

B.C.

- 43,000 At Panaramitee, Australia, humans make petroglyphs, rock engravings of circles, dots, arcs, and other nonrepresentational designs. SCULP
- 33,000 In France and other sites in Europe, beads, pendants, and other body ornamentation are fashioned from bone fragments and animal teeth. DECO
- 33,000-
-23,000 At Patna, India, and other sites in South Asia, ostrich eggshells, perhaps used as containers, are engraved with decorative, nonrepresentational patterns. DECO
- 30,000-
-28,000 The world's earliest known wall paintings—images of bears, mammoths, and other animals—are painted with charcoal and iron pigments in a cave near Avignon, France. PAINT
- 30,000-
-20,000 In Germany and elsewhere in Europe, sculptures are made from stone, bone, ivory, antler, and horn. Some depict animals, and others, called "Venuses," are of exaggerated female shapes (e.g., the four-inch Venus of Willendorf). SCULP
- 28,000 In Europe, flutes, the earliest known musical instruments, are made from bones. MUSIC
- 27,000 In Tanzania ocher fragments and ocher-stained palettes appear, evidence of the art of painting. PAINT
- 26,000 At the Apollo II cave in Namibia, Africa, artists paint stone slabs with black and red figurines of animals such as the zebra and black rhinoceros. PAINT
- 25,000 In the area of Europe that will eventually become the Czech Republic, weaving and fired-clay ceramics have been invented. DECO
- 25,000-
-20,000 In the Pyrenees and Spain spears are decorated with grouped incisions and simplified animal carvings. DECO
- 25,000-
-18,000 Rock engravings are made in Arabia and India. SCULP
- 24,000 In Europe humans make huts as long-term dwellings. One example from Moravia indicates use of a low outer wall of clay and limestone with a timber superstructure and a roof of animal skins and brushwood. ARCH

-20,000

-20,000-
-10,000

In France and Spain paintings are made on cave walls. Images include horses, bison, and cattle as well as nonrepresentational designs such as dots and lines, along with stenciled silhouettes of hands. PAINT

-20,000-
-15,000

Animal sculpture becomes much more common in central and eastern Europe as artists carve ivory statuettes of felines, horses, and bison. SCULP

-20,000-
-10,000

In France and Spain people decorate caves with realistic and abstract engravings and lifelike bas-relief animal sculptures. SCULP

-15,000

In Europe pierced staffs begin to feature finely engraved animal decorations. DECO

-15,000

Throwing sticks made of reindeer horn are frequently decorated with animal carvings or reliefs. DECO

-15,000

Artists in the Lascaux Cave in southern France paint lifelike animals on cave walls, using earth pigments such as ochre. Paint is applied with bundled grasses, reeds, or hands, or blown through hollow bones. PAINT

-15,000

Two bison are modeled in clay in the cave of Le Tuc d'Audoubert, France. SCULP

-13,000

In Mezhirich in eastern Europe huts are built from mammoth bones. ARCH

-13,000

At the Wargata Mina cave, Tasmania, stenciled silhouettes of hands are rendered on cave walls by blowing pigment over human hands. PAINT

-12,000

Crosshatching and shaded applications of color begin to enhance the modeling of cave engravings. SCULP

-11,000

At Bhimbetka, India, animals and abstract figures are painted on rocks. PAINT

-10,000

By now, across much of the inhabited world, including Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, the art of building tents and huts from such materials as timber, animal bones, hides, and brushwood has become widespread. In some sites, notably in Australia, simple windbreaks made of branches are used as shelters. ARCH

-9000

In Japan *jomon* (cord-marked) pottery vessels are made, notable for their pointed bases and cord-marked patterns. DECO

-8000

The first cities appear in Mesopotamia (Iraq) and elsewhere in the Near East, notably Jericho in Palestine. ARCH

-8000

Africans weave matting from palm fronds and other fibrous materials for use in bedding and walls. DECO

