

## Evaluating the Aesthetics of Arabic Calligraphy in the King Abdullah Mosque in Saudi Arabia

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### ABSTRACT

Arabic calligraphy, considered a mine decorative element, has been drawn attention to the interior design of the mosque of King Abdullah mosque in Saudi Arabia. The present paper aims to evaluate, analyze and investigate the aesthetic aspect of Arabic calligraphy art of mosque King Abdallah. This paper seeks to reveal the aesthetic values and dimensions embodied within the mosque's interior architecture. The study utilized the qualitative method of research. Analyzed the data collected for the study based on Feldman. Feldman approach four steps to evaluate artwork. The four steps are descriptive, formal analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The discussion section focuses on the detailed analyses of the art criticism method. The study concludes that the process of art criticism has revealed the aesthetics' element and the principle of the Arabic calligraphy embodied within the mosque's interior architecture.

#### **Keywords:**

Aesthetics; arabic calligraphy; mosque;  
Saudi Arabia

### 1. Introduction

The internal design of the mosque has some mazing Arabic calligraphic compositions that give a mosque a different style appears. King Abdullah Mosque was built by King Abdullah International Foundation for Humanitarian Activities. The location of the King Abdullah mosque is in the city of Riyadh. It was chosen because of its signature design and decoration of Arabic calligraphy art. King Abdullah Mosque was opened on 17th June 2015 in the city of Riyadh. This mosque represents an example of the contemporary architectural style of Arabic calligraphy composition. The applications of modern Arabic calligraphy were carried out under the supervision of the calligrapher Moktar Alam. The paper discusses the art of Arabic calligraphy compositions applied for the internal of the King Abdullah Mosque in the city of Riyadh, with analysis of the accompanied by photographs and analytical drawings of various Arabic calligraphy art used in different parts of the spaces in the mosque. The theoretical framework of this analysis is by Edmund Feldman (1993, p.100), which is the four-step structure of criticism consisting of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. It is hoped that this research would reach out to evaluate the aesthetic aspect of Arabic calligraphy, provide an understanding of the visual arts of calligraphy, and enlighten and appreciate the concept of beauty within the internal design of the mosque. Arabic calligraphy is simply joined letters and

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became the simplest form of Naskh script. Also, they could be angulated: as in the oldest Kufic writing, stretched, prolonged, bent, thickened, overlapped, and complicated as in the Thuluth script [1].

## 2. Methodology

The theoretical framework of this analysis is Edmund Feldman [2], which is a four-step structure of criticism consisting of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. The theoretical framework of this analysis is Edmund Feldman (1993, p.100), a four-step structure of criticism consisting of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment [2].

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Subtitle

In Figure 1 there is an example of the Arabic calligraphy configurations presented in the king Abdullah mosque in Saudi Arabia.



**Fig.1.** Arabic calligraphy in the king Abdullah mosque in Saudi Arabia

**Description:** Ayat al-Kursi and Surat Al-Fatihah are written in full in the clear thuluth script Written by calligrapher Mukhtar Alam. The achievement year 2015. It has been designed to stand out from the wall and in a white colour close to the background colour. "Allah! There is no god but He - the Living, The Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede In His presence except As he permitteth? He knoweth What (appeareth to His creatures As) Before or After or Behind them. Nor shall they encompass Aught of his knowledge Except as He willeth. His throne doth extend Over the heavens And on earth, and He feeleth No fatigue in guarding And preserving them, For He is the Most High. The Supreme (in glory)." Surah al-Baqarah 2: 255. Another surah is Surat Al-Fatihah "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;

Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. he does we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way, The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray". Surah Al-Fatihah (1-7)[3].

