

Deep in the Earth—Art!

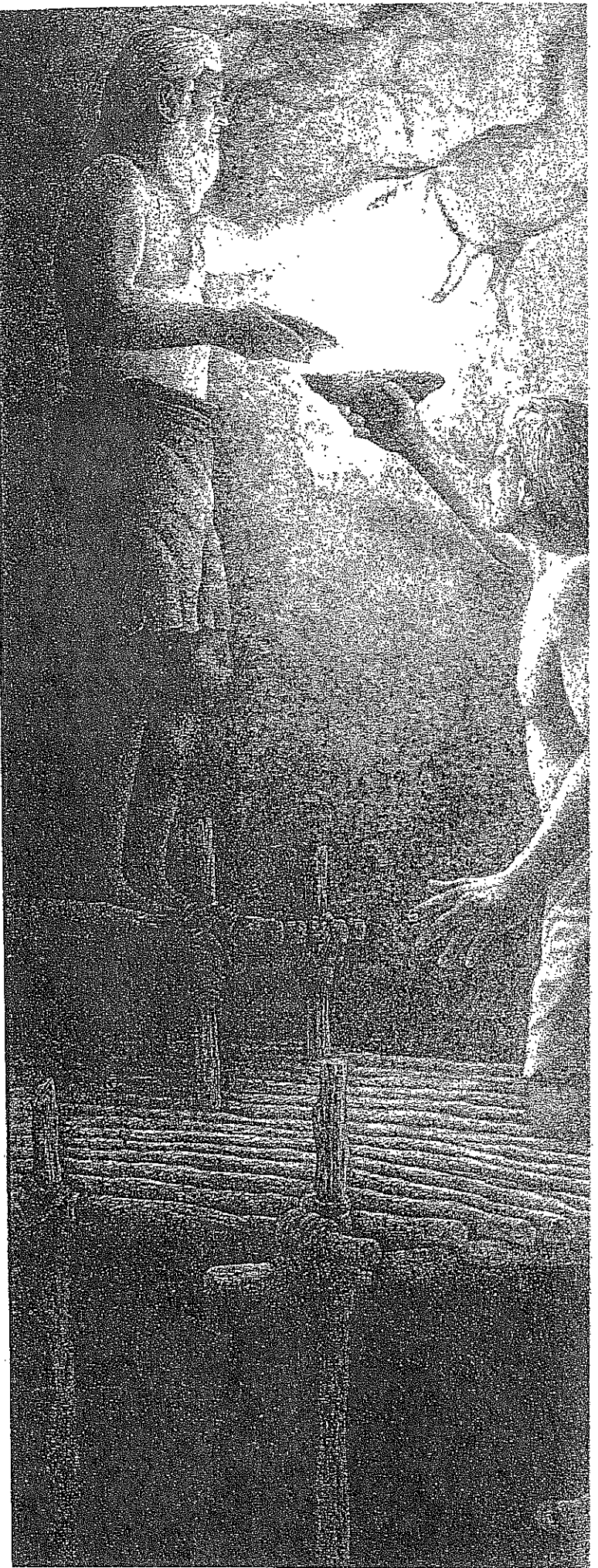
On a September afternoon in 1940, four French teenagers made one of the greatest discoveries in the history of anthropology. The boys were planning to explore a cave they thought might hold the secret entrance to an old manor called Lascaux.

When the boys entered the cave, they found it was filled with wonderful paintings of horses, bison, and deer. Many of the images are enormous; the largest bison is about eighteen feet long. This is about three times the height of a tall man. The artists worked in four colors: red, black, brown, and yellow. The lines of the art are fluid and graceful.

These 17,000-year-old paintings are one of the greatest examples of art—prehistoric or modern—known to the world. When the famous artist Pablo Picasso visited Lascaux, he said, “We have invented nothing.”

The Lascaux paintings are only one of many galleries of great cave art that have been found in Spain and France.

