Large panel with a herd of eland at the Eland Cave rock art site in the Cathedral Peak Wilderness Area in the Northern Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
Enter a labyrinth of caves and rock shelters, step back in time and embark on a voyage of discovery into the very hearts, souls and minds of our human ancestors. By the intimate, flickering light of oil lamps and torches, you’ll explore our ancient origins - and be awed.

It is a case of prehistory making history as we welcome the Lascaux International Exhibition to Africa for the first time, and complement it with a specially curated exhibition of Southern African rock art and prehistoric artefacts.

The Wonders of Rock Art: Lascaux Cave and Africa exhibition offers a fascinating glimpse into the lifestyle and culture of prehistoric humankind, while doubling as an insightful intercontinental dialogue between the ancient rock art of Europe and Africa.

It transports us back 17 000 years, to the Palaeolithic period of the Stone Age. Our hunter-gatherer forebears would craft stone tools and paint and engrave animals and mythological or ritual scenes on the walls of their caves and rock shelters - in what could be seen as the world’s very first graffiti art!

Some of the world’s richest artistic representations of ancient life and myths have been found in Southern Africa and in the Lascaux cave system in France. Thousands of kilometres (and thousands of years) may separate the San artists of South Africa and the Cro-Magnon artists of Lascaux, but there are common threads showing our shared humanity, culture and interconnectedness that transcend time and geography.

These early Matisse and Sekotos all favoured animals as their subject matter, used simple yet sophisticated artistic tools and wanted to leave an imprint, a permanent record, of their time on Earth. Equally, the deeper symbolism and meaning behind these rock art representations are open to interpretation - only deepening their enigmatic allure.

In the 21st century, with new fossil and archaeological discoveries constantly adding to our understanding of where we come from, our fascination with uncovering the mysteries of ancient life burns undimmed.

Tapping into this appetite, the Wonders of Rock Art exhibition offers us a tantalising and authentic snapshot of our far-distant past. We invite you to marvel at how these early artists looked, how they lived, the perils they faced and, importantly, the science that has led to the discovery, preservation and replication of their artistic output.

Join us as we explore a mystical and hypnotic realm of prehistory that is anything but primitive - as the Sistine Chapel of prehistory meets the Cradle of Humankind.
**FOREWORD**

**DR MORE CHAKANE, CEO OF THE SCI-BONO DISCOVERY CENTRE**

As a world-class facility, Sci-Bono strives to instil a love of scientific discovery in audiences of all ages through vivid, interactive exhibits that fire up the imagination. We are therefore immensely proud to play host to the Wonders of Rock Art exhibition, which represents a harmonious marriage of art, science, culture, heritage and technology.

While highlighting how early man expressed their deep spiritual awareness and their creativity through rock art, the Lascaux exhibition also represents a remarkable feat of modern human endeavour. As such, this extraordinary global showcase can be seen as a living, travelling monument to science and technology.

Sections of the cave, which is no longer open to the public, have been painstakingly recreated with replicas of the original rock paintings and stone tools. The result is so authentic that it is evident that the team of technicians, prehistorians and artists working on this project had deep reverence for their subject matter.

For instance, they took great care to use the same pigments and materials as the Lascaux artists did some 17 000 years ago. State-of-the-art digital technology has been employed to conjure an exhibit that lives and breathes through life-sized cave panels, 3D projections, interactive terminals, multimedia and even lifelike anatomical models of a Cro-Magnon family, as visitors embark on a compelling virtual tour into prehistory.

These meticulous experts can rightly be viewed as modern masters, creating a credible and immersive rock art experience that has enthralled audiences around the world.

Similarly, the companion South African rock art installation introduces the public not only to the mastery of our local artistic ancestors, but also to the science involved in investigating and recording these national assets.

This engaging exhibition therefore enables visitors to be captivated by the rock art of Lascaux and South Africa, while seeing how science and technology have contributed to our understanding of these artworks and the stories that they tell.

Bringing science to life, teaching through exploration, and providing innovative learning experiences is what Sci-Bono is all about – and the Wonders of Rock Art exhibition promises to do just that by opening up a window on the ancient past and using it to forge dynamic connections with the present.

“The result is so authentic that it is evident that the team of technicians, prehistorians and artists working on this project had deep reverence for their subject matter.”
The Embassy of France in South Africa and the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS) are delighted and proud to present the Lascaux International Exhibition and its South African counterpart, The Dawn of Art, at the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre.

This will mark the first time since its launch in 2012 that the Lascaux International Exhibition is seen on the African continent, with South Africans joining the more than two million visitors who have discovered this famous wonder of world heritage.

