

## ALIENATION IN KITSCH SINCE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TILL THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

الاغتراب في الكيتش (الفن الهابط) منذ القرن التاسع عشر حتى القرن الواحد والعشرين

Yasmine Gamaleldin Abdrabbo

Graphic Department – Faculty of Fine Arts – Alexandria University - Egypt

ياسمين عبدربه

قسم الجرافيك - كلية الفنون الجميلة - جامعة الإسكندرية - مصر

[yasmin\\_egamal@hotmail.com](mailto:yasmin_egamal@hotmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This research gives a brief on Kitsch art, displaying its historical and social contexts, which arose certain criticism over its ability to obtain aesthetic values, for it was considered as a continuum of a proceeding style that did not align with modern aesthetics, yet some remarkable philosophers took part in defending its distinct nature, explaining the core of its philosophy and how kitsch painters were inspired by academic art, in addition, they addressed the contemporary vision of kitsch art in the current era, by showing its philosophical and formal aesthetics that shaped its intensive appeal and created its new identity, that in my view relied on the notion of “ dark aesthetic,. This sort of beauty underlined a sense of alienation for the kitsch painters, which was presented in their works, hence, this research aims to trace the concept of alienation in kitsch.*

### KEYWORDS

Kitsch ; Aesthetics ; Alienation

### الملخص

يسعى هذا البحث لتقديم تصور مختصر عن فن الكيتش ( الفن الهابط) من حيث عرض تاريخه وسياقه الاجتماعي، والذي تعرض بدوره لعدة انتقادات فيما يخص قدرته على حمل أي قيم جمالية؛ فقد أعتبر فيما مضى بأنه مجرد استمراراً لأسلوب فني سابق ولا يتناسب مع الجماليات الحديثة، ومع ذلك فقد دافع بعض الفلاسفة المهمين عن طبيعته الفريدة، شارحين جوهر فلسفته وكيفية تأثير فناني الكيتش بالفن الأكاديمي والكلاسيكية من حيث الجماليات الشكلية واختيار الموضوعات المراد التعبير عنها، بالإضافة إلى ذلك فقد نوه هؤلاء الفلاسفة إلى الرؤية المعاصرة لفن الكيتش؛ من خلال اظهار جمالياته الفلسفية و الشكلية التي اكسبته مظهراً قوياً و خلقت هوية جديدة له، ونخصه ونؤوله -فيما نرى - بمفهوم الجماليات المظلمة، هذا النوع من الجمال الذي يختبئ خلف شعور الاغتراب والذي نرصده في أعمال فناني الكيتش وبالتالي فإن هذا البحث يهدف إلى بيان فكرة الاغتراب في فن الكيتش من خلال تحليل الظواهر الاجتماعية والتاريخية المرتبطة به وعرض آراء أهم المدافعي عن هذا الفن.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

الكيتش ؛ علم الجمال ؛ الاغتراب.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To study the case of kitsch art one should be attentive to its delicate nature, the path taken for better comprehension seems to the viewer to be simple, yet it is full of difficulties, misunderstandings, judgments, controversies, and discussions, for kitsch was a central issue of two domains of humanities, which is sociology and philosophy, they both fought to establish a methodology to address the problem of kitsch, though the philosophical approach emerged later in the late twenties to respond to the sociologists who denied any aesthetic appeal in kitsch and referred its proliferation to a deduction of taste. However, the contemporary perspective on kitsch highlights its social aesthetics, in which the researcher seeks to discuss how the social aesthetics led to a sense of alienation and made self-estrangement an issue or an inspiration to the kitsch of Odd Nerdrum.

### 1.1 Issue of the research:

This research aims to discuss the problem of kitsch art since the nineteenth century, and how the notion of alienation emerged as a compelling aesthetics and thought from negative criticism and social preferences, by displaying its historical and social context and highlighting some of the main criticisms that the kitsch artists had to face in the modern era, which later led to creating a new formal identity of the twentieth first-century kitsch.

