Artefacts of Ancient Egypt

Egyptian mummy of Princess Beketaten
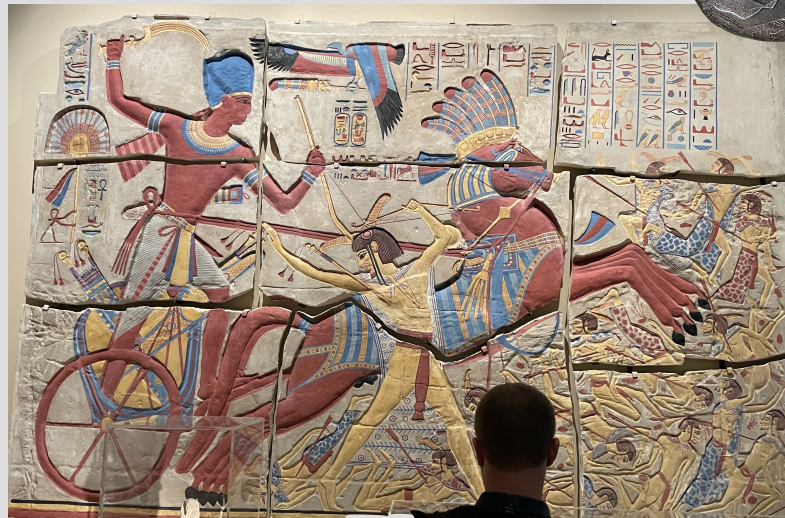
Egyptian pottery soul house

Cosmetic Palette

Wooden tomb models

Egyptian paints

Egyptian wall relief British Museum street view visit

Ushabti Dolls

Head of Queen Nefertiti about 1300 BCE

Head of Queen Nefertiti
about 1300 BCE

Egyptian paints
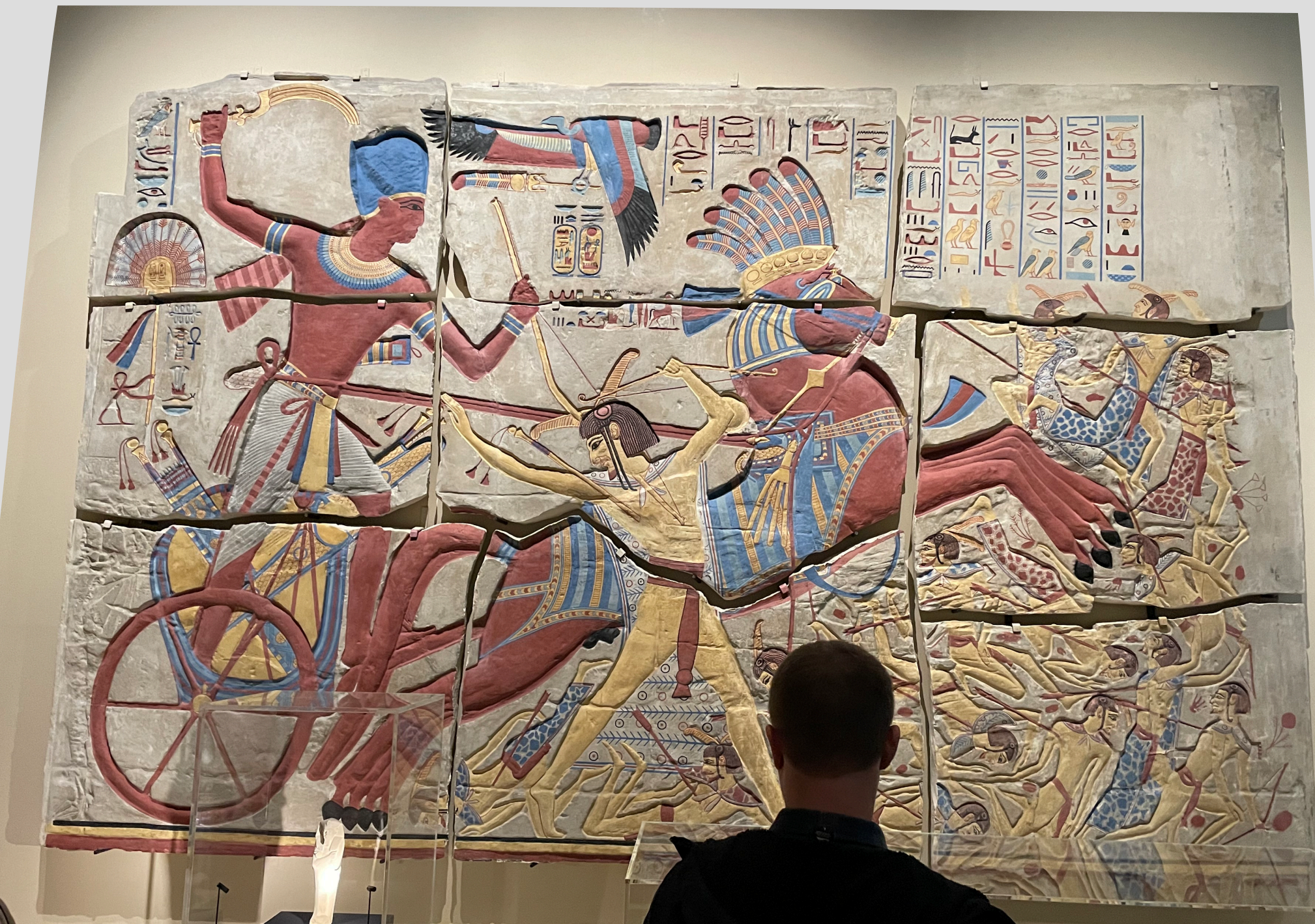
Wooden [tomb models](#)

