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## Who Were Mississippian Period Artists and What Was in Their Toolkit?

Riley James

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## **Who Were Mississippian Period Artists and What Was in Their Toolkit?**

The Mississippian Period lasted from approximately 1000 to 1550 CE and occurred in the regions of the North American Southeast and Midwest. Society followed a strong system of hierarchy with major settlements with mounds and palisades exerting political control over smaller towns and villages. In Georgia, the most notable Mississippian period site and settlement is Etowah, which belonged to the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC). The SECC was an exchange network of culture and spirituality that dominated most of the Mississippian period and is largely defined by its iconography and artifact trends. It is the general consensus that most Mississippian period art was produced by specialists in relatively large quantities and distributed to others throughout the Mississippian world, particularly elites at large settlements; however, there is a lack of information on who exactly these specialists were and what exactly they would have used to create their art. The Cummings Site in Northwest Georgia, a couple miles from Etowah, has provided a unique opportunity to learn more about who may have created art and what they may have used to do so. Excavation of a Middle Mississippian house (1260-1300 CE) at the site has revealed a number of potential artistic implements as well as potential raw materials used to produce art. By analyzing these artifacts and the context of this site in relation to Etowah, we can hopefully gain a better understanding of art and artists in this time period.