



Interacting with Figurines: Seven Dimensions in the Study of Imagery

By Harald Haarmann

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The Visible Manifestation of the Invisible World Ever since humans moved into Eurasia, they have fashioned figurines from stone, clay, wood, metal, and even butter. These are not dolls, author Harald Haarmann explains, not the playthings of children. Instead, these sculpted figures must be understood within the context of the cultures in which they were fashioned. Are they religious in nature? Perhaps. Are they concrete expressions of past generations fashioned by the present? At times. Are these figures, most of them female, incarnations of goddess divinities? Could be. Are they living components of the daily lives of their creators? Definitely. In this fascinating examination of contemporary scholarship on the study of figurines, Haarmann draws on centuries of human activity from the Neolithic era through the works of twentieth-century artists such as Henry Moore and Constantin Brancusi whose sculptures glow with their veneration of the span of human culture. What do these ladies have to tell us about ourselves? In his richly illustrated book, Haarmann draws on the disciplines of archaeology, mythology, and linguistics to explain how modern scholars and other interested investigators can see beyond the boundaries our culture sets on us so that we can be welcomed into other worlds. And by extension, learn so much more about our own. Author Harald Haarmann, Ph.D., is a German linguist and cultural scientist who lives and works in Finland. Since 2003, he has been vice-president of the Institute of Archaeomythology and director of its European branch. He is the author of more than 40 books in German, English, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese.

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