

**MUSLIM SCHOLARS VIEWS ON ART AND AESTHETICS IN ISLAM: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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Abstract	<p><i>Art and aesthetic is more than just drawings of lines on paper. Art especially in Islam revolves around the concept of beauty, faith and Tawhid, embodiment to Allah SWT as the creator of His vast beautiful creations. Art in Islam also has been discussed by many Muslim scholars such as al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, Ismail al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. There are three objectives of this study. Firstly, this research aims to identify the opinions on art and Islamic thought, elements, values or manifestations from several Muslim scholars. Secondly, this research aims to analyze the comparisons of views and opinions of art and aesthetics in Islam from the Muslim scholars. Finally, this research aims to explore the similar values and theories regarding art and aesthetics from these scholars in order to find unity from these opinions and views. This study will adapt analytical approach as methodology used for this study. This study also utilizes qualitative method of research which focus on gathering and collecting data from publications such as journals, website, articles, books and other publications materials. Furthermore, this research is significant in understanding Islamic elements and philosophy in art to create artists, especially Muslim artist that encompasses Islamic teachings, and further bring upon knowledge (Hikmah) and beauty with them to be shared to the society.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Aesthetics, Art, Islam, Paper, Tawhid.</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

Islam is a complete religion that encompasses all aspects of life, even in art and aesthetics elements. Mohammad Abdelhamid & Yaser Ahmed (2021) mentioned that art, beauty and creativity is the reflection of the content from any civilizational bloc. Thus, Islamic thought were never far, rather has been influential and inspiring to other civilizations, nations, and people with the concept of Tawhid at the center of it all (Muhammad Abid, 1994).

In addition, art, beauty, and creativity has bestowed upon mankind as a characteristics that are distinguishably without any other creatures (Mohammad Abdelhamid & Yaser Ahmed, 2021). Linguistically, according to Kamus Inggeris-Melayu Dewan (1991) the word art is defined as creation of works of beauty, human skill and fine skill.

Meanwhile, according to the same source, the word aesthetic is defined as a highly developed sense. From this literal linguistic definition, it is understandable that art is a human skill that relates to beauty and is fine. While aesthetic is considered to be a high level sense developed in Human mind. In the views of academias and scholars, there are

undeniably many opinions and definitions of the word art or aesthetics especially from Muslim scholars all around the world.

For example, Duaa Alashari (2021) mentioned that Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi is an example of Muslim scholar that sought to clarify the relationship between art and monotheism. Al-Faruqi assumed that monotheism or Islam is the principle of beauty, particularly Quranic arts that is considered to be the intellectual origin of the theory of art in Islam. Meanwhile, Syed Hussein Nasr interpreted art especially in Islamic context based strongly on the spiritual value and human potential (Khudori Saleh, 2010).

This research is significant in finding not only comparisons but also unification in views and opinions which can help to better implement these values in creating art or simply understanding its' definition and embodiment. Moreover, art is more than just painting a color on the canvas, every stroke and image should project ideas, knowledge and philosophy to make it a meaningful art to the audience and viewers.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, this research will choose four of Muslim prominent scholars that has contributed significantly towards Islamic thoughts and ideology to find comparisons and similarities for better understanding of the concept of art and aesthetic in Islam. The four scholars are Al-Farabi (870-950), Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Ismail al-Farouqi (1921-1986) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1933 – Present).

These scholars covers past and present eras of knowledge. This research believes that these scholar's opinions and views on art and the concept of aesthetics in Islam can contribute to better understanding on how art is defined, and embodied in Islam. This research is also important in understanding views on Islam which has undergone evolutions through historical events, including Arab conquests, territorial unification under Islam, invasions and others that explores art definitions (Huma Javed, 2024).

This research has three main objectives. Firstly, this research aims to identify the opinions on art and Islamic thought, elements, values or manifestations from several Muslim scholars. Secondly, this research aims to analyze the comparisons of views and opinions of art and aesthetics in Islam from the Muslim scholars. Finally, this research aims to explore the similar values and theories regarding art and aesthetics from these scholars in order to find unity from these opinions and views.

Hypothetically, this research can prove that all opinions and views matter and can collectively contribute with its values especially in the modern and advanced era to reinstate and re-flower Islamic thoughts and knowledge in every aspect of life, including art and aesthetics.

