 06 (2010): 47-2994-47-2994.

¹⁸David Glen Mick, and Laura Ruth Oswald, "The Semiotic Paradigm on Meaning in the Marketplace," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing* (2006), 31-45.

¹⁹Echtner, "The Semiotic Paradigm: Implications for Tourism Research."

²⁰E. N. Charles Hartshorne, and Paul Weiss, "Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce," *The Journal of Philosophy* 31, no. 7 (1934): 188.

²¹Marina Grishakova, "Structuralism and Semiotics," in *Companion to Literary Theory* (2017), 48-59.

Hillenbrand²² suggests that there was no explicit acknowledgement of the relationship between the artist's or architect's purely aesthetic motivation and his religious or spiritual motivation, in other words, whether or not Islam as a religion played an important role in inspiring the Muslim architects. However, there seem to be many aspects that contribute to the aesthetics of Islamic ornament, such as a feeling of hierarchy, a sense of scale, and a sense of proportion. One willingness to utilise symbolism, a fondness for opulent décor that serves a purpose other than adornment, and a preference for colour. As Faruqi²³ points out, the Islamic notion of utter transcendence of the Godhead dictated the illuminated manuscript, avoid depiction of human and animal figures. The fundamental meaning of Islamic artwork was defined by *Tawhīd* (God's Oneness), which reminded the Muslim artists of the necessity to create different creative forms and structural techniques for the creation of enormous patterns and themes. Complex and miniature details, division of geometrical motifs into parts as arabesque, and organisation into successive modular configurations are all important features that distinguish Islamic art as "Islamic." In addition, the *Tawhīd*'s influence seems to be present in Islamic art and adornment. The Muslim considers the aesthetic and beauty to be everything that draws attention to God. As Annemarie²⁴ points out, the practice of architecture is employed to fulfil both practical and expressive requirements, and thus it serves both utilitarian and aesthetic ends. Furthermore, the majority of minor arts, such as woodcarving, mosaics, and sculpture, are linked to architecture. Although some may refer to them as "minor arts" in the traditional sense, they never have a lesser status in the Muslim world since they are often utilised to convey the dignity of God's Representation on the Earth for example the depiction of beautiful floral and geometrical motifs and arabesque in Islamic art. In general, it is essential to briefly discuss the features of Islamic ornamentation in Islamic architecture in order to comprehend the relationship between the two. It has a unique and significant function, since Muslim architects incorporated its aesthetic aspects to Islamic structures, perhaps to achieve pleasure. Architectural ornamentation has flourished throughout the Islamic era, developing unique features in terms of design and creative production, as well as subject and style. The main source of inspiration for architectural ornamentation were plants, such as stems and single, doubled, and entangled branches; leaves, whether whole, half, in twos, threes, and fives, in full, or pierced style; palm leaves, and other fruits. Notably, the Muslim painters who were influenced by architectural ornamentation to depict any animal or human figure are rare. In one aspect, these forms are confined to a defined geometrical frame where they renew and alternate, and therefore are interlaced in a manner that makes it impossible to identify their origin or end point, as is the case with Islamic ornaments. Such expressions dominate the space and are combined with the component parts of Islamic architecture across the Arab globe, attesting to the uniform practise of the arts in both exterior and essence, indicating that Arabs were united and unified, no matter how diverse their nations were. In the pursuit of artistic magnificence, ornamentation can sometimes cover large surfaces of a building that can be divided into smaller areas, and in the pursuit of artistic magnificence, they can disrupt continuity with their many fine details in such a way that the architectural surface appears as two identical designs.²⁵ What seems to be critical is that ornamentation should not distract from the design's simplicity or break its main lines, but rather emphasise these lines and the architectural aesthetic of buildings. What stands out about the Muslim architects and their efforts to create beautiful shapes in decorating Islamic architecture is that they

²²Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

²³Lois al Faruqi, "The Aesthetics of Islamic Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 3 (1977): 353.

