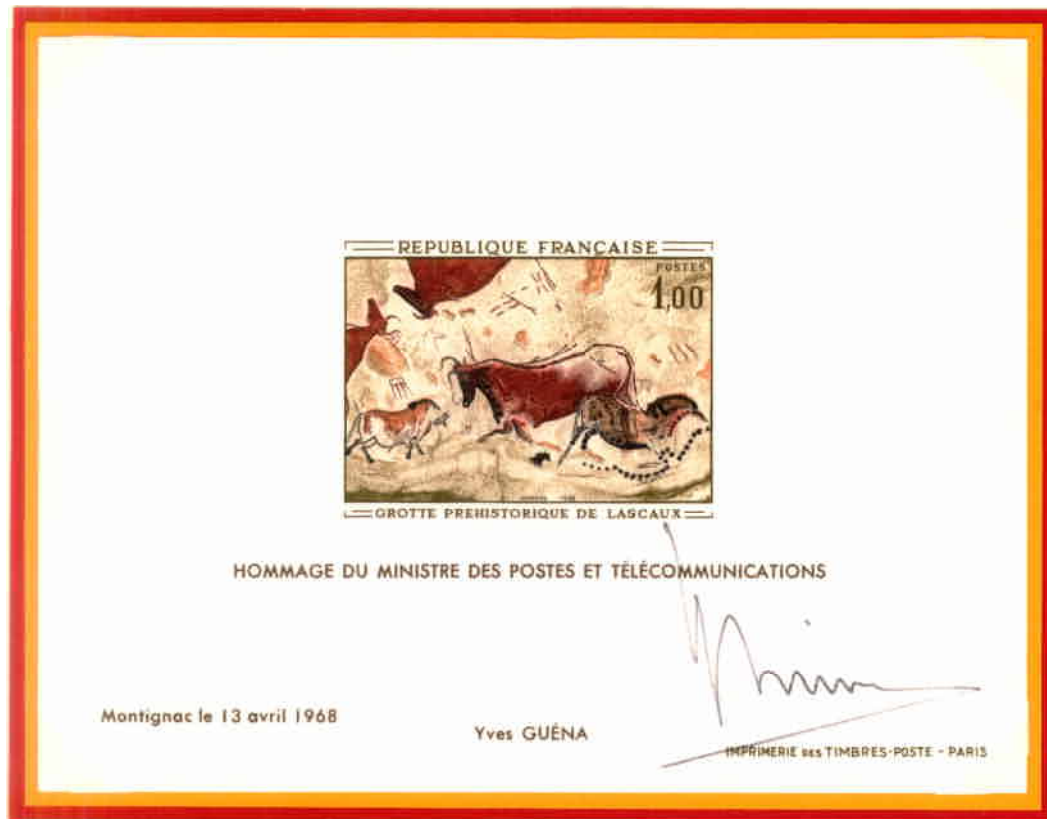


Dark Caves – Bright Visions

Ice Age Cave Painting of France and Spain



Signed presentation proof reproducing the 'Three cows and Chinese horses' of Lascaux

Introduction

By painting and etching on cave walls, our prehistoric ancestors captured their ice age perceptions of life. In doing so, they didn't realize those ideas would endure for more than 400 succeeding generations; it was the dawn of art.

Thousands of animal, human and geometric shapes grace the caves of France and Spain. These images are the earliest examples of life portraits. They have remained hidden from our modern techno-religious societies for thousands of years and only through chance encounters are they brought to light.

Broad scenes on irregular rock surfaces lend three dimensions to animals, bringing them to life. Modern observers marvel and feel strangely in tune with an early environment while haunting images stir imaginations - as perhaps the artist fully intended. The exhibit focuses on prehistoric cave painting and etching (parietal art) produced between 33 thousand and 10 thousand years ago during the European ice ages by Cro-Magnon man in southern France and northern Spain.

Plan

1. Prehistoric Exposé

1.1 *Discovery*

Mistaken origins

1.2 *The True Artist*

Prehistoric artistic talents come of age

2. Art Sites

2.1 *Chauvet*

by approximate age, oldest to youngest

2.2 *Ardèche*

2.3 *Pech-Merle*

2.4 *Rouffignac*

2.5 *Altamira*

2.6 *El Pindal*

2.7 *Covalanas*

2.8 *Tito Bustillo*

2.9 *El Castillo*

2.10 *Lascaux*

2.11 *Bara Bahau*

2.12 *Font-de-Gaume*

2.13 *Niaux*

3. Study and Preservation

3.1 *Research*

Historians

3.2 *Purpose*

The why behind the art

3.3 *Influence*

Picasso, Miro, Disney

3.4 *Museums*

Preservation and display

Scarcer items are matted gold on red



Cave paintings were reported in remote caves in the south of France by unnamed sources in the late 1860s. Additional sites in Spain and France came to light in the following years and a heated controversy over the art's age developed quickly.

