

# **Explaining the Social Effects of Technology on Islamic Art in the New Era; Based on the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School**

## **Abstract**

Currently, technology influences cultural and artistic values in societies more than ever. Its development also depends on its adaptation to cultural and social circumstances. The possibility of publishing cultural and artistic works on electronic networks for an indefinite period, while creating a special attitude, has altered the social identity of human beings and has formed a new cultural atmosphere; to the extent that in all societies, both Islamic and non-Islamic, the linking between modern culture, art and technology with the help of new media has created new meanings for concepts such as freedom, verity and reality. The topic here is to explain the social impact of technology on Islamic art and its nature in the modern era. This article applies a descriptive-analytical method to examine the social effects of technology on culture particularly Islamic art in the present era from the perspective of the Frankfurt School. The findings of the research indicate that although it continuously appears that Islamic culture and art should be considered from the perspective of the spiritual world of Islam; nonetheless in the global village of the contemporary era, where technology has shifted to social change in all societies, it has become a stimulus for cultural innovation; hence, a new approach is desirable in the field of Islamic art. Conversely, basically in Islamic culture, the mystical and intuitive view of the artist on the phenomena of the world has led to the formation of art, which narrates the beauty of the exhibition of the manifestation of the divine essence in the terrestrial world with a dissimilar nature from the definition of art in the modern world. Thus, technology as the main force for creating social organization in all societies and the transformation of social and cultural relations is one of the main concerns of the followers of critical theory.

## **Research aims:**

1. An analysis of the Frankfurt School's critical thinking approach to the interaction of modern technology with culture and art in the present age.
2. The study of the impact of technology as a social phenomenon and philosophical subject on Islamic art in the modern world from the perspective of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School.

## **Research questions:**

1. According to the Frankfurt School approach, how can a connection be made between Islamic art and technology?
2. What effect has technology had on Islamic art in the modern era?

**Keywords:** Modern Technology, Islamic Culture and Art, Critical Theory, Frankfurt School.

## **Introduction**

Art in diverse societies depends on various factors in terms of essence and evolutionary course. Islamic art is no exception to this rule. However, dimension still plays an important role in the evolution of various sciences. One of the hallmarks of time in the new age is the prosperity and application of technology. Technology is a coherent system of technical knowledge and skills necessary for the production and services of intellectual power, which is more information than machines; thus, the thinking that equates technology with tools and equipment; Today, it has been modified so that tools are the material embodiment of information that has a software aspect and has become hardware in a process. The development of technology depends on the adaptation of technology to the cultural, social, political, etc. conditions of society. In the modern world, the consequences and effects of technology are so vast that it can alter everything in a society quickly and irreversibly. Today's world has shown a different face with the help of science and technology, regardless of geographical borders and cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, etc. differences. Technology and culture are intertwined and dynamic processes that have no separable boundaries. Technology seeks to change the world, and culture seeks to value various social phenomena. To understand issues in all cultural, social and artistic fields, accurate knowledge of technology, especially in the field of communication means, is inevitable. Over time, with the advent of technologies that led to a rethinking of people's thinking about art and vast horizons were created in the creation of art. On the other hand, as we know, art in the culture of Islamic societies, which includes a large part of the world village, is an aspect of knowledge and presence, not a set of activities aimed at creating a work; rather, it is considered as a virtue and perfection and a spiritual thing. The issue of the nature of Islamic art in terms of semantics, ontology and epistemology is a topic for various artistic and philosophical topics. Based on this, the question arises as to what effects, manifestations and reflections on the nature and also on the audience of the present age have on the effectiveness of the comprehensive system of modern technology on Islamic art. The Frankfurt School Critical Theory places a special place on culture and art and seeks to clarify the relationship between power in the production of cultural phenomena and their interaction with various aspects of social life.

