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## MODERN (RE)USES OF ROCK ART: ART, IDENTITY AND VISUAL CULTURE

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Contrary to significant advances in archaeological approaches, little research has been done on contemporary uses of rock art: How does rock art influence and shape different spheres of contemporary societies? Often 'arranged' into protected sites open for tourists, and accessible through books and the internet, rock art is now easily reached by people today. Rock art is increasingly a popular topic of visual culture – it is used politically, socially, ideologically, religiously and artistically. In this session, we look for examples of such reuses of rock art from different places and cultures all over the world. Questions we ask include: What inspires contemporary artists (and not only artists) to use rock art? Is it simplicity of form?, Assumed simplicity of meaning?, Or assumed complexity of ideas hidden in rock art? To what extent are contemporary artists inspired by or influenced by scientific interpretations of rock art? How does the reuse of rock art differ in the Western world as opposed to within indigenous societies? How and why is rock art used to promote concepts of country, state, region, and culture? How is rock art presented in the media? Can rock art be a new source of cultural or ethnic identity? To what extent does professional archaeological and anthropological research influence contemporary uses of rock art?

## Rock art as a tool of mediation? On some uses of rock art imagery in contemporary San art

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**Keywords:** contemporary San Art, rock art, cultural translation, southern Africa, Kuru Art Project

When, in the early 1990s, contemporary San art joined the international art worlds, the new graphic compositions were immediately linked to the rock art images found all over southern Africa and usually attributed to 'San artists'. Since then, several researchers have shown that there is no connection between the two practices. However, despite the absence of any perceptible relation of continuity, it appears that rock art imagery has come to assume over time heterogeneous identities, functions, and uses for the actors involved in contemporary San art. Thus, focusing on the Kuru Art Project founded in 1990 in D'kar (Ghanzi District, Botswana), this presentation aims to explore the contexts in which connections have been established between pre-existing rock art and the contemporary paintings and prints. How rock art has been and still is being invested in and reused? By whom? For which purposes?

## Modern (re)uses of Prehistoric parietal art, e.g. in commercial centres in Hungary

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prehistoric art, Hungary

In Hungary, where (surely) prehistoric parietal art has yet to be discovered, it is interesting to investigate how people are using images of well-known French cave art, images of Scandinavian rock engravings or those of petroglyphs from Valcamonica. The Hungarian examples – e.g. commercial goods and services raffigurating prehistoric images – will be shown in a wider European context and the method of analyzing is planned to be useful for further research with other type of archaeological objects. A well visible example of the re-use of parietal art can be found in the commercial centre, called “Mammut I-II” in Budapest that was built in 1998/2001. Its name is derived from the acronym of “Major Associated Mall Mart and Universal Town” and the visual concept basically is planned on upon characters of Pleistocene fauna, especially the mammoth.



Fig.1 - Commercial Centre “Mammut”  
in Budapest. (photo by the author)  
Fig.2 - Commercial Centre “Mammut”  
in Budapest. (photo by the author)

## “Manistones” as Tibetan Buddhist Rock Art, Living Tradition and Heritage

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**Keywords:** mani-stones  
engraving, heritage, Tibetan  
Buddhism, revitalization,  
disaster

Tibetan Buddhist rock-art has been the focus of several archaeological studies conducted in the Himalayas. In these works, less attention has been paid to the study of mani-inscriptions, whose name originates from the six-syllables Avalokitesvara Mantra “Ohm Mani Padme Hum”, and to the related carving practice. The “mani” are votive tablets and stones engraved with Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and piled-up together on mani-structures widespread all over the Tibetan plateau. This paper discusses the case-study of the Gyanak Mani (Yushu, Qinghai Province - PRC), a mani-pile made of ten of thousands mani-stones situated in a small village of Eastern Tibet and known as the Greatest Mani-wall in the World (2005 Shanghai). Here, the engraving of mani-stones has been established in 1715 by an errant yogi and is still practiced by the locals. Following a destructive earthquake in 2010, the Gyanak Mani was listed by the Chinese State within the ten top-priority projects for the post-disaster reconstruction of the entire Yushu Eco-tourist area. Therefore, both this particular site and the living tradition of mani-stones engraving are now undergoing a process of heritagization negotiated among several stakeholders at local, national and global level.