This exhibition was created by the Departmental Council of Dordogne, supported by the Regional Council of Nouvelle Aquitaine, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the European Union. The worldwide tour is organised by the SPL Lascaux International Exhibition.

This stunning representation of the Lascaux cave opens a dialogue between ancient forms of art in South Africa and in France. The remarkable South African heritage of rock art is one of the richest in the world and this country is not only known as the cradle of humankind but also, increasingly, as the cradle of art. Lascaux rock paintings have been dated to around 17 000 years ago, but we can find the first traces of symbolic representation in South Africa more than 70 000 years earlier! The Southern African region abounds with treasures of rock art that enrich our experience of the Lascaux fresco.

These two exhibitions, showcased together at Sci-Bono under the banner The Wonders of Rock Art: Lascaux Cave and Africa, stimulate cultural interaction but also celebrate in a tangible way the breadth and vitality of French-South African cooperation in palaeoanthropology, prehistory and rock art research since the end of apartheid. The French government and South African institutions have funded research projects that have led to decisive discoveries, which have deeply transformed our views of the origins of man and of symbolic expression. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Commission on Archaeological Excavations and the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) support this research with South African universities in several provinces.

From the life-sized panels and virtual 3D tour of the Lascaux cave through to the ochre workshops, this exhibition aims to make prehistory accessible. Understanding our origins helps to develop and reinforce the social fabric of any society, since looking towards our distant past gives us a new perspective of our present.

"This will mark the first time since its launch in 2012 that the Lascaux International Exhibition is seen on the African continent, with South Africans joining the more than two million visitors who have discovered this famous wonder of world heritage."
A WORLD OF ROCK ART!
GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF ROCK ART HOT SPOTS

Rock art hot spots

Map by Stephen van den Heever and Dr Sam Challis (RARI/Wits University)
Blombos Cave
Western Cape
South Africa
77,000 BP - Oldest confirmed evidence of graphic expression

Nyero rock paintings
Kumi District
Uganda
700 BP

Matobo Hills
Matebeleland
Zimbabwe
13,000 BP

Zuojiang Huashan rock art
Chongzuo
China
16,000 BP

Diepkloof Rock Shelter
Western Cape
South Africa
109,000 (?) BP - Oldest evidence of graphic expression

Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains
South Africa
3,000 BP

Kakadu National Park
Arnhemland
Australia
40,000 BP
Art as we know it did not begin with the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Aztecs, Minoans or Mayans. It was born, as far as we can tell, right here in Southern Africa at least 100 000 years ago.

Here, early humans mixed ochre powder with seal fat, charcoal and other ingredients to make a rich "paint": a toolkit of sorts that they stored in abalone shells.

It is hard to imagine the lives of these Stone Age men and women and their daily battle for survival in a landscape that was becoming increasingly glacial and inhospitable.

What did a day in their life entail, 100 000 years ago? Where did they find the time amid foraging and hunting for food, finding shelter, raising a family, and keeping life and limb together to create and innovate? Did they feel a primordial pull towards artistic expression and culture?

It was not long before these enterprising modern Homo sapiens began carving symbols into rocks and other objects. An example is a red ochre nodule engraved with a geometric design found at Blombos Cave near Still Bay in the southern part of the Western Cape, dating back about 77 000 years.
This iconic ochre engraving is the world’s oldest known artwork. A replica of it will form part of the Origins Centre’s *The Dawn of Art* exhibition that accompanies the larger *Lascaux International Exhibition* at the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre (together the two installations form *The Wonders of Rock Art: Lascaux Cave and Africa* exhibition). Original engraved and ground ochre pieces, from layers in caves dating back between 96 000 and 40 000 years, will also be on display.

Near Blombos Cave, in Klipdrift Shelter in the De Hoop Nature Reserve, as well as north of Cape Town in Dieploof Rock Shelter near Piketberg, engraved ostrich eggshell fragments tell a fascinating story of life some 65 000 years ago. The geometric designs on the shells suggest that our African ancestors used decorated ostrich eggs as water containers, and the original fragments (as well as replicas of the full eggs) will also be on display during *The Dawn of Art* exhibition.

This early evidence of art, design and innovation shows that our ancient forebears were capable of complex mental tasks. It also disproves the notion that early humans only evolved to become fully “modern” or “creative” once they had migrated out of Africa to Europe.