METHODOLOGY

This research applies qualitative research approach with content analysis methodology to analyze the opinions of Muslim scholars on art in Islam. The datas are collected through publications such as journals, website, articles, books and other publications materials. Content analysis is a systematic and structured methodology that are used to evaluate and interpret data and information from various forms of sources including written or visual materials.

Wilson (2016) mentioned that content analysis methodology can be applied in two primary forms which are qualitative and quantitative approach. In it's qualitative form, this method focuses on the context and interpretive aspects of the information, seeking to understand deeper meanings and symbolic interactions within the data (Y Sirilakshmi, et.al,2024).

In this research, content analysis method will be used to analyse several key opinions from Muslim scholars through several articles, books, journals, texts and past research. This process is significant to compare these opinions and identify important themes surrounding this research's objective to identify definitions and views of art and aesthetics in Islam.

In comparative studies, content analysis methodology focuses on comparing communication practices across various settings such as regions, times, periods or even

demographic groups. Through systematic text data analysis, researchers can identify cultural, social and historical differences (Y Sirilakshmi, et.al,2024).

RESULTS

Muslim Scholars Views On Art In Islam

Al-Farabi (870-950)

Al-Farabi, or his real name, Abu Nasr Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Tarchan (Idris Zakaria, 1985) was a famous Muslim philosopher. According to Tijani Ahmad (2022), al-Farabi was born in Turkistan. He was then brought to Baghdad by his father to learn about Arabic, Mathematics, medicine and philosophy. After study, al-Farabi went to Damascus where he started learning and reading philosophical books.

He was so influential that he was acknowledged as *Muallim Thani* (The second teacher) because of his reconstruction of the science of logic that was first founded by Aristotle, which he commented and wrote treatise on it before passing away in 950 (Tijani Ahmad,2022). Idris Zakaria (1985) added that this acknowledgement was due to al-Farabi's efforts in the field of logics and Aristotle's philosophy which are interpreted as original, excellent and pure.

In interpreting the relationship between philosophy and art, this research believe al-Farabi is the foundation that should be looked upon into. Ghazali Darusalam (2001) wrote about al-Farabi's opinion on art which he defined it as a creation that has the attributes of beauty (Nor Adina Abdul Kadir, et. al, 2018). In addition, al-Farabi has always been connected to the world of philosophy.

Thus, Nadia Maftouni (2022) mentioned about the most basic philosophical element related to art which is the element of imagination. al-Farabi specified three functions of imagination which are preserving sensible forms, analyzing and synthesizing them, and representing sensible and intelligent forms by sensible ones. In al-Farabi's view, the public can obtain truth and happiness only through imagination as it also offers explanation for prophecy. In addition, art also functions in political and social aspects (Nadia Maftouni, 2022).

Al-Farabi classified art into two types of arts which is art as it is and art as it should be (Utopian art). The former, "art is it is" has desirable and undesirable aspects (Nadia Maftouni, 2022). Meanwhile, Utopian art are said to only consist desirable elements and brings goodness and happiness to the imagination and moderates human feelings, contrast to undesirable art.

In addition, al-Farabi views the usage of imagination as the key to comprehend meanings and obtain truth. This is achieved by the arousal of feelings and emotions caused by imaginary forms. Furthermore, al-Farabi also mentioned about utopian artists which have the responsibility to be the careers of religion to the public and are second level of al-Farabi's utopia, while the first level belongs to God's prophet and his successors. Thus, this implies the role of artist which are similar to the prophet and that is to transfer rational happiness to the minds of the masses through sensible and imaginative forms (Nadia Maftouni, 2022).

In conclusion, al-Farabi's view on art relates to the aspect of philosophy, specifically on the application of imagination in human minds. Imagination is a God's blessings upon human as it allows human to find happiness and think creatively for their own happiness and a very important aspect in life. Imagination is needed in order for an artist to achieve "utopia", a condition where a society is perfect and obtains happiness (Cambridge University Press, n.d.).

