

# EGYPTIAN ART HISTORY for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

\*Art History lesson to take place in Michele Hsieh's room, 26.

\*start presentation with short 10 minute video clip from DVD '5000 years of Magnificent Wonders: 7 Wonders' select #2 Pyramid of Giza.

\*cover each slide

## **Slide #1**

Beginning of powerpoint (picture of camel)

## **Slide #2**

Highlights of Ancient Egyptian History.

Ancient Egyptian art and architecture is vast and covers thousands of years.

Specialists in this time period are called Egyptologists. During this powerpoint we will cover these highlights.

Hieroglyphs

Paintings

Temples and Pyramids

Sculpture both relief and sculpture in the round

## **Slide #3**

**EGYPT (picture: full map of Egypt)**

-Egypt is basically a desert, part of the great Sahara Desert.

-However, near the Nile River, the land is very moist and fertile.

-Look at how near most of the towns are to the Nile.

-The water and silt from the Nile allowed the Egyptians to grow crops and raise different farm animals.

-In addition, the Nile supplied the Ancient Egyptians with a year-round supply of fish to eat.

## **Slide #4**

**THE START OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION:**

**(picture: aerial view of Nile)**

-The Predynastic (period of history before written records), or prehistoric beginnings of Egyptian civilization are chronologically vague but are thought

to begin around 3500 BC when sophisticated civilization began on the banks of the River Nile.

-During this time Egypt was divided geographically and politically into Upper Egypt (the southern, upstream part of the Nile) and Lower (northern) Egypt.

-Egypt had 31 dynasties during its existence with the last one ending in 332 B.C.

## **Slide #5**

### **Highlight #1: HIEROGLYPHS**

- **We will start with Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.** Hieroglyphs are pictures that were used to write the ancient Egyptian language.
- Hieroglyphic signs were used to keep records of the king's possessions.
- The language consisted of more than 750 individual signs.

## **Slide #6**

-The spoken language of ancient Egyptian were made up of sounds, partly of consonants and partly of vowels.

-The writing of hieroglyphs constantly ignored and omitted vowels.

-The ancient language has never been heard, we are not sure how these words would be pronounced.

## **Slide #7**

- **Hieroglyphs** are more than just a way of writing, they are also pictures meant to be aesthetically pleasing or beautiful.
- The picture signs can be written from right to left; from left to right; or vertically, reading downwards.
- Look for pictures of men or animals. See which way the pictures are facing, the text is read towards the faces. If they are facing to the left, the inscription is read from the left to the right. If they are facing right, the inscription is read from right to left.

## Slide #8

- Paintings occurred on walls of tombs and temples, in relief (carved into the walls and then painted), and on papyrus.
- This Egyptian painting shows the jackal-headed god Anubis as he weighs a dead person's heart on a balance scale.
- In ancient Egyptian religion and mythology, Anubis the god of embalming who guided the souls of the dead through the underworld kingdom of his father, Osiris. Considered benevolent and good, Anubis was present in the underworld at the weighing of the dead.

## Slide #9

- Nebamun's tomb in Egypt, dating from about 1900 BC, are full of detail and color.
- One section of the ancient Egyptian paintings shows Nebamun hunting birds from a boat on the Nile. The picture is full of birds as well as fish below the water. The animals, shown in profile are of such detail that their species' can be identified. Nebamun towers over one of his wives and their child, who appear unnaturally small next to him on the boat. The leg of a bird is caught by the hand of Nebamun; the three overlapping profiles of the bird show us movement.

Several characteristics of these paintings tell us that they are not direct attempts at realism. One is that all forms are painted in profile, giving them a stiff appearance. This rigid "Egyptian" style that we are all familiar with represents subjects in the most recognizable way possible. The second important rule is the size hierarchy. People of highest importance are painted largest while those of lesser importance are painted smaller.

In Ancient Egyptian paintings "inaccuracies" are not mistakes or lacking on the part of the artists. Tomb painters of Ancient Egypt followed strict rules in order to ensure that the trappings of life would follow the deceased into the afterlife. The artists of Ancient Egypt must have belonged to an elite guild. Unlike the artists of today they painted with common rules, this allows their paintings to be very readable. To us, these paintings function as

historical records of ancient Egypt. To the Egyptians, tomb paintings were literally magical images that transferred their subject on into infinity.