### 1.2 Objectives of the research:

- 1- Display kitsch's historical and social context in the nineteenth century.
- 2- Discuss the critical views on kitsch by known sociologists of the twentieth century.
- 3- Address the notion of aesthetic disinterestedness.
- 4- Highlights the role of contemporary philosophers to defend kitsch's aesthetics.
- 5- Showcase the notion of alienation in kitsch paintings.
- 6- Demonstrate the dark aesthetic ideology in the contemporary kitsch.

### 1.3 Questions of the research:

- 1- What is the definition of kitsch art? Mainly in painting.
- 2- What extent can culture and social changes affect art?
- 3- Can the absence of philosophical reading affect the interpretation of the art scene?
- 4- How can the sense of alienation be demonstrated in paintings inspired by classical heritage?
- 5- What is dark aesthetics? how is it applied to classical themes?

#### **1.4 Research methodology:** Analytical and historical methodology.

#### **1.5 Previous research:**

- 1- Sara Bethea, 2011, Odd Nerdrum, kitsch and modernity (master thesis), University of South Carolina.
- 2- Jordan Walker, 2021, the kitsch masterpiece: Odd Nerdrum, and the problem of the new old masters (master thesis ), Georgia State University.
- 3- Farouk Wahba, 1977, the phenomenon of alienation in the art of contemporary painting ( master thesis ), Alexandria University.

#### **1.6. research procedures justifications:**

This research showcases the dilemma of the classical approach in painting since the nineteenth century, which caused many intellectual crises regarding art and philosophy, notably by studying the case of alienation in kitsch art, for it is considered to be a current example of the problem of taste and aesthetic appreciation, associated with social sciences, thus, with using social and philosophical theories, the researcher reveals new aesthetic in kitsch art upon analyzing its historical context and former criticism, relating the new formal aesthetic with the notion of alienation, which will be traced and examined through the notion of Nostalgia and belonging.

#### **1.7 Research limitations acknowledged:** Europe.

## **2. Historical context of the creation of alienated kitsch.**

By the end of the nineteenth century, the classical approach in art was declared to be low art, due to the severe changes that occurred in the field of aesthetic taste and the emergence of new movements of art, which led in turn to establish new notions regarding aesthetic appreciation of a work of art, in addition to setting up novel perspectives in perceiving beauty, mainly by creating more loose and untamed standards and making art accountable to look for “the new and the unseen “instead of the known traditions approaches in painting. (Celebonovic, 1974)

This desire for originality and novelty surely provided fresh concepts and even offered innovative compositions and techniques, such as the expressive style and the deconstructive view of objects that the avant-garde presented, but it further emphasized erasing any human aspects from the work of art and made its concerns only for the formal elements. hence, the art critics of this era keened on these developments to the extent that they rejected any form of painting that contained nude, religious, and mythological themes presented in a realistic approach, furthermore, they named the academic artists or the classicists “ the decadents “ instead of sorting them by the name of the movement they belong to, whether it was classicist, romantic, realist, academist. (harding, 1979) though I found the word classicist would be more accurate, for the notion of classicism is a wide term that includes different periods and it is often used to describe the painter who is inspired by the old masters and the art of the past, who inherited their approach in thinking and in painting,

thus it involves the renaissance artists till neo-classicists and the academic painters of the nineteenth century, and it's currently used for the same purpose.