Now, in the present day, we have the privilege of boarding a time capsule back to the last Ice Age. In *The Dawn of Art* exhibition, you will come face to face with ancient South Africa where, without knowing it, pioneering men and women took the first tentative steps towards creating a world enriched by the art, culture, science and technology we enjoy today.
The Southern African region is considered one of the globe’s richest treasure troves of rock art, abounding with more than 15 000 sites.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly how old these images are, because there is very little organic material in the pigment that can be dated. The oldest known painted art in Southern Africa was made in Namibia about 27 500 years ago. In South Africa, the oldest rock art we are able to date with authority is 5 700 years old.

Most of these prehistoric paintings and engravings were created by San hunter-gatherers, a semi-nomadic people. Thanks to their descendants such as the Kalahari, Drakensberg and Karoo San, we have been able to decipher much of the meaning and symbolism behind these early artworks.

Their forefathers would often adorn their caves and rock shelters with striking images of animals and humans. This was not merely to make pretty pictures - in painting these beasts, the ancient San were depicting their religious beliefs and spiritual practices.

The San’s central religious rite was the trance dance. Imagine, if you will, a shaman or medicine man dancing around a ceremonial fire to fall into a trance so that he could harness the supernatural powers he needed to enter the spirit world.

The eland, the San believed, was /Kaggen’s (God’s) favourite animal, and the one with the most supernatural potency. And so, in the shaman’s trance state, he would try to channel the power of the sacred eland to heal the sick.
Although perhaps the most prolific, the San were not the only indigenous “rock stars” of early Southern African art. Engravings and paintings by Bantu speakers and Khoi herders dating back some 2000 years have also been found, commonly featuring geometric designs, finger dots and handprints. Later, during the Iron Age, farmers would create images of humans and animals, and scenes of everyday life.

We are fortunate to have access to archaeological discoveries that convey this wealth and breadth of artistic expression, allowing us to glimpse what our ancestors at the tip of Africa were thinking, believing and experiencing many millennia ago.

Dr Tammy Hodgskiss-Reynard is the curator of the Origins Centre Museum in Johannesburg. As part of the Wonders of Rock Art: Lascaux Cave and Africa, she curated the Dawn of Art exhibition in partnership with RARI, IFAS-Recherche and Sci-Bono Discovery Centre. Featured alongside the Lascaux International Exhibition, the Dawn of Art exhibition aims to open up dialogue between African and European rock art and Stone Age heritage.

Their forefathers would often adorn their caves and rock shelters with striking images of animals and humans. This was not merely to make pretty pictures – in painting these beasts, the ancient San were depicting their religious beliefs and spiritual practices.
INTRODUCTION
PROF. DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS
MORE TO ROCK ART THAN MEETS THE EYE

What makes the Lascaux cave so different from Southern African rock art?

They differ perhaps most fundamentally in that most of the French Palaeolithic art is underground in deep caves, and in some of the caves you go for a kilometre before you come to the images, crawling and squeezing to get there. Many of the caves are very difficult to access and are protected from the weather, whereas in South Africa the paintings are in open rock shelters. But then there are points of similarity: in both instances, the painters selected certain animals. Here in South Africa, it was the eland, the rhebok or the kudu. In France, it was the bison and the horse in particular.

Another difference is that we have no record of the beliefs and customs of the people who made the paintings in the French caves. By contrast, in South Africa we have comprehensive records of what the people believed. If you are going to say something about the meaning of South African rock art, you have to base it on what the San people themselves said and believed, not on what you might believe about art.

What were your impressions when you visited the original Lascaux cave?

Of all the French caves, it is the best preserved and has the densest number of images in a comparatively small space. One is struck by the beauty of the images and the astounding preservation; they look as if they were painted yesterday. And here they are, 17 000 years old! You want to pinch yourself. Many people I know who are not necessarily rock art people say that it was a life-changing experience.

Is there a South African rock art site that has left a long-lasting impression on you?

The Game Pass Shelter at Kamberg in the Drakensberg. That is where I began to see what was going on in the paintings, and they are not just trivial. They are the best preserved and the most striking paintings in South Africa, and they are also the most interesting - fortunately. There is so much happening, with people and animals interacting. I think that Lascaux is like that, too.

Professor Emeritus David Lewis-Williams is a world-renowned South African archaeologist at the Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand. He says: “The coming of the Lascaux International Exhibition to South Africa would be a real eye-opener for people who have been used to only San rock art to see this contrast in their minds.”

DID YOU KNOW?
The South African coat of arms features a San rock art image at its centre. David Lewis-Williams was invited to translate the new motto into the now-extinct /Xam San language.

