

# **EXPRESSION, No. 2, November 2013**

BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON  
INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF  
NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

*UISPP-CISENP was founded in 2006 as an international scientific commission of  
The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences  
(Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protobistoriques) President,  
UISPP-CISENP : Emmanuel Anati*



*Carved flint, Atapuerca, near Burgos, Spain. 1.4 million years old.*

**EXPRESSION** invites us to consider the human mind and spirit. Join our interdisciplinary dialogue with UISPP-CISENP and all those thirsty for an understanding of the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate people(s).

We note with pleasure the productive discussions held at the **XXV Valcamonica Symposium**, from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 2013 in Capo di Ponte, Italy. Many speakers participated in increasing understanding about “*Art as a Source of History*”. Many plan on submitting papers for the Burgos meeting at the “*Atapuerca*” UISPP World Congress in 2014.

**EXPRESSION** is herein publishing the Valcamonica Symposium conclusions as well as excerpts from the new *Atelier* publication in English “**What caused the invention of art?**”

## WHAT IS NON-LITERATE ?



*Maori chief with moko, Captain Cook expedition.*

In prehistoric, tribal and modern or contemporary art, we detect graphic, representational, figurative, and abstract engravings, paintings and assemblages of objects that attest in infinite ways how the natural world interpenetrates man-made creations that constitute our culture. It is no surprise that humans do universally envision their origins,

history, present lives and future well-being as intrinsically connected to their environment.

Non-literate expressions show how meaning is contextual as human behavior and thinking emanate from their inanimate and animate surroundings. The world of ideas, concepts and beliefs develops through intuitions or perceptions showing sensitivity to a spiritual realm peopled by powerful entities, divinities, animal-human forms, personifications of the forces of natural, physical phenomena among which man seeks his role. How can one understand others, be they animals or river rapids, without divorcing from the illusion of human alienation from

or opposition to nature and the cosmos?

If music establishes more of a mood than a specific meaning, as well as performing the phatic function of confirming presence – then we can learn from the bird-whistler. If symbols and signs engraved in stone reiterate, extend and transform those existing fractures and crevices, they also indicate efforts expended to inscribe valuable or emotional events in spaces already considered sacred or special due to their natural features. In the composition of rocks or bones assembled, we can distill a number of sequences, non-linear progressions, narrative structures, symbols and motifs. For the initiated,

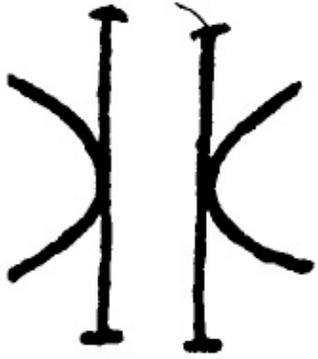
i.e., the “literate”, these are as comprehensible as sign language...



Are human body expressions through movement and gesture – dancing, playing music, hunting, using and making useful and decorative objects, tools, instruments or weapons, the gathering, preparing, and eating of food, sensual and sexual activity, or ritual actions in birth and funerary rites *fundamentally different* for literate and non-literate people?

**Lysa Hochroth**  
*Editor-Secretary, UISPP-CISENP*

# EXPRESSION DISCUSSION FORUM



*Nisibi (SE Nigeria) sign for 'two men talking'.  
Source: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological  
Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 41  
(Jul. - Dec., 1911), pp. 521-540.*

Intangible cultural heritage takes many forms, among which, knowledge. How do we see the learning curve of humanity seeking its purpose and meaning?

Tangible traces of the intangible proliferate worldwide. Yet the beliefs, ideas, concepts, intuitions and thoughts from which these productions arise are hidden in the recesses of

the mind, in the individual and collective memory we now seek to uncover.

*The purpose is to explore the human soul, using the material outputs: the material heritage as a source to discover the immaterial heritage.*

*- Emmanuel Anati*



*Kasai Velour, Congo.*

We welcome your reflections on the **EXPRESSION DISCUSSION BLOG**:

<http://cisenp.wordpress.com>

**XXV Valcamonica Symposium**  
*Capo di Ponte,*

*20-26 September, 2013*

Final Session

**CONCLUSIONS, DELIBERATIONS  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The six day long XXV Valcamonica Symposium, which took place at Capo di Ponte, Valcamonica, Italy, between Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> September and Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 was entitled “*Art as a Source of History.*” A total of 105 people from different disciplines and 38 different countries registered to attend the symposium, which comprised a total of seven sessions and one roundtable discussion based on texts previously presented and published in a booklet form. An average of 60-80 people attended each session.