Art ranges from southern France into northern Spain.

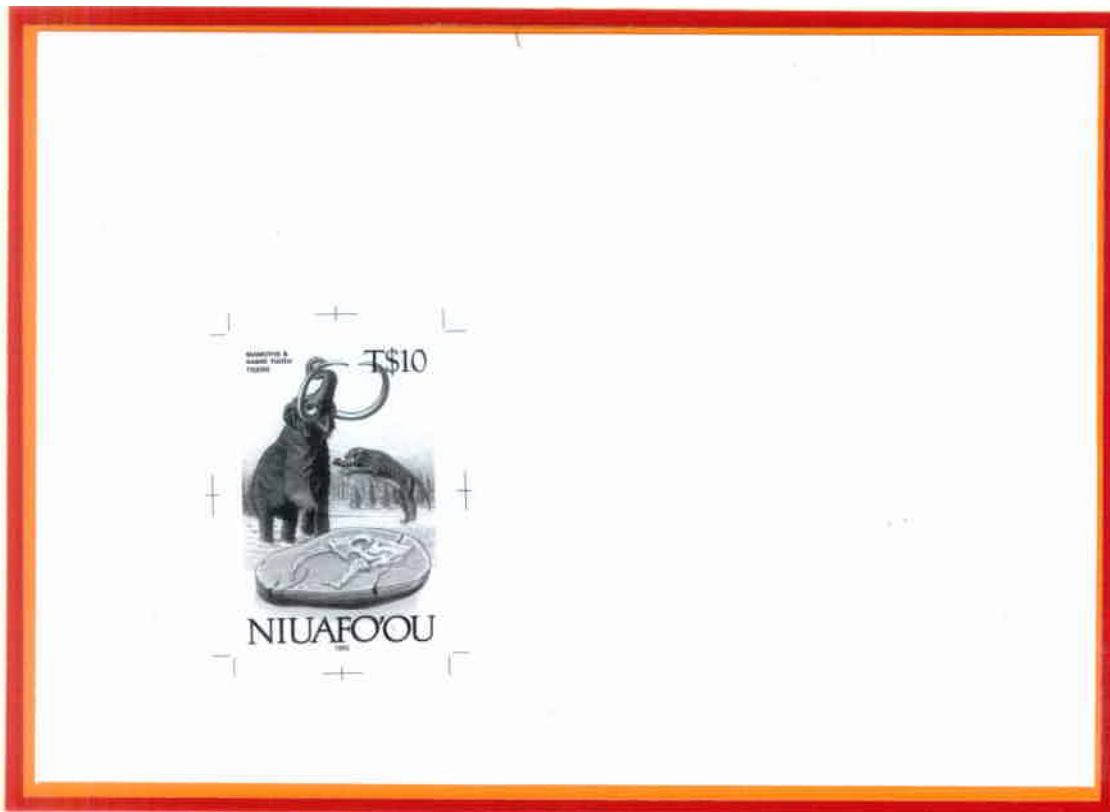


Pictorial advertising hand cancel "Art of the Paleolithic"



Machine roller cancel with advertising slogan 'Celtiques' (Celts); Paris to Chicago, May 7, 1938

