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Fatma Hamdy Mohamed Refaat

Athens Institute for Education and Research

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Fatma Hamdy Mohamed Refaat, Lecturer, Faculty of Communication and Mass  
Media- The British University in Egypt, Egypt

**Decoding the Gender Sign in Contemporary Visual Arts**

**ABSTRACT**

Visual arts have its own language which be needed to understand by the viewers at the approach of how to make sense of visual arts especially through the impact of digitalization. An active process of semiotics- the science of signs will be effective method for reading the signs of visual arts, which is hybrid between fine and digital arts. The concept of gender in the contemporary visual arts is very flexible which plays the important role in decoding the signs of gender through contemporary arts. Many approaches deal with this topic, for example, how to read photographs or painting. Time is changed; the arts aren't isolated from the global communication. Then the hybrid arts were created to merge between the fine arts and digital characteristics, which is needed to be read or decoding its sign. All previous approaches are not sufficient to decipher the contemporary visual arts mark for two reasons. First, reading the sign of the hybrid arts is superficial, dependent on the dialect (form) insulated from the meanings (concept), which means that the sign of these arts is absent. Second, the rapid evolution of digital and global communication, which means that many publications are required daily to follow the emphasis on the role of mark in visual identity, especially in the digital and visual arts, which will be reflected on how the arts will be consistent with rapid temporal and spatial development. In this paper, the semiotic method for reading the gender sign in contemporary visual and hybrid is presented. The examined case studies proof the effectiveness of the semiotic method in decoding the contemporary arts, in terms of the visual community, mental cultural, and the identity.

**Keywords:** Gender, Semiotic, Sign, Identity, and Visual Arts.

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## **Introduction**

Reading the visual arts with semiotic analysis is one method of interpreting the world of art as production of meaning, which was produced by considering every element in the visual art as a collection of signs to be read. It means that semiotic method literary means the science of signs, “Sémion” means Sign, and “Logie” means Science, which explain where do meaning come? The visual art includes many different languages such as words, sounds, painting and images, which needs to be read. Terms of many references considering language as medium of communications, the spoken words can deliver just 7% of your message, voice and tone deliver 38%, but Images and body language deliver the most communication of your message with 55%. It explains the important of gender sign to deliver different messages. It means that you can communicate with others by visual arts only to deliver the most percentage of your message in different medium of communication. [1]

Semiotics is the study of signs and their meaning. Signs include: words, gestures, images, sounds, and objects. You can deliver the same message with different visual signs by using gender as important iconic elements in your message. On the other hand, with the same visual signs, many messages can be delivered. The medium of visual arts is also important; it is totally different to encoding your sign with painting only, digital art, digital photography, or hyped mixed media between traditional arts and digitalization.

## **Literature Review**

There are many approaches deal with this topic, for example, how to read photographs or painting, but something is changed by time, the arts aren't isolated, and the global communication is increased gradually through digital communication. Then the hybrid arts or mixed media are created to merge between the fine arts and digital characteristics, which is needed to be read or decoding its signs.

The concept of gender in the contemporary visual arts is very flexible; it means to express iconic gender in realism, abstract, surreal, or other styles, In terms of the artist's visual community, his/her cultural, and the artist's identity and his\her technicalities, which plays the important role in decoding the signs of gender through contemporary visual arts. The hybrid between the visual arts and digitalization is one of the latest styles in visual arts.

All previous approaches are not sufficient to decipher the contemporary visual arts mark for two reasons. First, reading the sign of the hybrid arts is superficial, dependent on the dialect (form) insulated from the meanings (concept), which means that the signs of these arts are absent. Second, the rapid evolution of digital and global communication, which means that many publications are required daily to follow the emphasis on the role of mark in visual identity, especially in the digital and visual arts, which will be reflected on how the arts will be consistent with rapid temporal and spatial development.

