5-2023

Reconsidering Gender and Social Constructs in Prehistoric Cave Art: The Role of Women in Creating Art

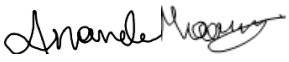
Amanda Mooney

RECONSIDERING GENDER AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS IN PREHISTORIC CAVE ART: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CREATING ART

By Amanda Mooney

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in
Art History and Visual
Culture At
Lindenwood University

Author's Name	Date
Amanda Mooney	May 3, 2023



Author's Signature

Committee Chair	Date
Sarah Cantor	May 4, 2023

Committee Chair Signature

Committee Member	Date
Stefanie Snider	5/4/2023

Committee Member Signature

Committee Member	Date
James Hutson	5/5/23

Committee Member Signature

RECONSIDERING GENDER AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS IN PREHISTORIC CAVE ART: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CREATING ART

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the College of Arts and Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master Art in Art History and Visual Culture
at
Lindenwood University

By

Amanda Mooney

Saint Charles, Missouri

May 2023

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Reconsidering Gender and Social Constructs in Prehistoric Cave Art: The Role of Women in Creating Art

Amanda Mooney, Master of Art, 2023

Thesis Directed by: Committee Chair, Dr. Sarah Cantor

This thesis reviews the importance of Prehistoric Cave Art and the partial basis of its creation, including some ways in which gender and society of the time influenced and led to the creation of said art, with a considerable focus on the devaluation that women have faced as artists in prehistory. The timeframe under consideration follows the Upper Paleolithic period, which covers 50,000 years ago to 10,000 years ago. Reviewing images from certain cave art in this time period of 50,000 years ago to 10,000 years ago, and recent scholarship allows for a specific look into the assumptions of who created these works and for a chance at analyzing the reality of the various works of cave art. In examining the relationship between cave art and other art found in various places around the world, an interpretation of gender roles can be made when viewing the stylistic differences and similarities in these paintings that have been found in natural settings. The roles played by different genders might be difficult to understand from this time period, as there is no absolute way to know who created the art, why, or how. This thesis examines previous findings under Western views based on European and American traditions and works to reconsider the findings and understandings of said view through a feminist methodology, providing an equal viewing of men and women in prehistory.

Keywords: Prehistoric, Cave, Art, Paleolithic, Gender

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my Committee Chair, Dr. Sarah Cantor, and my Committee members, Dr. James Hutson and Dr. Stefanie Snider, for their invaluable assistance in pursing the construction and completion of my thesis. The patience and feedback given have been more than generous and helpful.

I am also grateful to the professors, writing assistants, librarians, and classmates that I have worked with during this all. The advice, editing assistance, and support was beyond needed and appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their positive words of encouragement throughout this difficult and creative endeavor.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Prehistoric art of the Upper Paleolithic period dates back to around 50,000 years ago and ends about 10,000 years ago. The artwork has been observed and questioned as early back as 1895 with descriptions of rock and cave shelters in France and Italy that detailed some of the art found within.[1] In initial questioning of the art, mostly figurines, the idea of why it was constructed was unable to be answered. Even now, there is not a single answer that explains why or how or who created the art. The best that exists are educated guesses based off data and formulated assumptions. It is important to consider the roles that different genders played in the creation of prehistoric art, using a feminist methodological approach that helps provide a more comprehensive and equal understanding of said art.[2] When considering that art at times might have been crafted for ceremony sake, it is also important to consider the possibility of art made by children, as age was often a reason for a rite of passage.

Prehistoric is relating to times which predate recorded history.[3] Because of this, there is no absolute way to know what happened in prehistoric times. Assumptions can and have been made, based off of data collected and sites viewed. Prehistoric art does not include signatures or dates by those who created the works of art. Prehistoric art is something that was made during prehistory, but exists without record as to who created it or when it was done. Thankfully, due to scientific innovation, the dating is the easier to uncover aspect of prehistoric art. The difficult part comes from trying to determine just who made the art itself.

---

[1] LeRoy McDermott. "Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines." *Current Anthropology* 37, no. 2 (1996): 227-75. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2744349.

[2] For a review over distinguishing differences between sex and gender, see Rose McDermott et al., "Distinguishing Sex and Gender." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44, no. 1 (2011): 89–92. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40984490.

[3] Oscar Moro Abadia et al., "Paleolithic Art: A Cultural History." *Journal of Archaeological Research* 21, no. 3 (2013): 269–306. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42635583.

The information throughout this thesis conveys the relation, or lack thereof, between assumed gender norms and actualities in prehistoric times. The review of art in this thesis will begin with a work of art dating around 10,000 years ago, while originally thought to be only 2,000 years ago. This thesis will also include art from around 22,000 years ago, and around 2,000 years ago. The range of prehistory here will include mostly the Upper Paleolithic period, but at the high end will not surpass 30,000 years ago, unless otherwise stated.

