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# An Investigation of Architectural Heritage Design Features On the Formation of Architectural Identity through Globalization

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research project investigated the formation of the architectural heritage identity in Damascus within the context of globalization by analyzing the architectural principles of Damascus's prevailing architecture in the contemporary era. The research aims to identify the impact of globalization on the formation of heritage identity in terms of design and characteristics.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research project used studio practice method through studio experimentation and contextual approaches to investigate how architectural heritage contributes and creates the obsession, emotion, aspiration and belief of urban society towards shaping lifestyle in a contemporary culture.

**Findings:** The research project has been successful in examining how globalization technology and the ability of its modern materials have influenced the representation of heritage elements to create a unique heritage architectural identity adapted to the surrounding space and place.

**Practical implications:** The research contributed to raising the awareness of the community to enhance its appreciation of cultural heritage values, and also contribute to highlighting the pursuit of maximum benefit from all aspects of technological development in the architectural work to find new elements for architectural shape that match the new urban societies.

**Originality/value:** This paper is original.

**Paper type:** a Research Paper.

**Keyword:** Architectural Heritage, Design and Features, Globalization, Identity Formation, Contemporary Architecture, Visual Artworks

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This research project is based on the concept of architectural identity formation in globalization and technological deluge, which is noticeable in general or global influence on lifestyle through architectural heritage. It emphasizes the benefit of the ancestor's heritage, values and their individual and collective patterns of behavior, to create a modern architectural environment free of imitation consistent with the requirements of this age. With the emphasis on architectural heritage, this study unravels the cultural values that can be seen and identified through the architectural identity formation. The impact of globalization of architectural aspects contained in the contemporary architecture environments in Damascus, which is more focused on promoting heritage cultural values and getting the benefit of technology. Kamal (1999, p. 8) stated that "Every building is related to time in which it appears, meets the requirements of its time, and thus represents a cultural product that reflects the civilization of the country". Thus, religious, social and environmental factors are reflected in the form of architecture and building structures. According to Shakara (1998, p. 9) "the houses in Damascus were built within the framework of religious and cultural thought and environmental factors in that region."

The architectural heritage considered evidence of historical events before the emergence of writing, photography, documentary film, and digital and electronic means that were used to trace the evolution of mankind. Hugo (2012) said that architecture was the witness of historical events before the beginning of writing.

The architecture heritage spread in old Damascus reflects the sense of a new lifestyle by inciting the designer's imagination to creativity inspired by heritage. The architectural heritage, through the diversity of its elements, was constituted as a main source of inspiration for researchers, professional practitioners, those interested in architecture and those engaged in developing the foundations of building which expressive cultural identity. The dealt with this heritage adopted an approach based on symbolic inspiration from the heritage environment in a method of induction and analysis, which produced modern mechanisms. These mechanisms led to the formulation of this rich heritage in a new form suitable to the data of the new culture. This contemporary shape does not necessarily reproduce the heritage elements as they are, but rather creates a local urban character that is compatible with concepts, traditions and preserves the cultural and privacy of the local environment. Antoniadis (1992, p. 55) points out that When we simulating of traditional elements It is necessary to move away from the starting point, by applying changes, to the formal properties while preserving some of them in order to reach new meanings.

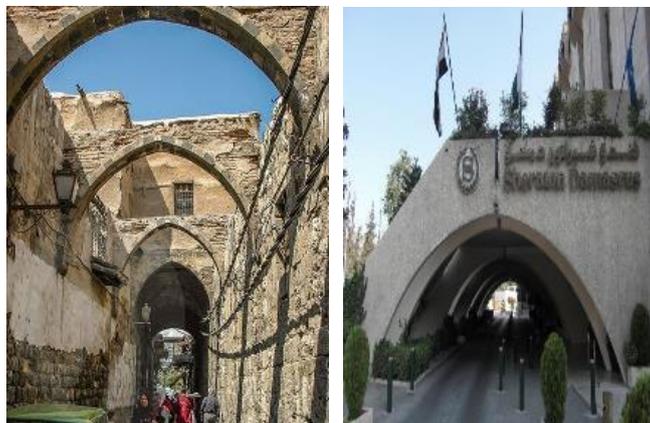
### **A. Damascus Architecture adopting and adapting modernity**

Damascus was able to combine the old and the new, so it was able to preserve the heritage, penetrating the contemporary, and building the new without ignoring the old Damascus was able to find a proportional shape in the buildings, compatible with the nature of the era in which we live, and to focus on serving and providing the needs of the modern age. Damascus was also keen on the importance of employing modern building techniques in forming a distinctive architectural personality as it draws inspiration from the architectural heritage on one side, and copes with modern systems on the other side.

Contemporary Syrian architects have adopted the idea that there is no conflict between globalization and heritage identity. Through its technological characteristics, globalization will become more effective to serve identity. Hassan & Haidar (1999, p. 106) mentioned that "Flexibility of identity makes it coexist and borrow from other cultures, and factors of convergence and openness help in a positive, creative interaction with globalization. Speaking so, globalization does not threaten identity by annihilation, but rather restructures and develops it to adapt with the present. "Furthermore, wide openness and taking advantage of all technological capabilities available, that means global knowledge with local implementation. As a result, "The architecture product comes with a mixture of European architecture with a local spirit" (Al-Nujaidi, 2001, p. 139).