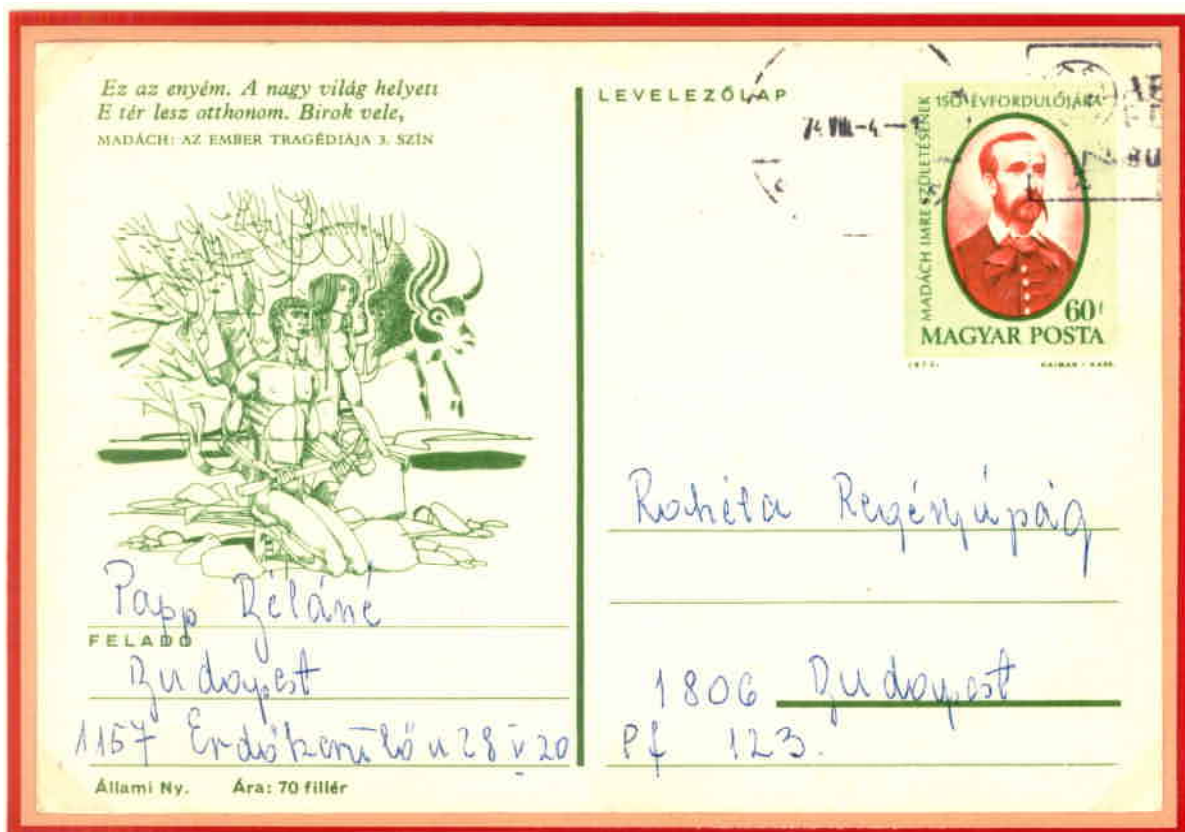
The earliest discoveries were thought to be Celtish in origin. The thinking of the time presumed prehistoric people were too primitive and lacked tools to create sophisticated works. This view has changed dramatically since their discovery.



Bromide proof, 20 examples printed



Bones of extinct mammoths and woolly rhinoceros native to Ice Age Europe were found to be stratigraphically associated with the art. This led to acceptance of early man's artistic abilities.



Illustrated domestic rate postal card depicting early man and cave painting, locally used within Budapest



Advertising meter (domestic postcard rate) depicting the evolution of man



Commemorative issue depicting Cro-Magnon - the toolmaking artist

Cro-Magnon's social interaction was a key to the development of a community and his ability to refine tools allowed him to produce the utensils needed to create his artwork.



SPECIMEN overprint



Machine slogan cancel depicting art of stone (pressure) flaking



Imperforate gutter pair from bottom of sheet depicting burins (tools) and stone lamp used in cave art production



Herrn Gernot Schuster
Reinickstraße 29

Stationery, first class rate in Europe

Chauvet at 33,000 years old, is the oldest of all cave art. Animals are so accurate that artists must have observed them at close range in life. The fifth gallery (room) has a pair of lions.

Machine slogan cancel, postcard rate



Ardèche 2.2, Pech-Merle 2.3

Paintings in the Ardèche are dated to approximately 30,000 years ago and are mainly composed of strong outlines or silhouettes with minimal shading on heads and feet of the animals.



Machine slogan cancel on domestic rate letter

Charcoal in the horses at Pech-Merle indicate an age of more than 24,000 years using the radiocarbon dating method. The most famous frieze is thought to be produced by the artist spitting the pigments through a hole in a piece of leather. This technique is used by modern day aborigines of Australia. The head of the right hand horse is drawn onto a shaped rock formation, probably modified by the artist.

This 23,000 year old art of Rouffignac, located in the province of Périgord, is generally incised into the soft clay of the cave's walls. This was most probably done by human fingers and outlined with manganese black (below).



Art in this cave has great scientific accuracy as well as beauty; the artists were by no means primitive or unobservant.

One mammoth's trunk has two 'fingers' depicted (center cancel), a prominent characteristic of modern African elephants as well as mammoths. The woolly rhino's hairy mane is also a detailed feature (below).



Advertising machine slogan cancel, domestic postcard rate



Advertising machine slogan cancel, first class domestic letter rate

Forward parts of a horse, two 'fighting' mammoths, and a bison are depicted along the 'Sacred Way', one of nine confrontations in the cave's murals.



Tracing by Abbe Henri Breuil



The 'Rolling Bison' in commemorative cancel for the Fifth Congress for the Study of the Quaternary, held in Madrid, Spain 9/2/57

Altamira is dry and rocky, resulting in high relief type artwork approximately 15,000 to 16,000 years old.

