An exhibition on the Indian Rock Art was on display in Yinchuan City, China. The exhibition was held on the occasion of the World Rock Art Conference held from the 26th to 28th August, 2014. The exhibition remained open for public for about one year from 26th August, 2014 to 30th September, 2015.

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 primeval sense of sight and sound. These two senses have stimulated artist’s 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.

Venue: Archaeological Survey of India Puratattva Bhavan, Seminari Hills Nagpur

Organized by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts Ministry of Culture, Government of India in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India, Excavation Branch Nagpur Circle, Nagpur
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 progeny 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 Tumshuq of Kazakhstan and Altai.

Animals petroglyphs, Pilbara Western Australia

Lascaux Cave, Dordogne, France

Bhimlat, Bundi, Rajasthan

Domestic bull, Messak, Libya

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.

Animals are the most favoured subjects of the early man as they were their source of life sustenance. Naturalistic presentation of wild animals and hunting scenes are thus the most common subject. Possessing brute power might be the most desired concern to the early men and as such representations of their anthropoids (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 plants and animals, the complexity of human lifestyle 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

Lascaux Cave, Dordogne, France

Bhimlat, Bundi, Rajasthan

Pandavulagutta, Warangal, Andhra Pradesh

Gobustan, Azerbaijan

Cupules, Irave-Jhari

The present exposition 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 23rd 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 was earlier hosted respectively at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (5th to 28th March, 2013), then in Srimanta Sankardeva Kalashetr, 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 Bengaluru (3rd December, 2013 to 3rd January, 2014) at Centre or Heritage Studies Thrupunithura, (3rd December, 2013 to 3rd January, 2014) at Center for Heritage

Kilvalai, Tami Nadu

Chandala Cave, Pullar

Godhani symbol, Vidarbha Region

Rock shelters with paintings are also reported from the Gawligarh hills, a part of the Satpuras, which form the boundary between the Amravati district of Maharashtra and the Betul district of Madhya Pradesh. These shelters exhibit petroglyphs as well as pictographs ranging from the Upper Palaeolithic to the early historic period.

In Maharashtra, the major rock art sites are Nartola and Dongargaon; the later being a rock shelter site in Chandrapur district. The principle subject contained in these paintings are human and animal figures in dark red and red ochre colour. The animal figures include both wild and domesticated variety like Barasingha (swamp deer), deer and humped bull. In the western part of the state, the Konkan region is also replete with rock art in the form of the engravings depicting human figures and geometric designs.

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