

Gender Workshop

For both exercises you will need to work in pairs or in small groups of three or four.

Exercise 1:

- Draw a person.
- I would like you to swap figures with your working partner or someone else in your group.
- Without asking the person who made the figure I would like you to determine its gender. What criteria are you using to ascribe gender to this figure:
 - primary sexual characteristics,
 - clothing
 - hairstyle
 - gesture / posture
 - any other attributes (holding any objects for example? Decoration)
- Were you able to ascribe/determine the gender of the figure? Consider what sort of gender assumptions you were making? How do these reflect our culture's gender assumptions

Exercise 2:

Thinking about gender within our own cultural context should help you understand how fluid and difficult this concept might be. For this you should discuss in pairs your gendered objects

- Discuss whether or not this object is something you would consider to be a “gendered” item. Things you should consider are:
 - Is this something that explicitly displays gender?
 - Is this something we might use as a tool to perform or enact our gender.
 - Is it something that imposes or coerces gender identities
 - Outline a few pointers that might help an archaeologist negotiate gender identities in ancient communities (with no textual recourse).

Exercise 3:

- I will give each pair / group a picture of a canonical archaeological artefact that has been interpreted within a particular gender narrative. Consider how your own reflections from the first two exercises might influence a more sympathetically engendered narrative of this object.