

## Art schools followed in Mural paintings inside Ancient Egyptian Tombs

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### Abstract:

The art of mural painting is not an independent art of the ancient Egyptians in accordance with the current concept of independent painting, as it is described as moving and changing. Philosophy and symbols carried no particular role or significance than the aesthetic values resulting from the art form.

Tomb paintings in ancient Egypt is a collection of scenes depicted on the walls, featuring scenes of the deceased indicating his place and position in worldly life, illustrating his living behavior with a suitable quality of life for him in the other world. These scenes are usually governed by the architecture of the tomb itself, the elements and the external framework of the scene are formed on the basis of it. Upon the services rendered by the deceased and through his role as mediator of God, he will decide to continue his life in the afterlife.

**The vision in the mural art** holds two perspectives. The first is to describe the direct form from an artistic point of view. The second is a deeper vision that refers to the philosophy behind the pictorial composition with all the elements of the hieroglyphic script, which is considered as a cultural and epistemological field in the form that its name gives it uniqueness from other creative texts, as required by the laws of formal discourse and the artistic necessity fused into lines, colors and ideas as they are arranged.

The scenes reflect the custom and traditions of ancient Egyptian society, where freedom to choose subjects reached in the era of the new kingdom, and the forms are inherently subjected to the content movement, reliant on it and determining its potential. At the same time, Egyptian art remained stuck with the religious objective, according to the belief of the monarchy and the priestly authority.

**The use of the art of painting for various purposes** varied, such as experimental and schematic, indicative or preparatory drawings for subsequent implementation on the walls of tombs and temples. The themes of ancient Egyptian mural painting have varied and many of them are due to an abyssal past that coincides with political, religious and social history. It was closely related to human life on the banks of the Nile and the daily life it lived, most importantly to the royal function and all that it could live in order to sustain life in the other world. And in addition to the royal themes that include the king,

**the most common painting themes are:**

- Religious books
- Royal figures

- Gods and deities
- Fishing subjects
- Animal subjects
  - Agriculture
- Music and dance
- Stages of statues Sculpture

**The ancient Egyptian plastic vision of mural painting** was not an aesthetic display of the of shapes, but rather an expression of the philosophy of human thoughts. The human body in Egyptian murals, whether it is a symbol of divine character, the mother of a ruler king on earth, or a human being who had to perform ritual worship without falling short in the shrine of God. The proportions of human figures are determined according to their social status, with an attempt to combine the ideal characteristic of shapes with their realistic characters. This system is a product of the Egyptian cultural structure of priestly power, since the Egyptian cultural structure is closed to itself because of the ancient Egyptian belief that Egypt is the entire world. Before the artist learned how to lay the basic lines of a form, he had to recognize the "law of proportions" and its standards that are applied to art during each period, so that the scene to be portrayed would enjoy full harmony between its elements.

**The law of proportions** had measurement units such as the hand palm and the arm. The units' distribution of measurement varied over the length and breadth of the human body from time to time, but each scale was imposed on each age it was adhered to. And we can ascertain this from the models that have been found that include drawings for fists that are closed or opened next to human figure drawings to determine the correct ratios.

**The squares grid** in the Old Kingdom was not in the same full concept as the grid, so there was a vertical line starting from the ear dividing the body into two parts, cut by 8 horizontal lines passing through specific points in the body such as the crown, hair germination, neck meeting point with shoulders, elbow, lower rib cage, knee and mid-leg. This form continued through the Middle Kingdom with the addition of two horizontal lines, one passing down the nose and the other with buttocks. There was a slight change in the second middle of the Middle Kingdom to become a slender body.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the ratios used were the same as those of the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Middle Kingdom. The lineage began to change from the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty to the 20<sup>th</sup>, in which the lineage returned the same as that of the Old Kingdom. These changes continued to affect the shape of persons until the proportions of both men's and women's bodies became close.

With regard to the Tel el-Amarna period, there was a change in the size of the network of squares itself, as the scene was filmed on a smaller scale than before, so the walls of the temples were all teeming with different themes.

**Art schools for that were used in mural painting from the old to the new kingdom were:**

**Third dynasty:**

The idealistic school of Menf: The artist's interest in showing the details of the body muscles and facial features, showing the strength and agility that characterized the king in his youth and

taking into account the accurately calculated proportions to attain this, being the highest degree of idealism.