²⁴Annemarie Schimmel, Titus Burckhardt, and William Stoddart, "Mirror of the Intellect: Essays on Traditional Science and Sacred Art," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 3 (1989): 455.

²⁵P Kochevar and Ahmed, "A Visualization Architecture for the Sequoia 2000 Project," *S2k-Ftp.Cs.Berkeley.Edu*, 1993, <http://s2k-ftp.cs.berkeley.edu/sequoia/tioga/vis-architecture.ps.Z>.

improve the art of ornamentation and apply it to their majestic everlasting structures, making decoration a significant technique for the architect. Furthermore, ornamentation plays an important role in the structure of architecture and may play a role in the psychological effects of architecture, as it may direct people's movement inside and outside buildings, as ornamentation and architectural forms attract the eye and the mind and focus the spectator's attention on specific architectural features. Another significant aspect worth noting is that there is a link between Islamic and Western architecture and ornamentation in terms of our enjoyment as viewers. According to Graham,²⁶ any structure whose only function is decoration was built solely for the goal of being admired and enjoyed, and therefore is more akin to art. Appreciation for architecture as an art is difficult to acquire, maybe because architecture possesses characteristics that seem to separate it apart from other arts. Architecture is helpful in a manner that other arts are not; an architect's work is fundamentally utilitarian, while a painter's or musician's work is not. Music and painting may be used for either utilitarian or artistic reasons. For example, an orchestral sound may be used to drown out a screaming infant, while a painting might be used to hide an unsightly crack in the wall.²⁷

5. Rationale for the Spread of Islamic Ornamentation

The motives for the emergence of Islamic ornamentation are many and debatable. Scholars disagree on what caused the growth of Islamic ornamentation. A few of them credit it to the Muslim artists' ambition to create a distinctive work that stands out from the previous, pre-Islamic arts. The artist wanted to create a wide range of ornamentations till the art's output became recognised as decorative goods. Other scholars, on the other hand, connect the development of Islamic ornaments such as arabesque patterns to the aversion of Islam to the depiction of actual humans. They think that the artist's departure from painting and portraying live creatures resulted in the emergence of a new area, Islamic decoration, in which the artist had outstanding creative abilities and aesthetic aptitude. Other factors that may have contributed to the development of Islamic adornment include the desire to decorate. Many ethnic and religious groups' creative endeavours have a strong propensity to adorn surfaces. Traditional themes are typically symbolic or representational in cultures, while they were less often decorative in the West until the Renaissance. The decorative desire is considerably stronger in Islamic art than it is elsewhere, and simply ornamental themes prevail.²⁸ As a result, there seem to be a number of explanations for this unique characteristic of Islamic art. Another explanation may be a psychological reaction to the vast, featureless, and desolate terrain. By being decorated, the item lost its obnoxious connotation, and the mirror image of a frightening and primal world became domesticated and nurtured, as well as pleasant.²⁹ In reality, three causes seem to have fuelled the need for ornamentation. The first cause seems to be the creation of an abstract decoration language that was universally recognised and could be readily applied. There was relatively little figurative art and seldom any influence from culture. The second cause is that the cost of artisan labour was very cheap, thus the raw material accounted for the majority of the price paid for a job. The third cause is that an item with a lot of ornamentation provided additional possibilities for social pretension. The high level of ornamentation that resulted was inevitably influential in a religious setting.³⁰

²⁶Gordon Graham, *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics* (Routledge, 2005).

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸R. Ettinghausen, "The 'Wade Cup' in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Its Origin and Decorations," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 327–66.

²⁹R. Ettinghausen, "The Impact of Muslim Decorative Arts and Painting on the Arts of Europe," in *The Legacy of Islam*, edited by J. Schacht and C. E. Bosworth (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974).

³⁰Ibid.