The Sheraton Damascus Hotel 1978, designed by the Italian architect Lucio Berbera, is the basis for adopting the theory of combining heritage with modernity and the cornerstone for Syrian architects who took it as an icon in their future projects. Damascus started abandoning traditional hostel because the hotels were initially too small for residences due to the poor economic returns and its old form. This situation does not achieve the conditions for comfortable accommodation for new guests and does not match by the world's tourism development and the requirements of tourists. So, owners would make preparations for visitors and tourists that came to Damascus but now most of the buildings have turned into simple heritage restaurants.

The designer tried to invent a brilliant way to make the building mass completely open onto a yard with a huge fountain (Sabeel). Al-Sibat (Fig.1) at the entrance expressed the relationship between the hotel body and virtual houses adjacent it. The Sheraton Hotel architecture is considered as one of the best project that integrates heritage with the present, this appearing in the building mass and its external and internal details, as it used the original architectural elements, such as (sibat, sabeel, ablaq stone) and oriental motifs (Figure 1). One of the most beautiful modern elevations adopted on the heritage is the oriental mural inspired by Muqarnas, with the abstract representation (Saud, 2010).



*Figure 1 Al- Sibat in old Damascus and Al- Sibat in the Sheraton Hotel*

Al-Sibat: Al-Sibat is a group of arches that shade the roads of old Damascus houses and protects the pedestrians from exposure to strong sunlight in the summer while on the move and forms an umbrella that protects pedestrians from the rain in winter. Al-Sibat has played a role in the contemporary architecture which has become functionally and aesthetically pleasing at the same time as it served two main purposes to beautify the building mass and to support the huge architectural blocks.

Sawwaf (2017) said that Al-Bahra or the “water fountain” is the centre of the traditional Syrian home and a focal point for social interactions. Bahra became more common in Syria with the growth of the political, social and economic power of the state. In addition to being an engineering structure that adds an artistic touch to the inner courtyard, the fountain was a source of drinking water and a place for washing and ablution, as well as a means of cooling down the summer heat. Furthermore, one of the most important things that the Bahra adds to the Arab House was the sound of the water flowing from it. The sound of water in the courtyard has many advantages, the most important of which is the privacy value of inhabitants talk resulting from the sound distortion caused by the water sound of private chatting. The water sound also gives a sense of calmness and reassurance. It reflects the sky in the middle of the courtyard, adding beauty to the concentrated and isolated structure that draws life from the water.



*Figure 2 The fountain in old Damascene house and the fountain in the Sheraton Hotel*

As for contemporary design, Al-Bahra has taken another concept which is focusing on the aesthetic aspect and linking the internal architectural compositions. Inspired by cultural, social and religious traditions, present in most contemporary buildings, but with a different service purpose, just as the case in the Meridian Hotel, where the shape of the fountain is present, but it is used as a swimming pool.



*Figure 3 The mural of hotel it's an abstract form of Muqarnas and Muqarnas from Mamluk and Ottoman era*

Al- Muqarnas is one of the elements of Islamic architecture that are distinguishable due to its various types and shapes. Moreover, it is used only for crowded queue, distribution and installation lines, contiguous and vertical look just like a beehive, with a harmony mass by an accurate geometric and decoration design lead to architectural function and aesthetic motif.

The project Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2008 was designed by the architect Basem Barghouthi who chose the horizontal solution in architecture to add aesthetic factors to the site such as green surfaces and artificial lakes that constitute a factor of attraction and psychological well-being for employees that helps to develop and improve products and services that are directly reflected on the citizen. The building was evidence of this authenticity and carried a local and contemporary architectural heritage by using Damascene architecture elements that has appeared in the elevations of the building and its interior design.



*Figure 4 Building of council of Ministers and Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

The building reflects the idea of stability, and a strong sense of rigor, using the architecture styles of castles in the Levant and the architecture of Arab and Islamic palaces. This clearly appeared in the luxury entrance. This is because of the nature of the open area in which the building was built. This area is called Kfar Sousa, which is distinguished by the residential and urban character that accommodates this type of building, and so it would look like a part of the building. The building expresses Islamic Damascus architecture through the use of heritage items, such as Mashrabiya, stone rows, tiles, domes, and fountains.

The rhythm of the building reminds us of the architecture of the Chicago School through its rhythms, balance and stability (Al-Jabban, 2015). Al-Bahra's use the ceramics design instead of marble or stones, a set of industrial lights to replace the sunlight and evoke the environment of the Damascene house through plastic plants. Moreover, the presence of Al-Bahra inside and outside the building has turned it into an aesthetic form that serves the huge blocks of the building.

