

Paleolithic art research paper examples

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Paleolithic art was used primarily as a part of rituals intended to promote successful hunting and fertility

The Paleolithic period existed in the oldest periods of human history.

Historians usually define the period as dating back 2 million years ago, and estimated to have ended 13, 000Bc. People of this period practiced Paleolithic art. This art is estimated to have begun 32, 000 years ago. Quite a lot of researchers have studied Paleolithic art and came up with different views regarding its intended purpose. Paleolithic art deciphering has brought quite a lot of controversies regarding the sole purpose of some of the art created in this period. In this essay, Paleolithic art was used primarily as part of rituals intended to promote successful hunting and fertility.

In accordance to the book written by Sayre, “ The humanities: Culture, continuity and change” it is evident that Paleolithic art might have been used for ritual purposes as evident from the surviving human foot prints found in the caves. Archaeologists were able to discover that the places were used as gathering points to conduct rituals that affected their day to day lives (Sayre 5). Often, a ritual involves practices conducted by a group of people.

Basically, the cave contained paintings of wild animals and depictions of human beings in hunting sessions. In addition, it also had paintings of animals like lions, bears, panthers, which were not being hunted by them, hence providing more evidence that the Paleolithic art was more so being used for ritual purposes in order to promote hunting of animals (Sayre 5).

In addition, from another perspective in support of the notion that the Paleolithic art depicted in the caves might have been used to conduct rituals can be viewed from the sense that the cave might have been used as a

sacred placed that connected the living and the non-living, the underworld and the death (Sayre 5). Hence it somehow served a more symbolic role to the people at that time as the cave served as a place to conduct rituals by trying to establish a connection with the dead (Sayre 5). In having symbolic depictions of some of the animals, it is believed that the place served as a ritual ground for the people to perform some of the rituals in regard to fertility, continuity of hunting and rite of passages likes circumcision (Sayre 5).

Furthermore, evidence suggestive of the Paleolithic art being used for ritual purposes entailed the use of colours (Sayre 6). In supporting this evidence, nearly most of the paintings that exist at the cave entrance have a natural red pigmentation most probably derived from ores which were rich in iron oxide (Sayre 6). As one advances deeper into the cave, the paintings are majorly painted with a black pigmentation supposedly derived from ores that were rich in manganese dioxide (Sayre 6).

In summary, from the evidence derived regarding Paleolithic art, it can be concluded that Paleolithic art was used primarily as part of rituals intended to promote successful hunting and fertility (Sayre 6). Evidenced from the human footprints deciphered by anthropologists, symbolic depictions of people and animals in the caves and by the use of colours, once can conclude the surely, Paleolithic art played a major role in promoting the rituals of people living in that period.

Works Cited

Sayre, H. M. (2010). *The humanities: Culture, Continuity and change*. New York: Prentice Hall. Print.

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