Neolithic (New Stone) Art

8,000-3000 BCE – Near East

4,000-1500 BCE – Europe
Neolithic: Ancient Near East
8000-3000 BCE
Agriculture:
The Domestication of Plants
(Wheat, barley, figs etc.)

Wild plants were domesticated
Domestication of Animals

Egyptian mural showing caws being milked

Funerary Stela of Intef and Senettekh. Egypt, c. 2065–2000 B.C.

Dumuzi feeding sheep.
Mesopotamian cylinder seal. Marble. c. 3200-3000 BCE.
List of domesticated animals

Dog - c. 30,000-15000 BCE Euroasia
Sheep 11000-9000 BCE Southwest Asia
Pig 9000 BCE Near East, China
Goat c. 8000 BCE Iran
Cow c. 8000 BCE India, Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa
Donkey c. 5000 BCE Egypt
Neolithic Grinding Stone. France. Beauvais Museum
Permanent Settlements: Their food supply assured, many groups changed from hunters to herders, to farmers and to townspeople.

Schematic reconstruction drawing of Çatal Höyük, Turkey, ca. 6000–5900 BCE
Restored view of a section of Level VI, Çatal Höyük, Turkey, ca. 6000–5900 BCE
Landscape with Volcanic Eruption (?)
Wall painting at Çatal Höyük, Turkey. C. 6150 BCE
Great Tower of Jericho
Jericho, Palestinian Authority.
ca. 8000–7000 BCE.
8.5-metre-tall (28 ft) stone structure

The tower contains an internal staircase
Restored Pottery from Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria. c. 6600-6500 BCE
Weaving is the systematic interlacing of two or more sets of elements to form a coherent structure.

Ancient textiles were made mostly of linen, wool, cotton (India), and silk (China).

Weaving in Ancient Egypt

Prehistoric woven objects and weaving tools
Fragments of earliest-known surviving textile. Maybe used fabrics used to wrap the dead. From Çatalhöyük; Turkey, 6th millennium BC; Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara, Turkey
Funerary Scene (?)
From shrine in Hierakonpolis. Upper Egypt. c. 3500 BCE. Wall painting
Head from Jericho

c. 7000-6000 BCE

Human skull; Plaster; Shells
L. Human skull with molded features. Jericho. 7000-6000 BCE
R. Painted Skull from Papua-New Guinea. 19th-20th c.
Human figure, from Ain Ghazal, Jordan ca. 6750–6250 BCE. Plaster, painted and inlaid with cowrie shell and bitumen, 3’ 5 3/8” high
Human figure, from Ain Ghazal, Jordan. ca. 6750–6250 BCE. Plaster, painted and inlaid with cowrie shell and bitumen. 3'5"
Neolithic 'spirit' masks from the Judean Desert.
C 7000 BCE.
Lovers

Ain Sakhri. Judean Desert
Early Neolithic. C. 9,000 BCE
Calcite cobble. 10.2 X 6.3 cm
British Museum
Deer Hunt. Wall painting from Çatal Höyük, Turkey, ca. 5750 BCE
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Comparison: Hall of the Bulls, Lascaux, Dordogne, France
ca. 15,000–13,000 BCE. Largest bull approx. 11’ 6” long
Hunter. Çatal Höyük, Turkey

c.5750 BCE
Wall painting, hunter wearing leopard skin, Çatal Höyük, Turkey c.5750 BCE.
Wild-Bull Hunt

Wall painting from Çatal Höyük, Turkey. c. 5750 BCE
Reconstruction of shrine. Çatal Huyuk Level VI. Turkey. c. 5900 BCE
Comparison: Woman holding a bison horn
from Laussel, Dordogne, France, ca. 25,000–20,000 BCE. Painted limestone 1’ 6” high
Reconstruction of shrine
Çatal Huyuk Level VI.
Turkey
c. 5900 BCE
Reconstruction of shrine. Çatal Höyük. Turkey. c. 5900 BCE
Goddess (?) from Chatal Huyuk. 5900 BCE
Enthroned Birth Goddess

Çatal Huyuk, c. Turkey. 6000 BCE
Comparison: Venus of Willendorf
from Willendorf, Austria, ca. 28,000–25,000 BCE Limestone, approx. 4 1/4” high

Enthroned Birth Goddess. Çatal Huyuk. c. Turkey. 6000 BCE
Marija Gimbutas (1921-1994) Professor of European Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles. She published twenty books during her long and distinguished career.