In 1860, the academic paintings fell into oblivion once they were stored in archives, and they were rarely shown in exhibitions for the public to see, meanwhile, art historians and critics were concerned with articulating the avant-garde concepts and writing about the call for the new and the different, leaving behind the academic painters and their great attributions in art, this act created a crucial notion of “high art and low art “, that the critics took to discriminate the art of the avant-garde (the high art) from the practices of the classical artists (the low art) causing a sense of alienation for the classicists, and soon, the remarkable critics of the twentieth century identified the academic and classical practices as kitsch art, which refers to bad art in this era. (calinsecu, 1987)

Though this allegation of making bad art may seem to be understandable regarding the need for change for this age and the search for originality, one can differentiate between the connotation of bad art and the traditional approach to art, and hence, the concept of kitsch. The term bad art is usually used to depict some sort of painting that have aesthetic and formal deficiencies, whether the artist lacks artistic ability to execute the artwork in a good manner, or the artist had failed to express correctly a subject matter through his painting, all these conditions can't seem to be the case of kitsch art, sure some of the kitsch painting had some deficiencies but it's not sufficient to fasten kitsch with bad or weak art, for it embraced excellent works of art of the old masters, many of them were made by famous artists such as William Bouguereau, Ingres, some were replicas of known paintings and others were made by unfamiliar artists who drew for the sake of selling, such paintings were designed for audience, to hang on the walls of proletariats, who wished to taste the upper classes' earthly joys, rather than being made for exhibitions. (kulka, 1996)

Yet what art critics meant by bad art was the continuity of applying preceding style and former aesthetics in painting, as for the American critic Clement Greenberg, argued that every style has its own time, thus the tendency to lean on classical themes and precepts should halt by the end of the nineteenth century, notably since the emergence of impressionism that have provided new ways of seeing and offered contemporary perspectives, for him, the impressionists gave vivid pictures of the world, not as it is or as it should be, but for what appears to the artist from this world, its effects and its relations to science and psychology, hence, what kitsch art has showed is a mere repetitive pattern of the same old visions, shaped with an emotional charge. (Greenberg, 1939)

The essayist Herman Broch announced his concerns about kitsch by saying “kitsch is evil” for its repetitive system that seems to be too calculable, and the sociologist Theodore Adorno also addressed his views on kitsch by pointing out that “kitsch is a sign of corruptive taste” and its prevalence indicates an agenda or an ideology that should be studied first by experts in psychology and sociology, for it appears as a reflection of a social phenomenon rather than a case of an emerging art movement. These claims arose from the transformations of social ranks that happened due to the Industrial Revolution, some of the proletariats ascended to the upper middle class and

became a lower stratum of the bourgeoisie, which allowed them to take part in many accountable positions in society including the art scene. (binkley, 2000)

As a consequence of this change, the aspiration of the new bourgeoisie to possess an aesthetic taste sprang up, they needed to express their own taste with the taste of the high bourgeoisie, which considered academic art and classical salons as high art back in the eighties, thereby, this class seized on the classical painting, adding her taste in executing cheap reproductions, so they made replicas of famous paintings and others addressed lame themes such as a child with big eyes, sunrise, a new-born with his mother, etc, all of these precepts loaded the artwork with exaggerated sensuality. )Tawfik(٢٠١٨ ،

### **3. The sociological and philosophical responses to the kitsch criticism.**

One can wonder the reason that the new bourgeoisie chose the high art of the nineteenth century to be its style when it was severely attacked by the critics of the twentieth century, and also why didn't take inspiration from Folklore art when they originally came from the lower classes, for my opinion I believe that the theory of "habitus" by Pierre Bourdieu in sociology would clarify both of these queries.

Bourdieu discussed the idea of habit that is created by authorities and dominant institutions, he explained that the environment in which one grew up develops behaviors subconsciously and habits as well as aesthetic preferences, so the case of European societies where schools, universities, and other cultural institutions promoted a certain taste based on classical heritage, this taste became a habit according to the principle of familiarity, which was better explained by the American social psychologist Robert Zajonc in his theory "mere-exposure effect", it says that if a person was repeatedly exposed to definite aesthetic appearances since a young age, he would get used to it by time to the extent that he would replicate them unconsciously in his daily usage. Hence, when some of the proletariats gained higher social class, they expressed themselves in a way they already knew, by what they were familiar with since infancy, and what they were exposed to, used to be high art, the taste of upper bourgeoisie and the aristocrats, and also the official taste of the state, but what is problematic here is that the principle of familiarity has two opposing sides, one explains that the aesthetic preferences are actually a prior experience that makes one choose something because he is just familiar with, and the other argues that the amount of exposure to something for a period of time can make this thing lose its appeal to the viewer, and that describes the attitude of the critics towards kitsch art, when they rejected those kinds of paintings for giving known sceneries. (Bourdieu, 2020) (Zajonc, 1968)

