

The Aesthetics of Repetition Style in Illustration Art and Its Evolution in The Age of Digitization

Assist.Prof. Dr. Eman Osama Mohamed Salem

Associate Professor – Graphic Department Faculty of Fine Arts – Helwan University –
Egypt

emanti76@gmail.com

• introduction:

(**Repetition**) is to repeat an element several times, and the word repetition in art has an impact that is intended to arouse the expectation of the recipient, and to establish some ideas in the minds, so we repeat the thing to keep and remember it. In the works of plastic art, repetition appears clearer, as part of the repetition appears as if it was a goal in itself, which is surprising and reflecting on the reason for the artist's resort to this type of formation, the ideas and concepts that occurred in his mind, and how he developed it even though it depends on a single technical process that is nearly the same, it doesn't come up with anything new. Whether the recurring element in the work is a bird, a human, a scene of a dance party, a speeding train, or something else, the repetition of those elements must evoke a goal or an idea, otherwise the artist would not need to redraw them more than once.

And the process of using the repetition pattern in the illustrations was presented by many artists, and some were creative in shaping it to preserve the special style of expression. We see some illustration works as if the artist had stuck to his old tools and toys that he kept in order to take them back out of the play box and re-stack them and play with them, then re-play them. Arrange them a second, third, and tenth time, and then the artistic condition that he embodied became a goal in itself. The artist who loves to play with dolls often draws them without getting bored, also who loves to raise an animal, and so on, we find everything that surrounds the repetitive forms. Repetition is not always a negative aspect, and it is cruel to judge it by the tint of boredom and monotony, and the artist can keep the recipient away from this monotonous aspect in the design process, only when the design craft and full knowledge of the foundations of composition and design are mixed with creativity, renewal itself sometimes comes from the womb of repetition.

Standing on the elements of creativity in art in general and in the field of illustrations is self-evident, from which we can move towards that development that can occur in (repetition style) which comes through the intellectual, and the technical side, especially in the era of digitization, or the world of digital art, which has also become one of the axioms of art now, especially in the field of book arts and its various branches. The modern technological development in the world of art and in the production of illustrations, the subject of the research, came to constitute a significant impact in the field, which called many artists who were fascinated by the capabilities of digital programs and digital art tools, and brought about a not simple revolution in the field of book arts, and we can admit the lack of familiarity even if it is simple, this technology may obstruct the way for a person who is ignorant of it in the current era. This does not mean that digital programs must be dealt with primarily, but on the contrary, many artists still present their illustration works through manual arts such as inks, watercolors, acrylics, etc.,

and at the same time they are aware of the potential of digital art, but they have very consciously chosen for themselves the artistic method appropriate for the implementation of their artistic and plastic visions.

• **Keywords:**

Repetition; Graphic Design; Illustration; Digital Art

• **Research problem:**

1.1. What are the artistic and aesthetic values in the repetition style in art in general and in graphic design and illustration art in particular, which allow it to be an aesthetic topic that carries new conceptual aspects in itself and not as one of the design components only?

2.2. What is the role of digital art in the production of designs and illustrations based on the repetition style, from a technical point of view, and from a creative point of view?

• **The research importance:**

The importance of the research is manifested in studying the style of repetition as a creative process in art and its impact on graphic design, and the richness of the intellectual and aesthetic aspects in it, with an examination of the role and impact of digital art in the development of artistic and design treatments for repetition, and the presentation of digital art methods in the production of various illustrations, without looking at one area of design. The research focuses on studying the concept and method of repetition in the design process itself, which can be manifested in the same formulas and ideas in any of the different areas of graphic design, including the art of illustrations.

• **Research Methodology:**

The research is based on following the (descriptive-analytical) approach.

• **Research limits:**

The temporal frontiers revolve: At the end of the 20th century AD and until now, highlighting a number of contemporary artists who lived in the era of digital art, to monitor its role in the production of their works in the field of illustrations.

As for the spatial boundaries: They are bifurcated between Europe, America, and Asia, due to the connection of the research topic to the era of digital art, which is an important aspect in the field of book arts and publications in all countries of the world now.