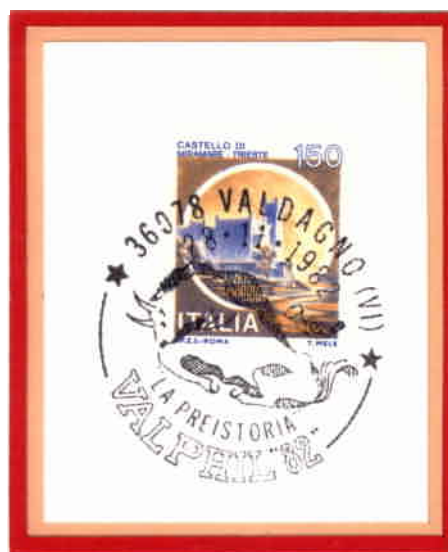
One very well known design from this cave depicts a female bison rolling in the grass and some historians believe she could also be calving.



Commemorative slogan roller cancel (domestic rate) depicting the 'Rolling Bison'



Painting is often considered the earliest form of writing



First day of issue commemorative cancel



Colorized tracing by Abbe Henri Breuil

In nearly every instance of cave art of this period, bison are counted among the animals depicted. As bison were likely the primary source of food for early hunters and it's believed that's one reason why they are the most common animal in prehistoric cave art.

Art in several caves on the Spanish northern coast date from roughly 13,000 to 15,500 years old. Styles range from simple outlines to more sophisticated engraved and painted works.

Sometimes, internal organs of animals were emphasized in the artwork and may have had a significance in hunting rituals (right) at El Pindal.



All 17 depictions of hinds at Covalanas appear in a somber, deep red shade and clearly show the shape as well as the markings of these animals.

The red hind is not only the most predominate animal in the art of Covalanas, but its bones are also the most plentiful in the cave.



Bison are common in other caves on the Spanish coast.



Commemorative cancel depicting mammoth's heart



Advertising meter (domestic postcard rate) with text promoting tourism, with bison logo



Color schemes used in cave art tend to be dominated by shades of red like Tito Bustillo (left).

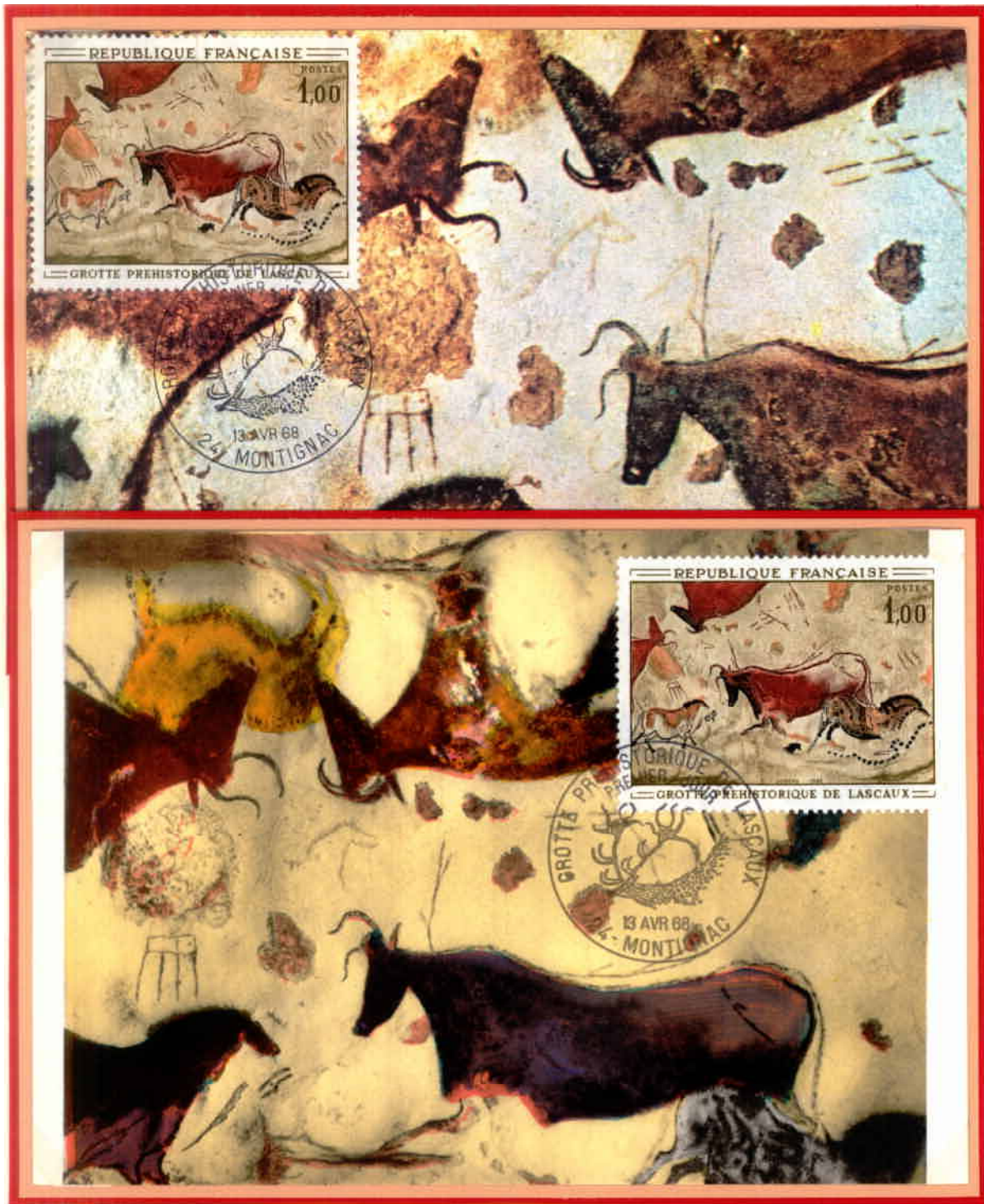
Human figures are rare and are usually shown as stickmen or as pairs of negative handprints like the red examples of El Castillo.



