



Man and Artistic Expression: Emergence of 'Homo Aestheticus'



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Abstract

Man is a member of animal kingdom like all other animals but his unique feature is culture. Cultural activities involve art and artistic expressions which are the earliest methods of emotional manifestation through sign. The present paper deals with the origin of the artistic expression of the man, i.e. the emergence of 'Homo aestheticus' and discussed various related aspects. It is basically a conceptual paper; therefore, mainly the secondary sources of data have been used for the study. Overall findings reveal that man is artistic by nature and the history of art begins with humanity. In his artistic instincts and attainments, man expressed his vigour, his ability to establish a gainful and optimistic relationship with his environment to humanize nature. Their behaviors as artists was one of the selection characteristics suitable for the progress of the human species. Evidence from extensive analysis of cave art and home art suggests that humans have also been 'Homo aestheticus' since their origins.

Keywords: Man; Art; Artistic expression; Homo aestheticus; Prehistoric art; Palaeolithic art; Cave art; Home art

Introduction

*'Sahityasangeetkalavihinah, Sakshatpashuh
Puchhavishanhinah.'*

(A person destitute of literature, music and art is like an animal without a tail and horn.)

'Neetishatakam' by Bhartrihari, 5th Century AD [1]

Man is a member of animal kingdom like all other animals but his unique feature is 'culture' – the way of life or the manmade part of the environment, which differentiates him with others. Culture is as antique as human being. Art and artistic expressions form a significant aspect of human culture from the beginning and make the human being – 'Homo aestheticus', the artistic man.

Antiquity of man and culture

The beginning of earth can be estimated as early as 4.5 billion years ago, but human development only counts for a small portion of its past which is divided into the stages: prehistory, proto-history and history. The prehistoric period was that phase of human life and culture when the records of human activities were not documented as the script was not invented. About 2.5 million years ago, it was started and continued to 1,200 BC and is generally classified into three archaeological periods: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age [2]. About 5 million

to 7 million years ago, the first human ancestors were appeared. Maybe it was the time when some African apelike creatures usually started walking with two legs. About 2.5 million years ago, they were flaking rough and simple stone tools. Then some of them diffused from Africa to Asia and Europe, 2 million years ago [3]. The first stage of social-cultural evolution of human, Stone Age, is further divided into three stages – Palaeolithic (roughly 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 BC), Mesolithic (about 10,000 BC to 8,000 BC) and Neolithic (roughly 8,000BC to 3,000BC) [2]. Therefore, Palaeolithic Age or Old Stone Age of prehistoric period is the phase of early development of human being. It is further divided into three periods: Lower Palaeolithic Period, Middle Palaeolithic Period and Upper Palaeolithic Period (Figure 1) [4].

Unique search for expression

The discovery of a way for humans to express their emotions through signs was a revolutionary change in the development and progress of human culture and civilization. One of the initial methods of emotional manifestation through signs was 'Art' [5].

Methodology

The present paper deals with the origin of the artistic expression of the man, i.e. the emergence of 'Homo aestheticus' and related various related aspects. It is basically a conceptual

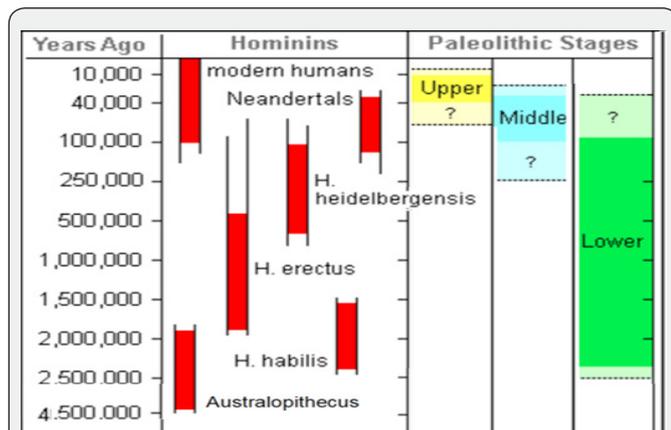


Figure 1: The Stages of Palaeolithic Period.

paper; therefore, mainly the secondary sources of data have been used for the study. Most of the facets are described with the

help of illustrations.

Discussion

Prehistoric art

The prehistoric period began somewhere late in geological history. Prehistoric and preliterate cultures adopted a way for expression through signs, currently known as Prehistoric art. This artistic method of expression was generally continued until that cultures had developed either script and writing or other techniques of record keeping.

Stone age art

Archaeologists have identified four basic categories of Stone Age art: Petroglyphs, Pictographs, Prehistoric sculpture and Megalithic art. The two broad classes of these art types are: Parietal art, the artworks applied to an immovable rock surface; and Movable art, the portable artworks (Figure 2) [6].