6. Aesthetic Values and Spiritual Aesthetics of Islamic Ornaments (Discussion)

In Islamic art, aesthetic value refers to the beauty. The Muslim scholars have differing perspectives on the idea of beauty. Some people seem to associate beauty with the pleasure we get from it. In book *Alchemy of Happiness*, Al-Ghazali, one of Islam's most prominent philosophers, said of beauty that, "Beauty is significant because it fills us with pleasure, and the essence of beauty is the acknowledgment of perfection."³¹ Everything has its own kind of perfection, yet the outside look may be deceiving when it comes to the perfection that exists inside. The sight can evaluate the exterior, but the heart is responsible for determining the essence of the item. The issue with admiring paintings and beautiful items is that it encourages us to focus on the exterior, rather than the inner, and to view the external world's superficiality as a representation of how things truly are.³² Beauty is also related to key concepts of Islamic art, such as general harmony, part-to-part balance, and overall composition excellence. According to Al-Ghazali, "The beauty of a thing resides in the appearance of that perfection which is realisable and in accordance with its nature."³³ When an ornament has all of the qualities of perfection, it exhibits the greatest level of beauty. Beauty, according to another Muslim scholar, is "the brilliance of the outward parts... it is also vitality and nobility."³⁴ Beauty is something that has no other term (except the one that identifies it) in the English language but is universally recognised by souls... when they view it. It seems to be something that is discovered inside the soul of the considered item by the soul of the one who contemplates it. This is the most prestigious category of beauty.³⁵ Beauty is seen differently by Neoplatonist Islamic intellectuals such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and others. The worth of the beautiful, according to Neoplatonic thinking, may simply be understood in a spiritual light, more particularly, in the light of emanationist cosmology influenced by Greek and Graeco-Latin philosophy. "Apprehended in ideal and spiritual terms linked to light and brightness as transcendental characteristics," says the scheme's definition of beauty. The phrase 'the power of light,' for example, is used to describe God. As a result, logically, beauty as defined creates a complete aesthetics of light that, due to its heavenly source, has very little relationship with the existential reality. This aesthetics is mostly philosophical, focused on the dual concepts of light and splendour, and might even be considered a true Divine aesthetics.

The Most Important Factors in the Beauty of Islamic Ornaments are Themes or Ideas for Islamic Ornamentation, the artist's exceptional ability to communicate emotions and heavenly concepts in a beautiful creative work seems to be one of the most significant elements contributing to the beauty of Islamic ornamentation. The Muslim painters sought to come up with fresh ideas and creative creations that adhered to the Islamic faith or rule. As a result, the Muslim artists shifted their focus away from human and animal shapes. The skill and genius of the Muslim artist revealed innovative artistic concepts that allowed freely expression of thoughts and sentiments. The Muslim artist may manipulate vegetal and geometric shapes, mix them with Arabic calligraphy, and arrange them in an endless number of ways by using an abstract approach. As a result, the Muslim artist created a new creative world in which simple vegetal and geometric forms are charmingly coloured and abstractly designed to reflect the intangible relationship between God and the artist, in which the artist

³¹M. Al-Ghazali, "Reflections on Islamic View of Art and Literature," *Islamic Studies* 35, no. 4 (1996): 425–34, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20836965>

³²O. Leaman, *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction* (Notre Dam: University of Notre Dam Press, 2004), <https://philpapers.org/rec/LEAIAA>.

³³Joseph E. B. Lombard, *Aḥmad Al-Ghazālī, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love*, 2016.

³⁴Abdolkarim Soroush, and John Keane, "The Beauty of Justice," *CSD Bulletin, University of Westminster* 14, no. 1 and 2 (2007): 8-12, <http://www.dr.soroush.com/PDF/TheBeautyOfJustice.pdf>.