To paint in a cave you must have light. To provide this, our ancestors sometimes placed animal fat on a piece of sandstone. By adding a wick made of dried plant matter, they had something



that would function much like a modern candle. Charcoal found in the caves tells us they also used torches made of pine branches. They also made scaffolds—high platforms where these ancient artists could stand to paint upon the ceiling.

What was the purpose of this great art gallery? No one knows for certain. It may have been to initiate young men into the mysteries of the tribe. It may have had to do with hunting magic. The cave may have been a place to worship—a monument to the Ice Age gods not unlike our own great cathedrals.

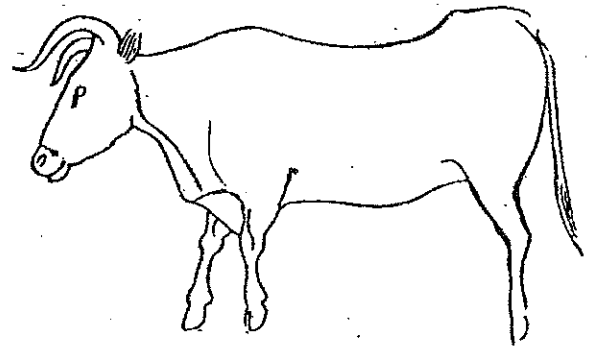
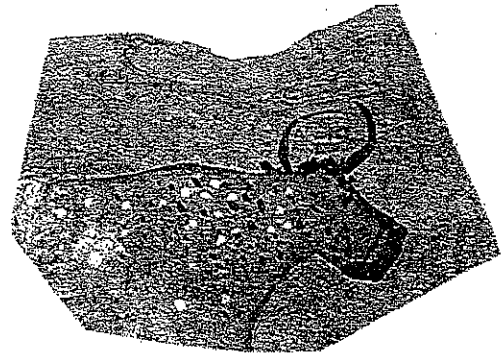
Another kind of art associated with the Cro-Magnons is little statues of women. These statues are called Venuses, after the Roman name for the goddess of love. They have been found all across Europe and Asia.

The statues are often oddly exaggerated. The women shown may be very fat. They have no facial features—and no feet. Some scientists believe the statues were stuck into the ground.

What was the purpose of these little statues? Were they used in worship in some way? Did they represent some ancient goddess? Were they good luck charms, meant to bless the home, or the hunt?

We have no way of knowing for certain.

Whatever their purpose, they are one of the most widespread of all the remnants of our ancestors.



▷ A painted bull and horse in the Lascaux caves in southwest France. The magnificent paintings there were discovered by four boys and their dog in 1940.

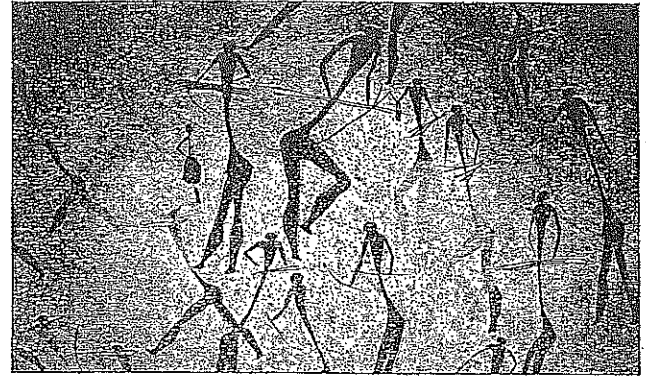
THE MYSTERY OF THE MEANING of cave paintings still remains. Some archaeologists believe cave art was involved in magical ceremonies related to hunting. This is because many images are of animals, some with spears in them; that Stone Age people hunted. Other less clear images could be male and female symbols that were linked to fertility rites.

Ancient art

Some of the finest Stone Age art still survives today in cave and rock paintings and engravings in parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. In Europe alone, over 200 caves with examples of this art have been found.

✂ THE EARLIEST CAVE PAINTINGS are from France, possibly dating back to 30,000 B.C. Examples found in Saharan Africa were painted around 20,000 B.C., while the earliest Australian rock art may be even older.

