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The art of Ancient Egypt



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Description

Bernard Smith was an Australian art historian, art critic and academic, including at the University of Melbourne. He has been described as the founder of Australian Art History, and his presence and influence in Australian cultural life immense. This is one of many of his lectures given in the Fine Arts Department of the University of Melbourne between 1956 and 1966 and at a time when it was the only art history department in an Australian university. They are lectures in the history of art that range from Palaeolithic to the Romantic Movement. These lectures are presented as originally written and are archival in nature with no attempt to bring them up-to-date. They belong to their time.

Abstract

The art of our times is connected by what we might call a chain of tradition to the art of Egypt-Mesopotamia. Beyond Egypt the chain is broken. The archaeological record which stretches back from Egypt to Lascaux and Altamira contains far more gaps than it does links. But from Egyptian times onwards, technical methods of working materials, style of drawing, and habitual ways of seeing, or modes of perception, and traditional graphic images which enable men to communicate their ideas and feelings to one another, have been passed down through Western Civilization from one artist to another. The art historian is concerned very largely with tracing the history of these technical methods, modes of perception, and accepted graphic images. He can only work where there is a continuous tradition of visual material and of written documents, for art history, like history itself is concerned very much with the study of written documents. We may say then that our study of the art history of Western Europe really begins with the art of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Prehistoric and primitive art are really the concern of the professional archaeologists and anthropologist.

Keywords

Art, Ancient; Egypt

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The artworks of ancient Egypt have fascinated people for thousands of years. The early Greek and later Roman artists were influenced by Egyptian techniques... The early Greek and later Roman artists were influenced by Egyptian techniques and their art would inspire those of other cultures up to the present day. Many artists are known from later periods but those of Egypt are completely anonymous and for a very interesting reason: their art was functional and created for a practical purpose whereas later art was intended for aesthetic pleasure. Functional art is work-made-for-hire, belonging to the individual who commissioned it, while art created for pleasure - even if commissioned - allows for greater expression of the artist's vision and so r Ancient Egyptian art is the painting, sculpture, architecture and other arts produced by the civilization of ancient Egypt in the lower Nile Valley from about 3000 BC to 30 AD. Ancient Egyptian art reached a high level in painting and sculpture, and was both highly stylized and symbolic. It was famously conservative, and Egyptian styles changed remarkably little over more than three thousand years. Much of the surviving art comes from tombs and monuments and now there is an emphasis on life after death and the preservation of knowledge of the past. The wall art was never meant to be seen by pe



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