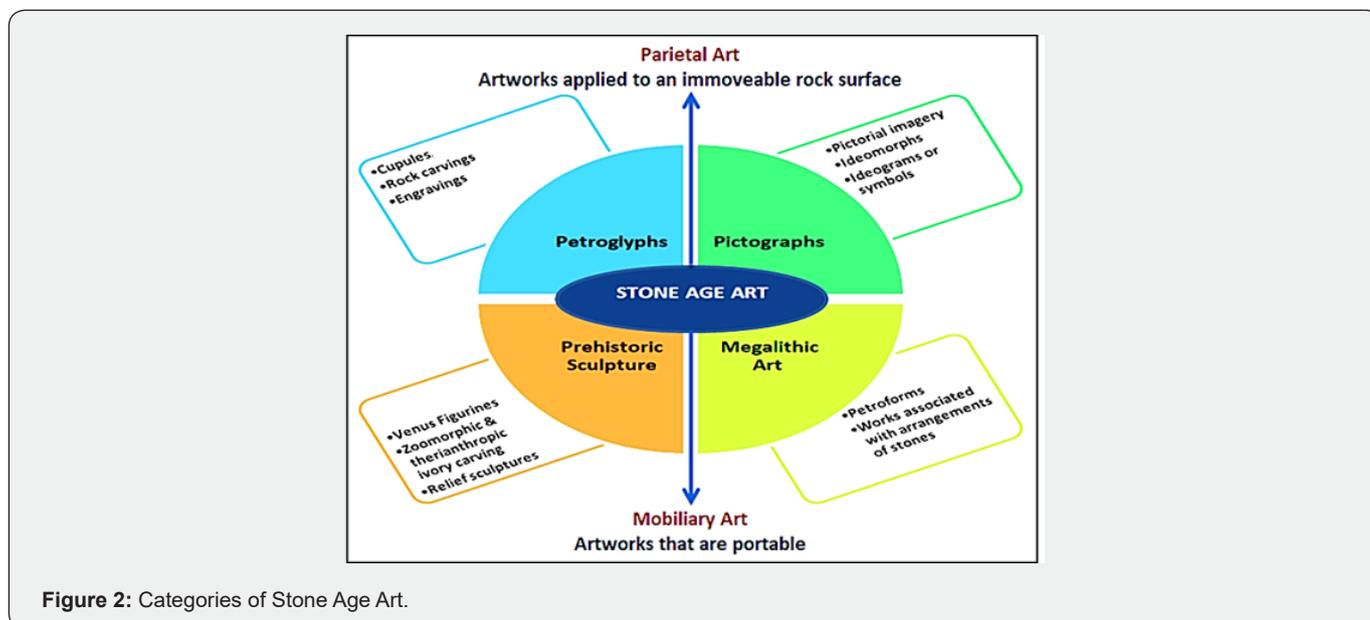


Figure 2: Categories of Stone Age Art.

Earliest discovery of palaeolithic art

Curiosity towards Palaeolithic art dates back to 1880 when amateur archaeologist Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola first published a pamphlet containing illustrations of Palaeolithic cave art objects from Altamira Cave of Spain (Figure 3). In fact the cave was sealed due to rock fall and a local hunter rediscovered it in 1868. Sautuola visited the cave in 1875 and in 1879 he started exploring the cave and firstly his nine-year-old daughter Maria, who was with him on exploration, noticed the bison paintings on the ceiling (Figure 4). Sautuola accurately assumed that the paintings were the creation of Palaeolithic man. Professor Juan Vilanova y Piera supported his views and in 1880, they published the results in a pamphlet- 'Breves Apuntes Sobre Algunos Objetos Prehistóricos De La Provincia De Santander' (Brief Notes about a few Prehistoric Finds in Santander Province) (Figure 3). Contemporary scientific

associations, particularly French specialists, rejected his views about the antiquity of the paintings. In 1880 Prehistorical Congress in Lisbon, the hypothesis of Sautuola and Piera and their findings were the subject of scoff, as nobody believed that those well preserved paintings with supreme artistic quality were painted by Palaeolithic man. Even, Sautuola became accused of forgery that he ordered a contemporary artist to produce those paintings. [7-9] Over the next 20 years, many other prehistoric painting finds made Altamira paintings more admirable and mainstream scientists withdrew their opposition to the Spaniards. Fourteen years after Sautuola's death, an article 'Mea culpa d'un sceptique' (1902) was published in the journal L'Anthropologie in which the French archaeologist, Émile Cartailhac, apologised for his fault. Thus, the cave of Altamira was the first site in the world where the Upper Palaeolithic cave art was discovered. Currently, thousands of sites allied to Palaeolithic art have been identified [7,8].



Figure 3: Pamphlet Published by Sautuola in 1880, Left - Cover Page of the Pamphlet, Right - Sheet 3 of Pamphlet showing Paintings in the Vault of the Cave [8].

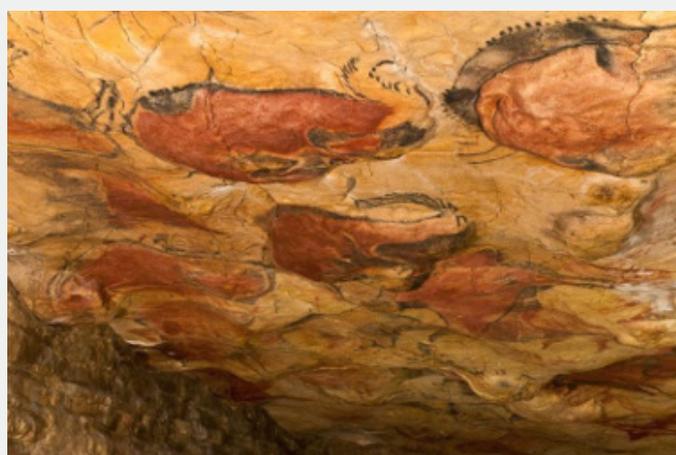


Figure 4: Polychrome Bison Paintings on the Ceiling of Altamira Cave, Spain [9].

Evidences of earlier symbolic thinking

There are some evidences in the human heritage found, which are not exactly the manmade or manufactured artistic artefacts but only reveal earliest symbolic thoughtfulness or aesthetic intelligence in early man. For instance a 3,000,000 years old pebble is found with the fossil remains of *Australopithecus africanus* in Makapansgat cave of South Africa (Figure 5). It is a reddish-brown jasperite cobble. Natural chipping made its look like a rough version of a human face. Might be the *Australopithecus* would have recognized the pebble as a symbolic face and brought it from its natural source to his cave. So, it is one of the oldest identified 'Manuports' in the world [10].

Origin of art

The earliest evidences of artistic capabilities of man go back to Lower Palaeolithic period, while the full flowering of this skill was visible only from Upper Palaeolithic period.

