

ROCK BY ROCK, A STORY OF TIME IN STONE

Exhibition aims to introduce residents to rock art & its varied expressions; workshops held for students

PARUL

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 10

FROM THE mountains of Himachal Pradesh to the caves of France — rocks tell a story through art.

At the World of Rock Art, an exhibition, which was inaugurated on Wednesday, images, motifs, creative expressions take the visitors back in time, make them stop, stare and soak in the thought that how art remains a constant of our life, a need to recreate the world in its many manifestations.

On till September 10 at the museum of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Panjab University, the exhibition brings to light the fascinating world of the primitive men, who decorated their abodes - natural caves and shelters with paintings and engravings and in the process, giving us an amazing view of life, through their eyes.

An effort of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in collaboration with the



Visitors at the World of Rock Art exhibition at Department of Ancient History Culture and Archeology, Panjab University, in Chandigarh on Wednesday. *Sahil Walia*

department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology (AIHC&A), the exhibition brings exhibits of rock art from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South

America.

Dr Paru Sidhu of the department said: "Rock art is known from across the world and as a discipline of study and research, is very popular in Europe. Asia boasts of a diverse art heritage, with Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh inscribed by UNESCO as a world heritage site."

Sidhu added that the effort of the exhibition is to introduce people of the region, students and history lovers to this treasure-trove of art and its varied expressions.

Art workshops for students are also being organised as a part of the showcase to develop an interest in the subject. Through carving, scraping, polishing, painting and stenciling, many subjects form the basis of the art on rocks, with a representation of wild animals and scenes of hunting being the most common subject.

Geometrical and abstract motifs, battle scenes, hand-prints are also common to rock art from all the five continents.

Some of the art depicts the

evolution from hunters and gatherers to a more settled life, with domestication of animals, and growing of plants.

Scenes from nature, complex depictions like that of a salmon fish in the form of a sculpture, a man holding an axe for protecting lovers, a delicate panel of horses and rhinos, lovers in a tight embrace, a chariot and charioteer, all take the viewer to varied spaces, indicating the diversity of culture, beliefs, practices, surroundings, as evident in the diversity and complexity of the art.

Rock art from Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh can be viewed.

The exhibition is a representative collection of the significant and important traditions are displayed continent wise, with the viewer getting a glimpse and feel of the constantly changing aspects of art, stimulated by the awareness of sights and sounds, myths and beliefs of life of the primitive men.