

Aesthetic Experience of Postmodern Arts Between Creativity and Appreciation

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Abstract. Modernity is not a departure from historical context. It goes back to the 14th century. In fact, it was a search of identity. Color assumed sovereignty, meanwhile, Perspective became of minor importance, and pure image was the main issue.

Modernity included a wide range of modern art movements, Styles such as were: performance, and conceptual Arts, were prominent. Main aspects of post Modernity were: Functionality, Abstract, and simplification. A tendency towards Consumables and every day's events were its main concerns. There was a close connection between artist and recipient, together with an ironical view towards the world, with a stress upon advertisements in media and everyday events. New thoughts came to existence, and there were radical changes of Criteria.

Hence, the research introduces a concept for art appreciation through the new Aesthetic Criteria. The Researcher's assumptions revealed, in analytical approach, the impact of post modernity upon Egyptian Art movement.

In her conclusion, the researcher found that the post modern artworks are integrated with the various environments. The recipient roles were always of prime importance. The Western Post modernity culture enhanced the free will, refusing centralized culture, and encompassed all sorts of contradictions, and that beseted unification and fragmentation. The study offered three examples, (three postmodern contemporary Egyptian artists), which confirm that: Artworks are integrated with their Egyptian natural environment. Their paintings revealed their tendency towards geometrical abstraction, the importance of chance and spontaneity, and the impact of surrounding. Due to the active contribution from the recipient side, the researcher stressed upon conducting more studies about the role of the act of appreciation in aesthetic experience, and the importance of planning practical appreciation programs; together with establishing seminars and symposia, which discuss various researches problems.

Research Issue: All Artists, Critics, (together with recipients) must unite their creative endeavors to establish an aesthetic and artistic criteria for the post modernity Era.

Research objective: High lighting the role of Art recipient (in particular, the layman) in the light of post modernity- on both the regional and international level

Foreword

Modernity is not a departure from the historical context. Major events, such as the, First World War, didn't represent separation from the historical context, the same was going in Art. The best way to

understand modernity, one has to study the social, political conditions, and the development of Art through the ages that preceded Modernity, since the Middle Ages.

It was the invention of printing which influenced the formulation of the education process in its entirety, and then scientific discoveries and development of mathematics, were the motive forces that pushed the evolution of human consciousness. Technical progress has formulated the second half of the nineteenth century⁽¹⁾, transferring the Social, and economic structures into new entities., Painters began to declare their rebellion. It was Gauguin⁽²⁾ who directed art towards new destination. The main characteristics of the modern Art schools that successively emerged, were the revolution against classical heritage. Impressionism, showed its Influence. Soon, various schools were in consecutive appearance. Cezanne reorganized the nature as a structural engineering. The Fauves in turn, led by Matisse, has formed a leap in the course of modern Art, abandoning perspective, and figures, rejecting the sense of drama and depth through light and shadow. Bright colors in combinations, ornaments, and simplicity, where the main sources of freshness for Art. It was Picasso Who established Modernity. The concept of modernity in general began referring to the symbolic. Radical change from real individual pictures, and superficial appearances, to the metaphysical depths, the twentieth century Artist began to detach himself from the visible reality. It came to a reductive, geometrical, and colorful forms. Piet Mondrian was the model of modernity. His Art became a realization of the pure image. Modernity included, a wide range of artistic movements: Neo-classical, Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism, and futurism ... etc⁽²⁾.

Since the sixties, Postmodern Arts has achieved, widespread expansion. Some Critics add movements, such as, conceptual Art, and Multimedia, those based on video presentations.. There are many characteristics such as Bricolage, the role of words, Collage, simplification and Recycling in a modern context. Prominent characteristic of postmodern is the break down of barriers between Fine and Low art. There was a return to figurative, with an abandonment of realism, and thus, paintings were looking as Advertisements, with a satirical spirit. There was a trend towards a consumer culture. Art renounced both originality and individuality, leaving itself free to reproduce his creations like mechanized style. Functionality took prominence. There was a domination of Abstract, and simplification in general. Most important characteristics were, continuity, celebration of consumed items, Events of everyday life, advertising, and Movies. All were in sarcastic tones. Artist himself became the subject of his art, as revealed in Pop and Conceptual Arts⁽³⁾.

