

# Matter As an Aesthetic and Expressive Medium in Postmodern Art

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## **Abstract:**

The current research deals with material as an aesthetic and expressive medium in postmodern art, as its importance was able to identify the material according to the artist's vision and desire to express the material as a medium in plastic art (sculpture). This research was divided into four parts; the first part included the research problem, which the researcher outlined in a summary with the following question: Was the sculptor able to employ the material as an aesthetic and expressive medium in the postmodern arts and the extent of its ability to acquire aesthetic values? The researcher defined a time period represented by the postmodern arts (1973-1990 AD), within the spatial boundaries in (Europe) that defined the boundaries of the subject represented by sculpture in the postmodern arts, and defined the terms contained in the body of the research such as linguistic, philosophical, technical and procedural context, while the second part included the theoretical framework and previous studies, it contained two research topics, the first research topic: (material and its philosophical concepts) and (material as an aesthetic and expressive medium in postmodern formation), the second part concluded with the indicators that resulted from the theoretical framework, the third part included the research procedures, starting with the research community and the research sample, which was represented by three sculptural models within the spatial and temporal boundaries in the postmodern stages, and the fourth part was concerned with the research findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions, then the research concluded with a list of sources .

**Keywords:** Aesthetic, Expressive medium, Postmodern art, Plastic art, Sculpture.

## **Research Problem:**

Art is a vast and diverse world encompassing many creative expressions. The medium is paramount in art representation because it influences an artwork's aesthetics, technical possibilities, symbolic significance and cultural context. It allows artists to express their vision, engage viewers, and effectively communicate their intended messages with the material from which the work is made. For this way of using the medium, crucial differences relate to the spatiotemporal organisation of the audience's experience of the artwork. The choice of a particular medium can evoke associations and references to particular artistic movements, traditions or periods, the medium in art is a crucial aspect of the art-making process, it refers to the materials or techniques used by the artist to create a work of art, each medium possesses distinctive characteristics, techniques and artistic styles, the medium is commonly used to describe not only the material but also the materials, tools and techniques used in a particular artwork, it is common to see the genre itself listed as a medium alongside the materials this is an important aspect to consider when creating an art piece, as it can significantly affect the outcome of the artwork. Therefore, the current research question centred on answering the following question:

How has the sculptor utilised the material as an aesthetic and expressive medium in postmodern art, and to what extent is it capable of acquiring aesthetic values ?

Significance and Need for Research:

The importance of the research lies in identifying the specificity of the material as a medium in the structure of the sculptural work and the technical treatments through which these materials have been employed in contemporary sculpture and indicating their aesthetic and expressive impact in the sculptural formation. The study is a scientific and artistic study that contributes to the knowledge of the plastic arts, especially sculpture, and is a reference for researchers, interested parties, art connoisseurs, and students of plastic arts.

**Research objective:** Revealing the material as an aesthetic and expressive medium in postmodern art.

**Limitations of the research:** The study is limited to addressing the following themes :

1- **Objective Limits:** Artworks that deal with the theme of matter as a medium and its uses in postmodern art. 2- Spatial boundaries: artworks in Europe. 3- Temporal boundaries: (1973-1990).

**Define the terms:**

- 1- **Matter in language:** (Matter in language is everything that is an extension of another, and the material of a thing is its origins and elements from which it is composed, whether sensory or moral, such as the material of wood and the material of scientific research)(1) .
- 2- **Material:** (The term material refers to everything that consists of molecules or is used to form other substances and has certain chemical, biological and physical properties. Material is the natural body that we eat as it is or turn it into something else for a specific purpose, such as alabaster from which the statue is made, it is a material, and the image of the statue is the form in which the alabaster is flattened)(2) .
- 3- **Material is a procedural definition:** Material is the raw material used by the artist in producing his artistic work and its output, whether natural or manufactured ready-made materials, transforming them from their initial traditional existence into a visual artistic production.
- 4- **Jamali Language:** (Jamali: A word whose origin is the noun (Jamal) in a dual form and its root (Jamal) and its stem (Jamal) and its analysis (Jamal + J). See the meaning of Jamal)(3) .
- 5- **Aesthetics:** (Aesthetics is a science that investigates the conditions of beauty, its theories, artistic taste, and value judgements related to artistic effects, a branch of philosophy)(4) .

**Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework:**

**Chapter One: Matter and its Philosophical Concepts:**

Matter has been the main concern and the ultimate goal of most philosophers and thinkers since ancient times, which made tracking its concepts, fields and fields and trying to search for the truth of the first principle of matter and establishing logical and rational perceptions and rules that would be a primary intellectual base from which to establish explanations for the origin of material existence. The concept of matter in philosophy has a very complex history, dating back to the beginnings of the type of contemplative thought that became known as (philosophy), as history in this field, as in others, provides us with a valuable means of understanding the present, whether natural, social or psychological in knowledge and human life, and with the overall concepts and their rules and laws that apply to various sciences and knowledge uniformly and those concepts interact dialectically with special laws through the relationship between the general and the special as well, and therefore the philosophy of matter and its intellectual concepts (5), as in the laws of physics and natural sciences and between matter and idea in philosophical sciences since matter.

## **The concept of matter through the ages (philosophical aspect):**

### **A- The concept of matter in Greek philosophy:**

Greek philosophers were among the first to search for the meaning of existence and the origin of man by observing natural changes in the world around them, trying to develop logical explanations and formulate hypotheses and laws through their opinions that correspond to their observations of the visible and invisible in the idea that the universe is built of matter. The search for the concept of matter is an old philosophical tradition among philosophers, as its concept arose from a series of Greek philosophers before (Socrates 399 BC). The philosopher (Thales of Miletus 624-546 B.C.) believed everything is made of matter. Thales was one of the first philosophers to define the science of nature, which he categorised as essentialism and material monism, the idea that everything in the world can be traced back to a single substance, water (6). Some consider Thales to be the first Greek philosopher to divide ancient Greek philosophy in general into two phases. The first stage focuses on natural and physical elements, where philosophers sought to understand the world through nature and basic materials. The second stage focuses on ethical and social elements, as philosophers began to think about values, ethical principles, and social relations (7), and the type of question at the time was 'where did it all come from' (8), Although Thales was a materialist, he recognised the existence of other substances, but he believed that water is the primary source of all matter, that the earth floats in water, that all things come from water, and that it is mentally true that water is the origin of everything, and that the one to which Thales attributed all things 'is the first origin of everything, saying that the earth is nothing but water and ice, and the air is the water of heavyweight and that all things always change from state to state, until they return to water' (9).

From here, turning to ancient Greek philosophers of the mind, the contributions of (Socrates Sophroniscus 470-399 BC) in the natural philosophy of matter, and his investigation of the different explanations of the nature of the universe, which argued for the existence of a rational cause. His contributions to the natural philosophy of matter and his research into the various explanations of the nature of the universe argued for the existence of a rational cause, as he believed that what happens in the intervention of the formation of creatures always interferes with the universe and human life, and knowledge, in turn, depends on the nature or essence of things as they are in reality because the basic forms of things are more real than their experienced examples. In philosophy, he believed that 'everything has a nature or essence that is its truth, which is revealed by the mind beyond the perceptible symptoms and expressed by the limit, and that the goal of science is to realise qualities, i.e. to form complete meanings, so he used induction, and progressed from parts to the common essence between them.'(10). This is the example that transcends the sensory world, and it has been proven that every personalised object in this world or universe has an example in the mental world, as the objects in this world are the effects of the objects in that world according to this theory (11).

Plato (428 - 348 BC) was a Greek philosopher and perhaps the most famous and influential thinker in the history of Western thought. He was a student of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle. The concept of matter is an essential part of his philosophical theory, and he believed that the universe consists of four types of matter: Earth, air, fire and water. Plato sees matter as the basic element that makes up everything. According to him, things are made up of a combination of matter and form; matter is the body that can change and transform, while form is the fixed structure that defines the identity of a thing (12). The terms form and matter describe a fundamental duality in all existence and are part of a larger system that includes ideas and forms; in his theory, matter and form are inseparably linked, as everything depends on the balance between them. The

existence of such a duality is widely recognised, but the definitions of form and matter have varied throughout the history of philosophy. In general, the terms form and matter are derived from classical philosophy, most notably from Plato, where the idea or essence refers to a thing's fundamental (essence) (13).

Aristotle (Aristotle 384-322 BC) (Metaphysics) is the first to search for the causes and principles of things, Aristotle divides the natural body into three principles: The first principle: The first principle is the first substance, the second principle is the second principle: Nothingness, and the third principle: Aristotle considered that these principles are the origins of the natural body, which means that it is not made up of other things, and these origins are not made up of each other as well, except that the structure and image is a principle of substance, while nothingness is a principle of presentation, i.e. it is the point of any image and the beginning of an image and not a third thing contained in the body, this is with regard to nothingness, but with regard to Aristotle endeavored in the science of nature to investigate the subject of the body in terms of movement, as everybody is composed of matter and image, and he also distinguished between movement and change, as movement is in space, quality, and quantity, while change includes a fourth type, the universe, which he considered to be the essence (14).

