

Yennhi Nguyen

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Essay 1

Prehistoric Art

During the prehistoric era, art pieces were created appearing either small or big for the convenience sake of the people of this time. During the Paleolithic time frame, art pieces were smaller for easy transportation from one location to another such as the Venus of Willendorf (25,000 BCE). However, over time, these nomads settled in to one place, marking this era as the Neolithic time period. Stone Henge (2,500 BCE) from Wiltshire, England is an example of a Neolithic art piece with its massive rock sizes that are far from small.

Since those during the Paleolithic time period were constantly moving around, they could not have big things that would be inconvenient for them to carry. The Venus of Willendorf is purposely made to be small so that these nomads could carry it without problems. It was easy to migrate with such a little figurine, especially since it was palm-sized. Although carved out of stone, the Venus of Willendorf would be light enough for the Paleolithic people to carry from one region to another because of the sheer size of it.

Taking a closer look at the Venus of Willendorf, it becomes noticeable that she has no face. A head is present, but there are no eyes, nose, or mouth carved into her head. There are little to no great detail done to make her appear realistic. Due to the fact that these nomadic people were constantly traveling to hunt and gather food, there was no time to add or make intensive detail. These nomads were focusing more on survival than spending their time making minor changes to a figurine.

The most obvious characteristic that the Venus of Willendorf possesses is the abnormal proportions that she has. She has slender hands that rest upon her huge breast and wide exaggerated hips. The reason as to why this is the case is due to the belief that the Paleolithic people had. The Venus of Willendorf symbolized fertility and would help the women become impregnated. By having large breast, a woman would be able to provide milk for her child while wide hips would ensure easy labor.

Later on, these nomadic people decided to settle in one area instead of migrating around constantly. The size of their art pieces changed dramatically due to the fact that they no longer had to leave the area. Stonehenge was enormous compared to the Venus of Willendorf and took about one thousand years to be built. The people were in no rush because those during the Neolithic time period no longer needed to move around to hunt and gather food. They were able to stay in one place and make art pieces that were not quickly sculpted with little detail on them.

Stonehenge is a megalith that had imported stones from nearly two hundred miles away. There was obviously a lot of labor work that went into building Stonehenge. They did not have advanced machinery to help them carry these megaliths, making their job a lot harder. However, during the Neolithic time period, the people were settling for permanent stay and were therefore able to make big artworks that they could spend a lot of time on making. Rocks from far away would not matter because even if they did make small progress, it would still be progress that would lead them a step closer to finishing Stonehenge, regardless of how long it would take.

Although Stonehenge appears to be simply an assemble of rocks in a circle formation, it is actually placed in specific spots for a reason. Stonehenge is generally thought of as a calendar that the prehistoric people used in order to predict the changes of the seasons. Since the Neolithic people decided to settle in one area, they would need to know the changes in weather beforehand

so that they could harvest food for seasons where they knew there would be food-shortages. They built a calendar because they knew that they were settling and would no longer be nomads. It was intended for a permanent stay, not a short settlement.

The size of Paleolithic art compared to the Neolithic ones is huge difference. The Venus of Willendorf is much smaller compared to the massive megaliths of Stonehenge. The intent for small artworks during the Paleolithic time period was for easy transportation since these people were nomads that were constantly moving. On the other hand, the Neolithic era was when these nomads decided to settle permanently. By doing so, they were able to build artworks that are enormous in size due to the fact that they had plenty of time to create them.