Regarding the research background on this subject, it should be said that no independent research with this title has been written so far. However, works on the encounter of Islamic art with the new era have been written. An article entitled "The encounter of sacred art with technology" by Zahra Rahnavard and Zahra Rahbarnia (2006) has been written. In this work, they have come to the conclusion that the design of variables such as the holy man, the Bible, space and holy places, proves that true holiness cannot be beyond all that is supernatural, and that it is the shadow and the divine spirit that the sanctity of its existence is placed in space, place, man and art. Therefore, the fact that the work of art has been achieved with primitive tools or new techniques has no effect on its sacred expression. However, the Frankfurt School is not used theoretically in this work. In this study, by examining technology as a philosophical subject from the perspective of critical theory, its presence as a social and cultural phenomenon in modern human life has been studied with an approach to Islamic culture and art and the effects of modern technology in the field of Islamic art in the new era. In this article, by collecting information in the form of libraries and documents, first the social effects of technology on contemporary human life based on the reflections of Frankfurt school thinkers by re-reading the concept of culture industry and then the relationship between Islamic art

and technology and descriptively-analytically categorized and data analysis is performed to achieve the result.

## **Conclusion**

All cultural products that are produced and reproduced today by technological tools such as various types of art, television programs, cinema, music, books, magazines, social networks, websites, etc., which are examples of cultural industries have made the culture industry pervasive. In the contemporary era, the direction of technology in the field of social change has become a stimulus in cultural innovations. The proliferation of today's world is very different from the proliferation that has existed throughout history in all cultures and religions; So the new era demands a new perspective in the field of Islamic culture and art. Whereas Islamic societies differ fundamentally from other societies in the world in terms of the type and philosophy of life and social relations; It is expected that their arts also have common features within Islamic societies and are different from other societies, which can be observed and studied in the field of style and artistic themes. Adherence to religion is the most important aspect of social differentiation of Islamic societies in terms of creating works of art as a factor in creating unity within societies and separating it from non-Islamic culture, and because the goal of religion is to guide man to God, human development and salvation, the goal of religious art nor can it be anything other than this. The creation of different forms of works of art in this thinking by any means and in any period, is not only due to the creative powers of the artist, but also plays a larger role in the production of works of art, each aspect of which affects the final product determines its content. The creation of Islamic art is a process that is influenced by many social factors based on a single and extraterrestrial thinking. One of these social factors is the increasing advancement of technology. According to the thinkers of the Frankfurt School, a homogeneous culture in the cultural industry is essentially nothing sublime, but destroys philosophy, art, education, and everything sublime; But the discourse of Islamic art and culture, even in the technological world and in the shadow of the culture industry as a sublime thing and derived from the holy religion and liberating Islam in the process of creation, tries to show unity in the multiplicity of existence and liberation from homelessness and attainment of closeness in existence. Organize and help to present the meaning and depth of feeling in religious and faith experiences in the form of various arts with a new form.

There is a belief in the oneness of God as a whole in Islamic art, and all works of art in this field have a common face and a special identity. Art in a religious context caused Islamic art to gradually achieve its special way of expression by using different arts and by maintaining this identity, to guide various developments over time towards its evolution. Islamic art in the new era in the service of industry, culture and politics has established its position and can play a great role in the production of transcendent culture. On the other hand, due to its nature and wide possibilities, it has the feature that by expressing what is expected from art, while informing, it also leads to the enlightenment of human thought. The reflection of spiritual truths along with aesthetic expression by Islamic art in the realm of modern technology can nurture human spiritual abilities in contemporary social conditions. Modern technology in Islamic societies is the manifestation of science, faith and artistic taste that, by influencing culture, creates new meanings for themes such as freedom, truth, reality and rationality in the shadow of religious and spiritual teachings. Despite the expansion of communication with the help of digital spaces and the possibility of creating and publishing works of art with a new structure and different from traditional methods and considering the function of art media, the connection of technology with Islamic art can be considered an opportunity for Muslim artists. Now it is the duty of the Muslim artist to try to cultivate the human spiritual abilities and to restore the lost freedom to him, despite the exponentially rapid changes in the field of culture and contemporary thought and to find new aesthetic concepts in art, and not to allow him to grow with

increasing growth. Hence, emerging technologies and the impact of Islamic art on it aid the human metamorphosis to find more depth.

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