

Prehistoric Art

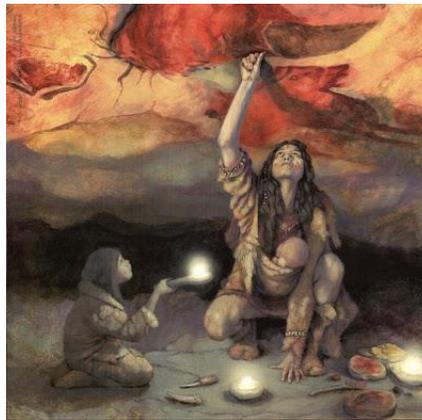
Venus of Willendorf

Parts of the body associated with fertility and childbearing have been emphasized leading researchers to believe Venus of Willendorf may have been used as a fertility goddess or idol to help women bear children.



Cave Paintings

These drawings are thought to be created in order to guarantee a successful hunt. Red and yellow ochre were ground into powder and applied to the walls using animal fats. Brushes were made using horse hair and strung together using dried animal skin. Lamps were used to light the dark caves.



Mesopotamia

The Sumerians were the first to invent the city-state, formal religion, writing, mathematics, law and architecture. Their predominant form of art was bas-relief sculpture meaning form in which figures are carved in a flat surface and project only slightly from the background rather than standing freely.



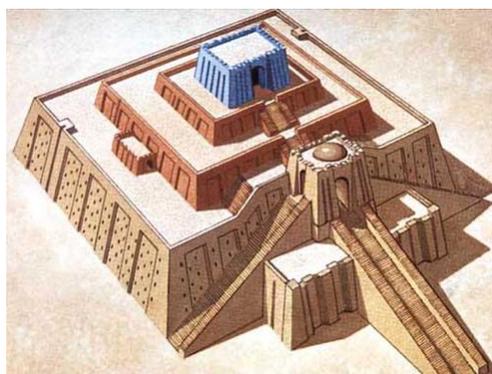
Sumerian Statuettes

Access to the small central shrines was limited to the priests who served the god's needs. Due to the lack of access that people had, the elite would commission images of themselves to be carried into the god's presence. The statues took the place of the worshiper when the physical body could not be present. These statues often have clasped hands with wide eyes; more expensive statues had jewels embedded in the eyes.



Ziggurat

The Mesopotamian ziggurats were not places for public worship or ceremonies. They were believed to be dwelling places for the gods and each city had its own patron god. Only priests were permitted on the ziggurat or in the rooms at its base, and it was their responsibility to care for the gods and attend to their needs. The priests were very powerful members of Sumerian society.



Lamassu is

an Assyrian protective deity, often depicted with a bull or lion's body, eagle's wings, and human's head. It was used as a symbol of power. It was believed that Lamassu would come alive and protect a home or a city if someone attempted to harm the residents.