

# Abstract

The international style or international *koiné* visual idiom is a contemporary theoretical construct designed to resolve the issue of visually and materially ambiguous artefacts from the final two centuries of the Late Bronze Age in the eastern Mediterranean. The iconography of the international style has been described in previous scholarship as irrevocably culturally entangled and thus the various cultural strands of visual idiom contained therein may not be unravelled. This has eventuated in the current theoretical state wherein it is no longer considered effective to analyse issues of visual style when addressing artefacts bearing this idiom from the Late Bronze Age. Instead contemporary scholarship chooses to examine larger issues of agency and audience, and theoretical frameworks of intercultural exchange and adoption, such as that of cultural hybridisation and entanglement.

This dissertation proposes to return to the origins of academic discussion for this culturally fused visual and material idiom from the latter half of the Late Bronze Age; the unique yet problematic international hybrid idiom. Because, for all artefacts discussed under the classification of an ‘international style’, it is the iconography that is and always has been the governing diagnostic feature that is used to identify these objects. In doing so this study tracks the evolution of this dialogue from the beginnings of modern archaeology, through art historical analyses to the present, and in contrast to current macro analyses of this topic that view broad swathes of material and cultures, this examination predominantly focuses on one culture; Late Bronze Age Egypt.

As a result, emphasis is placed on the extant and acknowledged New Kingdom Egyptian hybrid idiom artefacts from well documented archaeological contexts, particularly the tomb of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings near Thebes. It also highlights the evidence of related intrusive iconographic idiom from elite funerary contexts from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The proposition of this thesis challenges the model for a so-called international shared artistic idiom of kings from Egypt and proposes an internal Egyptian value for elements of this idiom in late Eighteenth Dynasty visual rhetoric. To aid clarity the text is structured in two halves with the first functioning as an overview of the theory, iconography, artefacts and research history of the international style. The second half of the dissertation examines the evidence from New Kingdom Egypt.