## II. METHODS

The research project used studio practice method through studio experimentation and contextual approaches to investigate how architectural heritage contributes and creates the obsession, emotion, aspiration and belief of urban society towards shaping lifestyle in a contemporary culture. Studio experimentation is the development process to seek the research objective by experimenting through material and media manipulation. Studio experimentation acquires knowledge about concepts, materials, processes and applications. In the process it will develop an intimate understanding the practice, which is held at various levels of consciousness, depending on the experimentation engaged. As Edmonds et. all (2005, p. 4) stated "In the creative arts, the Studio is the 'natural' working environment where the artist dreams, explores, experiments and creates". The studio experimentation is a method to gain an artistic expression within the context of the study. As mention in Sjöholm (2013, p. 1), "It is argued that the studio offers insights into a making and knowledge that is investigative and experimental; into the practices and skills visual artists need in order to transform initial plans, ideas into material work".

Meanwhile, the contextual review undertaken in form of several critique session, which is conducted regularly in every 2 week throughout the research period. The response gained in critique session will contribute in developing the artwork production from time to time. It is partly to re-look and re-think the work produced accordingly to the relevant suggestion received. The critique session also invites a revision and reflection towards appropriate decision making in experimentation conducted in studio, and it is vital in artwork production. Hearing some suggestions could improve the research context and material communication to form an artwork. "Art criticism is a vital assessment tool for development and growth in the arts. Art critics analyze, evaluate, interpret and study works of art, translate or articulate the intangible to tangible (Subramaniam et al., 2016, p. 59).

The research project will use the landscape elements in a realistic style and simulate details in terms of colour diversity and shape with the exploration of two points of perspective from four different points of view in

the composition. This method will be able to capture the uniqueness of the building and the environment through the complex overlap of images with various characters and designs, to create a comprehensive scene of the artistic and aesthetic values of this heritage.

Image collection will be done through field studies using photographic and video recordings, as well as printed materials such as books, magazines, travel promotion materials and internet resources. The artwork will be formed based on more than one image by combining the images and manipulation arrangement of images using manual method in cut, paste pictures, magnification and grid method. In addition to make a group of pencil sketches and composition studies to reach the final vision of the painting.

Therefore, the project has concerned with the idea of the aesthetic aspect of the architectural heritage, which is represented in the following:

1. To determine the relationship of architectural heritage with the physical and social aspects of contemporary architecture.
2. To analyze the features of contemporary architecture and its impact on the aesthetics of space and the environment.

### **A. The Theory of Globalization**

Globalization is the sum of the practices that individuals take in order to stimulate teamwork, which in turn affect the economic, social, and political conditions of nations, value systems, beliefs, and identity patterns. Globalization is a new scientific and technological innovation that allows making a revolution in communication technology, social media, and working to make all countries of the world work together within a small circle. Bhabha (1994) called it cultural hybridization when he said: America leads us to Africa, and the nations of Europe and Asia meet in Australia. This is because the trends of globalization flow in one direction, spreading one culture, which is the American culture, which produced a similar cultural around the whole world that hid any local cultural differentiation.

Thus this enables those in the East and West to communicate together. Globalization comes as an example of the spread of the Western and the American pattern in particular among the countries of the world to make the world as a small village. Ouisha (2013, p. 14) emphasised that "the root of the globalization word came from a book called (Global Village) which is written by Marshall McLuhan in late 1960s". McLuhan was interested in crystallizing the idea of reducing the speed of the information movement between the geographical distances of the Earth, which has turned into one village, where every person knows what is going on anywhere.

Ghalyoun (1999, p. 26) affirms that "the societies which dare to question whether globalization is something that should be resisted or integrated with are societies that live on the margins of life, the economy and the international competition". As long as we live within the framework of capitalism, the acquisition of information and communication technology which allows global integration is a major aim of any economic power interactive with the global system. Therefore, Ghalyoun calls for engaging with globalization to benefit from its technical potential, and for development. The fear of globalization; as a new imperialist strategy to entrap the Arab and weaken countries, hides its objective and inevitable dimensions and leads to ignoring the necessity of working to understand and adapt the basic technical aspects of development in any modern society or economy.

Yassin (1999) indicates that there are three processes that reveal the globalization core: the first concerns the spread of information so that it becomes known to all people. The second process is the removal of borders between states. The last one is the increase in the similarity rates between groups, societies, and institutions. All of these processes may lead to positive results for some societies or negative for others. Therefore, it can be said that the basis of the globalization process is the simplicity of movement of people, information and goods between countries on a global level. Meanwhile, Sassen (2008) stated that globalization looks like an animal that roams with great strength and speed. She added that the current globalization is the most complete picture of "primitive" forms of globalization, in which "cities" were one of its first features that include a group of individuals who belong to different backgrounds and must find a formula to live together.

### **B. Cultural Heritage: Architecture and Identity Formation**

Identity is a set of characteristics that individuals possess, and contribute to making them achieve the feature of uniqueness from others where these characteristics may be common to a group of people, within a society, or a state. Identity is everything common between members of a specific group or a social segment that contributes to building a general environment for a state. Michelli (1993, p. 169) says that "Identity is a set of symbols; these symbols indicate to physical thing, practice, social act...etc. All of this is done, within the different relationships between individuals". Identity is flexible and variable with the movement of history and conditions that societies are exposed to. It is linked to all external influences to become an evolutionary process that gradually arises due to the interaction of the individual with others. Al Jabri (1986, p. 245) mentioned that "Identity draws its power from history and shaped by changing political, social and historical attitudes".