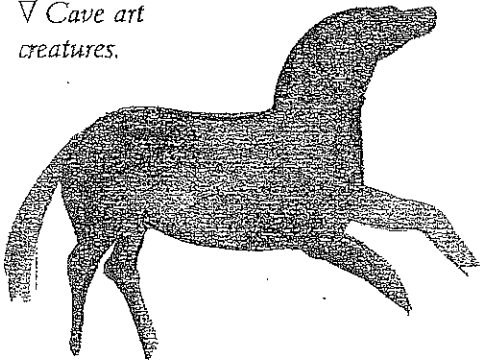
Many cave paintings in Spain or France are found deep in caves where there is no natural light. The painters must have worked in the flickering light of brushwood torches, or lamps made by burning fur or moss soaked in animal fat. They applied their paint with either their fingers or "brushes" made of hair.



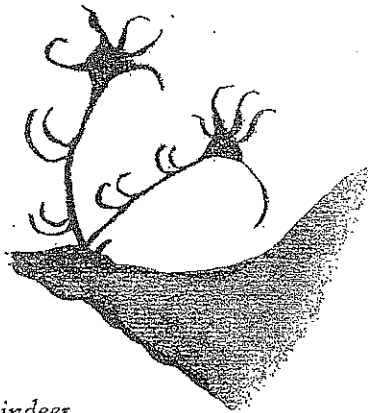
△ Hunters armed with bows and arrows were painted on the rocks at Valltorta, Spain, around 6000 B.C.

THE EARTHY COLORS they used—red, yellow, brown and black—came from minerals such as ochre, manganese, and charcoal. These were ground to powder and mixed with animal fat to make a sticky paint that adhered to cave walls and ceilings. The colors are still bright even though they were painted 30,000 years ago.

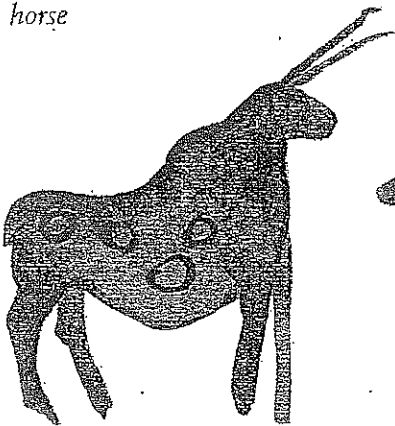
∇ Cave art creatures.



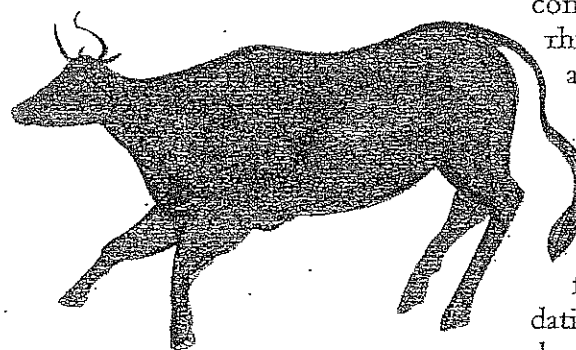
horse



reindeer



ibex



auroch (wild cow)