The philosopher Thomas kulka has suggested equally that the reason behind the rejection was that there were not any aesthetic and philosophical readings nor studies regarding kitsch art in the twentieth century, to respond to the accusations made by critics, and one can notice that most of the accusations were spoken by sociologists more than aesthetes and philosophers, which can let us question if sociologists can have the ability to state whether a work of art is aesthetically good or bad, for it was before the philosopher's mission to articulate the aesthetics of a work of art and point out the hidden beauty that lay in symbols and allegories of a painting. (kulka, 1996)

Certainly, the methodology of sociologists differs from that of philosophers regarding evaluating a work of art and as the philosopher Shaker Abdelhamid noted before in his writings, a painter could be a great artist from the sociological view and may rank at the top of his fellows but be quite the reverse to the philosophical opinion, yet one can still understand the context which made the sociologists dominate the art field, for it was the twentieth century that witnessed enormous development in sociology, which is the emergence of a subfield called “ sociology of art”, it essentially addressed the social perspectives of art and aesthetics by studying the history of art and philosophical and social theories altogether, hence, the criticism that was given to kitsch by the sociologists was built on philosophical theories too, notably the theory of Emmanuel Kant regarding the aesthetic disinterestedness. (Abdelhamid, 2001)

Kant asserted that to make an aesthetic judgment, to say that something is beautiful, one should detach all desires, interests, and goals from the process of judging, and let the mind step into a “ free play “ where the imagination tries to match up the judgment of beauty with concepts and sensations, though there would not be a definite result because, in the free play, the judgment is purely objective, for it didn’t depend on individual concepts nor desires, it was only formed for the beauty that lies in the thing itself, not on the beholder, hence, the free play state is a crucial phase to explain the feature of “ purposive without purpose”, where the object seems to be purposive like it was made for a certain usage but one cannot really tell its particular purpose, thus, the object doesn’t offer any utility to the viewer, except a mere contemplating sensation, which is the aesthetic disinterestedness. (Immanuel Kant, 1999)

And in the case of aesthetic judgment of a work of art, many critics understood Kant’s aesthetic disinterestedness as the painting should not possess any features that can lead the viewer to submit any personal or individual interests, for example, the art of Henry Pether, a British landscaper in the nineteenth century , who made astonish landscape sceneries under the moonlight, and is famous for his academic approach in depicting nature such as seen in figure (1) , his academic approach consisted to show refined details of old houses on a lake, and by its shore lay some wooden dinghies , a serene sky lit by a lucent moon, all these partial sceneries presented a nostalgic sensation, that can make the viewer desires this lifestyle and incites his daydreams, so when the beholder states that this painting is beautiful, he matches his desires and goals to the notion of beauty, for the painting is beautiful due to what it triggers in the viewer from direct concepts and emotions, thereby, this judgment is not really an aesthetic judgment in the eye of the twentieth century critics.





*figure (1) Henry Pether, View of Windsor Castle Looking at the Lower Ward by Moonlight, 1828-1865, oil on canvas, 488mm \* 742 mm, source ( Wikimedia \).*

**NB:** the artist Henry Pether is an example of academic art in the nineteenth century and wasn't directly classified as a kitsch painter in his lifetime, though he is used in this research to demonstrate the academic aesthetics that were later considered as kitsch art, his painting shows the aesthetics of sentimentality, theatrical atmosphere, and traditional subject matter.

