



Created by unknown masters scores of centuries ago, worshipped in their own time as symbols of forgotten religions, the greatest works of ancient art represent an apex of human creativity that subsequent civilizations can aspire to equal, but never hope to surpass. When we hold a work of ancient art in our hands today, we are directly transported into the past. The sensations we feel, the admiration for the technical skill of the artist, the awe over the luxurious nature of the materials, are the same feelings that would have been experienced by the king or wealthy nobleman who originally commissioned the piece. In this way, we form a direct connection with the past, with the lives of those who lived before us and those who ruled over them.

THE SPIRIT OF ANCIENT EGYPT

By Fayeze Barakat
Photography Courtesy Barakat Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA

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Perhaps no single object epitomizes the spirit of ancient Egypt better than the *ushabti*. Shaped like a mummy, the *ushabti* evokes the magical side of the Egyptian belief in an afterlife. The word *ushabti* literally means “the answerer.” The function of these little figures is described in Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead: “O this Ushabti! If (the deceased) is called upon to do hard labor in the hereafter, say thou: I am here.” The *ushabti* was expected to answer the call to work in place of the deceased. To look upon this *ushabti* is to come face to face with the mystery and magic of Egypt itself.

Among the ancient Egyptian funerary rites, the preservation of the physical remains of the deceased was of



gorgeous canopic jar lid depicting the human-headed deity Imsety exemplifies just how sophisticated such works became during the height of their evolution.

The ancient Egyptians envisioned



the sun god Khepri to be a great scarab beetle rolling the sun across the heavens. This handsome blue glass heart scarab, dating from the 18th Dynasty (1550-1297 B.C.), is the only glass example of this type known to exist. Adding to its value as the most prized type of scarab amulet, this piece also represents an important example of the early evolution of glassmaking.

Lion-headed Sekhmet was part of the powerful trio of deities that protected ancient Memphis. A sun goddess, she embodied the scorching, burning, destructive heat of the sun. This large bronze sculpture of Sekhmet features intricately engraved details including whiskers around the mouth and a mane decorated with a motif resembling lotus petals. Cast on a large scale, this impressive work surely would have once served as a centerpiece in a temple dedicated to this goddess.

TUT'S TREASURES



On an all-day tour of Cairo from Alexandria, Seabourn guests can visit the Egyptian Museum, whose fabled splendors include contents from the tomb of the young King Tutankhamen. Awaiting your attention are thousands of statues, jewels, and artifacts including the famous solid gold mask. In the afternoon, they proceed to Giza, exploring the magnificent pyramids and the inscrutable Sphinx.

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paramount concern. During the mummification process, an incision was made on the side of the body, through which the major organs were removed and then placed in containers called canopic jars. The finest examples include lids representing the four sons of Horus, with whom the viscera became identified. This

