



AMARNA ART

1353-1336 BCE



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

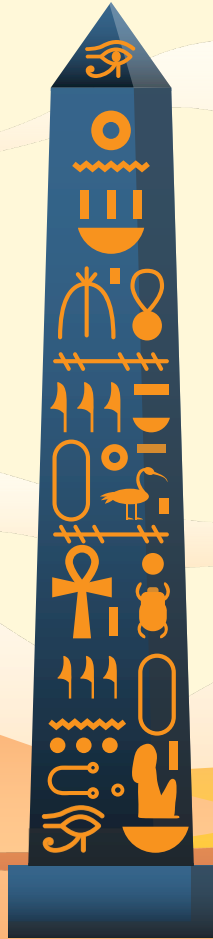
- First major change in ancient Egyptian aesthetics in 3000 years
- Five years into his reign, the Pharaoh Amenhotep III changed his name to Akhenaten and moved his capital city to Amarna
- Akhenaten establishes new religious cult
 - Polytheistic → pseudo-monotheistic
 - Worship of Aten – the sun god
 - Pharaoh as chosen son, representative and interpreter of Aten



Akhenaten, 1346-1356 BCE,
Luxor Museum, Egypt



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES



UNIQUE ANATOMICAL TRAITS

- Androgynous/feminized bodies
 - Elongated fingers, neck, face, and limbs
 - Puffy eyes, lips, nose, and chin
 - Narrow, almond-shaped eyes
 - Very large back of head, especially on children
 - Sense of “otherness”
- Were body details naturalistic or stylized?
- Resemble physical symptoms of Marfan Syndrome
- OR
- Represent aestheticized beauty ideals



The Wilbour Plaque, Unknown, ca. 1352-1336 B.C.E. or slightly later, Brooklyn Museum



Nefertiti, Unknown, ca. 1352-1336 B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum



Relief of Men Talking, Unknown, ca. 1352-1336
B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum



Head of a daughter of Akhenaten. 18th Dynasty, c. 1345 BC. State Museum of Egyptian Art, Munich



Head of a Princess from a Group Statue, ca. 1352-1336 BCE, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



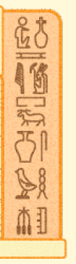
Limestone trial piece showing the distinctive Amarna-style elongation of Akhenaten's face, ca. 1353-1336 BCE, Petrie Museum,



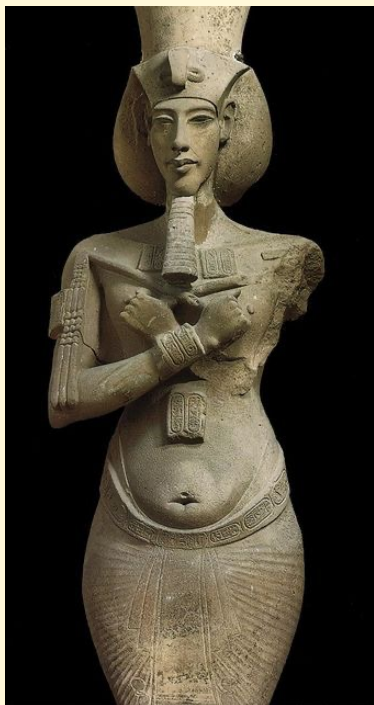
Limestone trial piece of hands. Amarna, Reign of Akhenaten, late 18th Dynasty, ca. 1353-1336 BCE, Petrie Museum,



Relief of Queen Nefertiti, ca. 1346-1336 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art



The King's Army, ca. 1346-1336 BCE, Fitzwilliam Museum



Akhenaten, ca. 1353- 1336 BCE,
Houston Museum of Natural Science



Nose and Lips of Akhenaten, ca. 1353-
1336 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art



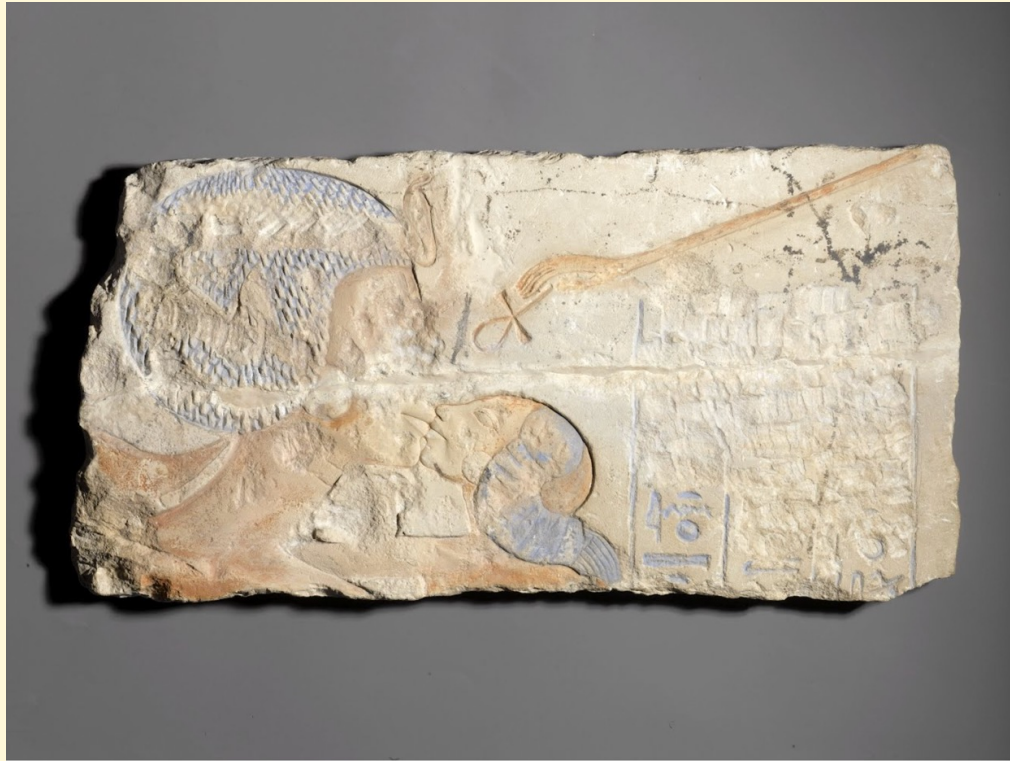
Akhenaten Sacrificing a Duck, ca. 1353-1336 BCE,
Metropolitan Museum of Art