• **First: The concept of “REPETITION” in art:**

A “recurring” thing is something that is certain, unlike something that passes once upon our eyes and tends to fade or be forgotten. The repetition of the element several times turns it into an effect through a larger, more powerful and influential entity through its presence within a group. And the repetition of any of the elements in the artwork represents a kind of repetition of an idea, this repetition is not always done on a single pace or pattern, otherwise it turns into a boring, motionless mechanical form that lacks sense – although some designs need this kind

of symmetrical repetition – but intervenes Variety sometimes so that the artwork acquires a kind of richness. Repetition is a human characteristic in general in all aspects of life. When a person loves a detail, or a story he keeps on repeating it. In plastic art, we find many examples that depend on repetition, but in a variety of ways, so that the artist brings his work to a kind of rhythm like music, and any change in performance produces a new tone on the same pattern. And this repetition is done through the distribution of the same element within the artwork and the creativity in its arrangement in relation to similar elements, and for the artwork as a whole. The repetition of the element and its distribution in more than one form consistent with each other is called (chanting), and each artist has his method in this repetition in terms of color, direction, size, number and others. And this repetition is the sense that includes repetition, meaning that every good distribution of the elements includes in its folds a repetition of its rhythms, harmonies and features in the folds of the entire artwork.

And visions of (repetition) in art are as old as ever, as cave walls and all ancient civilizations and structures of Roman and Islamic art are full of various repetitive formulations. Let us take an ancient example of this, which is the famous painting (Meidum Geese), which was discovered in the tomb of the Fourth Dynasty of Minister “Nefer Maat” and his wife “Etit” in Meidum, depicting a group of geese feeding on grass. The repeated geese stood tightly together, but all three of them headed in the opposite direction to the other. This panoramic example is one of the oldest exceptional models in terms of color, texture and balance, so that we can continue to repeat it several times right and left, creating an endless tape of the six geese without feeling bored, and we see the intelligence of the ancient Egyptian artist in his decision to change the color and the wonderful shape of two of them, as if he took the viewer on a visual break to come back again and continue to repeat.

• **Second: The difference between repetition. pattern. and rhythm:**

The repetition of elements in the artwork should not be boring, whatever the form of repetition, if it is optimally applied and consistent with the idea and content, and repetition can also include messages and ideas in themselves. We find that repeating design elements can provide a consistent visual experience for the recipient, making it easier for users to focus on the content because they know where to find specific types of options for that content. Or repetition can also be used to draw attention to a specific area of the design, it can be used to show relationships between blocks of content, and background patterns can be used to add texture and consistency, or create excitement, surprise, or reassurance. There are three terms: (repetition. pattern. rhythm). At first look, we may find a lot of similarities between each of them, and we must first differentiate between them:

Repetition. is the insertion or use of one element multiple times in a design, for example, you could draw a horizontal line and then draw several of them next to it. Through repetition of elements, and since the eye works in a certain way by default in receiving shapes and then their relationship to memory, by using repetition the eye can be kept in contact with design elements or artwork to achieve a goal and to emphasize certain ideas. We can also use shapes, colors, spaces, lines, etc. to maintain this consistency across repetition, in this case we use repetition for reinforcement, and the underlying principle is information retention.

Pattern.. A pattern is simply a repetition of more than one design element in harmony with each other. Of them (the simple pattern), which combines each element within a design - no

matter how many times - to form a whole, which is most common in backgrounds on web pages and applications, and also in the design of carpets, cloth, ornaments, wallpaper and other commercial designs, where the elements look and form like circles, cones, squares, etc. over and over again in the same manner, simplicity here is a key consideration in recurring design to maintain constant communication with the recipient.

Rhythm. By repeating elements, this repetition can create intervals—the spaces in the artwork—that create a sense of rhythm or movement, so designers insert spacing between elements to create that rhythm. There are five types of visual rhythm:

1- Random Rhythm: These are repetitive elements with no defined regular interval, which creates random rhythms. Where the spacing can be millimeters here... centimeters there, while the elements can be all over the place. Rain and snow, pebbles on beaches and traffic are all examples of random rhythms. By using a wider range of elements in the artwork, there will be limitless design possibilities for creativity.