The critics believe that the true aesthetic judgment is made when the painting is not referring to a specific and direct subject matter, nor initiates any sort of feelings, the painting is beautiful only when the viewer contemplates its abstract relations, between lines, shapes, and colour, performing the free play state. (ibrahim, 1987)

through this previous explanation of aesthetic disinterestedness, kitsch paintings offered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are straight emotions and clear subject matter, in addition to its utilitarian aspect of being used for decoration purposes or as commissioned art. One of the twentieth critics Theodor Adorno, saw the functional side of kitsch paintings as a False consciousness, for it gave instant sentiments, and didn't invoke an authentic aesthetic response, rather it offered deceptive precepts and perceptions of life, by drawing perfect ideal sceneries and some were too exaggerated in perfectionism to the extent it delivered a deluded reality as seen in figure (2). (Theodore Adorno, 2002)



*figure (2) Bob Ross, Sunset aglow, 1983, oil on canvas, source (© bob ross inc) ,*

Adorno believed that by reproducing the same traditional scenes several times without modifications or new visions, the paintings became mere trends, and consequently these trends turned the single viewer into plain masses, hence, this phase is due because of democratizing art, enabled people from different educational background to be part of the artmaking.

Although one can argue if kitsch truly lacked aesthetic disinterestedness even when it had a functional feature, especially since there are many philosophical theories that didn't negate the ability to contain both functional and aesthetic aspects in a work of art, and some didn't separate the two of them and dealt with them as if they were two sides of one coin, including the American philosopher John Dewey who explained that there is surely a distinction between the nature of fine art and useful objects but not in a way to make it impossible for a work of art to hold within itself these dualistic traits (aesthetic and useful). (Abdelhamid, 2001)

For Dewey, the distinction is determined by “the acceptance of certain existing social conditions”, which appeared in the late eighteenth century as a form of commercial and post-industrialized culture, that dyed the forthcoming eras with its aesthetics and led to accepting the functional aspect in a work of art ( such as seen in Pop Art ), just when the artwork conceives esoterically a sense of “completeness of living in the experience”. However, Dewey concluded that human civilization in boarding speaking did not divide works of art from artifacts by reason of the fact that they both fulfill a social need. (Bernstein, 1992)

The philosopher Shaker Abdelhamid best explained the “completeness of living in the experience” by stating that it is the interaction between the work of art and the viewer, that emerges like a dialogue and creates a reality of intensive efficiency, in which the beholder lives an intellectual and spiritual or sensual experience seeing a work of art, he connects with what it delivers from a new experience, this reality is achieved due to the artist ability to transcend an aura of completeness and fulfillment that draws the beholder into a vivid living encounter. He also pointed out that



enjoying a work of art doesn't prevent profiting from it, it happens that the notions of contemplating and interacting merge with the notions of taste and aesthetic appreciation, thereby, it is natural for people to apply what they aesthetically enjoy with their daily uses. (abdelhamid, 2005)

Even more, what emphasized the functional component in art was the art market, which became a mediator between the artists and the viewers, which facilitated the expansion of the masses' taste, therefore the work of art couldn't rest solely on aesthetics, yet it relied on both aesthetics and utilitarianism. (Tajonar, 2018)

#### **4. The alienation of kitsch:**

All the previous arguments that addressed the idea of kitsch as a deduction of taste for holding functional aspects, a false consciousness in which it emphasized exaggerated reality, and a repetitive system of impoverished patterns that lacked originality, all in the eyes of the contemporary philosophers just debatable theses, for all these criticisms can be used as well to prove the aesthetics of kitsch and its rightfulness of being a part of the high art. The essential key here is the thought that all these criticisms are something extrinsic to the kitsch painting itself. (scruton, 2014)

