

# Ancient or modern?

Cycladic figurines, among the earliest representations of the human figure, impress us today with their simple and timeless presence. Nevertheless, until the mid-20th century, the archaeologists who unearthed them as well as the general public regarded them as “inelegant”, “inartistic”, “primitive”, since the works of art of classical times, and especially of the 5th century BC, such as Aphrodite of Milos, Hermes of Praxiteles, etc., were the ultimate standard for these people.

From the late 19th century, and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, renowned European artists, sculptors and painters, such as Brancusi, Matisse, Moore, Coper, Hepworth, Picasso, Giacometti, Modigliani and others, started encountering Cycladic figurines in museums and collections. The nearly flat marble figures, with their simplicity and symmetrical proportions, captivated and ignited the imagination of these artists. Through their artworks, they invite us to view the Cycladic figurines from a fresh perspective, inviting us to imagine a bridge that spans across the centuries.



*"The pebbles are so beautiful that I feel like carving them all... The sea sculpts them so finely, gives them such pure and full shapes that only a very little effort is needed to make them into works of art."*

Pablo Picasso



Look for a stone, a pebble, a piece of broken vase or even a piece of wood and look at it for a long time. What image does it bring to mind? What if you change it a little? Paint it? Glue something to it? Will it always be the same image?

*"If I were to sculpt your form, I would create something almost flat, with minimal carving, resembling the Cycladic figurines."*

Alberto Giacometti



With these words, Giacometti addressed his audience who admired the simplicity of the forms in his works.

Look around you, inside the house, through the window, in the garden or even during your walk and find objects that remind you of a figure in the same simple way.

You can always carry a sketchbook with you, like artists do, and sketch it. Or you can even take a photo of it.