Adding a more comprehensive overview to some of the biases in society allows for a more educated approach to be taken with consideration being given to either side of assumed biases. Thus, using a feminist methodology on top of the scholarship allows for a balanced viewing of who men and women were as creators in prehistory and of what they could do in a time without complete historical record. This will allow for a broader understanding of genders that include information on different identities, as well as allow the understanding of the place that children and adolescence held during these times.

Prehistoric parietal art was made by a myriad of individuals throughout time.[4] For the sake of this paper, the review of art dates back to around 30,000 years ago. While there is limited knowledge on what societies were exactly like during these prehistoric times, often due to a lack of living ancestry and recorded history, the information that remains allows for a slight look into the lives and creations of the time, such as the variety of prehistoric art left behind in caves across the world. This thesis works to review the actualities in current and previous scholarship that shows different perspectives on which gender created the parietal art found 30,000 years

[4] For more information over defining parietal art, see Carole Fritz et al., "The Hidden Meaning of Forms: Methods of Recording Paleolithic Parietal Art." *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14, no. 1 (2007): 48–80. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20177552.

ago. Parietal art, for a better sake of understanding, is art that often includes paintings and drawings on the interior of caves or rock, also often referred to plainly as cave art.[5]

The first work of art and likely the most notable to this topic, is Cuevas de las Manos (fig. 1), or Cave of the Hands.[6] This cave filled with art was found about thirty-five miles east of Bajo Caracoles in the canyons of Rio Pinturas, Argentina.[7] While the exact age is unknown, the period that discoverers dated this art back to originally was at least 2,000 years prior to the year of discovery, per Thomas M. Brown.[8] As the name implies, the cave is filled with handprints and hand stencils crafted by using a pigment blown through a pipe or pipe-like-tool to give the striking outline of said hands. Something also noted by Brown is that these outlines, while in the hundreds, mostly consist of the left hand.

Another work of art worthy of being mentioned is referred to as The Spotted Horses (fig. 2), found in the Pech Merle cave in France, dating back to around 22,000 years ago. This art was likely by the Gravettians; however, in the immediate area of this cave, other art is associated to the Solutrean culture, having been dated to 19,000 years ago.[9] The Gravettians were an Upper Paleolithic culture, found throughout Europe and the Solutreans were another culture of a slight difference in time, identified by a pattern of leaf-shaped stone implements. The artwork here is not limited to the drawings of the horses, as it also includes handprints and other animals, like bison and horses. This painting is worth noting for the sake of better understanding who exactly worked on this section of prehistoric art.

---

[5] "Definition of Parietal Art in Art History." Bluebox Creighton Education. Accessed January 31, 2023, https://bluebox.creighton.edu/demo/modules/en-boundless-old/www.boundless.com/definition/parietal-art/index.html.

[6] See Figure 1.

[7] Thomas M. Brown. "Cave of the Hands." *Archaeology* 43, no. 3 (1990): 10. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765825.

[8] Ibid.

[9] See Figure Two.

Another section of cave art discovered in 1991 by Henri Cosquer is in a cave that has displays of prehistoric art throughout its walls, not just in one section; the Cosquer Cave (fig. 3) was printed with a range of art from more hand stencils to paintings of horses, antelope, bison, and other animals. It has a vast amount of space being occupied and was likely created by more than one person in its time of creation.[10] While filled with viewable art once down below, it originally took a dive by Cosquer to get down to this cave and to view the work on its walls, because the original entry to this cave is now placed at around 115 feet below our current sea levels.

Finally, a review of the Chauvet Cave (fig. 4) in France will help add to the study of this paper. According to Jean Clottes, the original entry to this cave that was used by the prehistoric creators of art has since been blocked off due to natural forces, like wind erosion, flooding, and general dismantling of nature.[11] The Brunel Chamber is where the current entrance to the cave leads, which is a striking size of around 130 feet wide and almost 100 feet high. The part worth noting is the expanse of art found within this cave system, which extends to around 1,300 feet in total length. Multiple chambers and galleries were found within, depicting things from people to animals to plants and more, with each section of the cave having its own name to help identify the location being referred to while studying.[12] Much of the art dates to the Upper Paleolithic period, around 30,000 years ago, while some of the visits by Clottes and their team indicate findings of art from around 23,000 years ago.[13] There are several chambers within the cave

[10] Jean Clottes et al., "Stone Age Gallery-by-the-Sea." *Archaeology* 46, no. 3 (1993): 37-43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41766360 and see Figure Three. Jean Clottes is an archaeologist and French prehistorian. And Paul Bahn is an archaeologist and writer.