Research Background

Postmodernism was a trend towards Deconstruction and Stereotyping, keeping pace with various shifts of industrial, scientific and technological developments. After wars world, man became disillusioned. Artists found that they should have a more active role in the social context. Postmedernity made a close bond, with all sorts of Experimental Arts. The postmodern Artist was eager to re - shape the world around him, amid the wake of ideology, and consumer Society⁽⁴⁾. Consumption became the main goal in the postmodern communities, changing ethical standards, striving to satisfy the needs of crowds.

Research Issue

The research problem lies in the following question: Is it possible to develop technical and aesthetic criteria for Postmodern Art, through recipient's taste..?

Research Hypotheses

- Disclosure of aesthetic and technical standards in Postmodern Art, through the artistic taste of creative experiences in (various styles).
- Exploring the post modern movements in Egypt, through the works of some eminent artists

Research objectives:

To Define the role of recipient, and its relationship with the creative experience of Postmodern Art, on both regional and global levels.

Importance of Research

- View and analyze the issue of artistic taste, bearing in mind perspective of post-modernity.
- Activating the role of recipient.
- Provide an scientific material for those in charge of laying Foundations and objectives of Art history, including the recipient 's role in Post- modernity.
- Enrich the Arabic library with critical and historical studies about Postmodern Art.

Research Methodology:

Researcher tracks comparative, analytical approach as follows:

- Analytical approach for works of art to consolidate the role of Recipient.
- Comparative approach between the Postmodern movement, globally, and locally to highlight the work of art.
- Rooting and consolidating the role of Recipient, through the aesthetic and creative concepts of Postmodernism

Terminology

1- Aesthetic Experience

Is a revealing process for values, which stems from the subject, our judgments of Artwork arise from a social point of view, and criteria are not fixed or absolute. It vary depending on the different communities or through the diversity of cultural levels⁽⁵⁾.

2- Modernism

Modernity is not referring to the Art of a particular era, it is suggesting formalisation. It's a result of a social crisis, as it represents a trend against traditional European Arts, in particular, the so-called Classic, Modernity emerged when utilitarian thoughts began to dominate⁽⁶⁾.

3- Post Modernism

A multi-faceted compound concept, which is manifested in a number of diverse phenomenae, but having one goal in common, standing against modernity hypotheses, but it cannot be said that the Post-Modernism has completely freed itself from the stream of modernity⁽³⁾. The latter is the land on which postmodernity stands. Both are in a lasting clash. As far as consumption became the ultimate goal of people ⁽⁷⁾. But postmodern Art was able to provide solutions, removing barriers between contradictory relations⁽⁸⁾.

4- Stages of Postmodernism:

Neo-realism emerged in 1960 from the Stream of Modernism, it has adopted the same aspects in the formation of artistic themes without drawing and colors, recalling what Duchamps (1887 - 1968) has done in "Bottles Carrier", when he declared that "everything is considered an Art in itself, if it is set within the right Framework" group of avant grades led the movement such as: Cesar, Kreso, Armand,...etc.⁽⁹⁾. Art moved from neo-realism to popular Art, which was crowded with residual, and waste of daily life. It was called "public art" (Pop Art), its most famous representatives were Leander, Hamilton, warhol, and Jasper Johns. Then emerged the Neo Dadaism, which relied on the assembly and installation, where the artist himself became an artistic subject, in what was called Body Art. In the Seventies, a new group Known as vacant Earth group, emerged on the stage, through exhibitions in Nice and Paris in 1970, 1971. Their main goal was to put an end to Dada, or the so-called

Conceptual Art. In the United States, this trend, Land Art has found a fertile soil to spread. Its main aim was to dock with Environment itself.

5 - Art Appreciation:

A spontaneous response from the recipient towards the work of Art. It is an inherent ability, but it can also be enhanced by training and aesthetic education⁽¹⁰⁾. This ability is affected by external factors such as: environmental conditions, historical beliefs, and psychological states⁽¹¹⁾. Art Appreciation is the human faculty to build a sound aesthetic judgment⁽¹²⁾.

Research core

Postmodern culture is a Consequence of the massive technological progress, particularly in the wake of World War II. It rejects closed formats of concepts and philosophies, which claimed an interpretation for everything. Open systems were the only alternatives for postmodernists, who are working hard to acclimate themselves to science and technology, which dominate their existence. At the same time, nobody would expect that his aspirations in welfare and luxury would be fulfilled.