The philosopher Thomas kulka explained that it is not the painting that lacks aesthetic forms or has some deficiencies, it is simply that this period had a different aesthetical aspiration than what was presented by the kitsch artists, and as the sociologist Janet Wolff had also stated that what is considered to be art can differ from time to time based on sociological contexts, hence, the utilitarian element can't be considered as disrepute, nor the emotional charge is fake sentiments of an unrealistic reality, and furthermore, the repetitive concepts and designs are not a plain system, it is just an inspiration of the old masters' precepts, by means of reviving the classicist's aesthetics by reusing their themes and allegories in a manner that embraces the contemporary traits of the world, which was the industrial or commercial culture. (kulka, 1996) (Solomon, 1991)

One could notice that the historical context of kitsch gave prior insights on how it later attained alienated features, the artists of contemporary kitsch didn't only derive their philosophy from the historical context, nor the criticisms associated with the term, from negative connotations which arose the sense of alienation, but it is the historical progression which let these features grow formally and aesthetically in a larger estranged path, by means it gained a new identity while holding on to academic approaches, it embraced a type of dark aesthetic, which tends to praise serene and mystical visions, observe the aspects of the vagary and obscurity in anything in life, a dark aesthetic captures nostalgic mourns for beauty as if the looker is in constant longing to its gloomy nature that allures its holy aura.

This type of beauty is considered to be a minority taste for its propensity to address a darker and perhaps a depressive apparition of things, however, this form of alienated aesthetic led the artists to seek a sort of ontological ambiance of their art, by uncovering the aesthetics of sorrow, pain, and suffering, proving that joy and contentment is not the only cognitive source of pleasure, it is also the pain that can seem to be pleasurable to sight, viewers can possibly enjoy sorrow and its

narrative, in the eyes of kitsch painters this ontological pain indicates the meaning of life, and by grief and solitude, an aura of holiness for the human being shapes, the artist Odd Nerdrum who spawned the contemporary kitsch and set its philosophy and its aesthetics by highlighting the dark aesthetics of human nature, expressed in his works an anecdote and narrative precepts, that shows the inspiration from the old masters and yet reveal the current place of human drawn in agony and grief.

The researcher finds that the notion of alienation in kitsch art can be traced in the exaggerated emotional charge and the extreme sense of Nostalgia presented tritely in their artworks, meaning that alienation can be inferred from its opposite meaning, the overstated ambiance of belonging implies solitude and the desire to fit in, and this nostalgic atmosphere in kitsch paintings entails loss and grief. Nostalgia is one of the crucial characteristics of kitsch art, it is an evoked emotion and an artistic object at once, by means that the kitsch painters choose cautiously the objects of their paintings, so it must serve their ideal philosophy and emphasize the core value of kitsch which is resurrecting the past in all its forms and meanings, that leads to creating a nostalgic narrative to the viewer, the researcher Stephanie Brown has noted that this provoked emotion of nostalgia is usually evoked by a memory of a past or a memory of an era, and kitsch objects hold within itself the nature of familiarity and retrogression. (Brown, 2000)

The kitsch artists emphasized sentimentality in their paintings to the extent it was perceived as clichés, so this extreme emotional charge would always tend to express nostalgia in my point of view, it just appears in different forms, for the core point of kitsch paintings is to make the beholder interact with its aesthetics and themes, by offering him a familiar scene with known emotions and experience. As In figure (3), Nerdrum portrayed three young men in a middle of a performance, in a manner that displayed his dark aesthetics on a theme that most artists would address it in a more playful approach, he tinted the scene with a dramatic gloomy spirit, each one of the singers is gazing in another direction, astray on the same terrain, yet they are bound to each other by the movement of their bodies, as if their souls were wandering to find its own sanctum between the audience, while carrying out a glorious dance, they lift their chests in pride, letting their legs sway them in plain air, they seem assertive but internally they are scattered, perhaps the view of the mountains behind them emphasizes a mood of solitude, of abandonment, though the gradient lit sky may suggests otherwise, it reveals a sense of hope and embodiment, and here lies the sense of alienation, in this duality of solitude and hope, Nerdrum used a traditional technique in painting this theatrical lightning, the high contrast between shadows and light is known as the chiaroscuro technique, which were discovered in the renaissance era, the palette colours that renders the whole painting is recognized as Zorn palette, which gave a reddish brown atmosphere, these two techniques served Nerdrum's vision in presenting the human figure in union with the surrounded world, that he is created from its own mud, yet he is still alienated from it.



