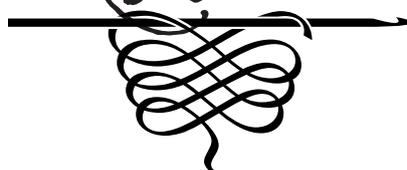Crochet Curiosities
Pattern no.1

Venus of Willendorf

Lady Crafthole

❖Background❖

The Venus of Willendorf is the most famous of the Neolithic Venus figurines found around central Europe. It is 11cm tall, carved from a soft orangey limestone and estimated to have been made around thirty-thousand years ago by pre-agricultural hunter-gatherers. It was discovered in 1908 in the region around modern-day Willendorf in Austria, but since the stone it is carved from is not local to the area, it may have been a product of trade or migration. It can be viewed today in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria.

To put the age of this artefact into perspective, it was made nearly twenty-thousand years before the agricultural revolution and is approximately the same age as the earliest known surviving cave paintings. In these far distant modern times we can only guess at the significance of this figure, but it seems most plausible that it signified a mystical connection with the fertility of nature, and may have been ritually buried in a productive place for food gathering, inadvertently ensuring its survival into modern times.

❖About me❖

I am an archaeological Illustrator & Photographer living near Oxford in the UK. I have worked in commercial and research archaeology across England and Wales: drawing, photographing and X-raying (and occasionally digging) my way through practically every period of history. When I finally took up the crochet hook I began making replicas of some of the objects I was handling, and formed the notion of a crochet cabinet of curiosities.

❖Notes❖

This pattern is worked in the amigurumi style: working in a continuous spiral with a stitch marker to denote the end of a round.
I use UK terminology here so for everyone else, substitute dc for sc.
The final size of the piece will depend on the yarn size, hook size and crocheting tightness. I used DK yarn with a 3.5mm hook and the final size of my original was around 15cm. I crochet fairly tightly and my single crochet tension gauge comes out at 25 stitches and 30 rows to a 10cm square.

❖Sharing❖

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please contact me on the email address below. I particularly love to receive photographs of finished objects and - best of all - burgeoning crochet curiosity cabinets. If you are unhappy with me sharing any images with our little crochet curiosity community please let me know.

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❖Glossary❖

dc (double crochet): hook in stitch, yarn over, pull through, yarn over, pull through two loops.
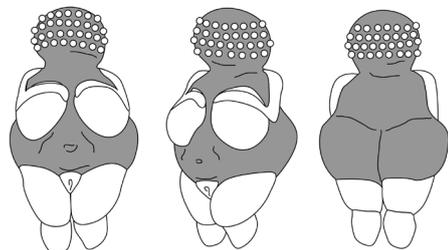
inc (increase): two dc in same stitch.

dec (decrease): dc two stitches together.

Magic ring: This is also known as a magic circle and can be explained best on youtube videos. It is the technique I use for starting round projects but the same can be achieved in other ways, for example by creating 2 chain and crocheting the first row of stitches into the first chain.

❖Head & body❖

Stuff as you go along to avoid difficulties at the end.

Magic ring
1. 6dc (6) [top of head]
2. inc around (12)
3. (dc, inc) x6 (18)
4. (2dc, inc) x6 (24)
5. (7dc, inc) x3 (27)
6. dc around
7. 13dc, inc [front of face], 13dc (28)
8. dc around
9. 13dc, 2 inc, 13dc (30)
10. dc around
11. 13dc, 2 dec, 13dc (28)
12. dc around
13. 12dc, 2 dec, 12dc (26)
14. (dc, dec) x3, 4 dec, (dc, dec) x3 (16)
15. dc around [neck]
16. 3dc, 2 inc, 6dc, 2 inc, 3dc (20) [shoulders]
17. 3dc, 4 inc, 6dc, 4 inc, 3dc (28)
18-23. dc around [waist]
24. (3dc, inc) x7 (35)
25. (4dc, inc) x7 (42)
26. (5dc, inc) x7 (49)
27-29. dc around [hip]
30. (5dc, dec) x7 (42)
31. dc around
32. (5dc, dec) x6 (36)
33. dc around
34. (4dc, dec) x6 (30)
35. dc around
36. (3dc, dec) x6 (24)
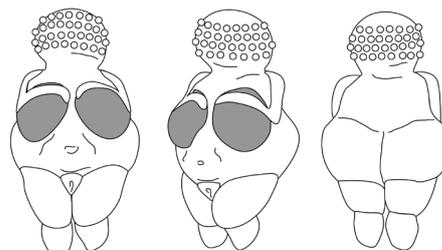37. dc around
38. (2dc, dec) x6 (18)
39. dc around
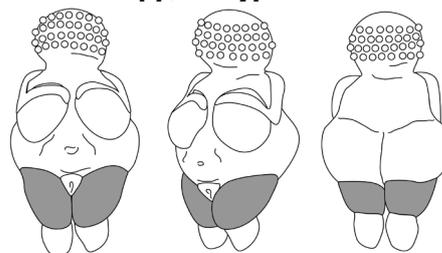40. (dc, dec) x6 (12)
41. dc around
42. dec around (6)
Tie off.