There was a mutual understanding among different cultures, man had to acclimate himself for judging and differentiating between values. Human freedom and free will have a top priority over Science, democracy over mental efficiency, and human destiny Is above all other considerations. Differences and happenings are prominent features of post-modernism. Post modernism does not believe in a culture center. It supports positive and creative differences among mankind⁽¹³⁾. Postmodernism individual would be involved in all the contradictions that beset (doctrines of Totalitarianism, Fragmentation, etc.). Postmodern current is a brainchild of the keen awareness of that colossal expansiveness in which Technology was the foundation stone in the spiritual knowledge of the twentieth century. Art (painting and sculpture) has turned to become a daily occurrence, cohabited by recipient as an Artwork. Artists no longer care for the concept of the museum and the exhibitions in their traditional sense. Critical writings hailed the importance of the Recipient's reaction at the evaluation of the work of art, the role of media and technology, in spreading of Artwork among the largest number of public was vital⁽¹⁴⁾. The difference between modern and art postmodern Art was not just how much of cultural change, but the process of re- formalization of the full cultural concepts, such as the re- conceptualization of industrial and liberal concepts.

Artistic styles of Postmodernism:

The French Artist Marcel de Champ (1887 - 1968) Fig. (1) has had a pivotal role in the movement of postmodernism. He announced that everything is considered an art in itself, if it is put within the right framework. De champ attracted artists such as Cezanne, and Klein.... And thus, Dadism became a land mark in Postmodern. Art began to move from Neo-Realism to a sort of Realism which is crowded with elements of everyday life. Materials wastes also should be re- employed as seen by each Artist, and then Pop Art (Art or common) became a characteristic aspect of the Era. Body Art also peered (the human body is considered as an artistic material, and Artist himself is the subject of the painting or mural).

The Ideas of Marcel Du champ attracted the leading Artists of the Era as said before, and thus Dadism became a landmark in the march of Postmodern Art, turning the Art of Neo-Realism to a crowded realism with elements of everyday life and material things, also the waste, and then became a public art or Pop Art (Art of common). One of the main characteristics of the Era which emerged at the same time was Body Art (the human body itself is the artistic material, and the artist himself is the subject of the painting or mural). Evolution of pop art, Conceptual Art, Land Art and Land Art was a necessity more or less as follows:



Fig. (1): Marcel de Champ, Metal wheel mounted, (129.5 x 63.5 x 41.9 cm) -New York, 1951

Pop Art

The term is an acronym for the word Popular, common sense, or rally. Since the late fifties, pop Art has been associated with business, advertising for goods, photographs, car models, movies and science fictions. The American photographer Eduard Paolozzi (1924 - 2005) Fig. (2) emerged as a representative of that Art, when he used tools at the level of a mass circulation magazines as images with attention to science and technology⁽⁶⁾ Art theorists claimed that the quality of such Art should be like a vogue, temporarily, popular, and low cost, and in mass production with repeated thousands of copies. The art became a manifestations of modern life and the means of popular culture. Perishable newspapers, threads, food stuff, and clothing were its ingredients. Pop Art in the United States was a visual re-evaluation of things and events that are living with mankind.



Fig. (2): Eduard Paolozzi, Wittgenstein in New York -silkscreen on paper 763 x 538mm, Tate collection, 1965

Pioneers of Pop Art in the United States were Robert Rauschenberg (1925 - 2008) Fig. (3), Andy Warhol (1928 - 1987) Fig. (4), and Jasper Johns (1930-) Fig. (5), In Britain, David Hockney (1937-) Fig. (6) was leading the same trend. It is noticeable that pop Artists have tried to establish, through the existing contradictions in our daily world, an artistically exciting form, which the world of the consumer market and the combinations of images, collage techniques of silk screen printing, publications, and so on, are its prominent features. Pop Art is distinguished by its shiny colors, smooth surfaces, and well known trademarks. Expression of the lay viewer concerns and accidental daily events were the main concerns.

Pop Art is characterized by temporarily using popular and low cost materials in mass production items with repeated thousands of copies. It was a manifestations of modern life and the means of popular culture, a re-evaluation of things and events that lives with ordinary man.

It is noticeable that Pop Artists have tried to establish, from the existing contradictions in our daily world, an artistically exciting forms relied on the art: the world of the consumer market, the combinations of images, collage techniques, silk screen printing, publications, and so on. Pop Art is distinguished by its shiny colors, smooth surfaces, trademarks, and the expression of the viewer and fortuitous events, and exposure to daily events.