³⁵V. Gonzalez, "Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture," *Choice Reviews Online* 39, no. 09 (2002): 39-4975-39-4975.

remembers and glorifies God, and tries to please Him with the splendour of his artistic creations. The Muslim artist used his creative ingenuity to create new instruments for artistic expression, which formed part of his repertoire and gave him an element of independence and originality, differentiating his work from that of others. Furthermore, even while sketching human or animal shapes, the Muslim artist inclined toward abstraction without paying attention to the details whereas European painters were eager to mimic both abstraction and emotional depth in their creative creations. Islam impacted Islamic art in such a manner that the Muslim artists abandoned depicting human and animal forms in favour of gaining new religious beliefs. The ornament shapes are another significant element that contributes to the beauty of Islamic decoration. Richly diverse decorative shapes or units linked to one other may be produced in a beautiful manner when combined with other forms, such as circles and spirals or floral forms. In general, the range of forms and diversity of Islamic decoration may be seen in Islamic ornamentation and architecture. Islamic architecture is perhaps the best example of a Muslim artist's capacity to overwhelm people via his work. The mosque, for example, the first structure planned and built by the Muslim Arabs, demonstrates how Islamic architecture was unique and unparalleled, notwithstanding Orientalist art and architecture historians' claims. Simple styles were employed by the Muslim Arabs, some of which were influenced by their surroundings and others which were due to religious reasons. Because of the hot Arabic environment, the architect had to cover his structure with a roof to keep people cool throughout the summer. The religious element determined the direction of the *qibla* (Mecca direction) so that prayers may be given in the correct direction. The predominance of divides seems to be a major distinctive element of forms in Islamic art. Instead, the Islamic aesthetic captivates the imagination with a succession of components or modules, whether accomplished in wood or stone, paint or stucco, phrases, tones, or even three-dimensional designs of structures and complexes. These inner components may be repeated in exactly the same way to make up the whole composition, or they may return in other ways. The internal divisions of the work are crucial in both instances for the impression of never-ending patterns.³⁶ The aesthetics of ambiguity, which may be regarded another significant element contributing to the beauty of Islamic ornamentation, seems to be what generates the beauty of Islamic ornamentation forms. The abstract forms of Islamic ornaments, as well as the aesthetic of decorative styles that are interwoven in infinite-seeming ways, imply ambiguity. According to Alexandre,³⁷ as the gap between the depicted world and the independent world of shapes and colours grows, the pleasure gained from such ambiguity becomes proportionally more exquisite and powerful. By making the representational material as believable as possible while also energising the form and compositional structure. What seems to make the form idea significant in the aesthetic context is its capacity to communicate a feeling felt by its creator, while beauty does not. To appreciate something aesthetically, according to some Western theorists, is to pay attention not only to its qualities, forms and meanings for their own sake, but also to the way in which all of these things emerge from a specific set of low-level perceptual features that define the object on a non-aesthetic plane.³⁸ In general, Islamic ornaments are likable because their shapes are not only attractive or abstracted without meaning or substance, but they also convey a divine message, which seems to be the most important element that contributes to its beauty.

The design and style of Islamic adornment is another important element that adds to its attractiveness. The designs of these masterpieces have the Islamic aesthetic mark, whether they are seen on Islamic architecture or creative items such as glass work or ceramic goods. The use of Arabic calligraphy, geometric and arabesque adornments in one style seems to be one of the wonders of Islamic

³⁶Waheed Ali Farooqi, "Islamic Art and Spirituality," *Idealistic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1992): 240-41.

³⁷Alexandre Papadopoulo, *Islam and Muslim Art* (Harry N Abrams Inc., 1979).

³⁸D. E. Cooper, "A Companion to Aesthetics," *Choice Reviews Online* 47, no. 04 (2009): 47-1920-47-1920.