### **B. The concept of matter among Arab philosophers:**

The Arab philosopher (Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi, 874- 874 950 AD), who lived in the tenth century, was one of the most important medieval thinkers, he was known in the Arab philosophical tradition as (the second teacher) after Aristotle, Al-Farabi focused on the subject of matter that the structure of beings has a necessary character derived from the first being (God) is the basic source of all existence, everything in the universe stems from this first being, as all material beings derive their structure and existence from the first being, this includes the natural and physical systems that govern the universe, and consists of two elements of matter and image, matter itself carries a necessary character that can only be understood through the relationship with the first being (15). Al-Farabi believes that matter is the first substance and the basis of form, and it can exist imperfectly without form, and therefore it is the one by which matter is in power; matter has no opposite or basis but is itself the basis for all changes, while form is the active element in existence, but it lasts only in matter, and explaining the relationship between matter and form gives us a necessary character that can only be understood through the relationship with the first being. The relationship between matter and image gives us a better understanding of body and soul relationships. Matter 'is the basis of the image, and therefore, the image does not exist by itself because it needs matter. However, matter exists for the sake of the image, and if an image did not exist, matter would not exist, and the image does not exist for the sake of matter (16).

The philosophy of al-Husayn ibn Abdullah Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD) is an extension of al-Farabi's thought, based on the idea that the natural world consists of a single substance that changes its composition and structure based on various factors. Ibn Sina believed that matter is the basis on which everything is built; his philosophy about matter was part of his comprehensive philosophical system that was influenced by Greek philosophy, especially the ideas of Aristotle. Ibn Sina considered matter the basis for all material things in the universe, consisting of four elements: He also believed that matter cannot exist without form, and that form gives matter its unique characteristics. He also considered that matter is the basic base from which any form can be given, as it transforms matter from a pure possibility into an actual entity that the senses can perceive. Ibn Sina believes that every material object consists of the union of matter and image, and this

union forms the various material beings in the universe; matter without image cannot be perceived, and image without matter cannot be realised in the material world (17).

### **C. Matter and its concept among Enlightenment philosophers:**

René Descartes (1596- 1650) states that as long as the mind perceives the primary qualities of things clearly and distinctly, it means that these qualities are already present in the matter and constitute what it is, while the secondary qualities are not in matter itself but are the result of the senses being affected by matter because the colour, smell and texture of a thing can change while this thing remains the same. Therefore, secondary qualities are not included as intrinsic. The mind perceives these primary qualities because they are qualities that the mind receives. Since it is the mind that receives them, this means that they are real, which is why Rene Descartes considers that the mind 'is the jewel of man and the natural light that allows man to correct mistakes and obtain correct and certain knowledge and truths and immunises him from falling into falsehood and error' (18). He is perhaps most famous for saying, 'I think, therefore I exist.' This simple inductive statement is the first of the first inductive statements. This simple inductive statement is the first principle of his materialist metaphysical theory, which is based on the science of physics, that is, on mathematical facts about physical objects, facts about size, shape, composition and speed, facts that can be grasped by a mind with different senses and experience than ours, or by a mind with no senses and experience at all (19).

In the eighteenth century, one of the brightest philosophers of the European Enlightenment, and perhaps the last philosopher to emerge in modern Europe through the classical sequence of epistemology that began in the Enlightenment, the philosopher (Immanuel Kant 1724- 1797). 1724 is one of the landmarks of modern philosophy, as Kant considers that every part of matter has a force of attraction and that this force, under being fundamental and constitutive of matter, must precede any difference in matter; he relied in knowledge on two elements, the first is matter and the second is image. Due to our susceptibility, matter comes to us through our sensory impression of external objects. Matter is the object of sensory intuition and is a dimensional given. At the same time, the image, which comes from our cognitive ability, is a link in thought that allows the synthesis of a total judgement necessary because it is elementary. Our ability to link and understand is not contingent on experience (20).

As for matter and its philosophy for the philosopher (Karl Marx, 1818-1883), Marx, one of the founders of materialist philosophy, understood it as the opposite of idealism, 'Throughout the history of philosophy, we find two camps, the materialist and the idealist, and that common thought is the opposite of idealism. The common idea of idealism as representing the pursuit of ideals, and of materialism as representing pettiness, greed, selfishness, grabbing things' (21), which means that it is a theory that Marx adopted a comprehensive materialist approach and considered that thought is a product of matter and matter is not a product of thought, so Marx's philosophy was based on key propositions in Marxist thought, namely (dialectical materialism), because he believes that the essence of the world is matter, and that matter is independent. Its existence is before its idea and thought only reflects what lies outside it in the natural physical world. Dialectics looks at things and the meanings of their interrelationship, mutual relationships, and influence on each other. The resultant change as you see it in its birth, growth, and decay' (22).

