

Ancient art



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Panel of Lions- Chauvet Caves Queen Nefertari Art history is a record of how people in the past lived, felt, and acted; it allows us a glimpse of a long ago deceased culture. To look at Ancient Greek art is to realize the importance and accomplishments of human beings. Though the Greeks used art to honor the Gods, it was those same Gods that were created in human image. Even their sculpture, pottery, and temples, were created under the fundamental principle of *arête*, meaning to reach one's fullest potential. Without Rome's influence, we would not have concrete or the Pantheon, which is still in use today.

While more secular and utilitarian in form, the Romans developed the use of the arch, the vault, and the dome, leading for a much grander form of architecture. From the Greeks example, the Romans developed mosaic decorations, which became a very important aspect of patrician domestic decoration. The Paleolithic Period is referred to as the Stone Age, mainly because stone artifacts are the only artifacts that have survived. In Paleolithic paintings, the images of humans rarely appear and when they do they are more simplified and abstract than the images of animals, which portray an expressive naturalism.

Discovered by three cave explorers in 1994, the Chauvet Caves, located in the Ardeche region of Southern France date back to around 30, 000 BC. The most famous cave findings in the world, this Pont d' Arc find holds the oldest known paintings. Painted in charcoal and earthen pigments, lifelike images of horses, rhinoceroses, tigers, and other animals that long ago became extinct show us what life was like for our ancestors. It has long been the

belief of scholars that the purpose behind this naturalistic art was to bring the spirit of the animals into the rituals of the hunt.

It is believed that the Chauvet Caves were used as a sanctuary where the Paleolithic people initiated their youth in ceremonies. This theory is based on both symbolic and metaphysical associations with the animals portrayed in these ancient cave paintings. The Chauvet Cave features a coveted scene of a pride of lions hunting together for bison; as this was a permanent place of inhabitation for man, this art represents a level of development for mankind. Chauvet Caves is divided into two parts. While the first part is mainly red images with some black imagery, the second part is mainly black images of animals.

Along with the pride of lions is a painting of three horses. More than 60% of the animals identified at Chauvet-Pont-d'-Arc were considered dangerous mammoth animals. These animals represent the animals that primitive man hunted at the time. It is surprising the amount of shading and perspective that went into the creation of these cave creations. These refinements contrast greatly with the images we are used to seeing. Egypt, known for such mesmerizing works as The Great Pyramids, had deserts on both sides of the Nile.

Because of this, Egypt remained relatively unscathed from outside influence for 2,500 years, leading to their own distinctive style of architecture, painting, and sculpture. While their religious belief focused largely on life after death, care and preservation of the body was essential for extending life beyond the grave. " Upon death, bodies of royalty and nobility were

embalmed; together with accompanying artifacts, tools, and furniture, they were then buried in pyramids or in hidden underground tombs. Architects put great effort into funerary structures. As a result, most of what we know about ancient Egypt comes from such tombs".

Frank, 2010). Nefertari's tomb is considered to be one of the best preserved, most eloquent paintings of any Egyptian burial site. Discovered in 1904 by archaeologist Ernesto Schiaparelli, he spent two years excavating both this site and other sites around the Valley of the Queens with limited success. Humanity and humidity, mixed with landslides and salt deposits, had left the tomb in deplorable condition. In 1986, the Ministry of Culture and the Egyptian Antiquities Organization in Cooperation with Getty Conservation Institute were determined to complete restore Queen Nefertari's tomb.

Queen Nefertari was believed to be King Ramesses II's favorite wife, and as such, he commissioned a beautifully painted tomb in a small rock-cut temple for her to be placed next to his own. It was located in the Valley of the Queens, which is located in Thebes. Reigning during the 19th Egyptian Dynasty, the queen's tomb consisted of several rooms and hallways with paintings of Queen Nefertari in various positions doing many different things. At the entrance is a depiction of a sun between Isis and Nephthys, which leads into an offering hall, with several paintings that show the Queen in worship and offering items to different Gods.