A decorative header element featuring a horizontal bar with a colorful pattern of red, blue, yellow, and green segments. Above the bar is a row of Egyptian hieroglyphs. The bar is flanked by vertical elements on the right side, including a vertical column of hieroglyphs and a vertical bar with a similar colorful pattern.

REPRESENTATION OF ROYAL FAMILY

- New subject matter of royal family, court, and daily activity
- Akhenaten, wife Nefertiti, and six daughters
- More depictions of women
- More intimate scenes than previously shown in Egyptian art
- Instead of earlier generic, ritualistic depictions, specific details of Pharaoh's life



Relief of Queen Nefertiti Kissing One of Her Daughters, Unknown, ca. 1352-1336 B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum



Relief Depicting Akenhaten and His Daughter Offering to the Aten, Unknown, ca. 1352-1336 B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum



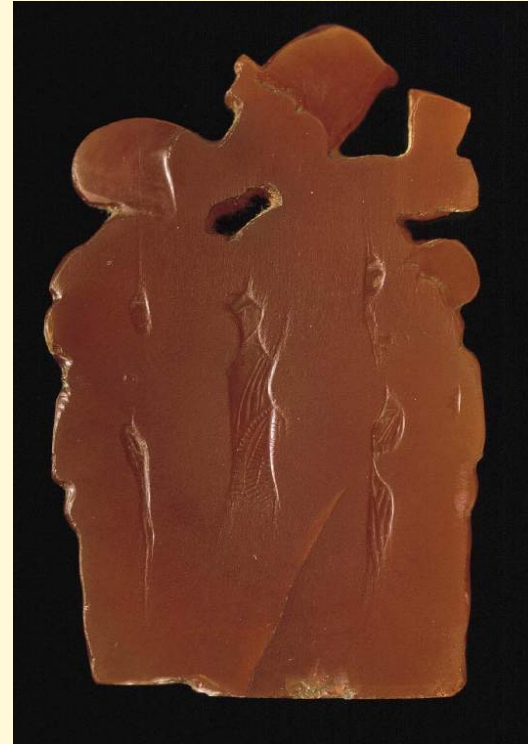
Standing Statuette of a King in a Blue Crown
(Probably Akhenaten), Unknown, ca. 1352-
1336 B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum



Portrait Inlay of Pharaoh Akhenaten,
Unknown, -17, Corning Museum of
Glass



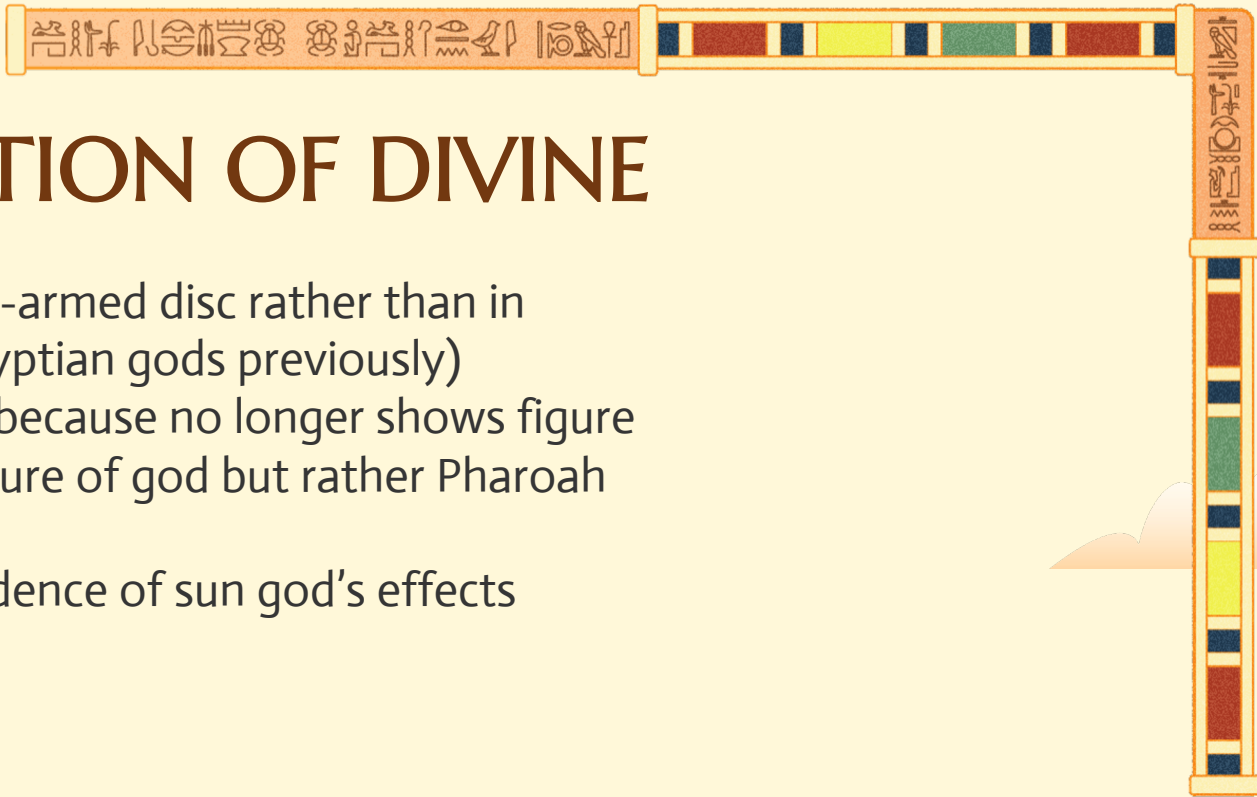
Princess of the Akhenaten Family, ca. 1346-1336 BCE, Louvre Museum