## **PALIMPS(G)ESTUS: Rock-Art and the recreation of body expression**

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choreography, visual, memory,  
rock art, Serra da Capivara

This article describes a way of practicing choreography based on archeological thinking. The presentation opens up some views on the re-creation of rock art in contemporary expression and opens up a new perspective on primordial gesture by showing examples of stage performances. Is the fact of being deeply touched by the images of rock art sufficient to liberate and reinvent the ancestor's traces? Can we find a way back to a fundamental theory of feeling in the search for the integrity of the embodied experience? This interface shows how the performance of gestures, which belongs to the systematic field of choreographic studies, can be inspired by rock paintings. The archaeological site Serra da Capivara in Brazil intensifies the discussion. It helps to consider the source of primordial art as an aesthetic phenomenon, which can relate to the search of identity, belonging and reorientation of culture. The memory, as an investigation of movements and gestures anticipated by archaeological sensory thinking, shows a confrontation and inspires to re-work on the theme of repetition. In fact, the re-danced gestures are conceived as a path to reactivate memory; it shows how to transform the ontological strength into the visual expression of alterity.

## Altamira and the contemporary artistic creation

The link between prehistoric rock art and 20th century art is undeniable and it's especially strong with those iconic sites such as the cave of Altamira. The discovery of Paleolithic rock art in the cave of Altamira at the end of the 19th century and the succession of discoveries both in France and northern Spain during the first decades of the 20th century, allowed for a vision of Paleolithic rock art to be drawn in a few short years that is very similar to what it is known today. This historical moment practically coincided in time with the emergence of avant-garde Isms. This avant-garde art movement was looking for a break with the previous art movements and with academic art, and the prehistoric cave paintings surprised them with its innovative technical and formal solutions, despite its antiquity. Suddenly artists found themselves facing a new plastic reality that surprised them by its modernity which, in general, they admired and was inspiring for them.

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**Keywords:** Altamira, rock art,  
contemporary art, inspiration



Fig. 1 - Sketch for an Altamira's promotional poster of Mathias Goeritz. 1948. (© Fundación Santillana)

## Creative Interventions: Rock art and contemporary art practice in Australia

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**Keywords:** contemporary art, creativity, photography, Australia, cross-cultural exchange

The majority of rock art research undertaken within Australia, and internationally, has been carried out by scholars operating within the disciplinary frameworks of archaeology and anthropology. Despite their significant contributions, this paper proposes that art history and art practice-based approaches may provide new insights and interventions in rock art method and discourse. Moreover, they demonstrate how rock art can be a site of active engagement with the past in the present. Focusing on the work of modern and contemporary Australian artists who have found inspiration in petroglyphs and paintings I discuss the potentiality of rock art as sites of ongoing creative production and cross-cultural exchange.

## Contemporary views on rock art from within the frame

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Western perceptions and utilisation of rock art imagery is largely limited to promotional media, tourism, touristic and popular 'culture' products and academic publications. However, a different narrative is gleaned through an Indigenous lens, in this case 'lenses' of Bidjara, Ghungalu and Garingbal peoples (from the central Queensland highlands of Australia). Interacting and sharing with Aboriginal artists whose practices extend historical rock art cannons allows us to gain further insights into contemporary perceptions and the continuum of the cultural base the art stems from. Dale Harding offers one such cultural continuum with his contemporary artistic directions forming and strengthening bonds for individuals, community and for a larger audience. He achieves this through a visual art practice that extends cultural inheritances and visual languages heavily influenced by historical rock art traditions and their associated meanings, their stories and through ties to place. This paper explores the inspiration behind this contemporary art practice that has its roots in the Indigenous rock art traditions. We hope this paper opens critical discussions on how changing perceptions of rock art can recognise the continuation and contemporaneous relevance of knowledge that prioritises education and the strengthening of cultural bonds to land through the medium of rock art.



Fig.1 - Dale Harding stencilling, Wall Composition in Reckitt's Blue, Queensland Art Gallery. (photo courtesy Dale Harding / Queensland Art Gallery)

Fig.2 - Cathedral Cave, Carnarvon Gorge, Queensland. (photo Marisa Giorgi)



## How is Australian rock art represented in the Australian media? An analysis

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Australia, vandalism, cultural  
identity, representation

One of the most common representations of rock art in the Australian media is when rock art sites are reported to have been vandalised or defaced by graffiti. The other most common representation of rock art in the Australian press is when a site is re-discovered, and new dates help extend the long-term occupation of Australia by Indigenous Australians. Although rich in rock art sites, the cultural identity of rock art in Australia has not been well established, except in a few cases where the label of World Heritage Site has helped a site, Kakadu for example, to create a positive representation of rock art in the media and the public sphere. Furthermore, Australian rock art plays a minimal role in the mainstream visual culture of Australia. This paper will provide an overview of different rock art sites that have been negatively and positively represented in the media, to discuss how and why they are represented in such ways. By comparing Australian rock art sites to other instances where the portrayal of rock art in the media is somewhat positive, the paper will analyse these case studies to answer the question how is rock art represented in the Australian media?

