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Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: **Ways of Perceiving (ADDA4023/C)**

Task: Curate an exhibition = 1,600 words

Graffiti throughout history.

This exhibition has been curated to showcase graffiti and its comparison to cave art looking at prehistoric art and modern-day graffiti, seeing how the way we communicate now and then, what impacts we make on the world by leaving our marks on stone to historic art pieces from millions of years ago.

Each piece in this exhibition has a different story a different timeline and makes us look at the 'vandalism' we create could become history in the next couple of centuries down the line. And looking at both post modernism and modernism perspectives.



Fig 1 (*Dan Yr Ogof Showcaves, 2025*)

This exhibition is showcasing in Dan yr ogof Showcaves, the exhibition venue is an excellent setting because Dan Yr Ogof Showcaves are well known for its historical value and display of geological importance in the area which would add to the aesthetic attraction which includes caves, stone circles, modern technology and animals. This will bring the past alive to the visitors will help them appreciate the exhibition within an ancient setting, and it'll help the viewers compare from prehistoric events to modern day.



Fig 2, (Panel of the Rhinos, Chauvet Cave (Replica). (2017).

This will be the first image that the audience will see, Replica of the Panel of the Rhinos from Chauvet Cave. This Cave art is around c.33,000-c.30,000 years, the artists of this cave belonged to the Aurignacian culture, this art piece is one of the oldest prehistoric pieces in human history.

This is a unique snapshot of people's lives at the time and what they saw around them, we hardly have much knowledge of the time, and this is the only depiction of life as it was then and what they could see around them; animals, wilderness and the general environment. We can see different shades of colours in this painting these colours brown, red yellow and black (were commonly used around that time,) which gives us a different insight on art materials surrounding them.

There are many different symbols, marks, and meanings behind it; to communicate with other humans and other beings which is exactly the same as modern day graffiti is used. This piece makes a viewer think from the way it's communicated have we really developed, changed or evolved ourselves from prehistoric times from looking at the links from this piece to modern day graffiti. Will we be studied in the future just

as others study prehistoric times now? Will studies be different because of the technology we use, or will our art be forgotten just as these artists of Chauvet Caves?

Graffiti art is anonymous it makes us think differently because it creates a different view point to others art made by 'outlaws' which really this art shows every day affairs, politics, diseases, and those who aren't seen by the media to be seen in everyday life, and for politics to be shown on walls without censorship. This 'vandalism' displays real-life historical events that are happening right now just as those cave paintings are drawn.

I think by showing this first, the viewers' thoughts can think of it being a 'normal' painting but their opinion of this will change towards the end of the exhibition.

Soulages, P. (n.d.). *'That's how I started thinking about art. It's fascinating to think that as soon as man came into existence, he started painting.'*

Soulages, P. (n.d.). *'I have always revolted against this foolishly evolutionary conception of art, which leads one to believe that there are at first awkward gropings, then that technique becomes more and more skilful and mastered, and that finally we arrive at the apotheosis of a perfectly imitative art. It must be said and repeated: there is no progress in art, only techniques that are perfected and which can lead you where you do not want to go. The painters of Lascaux or Chauvet brought art to a summit from the very start.'*