Besides that, al-Farabi also stresses about an artist's role, especially as a career of religion and a person that should transfer happiness to the masses using their own depiction of sensible and rational imaginative form. This research believes that this statement is significant in proving that art is not merely just art but should be utilized as a form of method that connects people to the religion with imaginative forms which then can be depicted by human's senses and imagination. The ultimate goal is to provide the public

with intelligible happiness, although entertainment, wonder and pleasure are acceptable benefits of art (Nadia Maftouni, 2022).

Al-Ghazali (1058-1111)

There are many prominent Muslim scholars around the world which have contributed towards Islamic thought and the process Islamization of Knowledge through their own respective fields and specialization. This include the views and thoughts on art and aesthetics. One of the many prominent scholars is Al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali (450-505H/1058-1111) was one of the most distinguished scholars of the time. His life was transformed by the experience of spiritual crisis and a desire to respond to what he perceived as erroneous interpretations and practices against Islamic orthodoxy (Rosmizi and Salih, 2016).

Al-Ghazali has never pointed out specific art theory but he did founded and gave his thought on the theory of knowledge. Although, there is a book titled *Fine Arts in Islamic Civilization* (1981) that quoted Al-Ghazali statement that says “art is beautiful through the perspective of beauty and exquisiteness, it comes from oneself and not from others” (Desa N.E, et.al, 2020).

Art does not only resembles images on canvases, but they do contain knowledge nevertheless. Al-Ghazali has pointed out how Human can gain knowledge, through two main sources, which is Reason and Intuition (Mansoor Alam, 2021). Nor Azlin Hamidon (2012) also mentioned about the process of attaining knowledge. According to Nor Azlin Hamidon (2012), human has five continuous process to attain knowledge and should not stop at any level, which are Sensory spirit, Imaginary spirit, Intellectual spirit, discursive spirit and finally transcendental prophetic spirit.

According to Nor Azlin Hamidon (2012), the first two processes are categorized in the knowledge gained through senses whereas the next two processes are categorized in knowledge gained through mind. Finally, the final process if gained through spirituality and Sufism. Al-Ghazali’s theoretical framework of gaining knowledge also relates to the concept of truth where the fifth level (spiritual truth) differentiate from other truth as it applies the question Islamic principles and laws relating to the production of an artwork, especially for Muslim artists (Nor Azlin Hamidon, 2012).

In the context of beauty, al-Ghazali (1909) in his writing “The Alchemy Of Happiness” , mentioned that beauty relates to love, but not just other simple love. Beauty connects to the love of god, which is defined as an inclination to that which brings pleasant. The concept of pleasant relates to the five senses. For example, the eye loves to see beautiful forms, the ear loves to listen to good music and the nose loves to smell good aromas.

Al-Ghazali mentioned about these senses as they are shared with the kind like animals. Although, what differs us with the animals are is the existence of the sixth sense, the faculty of perception that are implanted in the heart of human. Thus, human are aware of spiritual beauty and excellence (Claude Field, 2024).

Ismail Al-Faruqi (1921-1986)

Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi was another prominent Muslim scholars during his time. Al-Faruqi was born in 1921 at Jaffa, Palestine. During this time, the religious spirit and environment at his area was very strong. Al-Faruqi got his first education near his hometown at nearby mosques and through his own father which was working in religion related occupation, a *qadi*.

Only after 5 years at his hometown. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi continued his pursue of education at Lubnan, specifically at the College Des Freres (St Joseph) from 1926 until 1936. After many years of dedication and hard work learning and gaining knowledge on Islam, he then applied and joined the Institute of Islamic Research, Pakistan in 1961 as a full time professor. After leaving Pakistan in 1963, al-Faruqi continued educating as a professor of Islamic at Department of Religion, Temple University before passing away in 1986 (Adli Yaacob, 2022).

According to Adli Yaacob (2022), in al-Faruqi's view, he always defines Islamic art or aesthetic as an art that is infinite, which is based on the faith of Allah. Al-Faruqi also added that every aspects of art in Islam relates and are guided by Al-Quran as the main reference and source which he later called as Quranic Art. Nor Azlin Hamidon (2012) also mentioned that al-Faruqi mentioned about Qur'an being the main inspiration of Muslim artists.