The heritage is what preserves the identity of the nation and distinguishes it from others. Architectural artistic influence is a cornerstone in building a cultural identity. This identity is composed of a group of successive cultural effects throughout history, and this identity is continued through a commitment to artistic originality. Suleiman (2016, p. 95) described "The cultural peculiarity of any nation is based on several axes. The most important one is the cultural heritage, which includes the artistic heritage of songs, folklore, costumes and myths transmitted by generations to each other".

Bahnasi (1995, p. 131) asserts "Architecture is one of the most important tools for expressing the human society culture; it is, therefore, an important page of people's history, including the interpretation (reading) of customs, traditions, and general taste". Nevertheless, the most important of all, it allows us to discover the social and political system in an era and from that, we know the extent to which societies have reached in respecting the individual who enjoys all human rights and respectful living. For instance, classical architectural styles in which we realize the greatness of the state that is derived from the greatness of the Gods, in which man appears small in size in relation to those temples and palaces. Their palaces are larger and more luxurious than the churches and the cathedral, which were characterized by sobriety, prestige, and a pure sense of faith. Whereas the Rococo style expressed the end of the era of kings and the nobility, and the emergence of the merchant class who did not have ancient traditions, and this is why this style is included in all aspects of life, including clothes, kitchen tools and etc.

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Therefore, Bahnasi (1995, p. 45) argued that "If we want to understand the city as a historical product, we must rely on a set of documents and connotations. These help us in reading its current physical structure from economic, social, cultural and environmental components". The previously mentioned components are considered a measure of understanding the modern architectural identity. It is realized that any new changes must deal with the urban fabric of previous periods and trying to understand and benefit from it in meeting the new needs of the city.

## **C. Related Art Practices**

### **1. Nazem Al-Jaafari**



*Figure 5 Al-Shagor (1956), Oil on canvas, 50x70cm*

Most of the themes of the artist's paintings, Nazem al-Jaafari, are devoted to his hometown of old Damascus. He is a productive artist whose artwork amounts to approximately 5,000 paintings using different techniques executed by direct drawing from reality without the use of images (Shaheen, 2006). The artist adopts the realistic impressionist style. In his painting entitled Al-Shagor, he paints the place and the movement of the society, through the richness of the colors of his painting, compatibility and harmony in form and content. In this painting, he has adopted the facing geometric perspective from one angle in order to be able to collect all details possible in the painting to document the whole scene. It is clear that he has an ability to achieve the correct realistic proportions in painting the nature and architecture. Al-Khalidi (2005, p. 25) stated, "Nazem al-Jaafari is one of the most famous Syrian artists. So, we can consider all his paintings oils colors, pastel drawings and sketches as unique artistic documents, preserving the architectural heritage, which acquired it during the long centuries through his interaction with the aesthetics of ancient Damascene architecture".

## 2. Mahdi Ali Zadeh

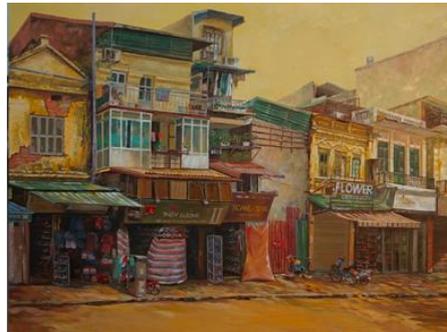


*Figure 6 Landscape from Babol (1989), Oil on canvas, 100x80cm*

Artist Mahdi Ali Zadeh focused in his painting on the features of the prevailing architecture in his hometown of Babol, Iran. This was as an essential component of his painting to express the architectural heritage of the local environment which he belongs to. The artist used the realistic style with oil-color technique to depict the scene with earthy colors to indicate the materials used in the mud buildings. He integrated the geometric perspective from two angles and from the front to place the viewers in front of the full scene with its components. The use of warm colors such as green, yellow and brown in a wonderful color harmony gives the elements of his painting the ancient dimension. The technique of oil colors used in his painting in an orientalism way enabled him to transfer the scene to the viewer in all its details, emphasizing the raw materials used in buildings in that period, to emphasize the state of passion that the artist experienced towards this heritage.

Mahdi greatly enjoys painting landscapes with its architecture, roses, trees and simple people. All his works and paintings have been classified as purely realistic paintings that tell a story from life stories, inspired by the realities of life in Iran (Deeb, 2020).

## 3. Pham Xuan Trung



*Figure 7 The Street Vendor (2017), Oil on canvas, 120x100 cm*

In his painting, the Vietnamese artist Pham Xuan Trung adopted hyper-realistic style with wonderful technique to document the prevailing architectural scene in Ventam. In a wonderful photographic way, he made the recipient interacts with these places as if he were part of them. By using harmonious oil colours, the artist moves us to those streets with all their subtle details. The artist in this painting uses the facing geometric perspective from one point to capture as much as possible detail that serves his realistic style. (Saigoneer, 2018) emphasized that, the artist immortalized the lanes and dead-ends of northern Vietnam in his masterful oil paintings. He gives the viewers a peek into the rarely seen corners of the capital, back alleys, old homes surrounded by fields, and bundles of electrical wires over buildings. And he is in love with the charm of rustic and quite buildings.

