

How palaeolithic art influenced later artists



The Venus of Hohle Fels Germany,
30,000 BCE Mammoth Ivory



Torso Preadamite Jean Arp 1938

The Venus of Hohle Fels, Germany was carved from mammoth ivory around 30,000 years ago. Early archaeologists presumed it was an object of adoration (a fetish) and so named it after the Roman goddess of love. Modern scholars are not so sure, pointing out that we cannot possibly know its true meaning today. Whatever its meaning, it is truly beautiful craftsmanship and amazing that it was made without metal tools or knives.

Jean Arp was a German-French artist who lived from 1886-1966. He was an early Surrealist Painter, sculptor and poet. He was hugely influential in the world of art and made many significant contributions. Arp made many sculptures of torsos and the human form, though in this one he clearly has been influenced by the Venus figures. You can see this in the shortened legs and the absence of a head, though Arp has made his torso more of a layered spiral shape. His figure is carved from stone and is smooth, whereas the Venus figure has a rough surface that is inscribed with marks.