decoration. The talent or skill in spreading and moulding Arabic calligraphy letters, or ornamenting them with geometric, botanical, or animal decorations, exemplifies the Muslim artists' inventiveness. People find it most exciting when they attempt to comprehend and explain the ornamentations but are unable to do so, and they are pleased that the Muslim artists has been able to overwhelm them via this type of adornment. Design harmony seems to be an important factor in achieving the beauty of Islamic adornment. To express the artist's emotions and awe the Muslim viewers, the highly harmonious shapes of Islamic ornamentation and components may be used in a perfect combination with ornamentation styles and colouring. Texture, according to Clevenot and Degeorge, may be utilised to bring up to four or five distinct density levels into play, encouraging the viewer to go near to the sculpted surface in order to perceive the finer details. In terms of aesthetic experience, coming closer relates to shifting from visual to tactile qualities, as though the pleasure derived from examining this kind of decoration must be satisfied via touching. It is not only the physical characteristics of the work that are visible at this distance, but also the technical competence of the artisan. Harmony and aesthetic pleasure, according to the philosopher Ibn Khaldun, might be achieved if the creator behaved as a servant rather than a master of the medium, and if form and purpose were intimately linked. One of the causes of amazement in Islamic art and ornamentation is the desire of the Muslim artists to innovate and construct new forms of adornment influenced by abstract styles. The Muslim artist refined his ornamentation to a high degree of inventiveness and skill, and began to interpret plants, foliage, geometric, and Arabic calligraphy shapes in ways that inspire pleasure by repeatedly repeating them so that they seem to be interwoven and turned indefinitely. According to Farooqi,³⁹ Islamic style or design conveys the notion of never-ending continuity. By breaking up the line and shapes and repeating various internal units with complicated treatment, an aesthetic sense of infinity can be achieved, and the implicit symbolic message may be realised. The brilliance and skill of the Muslim artists in producing very complex patterns is another source of awe. The arabesque style is one of these patterns. The perfect application of the Islamic design principle is an arabesque design, which is based on an infinite leaf-scroll pattern that generates new variations of the same original elements by dividing elements (stem, leaf, blossom). It can be applied to any given surface, such as the cover of a small metal box or the glazed curve of a monumental dome. A mosque's tiny box and its massive dome are handled in the same manner, varying only in appearance, not in quality.⁴⁰

The use of a range of colours is another important element that adds to the beauty of Islamic ornaments. The colours used in Islamic decoration have a great range of aesthetic appeal. The grandeur of the Muslim artists' creations in the decoration of buildings and artworks has sparked the imagination because they delight the sight and evoke emotions of surprise in viewers. One of the fundamental criteria for beauty, is the use of colour in Islamic adornment. The abundant use of green and blue reflects natural elements such as the sky, rain, and lush fertile plains, while the use of gold connotes spiritual joy. Islamic art, the liberal use of colours by the Muslim painters, especially the magically gleaming gold, transports the spectator from the earthly or physical world to the sky or the heavens above, the home of God Himself. The colours "which add brilliancy to the drawing are part of the appeal," according to Kant in "The Critique of Judgement." They may, no doubt, invigorate the item with feeling in their own manner, but they cannot make it really worth looking at and beautiful..."⁴¹ The Muslim painters were masters at generating and combining colours in a harmonious manner. According to Papadopoulo,⁴² the Muslim painters were very attentive to the

³⁹Farooqi, "Islamic Art and Spirituality."

⁴⁰Ernest J. Grube, *The World of Islam: Landmarks of World Art* (McGraw Hill Book Company, 1967).

⁴¹Immanuel Kant, "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," in *Aesthetics: The Classic Readings* (1997), 94-122.

⁴²Papadopoulo, *Islam and Muslim Art*.

density of colour components, and this is one of the most important factors in the independent universe of their works. The variety of colours is referenced many times in the holy Qur'an, showing and reflecting God's amazing capacity to create, which encourages meditation and contemplation of God's Power.