### **Slide #10**

Highlight #3 Mortuaries and pyramids

#### **Stepped Pyramid of King Zoser: (picture of pyramid)**

-about 2650 B.C. the stepped pyramid of King Zoser of the Third Dynasty was raised at Saqqara, the ancient necropolis (Greek for "city of the dead")

-It is one of the oldest stone structures in Egypt and the first monumental royal tomb.

-This stepped pyramid is 200 feet high and has two functions:

One is to protect the mummified king and his possessions and the other is to symbolize, by it's gigantic presence, the kings' absolute and godlike power.

-Egyptians took the afterlife very seriously their whole life was spent to prepare for the afterlife.

### **Slide #11**

#### **Mortuary Precinct of King Zoser, Saqqara (two pictures of columns at King Zoser)**

-The 40 columns used to line the pathway into Zoser's precinct are the first stone columns in the history of architecture.

-There is little doubt that the architecture of ancient Egypt had a profound impact on the designers of the first columnar temples of the Greeks.

### **Slide #12**

#### **The Great Pyramids of Gizeh: Dynasty IV (picture of pyramids) (from left: Menkaure, c. 2525-2475 B.C.; Khafre, c. 2575-2525 B.C.; Khufu, c. 2600-2550 B.C.)**

-of the three great pyramids, Khufu is the oldest and largest. Except for the galleries and burial chamber, it is an almost solid mass of limestone masonry.

-The limestone was quarried in the Eastern Nile cliffs and floated across the Nile river during the seasonal floods. On average each piece weighs 2.5 tons (an average mid-sized car weighs only 2 tons)

- After the masons cut and labeled the stones, great gangs of laborers dragged them up temporary ramps and laid them course on course.
- Finally the Pyramid was surfaced with a casing of pearly white limestone, cut so precisely that the eye could scarcely detect the joints.
- a few casing stones can still be seen in the cap that covers the Pyramid of Khafre, all that remains after many centuries during which the pyramids were stripped to supply limestone to the Islamic builders of Cairo.

### **Slide #13 and #14**

#### **Great Sphinx of Gizeh: (two pictures, two slides)**

- The Great Sphinx is a monumental statue with a head of a human and a lion's body which sits in a depression to the south of Khafre's pyramid at Gizeh
- made of sandstone and approximately 65' high, 240' long
- it is one of the world's largest and oldest statues, yet basic facts about it such as the real-life model for the face, when it was built, and by whom, are debated but one thing holds true and that is the Great Sphinx is a national symbol of Egypt, both ancient and modern.
- The Great Sphinx has suffered much damage through the years, mostly from erosion and also from damage by soldiers.

### **Slide #15, #16, and #17**

#### **Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut(three pictures)**

- the most majestic of these royal mortuary temples was that of Queen Hatshepsut.
- her mortuary temple rises from the valley floor in three colonnaded terraces connected by ramps.
- it is remarkable how visually well suited the structure is to its natural setting.
- the long horizontals and verticals of the colonnades with the light and shadows mimic the rocky cliffs above.

## Slide #18

### Highlight #4 Sculpture

#### Palette of King Narmer:

This is a relief as sculpture that is made by carving into a flat surface. The figures are not completely 3-dimensional. The art is viewed from from the front only.

- King Narmer is also known as Menes and he is known for uniting both of the kingdoms
- This is one of the earliest historical works of art preserved. C. 3100-3000 B.C.
- Slate, approximately 25" high
- Commonly used utilitarian object: tablet on which eye make-up was prepared to protect the eyes against irritation and the glare of the sun.
- This piece represents an early blueprint on how the figure would be represented in Egyptian art for three thousand years.

\*look at how figure is drawn:

- In Egyptian art realism was not the primary concern.
  - The goal was to represent the ideal (the best view to preserve the body) and the most recognizable characteristics of a person or subject.
  - For instance a human being's head is drawn in profile but arms and torso are drawn from the frontal perspective.
  - The most important person in the picture was the largest, thus a realistic perspective or representation was ignored. The pharaoh was shown as an ideal, regardless of age, disease, or injury.
- Between the goddess Hathor heads (shown in the form of a cow with a woman's face, are depicted at the top) is the hieroglyph giving Narmer's name within a frame representing the royal palace, making this palette the earliest labeled work of historical art.