Lower palaeolithic art

Lower Palaeolithic period was the first phase of the development of human as 'Homo faber', the creator man, as human being started tool making in this period. *Homo erectus* and *Homo habilis* were the hominins existing in this phase, while earliest stages were developed by *Australopithecus*. The dominant tool types were pebble tools and handaxes on core and flakes. There are no credible evidences of Lower Palaeolithic rock art as there are no figurines or cave paintings from that period. Certain evidences of earliest engravings, ornament making and petroglyphs are found from this period. Of these, some are controversial as the scholars believed that these are not manmade, while are naturally made creations. A few significant instances are discussed here. 500,000 years old engraved shells have been found in Java (Figure 6). These engravings were created by *Homo erectus*. Several scholars believed that these are earliest evidences of abstract art signs, while experts are disagree on issue

that whether these engravings can be properly classified as 'art' [11,12]. The 400,000 years old Venus of Tan-Tan is an unproven artefact found in Morocco (Figure 7). It is considered as the first representation of the human form. The normal human form of the object was analysed to be made up of natural geological processes. Then the early humans carved it with stone nails and emphasized its human form. The substance on its surface is may be the red ochre used by them. Critics believe that the shape of the rock is the result of natural weathering [13]. The same controversy is related to the Venus of Berkhet Ram, which is found in Berkhet Ram located on the Golan Heights in Beirnhath between Syria and Israel (Figure 8). Many palaeontologists viewed it as the product of erosion rather than a deliberate act of creativity, while others believe it to be the world's oldest sculpture possibly created by earlier hominids like Homo erectus, as it was related to the phase from 230,000 to 700,000 years ago [14]. Two perforated pendants found in Repolust cave in Styria, Austria, are the earliest objects with manmade holes: first is a wolf incisor, very efficiently perforated near its root (Figure 9); and the second is a flaked bone point, crudely triangular and drilled near a corner. Currently the

preferred age estimate of these items is around 300,000 years [15]. The related period of many engraved portable objects, found in excavations at European sites, has been recognised as Lower Palaeolithic. Of these, the earliest two marked bone fragments are from Kozarnika cave in north western Bulgaria: one is a bovine bone, about 8 cm. long, with approximately 10 grooves (Figure 10); and second is a cervical bone fragment with 27-notch along the edge. The estimated age of these things is between 1.1 and 1.4 million years [16]. A sequence of petroglyphs was discovered in the Auditorium cave at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, India. These petroglyphs are considered the oldest identified prehistoric art of its kind (Figure 11). This rock art consists of several cupules, non-utilitarian cup-shaped hemispherical depressions, hammered out of the surface of the rock. This quartzite rock art dates from 290,000 BC to 700,000 BC [17]. In the earliest Bead's category, there are several fossils of perforated Porosphaera globularis from a variety of French Acheulean sites have been found. Further, 252 beads of same type were gathered from England, mostly in Biddenham quarry at Bedford (Figure 12) [16].



Figure 5: 3,000,000 Years Old Makapansgat Pebble from South Africa [10].



Figure 6: 500,000 Years Old Shell with Geometric Incisions, Java [12].



Figure 7: 400,000 Years Old Venus of Tan-Tan, Morocco [13].



Figure 8: Venus of Berekhat Ram dated between 230,000 and 700,000 Years Ago, Syria [14].



Figure 9: 300,000 Years Old Perforated Wolf Incisor from Repolust Cave of Styria, Austria [15].



Figure 10: 1.1–1.4 Million Years Old Bovid Bone Fragment with 10 Grooves from Kozarnika Cave, Bulgaria [16].



Figure 11: Petroglyph, dated between 290,000 BC and 700,000 BC, in Auditorium Cave at Bhimbetka, India [17].



Figure 12: Perforated Porosphaera Globularis Fossils from the Acheulian of Biddenham Quarry at Bedford, England [16].

Middle palaeolithic art

Middle Palaeolithic period was the next phase of Palaeolithic after Lower Palaeolithic. Neanderthal man was the creator of this phase. It was the period when various fake tools were the dominant tool type. With the continuing introduction of the Middle Palaeolithic techno-complexes, the art work was increased significantly. Along with petroglyphs, ornaments and engravings, the colour drawings have also been achieved from this phase of cultural development. Some important examples of Middle Palaeolithic art are given here. A series of 18 cupules found under a limestone slab covering a Neanderthal child's tomb in the cave of La Ferrassie, France, is the oldest known cupule art and earliest identified rock art of Europe (Figure 13). This particularly funerary art dated between 70,000 and 40,000 BC [18]. Nasarius snail shells have been found on the Grote des Pigeons in Taforelt, eastern Morocco. These shells are 82,000 years old. Each shell is perforated and covered with red ochre and might be used as beads (Figure 14). The discovery of these small shells is an example of oldest human ornamentation [19]. The Nasarius rock beads are also gathered from Israel, which may be more than 100,000 years old. Shells in a 76,000-year-old sediment layer have been found in the Blombos cave in South Africa (Figure 15) [20]. A stone flake was discovered in the Blombos cave in South Africa. There were nine red lines drawn from ochre on its surface. This may be the first known drawing made by Homo sapiens (Figure 16). Scientists think the artwork is approximately 73,000 years old and

belongs to the Middle Stone Age [21]. Two finely engraved ochre fragments were found in Blombos cave, South Africa. These are recovered from the Middle Palaeolithic deposits and are at least 70,000 years old. The deliberate alterations by scratching and grinding can be seen on the surfaces of both pieces. The engraving pattern on its facets created a different cross hatch design in combination with parallel slant lines (Figure 17). Although the interpretations are suggestive, not all scientists are prepared to classify them as artistic expression and abstract thought [22]. The Diepkloof eggshell engraving is one more example of wonderful engraving from around 60,000 BC (Figure 18). It was found in Diepkloof rock shelter which is situated in Western Cape of South Africa. In fact this engraving was done on an ostrich eggshell and the patterns were drawn by using abstract art techniques such as crosshatching and geometric motifs [23]. Three fragments of bone as portable engraved objects were recovered from Kiesgrube Oldisleben 1, Artern County, Thuringia, Germany. These were found with Micoquian stone tools of the last interglacial and are the evidences of portable engraved objects in Europe related to Middle Palaeolithic. Of these, one is an engraving on a scapula fragment which resembles a human stick figure (Figure 19). Probably it represents the oldest known human figurative depiction through engraving in the world [16]. A painting was seen on the wall of a limestone cave on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia. This was 44,000 year old. In the mural, a hunting scene was drawn with dark red ochre pigment on a section of a 14 foot long wall. Eight small figures that looked like human-animal

hybrids were illustrated who were carrying weapons and chasing pigs and water buffalo (Figure 20). Scholars believed that this mural is the earliest example of storytelling through pictures in archaeological records [24]. On the wall of in the cave of Lubang

Jeriji Saleh on the Indonesian island of Borneo, there is an image of a thick-bodied, spindly-legged animal, drawn in reddish ochre (Figure 21). It may be a crude image which is more than 40,000 years old. It is one of the oldest figurative arts in the world [25].