### **D. The concept of matter among contemporary philosophers:**

For example, Martin Heidegger sees matter as the product of the interaction of human ideas and concepts. In contrast, Jacques Derrida sees matter as a set of elements that interact with each other and form the material world.

(Martin Heidegger: 1889 - 1976) is considered one of the twentieth century's most important and influential philosophers. Heidegger is seen as one of the most famous philosophers who tried to undermine the previously prevailing philosophical approach to the question of existence, especially metaphysics, which asked about what exists by what exists, and forgot about existence and ignored it completely. Heidegger says that 'metaphysics searches and investigates the existence of the existent, so it is illogical to attribute the issue of forgetting existence to metaphysics.' (23) Heidegger is known as the philosopher of a humanistic ontology that celebrates the existence of the existent and the being, as he restored the existence of the existent as a different existence from the previous philosophical He considered philosophy as a holistic ontology that stems from the hermeneutics of Dasein, emphasising the interdependence of ontology. He explains Dasein as the being of existence represented in the human condition in terms of its existence and the presence of the thing that is directly in front of us and is concerned with the description of the existing object and then its existence and existence, Heidegger believes that matter is not just a collection of physical objects that exist in the world, but is the product of the process of deduction and human thinking. In other words, matter is the product of the interaction of human ideas and concepts (24).

The philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) is one of the most prominent thinkers of the twentieth century. (2004); one of the most prominent thinkers of the twentieth century is famous for his development of deconstructionist theory, which focuses on examining texts and ideas to reveal points that have been ignored or underestimated. He shows how the concept of matter, like many other concepts, suffers from instability and the existence of binaries such as mind and body or matter and thought shows how meanings are complexly coupled, as deconstructing binaries and emphasising instability promotes new concepts about the relationship between matter and thought instead of considering them as fixed binaries. It also addresses how meaning is determined by cultural contexts (25).

Derrida's approach calls for deconstruction to overcome the dichotomy between matter and thought, making Derrida talk about three main things, namely metaphysics, presence and subjectivity, all of which interact with each other in shaping the subject of modernity. At the same time, the most general concepts, where the deconstruction of binaries and the affirmation of instability come Derrida's ideas, may influence how materialist philosophers understand the existence of matter, so he sees matter as a set of elements that interact with each other and form the material world. Derrida focuses on the relationship between metaphysics, presence, and the self, all of which interact to form the subject of modernity. Derrida focuses on the relationship between the elements and how they interact to form material objects. This concept reflects his idea of the relationship between parts and the whole and how the material world interacts through these interactions (26).

The researcher believes that analysing matter in different ways by ancient and contemporary philosophers and their views on matter and the difference between ancient, modern and contemporary in describing the monadic matter, there are some major differences in the philosophy of matter, firstly: Ancient philosophy: Focused on matter as a fixed essence and a fundamental component of existence, secondly: Modern philosophy: It moved to more abstract concepts and an interest in how the mind shapes matter, while contemporary philosophy: These analyses reflect the shift in philosophical thinking about matter and how it is understood and interpreted through the ages. These analyses reflect the shift in philosophical thinking about matter and how it is understood and interpreted through the ages.

### **The second topic: Material as an aesthetic and expressive medium in postmodernism**

In the recent decades of the twentieth century, postmodernism witnessed several changes, transformations, artistic revolutions and endless attempts, which led to the emergence of a new concept of the meaning of postmodernism, which is the combination of materials and materials using new tools or means and techniques in the production of sculptural artwork.



Such developments ended the plastic formulations of the traditional concept of plastic art. It turned into techniques that move away from the phenomena embedded in the essence. This transformation in the plastic arts led to a group of artistic movements and schools based on the material and its structure, which varied in their forms, methods and references, regardless of their plastic output, structure and mixing with neighbouring artistic currents (27).



Hence, the multiplicity of the material foundations of artistic construction had an impact on the multiplicity of intellectual and philosophical trends and the change in the artist's style, which resulted in the multiplicity of plastic formulas and individual styles of the artist, which in turn influenced the aesthetic concept of the artistic work, which is considered one of the areas that were associated with the concept of contemporary art, where its forms, philosophical and scientific concepts and contents were influenced by the change in the concept of visual text, which is considered one of the areas associated with the concept of contemporary art, where its forms, philosophical and scientific concepts and its contents were influenced. How this type of art, which interacts with materials as expressive media, had a positive impact on the organisation of the elements of the sculptural artwork, which has the characteristic of spreading and merging with the surrounding environment, and the artist began to seek through his work to find aesthetic and artistic solutions (28).