Gimbutas argued that the Neolithic cultures of Europe and Asia Minor (Turkey) were peaceful, matrifocal, egalitarian, sedentary, agricultural, highly artistic, and worshiped the Goddess. These cultures, Gimbutas argued, were overthrown between 4500 and 2500 BCE by patriarchal invaders who domesticated horses, worshiped male sky gods, and spoke Indo-European languages.
Yarmukian Goddesses

Jordan Valley
5500-5000 BCE
Clay & pigment.
65x14 cm
Snake Goddess (?) Tel Halaf, Syria
6000-5200 BCE. Terracotta
Neolithic: Europe
4,000-1500 BCE
Megalith Monuments

(Megalith= Huge, often undressed stone used in various types of Neolithic monuments.)
**Henge**: a circular area, often containing a circle of stones or sometimes wooden posts, dating from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.

**Aerial view of Stonehenge**, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, ca. 2550–1600 BCE. Circle is 97' in diameter; approx. 24' high.
Astronomers have determined that the sun appeared to rise over the “heel stone” at the midsummer solstice when one stood in the center of the circle in front of the altar.
Stonehenge.
Reconstructive models
Sarsen (gray stone) and bluestones
In this system of construction, vertical uprights (posts) support a horizontal element (the lintel). Figure 1.24 is a diagram of the most basic single post-and-lintel form, called a **trilithon**. In later eras, this simple system was elaborated into highly complex structures.

1.24 Post-and-lintel construction.

**Major trilithon** (three stones construction.) Stonehenge
Stone from the inner circle of Stonehenge.
Approximately 50 tons

At the top is a small protuberance called a “tenon” which was used to secure the upper lintel that connected this stone with its mate.
Bones from a burial site at Stonehenge. Radiocarbon dating indicates that they date back to the same time people started to erect the mysterious landmark. Other bones found there suggest people continued to use the area as a burial site until well after the stones went up around 2500 B.C.
Stone Alignments. Carnac, France. c. 4250-3750 BCE. Over 3000 granite stones. 20-350 tons. Approximately 12 feet high. Each set begins at the west with the tallest stones and ends with shorter ones.
Stone Alignments. Carnac, Brittany, France. c. 4250-3750 BCE
Stone Alignments, Carnac, Brittany, France, c. 4250-3750 BCE
Dolmen ("stone table" in Breton): Single-chamber megalithic monument usually consisting of several large stone slabs set upright to support a flat stone roof, all covered by a mound of earth that in most cases has weathered away. Frequently served as tomb.
Poulnabrone Dolmen. Ireland. 3800 to 3200 BCE
Dolmen from Garde-Epee. Near Angouleme. France
Boston Historic Graveyard
Passage Grave: form of megalithic tomb in which a burial chamber set in the centre of a barrow is approached by means of a narrow passage. The barrow is usually round in plan, but other shapes are known.
Passage Grave. Loughcrew, Ireland. c. 3300 BCE
Autumn Equinox.. Loughcrew, Ireland
The main cairn of Loughcrew is illuminated on the Spring and Fall Equinox
The back stone at the chamber of Loughcrew, Ireland. c. 3300 BCE
Passage grave at Newgrange, Ireland. c. 3100 BCE. 300 feet in diameter and 36 feet high. The white quartz is modern reconstruction based on excavations.
In the five days around the winter solstice, light from the rising sun enters through the doorway and the roofbox and illuminates the chamber for about 15 minutes.
Passage grave at Newgrange, Ireland. c. 3100 BCE

The Roofbox over the entrance where the solstice sun is beamed to the chamber.
Plan and Section of Chamber in Newgrange Tumulus.
Entrance Stone from passage grave at Newgrange, Ireland
c. 3500-2000 BCE
Silbury Hill. Wiltshire, England. 2700 BCE. 130 feet (40 m.) high. 5 acres.
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**Discussion Question:**

In what way did the social and economic changes that took place in human development between the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods affect the art and architecture produced in each period?

*Venus of Willendorf*
from Willendorf, Austria, ca. 28,000–25,000 BCE approx. 4 1/4” high

*Aurochs, horses, and rhinoceroses*, wall painting in Chauvet Cave, France, ca. 30,000–28,000 BCE.

*Deer Hunt*. Wall painting from Çatal Höyük, Turkey, ca. 5750 BCE

*Human figure*, from Ain Ghazal, Jordan, ca. 6750–6250 BCE. 3'5"

*Aerial view of Stonehenge*, England, ca. 2550–1600 BCE
Circle is 97' in diameter; approx. 24' high.