[11] Jean Clottes, *Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times*. (Salt Lake City: University Of Utah Press, 2003) and see Figure Four.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

system that have different animals and human figures drawn on the cave walls. The Chamber of the Bear Hollows is about 26,900 square feet with a single piece of cave art toward the end, described as a circle of red pigment. Another section in the cave, The Alcove of the Yellow Horses, was painted with art representative of horses in a yellow pigment. Overall, there were many power animals throughout the entire cave system, such as bears and rhinoceroses and mammoths.[14] Aside from normal animal depictions, Clottes concluded that several animals were created with human characteristics and in association with images of what was assumed to be female thighs.[15] With such a large amount of art to view, this cave provides a large contribution to the study of prehistoric art and the creators who gave us what we now see. One sample found included a footprint, identified as having belonged to an adolescent, one that might have been male or female.[16]

Cueva de las Manos (fig. 1) and The Spotted Horses of Pech Merle (fig. 2) serve to represent an attempt at understanding whether the parietal art was crafted by women, men, or both. In the Cave of the Hands, there are hundreds of stencils of people's hands that were created by pressing them against the cave wall and blowing pressed pigment around them, creating the stencil mark on the wall. The stencils above the Spotted Horses of Pech Merle appear to have been crafted in the same manner, as they are also stencils made around hands and not just handprints pressed to the cave wall. Between both images, there are hundreds of hand stencils that all seem to relate closely in size to one another, likely the creation of many different

[14] Jean Clottes detailed that power animals were those that were rarely or never hunted in prehistoric times. Further, he estimated that 75% of all of the painted rhinoceroses known in Upper Paleolithic cave art occurred within the Chauvet Cave system.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

individuals. Both sites also have hand stencils found at various heights, pointing to the same possibility that this art was likely crafted by multiple people of varying heights themselves.

The Cosquer Cave (fig. 3) and Chauvet Cave systems, (figs. 4) represent more diversity in parietal art. The Cosquer Cave, found mostly though an underwater dive, shows images of animals painted along the cave walls. This image (fig. 3) shows the depiction of an animal that was likely sought after by the individuals of the time.[17] This painting of a ram or ram-like animal was something found in areas around or inside the cave system, which is likely one of the reasons it was painted on the walls.[18] This image serves as an example of what was crafted but not of who crafted it, as the cave sites were not found to hold any physical representation of the artists. The Chauvet Cave art (fig, 4) which also contains part of a parietal painting of an animal, includes the artistic depiction of what appears to be the female pubic area, connected to the bison animal above it.[19] The image itself was created at around six feet above floor level, and while there is no way to say who it was that did it, all the drawings of pubic areas surrounding it are crafted in the same way and mimic each other in artistic similarity and anatomy.[20] There is a possibility that these images were done by a single woman or group of women representing their own bodies thousands of years ago.

The overall point of this thesis is to analyze and better understand the roles played by different genders in the creation of art throughout prehistoric times while considering prehistoric art from 30,000 years ago to works found to have been done more recently, around 2,000 years

---

[17] Jean Clottes, Cave Beneath the Sea. (Harry N. Abrams Incorportated, 1996).

[18]Ibid.

[19] Clottes, *Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times,* 167 – 170.

[20] Because prehistoric art exists without record of who created it, why it exists, or what it represents, most interpretations of the art are based around assumptions. Prehistoric art is often up for debate when it comes to determining what specific shapes and art might represent, such as many thinking triangles represent pubic regions of women and ovals sitting together representing breasts.

ago. Artists of a time without recorded history are an enigma in and of themselves, and while they might not be completely understood, they can at the very minimum be brought to a better understanding. The goal here is to continue without biased assumptions made by society or reconstructions of history.

The concept of gender is a tricky one to understand completely and the variations of such are unknown during prehistory. In considering this, the thesis refers to genders and identities in tune with the scholarship or art, as it is mentioned. This means portions of the paper will refer to the concept of genders accepted at the times the scholarship was written, but should not act as a comprehensive overview of what gender, masculinity, femininity, and biological sex actually mean to the author - there is no intent within this paper to dehumanize another being's existence or beliefs. Gender is not clear cut in one manner and thus should be viewed with an open mind while considering the extent that men, women, and others have played a part in the artistic recording of history throughout the prehistoric era. Due to the information in this thesis being based around Western European and American views, the spectrum of gender is being simplified to relate biological sexual characteristics more easily to a specific spectrum of gender.[21]

[21] McDermott, "Distinguishing Sex and Gender."