The material media became important in the representation of art by introducing new concepts that changed the concepts and techniques of art, so he began to employ collage in the style of cubism, which is based on glueing parts of different materials in their structure and assembling them on a painting, and if we consider that the experience of glueing materials on the surface of

the painting, Picasso's collage art represented the first line of departure towards thinking about the employment of unfamiliar materials in art (29).

For example, Pablo Picasso's (still life with a Cane - 1912) (Figure 1), while the Dadaists used ready-made objects as different in their initial structure to illustrate their artistic methods looking at the artist (Marcel Duchamp), saw that he went beyond the traditional features of the structure of materials and works of art (The Fountain - 1917), a piece of glazed porcelain, which has its origin in a urinal as in (Figure 2). 1917), a piece of glazed porcelain that was originally a urinal as in (Figure 2); after these two schools, the techniques moved on through the use of industrial and natural materials and raw materials that included everyday objects used in daily life, such as manufactured ready-made materials and ephemeral materials such as organic materials derived directly from nature such as water, earth, snow and other Based on the above, the researcher believes that it is obligatory to address the most important artistic trends that have an impact on the postmodern formation, which adopted the material as an aesthetic and expressive medium, including pop art, land art, hyper-realism and conceptual art, which are in line with the theme of the research and the procedural work of the researcher and my agency :

#### **A/ The material in Pop Art:**

Pop Art is an artistic movement that emerged in the United States of America by a group of young artists who expressed their desire to use common materials with their aesthetics and strangeness as material media, which represented the structure of the artwork in a different way from what was in circulation, inspiring the artist with ideas that he had not thought of before, as in the works of the American artist (Claes Oldenburg), who always endeavoured to make large-scale pieces and soft sculptures from the materials used in our daily life, such as The work of the American artist (Claes Oldenburg), who always sought to create large-scale pieces and soft sculptures from materials used in our daily lives such as ice cream cones and hamburgers, as in (Burger Floor - 1962) (Figure 3), who conducted experiments in the effects of the displacement of matter and its environment in favour of his work, he sees that matter hovers in the world of sculpture, and he says: 'I imitate signs of manufactured objects, not with the intention of making them art, which have a contemporary functional charm, I try to move them beyond my own naivety, which is not artificia (30) .



The synthesis of material can be seen in Andy Warhol's Brillo Box (Brillo Box - 1964), the most famous series of sculptures created by Warhol in the mid-1960s. 1964), the Brillo Box is the most famous series of sculptural works that Warhol created in the mid-1960s, which formed from the materials of cardboard boxes for various products.



It effectively transformed any gallery it was in into a replica of the high-culture warehouse until the Pop Art artist had a special vision of life and presented inseparable social themes to the zeitgeist through the use of material and its structure as an expressive aesthetic medium in contemporary art, Pop Art artists have expressed their artistic feeling in changing the classical inherited and fixed values, and criticising the consumerist capitalist society, so the use of ready-made materials and everything that comes to the artist's mind from the material, are material media that enable the artist to express what he wishes from the artistic discourse that adopts the material as its basis (31).

#### **B/material (Land Art):**

Art whose achievements are represented by natural earth materials, or from carving and trimming the earth itself or creating structures in the landscape from materials such as rocks, twigs, leaf remnants, hay and gravel and using them as material media that recommend the natural structure of the environment and express an idea that the artist is working to broadcast, and artworks are often implemented in places such as mountains, forests, deserts and beaches as an environmental, aesthetic art discourse that includes humans and nature (32). Based on the above, the artist used the elements of nature in their original location as an aesthetic physical medium to express what is in his imagination by arranging the landscape again, this type of work is often large and has large areas in terms of size.



In the work of the artist (Robert Smithson), where he resorted to the land to make it a base for his artistic work, one of his works is the spiral pavement, which was completed in 1970, using basalt rocks in this work, as in (Figure 6), where he formed from the large amount of rocks a work of art using the solid material as a medium. Therefore, the aim behind the use of natural materials in earth art as a physical medium for aesthetic and artistic expression to transfer it from the simple meaning to the deep intellectual meaning of things, made the artist, in particular, often endeavour to. The artist in particular often seeks to open up and liberate from old restrictions, theories and concepts

and lift the barriers between different arts, there are materials and objects that can be used as material media for aesthetic expression, as human thought and technical and technological developments have enhanced the artist's desire to satisfy his need and desire to discover and search for new materials that he uses in his artistic production, and thus this transformation occurs in the relationship that links man to the material and its structure that forms his artistic work to create new artistic achievements in an endless series (33).

