

The National History Museum of Moldova

Anna was a young woman filled with excitement and anticipation. She had just received important news that she was eager to share with her beloved. News that led her on a journey of discovery about the rich cultural heritage of Moldovan traditional fine crafts and priceless artifacts.

After her visit at the Information Center in the City Hall Anna started her journey in the world of her ancestors. Her first stop would be at The National History Museum.

As she entered the first exhibition room, all of her hectic thoughts and feelings dissipated. The room was filled with an almost palpable sense of reverence, with everyone speaking in hushed tones, respectful of the artifacts that surrounded them. Anna slowed her pace and gazed around in wonder. The first thing that caught her eye was a tiny clay figure of a woman. It was familiar to her, as she had seen it in history books and on the internet, but now she was finally face to face with it. The sign next to the glass box read "Cucuteni Tripolye culture, V - III century b.c."



Cucuteni-Tripolye culture inhabited a vast region stretching from the Carpathians to the Dnieper for approximately 1,500 years, from the late 5th millennium B.C. to the early 3rd millennium B.C.

The Cucuteni-Tripolitan culture elevated the craft of pottery to an art form through their innovative use of technology, shapes, and intricate ornamentation. Their work is considered on par with Greek ceramic art and porcelain. The ornamental compositions include cosmological scenes, astral symbols, fantastic animals, and anthropomorphic deities. The uniformity of the pottery's ornamental style over a vast region attests to the existence of communities with shared aesthetic tastes and a persistent cultural connection between them.

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The women figurine

Anna was overcome by an unusual feeling, as if the glass was not just protecting the pieces from the visitors, but also protecting the visitors from the pieces. The two tiny dots that represented the figure's eyes seemed to gaze deep into Anna's soul. Despite the fact that the two women were vastly different - the figure was thin and dry, almost like a mummy, while Anna was fleshy and alive - there was still something that made them feel connected. Was it the spirit, the strength, the essence? Anna couldn't quite put her finger on it, but ignoring the feeling was proving to be impossible.



As Anna stood in the room, surrounded by the remnants of a long-forgotten civilization, she couldn't help but be struck by the absence of male representation. The only figures to be found were those of women, deified for their ability to bring life into the world and protect their families. It was a concept foreign to her, having always been taught that men were the conquerors and providers.

The weaving loom exhibited in the Prehistory hall



One of the man's oldest invention exhibited in Red Room

Lost in thought, Anna's gaze wandered from the paper in her hand, taking in the various artifacts before settling on a tapestry loom. It was an exact replica of a much older one, designed for a vertical type of weaving that had since been replaced by more modern techniques. The sight of it sent a shiver down Anna's spine, reminding her that even the most primitive societies held onto their traditions and passed them down through the generations.

The National History Museum of Moldova's permanent exhibition "History and Civilization" features a reconstruction of a possible vertical loom used by the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture in the Neolithic period.

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The loom provides valuable insight into the textile production techniques used by the Cucuteni-Tripoli culture. The ropes used in the weaving process were commonly made from materials such as linen, hemp, or various animal fibers.

This museum piece was created using a combination of contemporary and original materials, with the wooden frame and support imitating the original construction, supported by two wooden legs or pillars. The hemp threads used in the reconstruction were complemented by 51 weights of clay, which were sourced from the Costești settlement and discovered in 1958. These clay weights played an essential role in the functioning of the loom, helping to maintain the tension of the warp threads and providing stability.



With every heave of the loom, Anna felt the weight of her ancestors' struggles, the difficulties that the clay women of yore had to endure in their everyday lives. Weaving was more than just a physical task to her; it was a metaphor for the trials and tribulations that life presented, a never-ending cycle of toil and perseverance. The thoughts of her ancestors generations removed, were always at the forefront of her mind, a constant reminder of why she had to keep going, to keep "weaving" her life into something strong and resilient, like the cloth woven on the loom.

Weaving is a reflection of a community's cultural heritage, as the ornamental styles and motifs found on textiles reveal the spiritual beliefs and aesthetic tastes of a people.

The art of weaving played a crucial role in the development of civilizations, as it allowed for the production of a wide range of essential items for daily life. The discovery of textile technologies in the Upper Paleolithic era is a testament to the remarkable ingenuity and creativity of prehistoric people. The invention of the loom is one of man's oldest, and it dates back to the 7th millennium BC. The evidence of the existence of textiles multiplied starting from the Neo-Neolithic era and is represented by the impressions of textile materials on vessels discovered in cultures such as Starcevo-Criș, Liniare, Pre Cucuteni ceramics, Gumelnița, and Cucuteni.

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Despite the perishable nature of organic materials from this time period, hints of the Stone Age's "textile" technology can be gleaned from textile prints on various materials, stone, clay, bone, and ivory tools used to create them, as well as various archaeological discoveries of furniture art such as "Venus" type statuettes and ornaments, and parietal art like engravings, drawings, and cave paintings. However, few actual textile objects have been preserved from the Stone Age.

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