Literature Review and Methodology

Literature Review

To understand the role of gender in artistic production created some 50,000 years ago, a study has been done of the known and assumed implications of gender and art in this time, under Western views based on European and American traditions. There is still much to be learned about prehistory and the possibility of all genders as creators of art, but the following scholarship serves as a starting point of discussion and exploration of gender in said prehistoric art. The scholarship that includes both gender and the prehistoric art as a combination of study exists from individuals like Pamela Geller.[22] Dean Snow's article from 2013 explored the extent of the dimorphic differences in male and female hand sizes, based around an original study done by John Manning.[23] Snow's article mimics a similar understanding to the work done by Michel Schmidt-Chevalier in 1981, though Schmidt-Chevalier takes on more of an opinionated approach than that of Snow.[24]

Outside of a study that includes gender and prehistoric art, some relevant scholarship also includes information from sources like Jean Clottes, Paul Bahn, and others who contributed in 2003 to the creation of a book that explored the extensive amount of art within the Chauvet Cave system.[25] This specific work outlines various types of cave art, depicting animals like bison and

---

[22] Pamela L. Geller, "Identity and Difference: Complicating Gender in Archaeology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38 (2009): 65-81. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20622641. Pamela Geller is an anthropology professor with research and fieldwork overing feminist and queer studies, bio-politics, bioarcheology, and more.

[23] Dean R. Snow, "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art." *American Antiquity* 78, no. 4 (2013): 746-761. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43184971. Dean Snow is an archaeologist with a focus in ethnohistoric and demographic problems.

[24] Michel Schmidt-Chevalier, "Were the Cave Paintings in Southwest France Made by Women?" *Leonardo* 14, no. 4 (1981): 302-303. https://doi.org/10.2307/1574607.

[25] Clottes, *Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times*.

horses, to human figures like triangles representing pubic regions and handprints in various places.

Finally, works about just gender specifically are used to comprehend the idea of gender constructs and possible societal standards in ancient and current times and how these constructs help attribute to an understanding of who was creating art in prehistory. This knowledge is obtained through sources from scholars Julie Solometo and Joshua Moss in their work over reconstructions in National Geographic. The writings over debates on gender with a chapter by Laura Mandell discusses gender and the stereotypes that come from being a woman in society today and in the past.[26] Lastly, Judith Resnik discussed the implications of gender biases throughout different topics, like going from classes to court, which helps with the underlining idea of what society has expected of men and women throughout time because of falsely crafted biases by all.[27]

There are many examples that can be explored when it comes to trying to solve the problem of what gender roles of men and women were during previous eras. To best relate earlier scholarship to the overall topic, it first helps to understand the art from prehistory. The following section is a condensed review of certain scholarship that discusses some prehistoric art that was found from 30,000 years ago to 2,000 years ago, as well as to serve as a brief overview of what is and is not known about certain roles people played in this period. This consists of an analysis of pigment, which is usually a compressed form of powder that has been tinted with

[26] Laura Mandell, "Gender and Cultural Analytics: Finding or Making Stereotypes?" in *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 3-26, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctvg251hk.4. Laura Mandell is a professor with specialties in digital humanities, 18th century literature, and British romanticism and Julie Solometo is an associate professor of anthropology with focuses in archaeology, ethnohistory, and ethnography.

[27] Judith Resnik, "Gender Bias: From Classes to Courts." *Stanford Law Review* 45, no. 6 (1993): 2195-2209, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229145.

something to change the color, and technique, such as stencils to handprints to drawn imagery with various tools.

The first monograph comes from Dale Guthrie who determined that cave paintings shed little light on what the people of prehistory were actually like but noted that the art was possibly a form of self-expression and a perspective of history at the time that it was happening.[28] Toward the early 1900s, Guthrie explains that paleolithic art was being accepted as art for the sake of recording events or interpretations, instead of just existing as art for art's sake, a theory that did not likely apply to art from 30,000 years ago.[29] Although the exact purpose can only be guessed, it was possible that parietal art was being created by religious practitioners for certain purposes or by groups that were going through rites of passages or initiations into different parts of life, like puberty.[30] Another contributor to this area of study is John Parkington, who discusses possible symbolism in parietal art and what that could mean for the people that existed when it was made.[31]

LeRoy McDermott references art that was often thought to have been either symbolic or representative of climate in their time.[32] While McDermott discusses several works of arts from different cave sites across the world, the general type of art he references are figures often known as, “Venus Figurines.” These figurines were considered Upper Paleolithic statuettes of women or

---

[28] Russell Dale Guthrie, *The Nature of Paleolithic Art*. (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2005), https://www.bibliovault.org/BV.book.epl?ISBN=9780226311265. And Dale Guthrie was a professor with specializations in paleoecology and archaeology.