Carnelian Gem, ca. 1346-1336 BCE, Fitzwilliam Museum



Nefertiti and Her Two Daughters, ca.
1346-1336 BCE, Houston Museum of
Natural Science



REPRESENTATION OF DIVINE

- Aten shown as many-armed disc rather than in human form (like Egyptian gods previously)
- Art less symmetrical because no longer shows figure of Pharaoh facing figure of god but rather Pharaoh in divine presence
- Nature scenes as evidence of sun god's effects



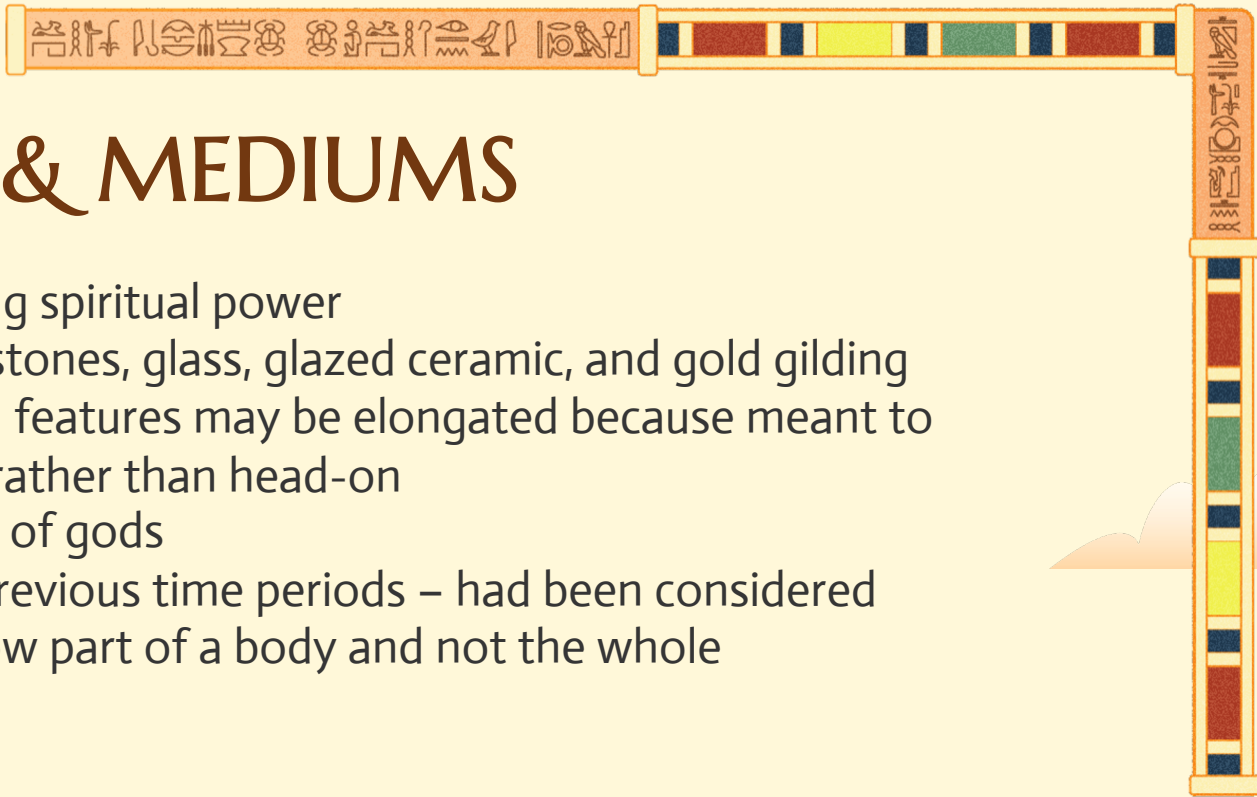
*Relief of Akhenaten as a sphinx, Unknown, 1349 B.C. - 1336 B.C.,
: [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston](#)*



Akhenaten, Nefertiti and their children, ca. 1346-1336 BCE,
Houston Museum of Natural Science



Facsimile painting from the 'Green Room' in the North Palace at Amarna, ca. 1353-1336 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art



MATERIALS & MEDIUMS

- Images seen as having spiritual power
- Reliefs with colored stones, glass, glazed ceramic, and gold gilding
- Statues of Pharaoh – features may be elongated because meant to be seen from below rather than head-on
- No more cult statues of gods
- More busts than in previous time periods – had been considered improper to only show part of a body and not the whole



Nefertiti Bust, Egypt 18th Dynasty, ca. 1351–1334 BC, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung



Bust of Akhenaten, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1351–1334 BC, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung

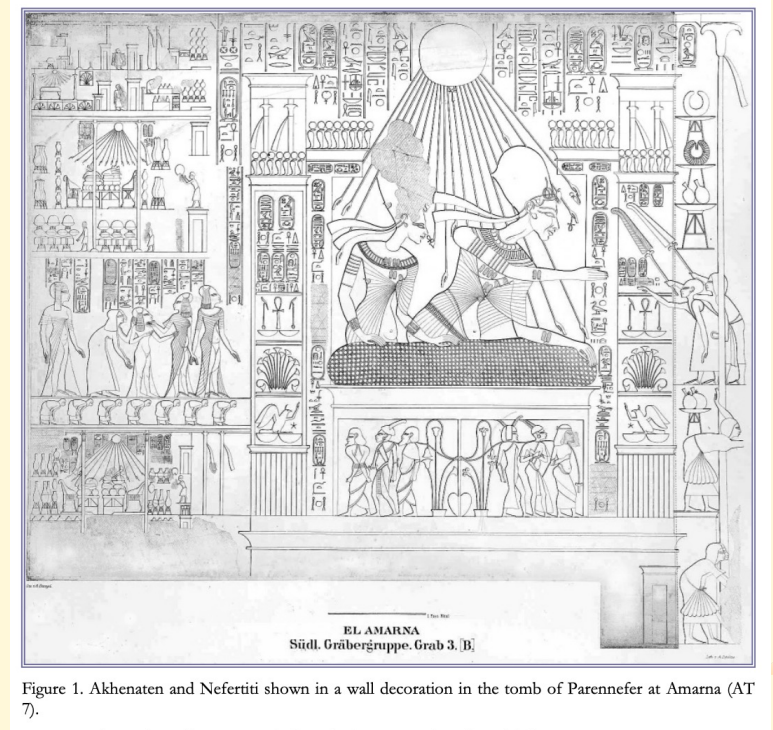
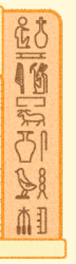


Figure 1. Akhenaten and Nefertiti shown in a wall decoration in the tomb of Parennefer at Amarna (AT 7).



Two Princesses, ca. 1353-1336 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art