“ke e: xarra ke” means: “People who are different come together.”
INTERVIEW

DR LAURENT BRUXELLES
CAVES AS TIME CAPSULES

How did the Lascaux cave form, and why did it remain closed to the outside world for 17 000 years?
The formation of the Lascaux cave is the result of a long geological evolution. First, a slow weathering of limestone took place over millions of years. When the valley of the local river began to deepen, underground water circulation occurred and the softest parts of the rock were removed due to erosion. Galleries progressively grew bigger and continued to expand above the groundwater table level. When the water dried up, galleries became fossilised. Later, as the valley grew bigger, the slope overlapped with the fossil section. The entrance was formed through the collapsing of the vault (or roof), which had become fragile. Earth accumulated gradually and clogged the entrance approximately 17 000 years ago. People of Palaeolithic times were therefore able to explore the cave before it closed naturally again.

Why are those traces often so well-preserved?
Caves are excellent environments for preservation. Their darkness and their extraordinary climatic stability enable them to act as genuine coffers. Caves are protected from exterior factors like rain, wind or sun, and are sometimes isolated from the outside world through a natural enclosing of the entrance. This way, traces of the slightest clay footprints or the most delicate charcoal drawings, or even objects on the ground, like in the Chauvet cave (France), remain behind. Caves are time capsules in which time is frozen for tens of thousands of years. The caves protect these otherwise temporary traces – scenes from real life – which we, in turn, are able to discover almost entirely intact. Many decorated caves are yet to be discovered and are treasures for future generations.

Only 50 kilometres outside Johannesburg are the caves of the Cradle of Humankind; why are they so important for the study of our origins?
When a cave is intersected by its surface, materials from outside will accumulate inside it: soil, pebbles, plant material, as well as bones of animals and of our ancestors, the ancient hominids. These sedimentary accumulations form steep slopes at the base of the cave entrances, much like sand in an hourglass. For four million years, the caves at the Cradle of Humankind have created successive openings. They trapped material and recorded everything that happened in the outside world. Between four million and two million years ago, the genus Homo, our genus, appeared. Studying and dating the sedimentary fill of these caves now enables us to write a new timeline for the evolution of humankind. These sites are of an unparalleled richness, as illustrated by Little Foot: this female Australopithecus fell to her death in Sterkfontein cave 3.67-million years ago and her body never moved! Her body mummified, then her bones became stone and, thanks to the Sterkfontein cave acting as a time capsule, we can now study a fossil that is complete up to 95%, which will revolutionise our view of our ancestors!

Currently a senior researcher at IFAS-Recherche (Johannesburg), Dr Laurent Bruxelles is a geomorphologist and geo-archaeologist at INRAP (Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives) and associated to GAES (School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, Wits University).
The discovery of the Lascaux cave paintings in the Dordogne region of south-western France is, above all, a fabulous story of four teenage boys: Marcel Ravidat and his three friends, Jacques Marsal, Simon Coencas and Georges Agniel, who on 12 September 1940 discovered, by chance, what would come to be named the Lascaux cave.

After his dog fell into a crevice, 18-year-old Marcel decided to explore it with the help of his three companions. Their treasure hunt ended in the Lascaux cave. They became the first people to enter a cave that had been closed off from the outside world for about 17,000 years.

In this protected shelter, the cave paintings had been exceptionally well preserved, which is why it is considered not only a treasure for the global scientific community but also a masterpiece of human creation. From an aesthetic point of view, the prehistoric artworks went on to greatly inspire and influence modern art.

With its precious Stone Age art placed at risk by a deluge of visitors, the cave was closed to the public in 1963. In order to display this valuable World Heritage Site without causing further damage to the cave, a replica of the original cave, called Lascaux II, was opened to the public in 1983. Here, the replicated artworks are dramatically illuminated as visitors explore the cave with torches.

To share its universal value with the world, a travelling exhibition - Lascaux III or the Lascaux International Exhibition - was created in 2012. Now, sophisticated artistic techniques and cutting-edge technology have enabled experts to recreate an even more detailed and interactive life-sized replica of this prehistoric wonder. In 2016, a new state-of-the-art museum, the International Centre for Cave Art - also known as Lascaux IV - opened its doors in the small town of Montignac in Dordogne.

**THE LASCAUX CAVE - FACTS**

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1 million visitors between 1948 and 1963
The Lascaux II replica cave opens in 1983.

The latest replica, Lascaux IV, opens in 2016.

Featuring 2,000 prehistoric figures about 600 animal figures mainly horses, deer, cows and bison, bears and felines, woolly rhinoceros and one human.

500,000 visitors per year at Lascaux IV.

More than 2 million visitors since 2012.

12 destinations without any interruption.

