

## GLOSSARY

- Abstract (identity)** In the context of this book it refers to a visual form that is not representational and does not look like calligraphy (or writing).
- Aesthetic** Concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty. In the context of this book it refers to the Arabic script/calligraphy that functions as an image in a calligraphic artwork. The emphasis in such a case is more on the visual appearance of calligraphy than its semantic meaning.
- Asemesis** In the context of this book it refers to the state in which a form resembles writing or calligraphy but is not recognizable as a particular verbal unit.
- Asemic** Of forms that appear to be writing but are actually not, and thus have no specific semantic content.
- Calligraphic art** Artworks (regardless of their date of creation) in which Islamic calligraphy (or Arabic script) is used in their visual structures as one of the main elements.
- Calligraphic form** In the context of this book the phrase refers to a shape that intentionally resembles Arabic script written in any style or form of Islamic calligraphy. It can be a glyph, a letter, or a combination of joined letters. A calligraphic line shapes calligraphic forms.
- Calligraphic line** A continuous line created as a result of the movement of an instrument of writing (such as a reed pen) on a support (such as paper), which intentionally conforms to shapes that have affinities with Islamic calligraphy along its trajectory. In the context of this book, it is

different from a penstroke: a calligraphic line may be the result of more than one penstroke. Calligraphic lines shape calligraphic forms.

**Function** The intended purpose for which something is being used in a specific context. In the context of this book it refers to the purpose for which Arabic script/calligraphy is used in an artwork.

**Glyph** In typography it refers to the specific graphical representation of a character in a certain typeface. It is a graphical unit. In the context of this book it refers to different elements of the Arabic script apart from letters and words. For example, rhomboid dots or a combination of joined Arabic letters can be called a glyph as they are a graphical unit.

**Hermeneutic** In this book it refers to that function of calligraphy that emphasizes extra-linguistic meanings and needs interpretation. To further clarify, it is useful to mention that throughout the course of Islamic civilization Arabic letters and words have been the subject of many mystical interpretations, and symbolic and metaphoric meanings were assigned to them. This symbolism of Arabic letters and calligraphic forms is reflected not only in the works of mystically inclined writers and poets but also in calligraphic artworks. The hermeneutic function of calligraphy is concerned with such symbolic or esoteric meanings of calligraphy rather than its exoteric (semantic) meanings.

**Hurufiya (/hʊrʊfiyæ/)** Literally means “letterism.” The term that is commonly used in the Arab world to refer to experiments with Arabic script and Islamic calligraphy.

**Icon** One of the three types of signs in a typology of signs proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce. An iconic sign is one whose relationship to its object of reference is based on likeness or resemblance, like a caricature image of a person. In the context of this book forms with representational identities are iconic signs.

**Legibility** Legibility measures the clarity of individual verbal units. In the context of this book, legibility refers to how easy or difficult it is to recognize a certain verbal unit, so it relates to the shape of individual verbal units.

**Morphology** According to the Online Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/> [accessed August 27, 2018]), morphology in the linguistic context refers to “[t]he structure, form, or variation in form (including formation, change, and inflection) of a word or words in a language.”

**Nasta’liq (/næstæliq/)** One of the main scripts (styles) in Islamic calligraphy. It is traditionally the predominant script used in writing Persian, especially Persian poetry.

**Neo-calligraphy** A term proposed by Hamid Keshmirshekan to refer to various kinds of approaches toward Arabic/Persian scripts/calligraphic forms, insofar as are distanced from classical calligraphy. In the context of this book, the term is used to refer to all experiments with Islamic calligraphy (or Arabic script) that deviate from traditional calligraphy in one way or another. This deviation usually takes place through one or more of three major ways: change in tools, deviation from traditional rules of calligraphy, or making the semantic content subservient to visual qualities.

**Proto-animated** In the context of this book, the words proto-animated and proto-animation refer to a static image that has a quality of aliveness or invokes a feeling of movement. This book has borrowed these two terms from Marks (2011), who used them, in her article “Calligraphic animation: Documenting the invisible” to refer to those qualities of Islamic calligraphy in some calligraphic artworks that render them as animated and moving in spite of being static images.

**Proto-animation** See Proto-animated.

**Pseudo-calligraphy** Forms that resemble calligraphy but are not recognizable as a particular calligraphic unit. See *asemic/asemis*.

**Qit'a (/qet'ə/)** A category of calligraphic works in which a fragment of poetry or prose (usually of two or four lines) is inscribed.

**Readability** Readability is an evaluation of how well the combinations of verbal units interact to communicate understandable semantic messages. It is a rate of how easily a block of text can be read or its semantic message can be deciphered. In this book, readability refers to how easy or difficult it is to decipher the semantic meaning of a block of verbal units. Therefore it mainly depends on how individual verbal units are arranged in relation to each other.

**Representational (identity)** In the context of this book it refers to a form that resembles someone or something in the real physical world. For example, a painting of a tree has representational identity because it resembles a tree in the real world. See *icon*.

**Semantic** Relating to the meaning of language or text. In the context of this book it refers to the function of calligraphy and writing that is conventionally expected of it, as the visual manifestation of language.

**Shikastih (/ʃekæste/)** One of the scripts of calligraphy that is mostly used in the Persianate world. It is a script known for its speed of writing and is characterized by the predominance of curved lines and ligatures.

***Sīyāh-mashq*** (/siyaḥ məʃq/) Literally means “black exercise.” A category of calligraphic works that are often covered completely with writing. *Sīyāh-mashq* pages were originally the preparatory sheets of calligraphy practice that preceded the fully rendered final calligraphy sheet. However, later *sīyāh-mashq* evolved into an art form in its own right and became a collectible artifact. Today many of the pages of *sīyāh-mashq* are created not for preparatory exercises but solely for the sake of artistic expression. In most of the artistic examples of *sīyāh-mashq*, form and technique suppress the semantic content of calligraphy, making the text secondary to the formal aspects of the work.

**Symbol** One of the three types of signs in a typology of signs proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce. A symbol is a sign whose relationship to its referent is arbitrary and conventional, an example being language. For example, the word “cat,” which signifies a specific animal, is a symbol. In the context of this book forms with verbal identities (i.e. verbal units) are symbolic signs.

**Verbal (identity)** In the form of letters/words. In the context of this book it refers to a form that is recognizable as a certain verbal unit (i.e. in the form of a glyph, letter, combinations of letters, or words).

**Verbal Unit** A legible linguistic sign. It can be a glyph (e.g. a rhomboid dot or a combination of joined letters), a letter, or a word.

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