SOURCES



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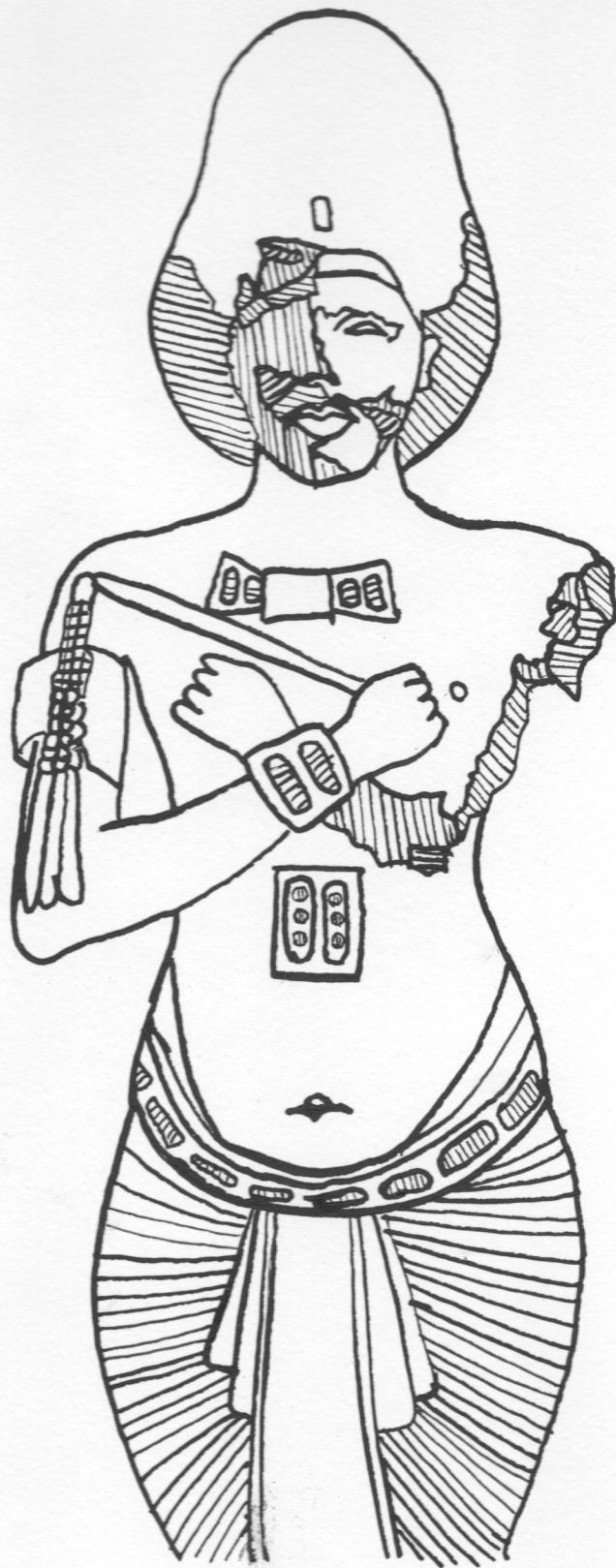
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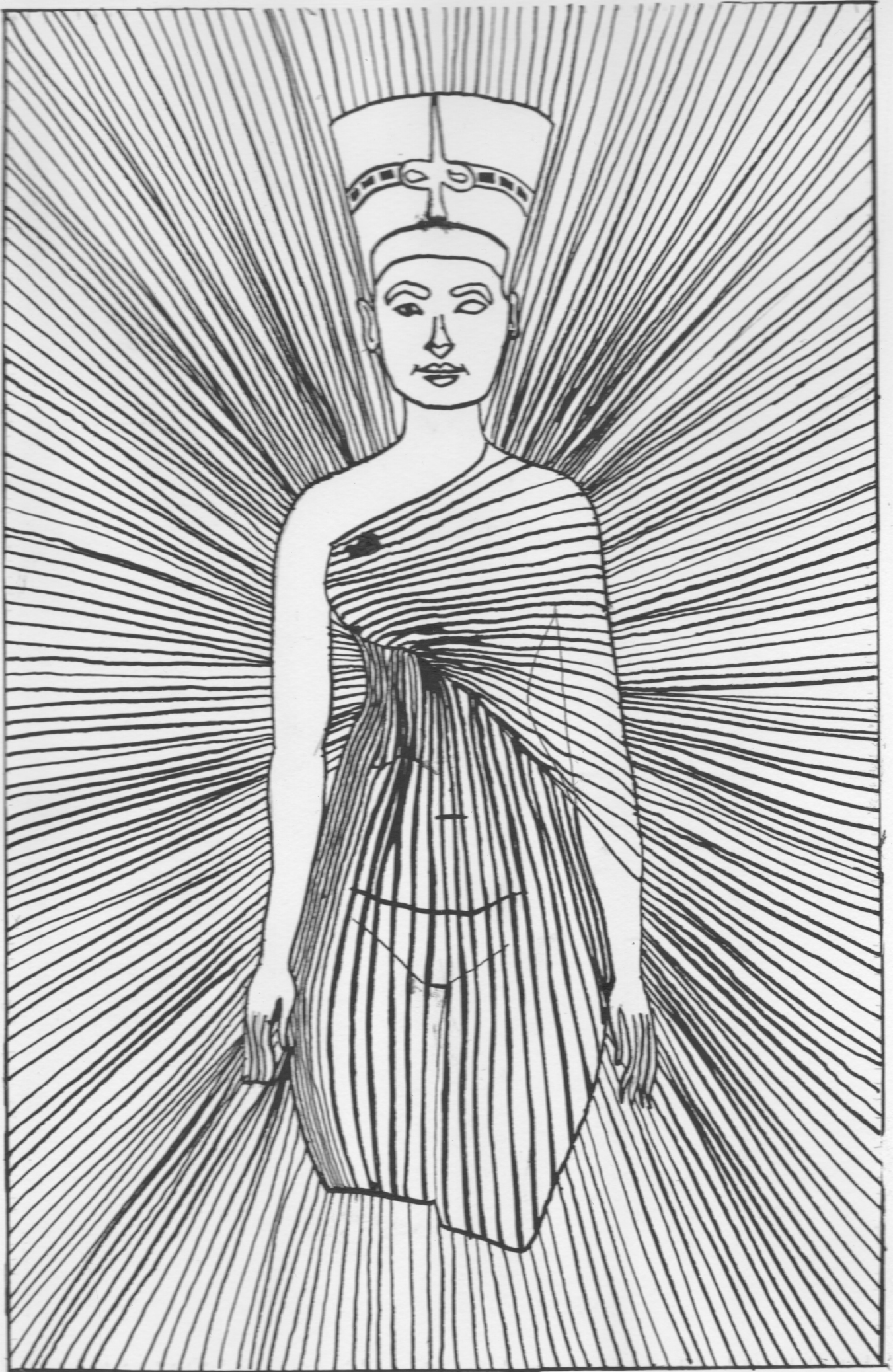
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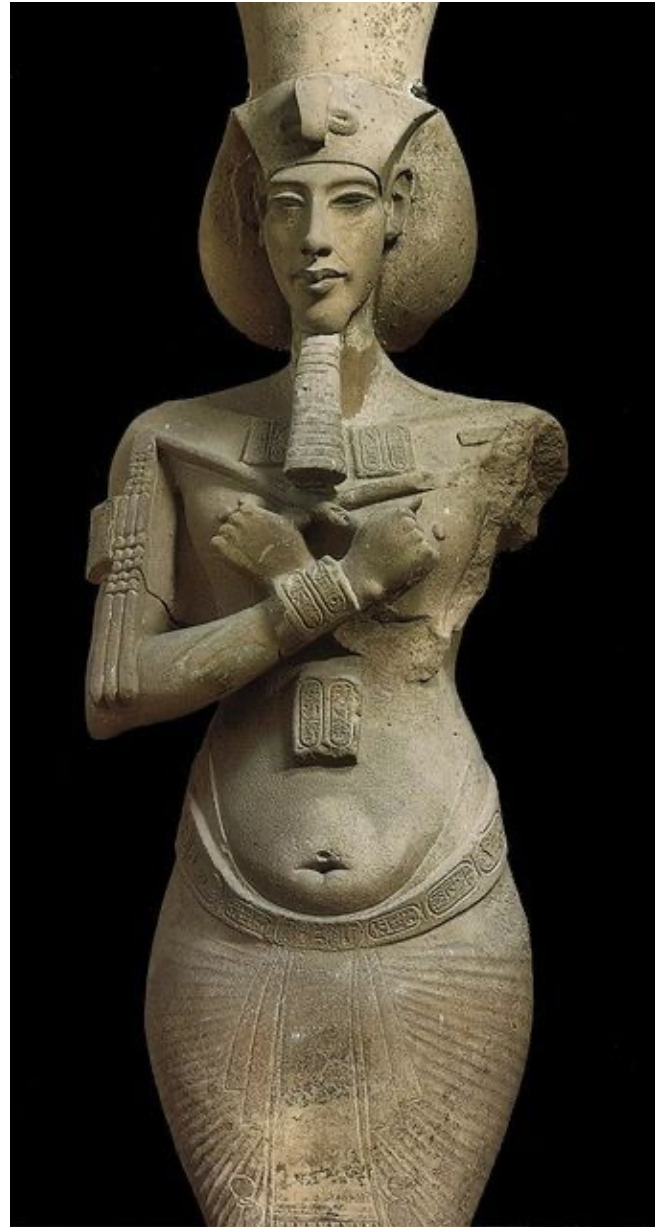