**Table 1**  
 Method of Art Criticism – The Critical Process by Edmund Feldman

No.	The Critical Process by Edmund Feldman	The Critical Process
1	Description Naming and describing the facts	Naming what an observer sees is part of the overall process of description.
2	Analysis Analyzing the facts	We are dealing with visual evidence, and it is an advanced type of description.
3	Interpretation Interpreting the evidence	The crucial third stage of art criticism is when our search for meaning reaches a climax.
4	Judgment Judging the works of art	The final stage of evaluation of criticism is the evaluation of whole works of art. This sort of judging may seem presumptuous, or perhaps it isn't brilliant.

**Analysis:** The layout of the Arabic calligraphy style for the King Abdullah mosque is clearly seen in the images captured. The design of the calligraphy reveals that there is consistency with each word. It is one of the corporate aesthetic relations of calligraphic art. the configuration of the Arabic calligraphy is constituent units (letters and words) that follow the text's meanings. The style of the handwriting is Thuluth style. The Thuluth style has achieved the functional aspects connected with the aesthetic side. Unity is the most crucial theory that played a role in the concept of Arabic calligraphy artwork. Unity can be seen in the colour, shapes, composition, and style of writing. Calligraphy configuration creates complete activity towards completion, that is, towards the formal closure of the structural. Moreover, the concept of unity makes sense of aesthetics, state of balance and rhythm.

Consequently, this unity among calligraphic verses can be clearly detected in the King Abdullah mosque. Also, there is strong integration between Arabic calligraphic patterns and the surrounding elements. Also, one of the essential aspects of calligraphy is distribution. The Thuluth script compositions are stretched, prolonged, bent, thickened, overlapped, and complicated. The distribution of the Arabic calligraphy composition and the placement of characters is essential to the integration of calligraphic configuration and the consistency of elements [4].

**Interpretation:** The Arabic calligraphy art presented on the mosque wall has consistently converged within a meaningful relationship to produce an integral unit. There are directional, scale, formal and spatial relations between the five compositions. Each one may vary according to its suitability within the context of the text or meaning. The consistency trends in the structure of the Arabic calligraphy art change and depend on the artistic design as dictated by vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and contrasting patterns to add an aesthetic relationship. The art of calligraphy composition has to isolate the forms from the backgrounds. Also, in King Abdullah mosque, the calligraphic designs are likely integrated with their environments either in colours, textures and style. The beauty of Arabic calligraphy configurations presented in the mosque internal elaborate is a broad scope to be covered, including the appreciation of symmetry and balance.

**Judgment:** The Arabic calligraphy pieces of art presented on the internal of the Mosque of King Abdallah are considered symbols of Islamic art. This calligraphy composition plays an essential role in reflecting the superiority of Allah the Almighty. The Arabic calligraphy composition reached the highest quality of aesthetic value. Aesthetic value in Arabic calligraphy is portrayed by the highest degree of master of handwriting and the design of the arrangements. The method of Arabic calligraphy presenting at the internal of the mosque is considered a contemporary design. These calligraphy pieces focused on the majestic looks of the exterior part of the Mosques. The aesthetics and beauty of the Arabic calligraphy presented in the mosque's interior fulfil the psychological needs of human beings. Mahmood [5], in his scholarly research, found out that Islamic calligraphy is not some art piece that has to be looked at, read, and passed. They need to be comprehended and because the most popular wordings taken by Muslims across the centuries for the Arabic calligraphy on mosques walls are the ones taken from the Al-Quran.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Arabic calligraphy configurations present in the internal of the mosque are filled with aesthetic value on one hand. On the other hand, it is a message conveying the precise meanings of Al-Quran. Moreover, the art of Arabic Calligraphy composition in King Abdallah mosque is very connected to the community in the Islamic world. Also, the Arabic calligraphy art displayed on the mosque wall presents a prosperous contemporary image of Islamic civilization from its beginning to its heyday. Arabic calligraphy art has been a vital element in the King Abdallah mosque, and this art is emphasized in the modern world. The evaluation of the calligraphy that presenting in the mosque has used the Feldman method for art critics. Khat Thuluth was the only kind of calligraphy that been used to create the whole composition of art.

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