

History of Cave Paintings

The oldest painting claimed to have been found is one of some hands in Indonesia. It is believed to be nearly 44,000 years old.

Cave paintings that have been found in Europe are younger and mostly from the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age.

By then people had begun painting animals and hunters. Horses, stags, cattle, bison, bears, rhinoceros were often painted.

Paintings have been found all over the world including Europe, Asia, North and South Africa and South America and Australia.

negative stencil

A method of blocking an area to prevent it from being covered by paint.

charcoal

Wood that has been burnt.

carbon dioxide

A gas that we breathe out via our lungs which produces acid when it gets damp.

powder

A dry substance that has been ground up into tiny particles.

moss

A small leafy plant that grows in moist shady places.



How they were painted...

Cave artists ground up coloured rocks into a **powder**. They used *yellow ochre* and *red oxide* rocks as well as **charcoal**. This **powder** was mixed to a paste using spit, water or animal fat which helped the paint stick to the cave walls. Stone Age artists used their fingers, as well as twigs and **moss** and horsehair brushes to dab paint on the cave walls.

Cave Paintings Lascaux, France

In 1940, a cave was discovered in Lascaux, France by a teenager and his three friends. The paintings were dated to be in between 15,000 BCE and 17,000 BCE and could therefore be nearly 20,000 years old. The caves had to be closed to the public in the 1960s as the **carbon dioxide** in the visitor's breath was causing damage to the pictures.

Cave of the Hands, Argentina

In this painting the artists used their hand as a **negative stencil** and then blew the paint through a piece of bone or a hollow reed to create this effect. This painting is thought to be at least 9,000 years old.