Egyptian pottery soul house

Cosmetic Palette

Ushabti Dolls

Ahmose-Meryetamen I

Queen Cleopatra

Cleopatra VII of Egypt
ca. 40-30 BC

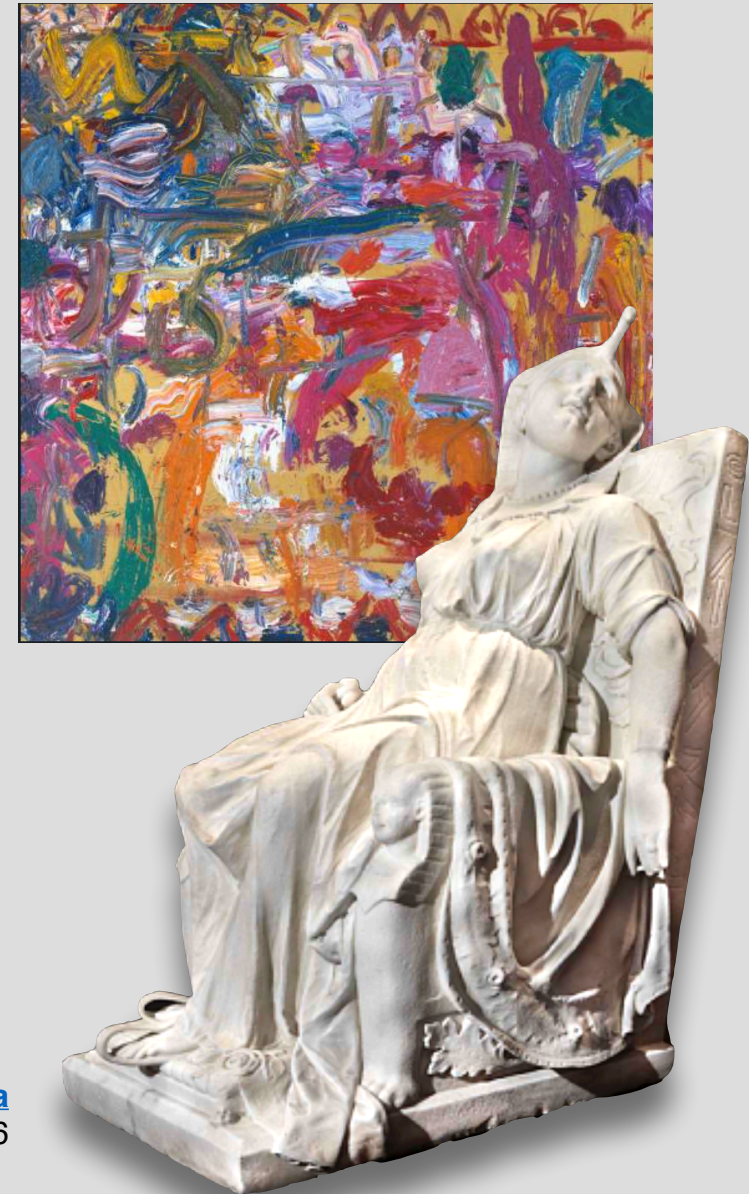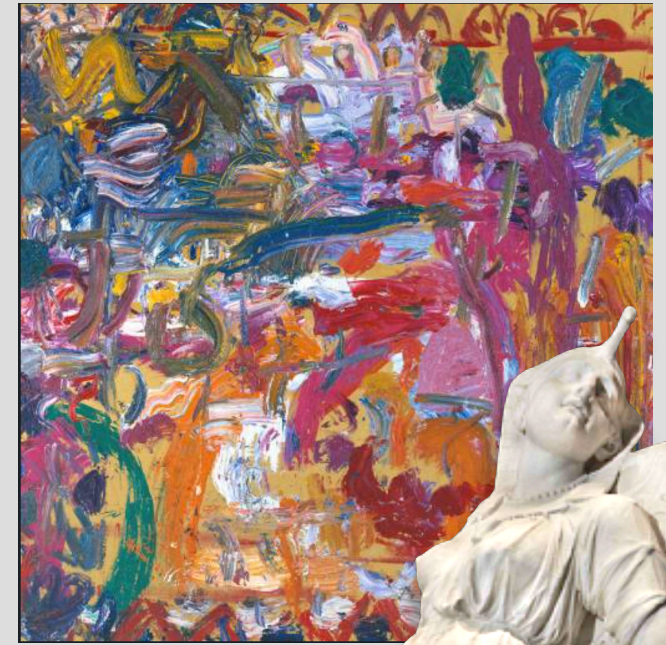**Antony and Cleopatra**
Gillian Ayres 1982

