Art & Architecture in the ancient World

Paleolithic Art

* Chauvet Cave Paintings
  + Mostly depicted the animals hunted by the paleolithic peoples
  + Some scholars think they painted them in an attempt to control their spirits
* Venus figurines
  + Exaggerated sexual features suggest paleolithic people were focused on fertility

Paleolithic Art

* Caves & huts- nothing permanent

Neolithic Art

* Cave Paintings
  + Often illustrate the different roles played by men and women in the early days of agriculture
  + Also, “Aliens.”
* Wall Reliefs
  + Etched into walls or molded onto them, often depicted important leaders and epic heroes in immense proportions
    - Pictures of… Queen of the Night (possibly the goddess Ishtar), Gilgamesh, definitely Ishtar
* Relief Tablets
  + Like wall reliefs, but you can take them with you
  + iReliefTablets coming soon
  + Made of a wide array of materials, depending on the wealth of the buyer
* Busts
  + Traditional clay and stone materials were later gilded and/or replaced with metals as metallurgy became more advanced
  + Depicted important cultural figures… or whomever could pay for one
* Tomb Art
  + Lavishly decorated tombs were the norm in many different cultures
    - Pretty paintings, however, were the mainstay of the Egyptians
  + Believed that the dead would rise and make use of their chambers, so they had to look nice
* Sculptures
  + Came in many different materials, modeled after many different things
    - Mesopotamia- usually took the form of a deity or animal
    - Mohenjo-daro dancing girl

Neolithic Architecture

* Defensive walls
  + Protected the towns and their occupants from those attracted to the concentration of wealth and resources
  + Jericho known for its protective walls
* Ziggurats & Pyramids
  + Massive temples dedicated to gods (like this one, dedicated to the Sumerian moon god Nanna-Suen) often dominated city skylines in Mesopotamia
  + Pyramids in Egypt served as tombs for mighty Pharaohs. Also, they look cool. Did you know they were supposed to be cubes?
  + Public works like these helped rulers to consolidate their power by pressing the people into civic labor and demonstrating the wealth and opulence of the monarchy
* Irrigation
  + Canals, aqueducts, etc. diverted water from the places where it naturally was to the places humans wanted it
  + Allowed for the growth and cultivation of crops farther away from water sources
  + Some places like Mohenjo-daro even had advanced plumbing systems that could remove waste from homes
  + Demonstrated man’s power over the environment
* Public Works
  + All of the things we’ve seen thus far required…
    - Public support, labor and wealth
  + Served as symbols of…
    - Authority & power of the government
    - Wealth of the city and its people