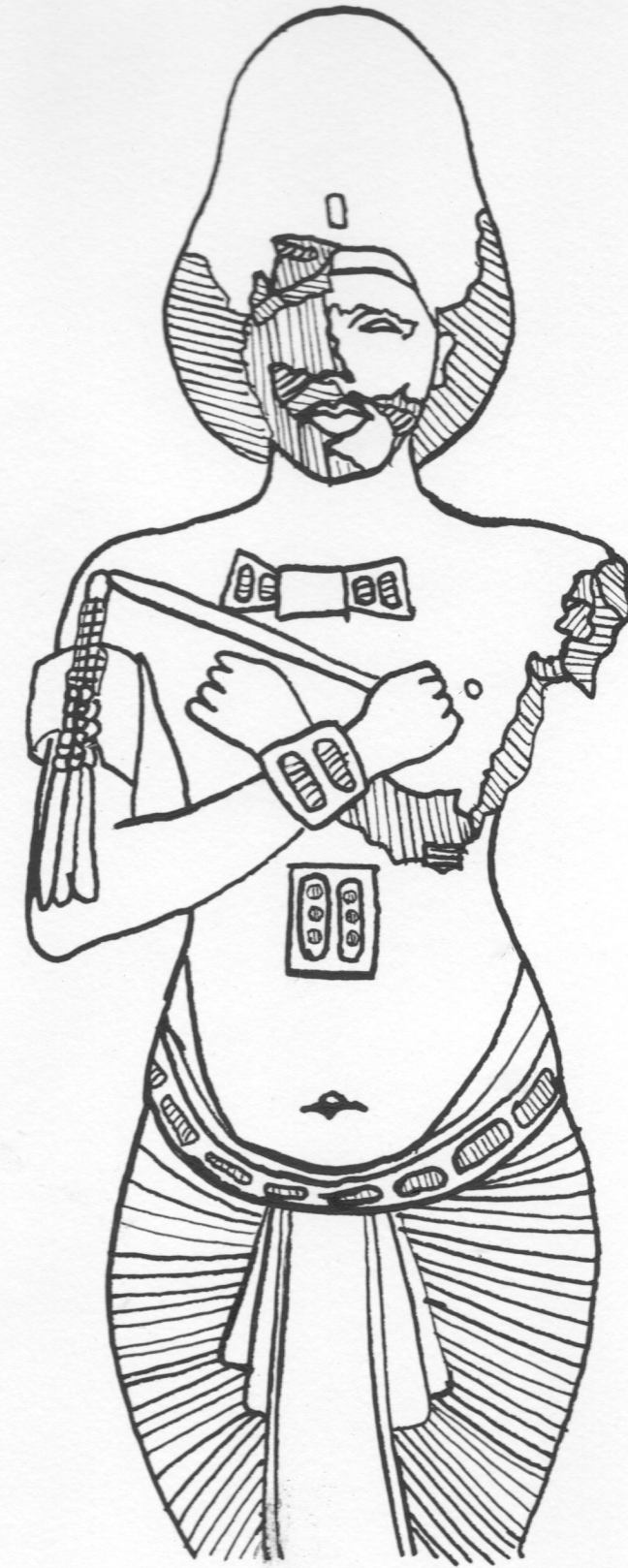
Exploratory Sketch 1



Akhenaten, ca. 1353- 1336 BCE,
Houston Museum of Natural
Science



Bust of Akhenaten, 18th Dynasty, ca.
1351-1334 BC, Staatliche Museen zu
Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und
Papyrussammlung



Exploratory Sketch 2

Row over Nefertiti bust continues

By Tristana Moore
BBC News, Berlin

She was rumoured to be the world's most beautiful woman in her time.

Nefertiti, Queen of Egypt, was the co-ruler in her country in the 14th Century BC. Today, the bust of Nefertiti (whose name literally means "a beautiful woman has arrived") has pride of place in the Antiquities collection in Berlin's Altes Museum.

Her face features on postcards of the city and each year, thousands of visitors flock to the museum to admire the ancient treasure.