## **Slide #19**

### **Imhotep (picture of imhotep)**

- The architect of King Zoser's mortuary is Imhotep and he is the first known artist in recorded history.
- He was the king's grandvizier, a man with legendary powers as well as a priest, scribe, physician and of course architect. He was later revered as a god.

## **Slide #20**

### **Menkaure and Khamerernebtj from Giza (two pictures)**

- Pharaoh Menkaure is shown in this sculpture with his queen (Khamerernebtj) (notice the posture)
- Menkaure stands rigidly straight with his arms hanging down close to his body with his hands clenched into fists with thumbs forward. His left leg is slightly advanced but there is no visible shift of his hips to correspond to the uneven weight distribution.
- Khamerernebtj stands in a similar position, however her right arm circles around her husband's waist and her left arm gently rests on his arm.
- Husband and wife stand frozen with no other sign of emotion and they do not look at each other but out into space.
- The dark natural stone used to create the sculpture enhances the timeless quality of these portraits.

### **Seated Scribe**

- Many other Egyptian portrait statues were painted including this one of a Fifth Dynasty seated scribe of unknown identity.
- Both sculptures have a stiff upright posture however the color in the seated scribe statue lends a lifelike quality that isn't seen with the husband and wife portrait.
- The seated scribe sits directly on the ground, not on a throne nor even on a chair, and is a much lower figure in the hierarchy of Egyptian society than is the pharaoh, whose divinity makes him superhuman.
- In the history of art, especially portraiture, it is almost a rule that formality is relaxed and realism is increased when the subject is a person of lesser importance.

-The scribe is shown with sagging chest muscles and a protruding belly; such signs of age would have been disrespectful and inappropriate in a portrait of an Egyptian god-king.

### **Slide # 21**

King Tutankhamen

-in 1922 the tomb of pharaoh Tutankhamen was discovered intact with numerous artifacts inside which gained renown interest and the pieces went on a worldwide tour. It has been estimated that the collection attracted the greatest number of visitors ever recorded at any single work of art tour.

### **-Death Mask of Tutankhamen**

-covered the king's face shows his features in a relaxed kind of way, confident of his eternal life.

### **Slide #22**

**Canopic Shrine of Tutankhamun** -Tutankhamun's canopic vessels were placed in this elaborately decorated shrine standing on a sled

### **Slide #23**

**Inside the shrine are the canopic jars which hold the deceased organs.**

### **Canopic Chest of Tutankhamun**

-Tutankhamun's Canopic Chest was carved from a single block of semi-translucent calcite

-notice the columns of blue-painted hieroglyphs

-the chest contains four Canopic Jars with lids of a king's bust, possibly Tutankhamun.

-inside the jar and different from the traditional canopic vessel, he had four small gold shaped coffins that held his organs.

### **Canopic Jars:**

-The art project related to this lesson will be to create a canopic jar.

-These jars contained the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines removed from the body during the mummification process. (the four main organs the Egyptians believed to be)

- each jar was placed under the protection of a God and often the lid of the jar was made in the head of that God
- The Four Sons of Horus are commonly used, however lids of goddesses were also used and in the new kingdom the canopic jars had the head of the deceased

The Four Sons of Horus:

- Hapy (baboon-headed) guarded the lungs
- Qebehusenuf (falcon-headed) cared for the intestines
- Imseti (human-headed) looked after the liver
- Duamutef (jackal-headed) protected the stomach

### **Slide #24**

#### **Canopic vases of Psusennes I (picture)**

- embellished with a thin gold leaf and blue glass paste
- a gilded bronze cobra tops -each head.
- Hapy (baboon-headed) guarded the lungs
- Qebehusenuf (falcon-headed) cared for the intestines

### **Slide #25**

#### **Canopic vase of Psusennes I (picture)**

- Imseti (human-headed) looked after the liver

### **Slide #26 and until the end of the power point**

#### **Canopic vase of Psusennes I (picture)**

- Duamutef (jackal-headed) protected the stomach
- there is a four-column hieroglyph inscription on the body of the jars

#### **Canopic vases of Inepuhotep (picture)**

- these roughly finished vases are made of limestone and topped by a lid made of painted wood in the form of a human head
- the lids depict in human form the Four Sons of Horus under whose protection the internal organs were placed.

#### **Canopic Jar, gold coffin: Tutakhamun (picture)**

#### **Canopic Jar examples: (8 pictures)**

- notice: color, lids, and hieroglyphics