- 8000 In Australia rock paintings of animals are made. PAINT
- 7000 In Jericho mortar is invented for use with sun-dried brick. ARCH
- 7000 Clay pottery appears in Asia Minor (Turkey) and the Near East. DECO
- 7000 In the Saharan plateaus, which will gradually turn to desert after 6000 B.C., animals are painted on rock walls, ushering in a long tradition of rock painting in the region. PAINT
- 7000 The faces of human skulls from Jericho are individually reconstructed in tinted plaster with pieces of seashells for the eyes. These Neolithic "sculptured heads" point the way to Mesopotamian portrait sculpture. SCULP
- 6000 Fertility goddesses made of baked clay appear in a number of religious shrines throughout Anatolia, or Asia Minor (Turkey). SCULP
- 5900 In Mesopotamia (Iraq) the Ubaid culture begins to build temples consisting of a single mud-brick room with an altar and offering temple. ARCH
- 5400-4300 During the Late Ubaid period in Mesopotamia (Iraq), mud-brick houses are built on a tripartite plan, consisting of a large rectangular room in the center with rows of smaller rooms on either side. ARCH
- 5000 In the Near East nuggets of gold, silver, copper, and other metals come into use as ornaments and trade goods. DECO
- 5000 In China ritual jade objects are fashioned with abrasives. DECO
- 5000 Near Eastern influences reach the Balkans with the creation of baked clay fertility goddesses in that region. SCULP
- 4300-3100 In Mesopotamia (Iraq) during the Uruk period, elaborately decorated temples, raised on platforms, are built following the tripartite plan of houses of the Late Ubaid period. *See also* 5400-4300 B.C., ARCH. ARCH
- 4000 In Mesopotamia (Iraq) building bricks are fired in kilns. ARCH
- 4000-3000 Eastern Europe becomes a major center of the potter's art and the clay modeling of free-standing figures. MISC
- 4000 In Egypt rattles and clappers are used in ritualistic music to exorcise evil spirits. MUSIC

-4000

-4000-
-2000

Artists from the settlement of Vinca in Serbia create hundreds of triangular clay heads with pierced ears to which can be attached hair, headdresses, or earrings. SCULP

-3500

In the Near East the Sumerians develop cuneiform, the system of pictograms wedged into clay tablets that is the earliest known form of writing. LIT

-3500

Sumerian sculptors from Uruk in the Near East create marble cult statues with heads inlaid with colored materials and topped with either gold or copper. SCULP

-3300

The pottery wheel is invented in Sumeria. By 3000 B.C., it is also developed in China, probably independently. DECO

-3100

The Egyptians invent an early form of hieroglyphics. LIT

-3100

At the beginning of the Egyptian First Dynasty, artists start to use bronze tools for carving. SCULP

-3000

Clothing dyes are in use in China and Egypt. DECO

-3000

Pottery and stylized stone figurines of humans are made in Ecuador. Independent pottery styles will develop elsewhere in the Americas, notably Mexico and Georgia, by 2400 B.C. DECO

-3000

Egyptian goldsmiths make fine jewelry from gold and precious and semi-precious stones. DECO

-3000

Harpes of several designs are played in Mesopotamia (Iraq). MUSIC

-3000-
-2155

During the Old Kingdom in Egypt (First to Sixth Dynasties), wall paintings in tombs feature fractional representation, in which the shoulders and eyes are viewed frontally while the head and feet are in profile. Hierarchical scaling is also common, in which some figures are enlarged to illustrate their social prominence. PAINT

-3000

In Egypt, red earthenware statuettes of lions are produced, predecessors to the Great Sphinx. *See* 2500 B.C., SCULP

-3000

Hieroglyphic reliefs celebrating King Narmer's victory over Lower Egypt appear on a ceremonial slate palette. The palette demonstrates a break from prehistoric traditions as a strictly Egyptian style emerges, marked by a strong sense of order and clarity. SCULP

- 3000 With the political unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, artists aim to spread the image of a new society and the glory of the pharaoh. Bas-relief carvers use divided compositions and simplified human forms. SCULP
- 2778-
-2160 During the Third to Tenth Dynasties of the Old Kingdom, harps with small bow-shaped resonators, long vertical flutes, and double clarinets are played in Egypt. MUSIC
- 2650 The pyramid of Zoser in Egypt, the world's first large stone structure, is designed by Imhotep, physician, architect, and counselor to Zoser. Also called the Step Pyramid, it is almost 200 feet high. ARCH
- 2600 Sumerian sculptors create simplified and schematic groups of cylindrical marble figures representing gods and temple worshippers. SCULP
- 2550 The Great Pyramid of Giza is built under the supervision of the Egyptian pharaoh Cheops, or Khufu. The pharaohs Chefren, or Khafra, and Menkure, or Mycerinus, will also build pyramids at Giza in, respectively, c. 2500 B.C. and c. 2470 B.C. ARCH
- 2500 The cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa arise in the Indus Valley. The houses are uniformly constructed of mud brick and laid out according to a plan. ARCH
- 2500 Glass ornaments are in use in Egypt. DECO
- 2500 Performances are given in temples in pharaonic Egypt. Coronation dramas are staged in which each scene is enacted at a different station along a given route. DRAMA
- 2500 The oldest written story, the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, is set into writing for the first time. It concerns the adventures of Gilgamesh and the "wild man" Enkidu. See also 3500 B.C., LIT. LIT
- 2500-
-2001 A five-tone scale is used in Chinese music. MUSIC
- 2500 Egyptian sculptors create a more cubic and impersonal view of the human body for royal portrait statues to be placed in funerary temples and tombs. SCULP
- 2500 Egyptian pharaoh Chefren, or Khafra, supervises the building of the Great Sphinx at Giza. SCULP
- 2423 A marked differentiation becomes apparent among Egyptian funerary stelae of the Sixth Dynasty. Sculptors ignore the old rules of human proportions and begin to enlarge the head and elongate the eyes and hands. SCULP