#### **Fourth dynasty:**

The idealistic school of Menf: He carried out the Tempura style of painting in tombs which signifies the luxury and love of life in the other world. The mixing of conservative realism with idealism.

#### **Fifth dynasty:**

The idealistic school of Menf: The themes of painting varied and included subjects about everyday life full of beauty, in addition to reflection of sun on artworks.

#### **Sixth dynasty:**

The idealistic school of Menf: Increased interest in Osiris in mural painting.  
Increasing realism, dynamism and emancipation in natural simulated subjects.

#### **Middle Kingdom:**

This period had passed through two phases:

##### **Phase I:**

Tiba's school which followed realism, to which the artist added a decorative style with precision and agility in mind and a shift towards classic style. The elevation of the goddess Amun and the goddess of the South, which appears with symbols that differ from the goddess of the North.

##### **Phase II:**

It included both the idealistic school of Menf, the classical school (which combined realism and idealism), and the realist school of Thebes (where the artist successfully combined expressive realism with a psychological state in mind).

During this period, the artist turned to full-instrument painting by treating the themes of eminent or immersive sculpture with the style of painting (using brushes and colors) that were flexible and lively, and hieroglyphic writing took its place by painting its details.

The painted themes included scenes from the everyday life of royalty that reflected appearances of their richness, as well as sports scenes such as wrestling, acrobatics, dancing also in addition to weeping

#### **New Kingdom:**

paintings went through five stages during this period.

**First:** the artist's emancipation from the old modes of the new direction emerged, and the planning method of drawing subjects to express the beliefs of people emerged as a result of the widespread use of papyrus in writing and drawing. The line has also become bolder and softer, and the color has grown more richness, as well as paying attention to the details of the human body in terms of its filling with skin and flesh, the appearance of folds with it and the portrayal of styled hair with the utmost precision.

The appearance of the King during this stage in the form of the Commander of the Armies and the campaigns he undertook for neighboring countries to establish trade with them and to transmit vivid images of the social landscape with the utmost naturalism and realism.

The interest in ornaments and luxury for men and women, as well as the disappearance of the manifestations of the huge structure and stern face that characterized the kings of Taiba in the Middle kingdom, replaced by the thin, fresh faces and women becoming more gentle and graceful. Women also appear as men making offerings kneeling or crouching in the form of lions as well as evolving crowns and headscarves.

**Second:** The development of Tiba school during the era of Thutmose III and Akhenaten, in which the line of land or the law of dividing the painting into classes was overlooked, the fluidity of the lines and the generous use of colors have also emerged and the artist has introduced a new element, the sensory aspect, as a result of the emergence of more realistic tones. Animals were depicted as natural as possible while the water, sky and River Nile as well as the priests were depicted in blue as spiritual and sacred, the gods were also painted in gold while the Nubians were depicted in dark brown. He emphasized tenderness and agility in depicting a woman's naked body. This style reached its climax as realism continued in the Akhenaten era. Themes of the period reflected luxury such as foreign trade trips and processions, sacrificial banquets with food varieties and flowers that adorned them, as well as garden irrigation and human glimpse in hunting scenes.

**Third Impact of Akhenaten movement on art:** There was a revolution as researchers and historians called it, which all that is traditional in ancient Egyptian painting during the Amarna period. What is new here is that he devoted more than one wall to one scene, while preserving the principle of varying sizes as it is, so the king remained the oldest person in the picture scene. During this period, Akhenaten became the first conscious innovator of art. Akhenaten's primary concern was the way the king was portrayed and captured, choosing the realistic and simulated style of his family life. Akhenaten portrayed himself and his family in situations of everyday life like the common people, showing humanism and emotion on the king's features in the themes depicted. For the first time, we find a great pharaoh who steps down the curtain and allows an artist to represent the details of his family life, because the special life conditions of the pharaoh were not allowed to be painted before.

The portrayal of Akhenaten and his family shows an exaggeration in head and body lineage due to his taking of the god Aton as the goddess of the sun which we see the strength of his influence on the features of the king and his family, creating the shadow effect of directing sunlight on objects. Therefore, the human body was depicted in all possible and not possible situations, even if it was not normal, and the lineage of Akhenaten's body was attributed to the woman's body, where the narrow shoulders and width appeared in the pelvis with the full thighs as well as the slender middle and legs, with the long face protruding the cheeks, tonsilla eyes and thick lips.