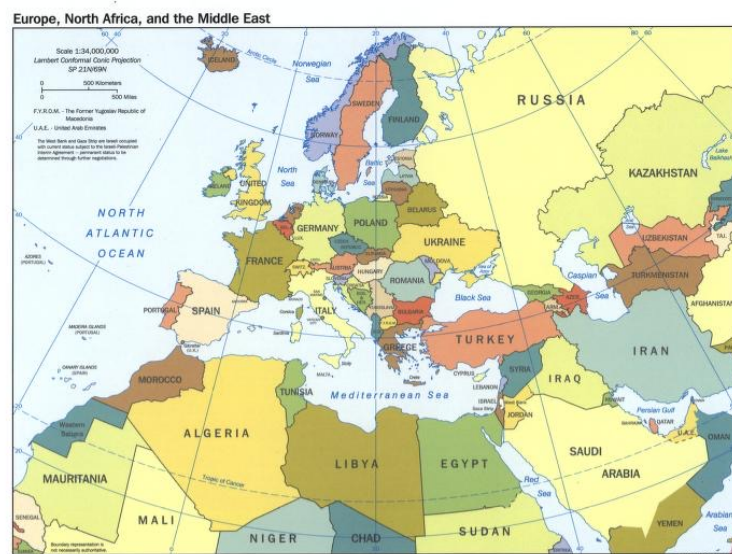
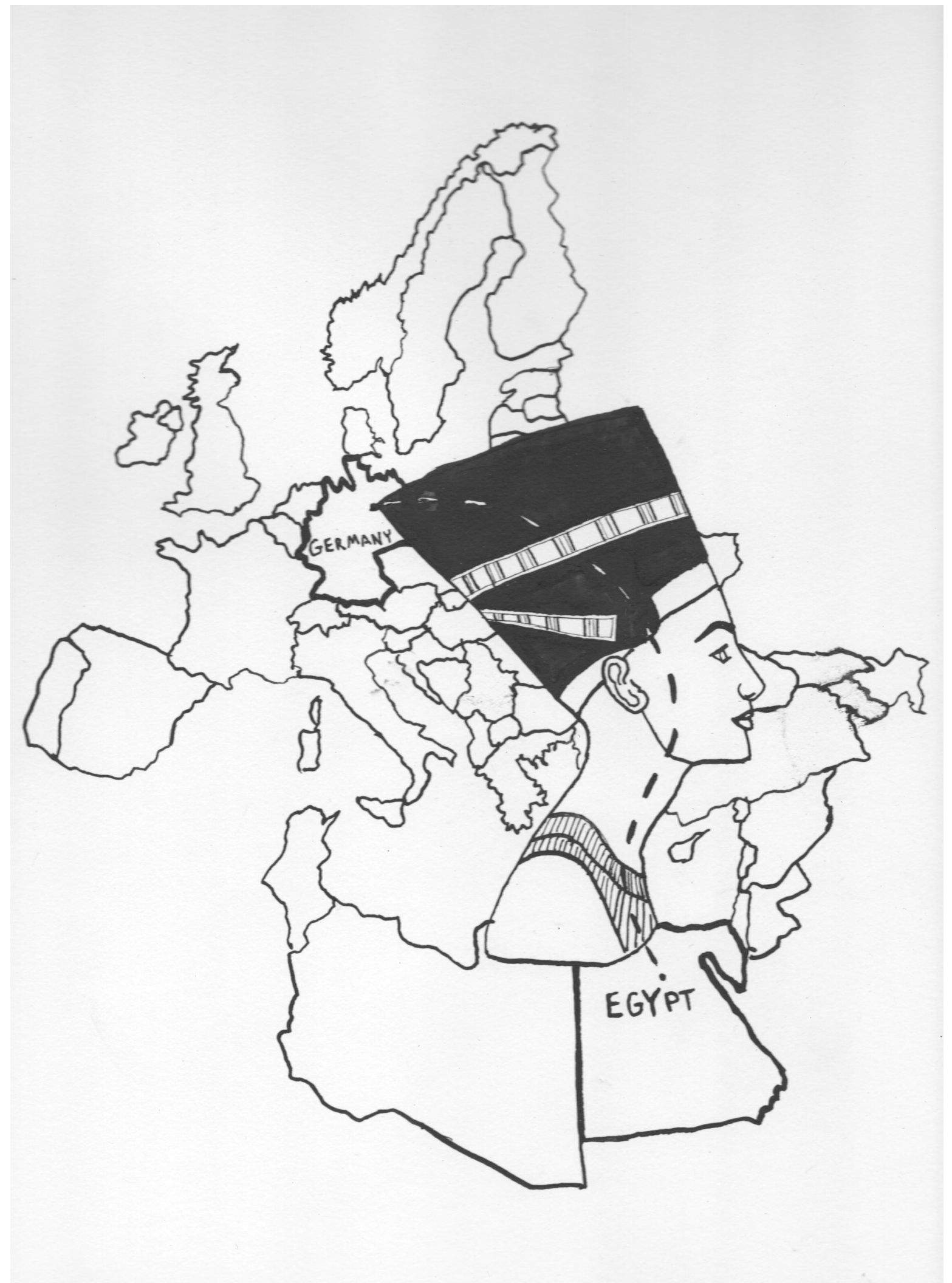
The bust was unearthed by a German in 1912

But, once again, the bust of Nefertiti is the subject of a heated debate, as it appears the Egyptians want it back.

The head of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt, Zahi Hawass, recently said the Egyptian Foreign Ministry would send letters to Germany requesting that the treasure should be loaned temporarily to Egypt.

This latest announcement has opened a can of worms as the German government has refused to give it back.

Nefertiti Bust, Egypt 18th Dynasty, ca. 1351–1334 BC, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung



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Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, United States. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000.

Exploratory Sketch 3



Nefertiti, Unknown, ca. 1352-1336 B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum



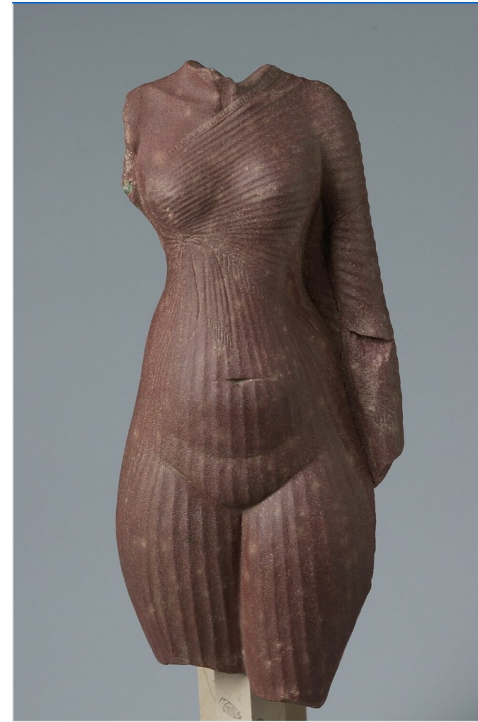
Nefertiti and Her Two Daughters, ca. 1346-1336 BCE, Houston Museum of Natural Science



Exploratory Sketch 4



Nefertiti Bust, Egypt 18th Dynasty, ca. 1351–1334 BC, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung



Torso of Queen Nefertiti, Egypt 18th Dynasty, ca. 1351–1334 BC, Louvre Museum, Paris.