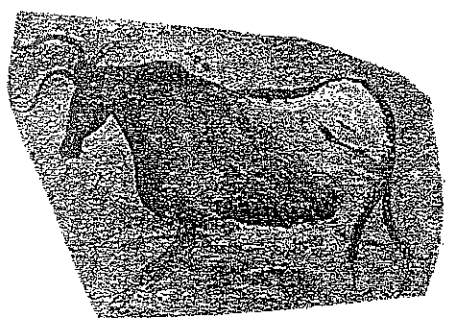
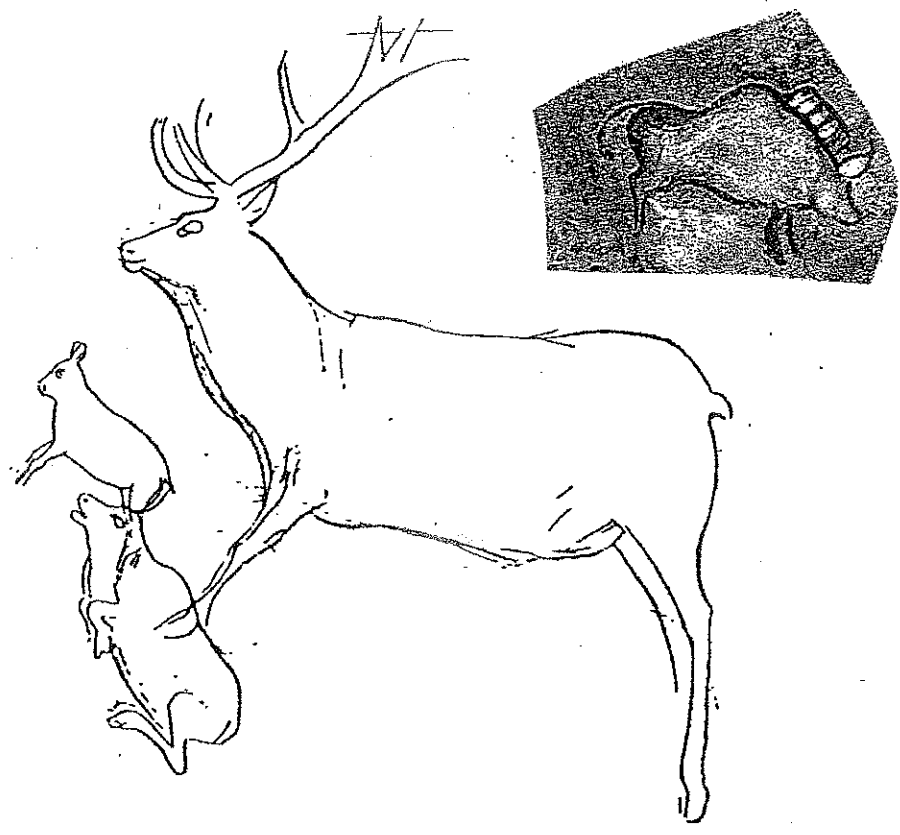
PICTURES OF ANIMALS, similar to those painted on the walls, are sometimes found carved on stone slabs or bone. They may have been sketches the artists used to paint from.

IN EUROPE, the cave artists painted animals far more often than humans (hunters appear more often in later Spanish rock art). Horses, bison, deer, and mammoths are the most common animals, but woolly rhino, cave bears, and boars are also depicted.

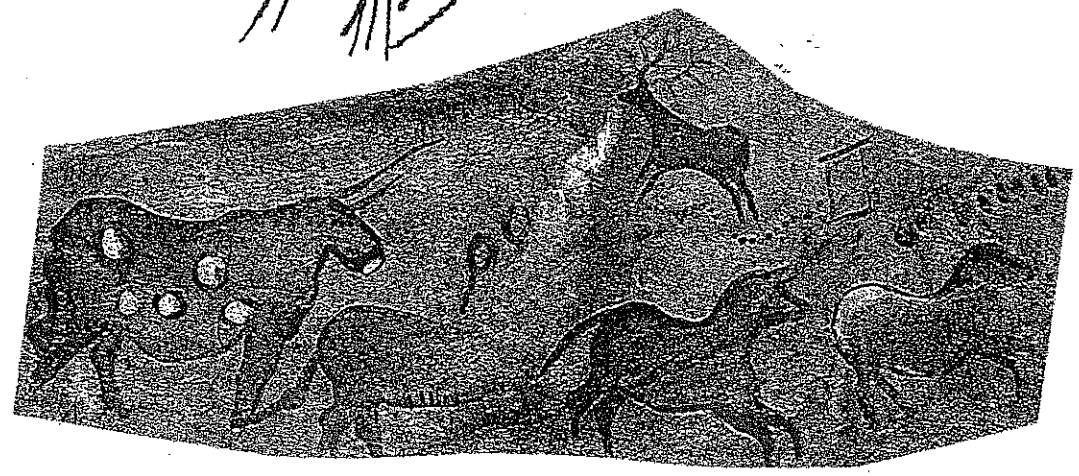
« LATER, SAHARAN rock art reflects the move from hunting and gathering to farming. Paintings dating from 6000 B.C. show domestic cattle and dogs rather than hunting scenes and wild animals.