#### **D. The Studio Investigation**

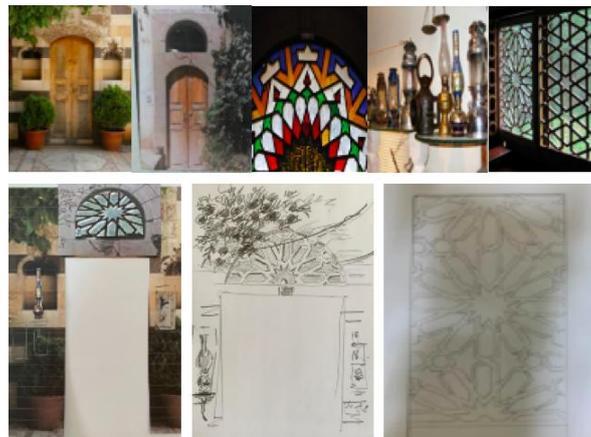
The research was conducted in the form of investigation of the concept of aesthetic characteristics of architectural heritage design features. Experiments started in the studio with an initial plan to develop ideas of composition through pictures taken from the old Damascus city. The project began by focusing on reinforcing the obsession towards highlighting the features of the architectural heritage in order to achieve the link between the architectural heritage and contemporary architecture. In addition, it shows the role of heritage in meeting the community's needs of architectural design. Lenak et al. (2021, p. 4) stresses that it is necessary to study and analyze the different architectural heritage designs in order to reach new meanings that can be reformulated into new architectural formations. These framing give a future concept of modern architecture, and emphasize the identity and belonging to heritage. The project started with the idea of creating a composition designed from traditional and modern elements that simulate the features of architectural heritage design in Damascus. The process of searching for elements that had an impact on the formation of the modern architectural identity, was began. These elements are considered one of the most important features of architecture in Damascus. A search was also made for modern buildings that simulated heritage architectural elements in form and function.

#### **1. The Door Open To Outside (2021)**

The first artwork is focused on reinforcing the obsession towards highlighting the features of the architectural heritage in order to achieve the link between the architectural heritage and contemporary architecture. In addition, it shows the role of heritage in meeting the community's needs for architectural design. Lenak et al. (2021, p. 4) stresses that it is necessary to study and analyze the different architectural heritage designs in order to reach new meanings that can be reformulated into new architectural formations. This framing gives a future concept of modern architecture and emphasizes the identity and belonging to the heritage.

At this stage, I chose the Al-Ablaq design, which is considered as one of the most important features of Damascene architecture. Al-Ablaq is a type of Islamic engineering art based on the use of different coloured stones, which are dominated by beautiful inscriptions and decorations with harmonious colours. The design includes white stone with black or pink. This design is used to decorate the houses' entrances and their facades or to decorate the facades of the houses from the inside. This design is used by the architect to reduce the heaviness of the facade's architectural block and increase its horizontal flow in beauty, smoothness, and calmness. Al-Ablaq spread in Damascus during the Mamluk era and continued to be used until the end of the Ottoman era in the 19th century (Rizk, 2000).

The reason for the spread of Al-Ablaq design in Damascus is the abundance of white limestone and black basalt. Modern architecture has used this type of design in large buildings such as universities and government buildings, which are characterized by the largeness of architectural blocks. By using this design, it is moving away from the functional content and transforming it into a service content to achieve the aesthetic goal. The presence of Al-Ablaq, doors and windows in abundance in the Damascus designs play an important role in influencing the designer, who aims to achieve compatibility between contemporary and heritage. Therefore, the choice of those elements as a subject in the production of the artwork seems appropriate and desirable in this research context.



*Figure 8 An experiment on image manipulation*

Figure above presents the stages of sketch formation, where the process begins by analyzing the images and selecting the appropriate parts from each image that serve the research issue. The design of Al- Ablaq around the doors was chosen by manually cutting parts from the two images, joining and gluing them together.

In order to highlight the aesthetic values of the heritage and its importance, a picture of the wooden decoration and manual lighting tools was adopted. Using traditional tools such as scissors and cutters, the parts that serve the composition were separated in terms of color and shape. From the lighting tools, Siraj with blue and golden decorations was chosen to highlight the aesthetic and functional value of such a heritage item. The shape of the wooden decorations was manipulated by drawing them first and then cutting them in a semi-circle to fit the shape of the window above the door, which is called Alqamriya or Alshamsiya.

Alqamriya or Alshamsiya, is a small window in the Damascene house that is in the form of a circle or semi-circle. Its glass is colored, and it is not used for ventilation, but it allows light to pass through. Since this element is colored, the stained-glass design was employed in the sketch to benefit the spontaneity and juxtaposition of colors in this kind of design, which distinguishes Damascus from other countries in its rare method of workmanship. The pictures show that the facing geometric perspective is the best way to describe the importance of these traditional items. This kind of perspective puts the largest number of heritage elements directly in front of the recipient in order to create a state of nostalgia for the past and to shed light on its role in shaping the modern architectural identity.