Lascaux is 13,000 years old and has far more animal paintings than any other cave, more than 2,000, and its art is both beautifully violent and grandiose. Several deer with large antler racks appear in the *Great Hall* between the second and third of the four great bulls.



Machine cancellation with dater to left of advertising slug (1970s)



Maximum cards with steel (above) and rubber (below) commemorative first day hand cancellation devices

Lascaux's natural mineral lining protects it from the formation of stalactites and ceiling and wall areas are very nearly white.



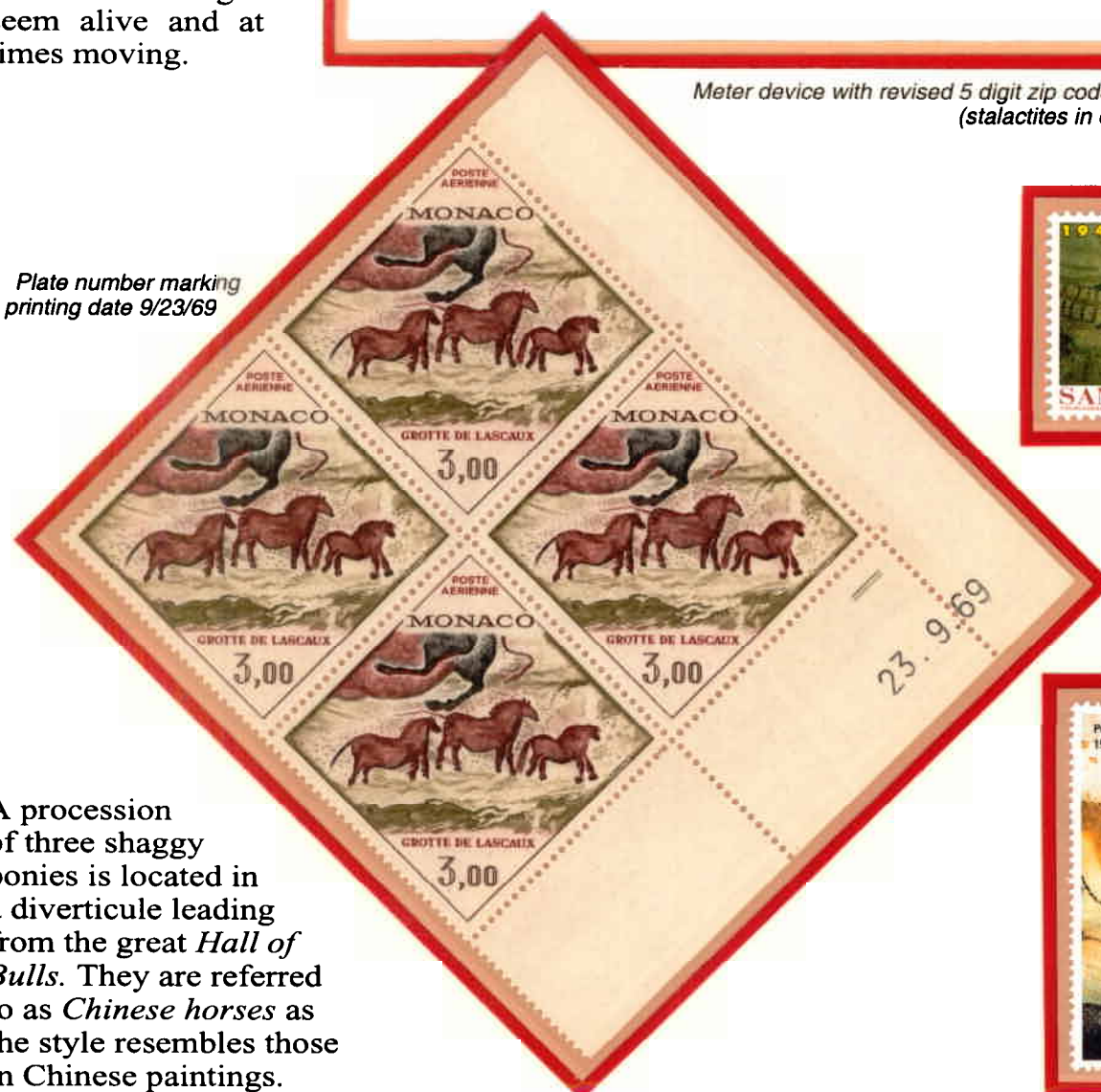
Machine device with dater to right of advertising slug began in 1960s