### **C- The material in hyperrealism art:**

Hyperrealism in contemporary plastic art was attracted by a group of artists who had a different opinion on contemporary artistic trends, as the artists of this movement adopted in its works the themes of daily life and the postmodern system of intellectual and technical development by adopting the material, so it was interested in depicting the world and objects with insistence on the material means in circulation with its aesthetic values and the most used in the media, press, illustrated magazines and television to express the aesthetic values in their artworks. (34) Among the hyper-realist artists whose works combine reality and fantasy that seek to elevate reality, the work of sculptor Ron Mueck, in his work (In Bed 2005) in (Figure 9), sculpts hyper-realistic works.



Sculpting hyper-realistic works, his works are executed in larger-than-life proportions and tend to focus on the perfect proportions of the human figure, using materials and techniques not widely known in sculptural traditions such as fibreglass, silicone, acrylics, resin paints and everyday objects incorporated into the sculpture (35).

### **D-Material in (Conceptual Art):**

Postmodernism has worked to change the old patterns of the methods and techniques of plastic art, where the arts were defined by fixed rules, so the desire of artists to keep pace with the scientific development and its concept of the universe and the accompanying shift in human intellectual concepts, that art must go through many transformations in the use of the material and its properties in its structure. Freedom from the traditional craft skill of the artist, so conceptual art arose due to several factors, the most important being the psychological reaction to the First and Second World Wars, scientific and technological development, and the influence of modern art movements that appeared in the twentieth century (36).

Conceptual art opened a new path of exploration towards the aesthetics of works by using different materials with new ideas that lead to the convergence of multiple concepts in a different group of people using those materials in different ways for artistic aesthetic expression. This is why the conceptual art movement has its ancestors in the technique known as installation art,

rooted by Marcel Duchamp along with other artists who adopted this technique, which was based on the technique of taking materials from everyday objects and then removing their customary context and inserting them with a new intellectual context (37).



Conceptual art is the art of the idea that aims to transform the mental image into a sensory image for the recipient through the use of materials as a medium for artistic expression that provokes the viewer and pushes him to decipher its symbols and understand its meanings, as conceptualism is the artistic trend that represents the blending of art and thought, as the influence of conceptual artists on philosophy and logic had a great impact in the formation of a language of their own, which is evident in their multiple levels of interpretation. The value of linguistic symbols as an essential tool in conceptual art is evident in the work of the artist (Joseph Kosuth) in his work (one chair and three chairs) (1965) in (Figure 18), where conceptual artists gained their distinctive radical character in artistic presentations through the use of materials as a means of aesthetic expression (38), and conceptual artists produced a huge amount of works and writings, photographs, documents, maps, charts, graphs, film, video, and the bodies of the artists themselves, as in the work of the artist (Hassan Sharif), and Sharif is considered one of the pioneers of absolute conceptual art in the Arab world, as in his work Hassan Sharif (I am a one-work artist - 2015) in (Figure 21), he used materials that he created for himself, represented by objects that are a product of daily life and used them as physical media in expressing his ideas, and he enjoyed a wide space of freedom as a result of expressing conceptual art forms that gained a wide base in plastic art (39).



Digital sculpture can be interactive, allowing the audience to interact with artworks in new and exciting ways, mostly as a result of the exchange of new elements and variables, which are mostly explaining projects that used modern technology as materials in creating new elements, carrying cultural, political, and environmental contents, in the field of art and the possibilities it can propose as an artistic medium (40), traditional materials can be combined with modern techniques to create conceptual artworks that provoke reflection, and among the artists who are famous for this art is

the artist (Robert Whitman), a pioneer in the field of performance art and multimedia installations and his works (shirts and clouds) in (Figure 24),



It must be noted that technology has become a basic need in the useful communication provided by this science, which has a role in encouraging creativity, so the new media arts have become a link between art and technology as a new structure dedicated to artistic development (41).



In addition to the use of the Internet as an important pillar in the world of conceptual art and other technologies that have played an important role in this art, in addition to video art, computer games, and the telephone, digital material opens new doors for creativity and artistic expression, allowing artists to transcend the traditional boundaries of art and reach a wider audience in innovative ways, as the work of the artist (Olafur Eliasson) is characterised by his work (Radiant Field of Existence - 2022), as in (Fig. 2022), as in (Figure 27), is known for his artworks that blend art, science, and the environment. He is known for using matter as an aesthetic medium to create surprising and dazzling art experiences that interact with the audience in unconventional ways, making the viewer an active part of the artwork. Reflecting how matter can be used as an artistic medium to create interactive, attention-grabbing and meditative experiences, this work is a great example of how contemporary art can merge technology and traditional materials to create new and exciting experiences (42).