## **Theoretical Background of Semiotics**

Semiotics the study of sign and symbols especially the relations between written and spoken signs and their references to the physical world to the peoples' interpretation, and regarding modern semiotics analysis in the early 20th century, two scholars can be named as the pioneers of this science- the Swiss linguists, 'Ferdinand de Saussure' (1857 – 1913) whose ideas played a foundation for many significant agnostics in 20th century linguistics, and the American philosopher, mathematical, logician and scientist, 'Charles Sanders Peirce' (1839 – 1914) who was educated as chemist and employed as scientist for 30 years.

Through the writing of Peirce and others, this method was published in many academic papers and applications as a fundamental element in the critical and analytical language of visual culture.

The visual artist encoding his/her artwork with the series of signs that give the viewers chance to read or decoding the signs by interpreting it in many perspectives, but the technical language of semiotics and the sign can be effective method. [1] [2]

### *Signifier and Signified*

The sign in semiotics consists of two important parts: First is (signifier) the form that the sign takes, and can be considered as the medium of expression as a physical phase such as a spoken/written word, images, a gesture, or an object. Second is (signified) the concept represents, and it can be considered as signified originates in the mind, it is psychological mental concept triggered by signifiers. e.g.; the schoolhouse, it can be considered as signifier of form of letters shape for word such as "S.C.H.O.O.L.H.O.U.S.E" or the form of the picture for the schoolhouse as a painting, clip art or photography. The different previous forms (text/picture) will be considered as a signified or concept of education. The graphical shapes of any letters such as the letter "D.O.G" and the physically form pictured for dog as an animal are signifiers that is triggered with the mental concept of dog as an animal. It means that the dog mental meaning can be signified by both specific letter shapes or by picture. Different sorts of signs can be identified, distinguished by the relationship or signifier to signified: these are arbitrary or symbolic, indexical and iconic signs. [1] [2]

### **Arbitrary or Symbolic, Indexical and Iconic Signs**

The arbitrary or symbolic sign is one in which there is no natural relationship between signifier and signified. The sound and graphic marks of any spoken and written language or letter must be considered as arbitrary signifiers, because there is no natural connection with it and must be learned.

The same for colours of traffic lights are similarly arbitrary- because the world community have decided, and agreed, that red symbolizes 'stop'- but we could equally have chosen blue.

Indexical signifiers are object, which are produced to indicate the main object, which must signify, e.g. smoke is indexical signifies the existence of fire somewhere and so signifiers. In a similar way, a footprint indexical signifies the person or animal whose foot made it; a bark indexical signifies the presence of a dog.

Iconic signifiers and symbolic functions are those that explain what can be seen, or resemble what you mean, e.g. the realistic drawing that forms and represents its theme is creative, the same for photography: we read the content of the images in terms of the similarity of the two-dimensional image of the represented scene. All these types of signs can be combined in any artistic image: it can be seen indexical if it includes indexical signs within the image such as smoke, recognizable figures and objects in the image are iconic, while any words included in the scene would be arbitrary or symbolic. [1] [2]

### **Semiotics in Visual Arts**

It works is a critical and analytical method for reading the artwork and interpreting it to the viewer from different perspective as a guideline to give them chance again for more interpretation and translation. This translation has its rules of composition and language. In semiotics method, you can read all types of images as indexical and iconic signs, arbitrary or symbolic. Digital photos, drawing, painting, digital art come under images analysis. Although all images are read with the same main process, but it will be interpreted in many ways because the interpreting or decoding the images with different cultures have various interpreting of meaning. Especially the culture that artist who is the main hero in artwork come from, the viewer culture, the style or school of artwork that the artist is influenced with. There is a contemporary technology and science with which the artist may be influenced. Finally, the medium that deals with tradition painting is totally different with dealing with digital painting or photography. [2] [3]

### **Important Answers for Interpreting Visual Signs**

Before reading the sign as a signifier and signified elements, the image must be interpreted many choices for artist starting from the decision of the image layout, it's better to be portrait or landscape, which elements and objects will be selected inside the frame, the image includes human figures or not, how the size of frame is decided and how the human figures inside are cropped. The meaning of the frames size: long, medium, close shoot, which includes one or more than fingers. It is important to interpret what to include and what to exclude. The angle of view, rules of composition, the systematic

Ways of selecting the colour, its hues, saturation, and values must be decided.

