

Western art history

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September 3, World Art I: Western Art Part One Throughout time different cultures use sculptures as symbols to communicate aspects of their religious beliefs and rituals. Two vastly different cultures from prehistoric times and times of the Ur and Babylonian Empires in the Middle East are being looked at in this analysis. Both cultures using the statues of the Venus of Willendorf and the Two Worshippers from the Square Temple of Eshnunna (now in modern day Tell Asmar in Iraq) show the human form to communicate their religious beliefs and rituals.

The Venus of Willendorf, which has the reproductive and nursing parts of the female form exaggerated, allows us to believe that this statue represents a fertility goddess. There is also a hint of red pigment on the statue that leads us to believe that it is representative of childbirth. 1 The women of this culture were, most likely, revered for their ability to have children. While the Two Worshippers, which were carved to represent the local citizens, were left inside the temple to keep continual prayer vigilance to the god Abu. 2

In the end, whether the statue represents a fertility goddess or a person, religion has been prevalent in some form throughout time. Though the various cultures may change, as well as the religious beliefs and rituals, time shows us that religion will always be there.

Part Two

Khafra Enthroned and the Seated Scribe come from two different periods of time in Egyptian Art. Both Khafra and the scribe seem to be seated in different positions. King, or pharaoh, Khafra is wearing similar style clothing to the scribe however it seems that Khafra's clothing is more elegant than the scribe's clothing. Clothing is one way of social position. The higher class

citizens and royalty wore finer more elegant garments while the other social classes wore clothing that was of much less refinement. Like the clothing upon the statues of King Menkaure and Queen and Ni-ka-re, his wife, and their daughter, Khafra Enthroned shows that kings reveled in power and luxury.

All the Egyptian works of art showed great detail when it came to the human form. From the placement of the eyes on the head to the curves on a woman's body, these sculptures show the importance of the craft taken by the Egyptian sculptors. 3

Part Three

The two works I chose for case studies are from the Hellenistic Greek era of art, Aphrodite from Melos and Battle of Issus (Alexander Mosaic). I chose these works since I like the Ancient Greek works of art.

For the sculpture Aphrodite from Melos (More famously known as Venus of Milo), I used the online book "Greek Sculpture a Collection of Sixteen Pictures of Greek Marbles" By Estelle M. Hurl, for Chapter 13 deals with Aphrodite of Melos (Venus of Milo), "By Greek tradition the fairest of the goddesses was Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. To her every lover paid his vows and every maiden paid for her charms." 4

As for the Battle of Issus (Alexander Mosaic), I used the online book: "The drama, painting, poetry, and song: embracing a complete history of the ..." By Albert Ellery Berg which states "In the time of Alexander, some such transition took place in Greek painting as we shall have occasion to notice in speaking of the Italian painters of the seventeenth century, when imitative dexterity and high finish was more highly thought of than inventive power."

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Greek artwork from the Hellenistic Greek period has a high quality to detail and to reverence that I enjoy in a sculpture or even a mosaic painting. They artist allow you to feel as though you were there when the artwork was being created. Furthermore, it shows the high quality craftsmanship and artistry that the artist used in creating the work of art.

Works Cited

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