Crystalline mineral base brightens the colors and acts like a modern beaded projectionist screen providing a sense of additional depth to the art making it seem alive and at times moving.



Meter device with revised 5 digit zip code after German unification (stalactites in design are artistic license)

Plate number marking printing date 9/23/69



A procession of three shaggy ponies is located in a diverticule leading from the great *Hall of Bulls*. They are referred to as *Chinese horses* as the style resembles those in Chinese paintings.



A fourth pony is visible to the right.





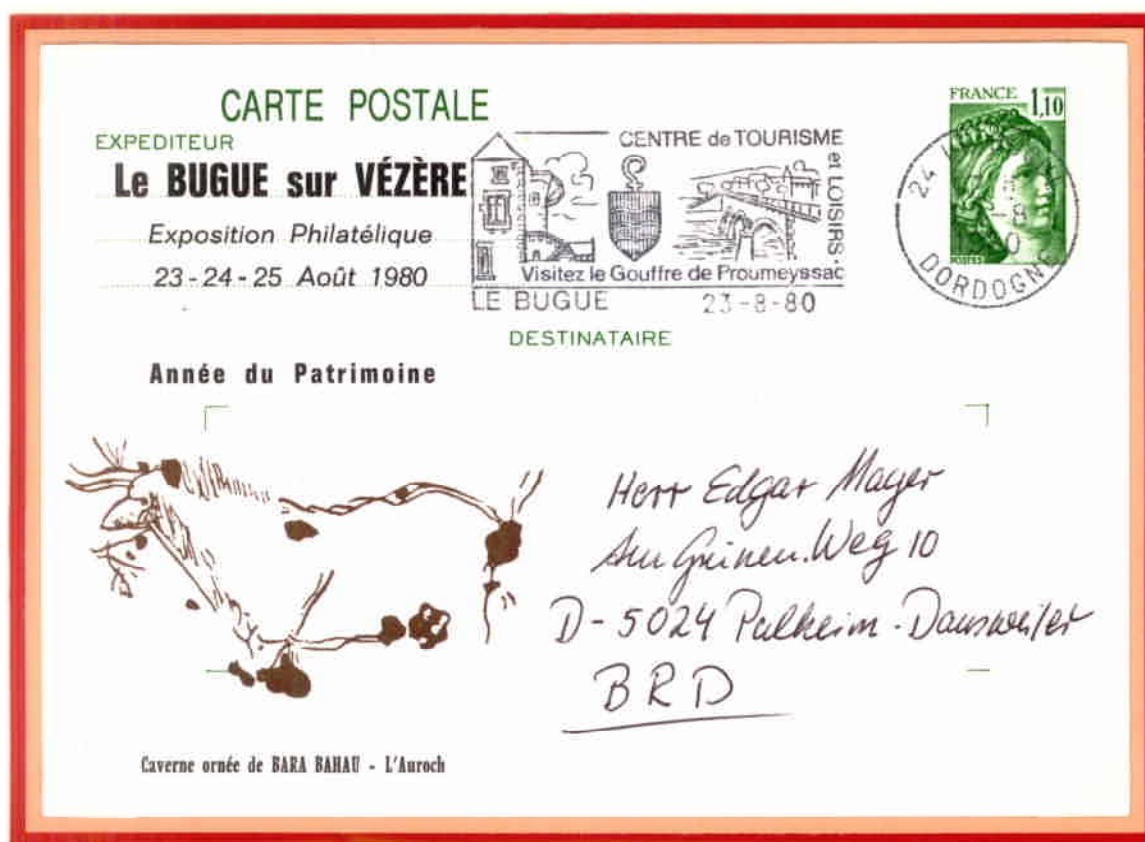
Advertising meter paying the domestic postcard rate



Domestic postcard rate, head of an auroch

The central hall ceiling at Lascaux has a single black auroch, one of only a few.

