

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Ancient Egypt in Context

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SEEING PERFECTION

*Ancient Egyptian Images beyond
Representation*

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Abstract: This Element offers a new approach to ancient Egyptian images informed by interdisciplinary work in archaeology, anthropology, and art history. Sidestepping traditional perspectives on Egyptian art, the Element focuses squarely on the ontological status of the image in ancient thought and experience. To accomplish this, Section 2 takes up a number of central Egyptian terms for images, showing that a close examination of their etymology and usage can help resolve long-standing questions on Egyptian imaging practices. Section 3 discusses ancient Egyptian experiences of materials and manufacturing processes, while Section 4 categorizes and discusses the different purposes and functions for which images were created. The Element as a whole thus offers a concise introduction to ancient Egyptian imaging practices for an interdisciplinary readership, while at the same time introducing new ways of thinking about familiar material for the Egyptological reader.

Keywords: ancient Egypt, ancient Egyptian art, ancient Egyptian religion, statue, image

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