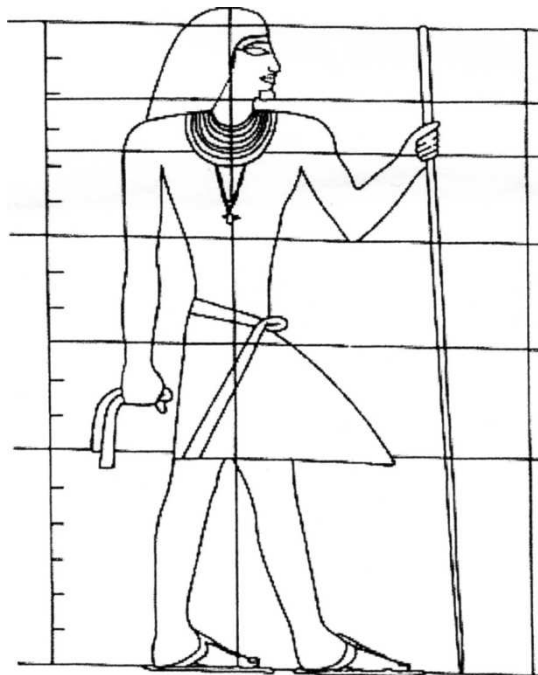


Egyptian representation code

Egyptians Art was ruled by a very strict code of representation able to visually turn reality into eternity. The statue of Menkure and Khamerernebty embodies the eternal existence of the Pharaoh and his wife. The two figures stand stiff side by side gazing far beyond the viewer. Immobility and abstraction serve as a visual counterpart of Egyptian belief in immutable laws that govern humans and nature.

When preparing to decorate a wall or to carve a statue, Egyptian artists first drew horizontal and vertical guidelines on the surface, or on the sides of the stone block, so the proportion of the figures would be consistent with the established canon. The result fo such measured proportions and relationships was an art of remarkable order and uniformity that maintains the same balance whethever in a colossal statue or a figure in hieroglyphic script.



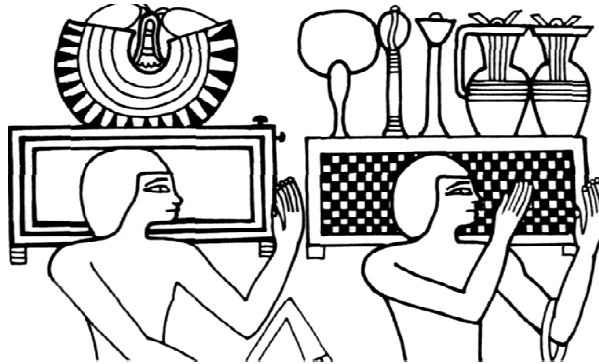
People

The Egyptians drew people almost like a diagram. They showed each part of the body in the most recognizable and typical view.

1. Heads are drawn sideways.
2. Eyes and eyebrows are drawn frontally
3. The most important person is shown largest. Women are smaller than men and stand behind their husbands.
4. Mouths are shown from the side.
5. Shoulders are drawn front on.
6. Waists are drawn sideways, but with the belly button showing.
7. Hands are drawn with thumb, fingers and nails showing.
8. Legs are sideways on.
9. Feet are sideways, with the arches and big toe nails showing.
10. Working people face toward the most important person in the scene and are drawn much smaller.

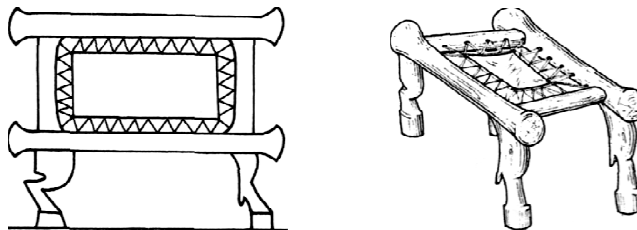
Showing things clearly

It was important to show things clearly. The Egyptians drew the things inside boxes and containers as if they were outside and on top. The picture below shows men carrying boxes which contain jewellery, a mirror, cosmetics and jars of ointment.



Space

The Egyptians put top and side views together in the same drawing. This stool (below, left) is shown from the top and from the side. This is what it would have looked like in real life (below, right).



More than one

The Ancient Egyptians had a formal way to show lots of animals, birds or people. Subjects are overlapped on the same register line by repeating several times the same outline.