Finally, it's important to determine what to focus and how to manage the white space around the elements inside the image. All these previous questions answer interpreter many signs to be read. [3] [4]

## Semiotics with Painting and Digital Photography

There is a big difference between dealing with traditional painting, and digital artwork, e.g. photography. Many decisions whereas dealing with digital art can be edited, or gone step back without any error, plus all the previous steps can be saved, e.g. changing the layout from portrait to landscape with applying all the rules of composition successfully with both can be done. Cropping different sizes, deleting any element and save it again in a hidden layer to be shown when you need can be done. The colour correction can be edited any time before, during, or after finishing artwork, e.g. photography, white balance can be adjusted before capturing the photographs, and edited after by many types of software. Many attributions can be edited again such as hue, saturation, value, shades, highlights, camera lenses, and exposure factor.

Whereas each element is changed, the reading of photographs must be changed too. Digital cameras techniques also control what to focus or to exclude easily by its function, e.g. depth of field (DOF) technique that was shown in fig.1, the specific f-number can be adjusted for getting the effect that you need, for focusing on one object or more and isolating the background to be blurred which titled as shallow DOF, or strong DOF which means focusing on both the background and foreground elements to deliver different message (travelling photo) as is shown in fig.2. Whereas in fig.3, the unusual using of shallow DOF delivers very creative message with very mysterious portrait with indistinct gazes, which it means doubtful and suspicious. The photographer focused on one eye and the nose becomes blurred, which gives intimate and intense direct effect for direct eye contact with the viewers.

One of the most important advantages of digitalization, such as digital camera has been the stop- motion picture, how to freeze the motion just in a moment of time, e.g. the very fast speed of seeing the galloping horses' legs that was shown in fig.4 and fig.5 which showing or the close-up of a bullet coming out of a gun. Also, it's imposible to ask any dancer to stop/pause the dancing action till the images is captured. If that was happened, the analysis of the movement will be faked. [1] [3] [4] [5]

**Figure 1.** *Using Wide Aperture of f/2.8 the DOF is now very Shallow and everything but the Model Falls out of Focus*



Source: Erik Valind, Portrait photography 2014, Ref. [5].

**Figure 2.** *Using Small Aperture of f/16 has a Wide/strong DOF, Rendering Everything in Focus, Including Distracting Background Elements*



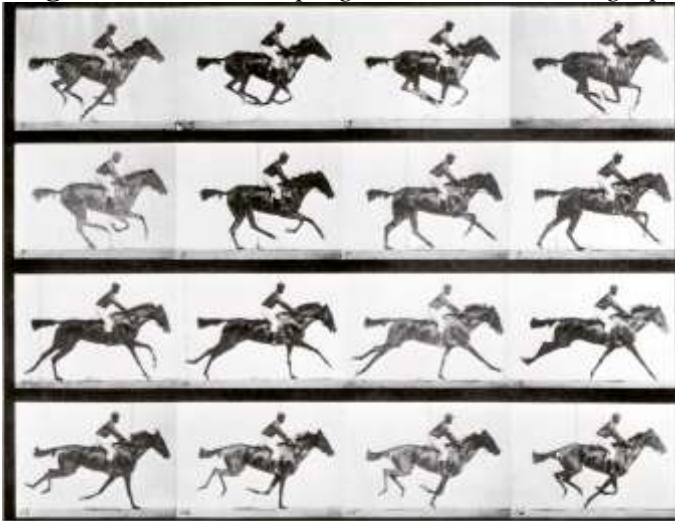
Source: Erik Valind, Portrait photography 2014, Ref. [5].