-2400

Limestone portrait busts begin to appear in Old Kingdom Egypt, perhaps echoing the Neolithic custom of keeping the head of the deceased separate from the rest of the body. SCULP

-2400

Egyptian sculptors focus more on observation rather than established conventions by creating painted limestone reliefs illustrating scenes of daily life for the tomb of Ti at Saqqara, Egypt. SCULP

-2340

At the beginning of his rule, Sargon sets up an imperial workshop in northern Mesopotamia (Iraq) to mass-produce monuments of royal victory to be sent throughout the empire. For the next two centuries, sculptors will work without variety or spontaneity but will achieve a technical perfection in the rendering of the human anatomy. SCULP

-2300

In Peru a monumental temple is built of stone and mud. ARCH

-2300-
-1700

In India, Harappan civilization engages in copper and pottery production. It also produces small steatite (soapstone) seals with pictographic representations of animals and humans that some consider the country's first art objects. DECO

-2300

Near Eastern engravers of Akkad establish the iconography of classical Babylonia through detailed depictions of the gods and their attributes. SCULP

-2200

Sumerian sculptors complete reliefs illustrating Naram-Sin's victorious army on a large stone stele. It is the earliest known monument to honor a conqueror. SCULP

-2160-
-1580

In the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (11th to 17th Dynasties), barrel-shaped drums, perhaps imported from sub-Saharan Africa, and asymmetrical lyres, imported from Asia, are played. Flute melodies probably move in large intervals. The long-neck lute appears toward the end of the period. MUSIC

-2160-
-1785

During the Middle Kingdom in Egypt, wall paintings in rock-cut tombs or in cliff-sides feature more freely drawn figures and more foreshortening than in Old Kingdom images. PAINT

-2160

A new type of capital, the uppermost member of a column or pilaster, featuring the sculpted head of the goddess Hathor on both sides appears at the beginning of Middle Kingdom Egypt and is used throughout this period (11th to 17th Dynasties). SCULP

-2150

Sumerian ruler Gudea assembles a workshop of sculptors and has numerous diorite statues of himself placed in the shrines of the Sumerian city-state of Lagash. SCULP

- 2100 The Sumerians build the ziggurat at Ur. A pyramidal brick platform on top of which a temple is erected, the ziggurat is ascended by means of zigzag ramps. Some ziggurats reach nearly 300 feet in height. ARCH
- 2000 The palace of Minos at Knossos, Crete, is constructed. It features light and air shafts and interior bathrooms with a water supply. ARCH
- 2000 Minoan sculptors of Crete create terra-cotta statuettes. SCULP
- 2000 Egyptian sculptors at the beginning of the 12th Dynasty develop a new type of pharaonic portrait, known as the "pessimistic king," that features deep-set eyes and sad faces. SCULP
- 2000-200 Popular art forms in Japan during the Jōmon period include small clay sculptures and cooking vessels. SCULP
- 1900 As the Near Eastern kingdom of Ugarit prospers from its trade with Egypt, statuettes of gods and goddesses in the guise of warriors reveal an Egyptian influence which will grow steadily for several centuries. SCULP
- 1850 In Babylonia temple service music evolves from simple chanted hymns to a complete liturgical service, with five to 27 selections interspersed with instrumental music. The practice of using a particular melody for a certain poem type develops. MUSIC
- 1760 Hammurabi, the founder of the Babylonian dynasty, has his law code inscribed in a diorite stele on which Hammurabi is portrayed confronting the sun god Shamash. SCULP
- 1600-1100 Mycenaean citadels (fortified hilltop palaces) are constructed of stone blocks without mortar and are decorated with paintings and sculpture. ARCH
- 1600 In the Near East, glass is used to form objects and vessels and is also used as a glaze for pottery. DECO
- 1600 The world's first purely phonetic alphabet is invented by the Phoenicians. Based on symbols for sounds, not things or syllables, it is the ancestor of all modern Western alphabets. LIT
- 1580-1085 The New Kingdom in Egypt (18th to 20th Dynasties) is marked by a surge in temple construction, including funerary temples and public temples to the sun god Amun-Ra, associated with the pharaoh. The buildings employ stone post-and-lintel construction with closely spaced columns. Examples include the temples at Karnak (c. 1280 B.C.) and Luxor (c. 1390 B.C.). ARCH