This is achievable through two main indicators from the Holy Book and that being the arrangement of beautiful words and the meaning contained in the words of Allah. In addition, another study also stated that Ismail Raji al-Faruqi defined Islamic art as a manifestation of the aesthetic value. This also bring upon the concept of every messages in Islamic artwork should be inspired by the revealed knowledge of Islam in the Quran (Wan Samiati Andriana, et. al, 2022). According to the same study, based on this definition, Muslim artists often relies on calligraphy, geometry, and abstract motifs to convey the concept of meaning and beauty.

Al-Faruqi's theory and views on art in Islam also relates to the art of arabesque. According to Mohd Zamri and Ermy Azziaty (2020), Islamic carving art is different from other civilization's carving art as it is following the rules and regulations of Islam. Islam is a religion that focuses on the question of *aqidah* which is integrated with the aspect of *akhlak* and *syariat* (Idris, 2012).

Mohd Zamry and Ermy Azziaty (2020) also mentioned that Islamic carving art is based on the statement by al-Faruqi which emphasized that a creation of art in Islam must be based on the faith and believe to Allah. Furthermore, art in Islam is precious as it brings the artist from the reality to the realm of aesthetics through unlimited creativity and imagination (Mohd Zamry, et.al, 2020).

From these statements, it is clear to conclude that Ismail al-Faruqi's theory and views on art and Islam is that it is an art that heavily relies to the revelation of knowledge which was brought upon Human through the form of the Holy book, Al-Qur'an Al-Karim. Human, especially Muslim artists must gain knowledge from Qur'an and obtain inspiration from it. This is achievable by reading, learning and thinking about the words of Allah (Kalamullah) in the Holy book which is pure, true and contains aesthetical values.

Through this process, Muslim artists can find the meaning of beauty through the words of God, and thus improving themselves and the audience with their artworks by implementing the messages and manifesting the values of Islam to achieve excellence and fulfilling the concept of *Tauhid* (Monotheism). The Quran and *Sunnah* is a complete reference for Muslims which covers not only the aspect of *akidah* but also the whole aspects of life. Islam has its' own views on art that are based on the concept of truth. This proves that art in Islam revolves around beauty (*al-jamal*) and truth (*al-haqq*) (Amatillah Aqilah binti Mohd Zaki, et.al, 2024).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1933–Present)

Seyyed Hossein Nasr was born in a well-educated family at Tehran, Iran on 7th of April 1933. According to Khudori Saleh (2010), Seyyed Hossein Nasr received his first education at Teran, before pursuing his education further in Qur'an education, Persian classic poems, and Sufisme at Qum, Iran. Later, he furthered his studies at Massachussets Institute of Technology, United States of America in the field of physics and theorytical mathematics in 1954.

He then obtained his master degree in the field of geology and geophysics from Harvard. Although, at the later stage of his study, he was attracted to the field of philosophy which made him pursued his doctorate degree at Harvard (Khudori Saleh, 2010). After several years studying abroad, Seyyed Hoessein Nasr returned to Iran to implement his knowledge in philosophy especially in the contrast between the western and traditional philosophy. He was acknowledged as an educator, a scholar and a great thinker of his nation as he received the task as the director of Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy in 1975 until 1979.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr has been very influential in the field of academic and knowledge, including the field of art and Islam with some of his writing such as “Islamic Art and Spirituality” which was published during 1993 (Khudori Saleh, 2010). Khudori Saleh (2010) mentioned that S.H. Nasr divided the matter of relationship between art and Islam to three division.

They are “Pure art”, “Traditional art” and “Religious art”. Nurhidayati (2019) discussed about S.H Nasr’s theory of art as a reference to the first metaphysical theory of art that was introduced by Plato (428 BC – 348 BC) and was an idea that has always resides to the concept of reality and appearance. Nurhidayati (2019) added that this type of theory is very hard to be understood as it is always in the realm of metaphysical and requires a much deeper intellectual understanding.

Although, S.H. Nasr mentioned that this is what makes the scholars of the east different and special which is not possessed by the western scholars (Nurhidayati, 2019). Nor Azlin Hamidon (2012) stated that Seyyed Hossein Nasr discussed about the question of the origin of Islamic art, its’ nature and principles which brought art into being must be related to the world view of Islam itself, to the Islamic revelation which radiates the sacred art of Islam and the whole of Islamic art (Nor Azlin Hamidon, 2012).

