

## Activating the aesthetics of African art in the field of artistic glass design

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### Abstract:

Ancient African art is a very rich art. Some African tribes have left many artistic monuments in many fields of art. African art has brought together many interrelated ideological and symbolic values. This has been achieved with the use of various raw materials related to the natural environment Surrounding these tribes, African art dealt with many artistic themes that carry many unique characteristics such as exaggeration, omission, flatness and abstraction, they also used symbols and human elements, especially the African woman in addition to animal elements. Traditional African art had a strong influence on European artists who formed a boom in the development of modern art trends and many artists like: Picasso, Georges Braque and other artists. It also had a significant impact of applied arts which can be utilized also in the field of artistic glass design.

The research problem:

- The need to reveal the most important artistic characteristics of African art.
- The need to explain how the aesthetics of African art have been used in the fields of fine art and applied arts.

The research aim:

- Activating the aesthetics of African art in the field of artistic glass design.

The research assumes that:

By studying the characteristics of African arts and their impact on the arts (fine-applied) and defining their aesthetics helps in reaching innovative solutions to enrich the artistic glass design field.

The research Methodology:

- Descriptive approach: through descriptive study and collecting information on African arts and determine their aesthetics and role in the arts (Fine - Applied).
- Experimental Method: Through the technical experiments of innovative design ideas that are suitable in the field of artistic glass design and how to execute them.

### Keywords:

African Art - Color in African art- Fine Arts - Applied Arts - Modern and Contemporary art- Artistic Glass Design.

### الملخص:

يعد الفن الأفريقي القديم من الفنون ذات الثراء الفني المتميز ذو طابع خاص، فقد خلفت بعض القبائل الأفريقية المتفرقة الكثير من الآثار الفنية في العديد من مجالات الفن، وقد جمعت الفنون الأفريقية الكثير من القيم العقائدية والرمزية المتداخلة وقد تم تحقيق ذلك باستخدام خامات متنوعة مرتبطة بالبيئة الطبيعية المحيطة بتلك القبائل، تناول الفن الأفريقي العديد من الموضوعات الفنية تحمل الكثير من الخصائص الفريدة كالمبالغة والحذف والتسطيح والتجريد واستخدام الرموز بكثرة

بالإضافة إلى العناصر الأدمية وخاصة المرأة الأفريقية والعناصر الحيوانية ، وأصبحت جماليات الفن الأفريقي التقليدي ذات تأثير قوي على الفنانين الأوروبيين الذين شكلوا طفرة في تطور اتجاهات الفن الحديث أمثال بيكاسو وجورج براك وغيرهم من الفنانين وأيضا كان لهذا الفن أثر كبير في مجال الفنون التطبيقية والتي يمكن الاستفادة منها في مجال تصميم الزجاج الفني.

#### مشكلة البحث:

- الحاجة إلى الكشف عن أهم الخصائص الفنية للفن الأفريقي.

- الحاجة إلى توضيح كيف تم الاستفادة من جماليات الفن الأفريقي في مجالات الفنون (الجميلة-التطبيقية).

#### هدف البحث:

- تفعيل جماليات الفن الإفريقي في مجال تصميم الزجاج الفني.

#### فرض البحث:

- يفترض البحث أنه بدراسة خصائص الفنون الأفريقية وأثرها على الفنون (الجميلة-التطبيقية) وتحديد جمالياتها يساعد في التوصل إلى حلول ابتكارية مستحدثة لإثراء مجال تصميم الزجاج الفني.

#### منهجية البحث:

- المنهج الوصفي: من خلال الدراسة الوصفية النظرية وجمع المعلومات الخاصة بالفنون الأفريقية وتحديد جمالياتها ودورها في الفنون (الجميلة-التطبيقية).

- المنهج التجريبي: من خلال التجارب الفنية للأفكار التصميمية المبتكرة و التي تصلح في مجال تصميم الزجاج الفني وكيفية تنفيذها.

#### الكلمات الاسترشادية:

الفن الأفريقي- اللون في الفن الأفريقي- الفنون (الجميلة-التطبيقية)- مدارس الفن الحديث و المعاصر-تصميم الزجاج الفني.