Figure 13: Petroglyph dated between 70,000 and 40,000 BC in La Ferrassie, France [18].

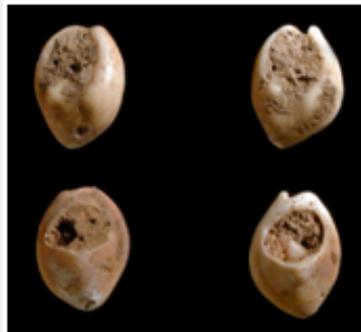


Figure 14: 82,000 Years Old Beads from Grotte des Pigeons, Morocco [19].



Figure 15: 76,000 Years Old Beads from Blombos cave, South Africa [20].



Figure 16: 73,000 Years Old Stone Flake with Ochre Lines from Blombos Cave, South Africa [21].



Figure 17: 70,000 Years Old Engraved Ochre Fragment from Blombos Cave, South Africa [22].



Figure 18: Diepkloof Eggshell Engravings, dated 60,000 BC, from Diepkloof Rock Shelter, South Africa [23].



Figure 19: Iconographic Engraving on Bone related to Micoquian from Oldisleben 1, Germany [16].

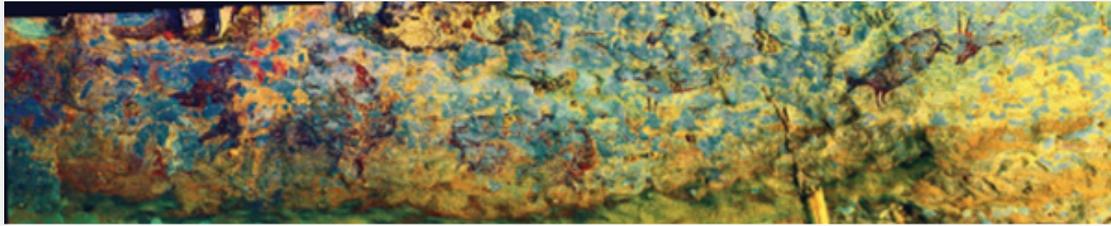


Figure 20: 44,000-Year-Old Mural from Island of Sulawesi, Indonesia [24].



Figure 21: Over 40,000 Years Old Figurative Art from Lubang Jeriji Saleh, Borneo [25].

Upper palaeolithic art

Upper Palaeolithic period was the last phase of Palaeolithic. Cro-Magnon man came in the existence and created both, stone tools and bone tools. Main stone tools were various blade tools. The most significant contribution of Cro-Magnon man was in the field of Art. The journey of Palaeolithic art touched the peak of art skills during this phase of late Pleistocene. All the three cultures of Upper Palaeolithic period of Western Europe – Aurignacian, Solutrean and Magdalenian are characterised by an exposition in art and artistic activities. The Aurignacian culture began this amazing venture with its aesthetic sensitivity in combination with the technical proficiency. The Magdalenian culture is the richest phase of Palaeolithic art contributed by the human of late Pleistocene and it has being apex of Palaeolithic Art. The general subject matter of the prehistoric art was the fauna, especially animals, of the contemporary period and their figures have been portrayed through paintings, engravings, sculptures and clay modelling. A few depictions of complete scene, birds, and fishes are seen. Even except Venus figurines, human figures are engraved or painted rarely. These were the most striking feature of the Palaeolithic art. The main sites from where the evidences of Upper Palaeolithic period are found are: Chauvet, El Castillo, Lascaux, Peche Merle, Cap Blanc, Niaux, Tuc d' Audoubert and Les Trois Freres of France; Pidal, Pasiege, Altamira and La Trinidad at Southern Spain. Firstly, some of the earliest evidences of Upper Palaeolithic are presented here.

A therianthrope figurine has been uncovered by the excavators in the Stadel cave in Hohlenstein, Germany. Its head

and front legs of a cave lion, while the lower body and legs of a human being. It was thus named the Lion Man or Löwenmensch figurine (Figure 22). The figurine was reconstructed through 575 fragments of mammoth ivory gathered from various excavations at the site. Its date has been determined between 39,000 to 41,000 years old by dating of the strata in which it was found. Thus, it belongs to Aurignacian culture of the Upper Palaeolithic. The Lion Man therefore belongs to the oldest known human-animal hybrid sculptures in the world [26]. The Venus of the Hohle Fels is a Venus statuette of the Upper Palaeolithic. It was carved from mammoth ivory (Figure 23). It was unearthed in Hole Fels cave, situated near Schelklingen, in Germany. It belongs to the time period between 40,000 and 35,000 years ago, thus related to the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic and associated with the early presence of Cro-Magnon in Europe. The statuette is the earliest unquestionable instance of a depiction of a human being [27]. Five of the earliest and most remarkable artefacts from the Upper Palaeolithic have been found in the Vogelherd cave of the Swabian Jura in south-western Germany. These very small sculptures, made of mammoth ivory, have been finely carved in at least 30,000 BC. The most impressive pieces are complete ivory sculpture of a mammoth (Figure 24) and a wild horse (Figure 25) [28,29]. Over 420 paintings, dated about 30,000 to 32,000 years ago, have been documented in the Chauvet cave located in the Pont-d'Arc valley of Ardèche, France. These paintings include figures of various realistic animals, hand stencils and nonfigurative dot paintings. In the front hall, the paintings are primarily in red, produced with the substantial use of red ochre, while in the back hall only there are mainly black designs, drawn with charcoal (Figure 26). Presently,

it is the oldest known cave art site on the world and is related to the Aurignacian culture of Upper Palaeolithic period [30]. The panel of hand stencils and very nearby red stippled disc have been found in In El Castillo cave of Cantabria, Spain. The negative hand prints, older than 37,300 years, were made by blowing paint

against the hands pushed against the cave wall and panel of red stippled discs made by a very similar technique dated to older than 40,800 years (Figure 27). This was the world's oldest art of their type from a cave in Europe [31].