Fig. (3): Robert Rauschenberg, Valley of life / on line memorial blog, Acrylic on canvas, 81x 118cm, 1984

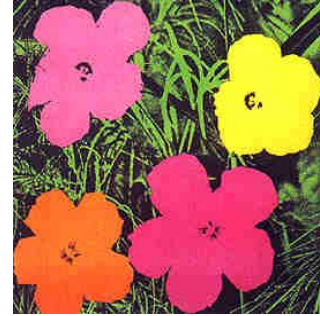


Fig. (4): Andy Warhol, Flower of set lithograph on paper 23x23cm, Leo Castel Gallery New York, 1964



Fig. (5): Jasper Johns, Colored Alphabet, oil encaustic and paper collage on panel, 12 by 10 1/2 inches, 1959



Fig. (6): David Hockney, The Road to York through Sledmere, oil on canvas, 45x60cm, 1997

Pop Artists created a style of their own. It was a reflection of the Tensions and the successive events in a changing world, which is dominated by turmoil and disintegration of human relationships. Pop art style tried to sum up its aesthetic criteria in the following points:

- Clear images should be turned to more explicit objects.
- Highlighting, the familiar, and emphasizing common culture.
- Try to raise the level of vulgar images. And clichés.
- Transforming Folk Art into Fine Art.
- The use of bright colors and smooth surfaces, combinations of collage and painting techniques.
- The use of common trade relations.
- Expression of accidental scenes and daily life events.

Conceptual Art

An Art of American shape, the most prevalent among the arts of the twentieth century, as one of the most important post-modernism Arts, where Artist renounced traditional concepts in order to provide a new vision of reality and shorten the distance between art and life. The artist goes directly to the recipient with a material from the core of the world. a primarily intuitive, perhaps carrying processes in a naïve way. As an example: the artist Josef Kostf put a conceptual idea Fig. (7) where he presented a real chair, with its image and the literal meaning of the word chair, asking the recipient about the meaning of chair. One of the main objectives is the liberation of the craftsmanship of the artist and the academic rules that governed art during several centuries. Thus, the idea becomes the real objective and not the artwork. There should be a mutual interaction between concept and expression (an interaction between Public and the Artist) and so, the recipient assumes here a pivotal role. Conceptual Art is one of the consequences of Dadaism, and thus it is a revolutionary movement against social forms of repression and persecution of all kinds, and it is also called the art of breaking down the image"⁽¹⁵⁾.

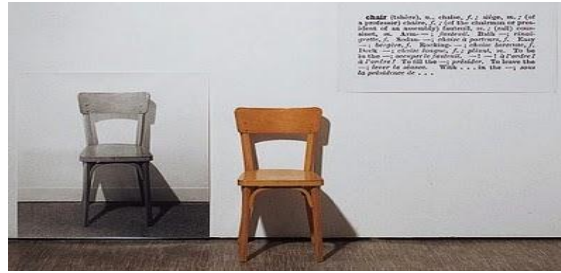


Fig. (7): Josef Kostf, Three chairs –real chair, its photograph & the literal meaning of the word "chair" - Three in one

We conclude from this that Conceptual Art looks at the artwork as a pure formal issue, Where Concept is more important than the Artwork itself; it is the highest artistic achievement. But in the end, it is equivalent to a complex material bearing a mysterious message from the artist to the recipient. It is a visual image and the final shape of a prudent Reason. The Artwork at this point lies in the type of idea and concept, which must be lifted and guided by distinct sensitive mentality.

It is supposed to take into account the type of those who can appreciate the concept of the artist as a point of departure, and not a stage performance, taking into account several artistic and aesthetic standards, including:

- Conceptual Art depends on the artist's intuition, which includes all the intellectual processes.
- Idea is the real target rather than the Artwork itself, and thus the Artist is liberated of craftsmanship.
- Conceptual Art is inspired by the Dada art and includes a bitter irony with Sarcasm on innovations and achievements of the mankind, which did not succeed in reassuring tranquility and internal peace for him.
- Conceptual Art is coupled with "reductionist minimal art, also with Easel Art.
- Conceptual art is Non functional.
- Conceptual Art skips reality and constantly depends on synthesis and new interim distributions of random topics.