**Figure 3.** *Title: Cindy Sherman, 2000, Photographer: Chuck Close, Shallow DOF Technique, 165x216 mm, and Unique Daguerreotypes*



Source: Richard Salkeld, Reading photographs 2014, Ref. [1].

**Figure 4.** Title: *Galloping horse, 1878, Photographer: Eadweard Muybridge*



Source: Richard Salkeld, Reading photographs 2014, Ref. [1].

**Figure 5.** Title: *Close-up of a bullet coming out of a gun, Photographer: Cocoon*



Source: Richard Salkeld, Reading photographs 2014, Ref. [1].

## Case Study

### *Gender and the World of Human Being*

The implied idea and sign that is decoded, the dynamic life of the human world which is imagined between the heaven and earth as a signified, but the artist deals with his identity in different signifiers.

### Signifier and Signified

The signified here missed any human figures, in the fig.6- (a) just iconic colour theory that used as indexical object volcano on the earth, complementary lives (heaven and earth), which are shown in two complementary colours (violet & yellow). Violet is symbolic element for karma in Indian and Chinese cultures, which means the upper spiritual situation that related with peaceful. Also, blue and



violet can be iconic for the sky colour, yellow plus red, which related with human desire on the earth such as hungry, may be human being in earth life. The digital part is created in the lower part by seeing elements, which may be indexical for the earth on which the human life is being. The Indian brown red shows half of circle as a symbolic of the earth. Around this earth, unsaturated atmospheric that may arbitrary for the space or the universe out of the earth, although there are three hidden iconic objects shown as the Egyptian pyramids in the upper part like crystals, which face contrast with iconic elements in the bottom to seen as aliens from space. May be this sign is encoded to the conflict between civilization and globalization, originality and modernity. Look at the fig.6- (b) which is leveled advanced for freedom from the black hole and entering the area of gravity where swimming and flight without return and no restrictions.

**Figure 6.** (a) *Without title, 2017, Artist: Stephan – from Macedonia*



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

**Figure 6.** (b) *Without Title, 2017, Artist: Stephan – from Macedonia*



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

### *The Impact of Community Visual Culture on the Sign and Materials*

The visual culture effect of the artist community is very important for encoding and decoding this painting, which combines visual aesthetics and the impact of digital arts through a digital printing function that supports theme idea. The treatment of the surreal atmosphere of the imaginary space in terms of colour correction threw editing programs on the impact of the dual-computer effect of the coding mark. Otherwise space texture, which became three-dimensional from visual through virtual reality effect, digital textures and colour value on the brown area.

### *Double Impacts of Surreal and Abstract Influences*

Although the painting is hybrid between painting and digitalization, it is also hybrid between abstract with colour treatment and surreal sign, which is appeared in virtual elements that was imagined or inspired from the nature such as the brown portrait that was composed from the mountain. The arbitrary sign, which may come of Muslim's holy book, is presented. The holy story explains the strength of human being because he able to accept the test of struggle on the earth, although the mountain and other nature element apologized to do because they explained for God that it's too heavy task to be done for them.

### Gender and Sign

The gender sign here is human figures, the unknown figure that may be hybrid between female and male in one figure. The balance of dynamic life is the complementary between the worlds of humanities life (civilization and globalization) from the earth to heaven.

#### *Gender the World of Femininity and Masculinity from Earth to Heaven*

Look at fig.7- (a), the work of the artist lover of the land of Egypt, motherhood, nostalgia, housing, alder, and mother of men.

### Signifier and Signified

Traditional painting materials gives the artist chance to imagine, draw, paint, edit on spot on the canvas. Very quick decision must be taken during the painting practice. The signs of this artwork can be read by semiotic. The signifier shows iconic object or pictures of caw, fish, island, river Nile, house, and figure for man in the foreground and portrait in the background. The symbolic pictures like putting the portrait of women instead of the caw's face to indicate the same feature between the women and the caw for giving all that they have for others with taking nothing for themselves, they were created just for giving. The fish can be read as symbolic picture for sustenance and goodness. We can see this symbol in the top inside the caw figure and down inside the white frame around the man's face, which seen as the third symbol for home and stability, so we can see woman's hand on the fish's body.