Figure (3), Odd Nerdrum, the singers,1984, oil on canvas,82.5 inch \*102 inch. source (wiki art).

in ( figure 4 ) Nerdrum presented a nostalgic scenery of a young mother holding her infant in proximity while lying down in an abandoned seascape, her features unveil her fatigue, even her grasp to her infant by one hand, and the other is loose shows her struggle not to give in just for her child to be safe, the artist painted a universal subject yet in his own style, instead of celebrating motherhood in a joyful way, he displayed it from a dark aspect, which reveals the hidden side of motherhood that creates resilience in the most tiresome and unpleasant times. Odd has beautified his objects to captivate the audience's sentimentality, by painting the two figures in the center of the canvas, darkening the surrounding background to highlight the presence of the two models, especially the infant which he lit his face up by using white silvery color to distinguish it from his mother, and alienation can be seen in the idea of a mother and her infant are drifted away from home, yet one can feel safety in the arms of the mother.



Figure (4) Odd Nerdrum, stranded, oil on canvas, 151 cm \* 194 cm, source ( wiki art).

The idea of beautifying objects means to apply certain aesthetics on an object, it does not necessarily means enhancing the appearance of the object, and make it more delightful , in kitsch art the charm of beautification lies in implying the dark aesthetics on any normal and ordinary object that exists in daily life, in ( figure 5 ) Nerdrum excelled in painting a dead cat and its reflection on the ground, the painting is a mere simple scenery, yet it shows nerdrum's high interest in Carravaggio's techniques and designs, as he replicated the same design of the famous carravaggio's narcissus, which depends on an opaque black background and a spotlight on one object and its reflection, the researchers sees that this kind of design presents a definite moment yet it's still timeless, for it offered one object drawn in a compelling mimetic skill, letting its appeal forms straight-through the aesthetic response of the beholder, moreover, the single dead cat points and its drowsy body movement out a sense of alienation by the meaning of separation, that the soul inherently is alienated from this materialistic world, and the moment of its death, is only a formal separation from its physical body, yet the soul still bears its own wounds.

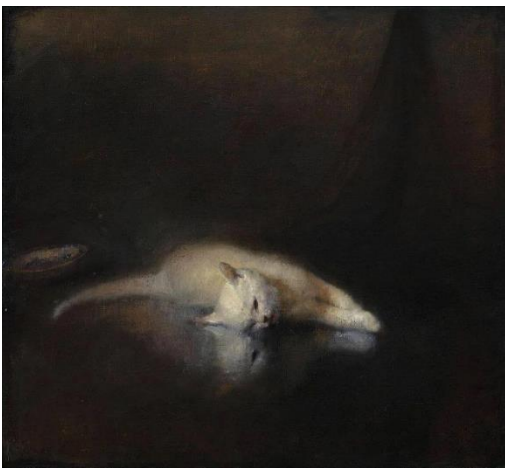




Figure (5), Odd Nerdrum, cat,45cm\*50cm,source ( reddit)

Even in the religious subjects, Nerdrum tent to dye it with tragedian vision, in ( figure 6 ) the artist painted a couple who survived a flood, they are standing in gratitude, raising their hands as a kind of thankfulness, he drew them both naked and positioned anxiously if they are in the day of judgment, standing before god, this narrative side of religious paintings are usually what made them more relevant to the masses, because the anecdote style is transformative and meaningful in a direct and understandable way, which also depends on an immediate aesthetic response created by what is called aesthetic transcendence, the researcher Jordan Walker has discussed the notion of aesthetic transcendence, by highlighting the view of the American critic Donald Kuspit on aesthetic transcendence, he declared that it is simply the return to the notion of beauty and craftsmanship to evoke emotions and sentiments in order to make an influence on the viewer. In addition to these charged sentiments which imply a sense of belonging, they also raise an ambiance of alienation, by drawing a scenery of two strayed souls who survived a natural disaster, feeling powerless and alienated from this world only to feel belonged to a higher power.

