



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS



CLASS: XI
PAINTING (049) & SCULPTURE (051)
WORKSHEET No. 4

Unit – I (A) Pre-Historic Rock Paintings

What is prehistoric?

The distant past when there was no paper or language or the written word, and hence no books or written documents, is called prehistory, or, as we often say, prehistoric times. How people lived in those times was difficult to surmise until scholars began to discover the places where prehistoric people lived. Excavation at these places brought to light old tools, pottery, habitats, bones of ancient human beings and animals, and drawings on cave walls. By piecing together the information deduced from these objects and the cave drawings, scholars have constructed fairly accurate knowledge about what happened and how people lived in prehistoric times.

When the basic needs of food, water, clothing and shelter were fulfilled people felt the need to express themselves. Painting and drawing were the oldest art forms practiced by human beings to express themselves, using the cave walls as their canvas. They may have drawn and painted to make their homes more colourful and beautiful or to keep a visual record of their day-to-day life.

Classification of Prehistoric Period

Humans produced their first work of art during Upper Paleolithic (45000 B.C. – 35000 B.C.) to be more accurate. The earliest made were a series of random line or grooves made by dragging the finger. Later on engraving tools along the soft layer of clay on the walls were added on.

The subject matter included simplified human figures, their day to day activities, geometric forms and symbols.

The prehistoric rock art has been broadly divided into seven periods:

- Period I (Upper Paleolithic)
- Period II (Mesolithic)
- Period III (Chalcolithic or Copper age)
- Period IV & V (Early historic)
- Period VI & VII (Medieval)

Bimbetka Caves

The caves of Bhimbetka were discovered in 1957-58 by an archaeologist Dr. Wakankar. Bhimbetka is natural art gallery and an archeological treasure. Spread in miles these caves trace the footsteps of the prehistoric man from as early as about 15,000 years ago. These magnificent paintings can be seen even the ceiling of rock shelters located at great heights. These caves remained covered with dense forest and vegetation that protected these rock paintings from the natural calamities.

A sand stone rock shelters with in a hundred-mile radius of the city Bhopal, Biyapura village in Raisin Dist., MP. It is interesting to know that the first discovery of rock paintings was made in India in 1867–68 by an archaeologist, Archibold Carlleyle, twelve years before the discovery of Altamira in Spain. Cockburn, Anderson, Mitra and Ghosh were the early archaeologists who discovered a large number of sites in the Indian sub-continent.

The Bhimbetka Caves are much closed to Bhopal on the way Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh spread in an area of 10 square kilometers. It has about 800 rock shelters out of which 500 have paintings.

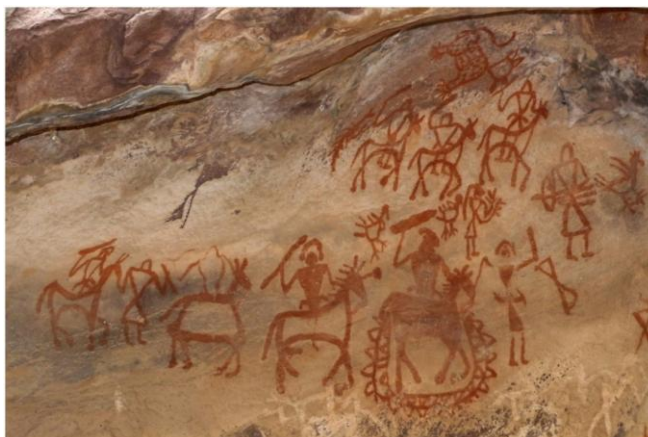


Bhimbetka Caves-Natural Art Gallery

Themes Of Bimbtkka

The themes of paintings found here are of great variety, ranging from mundane events of daily life in those times to sacred and royal images. These include hunting, dancing, music, horse and elephant riders, animal fighting, honey collection, decoration of

bodies, and other household scenes.

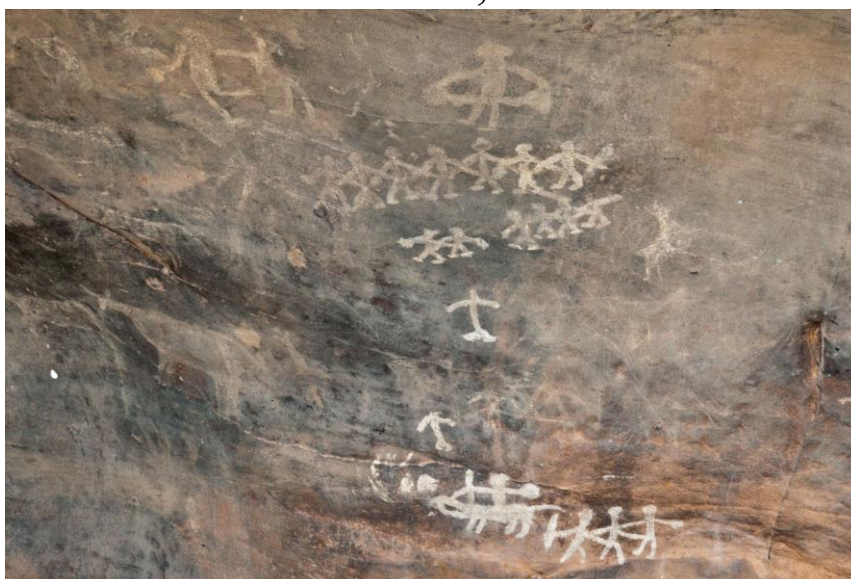


Colours of Bimbetka

The artists of Bhimbetka used many colours, including various shades of white, yellow, orange, red ochre, purple, brown, green and black. But white and red were their favourite colours. The paints were made by grinding various rocks and minerals like manganese, hematite and wooden coal.

- ❖ They got red from hematite (known as geru in India).
- ❖ Green prepared from a green coloured rock called Chalcedony.
- ❖ White was probably from Limestone and black from wooden charcoal.
- ❖ Some sticky substances such as animal fat or gum or resin from trees may be used while mixing rock powder with water.
- ❖ Brushes were made of plant fiber.

Wizard's Dance, Bhimbetka



In this painting, an animal is shown in the agony of death and the men have been depicted dancing with holding hands of each other and a person is shown playing a big musical instrument and some are sitting to watch them. It is the initial painting which shows the celebration with full rhythm and movements. This prehistoric painting help us to understand about early human beings, their lifestyle, their food habits, their daily activities and above all, they help us understand their mind- the way they thought.