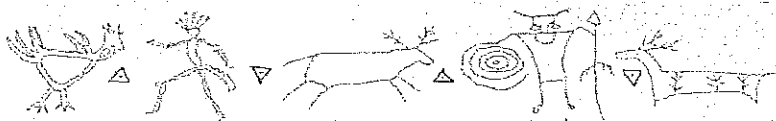


Deer, horses, and other animals with their young, a common sight each spring, inspired Ice Age artists. For example, this engraving cut into a rock wall shows a reindeer and fawn, small figures beside the larger stag of a different species of deer. Unlike many species of deer, female reindeer grow antlers, suggested here but hard to find.

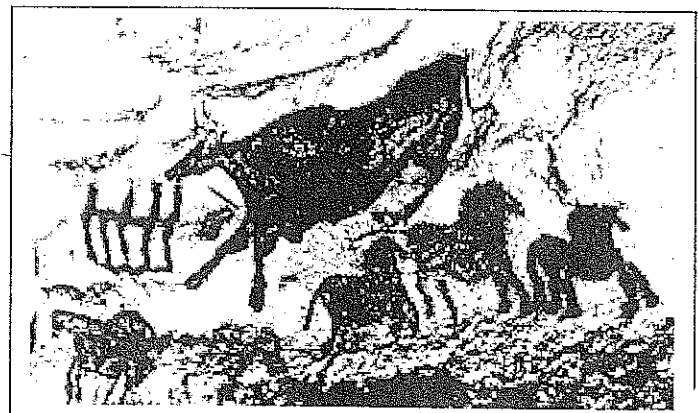
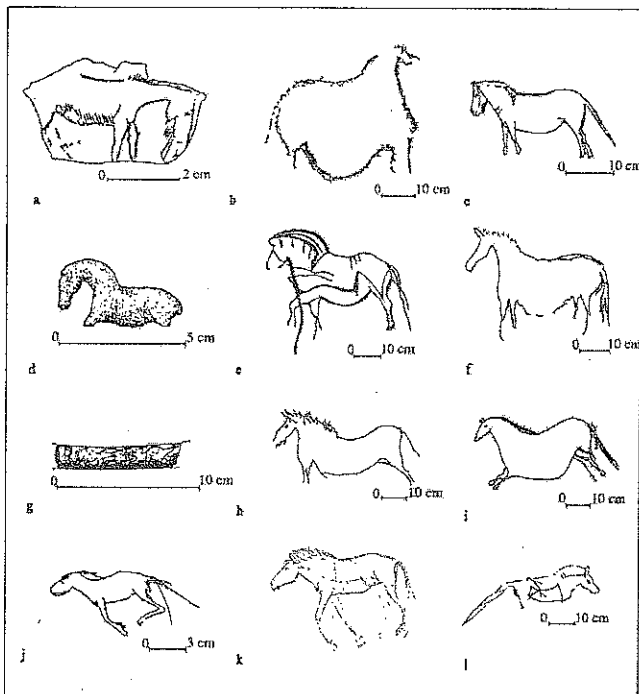
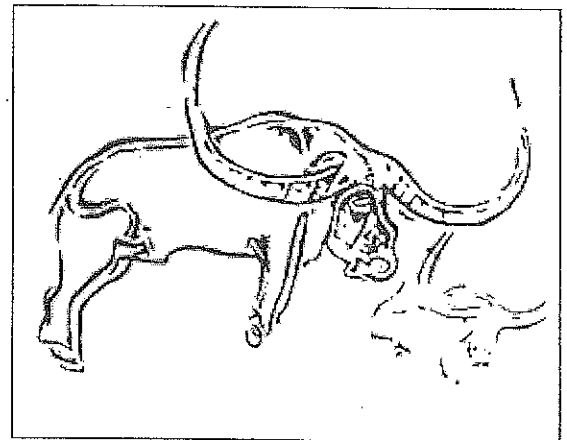
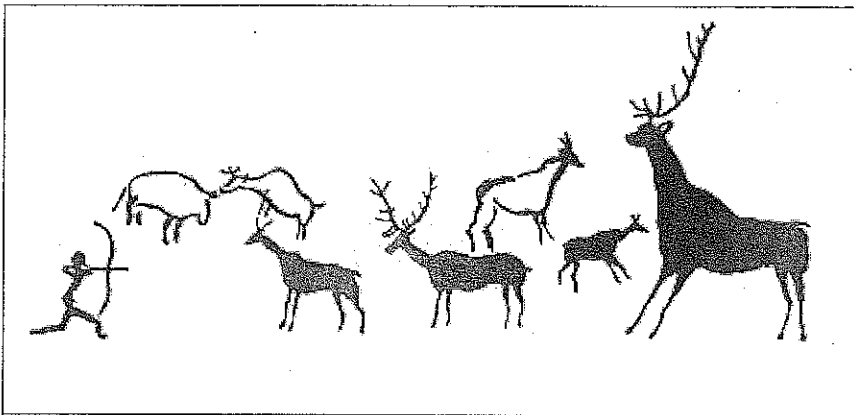
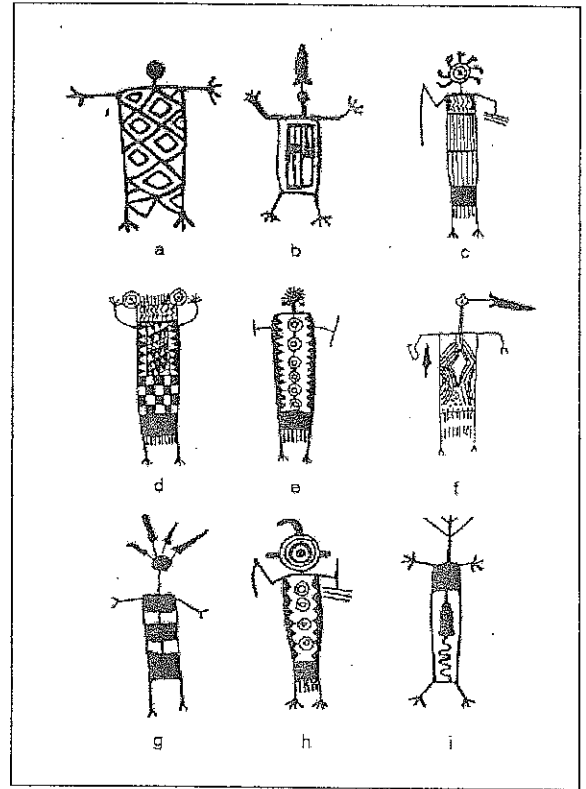
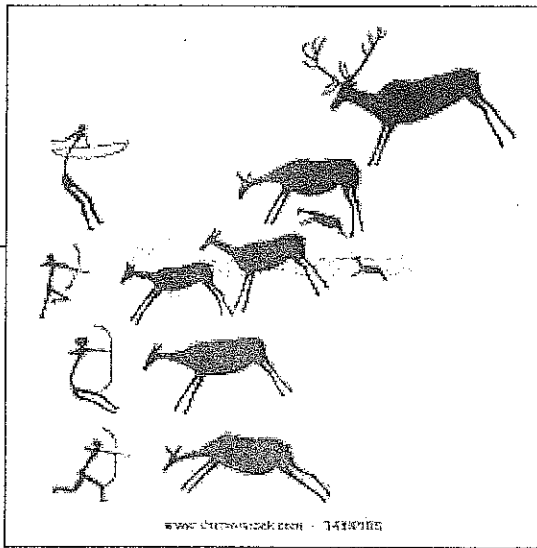