The frame of pictures like a square, which can indicate the stability and balance, throw its four lines, the layout isn't portrait or landscape. This for lines surround big surreal story inside. The composition keeps the rule of third that can be noticed threw the horizon line in the top. Also, the man's figure position was in the right side down of the intersect point of rule of third that attract the viewers' eyes to this position as an important one. The woman face in the same position but in upper part, which can be indexical picture for "Hathour", may that's the reason for being the sky is the space which surrounding her headspace. "Hathour" as shown in fig.8 is an ancient Egyptian goddess who personified the principles of joy, love, music, dance, foreign land, feminine, motherhood, and fertility. She was the most popular deity in the history of ancient Egypt. The frame was distributed into two parts, the upper one related to nature, giving and goodness that related with woman, the symbol of God of goodness "Hathour", the life in paradise. The lower part is related to white stability, home by whom was framed, and balance in the complement figure (the man).

The artist confirms these complement elements by selecting the complementary pallet Green and Indian red, which indexical to the red clay and agriculture which is actions related to the man and striving. On the other hand, in the top, green land, caw, planting, sky as a result of the first action, it's like a

paradise in the heaven. The colours are medium saturation with different values to confirm the contrast between darker and lower part, and lighter upper part.

All objects inside the images were focused but in different priorities that are determined by the position of human elements in the rule of third, the pure white space around the human heads, which prevent any distracting for the viewer attention.

The main idea and sign that was decoding is the dynamic life between the heaven and land, throw the balance and complementary between the world of femininity and masculinity.

**Figure 7.** (a) *A Body Music in an Ancient House*, 2017, Artist: Mohamed Oraby – Luxor, Egypt



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

**Figure 7.** (b) *A Body Music in an Ancient House*, 2017, Artist: Mohamed Oraby – Luxor, Egypt



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

**Figure 8.** Title: *Hathour, Luxor, Egypt*



Athar Masr Ref. [6]

### The Impact of Community Visual Culture on the Sign and Materials

The visual culture effect of the artist community is very important for encoding and decoding this painting, which is influenced by the impact of visual aesthetics that are produced by nature environment.

The treatment of the surreal atmosphere of the imaginary environment in terms of fully saturated colours. Iconic objects that are affected by Luxor atmosphere such as rabbit, pigeon, viper, fish, cow, verdure, river, and giraffe, mountain shape have female attribution as shown in fig.7(a) and (b).

### Gender and Sign

The gender sign here is female figure that indicates to Hathour, and male figure that indicate to the oriental man that has holy feeling towards family and home life. All nature elements such as the mountain have female features inside its rocks. The balance of dynamic life is the complementary between the world of femininity and masculinity from earth to heaven.

### *Gender is the Love of Home Country and Soul Mate*

Look at fig.9- (a), the story of spiritual love which working on nostalgia for his beloved, soul mate. The artist worked expresses of the land of kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the motherland, and his nostalgia to beloved.

### *Signifier and Signified*

The artist used traditional painting medium which gives the artist freedom and simplest on expressive his topic on the canvas. The artist's signs can be read by semiotic. The signifier shows iconic object or simple elements of many female figures, desert, island, and houses from clay without any figures for men. The symbolic pictures like putting the female figures instead of the letter shapes to write and speak about his home country.

The pure white space around the female figures, which seen as the third symbol for natures environment, home, simplicity, unity and stability, so we can see the negative space between women figures is too close to be seen.



