**Explore the ways in which Henri Gaudier’s Red Stone Dancer shows his interest in primitive artefacts.**

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska’s **Red Stone Dancer** 1914 shows his interest in primitivism by his use of direct carving. Working the figure himself – rather than allowing an apprentice to do it for him, was a way of celebrating the “marker’s mark” and the direct connection between the artist and his material. His small scale work has been heavily simplified here, showing his affinity for the ‘less is more approach’ that was part of the Modernist’s vocabulary by 1914. The face is completely lacking in idealisation, realism or indeed individuality, and is instead presented as a triangle. In this he pushes further than either Derain or Matisse’s earlier works of the same subject. The breasts are similarly simplified while the hands are greatly exaggerated (a feature shared with Epstein’s later Adam) but seen just as straight claws.

By carving only one figure, Gaudier moves towards an almost totemic presence of the single dancer, she stands as a testament to the energy and dynamism of movement. In this, he does show the influence of the ‘primitive’ (ie colonised) works he and Epstein saw in the British Museum, but also shows his simultaneous influence from the Vorticist group of which he was a part. The Vorticists, influenced by Marinetti’s visit to London in 1912 also celebrated the modern ideas and techniques of both the Cubists and Futurists and so Gaudier’s Red Stone Dancer can be seen as a successful fusion of primitivism with modernism. The colour of his material (Mansfield stone, rubbed with wax) evokes the strength and grounding of the primitive/natural idea and are evidence of his rejection of the white marble of classical sculpture. In composition, the twisted and angular body is forceful and powerful, celebrating both Marinetti’s ideas of Modernism and the raw aesthetic appeal of ‘primitive’ works.