## • Introduction

African art assets are before the registration time; a lot of sculptures have been found. The oldest African art is dated back to the third century AD, it was found in tropical Africa, in some Nigerian tin reservoirs and some technical tools, also various parts of crowns, statues and stone seats that are dated back to the civilization of Nok Nok, along with sub-Saharan African, and Western cultural arts, also some Ancient Egyptian, paintings, antiques, handicrafts in the South that are originally belonging to African art. Often depicting the abundance of surrounding nature, and the art was often abstract interpretations of animals, and plant life, or natural designs and shapes. In modern Sudan, the Nubian kingdom of Kush, it was in close contact yet it was often hostile to Egypt, and produced a huge carving which was mostly derived from methods that do not lead to the north. In West Africa, it is the earliest known from the Nok culture, which flourished between 500 BC and 500 A D in modern Nigeria, with clay they created elongated bodies and shapes of statues. With the scientific progress, the methods have become more complex in the production of art in Africa and they used multiple materials, most notably the bronze Ibo Ochoa, clay and copper alloy, and are often decorated with ivory and precious stones. The African Artist distinguished and also invented (3D) artwork with dimensions more than two-dimensional work, so most of what was found from the African heritage is a sculpture of multiple materials including: wood and other natural materials, turning the African Artist Making (Masks), one of the most important artistic elements that are found and implemented

in various ways. Masks are usually associated with rituals and religious ceremonies. Masks are one of the elements of great African art that have most evidently influenced Europe and Western art in general; in the 20th century, artistic movements such as cubism, fauvism and expressionism have been taking inspiration from the vast and diverse heritage of African masks. Influences of this heritage can also be found in other traditions such as South- and Central American masked Carnival parades.

### ● **African Primitive Art:**

It was meant to talk about African art before it fell under the influence of multiple foreign conquests, and it was often in that period of time that there were no fixed borders among the African societies, the names of the regions, as well as the countries that grew up with them, were multiple yet overlapping in many cases, so it is more appropriate when writing about these arts, starting from the existing political divisions to make the reader aware of the place where the art in question is researched, it is also appropriate to stand at the end of this research at the similarities between the artistic effects here and there to give an idea of what distinguish primitive African art, such as;

-**Mali:** The groups known as Tellem, Dogon and Bambara originate from the area today called Mali, interacting with their environment and nature and benefiting from the availability of raw materials to create their masterpieces.

-**Guinée:** Different tribes and communities have established in the region today called Guinée, and successive generations have inherited funny, legendary stories about the universe, its creator, its beings and its philosophy, and has created everything that conforms to its beliefs and meets its different requirements.

-**Nigeria:** In today's region of Nigeria, all the elements needed to date African art have gathered. The ruins of the Nok civilization in this region date back to the second half of the first millennium BC, and were found in the northern regions of Nigeria, but William Fag believes that it is possible to have older pottery traces, or that there were artworks that were found of clay or wood, but they have disappeared.

### ● **Primitive African Art In Central African Countries, Such As:**

-**Gabon:** In what is known today as Gabon, a large, hot, dark, and humid forest, where semi-nomadic tribes have proliferated. The best known are Fang, Kota and Tsogho. Fang was a semi-autonomous group with its distinctive arts of construction, formation and decoration.

-**Congo:** Extending in what is now Congo, a vast, hot and dark forest, a beautiful and fertile African environment has provided the artist with all the necessary raw materials to create his artwork. The artist's ivory masterpieces demonstrate his skill, experience and taste. Colorful murals have been found in the village of Akibondo in the Vele region in north-eastern Congo. Teke's groups produced simplified round masks and ancestral statues for use in magical rituals.

-**Zaiir:** The area today called the Democratic Republic of the Congo is characterized by its forests, steppes and strong kingdoms. Its artists created their sculptures in a realistic style, the oldest of which was made of stone and was characterized by funerary character. They

also produced wooden sculptures characterized by their attractive decoration and spontaneous style. One of the oldest wooden sculptures, the Shamba Bolongongo is from the 17th century.

### • Primitive African Art In Southern And Eastern Africa, Such As:

**-Zambia and Zimbabwe:** In the two areas now called Zambia and Zimbabwe, there was a vast empire whose ruler was known as the Monomotapa. During the Sixteenth century. In 1517, the Portuguese traveler Barbosa stated that the leader of Monomotapa was the master of a vast country extending far inside, even the head of the Good Hope (in the words of Jean Lode).