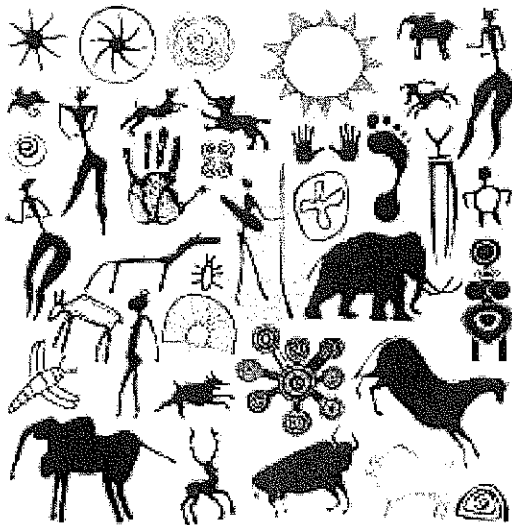
The woolly mammoth, about the size of an African elephant, was common during the coldest periods of the Ice Age, especially on the vast grassy plains of central and eastern Europe and Siberia. With no weapon more powerful than a spear, hunting such a large and dangerous animal must have required group cooperation and great skill. The mammoth died out forever at the end of the Ice Age, but artists have left us many images of this animal.



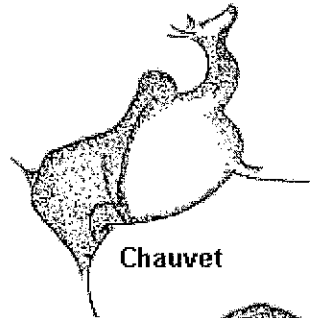


Be a Cave Artist

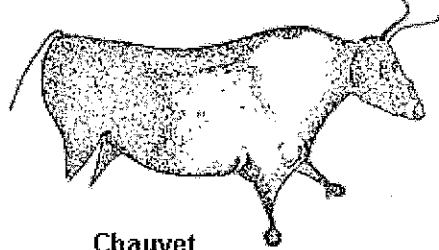




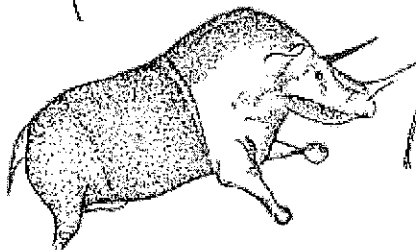
ENTOPTIC PHENOMENA	SAN ROCK ART				COSO	PALAEOLITHIC ART			
	ENGRAVINGS		PAINTINGS			MOBILE ART		FIXED ART	
	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
I									
II									
III									
IV									
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VI									



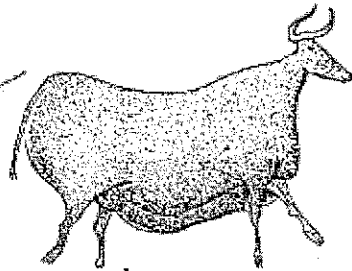
Chauvet



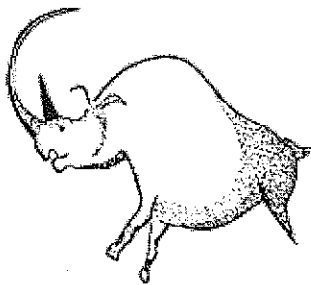
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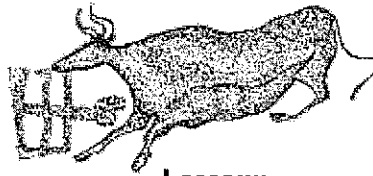
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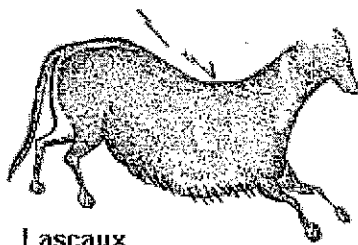
Lascaux



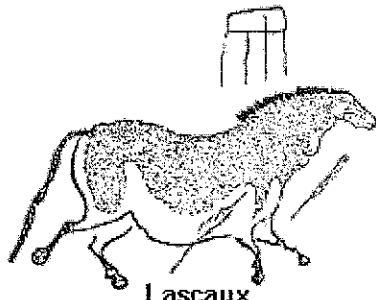
Chauvet



Lascaux



Lascaux



Lascaux