The artist influenced by “Henry Matisse” but with his identity, “Henry Matisse” played with space between lines as a tool to express lightness and darkness, with ignoring the importance of the lines' thickness for shading the areas or tinting. But the artist plays with size and spaces between lines to express the female figures as a dark mass plus ignoring the lines' thickness too. The contrast between black and white playing important role in encoding the message, the contrast between black and dark female figures and light and white simple sand background is symbols signifier for females' mysterious in the simple environment.

The contrast between light and white houses and black land of clay, is expressed as a symbol for the source of human figures.

The woman face in the fig.9- (b) is separated to another image, which can be indexical picture for secret and hidden thought for the artist and his nostalgia toward his lover.

The light brown mixed with white in the space surrounding her headspace. The female gazes are like a holy figure, with turn subject off, which confirm mysterious. The female figure is very simple, which showed with two dimensional in terms of surrounding the contour or outline bold line for expressing virtual three-dimensional feeling.

**Figure 9.** (a) *Without title*, 2017, Artist: *Fahd Al-Hgilan* – *from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

**Figure 9.** (b) *Without title*, 2017, Artist: *Fahd Al-Hgilan* – from *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

### The Impact of Community Visual Culture on the Sign and Materials

The visual culture effect of the artist community is very important for encoding and decoding this painting, which is influenced by the impact of visual aesthetics that are produced by nature environment and traditions.

The treatment of impressionist atmosphere of the realistic environment is unsaturated with colours. Iconic objects affected by the country of Saudi Arabia.

### Gender and Sign

The gender sign here is female figure that indicates to home country, and male figure is presented through the reflection of their thoughts that indicate to the oriental man that has holy feeling towards country tradition. The female clothes are clear reflection for these thoughts and traditions. All nature elements such as the clay land have female features inside its colour.

The main idea and signature which was the decipherment is the symbolist of life between the complicity of mysterious female human thoughts with the dark clothes that hides all the figures and faces of women, the balance and integrating the world of femininity and the thoughts of masculinity's world in very simple environments.

### *Gender is Life of the Human Generations*

This visual art has many signs, gender and identity sign. The first one related with our main topic, the second is related with the artist identity sign.

*Signifier and Signified*

Look at fig.10- (a) and (b). The denotation will be discovered through the signifier elements such as iconic for two female figures, one is young and another one is very old. Chess, butterflies and flowers are appeared as iconic signifiers, and arbitrary to link between dynamic life and spirit feeling with life. Chess is arbitrary too, to indicate the struggle of life between different generations and cultures. The connotation may decode the conflict or connection between civilization and globalization, originality and modernity, or originality and contemporary.

The signified or the latest concept of contemporary visual arts is still interested in relationship between visual compositional elements to deliver the artist ideas. Plus, the digitalization treatment plays the important role for many artists' identity. It doesn't mean to create the digital art by her/himself. The artist used the decorative or ornamental thermal paper that was pasted with glue as iconic features for butterflies and flowers. The contrast between white and black hair are indexical elements for disability and youth.

The implied triangle is seen through two women figures and the baseline of chess, which symbolises to balance and complementary between two women, that is appeared through the high contrast in complementary colour (blue and red orange) and (black and white), black hair with white dress facing the white hair and black dress, which is reasonable for both ages. The observation gazes from old woman to the young one. The dreamed gaze for the young girl, which is full of calm brightness. The chess game results indicate to the young girl. The scene is a circle of civilization communication.

**Figure 10.** (a) Title: *Life*, 2017, Artist: Randa Fakhry – from Cairo, Egypt



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017



**Figure 10.** (b) Title: *Life 2017*, Artist: Randa Fakhry – from Cairo, Egypt



Source: Fatma Hamdy, Captured in Symposium Madinaty, 2017

### The Impact of Community Visual Culture on the Sign and Materials

The importance of community visual culture for the artist, which combines between the visual aesthetics and the impact of digital arts, is presented in her artwork.