Figure 22: Lion Man, dated between 39,000 and 41,000 Years Ago, from Stadel Cave, Germany [26].



Figure 23: Venus of Hohle Fels, dated between 40,000 and 35,000 Years Ago, from Schelklingen, Germany [27].

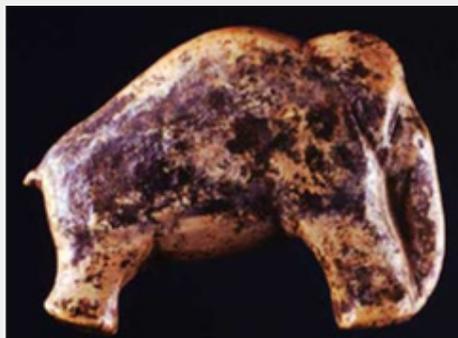


Figure 24: Ivory Carving of Mammoth, dated to at least 30,000 BC, from Vogelherd Cave, Germany [28].



Figure 25: Ivory Carving of Wild Horse, dated to at least 30,000 BC, from Vogelherd Cave, Germany [29].



Figure 26: Chauvet Cave, dated 30,000 to 32,000 Years Ago, from Ardèche, France [30].



Figure 27: 40,800 Year Old Red Discs on the Wall of El Castillo Cave, Spain [31].

Classification by M.C. Burkitt

In 1963, M.C. Burkitt had categorised art and artistic activities belonging to Palaeolithic times under two headings – Cave Art and Home Art [32]. His classification was mainly based on Upper Palaeolithic art, as the Lower Palaeolithic and Middle Palaeolithic art had not been widely explored until that time.

Cave art

It includes large and live forms of engravings and paintings on rocks in rock shelters and caves. The most striking feature of Cave art is that it was usually depicted deep inside the caves and sometimes in so narrow space that it is impossible to reach

without crawling. So it is also called as 'Art in Darkness' [32].

According to Prof. M.C. Burkitt, the Cave art can be classified in the following four phases.

Phase A

Engravings: In the initial phase, the simple design of the animals was made as if its shadow was projected on the wall and then a single line drew it round. Only the first two legs are indicated and while the body of the animal is represented in profile and the head and horns are represented full-face. The eye was usually left and if present takes the form of a small oval (Figure 28) [32,33].



Figure 28: Engraved Horse Figure at Hornos De La Peña Cave of Cantabria, Spain [33].



Figure 29: Painted Mammoth Figure at Cueva del Pindalin Asturias, Spain [34].

Paintings: Simple outline drawing of animals is found (Figure 29). Representations of the human hand either negative, uncoloured hand area with coloured background, or positive, coloured hand area with uncoloured background, were also seen [32,34].

Phase B

Engravings: The engraving was no longer made of a single line. The four legs were often engraved and tried to work with

the head and horn in the same perspective. The outline was not continuous. The eye, when present, was still oval (Figure 30) [32,35].

Paintings: Four legs were indicated in the animal figures. Details such as hair etc. are frequently added. Most of the drawings were in 'flat-wash', as well as certain were in the form of simple bichrome, figure painted in two colours (Figure 31) [32,36].



Figure 30: Engraved Reindeer Figure at Les Combarelles in the Dordogne, France [35].



Figure 31: Bison Painting at Font de Gaume Cave, France [36].

Phase C

Engravings: The outline was broad and deep but not continuous. Attempts were made to give art three-dimensional meaning and draw more efficiently that show greater vigour and

beauty. Actual work in relief was occasionally done. Most attempts to touch up the natural projections were made by painted horns or eyes or feet, etc. and were therefore transformed into actual representations of animals (Figure 32) [32,37].

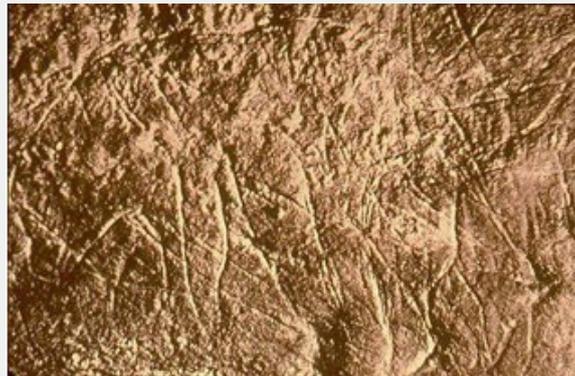


Figure 32: Engraved Bear Figure at Les Combarelles in the Dordogne, France [37].

Paintings: Three distinct styles of monochrome painting can be recognized. First was stump drawing with a variable sense of relief – shading. In second type, the outline of the animal's figure was drawn by a series of punctuation marks and sometimes whole body was covered with dots and in third style, the animals'

entire body was well finished in flat-wash. There were also a number of black outline paintings (Figure 33). Some figures were a combination of engraving and painting, as in the depiction of the animals the outline was engraved and the body was filled with uniform colour [32,38].

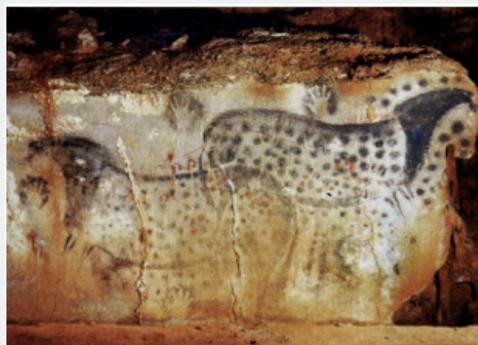


Figure 33: Spotted Horse Painting at La Grotte du Pech Merle, France [38].