2- Regular Rhythm: Like the heartbeat, the rhythm here is a regular rhythm that follows the same intervals over and over, and we can easily achieve a regular rhythm in the artwork, by creating a grid or a series of parallel lines of equal dimensions.

3- Alternating Rhythm: More than one element of the design can be repeated, such as the shape of the black and white squares on the chessboard. An alternating rhythm is actually a more complex regular rhythm, the repetition of which - may be as straightforward as a chess unit, or complex in an easy way to break the monotony of regular rhythm.

4- Flowing Rhythm: In it, repetitive elements appear after continuous bends, curves and lines. In nature, you can see this in waves on a beach or sand dunes, and as designers, nature can be imitated by making different patterns of elements through the rhythm of the flow.

5- Progressive Rhythm: This gradual rhythm can be created simply by changing even one characteristic of the element or shape that we repeat, such as a change in color, size or direction. We can draw a series of circles, one on top of the other, with varying size to subtly change the rhythm, and with further manipulation we can use shadows.

• **Third: An overview of the “Repetition” style in modern and contemporary art.**

Repetition in art may be one of the most interesting techniques artists use to create movement, stability, or confusion, in order to rebel against the idea of imitation, to redefine the idea of original and copy, or to place real emphasis on one part of the artwork, either it makes the work more visible or invisible on purpose. Producing artwork based on repetition is an exciting and challenging process at the same time, as many consider repetition to be boring and still. Sometimes repetition is used to build a sense of tension if no differences are made, often in minute detail. Working with recurring patterns has been held in high esteem in modern and contemporary art, thus making it more interesting to the public. Repetition in art helps build not only the visible part of the work but often provides a deeper meaning to the artwork, concealing a more philosophical and conceptual identity. Over the past two millennia, many artists past and present have focused on the continuous production of the same themes and motifs in their artworks, as this repetition is encoded in the DNA of art creation, as ancient painters and sculptors created the same pieces over and over until they perfected their skills and then transferred. This practice goes back to the Renaissance and the Baroque eras. However, it was the early avant-garde artists who were the first to begin repeating exactly the same motifs

without emphasizing the goal of greater mastery of painting, but instead pursuing other intentions. Since then, repetition has become a concept in which improvement and perfection were not the result the artist was striving for, and this radical conceptual change proved to be an excellent fit for the anti-imitation art forms of the twentieth century, with many artists striving to achieve different results with these creative strategies.

But if we move away from the literal definition of repetition in art and avoid commenting on every line, surface, color, pattern and recurring image in visual creativity, our attention will undoubtedly turn towards the concept and the inner workings of the artist and the decision to use repetition, we enter into a world that talks about repetition in choosing the subject beside form. This is evident in the production of modern art movements, such as Pop Art, Op Art, and Minimalism, where repetition was used in art as a tool for criticism and comment towards consumerism and mass production at the time, as we see in the works of the American artist Andy Warhol. Warhol” (1928 - 1987 AD), who is considered one of the most important artists of repetition, who effectively transformed his works into a world of repetition, and focused the foundations of the most successful art movement in the post-World War II period. Warhol became famous and influential for his recurring images of soup cans, soda bottles, and avatars of celebrities. – 1962 AD). This work represents the most famous form of repetition in modern art.

• **Fourth: The plastic treatments of the repetition style in the Art of Illustration.**

The selective, brief presentation of the concept and forms of repetition in modern and contemporary art was nothing but a drop in the ocean. The works that dealt with (repetition style) are many and varied and cannot be counted, but it is an entrance to the transition to the forms and variations of repetition in the field of illustrations, and from there to the applied research experience. In the field of illustrations, creativity did not stop at a certain point over time, and as one of the fields of art, it expressed the continuous artistic and technical development. And because it is linked to the process of trade, publishing and advertising, it was the closest art to searching for everything new and distinct. There is a lot of illustration work that has used repetition.