*Figure 9 Composition development and final sketch*

The figure above is considered advanced stage in forming the artwork composition. In this stage, the focus was on the most influential elements in the formation of the current architectural identity and arranging them to serve the main idea of the research that we are working on. The door, with its high proficiency decoration and its copper accessories was selected. With the diversity of its materials, the door gives space to creativity in manipulating the values and degrees of colors by well-studying texture materials. For this reason, the door was chosen as the main element in the front of the composition to reflect the high craftsmanship and accuracy of design in the decoration to highlight the aesthetic value of the door and its connotations in the architectural heritage.

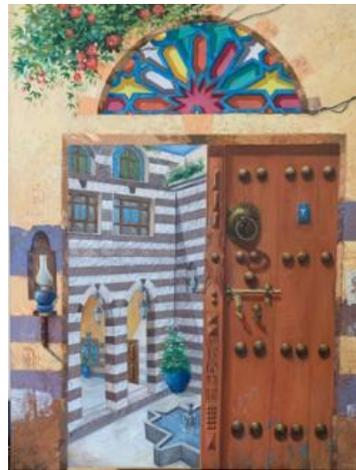
The door was made open to create more than one point and angle for geometric perspective in order to leave a free space in the background helped in clarification of the perspective. A part of the Council of Ministries building which achieved two vanishing points were selected. This part is suitable for the remaining space that I had left in the background. The image size was manipulated with the help of photocopiers, and the part that serves the perspective and gives a third dimension to the artwork was cut. The new shape of Al- Bahra was added to emphasize its use as an aesthetic decoration in contemporary architecture. Part of the wall was chosen to add some effect derived from the advertisements and random writings on the wall.

The images in these sketches are the cornerstone for building the composition and the method of distributing the basic elements to the artwork on the canvas surface. These elements were chosen because of the common use of these elements that distinguish Damascene architecture from others. Through the weekly criticism sessions from the supervisor, the appropriate sketches were selected to prepare the final sketch.



*Figure 10 Building the final painting*

Oil colours with knife palettes and brush techniques were used in this painting. Warm earthy colours were chosen in the foreground of the painting, such as tones of brown, yellow and hot violet, which are suitable to represent the old Damascus environment. In the background of the artwork, the colours were in bright and cool violet tones to represent the nature of contemporary architecture.



*Figure 11 The Door Open to the Outside(2021), Oil on canvas, 121x91cm*

The final painting which consists of images derived from actual locations in Damascus. All the heritage elements were collected in the foreground of the artwork, such as doors, stained glass, light tools used in that period and Al-Ablaq decor). These elements are the entrance to the interpretation of the painting, which creates an environment that simulates the heritage with its simplicity and symbolism represented in the pattern of decorations used. As for the painting background, the interior part of the Council of Ministers Building was chosen to take the centre of the painting. This building represented the contemporary architecture's search for elements that simulate the past in a style consistent with the requirements of the present time. This part of the painting indicates the obsession and excessive consumption of luxuries as part of the modern lifestyle. The emphasis on the texture of the dominant material in this part of the painting, which is artificial marble with bright colours which simulate the Al-Ablaq pattern in traditional architecture, refers to the aspects of luxury in urban society.

The door was chosen in this work as the main element in the painting, taking half of the right side at the front of the work due to the importance of the door in the architectural heritage. Throughout history, the door has many meanings, connotations and symbols. In terms of its function, the door is a barrier between two places and levels: an external and an internal level to ensure the protection of the inhabitants. From this perspective, the door reflects the concepts of civilization, religion, belief, heritage and environment and carries many meanings depending on its function and according to the symbol it carries. Hassan (2019) mentioned that the doors of Damascus have been embedded a symbolic and cultural value. In the Arab culture, doors have connotations which go into the depth of people's daily lives and constitute an integrated value system. The door is not just only a separator, but it is a cultural and civilized symbol that carries many connotations. The door entered into the famous proverbs, for example, describing the generosity of somebody (who has a high or open door).

The presence of stained glass at the beginning of the painting and above the door reflects the simplicity and spontaneity of the design and the accuracy of the workforce to achieve the aesthetic goal. While the glass in

the background of the painting reflects the other side of dealing with this material in modern designs that expanded its use of spaces to become a symbol of architectural excellence. The realistic approach is used in this painting to provide the recipient with a clear photo of the connection of architecture with the social, economic and aesthetic changes in each era. In addition, it enhances the obsession towards highlighting the features of architectural design in order to achieve the link between heritage and contemporary architecture in particular. Moreover, it clarifies the role of heritage in satisfying the obsession of forming a modern architectural identity and consuming luxuries to reach the aesthetic form that serves the needs of society in architectural design.

The creation of two different spaces in the painting, one in front and one in the middle gave a sense of a three-dimensional space that made the scene look more realistic. This was done through the use of the frontal perspective and above the level of view in the frontal space by using a vanishing point in the middle of the painting. This point worked to focus on the main theme of the work, which is the Al-Ablaq. This space also helped to distribute the heritage elements in a harmonious way with it. As for the internal perspective with multiple vanishing points and angles, it helped to create depth and highlight the aesthetic value of the elements that was dealt with in the artwork. Therefore, the artwork can be understood literally which explains the cultural context of the urban lifestyle. Besides, it give suggestions that globalization, with its new and modern tools presented different images of heritage in terms of design, colour, and interior details attached, according to the new function of the building that constitutes the lifestyle in the modern era which influence on the formation of heritage architectural identity.