Based on the above, the researcher finds that the artist has always sought, according to his innate exploratory nature, to search for all that is new in terms of techniques and materials with the ethics of their structure, which is the main tributary in achieving achievements, and did not satisfy the human instinct in the love of research for survival but extended to communication in taming innovative material media with the power of thought to transform them into works of art that gradually worked to harness the material environment to serve him to achieve more achievements that made him more conscious and aware of art.

### **Indicators that emerged from the theoretical framework :**

1. Every medium has distinctive characteristics, techniques, and artistic methods, and the medium is commonly used to describe not only the material but also the materials, tools, and techniques used in a particular artwork.
2. The sculptor in postmodern art did not use traditional material of a material such as wood or stone but rather diversified by using industrial materials; this gave him diversity in the textural surface of the sculptural work and also created another concept of using the materials of ready-made or manufactured objects to transform them into different forms.
3. Using ready-made materials with new ideas leads to the convergence of multiple concepts in different groups of viewers by using those materials in different ways for artistic aesthetic expression.
4. Philosophers and thinkers throughout history have dealt with the concept of matter on the meaning of existence and human continuity by observing natural changes in the world around them, trying to develop logical explanations and formulating hypotheses and laws that correspond to their visual observations in the idea that the universe is built of matter .
5. The role of industrial and technological development was not limited to the use of innovative and unconventional materials and techniques but also effectively contributed to the development of tools, media, and machines that contributed to the development of the sculptor's technical performance.

### **Search Procedure:**

**Research community:** The researcher identified the current research population of (30) artworks by relying on the visualisations found in the arts literature and websites that provide information about these works .

**The research sample:** The researcher selected (3) samples intentionally chosen to fit the material's premises as an artistic medium, both stylistically, conceptually and technically.

**Research methodology:** The researcher adopted the descriptive method of content analysis to analyse the current research sample based on the indicators' theoretical framework.

### **Model No. 1**

#### **Analyse the sample form**

**Business name: Picasso's Chair**

**Artist's name: George Segal**

**Year: 1973**

**Material: Plaster, wood, fabric, rubber and thread.**

**Measurement 198.1 x 152.4 x 81.3 cm**

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/guggenheim/education/05.html>



On the left is a life-size, white, nude female figure made of gypsum, standing and facing towards the right. The figure seems to be interacting with a set of elements on the right, which include an upside-down wooden chair, perhaps referring to everyday life, with a broken leg resting on the chair's seat; on the back of the chair is a wooden board with red balls that add a touch of vitality and movement, perhaps symbolising energy or movement. Above the chair, there is something that looks like the head of a broom or mop with blue bristles below this group, and there are clothes or

fabric stuffed between the legs of the chair and the seat; the work seems to combine anthropomorphic and concrete elements, creating a contrast between the human form and the materials used in the installation.

This sculptural work combines anthropomorphic and concrete elements to create visual and intellectual contrast; the white statue of a life-size naked woman represents the human form in its purest form, bringing a sense of classicism and purity alongside it; in this example, we find that the artist adopted a distinctive style that cleverly integrates aspects of art and real life. Art and real life in his sculptural work, as he combined raw gypsum with a variety of ready-made materials and placed them in places consisting of objects he selected, and his subjects usually came from familiar surroundings that drew his attention to the idea of linking art to concrete reality, inviting contemplation of the intersections between different modes of representation of depth in each of them. The contrast between the human form and the materials used in the installation creates a dialogue between classicism and modernism, stillness and movement, inviting the viewer to think about the relationship between humans and the physical world around them and the different connotations of the sculptural composition. The diverse sculptural composition includes every material and has different connotations. Interestingly, because of its use of everyday objects in unconventional ways to create art, this work challenges traditional sculpture concepts by incorporating disparate elements into an integrated unit, inviting viewers to search for connections and meanings within this contrast.

**Model No: 2**

**Business name: Earthquake**

**Artist's name: Joseph Boyes**

**Year of completion 1981**

**Material: Typesetting machine, Italian flag, eight blackboards, metal containers,**

**Cassette recorder, copies, newspaper, printed booklet**

**Size: (203.2 x 349.9 x 490.2 cm)**

**<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/389>**



The work consists of an old typesetting machine, formerly used to print newsletters, showing the Italian flag covered in felt, eight blackboards with charts and drawings leaning precariously against the machine, the octagonal board is supported against a large metal bucket that occupies the position where the typewriter sits, this bucket is the waste bin of the typewriter, which Boyes has filled with greasy lead letters, the artist here uses these materials to create a dialogue between old and new, technology and tradition, the physical and intellectual world. The result is a work that forces the viewer to think about how these elements interact in our daily lives.

