
Art Masterpiece - *Black Bull* at Lascaux Caves

Keywords: Art
Prehistoric
Texture

Grade: Kindergarten

Activity: Prehistoric Stone Age Art



Background about the Art

Who were the very first artists? The cavemen lived some 30,000 years ago. By the light of oil lamps, Prehistoric artists drew these wild animals, such as bison and mammoths on the wall of caves in Lascaux, France. Most scientists believe they painted these animals because; they hunted them for food to feed their colony/tribe, or tame them, to use for farming.

These cave paintings are **17,300 years old** and had more than 2000 drawings/paintings of animals, people and handprints. Some scientists believe the handprints were the artists' signature. Some drawings also included spears and arrows that were used in hunting. Using charcoal, they traced the outlines of bison and mammoths on the cave walls. For paint, they ground lumps of earth and rocks into colored powder. They mixed it with oil, and spread this powder with homemade brushes using leaves, or wads of fur. These early painters used the entire surface of the rock within the cave. If you look closely, paintings are overlapping each other, which suggests to scientists, these paintings spanned many generations of colonies/tribes.

The cave of Lascaux in France was discovered accidentally in 1940 by children while playing with their dog. Two boys sent their dog to retrieve a ball and came upon an underground cave. Deep within the cave, paintings were found that are now thought to be the very first artwork created by people. Today, many, many people can enjoy these wonderful cave drawings and learn about Prehistoric man simply because some children were out playing with their dog and made this fantastic discovery!

Questions to ask students while viewing the paintings:

- Why do you think people drew these pictures thousands of years ago?
 - What texture do you think the cave wall felt like?
 - What animals and figures do you see?
 - What colors did the artists use?
 - How did the cavemen sign their artwork?
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Activity: Prehistoric Painting

Materials:

Visual- Art Print of *Black Bull* on Lascaux Cave

Brown paper bags (grocery or lunch bags work well)

Black tempura paint- prepare trays/cups of paint ahead of time, but do not hand out until demonstration is done.

Brushes

Chalk

Paper towels(for possible spills)

Water bowls for placing used brushes

Fixative(to seal the chalk), such as canned Aqua Net hairspray (optional)

Activity:

Demonstration: We are going to be cave artists today! First, we will make our "rock" paper. Tear off all the edges of the paper. Then crumple it up. After crumpling it, gently smooth it out on your table and throw away the scraps. Use a brush and black paint to draw your animal. **Draw it large.** Try to fill up your "rock" paper. Start with a large oval for the body - a "jelly bean" shape. Add neck, head, legs, and a tail. Add ears and horns or antlers. Once done, gently blow the paint to speed up drying and then color the animal in with chalk. Color the space around the animal by lightly using the side of the chalk. Use as many colors as you like. Add designs, stripes, background, etc. as desired.

**If you prefer, you can demonstrate your animal drawing on the whiteboard with a black dry erase marker.

Handing out paper bags and brushes- After demonstration is finished, ask students to think about an animal they would like to draw as you are handing out the paper, brushes and pencils (Students should **first** write their names with a pencil in the front lower corner of their paper), remove pencils from table after they write their names. As students finish their painting, hand out bowls of chalk (2/table) and put brushes into water bowls to make clean up easier. Straighten up tables as you move around and put away chalk, paint and laminated visuals. Rinse brushes and leave out to air dry.