## **2. A Window Overlooking Into The Past (2021)**

The purpose of the second artwork is to display the culture of the modern lifestyle, which was formed from the impact of the architectural design on one of the most important forms of civil life represented in personal housing. The new lifestyle's feature was determined by prevailing architectural heritage in Damascus, which had a role in its formation in a way suitable to the changes that accompanied contemporary architecture represented by the technological revolution imposed by globalization. The artwork is particularly related to the impact of the architectural heritage design with its wonderful features, which can be found through the remains of the historical heritage in the lanes of old Damascus and the heritage monuments that still witness the lifestyle of that time.

Damascene architecture is characterized by the richness of its elements and its interest in all aspects of life. The most important of these aspects was the social aspect that was directly reflected in the design of the windows, which had many names and functions. The windows that overlook the outside were so high that they were not close to the eyes of passers-by, not even those on camels or horses. These windows were covered with Al-Khos, a window cover made of crossed wood that forms small openings that allow residents to see the outside and do not allow those outside to see inside and thus providing privacy for the residents of this house. As for the windows inside, which are called Mandaloun, they have another function, as they are characterized by their large size to ensure the greatest amount of ventilation at night and be a natural source of light during the day. The contemporary architecture windows of Damascus take the aesthetic role and function together and formulate them in a way suitable to the nature of the place. In places with moderate weather, these windows were made of wood, while in cold places were made of metal sheets to preserve them from damage caused by frost and heavy rain, as in the Zabadani and Bludan areas in Damascus.

According to Haddad (2019), The windows were used to cool the drinking utensils and to moisten the rooms' atmosphere through Al-Khos. It allows air to enter the rooms through the holes which formed them. Al-Khos is made of wicker wood taken from the palm tree, which is similar to beech wood in terms of its resistance to weather factors, its hardness and ease of formation. In addition to its social function, which was to protect women from the eyes of passers-by.

The architectural heritage spread in old Damascus reflects the sense of a new lifestyle by inciting the designer's imagination to creativity inspired by heritage. Through the diversity of its elements, the architectural heritage was constituted as a main source of inspiration for researchers, professional practitioners, those interested in architecture and those engaged in developing the foundations of a building that expresses cultural identity. They dealt with this heritage and adopted an approach based on symbolic inspiration from the heritage environment in a method of induction and analysis, which produced modern mechanisms. These mechanisms led to the formulation of this rich heritage in a new form suitable to the data of the new culture. This contemporary shape does not necessarily reproduce the heritage elements as they are but instead creates a local urban character that is compatible with concepts and traditions and preserves the culture and privacy of the local environment. Harb (2018, p. 15) asserts that "Heritage is a comprehensive treasury because it contains a summary of the experiences of a nation, people or group. The heritage is a memory represents the link between generations, the strong root of identity and the stable base".



*Figure 12 A few images of the old Damascene buildings models and the design of windows in the upper part of the building and the new modern buildings that adopted the same character*

Contemporary architecture has dispensed natural materials with other materials such as cement, marble and modern pigments, which are more accessible in terms of functional aesthetic formation. These materials help in the formation of curves and the implementation of more modern and contemporary designs. The use of laser cutting machines, for example, saved a lot of effort and time in simulating the old designs of windows and doors and coming up with a particular product. While the wooden window took a lot of labor, time and effort to produce it.



*Figure 13 Sketches development adopting images manipulation*

Figure above represents the photos taken from the old Damascus lanes by my own camera and the process of developing the sketch and searching for photos that fit the research issue. These images represent the dependence of modern architecture on ancient designs, but with a view fits the requirements of modernity. These pictures were adopted in the composition to put the recipient in a state of comparison between manual work, which still bears witness to the past, and automated work that came because of the industrial development and technological revolution. In addition, the difference between the nature of the materials used in the formation of architectural elements between the present and the past was the reason for choosing such elements in the sketches. The frontal perspective is adopted in the composition foreground and the perspective from two different angles in the background. The sketches did not achieve a multiplicity of perspective levels and did not create spaces that clearly achieve the three dimension feeling. The idea was adopted with an adjustments in levels and manipulation of images to create wider spaces.



