

Investigate the Realistic Status of the Timurid era's Tilework Decorations in Herat School's Painting (with a Thematic Approach to Behzad's Paintings)

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Abstract

The studies conducted so far on the Herat school's painting were more related to the aesthetic aspects and paid rarely attention to them in realistic perspective. One of the realistic features in paintings of the school was the reflection of Islamic architecture and decorative elements attached to it. Little attention to investigate the decorative elements in paintings stems from this presumption that Iran's painting mostly shows the world of Ideas and is far from the visible reality. In this paper, it is attempted to investigate the realism of tiling decorations of the Behzad's paintings by removing the existing presumption. The present study seeks to answer the question that what extent is the status of using the motifs and tiling decorations in Behzad's paintings and their adapting to decorative motifs of its contemporary architectural monuments' tiling? The research method is descriptive and analytical based on library data. For this purpose, 8 Behzad's paintings were selected and their tiling decorations have been analyzed. Then, the comparative comparison was performed among each type of the decorations identified with the same decorations in established monuments of the Timurid era. Results indicate that most tiling decorations of paintings are affected by the real monuments of the Timurid era in terms of form, structure and color, and the common types of decoration used in paintings are under glazed tiles, geometric faience mosaic, geometric monochrome and then brick's Garihchini and painted tile through matching the decorative motifs and the accuracy of structure, while some other common types of the Timurid era's tiling such as geometrical under glazed, mosaic floral, geometric Moaqely and masonry ones have not been used in Behzad's paintings.

Objectives:

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1. Investigating and studying the designs and decorations of tiling works of Behzad's drawings
2. Comparison of designs and decoration of tiling works of Behzad's paintings with decorations used in buildings of the same era.

Questions:

1. What is the position and importance of using tiles decorations in Behzad's paintings?
2. What is the matching rate of decorative motifs and tiles in Behzad's paintings with decorative motifs of the architectural monuments of his era?

Key Words: Behzad's painting, Herat school's, realistic status, Tiling decorations, Timurid era's.

Introduction

With the rule of Timor and his successors, a comprehensive effort was made to create the artistic resources of their realm in the form of royal honors such as the art of their ancestors and neighbors. Thus, Timor, by constructing magnificent, colossal buildings and paying high costs created works that similar to jewelry-like covering adorned the whole monarchy; moreover, his successors also continued this tendency and created vast structures with colorful tileworks (Taslimi et al., 2014: 96). Tile art in the Timurid era is beautifully expressed. As in many buildings of this era, beautiful tile decorations such as mosaic tiles, glazed tiles, glazed geometries and seven colors can be seen (Wilbur & Gulbeck, 1995: 176).

On the other hand, the art of book-painting and painting entered its golden age. The most complete Iranian painting school emerged because of the Iranian style and the expansion and excellence of related arts including calligraphy and book cover art. One of the painters who played an important role in the development of the art of painting during this period and became the most famous Iranian painter after Mani was Behzad. Behzad was a master of drawing who bestowed a superior style in drawing abstract, geometric, floral and plant motifs and illuminating tiles, porches, walls and inscriptions and combined them in a pleasing finish (Hassanpour, 1995: 83). The kind of realism in his work led to themes and scenes that were no longer designed, such as architectural and urban spaces. In fact, the depiction of architectural spaces and its decorative motifs such as tiling, Chinese knot, inscriptions, etc. in the paintings realistically not only conveyed the temporal index to the mind of each viewer, rather, it became an eternal pattern for depicting architectural decorations in the art of painting in the Herat School and other art schools afterwards

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(Shayestehfar and Sadra Nashineh, 2013: 36). The present study attempts to identify the realistic features of the decorations in the selected paintings of Behzad by classifying different types of tile decorations in Timurid architecture and classifying the diverse types of tile decorations used in the paintings. The importance and necessity of this article is to understand the evolution of decorative elements in Timurid architecture and to study the types and locations of each tile decoration in structures.

Conclusion

Behzad, the famous 9th century AH. painter whilst having a rich imaginary world, is one of the artists who has been very attentive to objective reality and tends to be realistic in its fine composition of paintings, variety of colors, precision in structure. The geometry of architecture and the variety and use of various architectural ornaments in his works voyages to the summit of the Herat School of Painting. One of the realistic artistic features of his paintings is the depiction of decorative tiles. Realism in the application of architectural ornaments in general and tilework in particular in his paintings appeared not only in the paintings of other Herat school painters, but also in subsequent art schools as an eternal pattern to depict such patterns in the art of miniature.

According to the accomplished studies, the selected Behzad paintings; with the exception of two paintings (numbers 3 and 6) all relate to the open spaces of the building. Furthermore, in terms of composition of the decorations they are categorized into two groups of exclusively tilework art and structures with the combination of tile and brick; and this has created exquisite and beautiful shades of light. More or less all of the paintings attributed to Behzad are all well-proportioned and create a rich deepness within the framework of the structures. Tile decorations, as the texture that covers the facade surfaces, are like those of the remnants of their time, depicted in the best color combination and density. Due to the different decorations of the paintings based on diverse types of tiling, the motifs under the glaze come first, followed by geometric, monochromatic geometric motifs, brick-and-tile knotwork and seven-color ornaments. Under glazed tiles seen on the walls and underground areas have geometric mosaic decorations on the side of the walls, monochrome geometries with openings and domes, and ultimately *Haftarang* tiles on the sidelines and beams, often appear where they should be in architectural structures and match the motifs of contemporary buildings. However, more or less of the other types of tileworks such as geometrical motifs, mosaics and Bannai script that were very common in the buildings of the period were not depicted in any of the paintings.

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