Brush strokes give a feeling of a mane to the auroch below although unfinished.



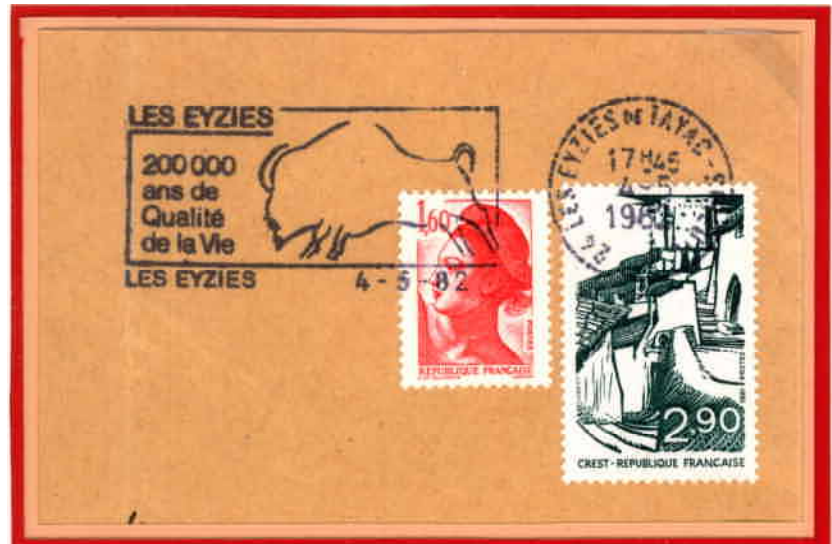
Commemorative supplemental printing provided by post office for a fee (print-to-order)



Machine slogan depicting bison outlined in black

Precancel

Two reindeer form a pair, the black male on the left nuzzles a kneeling female's face in red. The figures are nearly eight feet long, first engraved and then covered with a brown wash to effect contouring.



Advertising meter with 2 digit postal code



Advertising machine slogan cancel without zip code (1960), first class domestic rate

The animals of Font-de-Gaume are depicted in gentle, natural poses, not violent such as those of Lascaux. Reindeer were an important source of food and hide and modern French scholars refer to this period as *Age de Renne* or the *Reindeer Age*.

Eight hundred meters from Niaux's entrance, the *Salon Noir* is the main gallery of this 11,000 year old art. Among the animals depicted, horses, bison and ibexes predominate.



Use of postage meter tape applied as a 'redating' method for delayed mail, foreign surface rate to USA

Panel six includes a wounded bison with two spears protruding from its right side. This might indicate an actual event but it's more likely the scene reflects the practice of trying to influence the outcome of a hunt by using magic.



Machine slogan cancel, no date under slogan, double ring dater



Domestic use of machine slogan cancel depicting bison from panel six, date under slogan, single ring dater

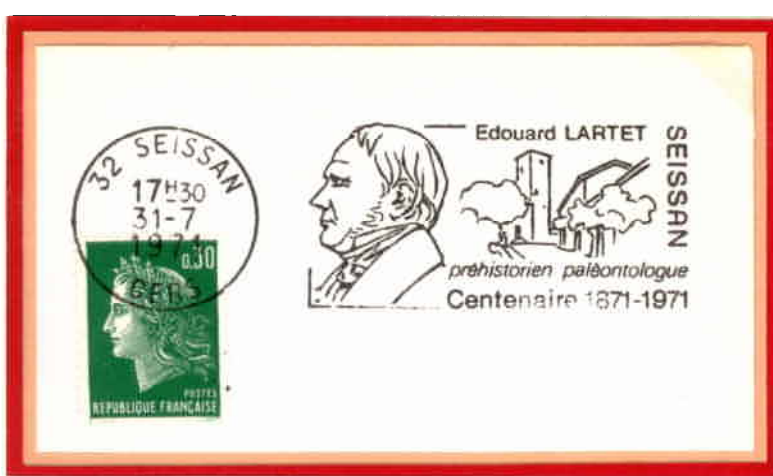


Portrayal of animal legs in pairs indicates understanding of perspective.





Abbe Henri Breuil, the 'Pope of Prehistory', copied several thousand paintings by rubbing over them and adding features from memory later. He was the major authority on cave art as it was discovered.



Henri Moisson analyzed the paint pigments of cave paintings to help in determining the origins of the materials as well as to assist in dating the artwork.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Edouard Lartet studied prehistoric artifacts to authenticate findings.

Conferences allow researchers to share scientific findings for review and verification.



Domestic registered cover with commemorative cancel for the first National Archaeological Congress, 1949

Modern historians believe cave art has shamanistic origins and may have been associated with rituals of hunting magic as many of the scenes depict animals with wounds.