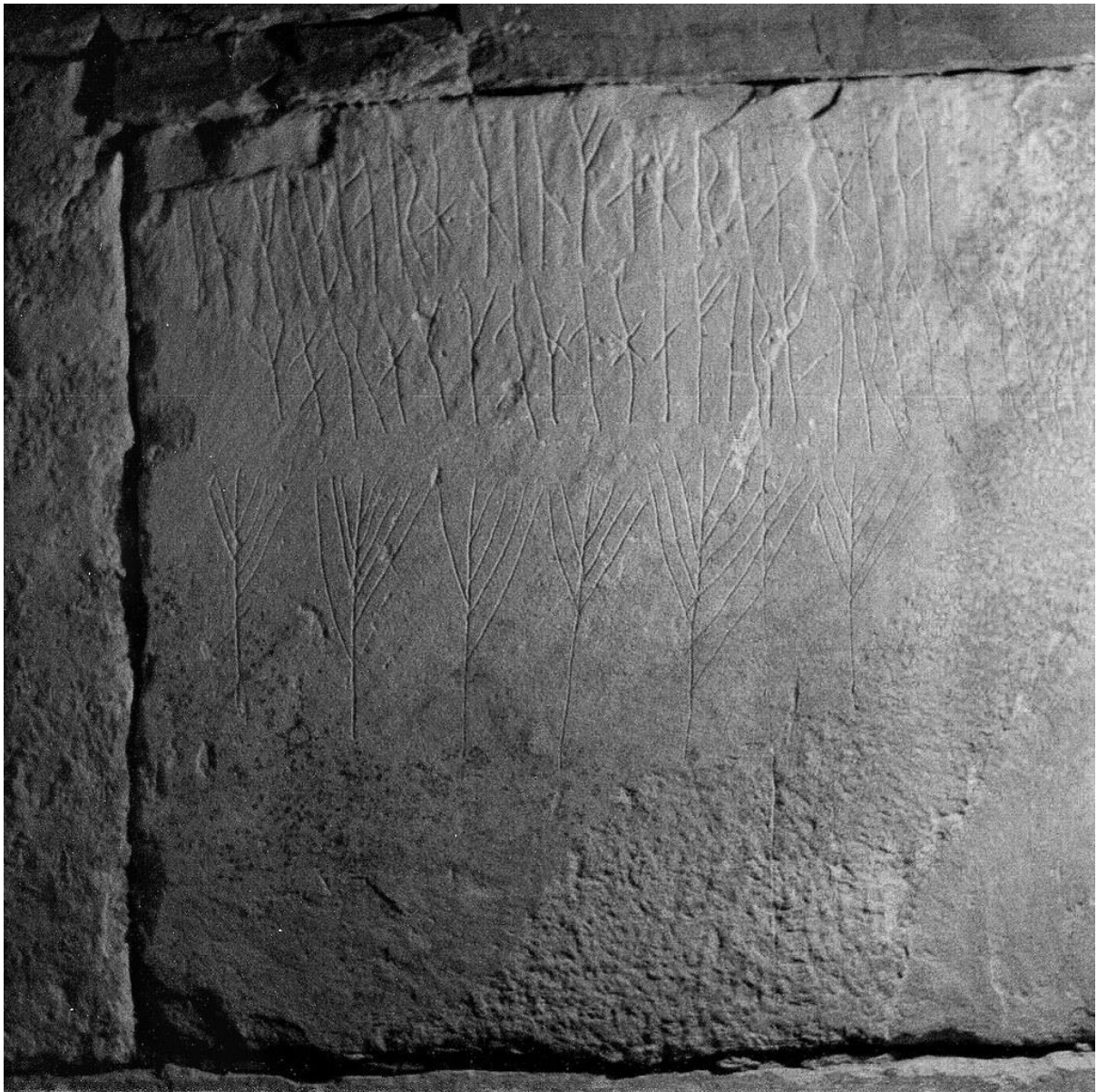


Fig 3, (McBey (n.d.). Old Norse runic inscriptions found in the otherwise Neolithic burial.)

The next piece to be shown is an inscription found in a Neolithic burial, which makes us think; 'Norse Graffiti: Vandalism or Historical Treasure?' (Paganheim, (2024). At first glance as a viewer looking at this piece, it seems that it's been scribbled down by a teenager in the middle of a busy city. However, this is not the case; this art piece dates back to the 12th century, which is called 'The walls of Maeshowe' and bears over 30 runic inscriptions. Similarly to the Chauvet Caves, it gives us a glimpse of what these young Vikings' minds and lives were like hundreds of years ago.

