

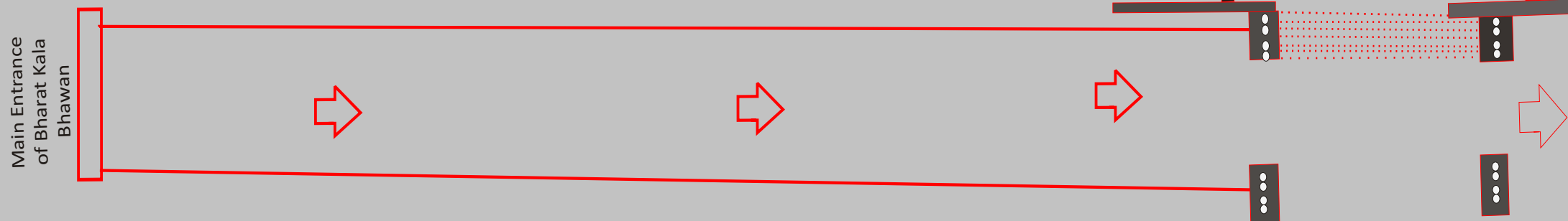
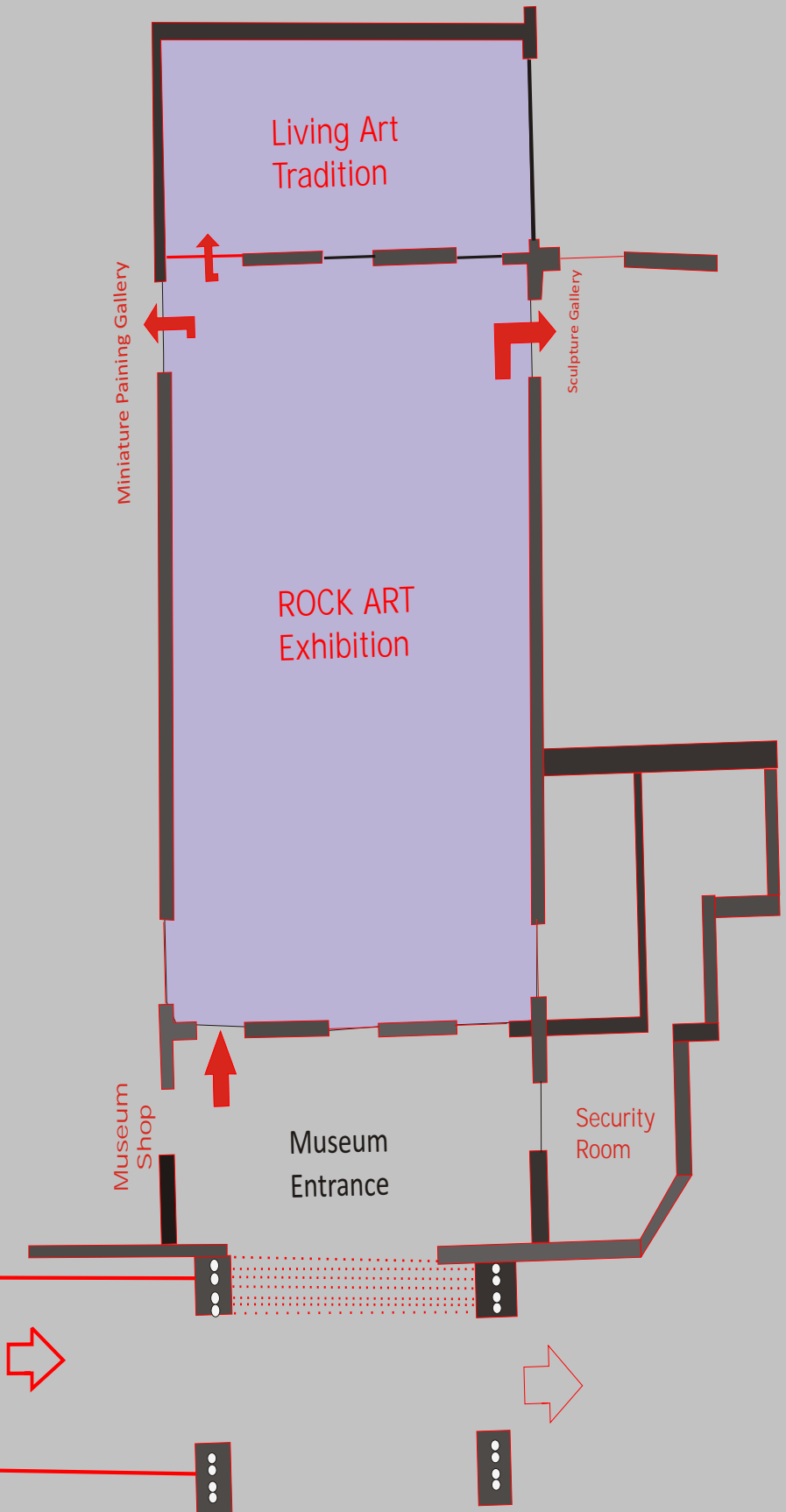
Rock art of the world is a fascinating saga of human endeavour to translate his aesthetic sensitivity into reality. From time immemorial the early man started to record his world around him and his activities for the life sustenance and to bring forth his progenies to flourish. He lived in the natural caves and shelters which he decorated with paintings and engravings; the subject matters that he could see in nature and life around him. This prehistoric art comes to signify the underlying philosophies and the worldview of the ancient people, and tells us about the soul of a community, its thoughts, beliefs and emotions. These records with high maturity as estimated by scholars perhaps go back to 30,000 years which we could well be presumed their much earlier existence.