## Rock art on and off the rocks: perceptions of Indigenous identity

In many countries, cultural and socio-political identity is shaped, manipulated, and presented through rock art. Both on and off the rocks, pictographs and petroglyphs are powerful tools. In this paper, I focus on re-contextualised and appropriated rock art images, in commercial settings, in new art works, in academic publications, and as integral components of national symbols. I also consider results from fieldwork in southern Africa, northern Australia, and North America. In all of these regions, there are new heritage centres concerned with conservation, job creation, promoting community archaeology, and – above all – challenging visitors’ preconceptions of rock art and of the Indigenous peoples who made it.

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**Keywords:** Indigenous identity, rock art, appropriated images



Fig.1 - Appropriated rock art images - such as this kokopelli figure - are often used for commercial purposes

## The Lord of the Scepters in the Andean rock art horizon: past and present

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**Keywords:** anthropomorphic rock art icons, authority representations in rock art

Fig.1 - Lord of the Scepters. La Bajada archeological site, Atacama Desert zone, II region of Chile. (photo Ximena Jordan)

Fig. 2 - Contemporary art craft representation of the Lord of the Scepters. Alto Atacama Hotel, San Pedro de Atacama town, Atacama Desert zone, II Region of Chile.

The Lord of the Scepters is the most represented anthropomorphic icon in the Andean rock art zone. Artisans and contemporary artists choose to represent this Lord as a motif in their creations, giving this image a new interpretation while making it available and even familiar to tourists, locals and new residents of the area. In the Atacama Desert, the most ancient drawings of the Lord of the Scepters can be found at the archaeological site known as La Bajada, where a variety of these representational characters are depicted, denoting different authors and pictorial styles. Most of them manifest notions of authority and greatness, both in the earthly and in the spiritual realm. Apparently, these Lord of the Scepters were not illustrations of an “ordinary” inhabitant of the area but of someone who was considered superior to the ordinary. This presentation will look into the peculiarity of this art form. What makes it so inspiring for artisans and contemporary artists to recreate it in different materials, not only in Chile but also in the rest of the world? Examples of the contemporary recreations of the Lord of Scepters will be analyzed as references, together with their cultural and commercial context.



## Joane Cardinal-Schubert: Ancient Contemporary

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**Keywords:** indigenous, contemporary, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, pictograph, cave art, stencil

In the 1980s, Joane Cardinal-Schubert emerged as a contemporary Indigenous artist, drawing on her Kainai heritage to create works that incorporated motifs seen as historic or traditional, while using contemporary materials and methods of presentation. Specifically, she considered the rock art of Southern Alberta, pictographs carved into stone in the Milk River area. Her interest in these images lay in their meaning, which had gone largely unexplored, and in their presence, which established the history of Indigenous people long before Europeans settlers came to the area. In both cases, Cardinal-Schubert had a concern for their preservation. She recognized the difficulty in creating these marks in stone and brought them into wider circulation through her artwork. In addition to the pictograph images, the artist also frequently used a handprint motif that could be likened to images found in Cueva de las Manos in Santa Cruz, Argentina. Similar to the pictographs found roughly 12,000 km to the north, the exact meaning of the images are unknown. However, it is certainly clear that both predate the arrival of Europeans. My paper will discuss how Cardinal-Schubert used ancient forms blended with contemporary mediums to make a statement about Indigenous culture and lifestyles.



Fig.1 - Calgary, Alberta, Canada - Joane Cardinal-Schubert / 1983.