Art for the sake of art is thought improbable even though some scenes are abstract and seem to have little utilitarian use.



Machine cancel depicting man hunting mammoth (letter rate to France)

Influence 3.3



Pablo Picasso 1881-1973



Machine slogan cancel advertising exhibits of 'Lascaux and Picasso'



Pablo Picasso and Joan Miro studied cave art and its influence is seen in their work.

Disney speculates on its use as a form of communication, likely close to the truth.



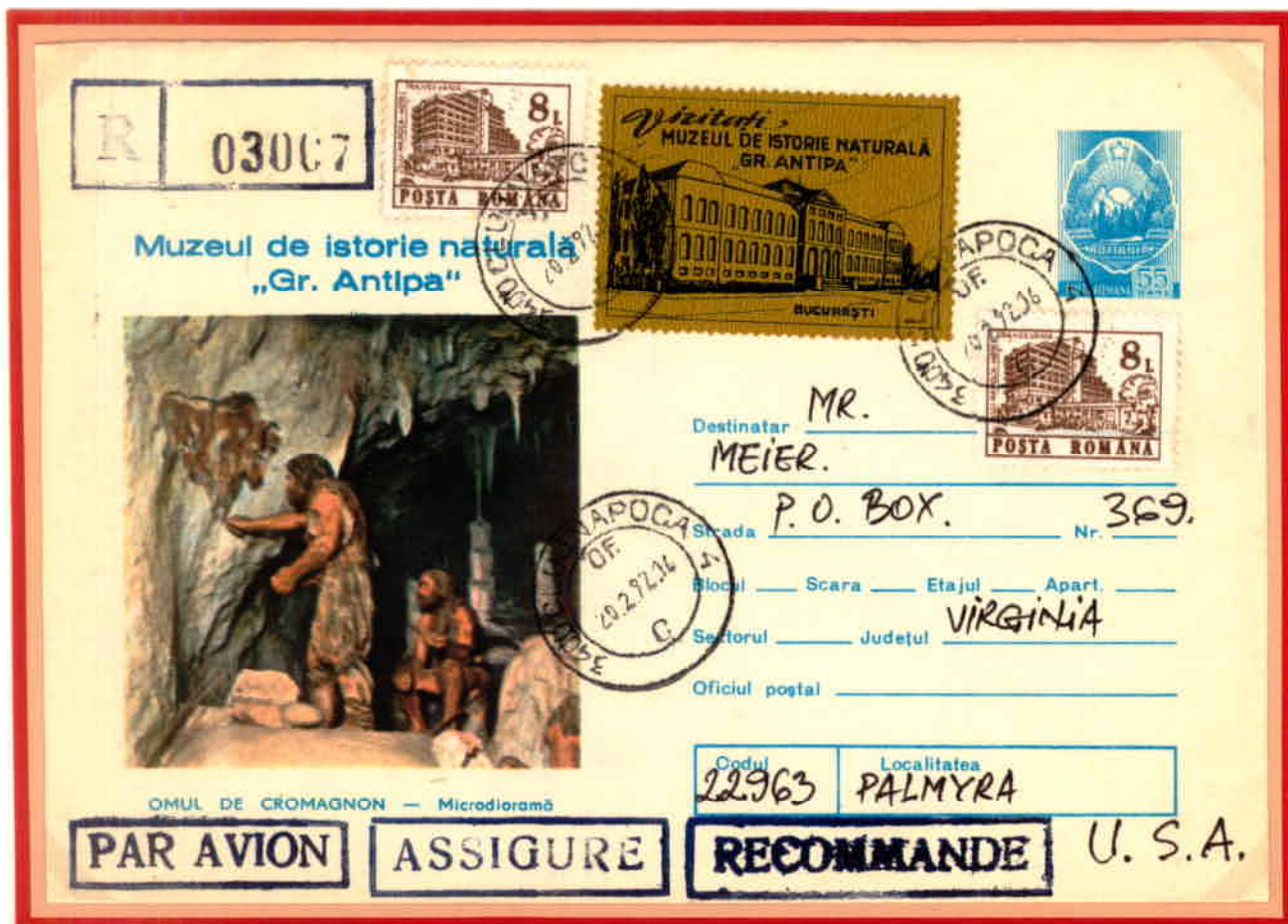
8 kip value, Joan Miro



Due mainly to modern pollution, many caves are now closed and museum exhibits are the public's only opportunity to experience prehistoric art.



1949 deluxe die proof with manuscript color code (1503LX), depicting Museum of Anthropology



Registered postal stationery via airmail (184 Lei on rear), Romania to U.S.A. with diorama of Cro-Magnon artist
Cave art embodies the full essence of human creativity; dark caves shelter man's bright visions.