



The Creative Process in the Art of Painting by Shaker Abdel Hamid

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Abstract

Creativity has become the dividing line between the progress and backwardness of nations, extending to inventions, scientific discoveries, artistic and literary creations, and other forms of creativity. This is because creativity is, at its core, a human process or activity characterized by awareness and orientation in a specific field, and toward a specific goal that is then transcended to other, more profound, beneficial, and authentic goals. Despite the beginnings of awareness of the importance of creativity studies, which emerged in a simplified form in the early 1940s and 1950s, and during the 1960s and 1970s, there remained some areas that did not receive the attention of scholars and researchers, particularly in the field of the creative process in the art of painting.

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Introduction

The book includes an introduction, a preface, and six chapters. The first chapter, titled "Psychology and the Art of Painting," states that psychologists' definitions agree that creativity is a distinct state of human activity that results in a new production characterized by novelty, originality, relevance, and quality, and that is accepted by the community as convincing and useful. Furthermore, these definitions agree that creative output (a painting, a statue, a poem, a novel, a symphony, etc.) is the necessary result of a complex and interactive set of activities called the creative process.

The second chapter, entitled "Explanatory Theories," highlights the interpretive attempts or theories that have attempted to explain the creative process in the art of painting, particularly the psychoanalytic theory of Freud, Jung, and Ahrens Weig, and the Gestalt theory and its attempts to explain human artistic activity, with a focus on Arnheim's study of Picasso's Guernica. It also addresses the working theory, the motivational theory or humanism, the associative theory, and the cognitive theory. This chapter concludes with a presentation of some interpretive attempts presented by contemporary artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh, Paul Klee, and others.

The third chapter, entitled "Creative Processes," addressed the sub-creative processes, which include cognitive, sensory, perceptual, affective, emotional, evaluative, performance, personal, and social interaction aspects. Each process differs from the others in the degree to which it encompasses these aspects. The author's proposed design for the creative process includes nineteen sub-processes, respectively: (forming and acquiring the framework, creative motivation, creative awareness and monitoring, capturing ideas, impressions, preparation, imagination, concentration, perceptions, coloring, composition, closure or mental blocking processes, relaxation, clarity of ideas and perceptions, implementation, evaluation, modification, control, and social processes).

The fourth chapter, entitled "Method," addressed the sample and how it was selected. It was selected based on the following criteria:

1. The artist must have held at least one solo exhibition.
2. The sample must include painters nominated by critics and artists, and must have participated in at least ten public

exhibitions.

3. Nominations by well-known critics, art professors, and artists.

While the fifth chapter included two sections: the first is entitled (Factors), and the author interpreted it as “the social factor of creativity” or the factor of “creative communication,” and this is evident through the great saturation of the variable related to the social aspect of creativity, which is the emotional state accompanying the end and completion of the creative work.

While the second factor is interpreted as the factor of “creative organization of perceptions” or the factor of “formation” of creative perceptions, and this is evident through the mere essential saturations of the variables of impressions, the capture of stimuli, formation, motives, perceptions and imagination, as the creator is transformed in reality by his eyes, mind and experiences.

The third factor is interpreted as “creative orientation.” This factor appears closer than others to the temperamental and motivational aspects of the creative process. The processes of preparation and sketching, along with the high motivation that accompanies them, as well as the processes of crystallizing concepts, framing, encompassing visuals, capturing stimuli, imagination, relaxation, coloring, and execution, are all linked to the artist's orientation toward creativity. The author defines orientation here as a state that is stimulated within the creative person, prompting them to search for everything that is appropriate and helpful in achieving uniqueness and originality.

The fourth factor is also interpreted as the factor of “forming and implementing creative concepts” or the factor of “creative implementation of concepts.” This is evident from the author's examination of the essential saturations on this factor. The highest saturations on this factor are specific to the variable of forming creative concepts, followed by the saturation specific to the variable of disability, mental impairment, or difficulties in work and thinking, which indicates that this process of forming concepts is often a process surrounded by mental and emotional difficulties and obstacles.

The second section of the fifth chapter included the axes of the field and reviewed and discussed the various answers of a group of artists according to the method of intelligence through personal interviews and content analysis. The author's goal in doing so was to confirm the character of uniqueness and privacy in the creative process through the following:

1. **The Creative Orientation Axis:** This indicates that the artist usually goes through a period at the beginning of their creative career of following the footsteps of a particular artist or group of artists, becoming familiar with their works and working styles.
2. **The Creative Perception Axis:** The answers here indicate that the creative artist is interested in observing people as they move, speak, and interact, and that they are interested in viewing good and even bad works of art. Sometimes they draw sketches of what they observe, and that the things they include in their work must be observed, studied, and thoroughly understood, just like actually starting to create the painting itself.
3. **The Motivation Axis - Creative Preparation:** The answers here indicate that the creative artist feels, before

beginning work, a strong desire to do it, and that they feel a great deal of motivation directed toward the activity, along with a comprehensive and somewhat integrated sense of the subject they wish to depict.