## Amorial Art under the spell of the time: Rock art in the aesthetic affirmation of Brazilian culture

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Keywords: rock art, Armorial Movement, Pedra do Ingá, contemporary art, Ariano Suassuna

Brazil is a continent-sized country when analyzed on a global terrestrial level. Rock art exists in all of the Brazilian states. Notably, there is a predominance of rock engravings in the north and south of the country. However, it is in the northeast of Brazil where the most popular engravings and archaeological site, among scholars as well as the public, can be found. The site in question is Pedra do Ingá, located in Paraíba State and it has aroused the interest of contemporary artists, such as the multi-skilled artist Ariano Suassuna. He created an art paper technique called *Iluminogravura* during the period when Rock Art gained prominence, culminating in the Armorial Art aesthetics. The Armorial aesthetics expanded in the field of visual arts through Suassuna's nephew and godson Romero de Andrade Lima. In many of their artistic projects, Rock Art is created with paints and colors in the *present* under the influence of the *past*. The fusion of Rock Art elements into the Armorial Movement expected in certain ways to reveal and to emphasize the indigenous people's art at the moment of its contact with European populations during the colonization of Brazil.



## Modern recognition of rock art from South Africa - an aesthetic perspective

Since colonial invasions, African indigenous cultures have withstood and weathered rapid change. Khoisan people of Southern Africa (also known as Hottentots and Bushmen), were among many who were dispossessed of their land by colonial and other authorities from the middle of 17th to early 20th centuries. The art, language, mythology and material culture of the Southern San people have been a source of interest since it was first recorded in 1779 by Robert J. Gordon. Other publications containing reproductions of San parietal art were produced from the late 18th and 19th centuries by Anders Sparrman, Francois Le Vaillant, Samuel Daniell, John Barrow and Thomas Baines. The unique rock art of San peoples from the early modernism was a powerful source of inspiration for white South African culture. The aim of the article is to present the recognition of rock art in South Africa in an artistic context, especially within modern times (in art of Jacob Pierneef, Walter Battiss and Pippa Skotnes).

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**Keywords:** Southern Africa, rock art, Southern San people, modernism, Jacob Pierneef, Walter Battiss



Fig.1 - Rock art in the Stormberg Mountains. (photo © William D.Hydert 2007)  
Fig.2 - Walter Battiss (1902-1982). *Figures & Buck*, Watercolour, 57 x 81cm. (photo © MutualArt)

## **Escoural Cave: analysis of the rock art image composition**

The Escoural Cave is located in Portugal, between the hydrographic basin of Tejo, the Sado river, and the Alentejo region, in the Serra de Monfurado, from where it is still possible to see the Serra da Arrábida. This article proposes the analysis of drawing as an initial step that unleashed the processes of engraving and cave painting in Escoural Cave. The perception of reality, gesture-action, pictorial composition, use of materials and the creative dimension are the pillars of reflection for this approach. It is intended to present how these identity elements of a visual culture in the Paleolithic period still reverberate and can also be a foundation for contemporary art.

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**Keywords:** drawing, rock art,  
Escoural cave, contemporary  
art, image and culture

## From rocks to canvas: rock art in the contemporary Siberian Archeoart movement

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**Keywords:** Siberia, Siberian  
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modern Siberian artists

Concurrent to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a new interest in the antiquity of local cultures emerged. In search of the roots of their culture, Siberian artists started exploring local mythologies and prehistoric art assuming they could and can be gateways to the ancestral world. The latter is to be restored to provide a source for new esthetics joining past and present. Particular attention has been paid by artists to rock art and other forms of prehistoric art, forms which have started to be an important source of cultural identity for the Siberian people. This paper will show how rock art is used by modern Siberian artists and to what extent their uses of rock art fit the archeological knowledge about this ancient imagery. Furthermore, taking into account that the most vivid religious tradition of the Indigenous Siberians is shamanism (assumed to be rooted in the remote past and as such to be the religion of ancestors of the Siberian people), rock art along with shamanism are two main themes in modern Siberian art which aspires to transmit ancient cultural codes into the modern world.



Fig.1 - The petroglyph from Oglakhty in southern Siberia (after Kyzlasov, Leontev, 1980, *Narodnye risunki khakasov*, Moscow, p. 144) and the painting *Shaman's drum* (1990) by Alexander Domozhakov (photo courtesy by S. G. Narylkov), inspired by the petroglyph



## In the Path of the Wanjina: Using tourism to revitalise and protect cultural icons

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**Keywords:** rock art, Kimberley, Australia, tourism, Wanjina, cultural revival, cultural heritage protection

Australia has the world's greatest concentration of Aboriginal Rock art, dating back thousands of years. It is the most visible and widespread example within the landscape of the diversity, presence and connection to country of Aboriginal culture in Australia. The Kimberley has one of the richest and largest concentrations of rock art in the country yet the fewest accessible public sites. The most spectacular manifestations are the art sites marking the journeys and deeds of the Wanjina, the creation spirits. The signature haloed heads of these ancestor beings are widely known and, in a few locations, regularly visited by tourists, though many classic sites are not used or accessible. Often the knowledge and care for these locations is fading as the elder custodians pass away. At Mowanjum the new Art and Cultural centre is dedicated to the Wanjina. There is an opportunity for local communities to utilise, protect and preserve this important heritage by creating a managed tourism trail with local guides. Comparison is made with similar projects in Namibia. How could the Path of the Wandjina become a vital part of Australia's national landscape? It could be a key feature of the Kimberley experience that enhances and adds economic value to the Aboriginal people of the region.