Peak number of visitors: more than 12,000 per day in China and more than 7,000 in Japan.

Places the exhibition has been:
- Belgium, Brussels, 2014-2015
- USA, Chicago, 2013
- USA, Houston, 2013-2014
- France, Paris, 2015
- Belgium, Brussels, 2014-2015
- Switzerland, Geneva, 2015-2016
- South Africa, Johannesburg, 2018
- Canada, Montreal, 2014
- South Korea, Gwangmyeong, 2016
- Japan, Fukuoka, 2017
- Japan, Tohoku, 2017
- China, Shanghai, 2017-2018
- Japan, Tokyo, 2016-2017
- Japan, Tohoku, 2017

The cave is closed to the public in 1963.

The cave is listed as an official UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

The Lascaux II replica cave opens in 1983.

The latest replica, Lascaux IV, opens in 2016.

13 destinations without any interruption.

500,000 visitors per year at Lascaux IV.

2,000 prehistoric figures about 600 animal figures mainly horses, deer, cows and bison, bears and felines, woolly rhinoceros and one human.
**INTERVIEW**

**DR CAMILLE BOURDIER**
**SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS OF THE LASCAUX CAVE ART**

What do the Lascaux paintings tell us about the spiritual world of prehistoric European hunter-gatherer populations?

While the Lascaux art shows a selection of very dynamic animals, it is not a faithful image of reality. In European Paleolithic rock art, the motifs are not randomly chosen. They focus on a few animal species, particularly large herbivores. Landscapes, the sky and stars, and the mineral and botanical worlds are missing. Humans and their material world (their objects and habitats) are also barely present. Where humans are present, they are portrayed with simplistic or grotesque features, like the “bird man” in Lascaux’s famous “Shaft Scene”.

The animal depictions are not randomly arranged on the walls, either. There are rules of composition, notably in the “Hall of the Bulls”, where images of three main species - horse, bovine, deer - illustrate three different seasons - spring, summer, autumn - and were made in chronological order.

The Lascaux rock art is an exquisite expression of the symbolic and spiritual world of these past populations of hunter-gatherers, and how they perceived the human world through animals.

What makes the Lascaux cave unique?

Numerous European Palaeolithic rock art sites strike the viewer with the beauty and the technical mastery of their painted, drawn, engraved or sculpted images. Examples of this are the Altamira, Chauvet, Niaux, Font-de-Gaume, Foz Coa and Roc-aux-Sorciers sites. However, Lascaux remains unique in the profusion of its motifs - several thousand paintings and engravings - and the splendour of its multicoloured images. Such a profusion of colours and shades has not been seen in other prehistoric rock art.

These early humans had to make different technical choices to apply the paint according to each rock’s constraints. Scaffolds were used to reach the upper part of the walls and the vaults, for example. Such complexity highlights an astonishingly high level of technical savoir-faire, making the Lascaux cave one of the great masterpieces of humanity.

Dr Camille Bourdier is a prehistorian and associate professor at the TRACES UMR 5608 research laboratory at the Toulouse-Jean Jaurès University, and researcher at the Institut Universitaire de France. She is currently running a five-year research project on rock art in Zimbabwe called Matobart, alongside specialists from Zimbabwe, South Africa and France.
EXPERIENCING THE LASCAUX EXHIBITION

A fully immersive and interactive experience

State-of-the-art technology is used to replicate and highlight the cave paintings

Art meets science to bring the Lascaux cave to life

Children can get creative in an ochre painting workshop

Children can marvel and explore the wonders of Lascaux and rock art
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The Wonders of Rock Art: Lascaux Cave and Africa
Sci-Bono Discovery Centre, Johannesburg
17 May to 1 October 2018

The Wonders of Rock Art: Lascaux Cave and Africa exhibition features:

The Lascaux International Exhibition
This exhibition was created by the Departmental Council of Dordogne, with support provided by the Regional Council of Nouvelle Aquitaine, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the European Union. The worldwide tour of the Lascaux exhibition is organised by the SPL Lascaux International Exhibition.

The Dawn of Art
This exhibition was curated by Tammy Hodgskiss-Reynard (Origins Centre), Sam Challis (Rock Art Research Institute), Catherine Namono (Rock Art Research Institute), John Parkington (University of Cape Town), David Pearce (Rock Art Research Institute) and Thomas Vernet-Habasque (IFAS-Recherche), and was designed by Grafix Corner and Stuart Hopwood (Sci-Bono).

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The artist Celeste Theron was commissioned to paint a mural for children, celebrating imagery from Lascaux and Southern African rock art, for the Wonders of Rock Art exhibition.