Relief of Akhenaten as a sphinx, Unknown, 1349 B.C. - 1336 B.C., : Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Exploratory Sketch 5



Facsimile painting from the 'Green Room' in the North Palace at Amarna, ca. 1353-1336 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Papyrus Marsh, ca. 1427-1400 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art

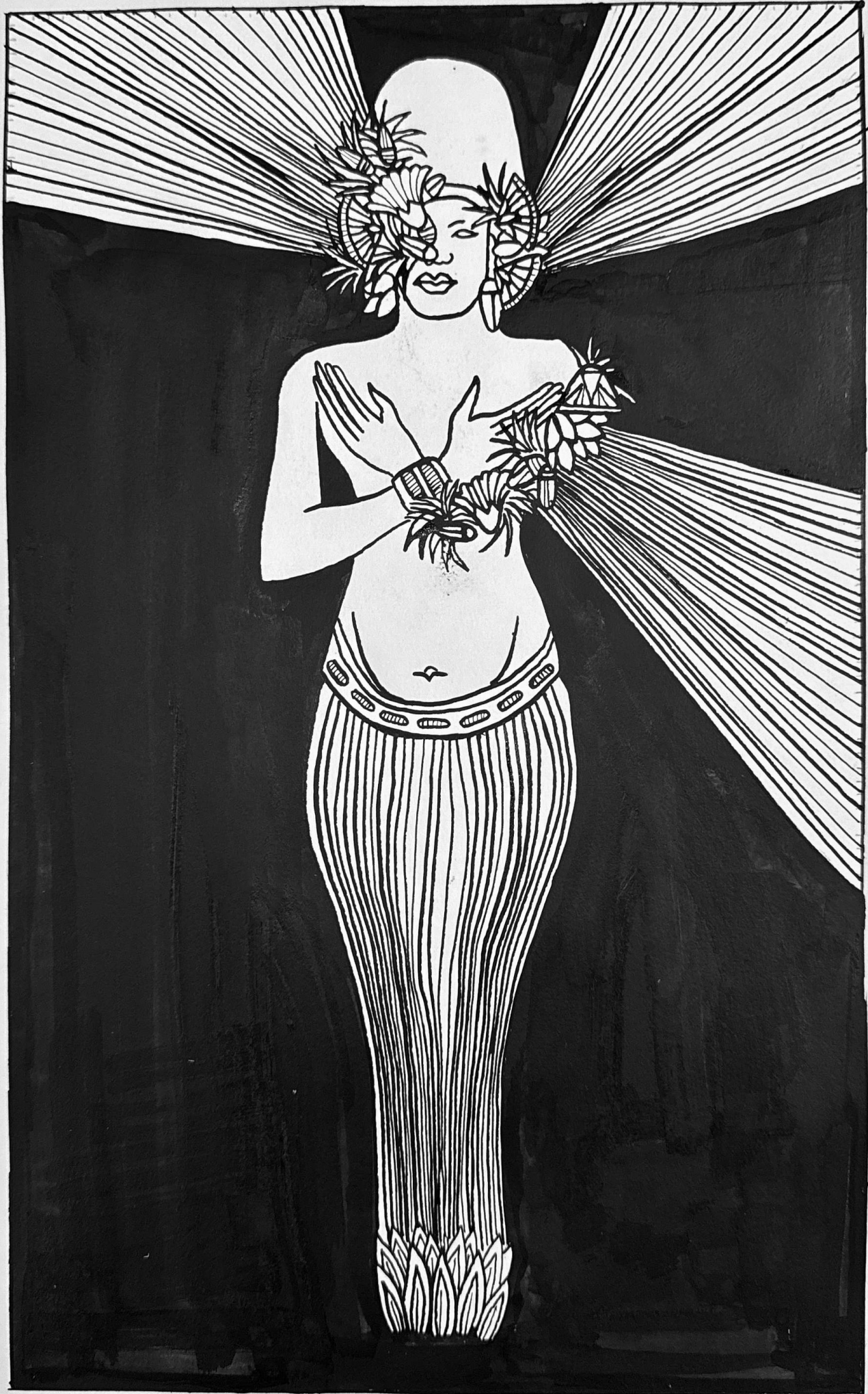


Ta Prohm Temple, Cambodia



Martin Wittfooth, *Bloom*, 2015, oil on canvas, private collection.







Assignment W3 – Silhouette

For this assignment, my exploratory sketches helped me figure out which elements of Amarna art fascinated me the most and how I could combine those details together in my finished piece. My first drawing represented my interest in the wear and decay affecting Amarna artifacts, which I represented with line work and hatching. In my second sketch, I explored the theme of postcolonial museum ownership, while also drawing on pen and ink as an effective medium to represent the black lines on a map. My third exploration focused on the unique silhouette of Amarna art. In my fourth drawing, I connected similar visual language in the elaborate folds of ancient Egyptian garments and the rays of light representing Aten in Akhenaten's new religion. And in my fifth drawing, I represented the naturalistic, floral elements of Amarna art.

As my first drawing and my fifth drawing both included the figure of Akhenaten, I started thinking about the connection between growth and decay. I considered how plants often thrive on ancient archaeological sites and how this foliage represents new life on top of long dead societies. This continuing cycle of life gives me hope. I decided to represent this hope with light, central to Amarna religion through the sun god Aten. In these final figurations, light emanates from plants typical in ancient Egyptian depictions, which spring from the missing or decayed parts of the figures. These rays of light mirror the folds in Nefertiti's and Akhenaten's garments and expands outward into the picture plane.

If I were to repeat this assignment, I would have pushed myself to abstract the figures even further. I tend to favor dark, decisive strokes, especially in a permanent medium like pen and ink. These rigid lines are conducive to representational art, but I would be curious to see where a looser, less realistic approach would take me.