

# Prehistoric Art

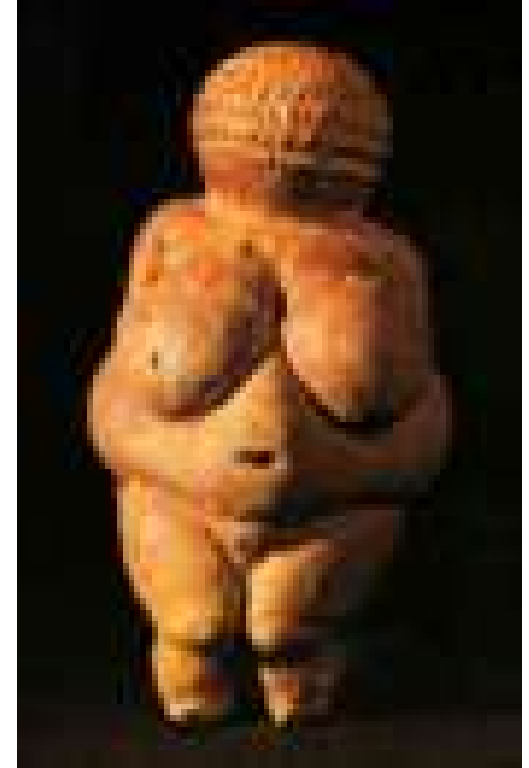
<http://www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/prehistoricart/>



# 1 Prehistoric Art: 2

Characterized by rock art and small sculptural figurines

Women's statuettes, found now and then during excavations of Upper Palaeolithic settlements, attract the closest attention of specialists. At present, more than some dozens of statuettes of this type are known only on the territory of Russia. Together with those, found in Europe, there are more than two hundreds of them. The majority of the figurines are not large: from 4 up to 17 cm. The most characteristic feature is their exaggerated "corpulence", they show women with portly figures. "Venus" from Willendorf and statuettes from Kostienki are the typical ones.



Venus of Willendorf , c. 30,000 - 25,000 BCE, limestone, height 11 cm, found in lower Austria

Among the earliest pieces of prehistoric sculpture that has been found.



Cro-Magnon peoples, Cave at Lascaux, France, "Hall of Bulls", 15,000-13,000 BCE, "fresco" and "found relief" includes paintings of bulls, horses, deer, bison, etc.

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# paleolithic



**The prehistoric temples of Malta**

- Depictions on small, "portable" objects, make the integral part of the Palaeolithic art. (l'art mobilier, portable art).
- There are three types of objects:
  - 1) statuettes or other three-dimensional objects cut out from soft stone or other materials (antler, mammoth's tusk),
  - 2) flat objects with engravings and paintings and
  - 3) small reliefs in caves, grottoes and under natural roofs. One of the first finds on this kind was a reindeer foot-bone from the le Chaffaud grotto with a depiction of two hinds.



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Reindeer foot-bone from the le Chaffaud grotto with a depiction of two hinds. One of the first finds of palaeolithic portable art.



5

"The lady in a hood" - a statuette from the mammoth's tusk, 3,7cm.

The Museum of National Antiquities, Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Found in 1894 by E. Piette и Ж.Лапортери while excavating a Palaeolithic site.

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**Horse carved from  
mammoth ivory, 2"  
long  
Polished and worn by  
long usage  
Vogelherd, Germany,  
ca. 31,000 BP**

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**Engraved baton of reindeer antler  
Montgaudier, France, late period  
Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris**



### **Leaping Horse**

**Carved on spear-thrower of reindeer antler**

**Bruniquel, France, late period**

Musée de Antiquités Nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye



### **Bison Licking an Insect Bite**

**Carved and engraved on a fragment of a spear-thrower made of reindeer antler**

**La Madeleine, France, 20,000-12,000 BP**

Musée des Antiquités Nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye





**Mare with Double Fingermarks and Sign  
Cave of La Pileta, Spain**



**Bowmen and Deer  
Cliff Painting  
Los Caballos, Spain**

[http://www.humanities-interactive.org/ancient/iceage/ex038\\_05a.html](http://www.humanities-interactive.org/ancient/iceage/ex038_05a.html)