As for the depiction of nobles, the artist is freed from the intensity of the traditional system, and this is reflected in their features, such as the mouth, the eyes, the bewildered smile. And the most important characteristic of Amarna was its departure from ancient art traditions to show that diversity of movement and life forms, avoiding the intransigent rigidity that prevailed in

the murals of earlier times, the lines seemed more flexible, the objects leaner and the movements are more diverse.

Akhenaten was the first to transmit the tendency to match nature, as the great Akhenaten sculptor (Bey) stated that it was Akhenaten himself who proposed this formation. The symbol of the god Aton allowed the artist's interest in a space in the artwork which inspired a sense of depth and a third dimension.

**Fourth Akhenaten's style ends:** The Amun priests put an end to the Amarna style and again imposed the traditional school of Taiba from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty until the end of the Ramasa era.

**Fifth the phase of Ramses:** The art of this era bounced back from the ancient artistic tradition that preceded the Akhenaten era, where the artists of this era attracted attention in the overwhelming and eminent style of sculpture with the aim of creating shadow and light and showing those works strongly. This goal was to transform the world of the gods into a realistic and real world through the strength of the lines and the flexibility of the formation to show the work in a representative scene. Foreign elements were added to these scenes and their symbols were used alongside Egyptian gods. In addition, burial scenes and comic books such as the Book of the Dead, hours, and Gates have been published to live with the world of the unseen and the other world.

The Egyptian artist used very simple tools, all extracted from the surrounding nature, and in order to use them in painting, three basic things had to be available:

- A dye or color placed in a palette
- A tool to transfer that color to the surface to be painted on.
- A perfectly prepared surface for drawing:

Using the drawing as a preparatory work for wall painting carried out inside the tomb

### **Steps of painting inside the tomb:**

The establishment of the tomb to the west is a guide for the entry of people to give offerings.

The distribution of paintings and texts within the tomb makes sense by following the original four directions to achieve the effectiveness of the paintings and texts and to try to reach the place of the gods. The viewer's themes are distributed in the occasional hall to contain scenes associated with worldly life, with the direction of view determined by the end point of each axis.

Afterwards there shall be relative freedom for the possibilities of shaping the scene, which must have been reconciled.

#### **a. Surface configuration (wall):**

The surface is prepared before starting to draw or color.

#### **b. Wall division:**

Areas containing the scene are marked and identified with red lines. Divide the wall into rows for the purpose of forming the character of the king or cemetery owner within the design. who was shaped larger than those around it.

**c. Initial drawings of the scene:**

Using the red color, artists are divided into groups and each group works on a different part of the scene, and the chief artist oversees the person responsible for placing the composition of the elements in the scene and corrects artistic errors, if any, using black color.

**d. Coloring Steps:**

The artist was forming tones and controlling their textures according to his plastic purposes. There was no single method or uniform style imposed on the artist for coloring but most often the artist did not typically fill the spaces as vertical and horizontal lines, but rather took into consideration the construction of each element and its own arrangements for outlining the shape and following the direction of the brush with the structure of the shape. He filled the spaces in the same way, giving the form homogeneity, stability and vitality, avoiding a strict arranged system. The diversity of line thickness and color tones used, resulted in different lines determining the shapes.

**Steps taken by the artist to complete the painting process within the tomb:****First:**

The artist begins by coloring the background white for two reasons, the first so he can cover red if any correction is made, and the second to give a uniform color to the background so he can highlight the spaces of people's positions.

**Second:**

The artist colors the spaces in a specific color and then begins to cover it in another color and repeats the move several times to produce color layers, putting the core colors in the latter layers. The artist was interested not only in the practical way of coloring, but also in coloring the elements in their realistic colors and in the way of setting the fine details.

The first one... Forming homogeneous color spaces and then placing fine details on them by identifying details on the background and coloring them.

The second one... It is filled with color spaces and then painted details on them.

**Third:**

After finishing the fine details of the shapes, the background is supplemented by placing a second or third layer of color to make sure the initial lines are fully covered. Sometimes, after completing the artwork, the artist delineates the shapes precisely using the brown color and it appears as a wire bending around them.

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