Sessions addressed the following themes:

- 1.) Decoding religion, myths, and beliefs through rock art;
- 2.) Art as world heritage;
- 3.) Regional identities and common themes in rock art;
- 4.) Making history of prehistory;
- 5.) Psychic stories revealed by the arts;
- 6.) Decoding rock art: a worldwide survey on methods and theories;
- 7.) Ancient graffiti and modern graffiti.

The Round Table held on September 21<sup>st</sup> examined the

question of “What Caused the Creation of Art”.

The final session held on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup> is unanimously expressing thanks to the organizing team, to the supporting institutions and to the active participants.

An appeal is addressed to the IUPPS/UISPP (International Union of Prehistoric and Proto-historic Sciences), to stimulate and develop coordinated research programs for the advancement of research in the field of prehistoric and proto-historic intellectual and spiritual expressions, for international funding, which will involve joint projects of at least three institutions, each from a different country. The research goals have to conform to the aims of the respective institutions.

An on-line newsletter to be published every two months by the UISPP-CISENP Scientific Committee will communicate the goals and content of projects. A major aim will be the development of cooperation in research projects and the promotion of electronic publications.

The next UISPP conference is scheduled in Burgos, Spain, for September of 2014. Colleagues are invited to propose papers for the session on “Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-literate People” by sending title and short summary (10 lines) to the President of

CISENP, Prof. Emmanuel Anati, <cispe.research@gmail.com>.

Lal Malla from India suggested replacing the mention of “illiterate” with “non-literate” as it has been applied in this Symposium. He also proposed the compilation of a manual of rock art studies. It was suggested that Anati’s book “World Rock Art” (Oxford, 2010) should be made available on internet. Other basic papers and books should be made available the same way. Free access of books on internet should not conflict with copyright agreements and regulations.

Debate developed on research topics concerning rock art. Emmanuel Anati suggested three sectors requiring specific professional knowledge:

1 – Management, conservation, promotion, information and public enjoyment of rock art;

2 – Methods of recording and data storing (including explorations, surveys, mapping, tracing and photography).

3 – Decoding and understanding rock art.

Anati emphasized the need for more informed conservation and management, recording, and interpretation. Johannes Loubser from the United States and Fernando Coimbra from Portugal emphasized the need for archaeologists to be included in the conservation and management of rock art and so be able to provide essential orientation to conservation technicians.

Anati mentioned that conservation procedures must not be used as excuse to stop or delay research. He also recommended that rock art sites be open to the public as far as possible to favor their cultural and educational function and for the promotion of research.

George Nash from the United Kingdom called for the updating of a world heritage list/directory for global circulation. Anati suggested that Ariela Fradkin-Anati (Editor of the previous edition) and George Nash update the existing “Who’s Who” schedule of rock art scholars.

Fernando Coimbra proposed the creation of an International School of Rock Art, with theoretical and practical sessions, involving at least three different countries. Anati considered the idea as positive, practical and feasible. The term “school” should be used in a generic way. It could be called “Educational Project” and may use, continue, unify and coordinate existing local educational projects. Colleagues could probably involve their institutions in countries such as India, China, Italy and Portugal, to conduct seminars or two-week long classes to train people including also participants from other countries.

Fernando Coimbra recommended that seminars should be given to both archaeologists and non-archaeologists concerning the conservation and management of rock art.

A.K. Prasad from India called for ways to create a greater awareness and appreciation of rock art among the public. Anati added that rock art scholars should aim at writing broadly cultural articles to attract wider public attention. George Nash suggested that reporting rock art news on Facebook will be an effective way to promote awareness among the public. Primadi Tabrani from Indonesia pointed at the need to create awareness at the local level too. Arsen Fardzhev from Russia proposed ways to link rock art animal imagery with visit to nearby parks of actual live animals. Erwin Neumayer from Austria mentioned the problem of disseminating information pertaining to conservation and management to the general population in India with the goal of avoiding further damages.

The topic of the 26<sup>th</sup> Valcamonica Symposium was the last issue on the agenda.

Lisbeth Bredholt from Denmark suggested that the next Symposium be shortened by one day. Anati suggested a structure consisting of three days of general sessions, with additional days of more specific sessions. Primadi Tabrani requested that Italian presentations are accompanied by English translations.

In the course of the Symposium the following titles were proposed for the forthcoming 26<sup>th</sup> Valcamonica Symposium to be held in 2015:

- Multi-disciplinary approaches to prehistoric and tribal art;
- Prehistoric art and its context;
- The relationship between prehistoric art and material culture;
- Prehistoric people and cultures that have produced rock art;
- Differences in art between non-literate and literate cultures;
- Prehistoric art as memory for the future;
- Rock art research: past, present, and future;
- Rock art conservation for future generations;
- Defining dating and motivations of rock art.