[29] Ibid, 7.

[30] Ibid, 8 – 9.

[31] John Parkington reviewed the possibility of symbolism found in cave art and what those symbols could mean, such as different shapes associate to different animals and whether prehistoric individuals could have had motivation for symbolic art, discussed in John Parkington, “Symbolism in Paleolithic Cave Art.” *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 24, no. 93 (1969): 3-13. https://doi.org/10.2307/3888361.

[32] LeRoy McDermott is a professor with a PhD of Special Studies in Stylistic Pattern Recognition.

female-presenting individuals.[33] While often works of arts carved from tusks or from stone, they depict the details of genitals that women are inherently believed to have, like vaginas and breasts (fig. 9).[34] These recreations of humans were often believed to have been crafted by the women themselves.[35]

John Robb set to answer questions about why certain art was made and by who.[36] He began by discussing how prehistoric art has never been viewed or studied as a whole, rather that individuals with an interest in the art tend to focus on individual works in different areas. Robb discussed the possibility that women and men both created art in Prehistoric Europe, more than 30,000 years ago. The trends of art through different pieces and in various locations is often overlooked because of this and Robb wanted to determine why. He discussed that there were long-term shifts in parietal art, such as it being used for the sake of ritual to being used for the sake of display purposes. Robb also determined that parietal art was often representational imagery, mostly of animals and humans.[37] These images he reviewed of humans were often drawn in the same way animals of the time were, from the side instead of frontally. This art was also sometimes done as depictions of human-animal hybrids. Robb saw that many of the hybrid animal-human art depictions often seem represented as males and the figures that were often just humans, like "Venus statues," had genitalia relating to females.[38]

---

[33] Jessica Liew, "Venus Figurine." World History Encyclopedia, last modified July 10, 2017, https://www.worldhistory.org/Venus_Figurine/.

[34] Figure 9 is believed to represent a woman with a vagina and breasts due to the shape of said genitalia that mimics reality. Ovals sitting beside one another are assumed to be representative of breasts, while the triangular area between the figures thighs is assumed to be representative of the upper vaginal area.

[35] McDermott, "Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines," 227-75.

[36] John Robb, "Prehistoric Art in Europe: A Deep-Time Social History." *American Antiquity* 80, no. 4 (2015): 635-654, https://www.jstor.org.stable/24712796.

[37] Ibid, 645.

[38] John Robb viewed Venus Statues as physical representations of biological females due to sexual characteristics carved in the figures, such as breasts. Ibid, 645-646.

Next, Jean Clottes details the discovery of the Chauvet Cave to 1994 at the hands of speleologists, or people who explore caves, such as Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel, and Christian Hillaire.[39] Due to the nature of the artwork spread throughout the cave system, Clottes and fellow researchers were able to determine certain aspects of the art and human visits to the cave, such as the singular piece of art in the entrance chamber of the cave. Further, the dating of said art is related to the findings of certain drawings in the cave and the marks left by humans which indicate two periods of time that the art was made in Chauvet. The oldest dating is a near 32,000 years ago, this date being discovered by the study of the pictural depictions such as rhinos and cows.[40] Another tested area, which included a panel of drawn horses, allowed for the time frame to be estimated at nearly 26,000 years ago.[41] Human traces left behind were studied in an enclosed environment within the cave to protect the markings, often by using protective gear and lights that would not harm the work that had been left behind by the prehistoric artists of those times. As the cave was discovered, some footprints found near perfectly atop one another led researchers to believe that it was by one individual, not a multitude, in this specific section of the cave.

Aside from the dating of the art, the immense amount of work found within the cave system is another notable feat detailed by Clottes. Several chambers exist within the cave that display different pieces from bison in the end chamber to a gallery of cross-hatching, a method of art shading that is still used in artwork today, in another.[42] Moreover, in this cave system, Clottes notes the collection of triangles drawn together on the cave walls that were often

---

[39] Clottes, *Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times*.

[40] Ibid, 32.

[41] Ibid, 32.

[42] Ibid, 104-128.

interpreted as images of female pubic regions due to similarities in shape, some of which were even attached to animals like bears and bison.[43] The triangular art was crafted in a similar manner, possibly by one artist. Another alternative, detailed in Clottes' work, is that the art could have been done by many people who knew what this pubic region would have looked like, which would explain why the images were painted so similarly to one another.