**-Tanzanian:** The discovery of the "Tanganika man" indicates the stability of man in this important region of East Africa. Successive generations have inherited artistic traditions and professional experiences that have helped artists create different masterpieces, influenced by the culture of Knock and Benin. In addition, small wood carvings represent the ancestors. There are various murals that represent subjects of daily life, including snakes, in which human forms and symbolic patterns appear. In the south, there is a sophisticated civilization based on beadwork and various works of iron, pottery, feathers, leather and straw.

### • The Aesthetics Of African Art:

African art culture consists of a variety of artwork varieties developed by various tribes. This African tribal art is regarded as one particular of the best creations in the world of art. Africans use artwork for cross-cultural dialogues, private therapies and in purchase to talk with gods and ancestors. Hence, artwork is an integral element of the day-to-day African daily life. The principal materials that was utilized in most African art types was wood, which was decorated with clay, shells, beads, ivory, metal and feathers. Masks and figures have also been the most essential sorts of artwork types that had been employed in religious ceremonies. The incredible assortment of all these African art kinds and their replicas can be discovered in various African artwork galleries.

### • The Most Important Characteristics Of African Art:

- a. This art presented many creations through the ages in several field.
- b. The artist Superiority in the fields of African wooden sculpture, dance, singing and distinctive motifs and smart nods vocabulary Avatar.
- c. African art discriminates with spontaneity, simplicity, originality, innocence, language aesthetic and spiritual effects.
- d. The primitive African art did not disperse between the fine arts and applied arts, and lack of interest in perspective and anatomical proportions and details.
- e. The variety of crudes and materials and close association with the natural and social environment and the use of these arts in providing various means of subsistence and the expression of the daily life of African people.
- f. The strong relationship of religious rituals and daily life, which is still stick to its roots and heritage yet.

g. Using different arts to create all the necessary pots, plates, spoons, benches, beds, necklaces and elements adorn human, animal and weapons to defend in wars and also fishing tools, and other things that human needs in rural life.

h. Interest in masks and statues which express the African ideology and also the themes fit with their conditions of the environment.

i. The contribution of African women in creativity, especially in the fields of pottery, weaving and others.

**The most interesting things in african art are the color meanings:**

**Black:** power, evil, death, mystery

**Grey:** security, authority, maturity, stability

**Purple:** royalty, luxury, wisdom, passion

**Yellow:** joy, energy, warmth

**Red:** danger, daring, urgency, energetic

**Blue:** peace, calmness, confidence, affection

**Green:** life, growth, freshness, healing

**White:** hope, purity, coolness, light

#### • African Art And Sculpture:

Most [African sculpture](#) was historically in wood and other natural materials that have not survived from earlier than, at most, a few centuries ago; older pottery figures can be found from a number of areas.<sup>[3]</sup> [Masks](#) are important elements in the art of many peoples, along with human figures, often highly stylized. There is a vast variety of styles, often varying within the same context of origin depending on the use of the object, but wide regional trends are apparent; sculpture is most common among "groups of settled cultivators in the areas drained by the [Niger](#) and [Congo rivers](#)" in [West Africa](#).<sup>[4]</sup> Direct images of deities are relatively infrequent, but masks in particular are or were often made for religious ceremonies; today many are made for tourists as "[airport art](#)".<sup>[5]</sup> African masks were an influence on European [Modernist](#) art, which was inspired by their lack of concern for naturalistic depiction. Since the late 19th century there has been an increasing amount of [African art in Western collections](#), the finest pieces of which are now prominently displayed.



[Nok](#) Terracotta, 6th century BC–6th century CE Figure (1)

### • African Art Influence On Western Art:

African art came to the European notice c.1905, when artists began to recognize the aesthetic value of African sculpture. Such artists as Vlaminck, Derain, Picasso, and Modigliani were influenced by African art forms. Interest in the arts of Africa has flourished, and many modern Western artists have rediscovered the enduring qualities of African art. In the latter part of the 20th cent., African art has come to be appreciated for its intrinsic aesthetic value as well as continuing to be a source of inspiration for the work of Western artists.

## 6. Influence On Fine Arts:

### - Painting Art:

The art of African carried artistic and aesthetic high values spread and increased demand for them, especially by the Europeans who found spontaneous finite and valuable humanitarian high and technical tag, the African art was one of the most prominent concerns of the artists of the West and that made a lot of artists to resort to them to inspire their art in a new plastic formulations , and unfamiliar to some has become the aesthetics of traditional African sculpture with a strong influence on many artists, art schools. African art is a distinct art in itself and has its own characteristic, like other Arts. The most famous of these artists are:

### Amedeo Modigliani:

At the start of the twentieth century artists like Modigliani became aware of, and inspired by African art, he was an Italian painter and sculptor who worked mainly in France. He is known for portraits and nudes in a modern style characterized by elongation of faces and figures.



