

Rock art rocking in Shimla museum

THE EXHIBITION, WHICH WAS INAUGURATED ON JUNE 15, IS ON TILL JULY 24

SONAM KAINTHLA

The art is ancient, carved, intriguing and dates back to 500 million years. But the valley of Spiti in the Himalayas lives to tell its tale to the present generation. The art is called "Rock Art". It is an art that excels in translating human aesthetic sensitivity into reality, which as of now is either fully explored or still remain in the realm of Earth.

These findings allow an individual to see prehistory in the visual form. An interesting harmony of nature and culture which is brought about in the form of an exhibition by the Indira Gandhi National Center for the Art (IGNCA), New Delhi in collaboration with the Himachal State Museum, Shimla (Ministry of Culture).

The exhibition was inaugurated on June 15 to showcase 90 plus specimens of rock art in the museum and will be on till July 24.

The main objective of connecting past and pres-



PRADEEP KUMAR

ent through a form of art is to make all the academics aware. Educational institutions can undertake subjects in arts and social science and introduce student with a subject which intersects with our lifestyle, said B L Malla, project director, IGNCA, New Delhi.

In a world where man power is relentlessly scaling heights, rock art has few professionals. This is why IGNCA has taken an initiative to make people aware of the rock art. It is an interdisciplinary and emerging field which will wave new chances for students to become future anthropologists, artistorians

and archaeologists.

In Himachal Pradesh the major rock art sites are located in the Spiti valley of Lahaul-Spiti district. It has a rich concentration of rocks, chiefly containing figures of animals, mountain goats and human figures on boulders and stone blocks.

With nine sites of rock art in the valley, the IGNCA, under the national programme called The Primeval Vision, has commenced the task of methodically documenting and researching the rock art sites in 14 states of India including Himachal Pradesh. Exhibition also has on display rock art from five continents

of the world: Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, North and South America. Besides this it is showcasing living art traditions of three communities from the state of Odisha, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Even though representations are miscellaneous, they indicate a message of a time from different primitive hunters, from distinctive environments, separated by millions of years. All-in-all, this exhibition is a highly detailed, researched and educational presentation of rock art from a little known area whose ties are manifestly displayed to whole world.