This could suggest that human communication and expression has not really changed since this time period as they have been written by the same material that current modern young

people use today, for example, you may find similar material in toilets, train tracks, underneath bridges, or a tunnel these written materials resonate with these runes. The factor that has changed is that they are written in runes, in today's society graffiti is usually written and drawn in spray paint.

Some of the inscriptions out of the thirty were *"Ingigerth is the most beautiful of all women"* This was carved alongside a rough drawing of a slaving dog *"Is to me said that treasure is here hidden very well," 'Hakon alone bore the great treasure out of the mound' 'Ofra the son of Sigurd carved these runes' 'Haermund Hardaxe carved these runes' 'Tholfir Kolbeinsson carved these runes high up' 'Arnfitr Matr carved these runes with this axe owned by Gauk Trandilsson in the South land'.*

Paganheim (n.d.). *'They add layers of history and humanity to the ancient stones, bridging the gap between the Neolithic builders and our modern era.'*

Similarly to the inscriptions from the Vikings modern day graffiti has similar inscriptions, which can be regularly seen throughout a day's walk, you might find lettering or many different art styles spread on walls. They might say something rude or they might say something on the lines of *'(name) was here'* or *'I'm in love with (name)'* there may even be explicit drawings that are engraved onto these walls too.

These two comparisons are clear that not much has changed throughout the impact that graffiti from modern day or from the Viking days. More or less the only things that have changed is the fact that those are in Norse (old norweigan) and today's age is in English.



Fig 4, (National Trust (n.d.). Daisy wheel witch mark, Canons Abbey.)

This is a very old graffiti symbol of protection against evil, demons, the devil, and witchcraft this was carved into the building to protect occupants by demons or witches. Ritual marks are often found in entrances, thresholds, and 'portals' of buildings one of the most popular is this Daisy mark which was easier to carve into walls and more recognisable than other protection marks.

Dommett, T. (n.d.). 'So often these are the stories of people forgotten by history but finally revealed again through archaeology.'

This is another example of 'vandalism' that is now considered historical similar to other graffiti artists this artist is also unknown and is a standing art piece for people seen by the forgotten and people of now.



Fig 5, (Soulages, P. (1949). Walnut Shell)

For this piece, Pierre Soulages was inspired by the world's prehistoric art he looked at Neolithic menhirs, standing stones, and some of the oldest caves in Europe to the 20,000 year old cave paintings in nearby Lascaux and Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc.

Soulages, P. (n.d.). *'I have always revolted against this foolishly evolutionary conception of art which leads one to believe that there are at first awkward gropings, then that technique becomes more and more skillful and mastered, and that finally we arrive at the apotheosis of a perfectly imitative art. It must be said and repeated: there is no progress in art, only techniques that are perfected and which can lead you where you do not want to go. The painters of Lascaux or Chauvet brought art to a summit from the very start.'*

Pierre Soulage's art is heavily influenced by cave paintings, they are wild and direct it has a mix of both contemporary and ancient. Usually in cave paintings the palettes they used to use was a mixture of different powders which created colours like black, yellow ochre, red ochre, and white. Pierre Soulage's palette is similar to this he uses reds, blacks, and ochres.



Fig 6 (Banksy (2006). Cave Painting Removal.)

This final piece exhibited conveys a message of both a mixture of modern-day and prehistoric history. Prehistoric art is very precious to humans because we only have that art to show what prehistoric times were like. In this picture, the worker is spraying over 'vandalism' and he's cleaning the area of this ancient art. By comparing graffiti with ancient prehistoric art, it screams that what the worker is doing is destroying our history, this is like today, where we can't fully express ourselves because it's considered vandalism. Banksy covers his face, and his identity is unknown similar to how cave artists is unknown because there is never any faces revealed throughout cave art, apart from hands or the wilderness, in years to come Banky's art will be remembered but his identity will never be revealed. Are we the same as we were marking current affairs as prehistoric people or have, we changed?

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