More work by Clottes reviews The Cosquer Cave system, explored also by Jean Courtin, which consisted of several types of parietal art.[44] According to Clottes and Courtin, the paintings in this cave left a mark on who the human artists were and not just what they were painting. The people of this time lived in a different landscape from what the current area looks like, with different climate and vegetation.[45] While the differences can be discovered, what still remains is the question of who the humans in this setting were. There were no self-portraits or burial sites to be found in Cosquer, which leaves little to prove who was painting the images in the cave. Skeletons found in nearby sites showed structures of humans that were likely hunters of large game and those that created the statuettes of women found throughout the various sites.[46] Clottes went on to remark that these were signs that pointed to complex and elaborate mental lives of the people who painted in these caves.

The next piece, reviewed in an article written by Thomas M. Brown, discussed the depths of what the Cave of the Hands displayed on the walls. Within the writing, however, Brown makes the connection between this cave located in Argentina, to one found on a cliff in Bluff, Utah, United States. The cave in Utah was also riddled with hand outlines – the interesting part is

---

[43] Ibid, 167.

[44] Jean Clottes et al., "Stone Age Gallery-by-the-Sea." *Archaeology* 46, no. 3 (1993): 37-43, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41766360.

[45] Clottes, *Cave Beneath the Sea*, 33.

[46] Ibid, 45.

the excessive amount of right hands on the cliff in Utah but the hands in Argentina seem to be mostly left hands.[47] Brown also went on to point out the varying heights in which the hand stencils adorned the cave walls.

LeRoy McDermott studied the possibility that prehistoric artwork, specifically in the Upper Paleolithic Period, might have been crafted by the individual that the artwork depicted (fig. 9) in a manner of self-portraiture.[48] In looking at several examples of rock art and carved figurines, McDermott theorized that the artwork was crafted by that who it represented. While this leads to more questions about the artwork itself and the meaning behind it, it does further stand to support the idea that women were creating art, especially as many of the figurines in McDermott's study were of the female body. McDermott argued that it was likely the work of looking down on oneself that allowed for a view of different proportions for these figures, which is why today they are not completely proportionate to what people believe the human body might have looked like 30,000 years ago.[49] He argued this by saying,

> Before asking if a physical mechanism could be responsible for the "violations" observed. I contend that their origins lies in what all humans and especially expectant mothers can and cannot see when they look down at their own bodies. The distortions in these first images are produced by three structural regularities inherent in the body as directly self-inspected but not necessarily observed from the point of view of other human beings.[50]

[47] Brown, "Cave of the Hands."

[48] Self-portraiture is an act of an artist creating artwork meant to look like themselves, discussed more in McDermott, "Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines," 227.

[49] Ibid, 231.

[50] Ibid, 231.

McDermott believed that the reason the stone and rock figurines that we see today were crafted in the way that they were was simply because the sculptor was working from a view looking down, using that as their reference image.

Some also viewed these statuettes as possible representations of weight needed for the sake of survival.[51] Because of the battle of climate in this time, the approach of gaining weight allowed women to carry pregnancies with less risk and maintain more energy as needed for survival. Further, it was thought that these figures may have been passed from person to person as a type of heirloom, due to the well-worn indicators on the figures. This likely represents a need to pass down an ideal image from mother to daughter, such as during puberty.[52] It makes sense that this could have been something created then by women, for women.

Moving onto the understanding of gender today in Western views based on European and American traditions compared to prehistoric cultures, Julie Solometo and Joshua Moss discussed reconstructions that were constructed, whether in museums or for magazine with imagination and interpretation of data alike.[53] The scenes that are built are done so to give visuals of what history was, to make the actual reconstructions of the time periods being discussed. According to this article, 204 reconstructions were reviewed and it revealed that women and their work were underrepresented in these creations in comparison to the work of male counterparts. The interesting part here is that the data used in these reconstructions was just as fruitful for the discussion of men's work as it was for women's work.[54]

---

[51] Richard J. Johnson et al., "Upper Paleolithic Figurines Showing Women with Obesity may Represent Survival Symbols of Climatic Change," *Obesity*, (2020): 11-15.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Julie Solometo et al., "Picturing the Past: Gender in National Geographic Reconstructions of Prehistoric Life." *American Antiquity* 78, no. 1 (2013): 123-146, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23486388.

[54] Ibid.

Solometo and Moss discuss the numerous studies that have shown how the media that people consume reflects what they believe and enforces the ideas viewed, like that of gender. This in turn leads to more people adopting those same views. Androcentrism, or the idea that male is natural and normal and what is not male is inferior and unnatural, is shown through the consistent devaluation of women's work in the media.[55] The article also describes how this can be an inherent view due to the media we consume, such as the reconstructions of what happened in history. It is hard to develop a view of something being natural when it is not often shown - this idea is why many men and women believe that women are looked at as the lesser of genders, while looking at men as if they are the only creators.[56] Solometo and Moss end by claiming,

> We feel it is imperative that archaeologists reclaim prehistory as a place where, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, gender roles and the relationship between the sexes remain an open question.[57]

This is to say, that without the recorded history of what actually happened, the imagery created that tells stories should be left to interpretation on any side of the binary spectrum – art could have been made by anyone. Solometo and Moss believed that it was important for historians to view prehistory as possible from either gender in order to allow for more reconstructions of what history was like.