According to Nasr (1993), pure art is defined as art that directly connects to the practice of Islam and the spiritual life. He also added that in order to further integrate pure art is to understand the people’s views regarding the reality, cosmic and meta-cosmic. Furthermore, Khudori Saleh (2010) stated that in Islamic philosophy, the concept of reality is defined as a multi-structural concept that has several levels of existential components.

Based on Islamic cosmology, the very first and most high level is from Allah as the divine and followed by other realm such as the realm of angels, psychic and material (physical) which Human are said to live in. In Khudori Saleh’s (2010) study, he concluded that the element of “pure” is the element that comes from the higher realms to the human realm (material) and are acting as orders to human to come back to the spiritual world, where we used to belong.

Meanwhile, according to the same study, Seyyed Hossein Nasr also mentioned that Islamic cosmology is defined as the believe that Allah as the source of everything and He is the One who connects the realm of material with other realms such as meta-physical realm, the realm of angels, and other such as the real of *Ruh* (Soul) with a balanced and dynamic form (Khudori Saleh, 2010).

Traditional art in the other hand was discussed as art that manifests religion principles and spiritual, but intangibly. While religious art was elaborated as art that functions or subjecting elements that has religion theme, but the execution and creation of the art is not traditional and often related to the category of Western paintings and architecture during the *Renaissance* as well as Eastern artworks during several decades under the influence of European art (Nasr, 1993).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr also discussed about other opinions regarding the relationship and the function of art in Islam. As mentioned by Nor Azlin Hamidon (2012), Seyyed Hossein Nasr also relates art and Islam to the revelation of God. Khudori Saleh (2010) also mentioned that Seyyed Hossein Nasr also relates and stresses Qur’an as the source of Islamic art which manifests spiritual elements that relates to Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

He also added that art in Islam would not exist without Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad’s PBUH values as Qur’an acts as the syllabus of Oneness of Allah and the Prophet manifested these values through his practice and deeds. Nasr (1993) also added that a Muslim maestro artists should always manifest the feeling of love and loyalty to Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his family.

Nasr (1993) also relates art in Islam to the concept of *Hikmah*, which is defined as the knowledge gained through inspirations from spiritual values. Seyyed Hossein Nasr also mentioned about the functions of art in Islam or Islamic art. Firstly, Islamic art should bring blessings to the heart that connects with Islamic spiritual dimension in the form of peace and happiness when observing them.

Secondly, it should act as a constant reminder of Allah wherever a human resides to motivate a better and valuable life as a Muslim that observe and reflect Allah and His reality. Thirdly, Islamic art should be authentic and not just using the term of Islamic as a method to achieve other unrelated objectives. Finally, Islamic art should serve as a criteria to determine Muslim society religious and intellectual level (Khudori Saleh, 2010).

In conclusion, this research can summarize that Seyyed Hosseinn Nasr’s views on the subject of art in Islam is strongly related to the element of spirituality and physics with Allah as the highest form and highest being. Seyyed Hossein Nasr also constantly reminding human that are living in the “material” realm that human must use art as a method to listen and bring themselves back to the spiritual where they actually belongs.

This research can also observe that Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s opinions also involved in manifesting Islamic elements and teachings which can contribute to gaining *Hikmah* or knowledge gained from spiritual values. Thus, *Hikmah* can also contribute to better understanding of oneself, by observing the creation of Allah and manifesting it in their own artwork with the guide of Qur’an that contains spiritual elements and the most subtle evidence of the existence of Allah and His beautiful creations.

Finally, this research agreed with how Seyyed Hossein Nasr elaborated about the functions of art in Islam. Firstly, it should become a gateway for blessings for Muslim artist which are connecting themselves to the Islamic spiritual elements while producing an artwork. Secondly, art in Islam perspective should also remind men about the presence of Allah wherever they are. Thirdly, art should become a criteria to differentiate authentic Islamic elements in art or just a fake intention to find popularity. Finally, art should become a guidance in Islam as to classifying the level of relationship of intellectual and religious of Muslim society (Nasr, 1993).