Cleopatra
John William Waterhouse 1887

Cleopatra
Michelangelo 1534

The death of Cleopatra
Edmonia Lewis 1876

Artefacts of Ancient Egypt

Egyptian artefacts were not made purely for aesthetic, decorative reasons as much art is today. Nor were they made in the name of art, because there was no word for art in Ancient Egypt. They made artefacts to represent their beliefs of the afterlife, to depict important people, to record historical events such as battles and for practical purposes such as pottery or furniture. Egyptians believed in ma'at (harmony). Ma'at was the fabric of creation ; the order of the universe. Ma'at was night and day, female and male, good and evil. Today, when a painter paints the sun, it is just a sun, but in ancient Egypt, it might mean creation, illumination or spiritual sight. The ancient Egyptians used symbols like we would use code today. Unlike Egypt's elite, ordinary Egyptians could not afford mummification, tombs or elaborate funerary offerings. Nonetheless, they wanted to provide for the afterlife as best they could.

Egyptian Painting
• People are depicted in side profile.
• A pharaoh is always larger than the other figures.
• Social Status determined how large people were in a painting.
• Pharaohs are depicted as being tense and formal, whereas ordinary people are more relaxed and realistic.
• Pictures in ancient Egyptian art are two-dimensional. [Link to British Museum Google Street view tour of Egypt collection](#)

Tomb Models display aspects of daily life in Ancient Egypt. They were placed in the tomb as replacements for the real things for use by the tomb owner in the afterlife. Models of butchering, granaries, and boats were common.

Ushabtis - Ushabti (also called shabti or shawabti) was a figure used in funerary practices. Ushabtis were placed in tombs among the grave goods and were intended to act as servants for the deceased.

Cosmetic palettes were used to grind ingredients for cosmetics. Symbols were used together with pictorial descriptions. The Narmer Palette (c. 3150 BCE) contains some of the earliest hieroglyphic inscriptions ever found.

Pottery soul house - believed to represent a dwelling for the soul. Poorer people had objects, like this one, placed above their burials. Modelled on the tray are miniature representations of bread and meat which would sustain the deceased in the afterlife.

Bust of Queen Nefertiti - believed to have been crafted in 1345 BCE by Thutmose, the bust contains a more realistic depiction of the queen underneath the surface appearance, complete with a bump on the nose and wrinkles.

Art Investigations

Describe your thoughts and feelings about this work using information you gather.

Describe the artworks appearance. Say how it looks, what is in it, what it's about.

What is the meaning behind this work? Why was it made? Does it contain hidden meanings or symbols?

Where and when was the art made?

How was the art made? What materials were used?

Write short sentences, use words or descriptive phrases to describe how the artist has used:

Colour - *(bright, dull, dark, vivid, warm, cool, pastel, pale, intense.)*

Line/Shape - *(round, curved, smooth, bold, rough, straight, angular.)*

Tone - *(Dark, light, contrast, shadow, faded, grey, strong, feint.)*

Form - *straight, (2D, 3D, flat, relief, rounded, curved, size, scale.)*

Texture/Pattern - *straight (Rough, bumpy, grainy, coarse, repeat, drop, geometric, informal.)*

Present

Contemporary
1980s

Pop Art
1950s

Surrealism
1920s

Cubism
Abstract
1900s

Impressionism
1860s

Romanticism
1800

Dutch Flemish
Baroque
1600s

Renaissance
1400s

Gothic

1000 AD

Medieval art
Viking

Anglo-Saxon

0 AD

Ancient
Roman
Greek
Egyptian

Prehistory