4. **The Perception and Imagination Axis:** The answers here indicate that a painting usually begins with the emergence of a certain impression or feeling, often stemming from reality and interacting with it through movement, observations, readings, hopes, ambitions, color and light experiences, and the resulting feelings and accumulated perceptions.
5. **The Coloring-Composition Axis:** The answers here indicate that the creative painter usually begins work saturated with certain color sensations, and that these sensations may change during the work through attempts to intensify them. Furthermore, during the work, each touch of color can alter the meaning.
6. **The Creative Focus Axis:** The answers here emphasize that the creative painter usually concentrates when alone, and that this cannot be done while surrounded by others. In this case, the painter can mentally separate himself from them and, through concentration, attempt to bring each component of the painting into the best possible relationship with the other components.
7. **The creative performance axis:** The answers here indicate that the creative artist may envision the style that will be implemented through the work from the outset, but this style may change according to the artistic vision of the work. They may use more than one style to implement the work, and they may create preliminary sketches or preliminary drawings before executing it.
8. **The social axis of creativity:** The answers here indicate that the creative artist feels a strong desire to seek the opinions of others about their work after its completion, and that there is a special group of friends and acquaintances whose opinions matter more to them than others, and they are often interested in art.

The sixth and final chapter, entitled “The Creative Process in the Art of Drawing,” discusses the results of his study in light of the results of previous studies:

1. **Creativity and Cognitive Organization:** The results of his study confirmed that the creative process in the art of painting is, at its core, an organizational process, aiming to present a new system of visual understanding of a given content of information or stimuli that vary in their degree of clarity or completeness at the individual or collective level.
2. **Creativity in a Social Context:** The results of the study demonstrate that the social dimension in the art of painting has emerged in an integrated and distinct manner in this field, based on its effectiveness and presence in the various stages of the creative process. Creativity is an interactive process based on positive, active interaction between the individual and the group.
3. **Creativity and Motivation:** The results of the study emphasized the great importance of creative motivation, not only in the artist's creative processes, but also through formative processes. Here, the concept of “framework” is of great importance as it is the “organizing factor” for motivation, creative goals, perceptions, acquisitions, and relevant learning and knowledge systems.

Second: The Creative Movement: From Imitation to Authenticity: At the end of the study, the author emphasizes that the gradual progression the painter undergoes from imitation, imitation, and emulation to creativity, distinction, and originality also applies to the developments experienced by the plastic arts movement in global Painting—developments that were directly reflected, in one way or another, in this art form.

Third: Levels of Vision: The author views art as a purely human activity through which the artist resorts to thinking in symbols, aided by imagination, and through this, arrives at new cognitive and perceptual systems. The author asserts that the basic goals of science (description, interpretation, control, prediction, and brevity in description) can be adapted to suit the goals of art in some way. The author divides the levels of vision into:

1. The level of simple or direct vision;
2. The level of intermediate, reflective, or indirect vision;
3. The level of complex or creative vision.

Fourth: Visual Thinking: This is thinking directed through forms in terms of their nature, components, relationships, and potential for change and development.

Conclusion

The value of Shaker Abdel Hamid's study of the creative process in the art of painting lies in its emphasis on the processes of learning and discovery in art. Furthermore, it considered discovery more important than learning, but inseparable from it. It also emphasized that when drawing emerges, it is often incomplete or irregular in its relationships, and that this occurs gradually. Furthermore, each painting and each artistic process has its own rules. It gave imagination a significant role in resolving many technical and conceptual problems. It believed that the artist moves from perceiving and interacting with reality to forming a vision, attempting to realize it in a complex interactive movement. It moves from simple perception to complex perception, seeking a better and more authentic understanding of both reality and the self. The artist will then be capable of flexible, authentic, and penetrating thinking, capable of issuing correct and new judgments, and of making generalizations and visual abstractions based on a deeper understanding and a greater capacity to absorb details and small details. It will also enhance their ability to combine variables and create new color, formal, and semantic derivatives and generation through their organizational creative potential. For lines and colors, and then for artistic values, this is because, in the author's opinion, creative artistic activity represents the embodiment of the artist's ideas, motivations, perceptions, values, tendencies, personality traits, preferences, patterns of perception, and interpretations.

We conclude our review of Shaker Abdel Hamid's book "The Creative Process in the Art of Painting" by generalizing the benefit of the art of painting and referring it to other adjacent frameworks, such as the educational framework, the therapeutic framework, the social framework, and other frameworks that this study attempts to take an important step towards understanding. The book concludes with a list of Arabic and foreign sources.

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