Additional titles were proposed in the course of the session:

- Palaeo-art (proposed by Arsen Faradzhev);
- Contemporary art (proposed by Andrzej Rozwadowski);
- Experiencing art (proposed by Lisbeth Bredholt);
- The production and re-adaptation of rock art in later periods (proposed by Bobrowski Przemyslaw);
- Rock art as performance (proposed by George Nash);
- Relationship between zoomorphic and anthropomorphic imagery

- (proposed by Umberto Sasoni);
- Rock art between archaeology and spirituality (proposed by Fernando Coimbra);
- Art as experience and experiencing art (proposed by Lisbeth Bredholt);
- Meaningful experiences and experiencing rock art (proposed by Andrzej Rozwadowski.

After debate it was decided that several of the proposed titles could be themes for specific sessions. Considering their variety and range, the forthcoming Symposium should have a broad title. The title of *“Prehistoric and tribal art: spiritual and intellectual aspects”* was unanimously accepted. Participants were invited to submit titles and abstracts of their proposed papers for the forthcoming Symposium. Colleagues intended to organize and coordinate specific sessions should present their proposal as soon as possible.

Items for action:

- Ariela Fradkin-Anati and George Nash: update the existing “Who is Who in Rock Art” directory and prepare a new edition for

- publication; possible diffusion of electronic edition.
- UISPP: approach potential funding sources for multinational cooperation projects in rock art studies;
- Various members: verify feasibility of “Educational Project”: seminars and courses in conservation and management of rock art.
- UISPP-CISNEP: Develop and promote bi-monthly Newsletter;
- UISPP-CISNEP: Verify and promote diffusion of educational publications by internet.
- CCSP: Organize the 26<sup>th</sup> Symposium in 2015

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UNION INTERNATIONALE DES  
SCIENCES PRÉHISTORIQUES ET  
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### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

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### **ATELIER**

**Atelier is a workshop for research, experiment and debates on the intellectual and spiritual expressions of cultures...Membership is open to all those wishing to participate and share their knowledge and ideas. The latest publication in English is the Valcamonica Symposium Round Table discussion. To order Atelier publications:**

**<http://www.atelier-etno.it>  
[atelier.etno@gmail.com](mailto:atelier.etno@gmail.com)**

## **WHAT CAUSED THE CREATION OF ART?**

**Here are just a few excerpts from the Round Table discussion published by ATELIER:**

### **Massimo Minini**

*A few days ago I was in Africa, in a hardware store. I needed some eye bolts, square hooks, a special kind of wrench and a gas ring reducer for the coffee-maker. We were having a hard time understanding each other. So I took paper and pencil and drew the things I was looking for. They caught on instantly. The miracle of art. (...)*

### **Jannie Loubser**

*Jannie Loubser on how art began and why? What kept humanity to produce art ever since?*

*The creation and continuation of art can only be understood by referring to mind and body properties and how these structure our interaction with others and with the surrounding world. An individual's mind and body is a metaphoric reference point of the world and surrounding cosmos. Because individuals live and evolve within social groups with certain shared cultural ideas, there must be a congruence between individual and socio-cultural reference points; the micro-cosmos of the individual mind's and shared group beliefs is projected onto the macro-cosmos of increasingly greater scales. The almost universal belief of core religious practitioners that re-creation is really an on-going continuation of creation, is phrased anthropologically that ritualized practices are really on-going group re-enactments of certain socio-cultural sanctioned revelatory mind and body experiences. (...)*



*Rock art in Wonderwerk cave, South Africa Photo: ALAMY*

## **Tang Huisheng** *On Paleo-Art And Its Origins*

*"When we talk about beads and art, we are actually talking about material technologies for symbolic expression that certainly postdate the origins of symbolic thought and communication, potentially by a very wide margin." I prefer this to the definition of art put forward by the archeologist Dietrich Stout of University College London. Two concepts here need to be emphasized: symbolic expression and material technologies. There is no need for us to talk about material technologies which are actually a process of technical development, a historic event and an external form of the symbol. What we need to do for material technologies are pay archeological attention from the historical perspective. We should focus all our attention on talking about the symbolic expression which caused the creation of art. What kind of symbols do these prehistoric artistic pieces express? Secret power? Magic? Hunting success? Fertility? Life? Soul? (...)*