[http://www.humanities-interactive.org/ancient/iceage/ex038\\_08b.html](http://www.humanities-interactive.org/ancient/iceage/ex038_08b.html)

**Azerbaidzhan  
limestone and other  
sedimentary rocks. There  
are numerous  
petroglyphs**

# mesolithic



**Azerbaidzhan. Situated to the south from Baku between the south- eastern slope of the Great Caucasian Range and the Caspian Sea, there lies a small plain Gobustan (a country of ravines) with tablelands of Beyuk-dash, Kichik-dash, Djinghir-dash and Yazyly-Tepe consisted of limestone and other sedimentary rocks. There are numerous petroglyphs date to different periods on the rocks of these mountains.**



**BARBED POINT  
Azilian, ca. 11,000-9,000 BP  
Mas d'Azil (Ariège), France**

<http://www.beloit.edu/~museum/logan/paleoexhibit/masdazil2.htm#artifact5>

<http://vm.kemsu.ru/en/mezolith/kobistan.html>





**Mesolithic, canyon Zaraut-Sai there is a monument, widely known not only among specialists-archaeologists - Zaraut- Kamar grotto.**

**The paintings of the grotto were discovered in 1939**

In the south-western spurs of the Gissar range (Uzbekistan) in Kugitang mountains, about 2000 m above the sea, in the canyon Zaraut-Sai there is a monument, widely known not only among specialists-archaeologists - Zaraut-Kamar grotto. The paintings of the grotto were discovered in 1939 by local hunter I.F.Lamaev, repeatedly published and studied in details by different authors. Primary conclusions that the paintings were dated to the Palaeolithic proved to be erroneous. A.A.Formozov assumes that the paintings are dated to Mesolithic, not earlier, in any case.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/profiles/ktubb/tubb.htm>

# neolithic

## Neolithic 'Ain Ghazal

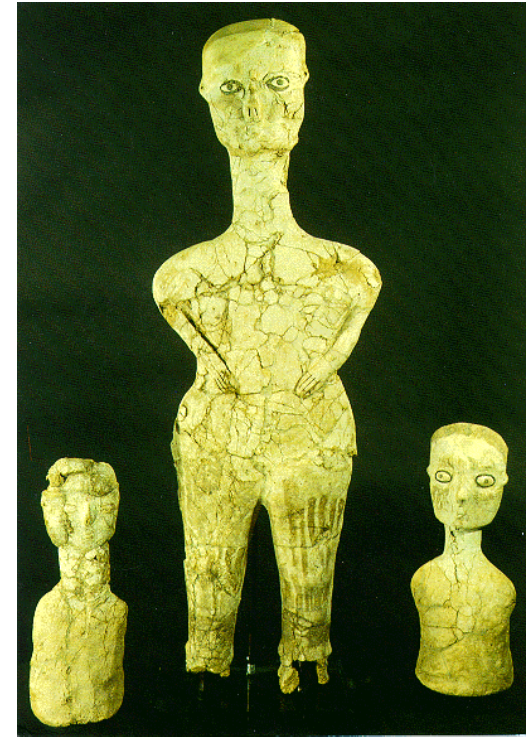
The statues were found at the Neolithic site of 'Ain Ghazal, in central Jordan during excavation in 1983. The site was initially discovered during the building of a new road in the 1970's on the north-east outskirts of Amman and most excavation has been of a rescue nature, made necessary because of extensive development taking place in the area.

## Technological Details

The statues had been made by modelling plaster made up of slaked lime, quartz and crushed calcareous filler on a reed/rush bundle armature. The armature was reinforced using spun twine/string. Impressions of the organic material are clearly preserved on the interior surfaces of the lime plaster and their interpretation yields a wealth of technological information. The cores in the dumpies consisted of a simple bundle of reeds which extended down through the centres of the bodies from half to three-quarters of their total heights leaving broad solid bases.

The cores of the figures were much more complex in their construction consisting of several bundles married together using twine to extend height and width. In both cases, the head and neck parts of the armature were reinforced by a close, continuous binding of twine. Evidence from the pit fill indicates the reeds extended through the base of the feet. These extensions could then have been embedded in the plaster floors, thereby securing the statues in a standing position.