Phase D

Engravings: The engravings were small, very fine and beautifully done as a rule. In the nature of the pictures, it can be occasionally identified that in the figure of some animal, the feet are totally unconnected with the body and yet the overall general impression was perfect. The engraving was no longer deep, but

only scratches (Figure 34) [32,39].

Paintings: Art par excellence was seen in beautiful polychrome painting of animal figures. The application of different colours was truly wonderful (Figure 35) [32,9]. Prof. Burkitt concluded that phases A and B are Aurignacian and phases C and D are Magdalenian [32].



Figure 34: Engraved Woolly Mammoth Figures at Rouffignac Cave in the Dordogne, France [39].



Figure 35: Polychrome Bison Painting at Altamira Cave, Spain [9].

Home Art

This category of art consists of engravings on tools and other movable objects, figurines and statues, jewellery and ornaments made on bone, horn and ivory etc. and a number of exotic looking objects. The French prehistorians have called these mobile art objects as 'Art mobilier' (Portable Art). This form of art was generally related with habitation sites of Palaeolithic man rather than the cave interiors; therefore, it is called as 'Home art' [32]. Prof. M.C. Burkitt had discussed Upper Palaeolithic Home art under three headings:

Aurignacian home art

From the Aurignacian level of Upper Palaeolithic deposits, a rich collection of Home art materials have been recovered which comprises stone sculptures, carved reliefs and bone figures of

various categories. The famous sculptured 'Venuses' of this stage are highly stylized depictions of women with exaggerated female parts representing fertility and sexuality. These were probably connected with some fertility cult (Figure 36) [32,40].

Solutrean home art

Previously it was conceived that the Solutrean level lacks art. However, further research shows that the artistic ability of the Solutrean people gradually developed in contact with the Aurignacians and thus created numerous relief works depicting animal figures and engraved and carved tools and objects (Figure 37) [32,41].

Magdalenian home art

The Magdalenian level represents marvellous art works. The Home art of this level was parallel to all the six stages of

Magdalenian culture. In the first and second stages, 'batons de commandement' with sculptured extremities in the forms of animal heads are found. Along with animal engravings, spiral motifs as well as zigzags broken by transverse lines are found in the third stage. In fourth stage, the association of sculpture with engravings was frequently found and the effort was made to give a sense of relief to the figures. Fifth stage was the best phase of the engravings. Many beautiful drawings of animals were also

created. In the final sixth stage, degeneration began in home art as the engravings were slightly deeper and more mechanically made (Figure 38). Overall, home-art of Magdalenian level is remarkable for its two things: 'Suggestion Pectoris' - reveals one or more striking features in a naturalistic figure, while the remaining features suppressed; and 'Simple Conventionalization' - includes the use of signs and symbol for various naturalistic objects [32,42].



Figure 36: Venus Figurine of Willendorf, Austria [40].

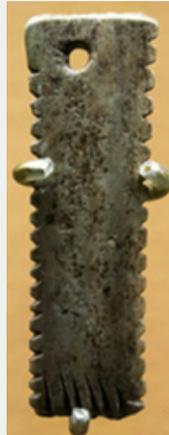


Figure 37: Bone Pendants from La Grotte du Placard Cave in Charente, France [41].



Figure 38: Horse's Head from Mas d'Azil Cave, France [42].

Classification by L.S.B. Leakey

L.S.B. Leakey had classified Palaeolithic Art into four forms: Engraving, Drawing and Painting, Sculpture, and Clay Modelling [43].

Engraving

It was the practice of incising a surface by cutting grooves with engraving tools made up from stone, bone, horn and ivory (Figure 39). The evolutionary sequence of this art form can be seen in three stages: Engravings with thick and deep lines; Engravings with thin and shallow lines; Engravings of figures through strokes [43,44].



Figure 39: Wild Horse Engraving on Baton-de-Commandment from La Madeleine, France [44].

Drawing and painting

This art form was related with coloured figures (Figure 40). The Palaeolithic man prepared colours through minerals and leaves and fruits etc. To prepare oil paints, they mixed animal fat in these natural colours. Along with using their fingertips in painting, they also used simple brushes prepared by animal fur, hair pieces and feather quills. For spray painting they used their mouth as blower. Technically drawing and painting of Palaeolithic period are divided into three groups: Colour drawings (Dry colour art); True paintings (Monochrome and polychrome live sized paintings); Spray Paintings [43,45].

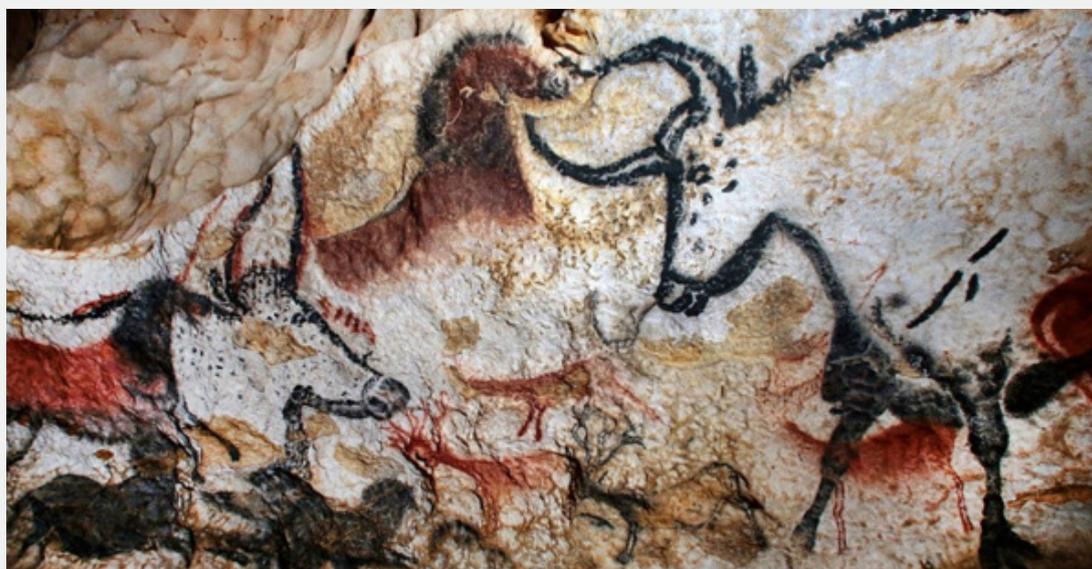


Figure 40: Painting at Lascaux Cave, France [45].