Land Art

An Artistic trend that reflects a total fusion with nature. In this style, the Artist deals directly with its raw materials (dust, stones, sand, tree trunks, ...etc.) throwing himself in direct contact with nature⁽¹³⁾. Creating works with this concept needed very vast open spaces outside the exhibition halls, therefore the work is not designed to stay. The Artist records his endeavor through photographs, films, documents and other means of modern documentary. The main target of this Art is to increase awareness of nature and the idea of pure art and get rid of the forms and methodology, to oppose consumer art, as well as to achieve freedom from social and cultural constraints. In order to integrate art with life the artwork is distinguished by bulky Colossal dimensions, spreading in space, in deserts and land avoiding any intuitive emotional processes, responding directly by the artist with raw materials and techniques idea, Art here is a phenomena directly derived from nature

Julian Beaver (October 12, 1970), an English painter is one of the most important artists of land art, he is known as Chalk man, he paints his pictures on the floor in three dimensional designs. Things are not real, such as the presence of persons, or the presence of a deep hole or other things. The viewers are astonished when approaching them find colored chalk drawing on the ground!! Figs. (8), (9) And thus the recipient is moved from just viewing the experiment to be involved in the process of making Art.



Fig. (8): Julian beaver, Shark in chalk - land Art



Fig. (9): Land Art setting at a considerable distance from the Artwork

This depends on some factors:

- The recipient acquire a feeling that he is an integral part of the natural phenomenon (unification with nature) Pantheism, where art becomes the same phenomenon derived from nature.
- Abolishing the barriers between the artist and the artwork and recipient.
- Disposing of the ways and forms of consumer art, the Artist frees his Art of social and cultural
- Constraints so that he completely merges with life.
- The use of raw materials derived directly from nature and the environment, or the use of an unfamiliar Ores.
- Help creating a sense that skip the direct perceptive experience, or cognitive understanding within.

The recipients

In Egypt, the contemporary movement of modern and post modern Art was not far from what is happening abroad, tenths of academic artists showed original trends towards Postmodernism. Here we have selected the most prominent among them:

1 - Abdul Rahman El Nashar (1932-1999) Fig. (10)

Modernist artist in every sense of the word, did not stop for a moment for experimentation and analysis of the elements, through an Engineering concepts, as applied for organisms.

The Artist was always obsessed by his engineering vision towards the living organisms. For that target, he resorted to the fragmentation of the total area of the canvass into the geometrical sectors, through which, he established compositional relations. In his crowded area, he absolutely denied the empty space⁽¹⁶⁾, and set up multiple layers on the surface of the painting, so that they attract actual shades, which would interact with the drawn false shadows. His final objective was modeling his elements (giving them a quasi 3 dimensional form) and thus initiating a suggestion of movement in an illusioned space. In that respect, he owned a vision for textures and color combinations and assembly of components. Since the beginning of his career, he abandoned the visible reality, liberating himself from constraints of perspective and academic rules, establishing at the same time a dialogue with the self. Fertility and richness of the Artist represents the energy directed to attract the viewers.



Fig. (10): Abd El- Rahman El- Nashar geometrical concept as applied for organisms, in a combination of color, 1995.

The paintings of El-Nashar reflect his ability and full control upon hundreds of variables to achieve harmony in his compositions, we also notice his keen interest in geometric forms (triangle, square and rectangle), through which he treats corners in an isometrically radiating. His peculiar way in combination of the opposites, the organic and the geometric, Engineering, is always a source of attraction to the recipient

Main features of the Art of El- Nashar can be summarized as follows:

- Dramatic contrast between shadow and light, which suggest Time space duality.
- Expressive symbols of influential and dynamic expression and vitality.
- Breaking down the boundaries between the outside world and the viewer, and the integration of the Artwork items (raw materials - form - the expression) in a merge among them.
- Use movement to influence perceptions so that the viewer cannot escape the impact of the work.

2- Mustafa Abd El - Moety (born 1938) Fig. (11)

This Artist, diligently and persistently, is in Continuous innovation since the sixties. He has achieved his deep concept in Art and creativity through a personal vision, which was a bold revolt upon traditional laws of Art. Soaring in a more expansive horizons, he looked for aesthetic values in engineering forms, which are full of symbols. He focuses on the ability of every person to see the Artwork (from his point of view) and interpret as recognized by his own feelings, without considering what the Artwork represents, and thus he may discovers a strong link between him and the reality, which be may be reflected on the course of events within the environment, either in the present or in the future. The potential of Abd-El moety lies in that suggestive power of his figures, which tends toward metaphysical horizons. His Art represents a contemporary Equivalent of a Scenography associated with a metaphysical sense⁽¹⁷⁾.



Fig. (11): Mustaha Abd-El Moety -Eternal recurrence, 1996.