In connection to this, Pamela Geller discussed the need for feminism as a methodology in the viewing of archaeological studies, regardless of the specific topic. With the studies going forward, Geller claimed that a need for a feminist perspective would assist in diversifying different fields and tackling issues within the understanding of gender studies by encouraging a

---

[55] Ibid, 125.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid, 143.

less biased view of history when it comes to gender assumptions.[58] Geller continues on and claims that a gender study without feminism is a study that does not address things properly, essentially ignoring important aspects of what it means to be female versus male, adult versus child. The function of this article by Geller serves as a representation of the need in pursuing a feminist methodology when it comes to reviewing gender in any topic. There are many disciplines reviewed as being inequal when it comes to the hiring or pay of men versus women, and because of this, there is further need to look at whether the inequity started recently or was an issue that rose from the past.[59]

Continuing the look into possible gender roles in the past, Donna Hart argued against the idea that men, or humans in general, were the hunters of past societies.[60] Rather than following the idea that humans were hunters and were the top of the pyramid in prehistory, Hart took it in a different direction, quoting the fossil records that detail how primates have been prey for millions of years and that this likely shaped who we are today, as the human species. Hart claimed that since men were likely not the head predators of society, the roles that they played were equal to the roles that women of society played. This assumption is that all humans would have equally contributed to hunting and gathering.

Around the 1970s, feminist individuals began questioning the lack of women artists in historical contexts and museums, compared to men. While there have been developments in the field of women artists in history, there is always more work to be done in order to account for the art and the artists themselves. Linda Nochlin questioned the extent to which women existed as

---

[58] Geller, "Identity and Difference: Complicating Gender in Archaeology," 65.

[59] Ibid, 74.

[60] Donna Hart and Sussman, R. W, *Man the Hunted: Primates, Predators, and Human Evolution*. (Westview Press: Philadelphia, Pa., 2009). Donna Hart is a professor of anthropology and wildlife conservationist professional.

great artists, objecting to the statement that the viewpoint of the art historian was historically that of a white, western male.[61] Instead, she opted to investigate how the lack of greatness was caused by poor institutions and a lack of education for women, not by the "misfortune" of menstruation or hormones. She argued that women often did not have artistic origin moments, like some of the "greats" in history had because of things like the exclusion of women in art education.[62] Nochlin argued that it was an institutional problem that led to the lack of success from women artists, not an individual problem.[63] The lack of access, support, and general footing men held as artists was a contributing factor to the lack of support in the historical context of women as artists. This was why she viewed that there were no great women artists in history. She believed they could, but without the same opportunity, it was a struggle for women.

Still in the 70s, Lise Vogel discussed how often art history has been left out of the observation of feminist critique.[64] Much like Nochlin remarked, there is often a lack of representation of women artists and feminist art historians. Vogel explained that things such as sex, class, and race have been historically ignored or overlooked. She further claimed that they have been viewed as background or context to conversations.[65] Vogel also noted that more data and more understandings of art created by women must be studied and, in some cases, re-studied, in order to balance out art history as a study of art by all genders and not just a focus on artwork done by men.

---

[61] Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ArtNews*, (1971): 1–26.

[62] Linda Nochlin viewed an artistic origin moment as a point in time where individuals would have a chance to create a "great" masterpiece. She further believed that, because women were not often allowed the same artistic opportunities as men, that they did not have as many chances to create masterpieces.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Lise Vogel, "Fine Arts and Feminism: The Awakening Consciousness." *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 1 (1974): 3–37, https://doi.org/10.2307/3177695.

[65] Ibid, 5.

Continuing to the gender and prehistoric art combination scholarship, the article from 1981 by Michel Schmidt-Chevalier, "Were the Cave Paintings in Southwest France Made by Women?" begins by pointing out an interesting use of assumed gender roles. This article stated that Schmidt-Chevalier disagreed with French archeologist Abbe Henri Breuil's idea that men were the creators of prehistoric art, arguing instead that women could have also played a role in creation.