Sculpture

This art work was produced by carving or shaping stone and wood etc. (Figure 41). The Palaeolithic sculptures are divided into two categories: Bas-relief style (Depth form and raised form two dimensional); Sculpture in round (Three dimensional) [43,46].

Clay modelling

The wet clay was used to produce various art forms in this work (Figure 42). Technically, the clay models of Palaeolithic period are categorised into two groups: Bas-relief style (Two dimensional); Model in round (Three dimensional) [43,47].



Figure 41: Bison Sculpture at La Madeleine, France [46].

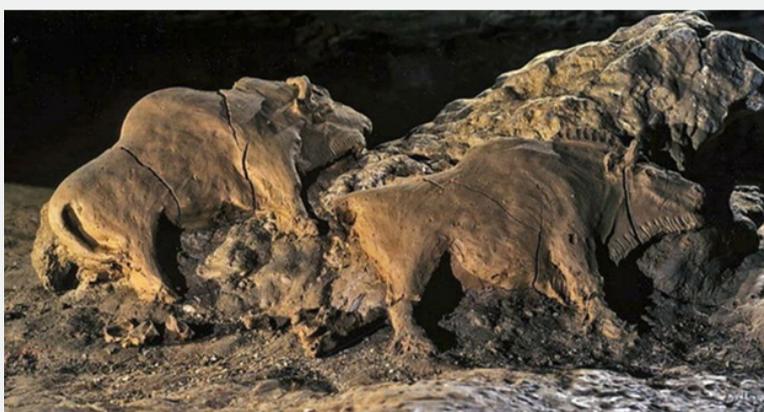


Figure 42: Clay Model of Bison Pair at Tuc d' Audoubert Cave, France [47].

Key Characteristics

i. Palaeolithic art is the subject matter of anthropological and archaeological studies. Several scholars have devoted their entire lives in researching and compiling about Palaeolithic art. They had tried to give its some comprehensive generalizations [48], which are as follows:

ii. Palaeolithic art was mainly concerned with either food or fertility. For instances, hunting scenes and animal carvings were related with the issue of food and Venus figurines were related with fertility. Overall, the dominant theme of Palaeolithic art was animals (Figure 43) [48,49].

iii. It is considered that Palaeolithic art was the manifestation of the attempts made by early man to gain some sort of control over their environment, whether by magic or ritual (Figure 44) [48,50].

iv. Art from this period represents an enormous increase

in human cognition, revealed in abstract thinking (Figure 45) [48,51].

Motives or significance

The Palaeolithic art forms are not always in the form of beautiful figures or paintings, as some mysterious or unusual artistic expressions are also found in large numbers like large and live size oil paintings in dark and narrow places of caves where nothing can be seen without artificial light, painting and engravings on open rock shelters which were slightly over hanging rocks and are not quiet strictly shelter, drawing and painting on flat slabs of rock and tops of boulders, mutilated negative hand prints, superimposed figures, Venus statuettes without facial features and prominent reproductive organs, figures of pregnant women and animals, male chasing female animal figures, composite figure of sorcerer in dancing posture, hunting scene, figures of wounded animals and portable art pieces etc [32,43].

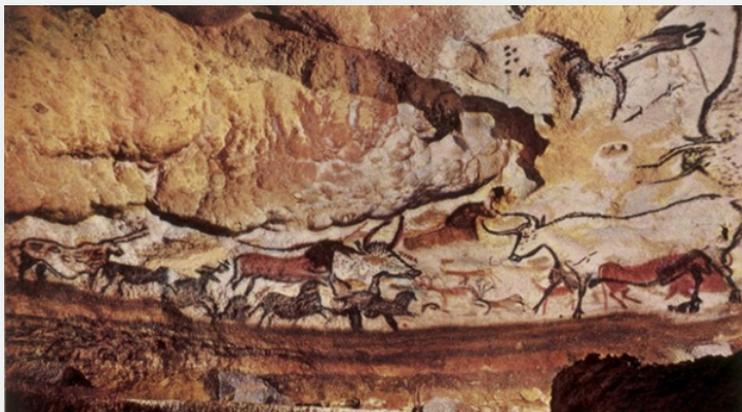


Figure 43: Animal Hoard in Cave Art at Lascaux Cave, France [49].



Figure 44: Engraved Figure of Sorcerer in Grotte de Gabillou Cave of Dordogne, France [50].



Figure 45: The Man Wounded by Spears and the Placard-type Abstract Symbol – ‘Aviform’ above/left of his Head, Pech Merle Cave, France [51].