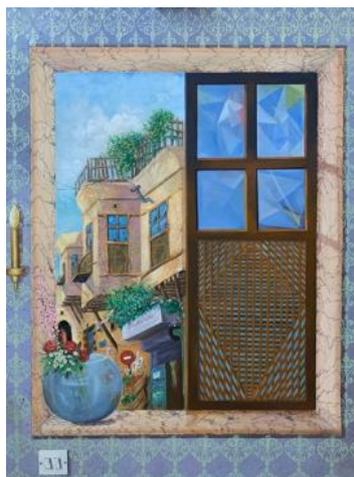
*Figure 14 Sketch development and final composition*

Figure above represents the continuation of the manipulation process and the suggested modifications in the weekly criticism sessions. The study of geometric perspective is one of the most important steps that has been modified in the drawing. In the foreground of the painting, the facing geometric perspective from one point was chosen, and all the contemporary architectural elements were taken and placed above and at the level of the viewer's sight. As for the painting background, the side geometric perspective was adopted from two vanishing points to the horizon line to place the largest possible number of heritage elements of different sizes that inspire depth to the viewer. This scene consists of heritage elements represented in the windows that are the focus of the main work and elements that represent the extent to which globalization depends on technology in simulating the oriental heritage of Damascene architecture in its smallest details. This led globalization, with its modern tools, to become a new cultural pattern that depends on the consumption of such products as materials in order to achieve the aesthetic aspect, not the functional aspect.



*Figure 15 Stages of final painting construction*

The figure above represents the process of making the painting. After determining the size, the sketch was transferred to the canvas using the same method of drawing on the first painting (the grid), which is the manual method for enlarging the images. The grid method helps to ensure that the proportions and layout of the drawing are correct. Using tools such as rulers and pencils, geometric perspective was drawn accurately from the figure created in the previous stage. To make the painting more accurate and integrated artwork, some parts were cancelled and others were added. The shape of the modern window in the foreground painting has been manipulated to become close to the heritage shape of Al- Khos in order to emphasize the symbolic importance of this design. A flower vase has been added to the left side to achieve the balance between the elements in the painting's background and foreground. In addition to emphasizing that modern architecture uses artificial plants instead of natural ones inside the house only to achieve the aesthetic goal.



*Figure 16 A Window Overlooking Into The Past (2021, Oil on canvas, 121x91cm)*

The artwork consists of images derived from the real sites of the old Damascus quarters. The elements of contemporary architecture are represented by their modern materials in the artwork foreground, such as the new shape of Al-Khos, coloured artificial marble, new lighting tools, and wallpaper. These elements are considered

the core point of artwork interpretation. In addition, it is a clear indication of the dependence of contemporary architecture on the obsession of consuming everything new to reach an architectural environment which simulates the heritage with its simplicity and symbolism. As for the painting background, the design of the exterior building scattered in the old Damascus lanes was chosen to take the right side of the painting. The social situation prevailing in those lanes was described through drawing and portrayed the dominated lifestyle represented in the shape of windows, doors, and walls, and the distribution of shops.

The modern window in the painting's foreground is drawn large and clear, with a realistic style that represents the creativity of the machine simulating the heritage in order to show the easiness of production in the technology time. Thus, this artwork is a message that the effort of the ancient designers who took a lot of time to present such wonderful elements have been shortened in a few hours with the help of silent machines controlled by people without any effort while they are busy in their daily lives.

The choice of modern Islamic botanical decorations that simulate the heritage decorations made of wallpaper and put them at sight level represent the importance of these Islamic ornaments in the architectural heritage. Islamic decorative arts are creative products of aesthetic thought emanating from the spiritual doctrine. Bishr (1948, p. 9) mentions that the aesthetic values of Islamic decorations are linked to accurate artistic performance based on strict rules. It is also based on the harmony among the proportions of the shapes, the flow movement, the beautiful rhythm, as well as the infinite extension in the repetition of the decorative units. This decoration constitutes a space with features and privacy far from routine and boredom and does not stop at the limits of the realistic form. As well as such decorations express deep spiritual contents and pure aesthetic values.

The presence of traditional wooden windows (Al-Khos) in the first section of the painting background and at the same level of sight as the Modern Al-Khos reflects the comparison among the simplicity, spontaneity and accuracy of the workforce in the heritage design to achieve the aesthetic and functional goal at the same time. In contrast, the modern design of the Al-Khos reflects the aesthetic aspect that is clear in the accuracy of the machine. The reflection of the geometric shapes on the window glass from the inside, which simulates modern plastic art that redefine the new formula in the obsession with consuming luxuries to become a symbol of architectural excellence.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research project reveal that globalization has opened horizons to know new cultures and raised the boundaries of place and time by obtaining knowledge about the world more easily. Moreover, anything that happens in the world creates the impression that it could be reached by anyone, affected, and interacted with it through the means of communication and information networks. The spread of knowledge and technology resulting from globalization motivated Damascus to benefit from the technological capabilities and use them in order to create a unique architectural identity compatible with the local culture and suitable for the contemporary era requirements. Modern materials and advanced machines that have resulted from globalization have helped in presenting an innovative concept of architectural design through using the latest computer software technologies. These techniques produced architectural formations that simulate the elements of the Damascus local heritage, with distinctive designs and modern materials. These modern materials, which were caused by globalization, such as glass, metal, cement, and others, expressed the heritage in a unique way and created a sense of satisfaction and belonging to the local environment. Moreover, the advanced machine was the main factor in dealing with modern materials and applying all these techniques to accelerate the production of modern architectural shapes such as pumping machines, molds industry, prefabricated buildings, and others. These features helped to create a unique architectural identity and to find modern formulas for heritage elements that suit the surrounding environment, the requirements of modern generations and urban lifestyle.

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