Fig. 1 - Wanjina Rock Drysdale River. (© Joc Schmiechen)  
Fig. 2 - Sunburst Wanjina King Edward River. (© Joc Schmiechen)

## In the name of ancestors: “repainted-identities” and land memories

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**Keywords:** tribal India, cultural identity, cultural revival, cultural landscape, ancestors

The reuse of rock art by two neighbouring tribes of the Nilgiri Mountains, in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, transects social, religious and environmental aspects. Two case studies will be examined from an indigenous point of view. The revival of Vellaricomбай-Eluthuparai rock painting in a small community of honey hunters and gatherers, the Alu Kurumbas, has represented a means of integration for social uncertainty with the intent to release tribal people from the loss of cultural identity caused by land grabbing, deforestation and the consequent social grievances. An “invented tradition” encouraged by local foundations and with the added influence of global marketing. Rock paintings can promote concepts of ethnicity and environmental protection, as in the case of the Toda people. Rock paintings representing honey harvesting, with the same methods still being practiced by this community of buffalo herders, are traces of their ancestral cultural landscape and Dreamtime. Despite commoditization, assimilation and land grabbing, these rock evidences still represent for these communities hierofanies of ancestors to be honoured and respected.



Fig.1 - Eluthuparai rock paintings, Vellaricomбай Village, Nilgiri District. (© Laura Teresa Tenti)  
Fig.2 - Ancestors painted by Krishna Kitna, Alu Kurumba artist. (© Laura Teresa Tenti)

## Modern Indigenous (Re)use of Rock Art in Amazonia: The Case of Munduruku People and Rock Art as a Cultural Weapon for the Defense of Indigenous Territorial Rights

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**Keywords:** Munduruku, Tapajós River, Amazonia, sacred rock art, modern indigenous reuse

This paper presents an intercultural investigation of rock art aiming to promote a more balanced and reciprocal dialogue between Western and Native Amazonian Knowledge systems, that may be viewed as an “interepistemological approach”. Along this avenue, rock art is problematized as part of living intangible cultural heritage of Indigenous people in the ethnographic present and as a strategic cultural resource. In many Native Amazonian cultural traditions, rock art sites are considered sacred and dangerous places containing knowledge about living Indigenous historical trajectories imprinted on the landscape. Despite not exactly a “modern” (re)use of such sites, this perspective has acquired a new meaning and function, as they also became a weapon, or tool, as ethno-political territorial markers and, in consequence, played an important role in the struggle for Indigenous cultural and territorial rights in twenty-first century Amazonia. This research examines the case of the resistance of the Munduruku people against the construction of a mega-dam complex project in the sacred rapids and waterfalls of the Tapajós River, bearing rock art made by the demiurge Muraycoko.



Fig.1 - Prof. Jairo Saw Munduruku found a petroglyph boulder in the Cachoeira do Cabano location, Middle Tapajós River, Brazilian Amazonia. (photo Raoni Valle, taken during 2015 fieldwork campaign)

