

King Khafre Seated

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King Khafre Seated Egyptian art is infamous across the world - classified by the monumental pyramids, and the Sphinx. Although these are both valid forms of Egyptian art, they do not make up the entire artistic history of the country. On the contrary, perhaps the most replicated example of classic Egyptian art, from the Old Kingdom, can be found in their rendering of the human form. An interest in portraiture developed early in Egypt. (Gardner, 75) Whether painted on pottery, or cut into rock, the figures all had notably Egyptian characteristics. "The seated statue is one of only a very small number of basic formulaic types employed by the sculptors of the Old Kingdom." (Gardner, 75) The statue of King Khafre Seated, from the fourth dynasty of the Old Kingdom, 2520 - 2492 BCE, was created by an unknown artist in the smooth permanence of graywacke stone. Although the statue is currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as number 56 in the Special Egyptian Exhibition, its true home is at the Egyptian Museum, in Cairo. The man being portrayed, King Khafre, ruled Egypt for approximately thirty years, during which he commissioned the single most recognizable monuments of Egypt, the a fore mentioned Pyramids at Giza and the Sphinx. These monuments of symmetry and solidity characterize the focus of popular architecture and sculpture from the Old Kingdom in Egypt. Two main devices used in Egyptian art from the fourth dynasty, that also help classify it, are a strive for naturalism and the use of sculpture in the round. In addition to the large burial

monuments being built, portraiture became quite popular at this time in history. Paintings featuring humans used their own form of "sculpture in the round" by painting in middle of paperars after Khafre's reign, the fourth dynasty was just the beginning.

Monumental Egypt, although it existed in burial tombs before Khafre's reign, truly became a traditional pattern in the fourth dynasty. Khafre's seated ka statues were numerous and perhaps the beginning of the formulaic sculpting of Egyptian ka statues. The King Khafre Seated that is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art now is not only the best ka statue of Khafre in existence, but perhaps one of the best examples of classic Egyptian sculpture from the Old Kingdom. Bibliography 1. Tansey, Richard G., and Kleiner, Fred S., Gardner's Art Through the Ages, Harcourt Brace and Company, Fort Worth, TX, 1996, tenth edition, volume II, pp 73 - 85. 2. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Special Egyptian Exhibition, no. 56. King Khafre Seated statue label. 5th Ave. and 82nd St. New York, NY.

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