DISCUSSION

Table 1: Main Theme Or Concept Identified From Muslim Scholars Views On Art In Islam

Muslim Scholars	Key Points on Views of Art in Islam	Main Theme/Concept
Al-Farabi (870-950)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art is a creation that has the attributes of beauty (Ghazali Darusalam, 2001) - Truths and meanings can be obtained through imagination (Nadia Maftouni, 2022) - This is caused by arousal of feelings and emotions caused by imaginary forms (Nadia Maftouni, 2022). - There are two kinds of art, art as it is and art as it should be (Utopian art). - Artists plays important role as career of religion and should transfer happiness to the masses with their own depiction of imaginary forms (Nadia Maftouni, 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beauty. - Imagination. - Artists as career of religion.
Al-Ghazali (1058-1111)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Art is beautiful through the perspective of beauty and exquisiteness, it comes from oneself and not from others” (Desa N.E, et.al, 2020). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beauty. - Knowledgeable. - Internal Senses - Human’s sixth sense (Faculty of perception).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art should be knowledgeable and relates to Al-Ghazali's theory of gaining knowledge. - There are five processes of attaining knowledge. Sensory spirit, Imaginary spirit, Intellectual spirit, Discursive spirit, Transcendental prophetic spirit (Nor Azlin Hamidon, 2012). - While beauty is pleasantful to the five senses (eye, nose, etc.) , beauty that is perceived by the sixth sense which is implanted in the human heart is what differs us from the animals. (Claude Field, 1909). 	
Ismail Al-Faruqi (1921-1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art in Islam is infinite, based on faith to Allah and Qur'an as the main guidance, can also be called as Quranic art. (Adli Yaacob, 2022). - Qur'an should be main inspiration from Muslim artists (Nor Azlin Hamidon, 2012). - Muslim art relies heavily on geometric, calligraphic and abstract motives to convey meaning and beauty (Wan Samiati Andriana, et.al, 2022). - Islamic carving art was born with the usage of flora and fauna motifs which was abstracted following al-Faruqi's views on art in Islam (Farida, 2014). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infinite. - Faith to Allah. - Quranic art.
Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1933-Present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divided art into three division, "Pure art", Traditional art" and "Religious art" (Khudori Saleh, 2010). - Pure art: art that relates directly to Islamic practices, values and spiritual lie (Nasr, 1993). - Better understanding of this division comes through the understanding of the concept of reality, cosmic and meta-cosmic (Nasr, 1993). - The concept of reality relates to several multi-structural levels which consists of Allah as the Most High and human in the material realms in one whole form of reality, moving dynamically and balanced. (Khudori Saleh, 2010). - Traditional art in the other hand was discussed as art that manifests religion principles and spiritual, but intangibly. While religious art is the division that functions or subjecting elements that has religion theme, but the execution and creation of the art is not traditional. Example, Western paintings and architecture during the <i>Renaissance</i> as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Islamic practices, values, and spiritual life. - Concept of reality, cosmic and meta-cosmic. - Manifests religion principles and spiritual intangibly. - Hikmah (Knowledge).

	<p>well as Eastern artworks during several decades under the influence of European art (Khudori Saleh, 2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art in Islam also served several functions for Muslim and their soul rather than just having aesthetical value. For example, it acts as a reason to find <i>Hikmah</i> or knowledge gained through Islamic spiritual values. 	
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Based on Table 2, it is clear that the opinions from the Scholars varies from their own perspectives but somehow there was always similar concept or theme. This shows that art or the concept of aesthetics in Islam always relates to the teachings and values of Islam itself while most related to the concept of beauty. Although, the beauty as said by Al-Farabi or Al-Ghazali did not literally defined as the imagery or forms but also how the art with the elements contained within it can reach human inner-soul for their own betterment.

Latiff H.S.K (2021) mentioned that the concept of beauty in reality is really, indefinable. However, in the context of art, beauty is generally defined as objects, images, shapes, and colors which possess quality that give us a certain kind of pleasure that is called as aesthetic pleasure.

In the other hand, some Muslim great thinkers such as Imam Ali, poets and Sufis such as Jalaluddin Rumi, Hafiz, Sa'di and others have come to conclusion and defined beauty in their own mystical doctrines with assertion that "Divine Beauty" is the real beauty and the One Supreme Reality, which has perfection in knowledge, kindness, goodness and beauty is the source of every beauty.