## **Claudine Cohen** *Desire of art, art of desire*

*In the first chapters of The Descent of Man (1871),<sup>1</sup> Darwin insisted on the persistence, from animals to humans, of mental*

*characteristics such as curiosity, attention, sense of imitation and of beauty. He compared, in this regard, 'the mental faculties of man and of lower animals'. For him, the sense of beauty, far from belonging exclusively to humans, is shared by many animal species, as it is intrinsically linked to seduction and sexual selection. 'When we behold a male bird elaborately displaying its graceful plumes or splendid colours before a female, whilst other birds, not thus decorated, make no such display, it is impossible to doubt that she admires the beauty of her male partner. As women everywhere dock themselves with those plumes, the beauty of such ornaments cannot be disputed,'<sup>2</sup>he wrote. The faculty of imitation, interest in the beauty and aesthetic forms are natural to man, and must be understood as having deep roots in the evolutionary history of the animal world. In humans, the aesthetic sense is associated, as in animals, with sexual selection. But contrary to many other animal species, in humans it is men who choose and select their sexual mates for the beauty of their bodies and their use of ornaments. (...)*

## **Michael Francis Gibson** *Artists Are Hunters*

*I worked most of my life as an art critic, and today, after having fantasized for some decades on the origins of art, I intend to suggest that our homo sapiens ancestors learned to understand symbols and became artists because they happened to be hunters who also stood upright. Gorillas did not become hunters because they ate leaves which just sat there and allowed themselves to be eaten.*

*Panthers did not become artists because they ran on all fours and kept their noses to the ground. Homo sapiens, according to one theory at least, was a tree-dwelling, forest species whose forebears saw their environment replaced by savanna as a result*

of climate change. And since they could no longer climb into a tree to spot their prey, the best alternative was to stand upright on their hind legs. True, sapiens and his ancestors could still get down on all fours and sniff the ground. But even as they did so, they must have noticed that their game left meaningful spoors in the mud, snow or dust. This is where they first became connoisseurs. (...)

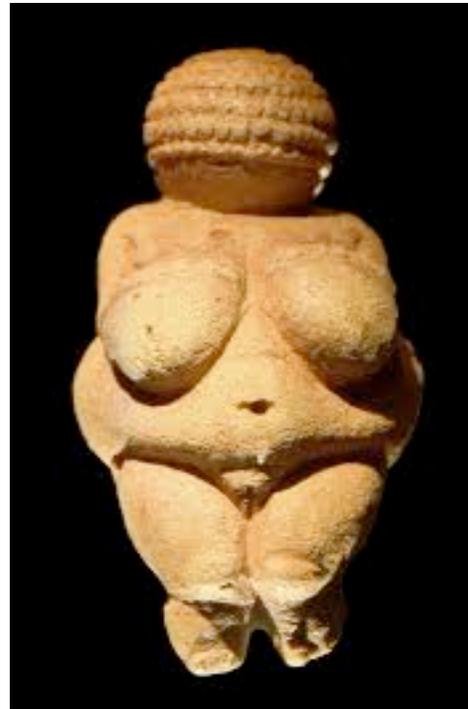
## Robert Bednarik

Theory of Mind, self-awareness and consciousness are things humans have in common with a good number of other mammalian species, and the only significant difference between humans and other animals is that we use exograms: agents of the external storage of memory traces. Today, practically all our cultural knowledge is stored outside the brain, in myriad forms of exograms, which in contrast to engrams (...) occur in relatively permanent forms, are unconstrained and reformatable, can be of any medium, can have virtually unlimited capacity and size, and can be subjected to unlimited iterative refinement. It follows that at some point in hominin history, these exograms must have been introduced. The most probable prompter of the use of exograms derives from an extrapolation of self-awareness beyond pongid capability, by incipient body adornment (traces of it have been reported from chimps). Once in use, such tools would have been adapted for a variety of other applications. So when you are looking for the origins of what you call "art" you need to reformat your question, because palaeoart is the major surviving corpus of traces of systems of early exograms. (...)

## Emmanuel Anati

(...) The term art has been defined many times, even by the papers included in this book. But the makers of eternal works of art of 20,000 years ago, like the painters of

Lascaux, probably did not know the meaning of this term. They rather considered themselves to be scribes, recorders of myths or of history, of realities or of dreams. They were the writers of the pre writing ages. Their works have been defined as art by the archaeologists and art historians of today. The spectrum of the contributions of the present book may propose more questions than those they solve. They are the base of a roundtable, of thinking and of lasting open debates. But perhaps, for culture, it is more important to awaken queries than to solve them.



*Venus of Willendorf (24,000-22,000 BCE)*

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# EXPRESSION

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