Interpretation of Islamic ornamentation is also helpful when examining the different decorative techniques used by the Muslim artists in Islamic art, such as the connection between the repeating pattern and the infinite, and between mathematical order and divine order. Islamic ornaments, whether vegetal, geometric, or portraying human or animal forms, seems to have certain connotations or symbolises certain ideals or concepts, such as well-being or cosmic power, in both Islamic art and architecture. As Baer⁴³ points out, determining whether Islamic ornaments conveyed openly or implicitly is challenging. A thorough examination of the official and technical characteristics of ornamentations, as well as the geographical, social, and religious distinctions between the artists who created and beheld them, may provide a clear grasp of Islamic decorative significance. Notably, some people may have admired Islamic decorations because they were aesthetically pleasing or appealing to contemplation, while others may have understood a similar design figuratively or symbolically, associating it with holy, magical, or other connotations. In general, one of the major elements that adds to the beauty of Islamic decoration, whether used in Islamic art or building, is the variety of embellishments and colours. "Luxurious themes turn the mosque into an enchanting place, more [like] the garden of Paradise," writes.⁴⁴ The building's decorations of leaves and flowers allude to Eden's everlasting spring. This everlasting, unchanging greenery is a metaphor of eternal life in the mosque."⁴⁵ describe the "azure robeing that transfigures the plain brick and the lush plant patterns that give a picture of the paradise gardens promised to the faithful Muslim" in a similar way. The main distinctive element of Islamic art, according to,⁴⁶ seems to be its unique handling of symbolism, or how the symbolic meanings of Islamic decorations are communicated and represented.

Symbolism in Islamic architecture seems to be of a similar type, with shapes whose potential may be triggered under certain situations and whose significance is not diminished by its lack of precision.⁴⁷ The symbols and signs seen in Islamic structures did not necessarily have a religious connotation. The meaning of several of the forms was hazy and vague. Calligraphy was the only design that had a readily understandable message. The symbols employed in architectural designs were either cultural or religious expressions. Buildings were constantly repaired and refurbished in accordance with current trends. This implies that the symbols were occasionally employed only for aesthetic reasons. Islamic architecture gives us a glimpse into Muslim ideas and practises throughout history. It adapts and reacts to a wide range of cultures and traditional customs maintained by the various Islamic generations without adhering to any rigid rules.

7. Conclusion

Islamic ornamentation, according to the research, is not a traditional legacy art with set components and shapes. It's a dynamic art form that may include new components based on the changing impacts of the period as represented by human perception in space and time. In conclusion, the primary goal of Islamic ornamentation approaches, as have been explored in this article, seems to be to cover all

⁴³Eva Baer, *Islamic Ornament*, 1998, <https://www.ocaw.ac.at/resources/Record/990001205590504498>

⁴⁴Henri Stierlin, *Islamic Art and Architecture: From Isfahan to Taj Mahal* (Thames and Hudson, 2002).

⁴⁵Dominique Clevenot, and Degeorge Clevenot, *Ornament and Decoration in Islamic Architecture* (Thames and Hudson, 2017).

⁴⁶Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (1991).

surface areas, whether in art or building, using different complicated techniques. The employment of various creative techniques by Islamic artists, such as infinitely repeating patterns, interwoven decorative patterns, symmetry, and abstraction, which may be linked with a specific cultural and heavenly philosophy, separates Islamic art from other cultures artworks. The universe, paradise, and God's might are the primary themes connected with Islamic ornamentation, whether utilising geometric shapes, vegetal patterns, such as the arabesque, animal imagery, Arabic calligraphy, or other components to represent a sense of the divine on walls or art items. To put it another way, decorative motifs and figures in Islamic art and architecture have meanings and interpretations that are linked to a divine philosophy.

Conflict of Interest

Author(s) declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Funding Details

This research did not receive grant from any funding source or agency.