❖Breast (x2)❖

Magic ring
1. 6dc (6)
2. inc around (12)
3. (dc, inc) x6 (18)
4-6. dc around
7. 9dc
8. turn, 8dc
9. turn, 7dc
10. turn, 6dc
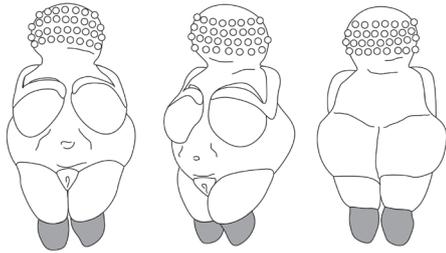11. turn, 5dc
12. turn, 4dc
Tie off, leaving a long tail.

❖Upper leg (x2)❖

Magic ring
1. 6dc [bottom of lower leg]
2. inc around (12)
3. (2dc, inc) x4 (16)
4-6. dc around
7. 14dc
8. turn, 13dc
9. turn, 12dc
10. turn, 11dc
11. turn, 10dc
12. turn, 9dc
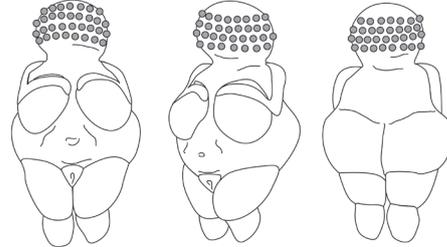13. turn, 8dc
14. turn, 7dc
Tie off, leaving a long tail.

❖Lower leg (x2)❖

Magic ring
1. 4dc [bottom of lower leg]
2. inc around (8)
3. dc around
4. (1dc, inc) x4 (12)
5-6. dc around
Tie off, leaving a long tail.

❖Vulva❖

Magic ring
1. 8dc
2. turn, miss first stitch, dc in each stitch (7)
3. turn, dc, inc, dc, inc, dc in next three stitches (9)
Tie off, leaving a long tail.
The bottom of the vulva is the point where the two sides meet.

❖Arm (x2)❖

Magic ring
1. 6dc
2-22. dc around (6)
Tie off, leaving a long tail.

❖Making up❖

When making up, each piece should be added in the order they appear in this pattern. It is useful to sew the two upper legs together before stuffing and fitting to the body.
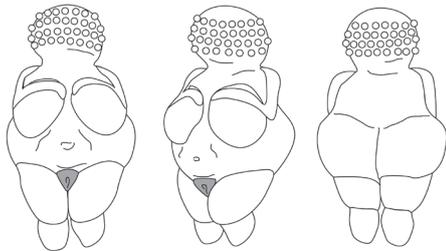Sew four rows of French knots around the head.

The shaping of the body is carried out after the limbs & breasts have been attached. This is achieved by tightly sewing lines of wool between the middle of the belly at the front of the body and points along the crease in the bottom at the back. Keep the tension on the sewn wool high and keep sewing through the body between the newly-formed belly button and the bottom until you are happy with it. The folds of fat can then be shaped in the same way by sewing tightly from the upper to the lower waist along the circumference of the body, pushing out the middle of the folds of fat.

Detail images of the finished figure can be found on my website.
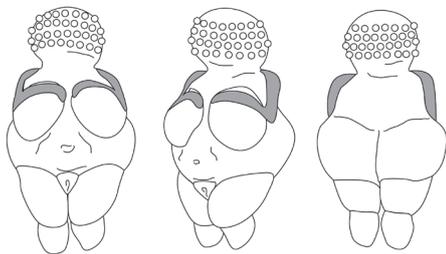
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