



The Elements of Unity in Islamic Art as Examined Through the Work of Jamal Badran

Fayeq S. Oweis

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In this dissertation, Islamic art is explored and defined by focusing on its unifying elements and features such as the use of geometrical patterns, arabesque, Arabic calligraphy, and secular figurative art. The mosque (masjid) as the place of worship for Muslims and a gallery for artistic contributions is also explored. Interior elements such as the prayer niche (mihrab) and the pulpit (minbar), and exterior elements such as the call-to-prayer tower (minaret) and the dome (qubba) are analyzed as unifying elements in Islamic art and architecture. These elements are examined through a study of the art and projects of Jamal Badran (1909-1999), a Palestinian artist who specialized in Arabic and Islamic ornamental art. Individual art pieces that Badran created using a variety of media and techniques are examined, many from the never-before-seen collection of his family. Jamal Badran's projects in mosques, including the interior decoration of the University of Jordan Mosque and his work in the Saladin Minbar of the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, is also researched. This work is divided into eight chapters, covering an introduction to the life of Jamal Badran; the unity of Islamic art; and the art of Arabic calligraphy, its geometric principles, and how it is used as an art form and a unifying element in Islamic art. Through Badran's artwork, geometrical patterns, principles, and features are discussed, as are the elements of arabesque and figurative images in Islamic art. The mosque, its development, and its interior and exterior elements as used for artistic expression are also discussed, with a variety of examples from Badran's work. The influence of Jamal Badran is discussed in depth including a section on contemporary Islamic art and the continuity of this cultural art form. A glossary of terms and a chart of historical and key dates in Islamic art are included as appendices, along with a list of Badran's exhibitions and awards, and a chronology of his life.

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