-1580

-1580-
-1085 During the New Kingdom in Egypt, the papyrus scrolls of the *Book of the Dead*, a collection of spells related to the afterlife, are illustrated with images of the deceased appearing before the gods. GRAPH

-1580-
-1085

The New Kingdom sees a great flowering of Egyptian music. Older instruments appear in new forms, often splendidly decorated. New instruments include double oboes, trumpets, short lutes, and the sistrum. Melodies move in smaller intervals and there is evidence of antiphonal and responsorial singing, men's and women's choruses, strophic songs, and liturgical music. MUSIC

-1580

Egyptian sculptors of the New Kingdom create more slender and graceful human figures. This delicate rendering of the body and its features will continue to the end of the 18th Dynasty, across the reigns of Tutankhamen and Haremhab. SCULP

-1550

Artists from central Crete produce bronze votive figurines with a strong concave bend of the back to correspond to the customary Minoan ideal of prayer. SCULP

-1550

Sculptors in the Tehuacán Valley of the southern Puebla region of central Mexico begin to make little clay figures. The figurine cult will soon spread throughout Mesoamerica, with distinct styles developing in different regions. SCULP

-1523-
-1027

Artisans of the Shang dynasty in China produce ritual bronze vessels, many decorated with stylized animal heads. DECO

-1523-
-1027

During China's Shang dynasty, three types of pottery are produced: red earthenware, burnished black or dark brown ware, and gray ware. DECO

-1523-
-1027

During the Shang dynasty, the Chinese develop a system of writing. LIT

-1500

The Shang palace complex at Anyang, China, consists of a south-facing rectangular hall within a courtyard rimmed by galleries. That pattern will be adapted for palaces and temples throughout the Shang dynasty (1523-1027 B.C.). ARCH

-1500

The rebuilt Minoan palace at Knossos, Crete, is three stories tall with post-and-lintel construction, using stone lintels and pointed wooden columns tapering downward. The palace walls are painted with fresco decorations, depicting dolphins and scenes in which youths leap over bulls. See 2000 B.C., ARCH. ARCH

-1500

Terra-cotta vessels in animal form become common in Cretan art and are central to Minoan religious cults. DECO

-1500-
-486

Indian art forms include stone sculptures, cave paintings, and embellished palaces. MISC

- 1480 The funerary temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt is a rock-cut cliff sanctuary fronted by three terraced courtyards faced with colonnades. Long ramps lead from the valley to the temple. ARCH
- 1450 An upright harp as tall as a man, along with a kithara, are painted on the walls of the tomb of Paser in Egypt. MUSIC
- 1400-1200 The Mycenaean of mainland Greece adapt many architectural elements of Minoan Crete, including decoration with frescoes. ARCH
- 1400-1200 The Mycenaean produce Minoan-influenced terra-cotta figurines. SCULP
- 1400 Sculptors in central Mexico make an important technical innovation by creating effigies that are partly or entirely hollow. This construction will allow greater size. SCULP
- 1379-1361 A temple to Aton, the sun-disk god, is erected by Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaton, who briefly introduces monotheistic worship to Egypt in his capital at Tell al-'Amarna. His reign, known as the Amarna period, also introduces short-lived innovations in art, including greater realism and emotion in depictions of people, along with curvilinear contouring of bodies. MISC
- 1350 Silver and gold trumpets are buried in the tomb of Tutankhamen in Egypt. MUSIC
- 1250 Mycenaean architects build the Lion Gate, which uses post-and-lintel construction with corbeled arches. A great stone relief of two lions is carved over the doorway of the hilltop fortress. This new manner of integrating architecture with sculpture will be seen throughout ancient Greek temple construction. ARCH
- 1200 The Olmec civilization of Mesoamerica (Mexico and Central America) constructs pyramids and stone monuments. ARCH
- 1200 The dye known as Tyrian purple is invented by the Phoenicians. Obtained from a Mediterranean snail, it will be a favorite of the rich and powerful throughout antiquity. DECO
- 1200 The Egyptians weave linen from flax stalks. DECO
- 1200 Artists introduce the jaguar, the constrictor snake, the condor, and the eagle as the main iconographic sources of pre-Columbian temple art throughout the sculptures and reliefs at the temple of Chavín de Huantar in the northern highlands of Peru. SCULP