

Article 2: Kihnu Cultural Space

Lying off Estonia's Baltic coast, the small islands of Kihnu and Manija are home to a community of 600 people whose cultural expressions and agricultural traditions have been kept alive over the centuries largely through the island's female population. The men of the Kihnu community have taken to sea to hunt seals and fish, while the women have on the islands to farm and to maintain the household. Kihnu women thus have become the principal of the cultural traditions in numerous songs, games, dances, wedding ceremonies and handicrafts. Singing is an part of collective handicraft activities and of religious celebrations.

The most visible of Kihnu culture remains the woolen handicrafts worn by the women of the community. Working in their homes using traditional and local wool, the women and knit mittens, stockings, skirts and blouses, which often feature bright colours, stripes and .

Their geographic isolation, their strong sense of community spirit and their unwavering attachment to the customs of their ancestors have enabled the Kihnu people to preserve their crafts and customs.

