

# Gender roles set in stone

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Gender roles set in stone Art has remained the most appropriate media used to criticize and represent the society. Prehistoric societies used sculptures as their main art to represent their societies. In doing this, they communicated specific thematic issues key among which is gender roles. Woman of Willendorf and statue of a kouros are among the most famous prehistoric sculptures that provide a perfect representation of gender and the gender roles in the early societies. Key among the features both sculptures portray systematically is nudity. The lack of clothing at the time implied that both genders went about their businesses in a nude state. They glorified their nudities not only as a mode of stratification but also as a type of life.

Woman of Willendorf is a perfect representation of a woman in the early societies. Just as with any other sculpture at the time, the woman is nude. In her nudity, her fertility features are conspicuous. Such features as her large breasts, developed hips and a large pelvic girdle are visible. Such features portray the vital role the women played in the society. Women embodied reproduction in the society. Her fertility features show this thereby presenting her as an established woman of the time. The sculptor emphasized her fertility and child bearing features owing to the childbearing role that women played. A perfect woman was fertile thus had children. Additionally, the sculpture lacks a definite face. The wears a unique headgear hat covers both her head and parts of her face thus concealing her face.

Other primary feature of the sculpture was its lack of legs. The statue does not stand on its own. The lack of legs coupled with the concealed face is two primary features included in the sculpture deliberately in an attempt to

portray gender roles. Women relied on their husbands and the rest of the society by extrapolation. As such, they relied on their male counterparts who provided and protected the families. The concealed face has a spiritual connotation. Women in the prehistoric society upheld stringent religious values, which they believed, played significant roles in enhancing their fertility and childbearing role. Additionally, concealing the face of the woman shows the society's interest in her face among other externalities (Adovasio, Jake and Olga 112).

Statue of a kouros on the other hand presents the position and roles of the youth in the society. The youthful nude male stands majestically in perfect symmetry. This portrays the features of the youth in the prehistoric society as captured by the sculptor. The youth looks honorable since he wears an ideal headgear, one that shows the society's glorification of his status. Unlike the Woman of Willendorf, his headgear does not overlap to his face thus showing a cheerful and contented youth. He has beautifully long hair pleated in beautiful beads both of which portray the youths' beauty and their artistic ways of enhancing their beauty using their hair among other features. The young man looks fit and athletic both features were prime and empirical in the society's representation of the youth.

Work cited

Adovasio, J M, Jake Page, and Olga Soffer. *The Invisible Sex: Uncovering the True Roles of Women in Prehistory*. New York: Smithsonian Books, 2007. Print.