The motive or significance of Palaeolithic art is a controversial topic among the Anthropologists and Archaeologists, as they had given various views on this subject. Many scholars believed that Palaeolithic art was merely a manifestation of the artistic temperament among a naturally artistic people (Figure 46). Artists have an inner compulsion to express themselves in some way or other and that in this particular instance it took the form of pictorial representations of the animals that roamed about the world in front of their homes. For portable art pieces of animal figures, it is said that these were the artist's note book, through which they had drawn live size paintings in the interior, narrow and dark places of caves (Figure 47). Some argued that the love of beautiful surroundings inherent in an artistic people required that many of their tools should be decorated and their cave walls beautified (Figure 48). Some art was also used to tell the rank and i Many Anthropologists and Archaeologists have seen the magico-religious purpose as the most significant aspect of Palaeolithic art (Figure 49). They believed that behind the art there was a utilitarian purpose, involving a form of sympathetic magic, to ensure the continuance of a constant food supply. Some believed that Palaeolithic people firstly selected those caves which had the feature of good sound quality and then covered them with elaborate art in preparation for religious ceremonies that involved chanting and singing (Figure 50). Researchers found that paintings are located at points where sound is amplified (Figure 51). Superimposed figures of animals may be related with some magico-religious rituals to make success in hunting events (Figure 52). Wounded animal figures were also the

part of magical tie up of animals in hunting (Figure 53). Figure of male chasing female animals and pregnant female animals (Figure 54) were may be related with rituals to increase the population of animals to make continuous food availability. They need more members in their group for hunting-food gathering purpose, so Venus statuettes were probably related with fertility cult to increase their population. It is also possible that these figurines were their mother goddess (Figure 55). They believed in shamanism and totemism. The composite figure of sorcerer (Figure 56) and bird masked sorcerers (Figure 57) were may be related to these phenomena. Manifestation of mutilated hand was probably related to any ritual involving mutilation of figures from hand (Figure 58) [32,43,57-65]. importance of a group leader. Others have suggested that the drawing in cave art were made to commemorate success in hunting [32,43,52-56]. Some scholars claimed that rock art was created to make boundary to demarcate limits for ethnic groups and their territory. According to them, these boundary markers were drawn to avoid possible conflicts by different groups, as it was that time when climatic conditions increased the rivalry for area between hunter-gatherer communities, but this hypothesis has been very much criticized in absence of concrete evidences [66]. Various motives traced behind Palaeolithic Art broadly divided into four categories: Art for the sake of art; Decorative purpose; Commemorative purpose; and Magico-religious purpose. Of these, all have their own relevance and cannot be ignored in functional analysis of Palaeolithic art. Thus, overall Palaeolithic art was 'Multipurpose Art'.



Figure 46: Hand Paintings in Cueva de las Manos in Santa Cruz, Argentina [52].



Figure 47: A Carved Reindeer on Reindeer Bone from Ice Age Art [53].



Figure 48: Horse Shaped Atlatl from Magdalenian Culture [54].



Figure 49: Baton-de-Commandement sculpted in the Shape of Ibex from Magdalenian Culture [55].



Figure 50: Wounded Bison in a Hunting Scene from Grotte de Niaux Cave, France [56].



Figure 51: The Main Hall of Lascaux Cave with Polychrome Live Sized Paintings [58].



Figure 52: Superimposition in Fariseu Rock Engravings in the Douro-Côa Valley, Portugal [59].



Figure 53: Wounded Bison in Cave Painting in Altamira Cave, Spain [60].



Figure 54: Pregnant Horse Painting at Lascaux Cave in the Dordogne, France [61].



Figure 55: Venus of Laussel from Aurignacian Culture [62].



Figure 56: Figure of Sorcerer at Les Trois Freres Cave, France [63].

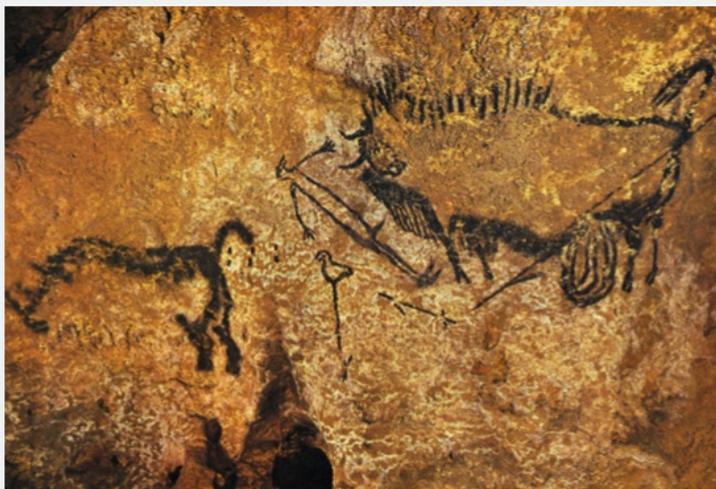


Figure 57: Figure involved Rhino, Man with Bird Mask and Bison in Lascaux Cave of Dordogne, France [64].



Figure 58: Mutilated Handprint at Maltravieso Cave, Spain [65].

Conclusion

Culture distinguishes humans from other animals throughout the animal kingdom, and art and artistic expression are important aspects of cultural life. First, due to the development of symbolic thought or aesthetic perception, the early man collected natural objects that resembled works of art. Starting a way for humans to express their feelings through signs and symbols was a revolutionary change in their progress. One of the first methods of emotional expression through signs was art. It arose in prehistoric and preliterate cultures. In the distant past, when there was no proper language or written records, the very concept of the birth or origin of art may seem inappropriate. The earliest evidence of man's artistic abilities dates back to the Palaeolithic period, while the full flow of this ability was only visible from the Upper Palaeolithic period. Palaeolithic art is the subject of anthropological and archaeological studies. Researchers tried to give some of broad generalizations about Palaeolithic art, like it was mainly related to food or fertility, its main theme was animals, it was an expression of the magical or ritual efforts made by the early man to control his environment, and this manifested his improved cognition reflected in abstract thinking. Palaeolithic art forms are not always in the form of beautiful figures or paintings, as some mysterious or unusual artistic expressions are also found in large numbers. Along with the artistic expression just for the sake of art, various purposes behind Palaeolithic art are investigated, like decorative, commemorative and magico-religious purposes, are making it a multipurpose art. Overall, man is artistic by nature and the history of art begins with humanity. In his artistic instincts and attainments, man expressed his vigour, his ability to establish a gainful and optimistic relationship with his environment to humanize nature. Their behaviour as artists was one of the selection characteristics suitable for the development of the human species. Evidence from extensive analysis of cave art and house art suggests that humans have also been 'Homo aestheticus' since their origins.

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