Art and Culture in Mesopotamia

Archaeologists have found beautifully detailed statues, jewelry, helmets, and bas-reliefs (figures carved into walls) on archaeological digs in Mesopotamia. In the earliest days of Mesopotamia, statues and murals were used only in the temples to please the gods. As trade with foreign lands developed, the demand for works of art increased. Craftsmen formed guilds to regulate and protect their crafts.

Sumerian art had a distinctive style. Men were pictured with bald-heads and broad-shoulders, wearing skirt-like kilts around their waists. Artists portrayed women with ankle-length straight gowns and various headdresses. Figures were often seen in profile (standing straight-up with their head facing to the right or left. The most unusual feature of Sumerian figure art was that the eyes of a person were opened very wide, staring straight ahead.

Sumerians were famous for tow handmade products. One was wool cloth, woven on looms using wool from domesticated sheep. The other was carved stone cylinder seals. These were small, round cylinders of stone carved with the owner's signature or symbol. The seal was rolled in ink and pressed onto documents as an official seal or trademark.

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Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1.)   What types of art have been found at sites in ancient Mesopotamia? _____

_____

2.)   Where was art work found in early Mesopotamia?_____

_____

3.)   Why did demand for art work increase? _____

4.)   How did crafts people protect their crafts? _____

5.)   How were people depicted in Sumerian art?

a.)(men)_____

b.)(women)_____

c.)_____

d.)_____

6.)   What two products were the Sumerians famous for? _____

_____

7.)   What was a cylinder seal, and what was it used for? _____

_____

8.)   If you had been a craftsperson or artist in ancient Mesopotamia, what product
        would you have made and why?