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, Europe and Asia to the New World i.e. Australia and 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 Altal.

Major concentrations of petroglyphs are found from the arid regions of Saudi Arabia, Nagev Desert of Israel, etc. of West Asia. In South Asia, India and Pakistan are having rich rock art concentration. India has a wide range of rock art tradition throughout the length and breadth of the country. The quantity and quality also can vice with the art of any of the other country so much so Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh has been inscribed by UNESCO as world heritage site. In the East Asia, China and Japan are two important countries having rich concentration of rock art. In Southeast Asia, rock art sites are reported from Indonesia, Myanmar etc.



Several techniques are employed to execute the petroglyphs (engravings) like shallow carvings, deep carvings, scraping, pecking, finger fluting and polishing. In case of pictographs, paintings and stencilling are the major techniques. Styles of execution are also diverse in nature.



The subject matter of the rock art is also very 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 men as they were their source of life sustenance. Naturalistic representations of wild animals and hunting scenes are thus the most common subjects. Possessing brute-power might be the most desired concern to the early men and as such



representations of therianthropes (Half human and half animal features) are commonly found from the Palaeolithic period of Europe to the South African Bushman painting. After the introduction of domestication of animal the complexity of human life style in material culture as well as in social 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 belief, 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.

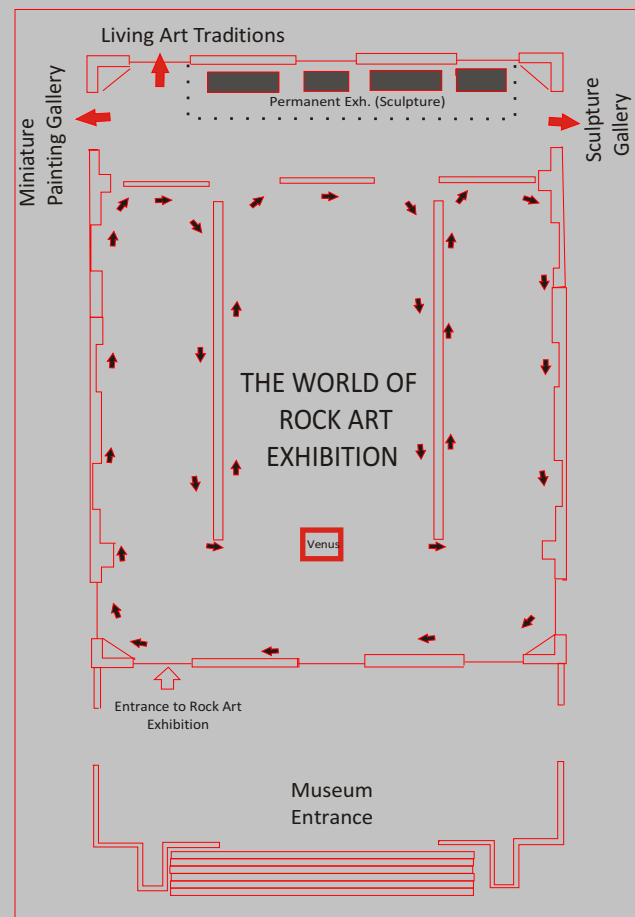


For the present show, exhibits are chosen from five continents of the world - Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, North and South America. A

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 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.



The World of

Rock Art

Exhibition

5th-28th March, 2013

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

भारत कला भवन

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

In Collaboration with

Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi
Banaras Hindu University