The artist's work has greatly impacted the political aspect of his work and the use of the material as an artistic medium, which appears in many of his works. His work *Zelzal*, which outlines a political programme to reform society in dialogues about current issues along with lessons on art making, seems to be a kind of social criticism through the use of ready-made objects; the components used carry different connotations :

**First:** Typesetting machine: Representing the written word and communication .

**Second,** the Italian flag can symbolise patriotism or politics .

**Third:** Eight chalkboards: Refers to education and the dissemination of knowledge .

**Fourth:** The metal container: Symbolises industry and progress,

**Fifth:** recorded with a cassette: Reflects the influence of media and popular culture .

**Sixth:** Copies, newspaper, and printed booklet: Highlights the role of media and information in our lives.

The artist here may be trying to highlight how these elements interact and reflect our daily experiences and challenges as a society. The interaction between the elements creates a visual dialogue that encourages the viewer to think and reflect on its contents.

### **Model No: 3**

**Business name: Baby Room**

**Artist's name: Jenny Holzer**

**Year: 1990**

**Material: Marble, LEDs, billboards, printing**

**Size: 3 x 4 x 6 metres**

<https://projects.jennyholzer.com/LEDs/venice-1990>



The artwork consists of the medium of language in a variety of forms to convey her artistic messages, executed in a room whose texts are inscribed on marble tile floors as well as on a series of reverse signs, the conversion of these symbols back into information understandable by the recipient Light Emitting Diodes (LED), electronic message boards for which Holzer is known for her work that integrates text and visual arts, interdisciplinary and neo-conceptual.

In using words as a means of artistic expression, the artist focuses on using shapes and colours to attract the eye, some of which work within a social and political context, making her interact with the feelings of individuals, writing and editing her texts to appear in the form of books or prints, which helps spread her ideas more widely. The artist uses a variety of techniques in her art and focuses particularly on combining texts with different media, especially in his work The Baby Room, which includes light shows and writings inscribed on stone; he highlighted the combination of several forms of media, such as printed texts, sculptures, video, and diagrams, which helps create a rich visual and compositional experience to make the texts more prominent, attracting the audience's attention and adding a dynamic dimension to the show. She has presented her works in public spaces, using the space as an exhibition surface; this contributes to bringing art into people's daily lives and promotes direct communication with the audience, relying on projecting animated texts that the audience interacts with immediately through these techniques, Jenny Holzer manages to communicate powerful and complex messages in innovative and impactful ways.

### **Results and conclusions**

After analysing the research sample, the researcher reached the following conclusions:

1. The use of industrial and ready-made materials in sculpture in postmodern art plays a major role in changing the composition of the form from a form with a traditional material to a form with a new technical type, as in (Model 1).

2. The artist employed the material concept in his product as an aesthetic means and carried it with semantic elements to reach the relationship between the material and its impact on the artwork.
3. Technology has become an influential force in postmodern sculpture by exploiting its advanced means, a development reflected in the sculptor's use of new materials in sculptural works (Model 2).
4. Materials and tools lead to developing techniques for the artist's use of the material.
5. The material is one of the means of expression or functional production that has its importance, as technological progress in the modern era has provided many raw materials whose use helps achieve new artistic values. Hence, selecting and processing materials is necessary before shaping them and expressing his ideas (Model 3).
6. It was found that the material is a medium, a means and a tool to emphasise the conceptual and structural dimension of the artistic work, and it is an end in itself. As in all research models.

### **Conclusions :**

1. Employing the potential in a way that confirms the creative work and supports it to achieve its desired goal, as the artwork is an organisation that carries an idea that the sculptor embodies with the material, taking into account all its plastic and expressive aspects when choosing it to achieve the expressive values in the artwork.
2. Postmodern sculpture is no longer limited to a specific medium or traditional materials only; it has expanded to include new materials with their potential, whether natural or manufactured, which has had the biggest role in changing the sculptural concepts in the artwork.
3. Some artists, especially in postmodern art, took advantage of the formative and expressive potential of the material to confirm their artistic ideas and expressive values, and as a result of the technological and scientific development that helped to achieve creative ideas that transcend many of the heritage concepts of ancient civilisations in the construction of artistic works .

**Recommendations:** Pay attention to studying and analysing the impact of employing new technological techniques and materials and their impact on changing the form and construction of the artwork.

**Suggestions:** Aesthetic expression in the use of natural and ready-made materials in sculpture (a comparative study)

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