• **Fifthly: The role of "Digital Art" in providing visual treatments for repetition.**

The 1990s incorporated both old and new artistic styles and techniques in illustration, and the techniques of oil, acrylic, watercolor, gouache, pastel, and pen and ink are still the primary techniques used by most painters today, but there were many enthusiastic artists who discovered the natural digital evolution in the field, especially with the benefits of personal control and greater ease and speed in the completion of illustrations, but they also discovered that there are new responsibilities, including dealing with the art of photography, montage arts, and sometimes programming, so the digital process has replaced the old manual production techniques, or sometimes along with them . All illustrators had to decide on incorporating new digital tools into book and print art, those who liked touch-ups of traditional art materials and did not prefer computers avoided the problem entirely. Many had learned enough about computers to scan artwork, create digital files for archiving, and email clients, but the endless possibilities and challenges of new digital tools were compelling to others.

Indeed, pioneering illustrators began creating digital illustrations, which showed great versatility and achievement, but at the cost of recording hundreds of hours in order to master the new tools, though some questioned, seeing the new work as less creative, formulaic, and subservient to the particular software that was used to produce the illustrations. By the turn of the new century, cultural, creative, and commercial adjustments had been made to the field of graphic design as a whole, an era began in which digital tools were just a fact of life, and willing artists adapted ready-made and personalized new technologies and media to creatively visualize them, moving forward with changing times.

The artistic trends in which illustrations based on (repetition style) are implemented in the age of computers and digital art tools and programs can be divided into two main directions: The first by mixing manual and digital processors together, and the second through fully digital art. In the following, the "researcher" presents a presentation of the artistic experience of one of the contemporary artists in each of the previous two genres, both of whom are contemporary artists, with distinguished experience in the field of illustrations and book arts based on repetition.

• **The first trend. Illustrations based on the combination of manual and digital processors:**

In which illustrations based on repetition are implemented by either drawing the entire artwork manually, then using digital programs in coloring, adding visual effects and writing elements and processing the final design as a whole, and here comes the greater reliance on digital tools and well-known filters, and in this case the balance towards digitization in the work output as a whole. Either the artist controls the digital tools to assist the manual artwork, through simple additions and revisions to process images or other details that do not affect that human feeling in the artwork or illustration. Adobe Photoshop's censored capabilities have inspired many artists and designers to create montage illustrations, and artists and designers have found that the digital toolbox has set its own limits on what's possible, leading artists seeking originality deeply into software tool boards to create new and personal effects, and some artists have combined traditional and digital media in the same work or through several stages.

• **The second trend .. illustrations implemented through digital art:**

In it, illustrations based on repetition are implemented using digital programs completely from the beginning of the drawing and design stage, through the stages of coloring, adding visual effects, writing elements and processing the final design. As much as the illustrative works seem at first glance to be very simple in terms of the number of colors and the shape of the drawn illustrations, yet they carry beyond normal or stereotypical repetition. Its subject is direct, and the symbol becomes a slogan or a visual identity for the novel itself.

• **Results:**

- 1- Refusal to link the literal meaning of repetition to boredom and monotony in art.
- 2- Repetition as an artistic vision does not stop at the limits of being a form of design, but it can carry with it aesthetic creativity and important intellectual concepts, as it is an art in itself.
- 3- The process of repetition in the field of book arts and publications is an aesthetic process that benefits from standing on a particular form, and the contents and ideas behind it.

- 4- The aesthetic values of repetition in the illustrations are formed through the plastic relations in the artwork and the repetition approach in it.
- 5- Repetition processes in the illustration are no longer difficult with the presence of digital art and its various capabilities and programs, and it has an important role in facilitating and accelerating the production of works, but it has limits and caveats in dealing with digital art in a time of cultural and digital openness.
- 6- Implementation of illustrations based on repetition is optional and relative, in which the decision rests with the artist.
- 7- The controversy over the value of manual and digital artwork will remain, and this will not negate the fact that both are considered original artistic creation.