### Gender and Sign

The question is, the female figures are “the must” for this picture, or it can be replaced with men figures. Female figures are symbolic elements for joy, love, music, dance, feminine, motherhood, and fertility, which will the answers clear for concept. Visually earthly and ornamental papers also support the aesthetic of female figures.

The balance of dynamic life is the complementary between human generations (civilization and globalization) from the land to heaven are the main message that are decocted from female gender sign, which are confirmed the concept of the debates about the human generations.

*Gender and the Inner Human's Mind and Soul*

Signifier and Signified

Look at the fig.11- (a), the signifier is presented through the concept of balance of dynamic life inside the inner human mind between the positive and negative thoughts, inspiration trip from dark to light.

The signified elements are presented through the aesthetic female nude figure, which is standing in a very balanced position, many unknown graphical letters were found on the female body as a secret language. The direction of the body is towards the light ornamental background, which was drawn in digital painting technique. The smoky blue area is like a border between the mysterious darkness and the black area of science and illumines, vivid, decorated and creative area. The whole atmosphere is imaginary one, which inspired from the development of digitalisation world. The mixed media are shambled photography, digital painting and printing, plus using oil and acrylic painting. The iconic blue bird is symbolic for peace, safety, and happiness. The chromatic blue colour for smoky area is indexical for cloudy atmosphere in the sky.

Look at the fig.11- (b) The balance of dynamic life within the inner human soul between truth and falsehood, face and mask, the journey of inspiration from darkness to light, the iconic signifier appears through two objects, one African face, and its mask. Mask can be the hidden door for disappearing your fears, different.

**Figure 11.** (a) Title: *Mental Inspiration 2014-2017*, Artist: *Fatma Hamdy – Cairo, Egypt*



Source: Fatma Hamdy, 2017

**Figure 11.** (b) Title: *Spiritual Inspiration 2017*, Artist: *Fatma Hamdy – Cairo, Egypt*



Source: Fatma Hamdy, 2017

### Signifier and Signified

Kinds of fears is presented in fig.11- (b), the reality and the illusion is the same fear. But the big size of face may explain the trial result. The positivity is for facing. The thinking gaze indicates to the struggle for purity. The bloody red orange face is the symbolic for dynamic action, still alive in front of the fake masks.

### The Impact of Community Visual Culture on the Sign and Materials

The importance of community visual culture for the artist, which combines between the visual aesthetics and the impact of digital arts, is presented in her artwork. The mask was designed and drawn in digital painting, the compositional elements were composed through digital software as a main idea, but all elements were painted with oil and acrylic with various techniques such as transparency areas and dark, the hot colours are highly saturated.

### Gender and Sign

The female face here is a symbolic element for strength, feminine, and fertility, visually African ornamental also support the aesthetic of female figures and confirm the identity.

Only the women can face their fairness without any masks, that's the reason for choosing female face larger than her mask, which couldn't be used to disappear her fairness, useless mask for the face, which is covered by natural elements such as animals' feature.

Look at the fig.11- (a), The balance of dynamic life is inside the inner human mind between the positive and negative thoughts, inspiration trip from dark to light.

Look at the fig.11- (b), The balance of dynamic life within the inner human soul between truth and falsehood, face and mask, the journey of inspiration from darkness to light.

## Conclusion

Semiotic analysis is one of effective methods of interpreting the meaning of artwork. As reading the written language, the visual art can be read as collection of signs. In this paper, different kinds of visual arts, e.g. photographs, digital painting, painting mixed and digital arts, and with different mixed media are interpreted. Gender is a common signifier that is selected to examine if it can be used as the important element through collection of signs for producing different signified and messages.

The result is although many artist can use the same signifier, they produce different signified, because of the semiotics as a reading method confirm that reading is related with collection of signs, many words of rules of composition, artist styles, community and visual infuses that can be interpreted a critic reading. The medium of visual arts is also important; it is totally different to encoding your sign with painting only, digital art, digital photography, or hyped mixed media between traditional arts and digitalization.

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