

Rock art of the world is a fascinating saga of human endeavour to translate his aesthetic sensitivity into reality. From time immemorial the early man started to record the world around him and his activities for the life sustenance and to bring forth his progenies to flourish. He lived in the natural caves and shelters which he decorated with paintings and engravings; the subject matter that he could see in nature and life around him. Rock art is known from almost all corners of the world, except Antarctica. Evidences are found from all the continents starting from the Old World i.e. Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America. Asia is the largest continent of the world and has diverse art heritage. The huge area can be divided into five regions; Central, West, East, South and Southeast Asia. In Central Asia the two most important rock art zones are Tamgaly of Kazakhstan and Altai mountains.



Animals petroglyphs, Pilbara Western Australia



Domestic bull, Messak, Libya

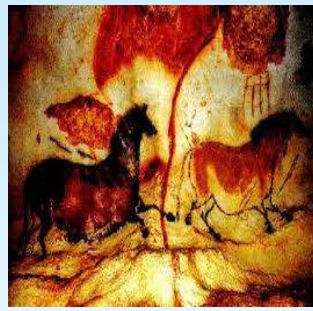
any other country. In East Asia, China and Japan are two important countries with rich concentration of rock art. In the East and Southeast Asia, rock art sites are reported from Indonesia, Myanmar etc. Several techniques are employed to execute rock art like; shallow carvings, scraping, pecking, finger fluting and polishing in case of petroglyphs (engravings) while in pictographs, painting and stencilling are the two major techniques.

The subject matter of the rock art is also varied; starting from the simplest geometrical lines found in the Panaramittee tradition of Australia to complex geometrical designs executed by the Chumash people of California. Animals are the most favoured subjects of the early man as they



Gobustan, Azerbaijan

Major concentrations of petroglyphs are found from the arid regions of Saudi Arabia, Nagev Desert of Israel in West Asia. In South Asia, countries like India and Pakistan are rich in rock art heritage, Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh (India) has been inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The quantity and quality of Indian rock art can vie with the art of



Lascaux Cave, Dordogne, France

life was well evidenced in the diverse nature of depictions. The Anthropomorphic figures of the Coso range, California, the shamanistic representations of Texas, representations of the ancestral beings from Australia, depictions of the Bushman myths from Southern Africa are the reflections of the religious beliefs, myths and customs of early man. In this great diversity of the rock art heritage, instances of the universality of human mind is also mirrored in the depictions of cupules and hand prints found almost in all the corners of the world.



Kyurmo, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh

blocks. As the rock arts in the area has neither been fully explored nor proper studies have been undertaken earlier. IGNCA, under its national programme *Adi Drishya* (the primeval vision) has initiated on this daunting task of systemically documenting the rock art sites in the valley.

The region has a number of rock art sites, namely; *Lari, Tak-tse, Ngangma-rang, Pohling-thang, Tabo, Zama-thang, Dakto-kiri, Hurling, Kyurmo etc.* The principle subject contained in the rock art of the area are figures of animals consisting of ibex, blue sheep, mountain goats and human figures along with various intricate and abstract patterns.

were their source of life sustenance. Naturalistic representation of wild animals and hunting scenes are thus the most common subject. Possessing brute-power might have been the most desired concern for the early man and as such representations of their anthropoes (Half human and half animal features) are commonly found from the Palaeolithic period of Europe to the South African Bushman paintings. After the introduction of domestication of plants and animals, the complexity of human life style in material culture as well as in social



Bhimlat, Bundi, Rajasthan

In Himachal Pradesh, the major rock art sites are concentrated in the Spiti valley of Lahaul-Spiti district of the region. Located in the north-eastern part of the state, it is a cold desert area in the Himalayas. Rock faces in the valley are veritable store-houses of the geological history of the Himalayas, dating back to 500 million years. Spiti valley has a very rich repository of rock art, primarily consisting of petroglyphs on boulders and stone



Lari, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh

While ibex and blue sheep are the most common animals depicted in rock art, some exotic and imaginary animals are also seen. These petroglyphs mostly depict the early inhabitants' common occupations like hunting, dancing, battle scenes, rituals etc. These engravings have been executed on the boulders and stone blocks primarily along the banks of rivers and streams in the region. Beside these major petroglyphic sites in the region, there are also some newly discovered pictographic sites like *Nimaloksa (4300m), Sringmo-Khadang (4700m), Drak-phuk* etc. The pictographs depicted are mainly human and animal figures along with several astronomical and religious symbols.

The present exhibition 'The World of Rock Art' is culled out from the Exhibition on Rock Art organised during the International Rock Art Conference, at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi from 6th December, 2012 to 25th January, 2013. After getting a very positive feedback from a cross section of the society comprising; scholars, media persons, public servants and general public, it was decided to take the exhibition to other parts of the country as circulating/mobile exhibition to spread awareness among school children, college and university students and general public at large. The exhibition



Kilvalai, Tamilnadu

was earlier hosted respectively at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (5th to 28th March, 2013), at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalashetra, Guwahati (12th April to 3rd May, 2013), at Odisha State Museum, Bhubaneswar (18th May to 23rd June, 2013), at Department of History, Pondicherry University, Puducherry (25th July to 25th August, 2013), at National Gallery of Modern Arts, Bengaluru (3rd December, 2013 to 3rd January, 2014) at Center for Heritage Studies, Thripunithura, Kerala (28th November, 2014 to 28th December, 2014), at Sangeetha Mahal Palace Complex, Thanjavur, Tamilnadu (6th May-21st June, 2015), at ASI, Puratatt-



Nimaloksa, Spiti Himachal Pradesh



Mavadaippu, Tamil Nadu

-tva Bhavan, Seminari Hills, Nagpur from 19th Nov to 31st Dec, 2015 and at Regional Science City, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (26th April-24th May, 2016). An exhibition on the 'Indian Rock Art' was on display in Yinchuan City, China. The exhibition was inaugurated on the occasion of the World Rock Art Conference held from the 26th – 28th August, 2014. The exhibition remained open for public

for about one year from 26th August, 2014 to 30th September, 2015. Another Exhibition on 'India-China Rock Art' was recently on display in IGNCA, New Delhi from 24th February- 27th March, 2016.

For the present exhibition, exhibits are chosen from five continents of the world: Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America. A representative collection of the significant and important traditions are displayed continent wise. This exhibition creates, for the viewer, a degree of experiential contact with prehistoric art. It provides the basis for entering into the changing aspects of the living arts of man. It is believed that man's awareness of the world around came through his



Lekhamonda, Sundergarh, Odisha

primeval sense of sight and sound. These two senses have stimulated artists' expressions; visual and aural in the prehistoric past as well as in the contemporary cultures. The present exhibition also showcases the 'living art traditions' of three communities - the Lanjia-Sauras of Odisha, the Rathwa-Bhils of Gujarat and the Warlis of Maharashtra, just to give a glimpse of continuity of artistic traditions in Indian context.



Khajuri Village, Rayagada, Odisha



Venue:

**Himachal State Museum Shimla
Chaura Maidan, Shimla-171004,
Himachal Pradesh**



The World of Rock Art Exhibition

(15th June-24th July, 2016)



Organised by

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