The color also raises a dialogue, the Artist gives an important issue concerning colors, which is: there is no color that cannot coexist with another color, it's only the tonal degree and the relationship between various colors. it is a relationship of juxtaposition of integrated colors. Artist has to strive to find the tonal harmony... It is a perceived music through the Eye

Equilibrium in the construction of the Artwork comes from a manifestation and symmetry of cosmic laws, which is confirmed by the artist in most of his works.⁽¹⁸⁾

The viewer may wonders when he finds elements above the edged pivotal points, which transfer to him the tension and crisis reflected on the relationship of those elements together... are they going to fall or they would remain in a permanent state of tension, in trying to maintain the balance of the fall... and thus the Artist summarizes the state of our man of the age, surrounded by tensions and crises.

3- Abdul Salam Eid (born 1943) Fig. (12)

Abdul Salam Eid uses, for the completion of his compositions, his expertise as an able Painter, together with his experience in the art of collage and graphics. As a vanguard postmodernist, he is

igniting the imagery of his viewers by the marvels of his use of raw materials and industrial wastes through a creative sprawling vision. In reconciliation between Art and technology, he is sending a message to the community and audience, an invitation to around us in a new light, and an invitation to skip the utilitarian amputated vision towards objects, elucidation of beauty in everything, And thus contributes to the modern vision in raising the efficiency of the receiver modifying his style of tasting the work of Art. It was as a re- discovery through art, unremitting attempt to liberate us from the rudeness of everyday life chores (when the re- employment of trash, waste making an aesthetic combinations) as the Italian critic and architect Carla Bani says.⁽¹⁹⁾



Fig. (12): Abd El-Salam Eid- collage, 1997.

Eid possesses the sensitivity of a fisherman when he capture the wastes, the remnants of raw materials, fibers, ropes, fabrics, nets, strands, glues, pastes, epoxies, polyesters, pastes and combinations of natural and industrial chemical wastes. In these domains, He enjoys an encyclopedic knowledge, when he finalize his wanders, which can not fall under the style of any particular school. Eid poses his questions about existence, construction and demolition, under the threat of time. When he tries to satisfy the inherent metaphysical sense within him, he envelopes his Artwork with a bitter sarcasm. The monumental Murals of Eid, represent, now spread all over the country and abroad, successive shocks, as a post modern works, emphasizing the joy of detection, and invite us to share his predictions and his future vision for an Art, where painting, sculpture, collages, architecture, together with an aesthetic vision of wastes, are harmonically mingled in a visual symphony

Research results and recommendations

1- Results

- The Artwork in the era of postmodern integrated with the natural environment. participation of the recipient has become one of the most essential features.
- Postmodern art has been associated with the new innovations of industry and technology (information age). The Artist turned to be more or less a manufacturer or craftsman.
- Artwork is no longer became, a commodity to be exchanged and acquired, and no longer exposed in Galleries and Museums, but an idea that could be stored as a Data through technological means, such as video, computer and various recording devices.
- Postmodern art form is a real participation between the artist and the public on the level of real life in all its aspects (thoughts, feelings, Effectiveness, sensitivity).
- Appreciation experience here plays a vital role. Interpretation of the Artwork would be a function of the recipient state, and the extent of his interaction with the artwork. The latter would not be complete without the participation of the public.
- Postmodern art removed the barriers between Nature and Art. Nature itself became a work of public, in postmodern Art enjoys synthesis between conflicting cultures, contrasting techniques and symbols contradictions. While art of modernity asked for a unity of style, synthese is the backbone of postmodern art.
- Work of postmodern was based on a combination of puns, irony, simplification and fun, at one time fun associated with the spirit of irony. Deep ironical Fun was an essential feature of the spirit of time. It was a core element in revealing the absurdity of the consumer societies.

- There was a permanent and renewable energy in the Artwork of postmodernism, as it reduced to minimum the idea of revolving of the artist around the self.

2- Recommendations:

- Difference in the criteria of judgment and taste for post modern Arts, should take more concerns.
- There is a need to develop appreciation programs, which should be consistent with the aesthetics and concepts of postmodernism.
- On the part of critics and Art educators, analyzing work of Art to reveal the expressive and aesthetic values should take the same concern as the purely technical features.
- Further studies on the role of recipient, and development in the arts through various art eras.
- Seminars, meetings and debates, should be conducted by specialists around the recipient and his role in the aesthetic experience.

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