Bibliography

- Baer, Eva. *Islamic Ornament*. 1998. <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/resources/Record/990001205590504498>
- Brend, Barbara. *Islamic Art*. New York, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Clevenot, Dominique., and Gerard Degeorge. *Ornament and Decoration in Islamic Architecture*. London:Thames and Hundson, 2000.
- Cobley, Paul. "The Routledge Companion to Semiotics." *Choice Reviews Online* Vol. 47, no. 06 (2010): 47-2994-47-2994. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.47-2994>.
- Cooper, E. David. "A Companion to Aesthetics by Cooper, E. David. and Robert Hopkins (eds)." *Choice Reviews Online* Vol. 47, no. 04 (2009): 47-1920-47-1920. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.47-1920>
- Echtner, Charlotte M. "The Semiotic Paradigm: Implications for Tourism Research." *Tourism Management* 20, no. 1 (1999): 47-57. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00105-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00105-8).
- Ettinghausen, R. "The 'Wade Cup' in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Its Origin and Decorations." *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 327-66. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4629041>.
- Farooqi, Waheed Ali. "Islamic Art and Spirituality." *Idealistic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1992): 240-41. <https://doi.org/10.5840/idstudies19922231>.
- Faruqi, Lois al. "The Aesthetics of Islamic Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 3 (1977): 353. <https://doi.org/10.2307/430294>.
- Al-Ghazali, M. "Reflections on Islamic View of Art and Literature." *Islamic Studies* 35, no. 4 (1996): 425-34. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20836965>.
- Gonzalez, V. "Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture." *Choice Reviews Online* 39, no. 09 (2002): 39-4975-39-4975. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.39-4975>.
- Graham, Gordon. *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*. Philosophy, 3rd Edition. London: Routledge Press, 2005.
- Grishakova, Marina. "Structuralism and Semiotics." David H. Richter(ed.), *A Companion to Literary Theory*, 2018: 48-59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118958933.ch4>.

- Grube, J. Ernest. *The World of Islam: Landmarks of World Art* (2nd edition). McGraw-Hill Book Company, (January 1, 1967).
- Hartshorne, N. E. Charles., and Paul Weiss. "Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce." *The Journal of Philosophy* 31, no. 7 (1934): 188. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2016224>.
- Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment." *Aesthetics: The Classic Readings*, 94-122, 1997. http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Critique_of_Aesthetic_Judgment.
- Kochevar, P., and Ahmed. "A Visualization Architecture for the Sequoia 2000 Project." *S2k-Ftp.Cs.Berkeley.Edu*, 1993. <http://s2k-ftp.cs.berkeley.edu/sequoia/tioga/vis-architecture.ps.Z>.
- Leaman, O. *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction*. Notre Dam: University of Notre Dam Press, 2004. <https://philpapers.org/rec/LEAIAA>.
- Lumbard, Joseph E. B. *Aḥmad Al-Ghazālī, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love*, 2016. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=S7ZLDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=a+ghazali+on+beauty&ots=2VKnE3C18C&sig=IhRtpP3TKzq9WIEncx-M4IL4Noc>.
- Mick, David Glen., and Laura Ruth Oswald. "The Semiotic Paradigm on Meaning in the Marketplace." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*, 31–45, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781847204127.00009>.
- Papadopoulo, Alexandre. *Islam and Muslim Art*. Harry N Abrams Inc., 1979. <https://ixtheo.de/Record/1107879221>.
- Schimmel, Annemarie., Titus Burckhardt, and William Stoddart. "Mirror of the Intellect: Essays on Traditional Science and Sacred Art." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109, no. 3 (1989): 455. <https://doi.org/10.2307/604159>.
- Shafiq, Jeanan. "Architectural Elements in Islamic Ornamentation: New Vision in Contemporary Islamic Art." *Art and Design Studies* 21, no. July (2014): 11–21. https://www.academia.edu/download/35250114/Architectural_Elements_in_Islamic_Orname ntat.pdf.
- Soroush, Abdolkarim., and John Keane. "The Beauty of Justice." *CSD Bulletin, University of Westminster* 14, no. 1 and 2 (2007): 8–12. <http://www.dr.soroush.com/PDF/TheBeautyOfJustice.pdf>.
- Stierlin, Henry. *Islamic Art and Architecture: From Isfahan to Taj Mahal*. Thames and Hudson, 2002.
- Waardenburg, Jacques. "Islam studied as a Symbol and Signification System." In *Volume 2 1974*, 267-286. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2020.