## Reproduction, Simulation and the Hyperreal: A case study of 'Lascaux III' 2015-2017

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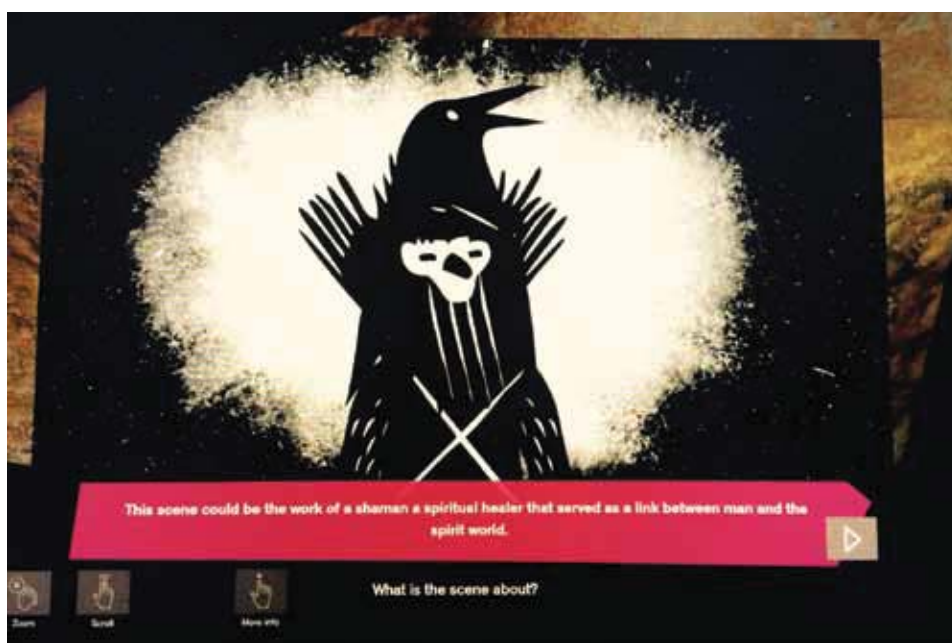
**Keywords:** Lascaux, Lascaux III, reproduction, facsimile, Baudrillard, simulation

The Lascaux International Exhibition, dubbed 'Lascaux III', was a blockbuster show which toured seven countries worldwide between 2012 and 2017. The highlights of the exhibition were five 'facsimile' reproductions using 'stone veil' technology of those parts of the cave not reproduced at the infamous Lascaux II (located near the original cave). Other reproductions on show included a 3D film experience of the cave interior, life-size 'hyperrealistic' reconstructions in silicone of Cro-Magnon humans by artist Élisabeth Daynès, multimedia consoles including an animation of a 'shaman' painting the 'scene in the shaft', and 'prototype' copies of artefacts from the cave complex made by Jean-Michel Geneste and Serge Maury for the film *Les gestes de la Préhistoire*. In this paper, I critically examine the re-use, reproduction and simulation of the art, architecture and archaeology of Lascaux in the Lascaux III exhibition, focusing on how simulation offers new ways of engaging with the art and the problem of the reproduction superseding the original; how the show's aim to offer an 'authentic discovery of the origins of art' reinforced stereotypes of prehistoric cave art and delivered a problematic paragon of Baudrillard's concept of 'simulation'.



Fig. 1 - Reproduction of the Lascaux shaft scene, Lascaux III (author's photograph)

Fig. 2 - 'What is the scene about?': still from multimedia console, Lascaux III (author's photograph)



## Do you see what I see? (part 2)

My general feeling is that rock art is the earliest form of communication. While it is still in use today, it has been displaced by other forms of recording facts and opinions (Today we mostly use print medium for communication). Therefore, as an archaeologist and amateur anthropologist, I would like to continue sharing my observations on interpreting rock art based on my search for basic universals of human behavior which transcend culture, time, and distance. this will include using all of the senses, memory, observation, personal bias, etc... and some observations of modern "rock art" which I have found interesting.

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**Keywords:** interpreting rock art, human behavior, communication through rock art

## Rock art and the Woodland School of Art

The Woodland School of Art, associated with the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes area in Canada, is a pictographic style of art inspired by traditional Midewiwin pictography, as well as rock art. This style also known as Legend Painting was originated by the artist Norval Morrisseau in the 1960s. Morrisseau's paintings inspired other Indigenous artists for whom this style was suited for their own cultural needs while it also helped to promulgate Indigenous culture and arts to Euro-Canadians. This paper will explore how rock art influenced this painting style, especially since the sharing of Indigenous traditional ceremonial knowledge is discouraged. Was this influence evident in the pictorial style or in the stories depicted? Can clear links be established between particular rock art sites and modern paintings? Is rock art's presence explicit or is there a conscious choice to dissimulate the ceremonial knowledge for a non-Indigenous audience? Finally, was the mainstream art world's fascination with the Woodland School due to its perceived connection with the Primitive and a timeless, universal and simple art, a category into which, unfortunately, rock art is still often assigned?

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**Keywords:** Woodland School of Art, Norval Morrisseau, Canadian Shield rock art, contemporary art



Fig. 1 - Norval Morrisseau. *A Separate Reality (fragment)*, 1979-1984. Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Quebec. (photo Dagmara Zawadzka)

Fig. 2 - Wizard Lake site, Ontario, Canada. (photo Private collection)