Some statue surfaces were decorated with pigments: ochres, carbon black and a fine white lime plaster. The eyes were delineated using a bituminous mastic/putty as eyeliner, the same material was also used for irises. The eyeliner is further embellished in some cases with a green coloured pigment called diopside, a hydrated copper silicate.



## Neolithic 'Ain Ghazal

The statues were found at the Neolithic site of 'Ain Ghazal. The statues had been made by modelling plaster made up of slaked lime, quartz and crushed calcareous filler on a reed/rush bundle armature



Idol  
Usvyaty IV Settlement,  
Pskov Region  
Second half of the 2nd  
millenium BC  
Elk horn  
H 9.3 cm

[http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html\\_En/03/hm3\\_2\\_2.html](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/03/hm3_2_2.html)

# Ubirr (40,000? B.C.–present)

## Australian aborigines



**An early painting at Ubirr showing a running male figure with hunting gear. The thin, sticklike limbs and animated stance are characteristic of the Dynamic Figure tradition.**

**The original significance of these figures is unknown but some are arranged in groups that appear to depict ancient hunting practices or ritual activities.**







**China, Yuan or early Ming dynasty, 14th-15th century AD**

**China, Yuan or early Ming dynasty, 14th-15th century AD**  
This is an exceptionally well carved example of a type of headdress ornament that was made in a variety of sizes; this one is among the largest. Many Chinese of this period wore their hair on top of their head and crowned the arrangement with a jade ornament of this type. However during the last imperial dynasty of China, the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) men wore their hair in a plait and such head ornaments were no longer used. Many of them were subsequently converted into knobs for lids of bronze vessels.

A powerful coiled dragon emerges from the top of the complex openwork carving, supported on a curved plain underside, which is pierced by two pairs of holes. The body of the creature is embellished with deeply incised lines; a pearl is clasped in its claws. Its uplifted head crowns a convoluted composition in which the dragon body is entwined among cloud tendrils.



***Storage Jar c. 2500 B.C.***

**China, Gansu province**

**Neolithic period, Yangshao culture, Banshan phase (c. 2600-2300 B.C.)**

**Low-fired earthenware painted with iron oxide and manganese pigments**

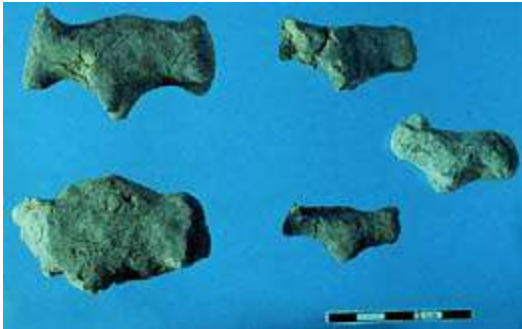
**Storage Jar, ca. 2000–1600  
B.C.**

**C-Group; From Faras, Upper  
Nubia, grave 3, Griffith  
excavations**

**Red and black ware with  
incised linear decoration;**



[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/afs/ho\\_13.125.29.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/afs/ho_13.125.29.htm)



**'Ain Ghazal Zoomorphic Assemblage**

**from the 9-3rd millennium BC**

**from the Levant to Iran.**

**Made from pinching the coarse yellow clay into  
elegant little bulls**

<http://link.lanic.utexas.edu/menic/ghazal/ChapII/fig14.jpg>



**Female Figure, end  
of 3rd millennium  
B.C.**

**Ecuador; Valdivia**

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/sa/ho\\_1980.83.15.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/sa/ho_1980.83.15.htm)

South Asia, 8000–2000 B.C.



**Stamp seal and a modern impression:  
unicorn or bull and inscription,,  
Mature Harappan period, ca. 2600–1900 B.C.  
Indus Valley**

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/ssa/ho\\_49.40.1.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/ssa/ho_49.40.1.htm)

Central and North Asia, 8000–2000 B.C.



**Shaft-hole axhead with a  
bird-headed demon, boar,  
and dragon, late 3rd–early  
2nd millennium B.C.  
Central Asia**

**(Bactria-Margiana)  
Silver, gold foil; 5 7/8 in. (15 cm)**

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/nc/ho\\_1982.5.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/02/nc/ho_1982.5.htm)

# Resources

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