Figure (2): Artist Modigliani Caryatid, now at [the New Art Gallery Walsall](#)

### Paplo Picasso:

Picasso's African Period lasted from 1907 to 1909. This period, which followed his Blue Period and Rose Period, was also called the Negro Period or Black Period. Picasso influenced by sculptures and primitive Negro shapes, and in this period presented his famous portrait "girls Avignon", which came to contradict the traditional rules of generally accepted standards of beauty, and was a revolution against what is prevalent.



Figure (3) Picasso' painting - [Les Femmes d'Alger \(O. J. R. Version O\)](#)

### Henri Matisse:

Matisse influenced by African art in its aesthetic values, especially Sculptures African art and he was interested in the arts of Northern Africa and the African primitive art and also used the expression in sensory net fees and children's arts. He used color as an essential means to express the elements in a simplified form of spontaneous childlike, Matisse has revolted against the traditions of the art schools and restrictions, and headed directly to express emotions freely using the clear and contrasting colors, in search of the properties of fine art, which overlooked the academic art.



Figure (4) Matisse's painting-influence of African art

### 7. Influence On Applied Arts:

The African Art a significant impact in the field of Applied Arts. African Art was source of inspiration for many designers: the elements of African art have a symbolic move inside the horizon and imagination of the designer, which is then translated into practical ideas consistent design and issues that lead to a variety of products through the mediator which is the raw material that will be the expression of the design. Where it benefited from the plastic formulations in African art of lines and spaces and the diversity in the form of elements (Humanity -Animals), Using different size, color and other aesthetics of African art and expression, either directly or through abstract formulations employed in the field of applied art.

- **Influence On Ceramics Art:**

There are a lot of samples of ceramic art which got involved with African art using different techniques and materials to achieve ceramics art ware, tile, sculpture, tableware and pottery.



Figure (5)-Ceramic, sand, plastic and toy insects-artist Jorge Dias-2008-'Coisa'- Sculpture



Figure (6) African wall Plaque-Chief and Queen

- **Influence On Glass Art:**

African art effect is clear in the design of special glass products (Aesthetics - Usability), and was inspired by glass artist many of the design ideas to achieve a variety of aesthetic values of the product glass and implemented through various technical methods, which helped to add new features and properties to the glass products (vases, stained-glass, glass plate, sculpture).



Figure (7) Seduction of Light- Crystal Vase- African Art- Giraffe



Figure (8) Stained glass - Contemporary African art



Figure (9) Glass plate- Contemporary African art



Figure (10) Glass sculpture Masks - Contemporary African art

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-Design Ideas Inspired By African Art:

Some of the diverse design ideas have been developed for theme and style, color glass for products of a technical nature (aesthetic -functional) by utilizing the aesthetics of African art and its artistic spirituality and can be executed using several techniques.

Design (1):



Figure (11) (Blue face)  
Glass Panel- painting with enamels

Design (2):



Figure (12) (Face)  
Glass plate- Glass fusing and painting

Design (3):



Figure (13) (Mask black and white)  
Glass Panel-Glass engraving

Design (4):



Figure (14) (Colored Ballet)  
Glass Panel-Glass Mosaic

Design (5):



Figure (15) (Black and white Zebra)  
Glass panel - Reforming glass (fusing)

- **The Applicatons:**

**The First Application:**

Based on the African art philosophy in using elements of nature such as zebra and expressing it in an abstract way, it was executed by reforming (fusing) white and black glass to form this panel.



Figure (16) Executing design (n. 15) Reforming glass (fusing)

**The Second Application:**

Based on the African art philosophy in using elements such as using human in an abstract way, it was executed by using glass painting and slumping to achieve the form of the plate.



Figure (17) The African movement- glass plate –painting on glass and slumping

**• Conclusion:**

- Identify the most important aesthetics of African Art.
- Display the influence of African art on Fine Arts.
- Illustrate how Applied Arts took advantage of the aesthetics of African Art.
- Explain how glass art and design were influenced by aesthetic values of African Art.
- Benefit from the philosophy of African art for the design of a variety of functional glass products and implement various technical methods.

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