This simply concludes that God is the source of art and thought (Latiff H.S.K). Ali Tufekci (2021) in his writing, mentioned that al-Ghazali was one of the great thinker who mentioned about the concept of beauty. Al-Ghazali emphasized that beauty does not come from bodily or sexual pleasure alone; on the contrary, the pleasure that beauty gives is something different, and is loved by itself (Ali Tufekci,2021).

Besides that, art and aesthetics in Islam should also be knowledgeable, based on Table 2, it is mentioned both by al-Ghazali and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Knowledge is a very important value in our life. Without knowledge, human would not be able to fathom the essence and purpose of their creation, let alone surviving and creating several great civilizations across the time.

One thing that is clear is that knowledge is a gift from Allah, the most knowledgeable, to human and that is what separates us from other creatures such as the animals. In the ancient Greece era, knowledge was defined as philosophy, which basically refer to investigating something or gaining wisdom. In Islamic context, knowledge can be defined in many terms and meanings. One of such is that knowledge comes from the word *'ilm*.

Muslim scholars agreed that the term *'ilm* itself cannot be defined in the most accurate definition because of its limitless attributes. However it can be describe through its several special attributes (Muhammad Khatib Johari, et. al, 2021). Al-Ghazali applied several systems of classification in an epistemological framework which was based from his research, *Kitab al-Ilm* from *Ihya'* and *Risalah al-Laduniyyah*.

They are classification into theoretical and practical knowledge, classification into presential and acquired knowledge, classification into religious and intellectual knowledge and finally classification into individual obligations and collective obligations knowledge (Muhammad Khatib Johari, et.al, 2021). This research believes that artists, especially Muslim artists should embody these knowledge classifications in their painting and artworks in order to spread knowledge not only to themselves but also to the audience.

There are many ways to deliver messages especially knowledge in an artwork. One of the example was mentioned by al-Farabi in table 2, imagination is one method that artists can apply to instill knowledge to the audience with their imaginary forms in artwork. Al-

Farabi also mentioned about how important these artists are in the sense of being the career of religion with their arts and imagination to bring happiness amongst the masses (Nadia Maftouni, 2022).

In other opinion, Ismail al-Farouqi also proved that there are elements in Muslim art and aesthetics that provide knowledge. Muslim art relies heavily on geometric, calligraphic and abstract motives to convey meaning and beauty (Wan Samiati Andriana, et.al, 2022). All these elements are knowledge, such as geometric which is an important knowledge to master to understand the basic shapes which can later be evolved into greater knowledge such as architecture and engineering.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr on the other hand mentioned that art relates to the concept of reality, cosmic and meta-cosmic (Khudori Saleh, 2010). The concepts already provide knowledge on another spectrum as it give artists the chance to study and research about them before creating their artwork and this will then help them to create art that brings knowledge (*Hikmah*) (Khudori Saleh, 2010).

Finally, from these elements such as the element of beauty, knowledgeable and others, art in Islam should bring human closer to their creator. This will strengthen human's faith to Allah and imbue the concept of *Tauhid* (oneness of Allah). Art in Islam with its' unique criteria will be able to touch human senses, not only on the external senses but also the internal senses.

These senses will then formulate the conclusion with mind that Allah is the only God and there is no God but Him. Therefore, it is clear that art and artist in Islam hold a much special role than just pleasing the eyes, but also pleasing the heart and soul. This can be done by implementing Islamic elements and teachings, whether through forms or through indirect messages to the audience.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has compared different views from Muslim scholars regarding art and the concept of aesthetics. Muslim scholar's contributions in the field of knowledge are immense and should be studied in order to create a much better civilization. For example, scholars like al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, Ismail al-Farouqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr have discussed their own views and opinions which helps to understand better about the concept of art and aesthetics in Islam.

These opinions are also crucial in shaping young artist's views on art and encourage them to create meaningful art that can help to deliver message and knowledge to the audience. Furthermore, art should always be more than just a painting on canvas or drawing on a paper, it should bring some sense and value to it. Art should become a medium to criticize, to teach, to encourage, to inspire and in Islamic context, art should bring the artist and the audience closer to their creator and strengthen their faith.

In addition, art should also contain philosophy elements and teachings so that it can give knowledge (*Hikmah*) as well as contribute in creating a better person with good personality (*Akhlak*).

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