

Assignment 4 • Connecting with Materials: Neolithic Ceramic Sculpture

Due: Monday, February 26, 2024

Bring the sculpture to class on Monday for full credit.

(Submit the written component (typewritten, double-spaced, no more than 12pt font size) and a photo of your sculpture in a single PDF document by 11:59 pm to vsoufias-lalli@ncc.commnet.edu)

Create a replica sculpture (30 pts) and provide a **formal analysis** and **artist's statement** (40 pts)

1. With the clay provided, you are to **sculpt** your own small replica of **ONE** of these two Neolithic era sculptures—**Male Figure from Cernavoda** **OR** **Female Figure from Cernavoda**. For your reference, the images of these works can be found in the Prehistoric Art slide presentation. For more information see also, *The History of Romania in One Object: The Thinker and the Sitting Woman*, <https://www.rciusa.info/post/the-history-of-romania-in-one-object-the-thinker-and-the-sitting-woman>
2. For tools to sculpt with, work as prehistoric humans did with tools made of stone, bone, and/or wood. Copper was a metal known to Neolithic peoples and could be used to make tools but bronze did not yet exist, not until ca. 3300 BCE. However, do not forget the most important tool, your own hands! To keep the clay from drying out between working sessions wrap it in plastic, or keep it in the sealed bag. If you find that the clay is beginning to dry out, wrap the clay with a moist paper towel, and store it in the bag until it absorbs the moisture. Keeping your hands moist also helps. Do not add water to the bag of clay as this will make liquid clay, also known as *slip*.
3. **Bring your sculpture to class** in the plastic bag **labeled with your name**; incise your initials into the sculpture if you are choosing to have it fired.
4. In response to this process, **submit a 1 to 2 page formal analysis and a reflection, an artist's statement** (essay format, type-written, double-spaced); **include the image and label of the original, and a photo of your finished sculpture at the beginning of your essay**. A formal analysis doesn't mean simply describing what you see in a work of art, although description is part of it. It means looking at the work of art and trying to understand what the artist wants to convey. An artist's statement is a piece of writing by you that helps the audience understand your artistic work. It is written in the first person and offers a description of your work and creative process.
5. **Consider the following questions for your formal analysis:**
 - Introduce the sculpture you're analyzing and that you've replicated. How does the original sculpture present itself? Is it representational, abstract, or non-representational? Explain. Use those definitions to help you.
 - What is the subject matter/content for this sculpture? (remember Assignment 3: What is Art?)
 - What size is this sculpture? Is it miniature, life-sized, over life-sized?
 - What kind of sculpture is this? sculpture-in-the round (meant to be seen from all angles and inviting you to move around it) or is it a relief sculpture (dictating one specific point of viewing)?
 - What is the texture of the surface of the original? Is it smooth or rough? Is it dull or shiny? What material (medium) was used to create it?



ARTIST UNKNOWN
MALE (LEFT) AND FEMALE (RIGHT)
FIGURES FROM CERNAVODA
PREHISTORIC, NEOLITHIC
CA. 5,000 - 4,600 BCE
CERAMIC, HEIGHT 4 1/2"
CERNAVODA, ROMANIA

- Is there any color?
- What shapes are being used to form this sculpture? Geometric, organic, biomorphic?
- What does the artist emphasize visually? What first attracts your attention? Describe it.
- How does the artist emphasize this feature/these features? Through scale, directional force, pattern, contrast?
- How is this work balanced? Is it symmetrical or asymmetrical? Is it dynamic or static?
- What emotion or idea is being expressed in this sculpture? How can you describe it and how is it being visually communicated? Is the artist successful in doing so?
- What purpose did this object fulfill, in your opinion? Explain

6. **Consider the following questions for your artist's statement:**

- What methods of sculpting did you utilize to recreate your replica sculpture? Refer to your handout about sculpture techniques (remember Assignment 3: What is Art?).
- What tools did you use and how did they work for you? Which tools worked best? Why?
- What is your reaction to working with clay? Any difficulties? Any surprises?
- What were your thoughts going into this and how did you feel about sculpting and the original work you replicated at the end of this? (expressing frustration is OK)
- What did you learn about sculpting in clay? What did you learn about your materials?
- What is your perception of the sculptor(s) who created these original figures?

You **are not** being graded on your artistic abilities in sculpting; don't be too concerned if your sculpture doesn't look exactly like the original. And yes, it might not be the most stable sculpture so be sure to support it when transporting it back to class. I will be looking for effort here and your response to working with materials. Enjoy the creative process and really think about the artist in all of this. In this case, that's also you!