(walker, 2021)



Figure (6), Odd Nerdrum, after the flood,2019,200cm\*288cm,source ( wiki art)

## 5.RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1- Former and repetitive aesthetics can still be a current inspiration and rich source for artistic ideas.



- 2- Social culture affects the development of artistic taste and has a direct influence on artmaking.
- 3- New ideologies can be created from negative criticism.
- 4- Aesthetic appreciation differs whether it is due to social aesthetics, personal taste, historical contexts, or the views of critics.
- 5- Alienation can be a source of artistic pleasure and a compelling subject for the arts.
- 6- Alienation as a current phenomenon still appears in today's classical and traditional paintings.
- 7- Kitsch is a wide notion that needs further studies from different disciplines.
- 8- The role of interpreting and reading art varies due to the nature and contexts of the century.
- 9- The art of the past and classical approaches are still adequate for contemporary artists.

## 6. REFERENCES:

### Books:

- Abdelhamid, S. (2001). *Aesthetic preference, a study in the psychology of artistic taste*. kwait: Alam el marefa.
- Abdelhamid, S. (2005). *The age of the picture*. kwait: alam el marefa.
- Bernstein, J. (1992). *The fate of art ,aesthetic alienation from kant to Derrida and Adonro*. The Pennsylvania state university press.
- Binkley, s. (2000). kitsch as a repetitive system ( a problem for the theory of taste hierarchy ). *ournal of Material Culture*.
- Bourdieu, P. (2020). *Habitus and Field: General Sociology (Lectures at the College de France (1982-1983) )*. Polity.
- Brown, S. (2000). On Kitsch, Nostalgia, and Nineties Femininity. *Studies in Popular Culture*, 22(3), 39–54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23414521>
- calinsecu, M. (1987). *five faces of modernity ( modernism , avant-garde, decadence, kitsch , postmodernism)*. Duke university press.
- Celebonovic, A. (1974). *some call it kitsch : masterpieces of bourgeois realism*. albrams.
- Greenberg, C. (1939). Avant-garde and kitsch. *Partisan review*.
- Harding, j. (1979). *Artistes pompiers: French academic art in the 19th century*, . Rizzoli.
- Hauser, A. (1951). *The philosophy of art history*. England: Routledge.
- Ibrahim, z. (1987). *Kant or the critical philosophy*. cairo: Egypt library.
- Immanuel Kant, P. G. (1999). *Critique of Pure Reason* . Cambridge University Press.
- kulka, t. (1996). *Kitsch and art* . Pennsylvannia state university press.
- Scruton, R. (2014). A fine line between art and kitsch. *forbes*.
- Solomon, R. C. (1991). On Kitsch and Sentimentality. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.
- Tajonar, H. (2018). *On beauty and ugliness*. Retrieved from the san diego museum.
- Tawfik, S. (2018). *The philosophy of history of art ( arnold hauser*. cairo: the national center for translation.
- Theodore Adorno, M. H. (2002). *Dialectic of Enlightenment - philosophical fragments*. stanford university press.

### Webpage:

Walker, J. (2021, may 15). *The Kitsch Masterpiece: Odd Nerdrum and the Problem of the new old masters*. Retrieved from Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design:  
[https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art\\_design\\_theses](https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art_design_theses)

**Journal:**

Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Monograph Supplement*, volume 9 no:2.