While some of his commentary might be subjective, Schmidt-Chevalier determines a few things that he believes would be important to note regarding the art in caves and the gender of the creators. Throughout his research, he noted that there was a high number of drawn, pregnant animals, hand outlines he viewed that appeared to have come from women, a child's footprint that was discovered in the Pech Merle caves, the grave of a woman that was discovered within another cave called L'Abri du Cap Blanc, and some of the markings that were similar to the Neolithic pottery he believed to have been created by women.[66]

One of the other points of interest from Schmidt-Chevalier's work is connected in thought to the information about sexual dimorphism from Dean Snow.[67] In Snow's work he discusses the inherent differences in hand sizes and shapes between males and females.[68] This relates to the article by Schmidt-Chevalier as they both discuss the discovery of prints in caves that seemingly

---

[66] In Schmidt-Chevailer, "Were the Cave Paintings in Southwest France Made by Women," 302, Schmidt-Chevalier notes some similarities between the Pech Merle cave art and Neolithic pottery, where he claims there are similar geometric patterns between the two. Schmidt-Chevalier believed this Neolithic pottery was made by women because of its similarities to art described in André Leroi-Gourhan, "Préhistoire de l'Art Occidental," *d'art Lucien Mazenod*, (1965).

[67] For more information over dimorphism, see David Frayer et al., "Sexual Dimorphism." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 14 (1985): 429–73. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155603.

[68] Dean R. Snow, "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art," *American Antiquity* 78, no. 4 (2013): 746-761, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43184971.

belong to women, based off of the shape and size.[69] Snow goes on to say that traditional assumptions supported the idea that parietal art was often related to hunting, a practice often thought to be done by adult and young adult males.[70] Further, Snow goes on to explain how these assumptions might be a comfortable thing to follow in the current day and age because of the media we are exposed to, but they are no more than that – assumptions, untested and unproved. Snow continues the discussion with a brief overview of the work done by John Manning, explaining that while his studies are relevant if using the digit ratio as an argument, that there are people who criticize the science behind the theory.[71] Because of this, the argument that Snow supports is the concept that human hands are different based on gender.[72] While Snow claims that many publications theorize a male dominated artistry of work in caves, he also mentions that it was on occasion thought to be a religious practitioner, a divining individual who could be male or female, that would create the art. He supports this idea by following the digit ratio theory, stating that the hands were assorted sizes in the art because some were done by men, and some were done by women.

However, Manning determined that there were many differences in digit ratios as it compared to different human populations across the globe, as no one race or culture was thought to be the exact same as another when it came to the developmental structure and evolution of parts of the body. The questionable aspect that remains throughout these kinds of studies is how

---

[69] Schmidt-Chevailer, "Were the Cave Paintings in Southwest France Made by Women," 302, and Snow, "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art," 746.

[70] Snow, "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art," 746.

[71] John Manning believed that the length of a person's fingers could indicate predispositions of certain aspects in your life, such as your health, sexuality, and more. Manning discusses how the digit ratio difference in men and women can correlate to different traits humans have in life, discussed in John Manning, *Digit Ratio: A Pointer to Fertility, Behavior, and Health, (*New Brunswick Rutgers Univ. Press, 2002).

[72] Ibid.

true data like this can be when considering the other studies that show how digit ratios are not constantly consistent between different ethnicities and age groups. Using the ratio as a possibility, Snow assumed that after a number of stencil samples were taken and observed in comparison to the hand digit consideration. He determined that only about ten percent of what he saw was likely to have belonged to adult males.[73] Of course, this is basing the data off of what Manning and Snow analyzed regarding different hand and digit comparisons. Other scholars, such as Wang Wong and Melissa Hines have researched alternate findings, claiming that the ratio that Manning studied is not replicated in other studies enough to be confirmed as a finite explanation.[74] Jaroslav Flegr and Lukas Kratochvil also claimed that the difference in digit ratio can change throughout the life of an individual and therefore cannot be used as a consistent manner of information.[75]

While this is not to serve as a complete overview of the scholarship today about gender, art, and prehistory, this research acts as a guide of direction in how this thesis was created. There are assumptions regarding gender and there are ways to make better, educated guesses as to what gender actually meant in these times and what it meant for the societies and roles that existed. There is not a single conclusive article that stands to explain the entirety of what is being questioned, but there is enough out there that knowledge can be gained.

---

[73] Ibid, 755.

[74] See Wang Wong and Melissa Hines, "Interpreting Digit Ratio (2D:4D)–Behavior Correlations: 2D:4D Sex Difference, Stability, and Behavioral Correlates and Their Replicability in Young Children." *Hormones and Behavior* 78 (February 2016): 86–94, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yhbeh.2015.10.022, for an overview of research by Wong and Hines disputing the digit ratio developed by John Manning and furthered by Dean Snow.

[75] See Lukas Kratochvíl and Jaroslav Flegr, "Differences in the 2nd to 4th Digit Length Ratio in Humans Reflect Shifts along the Common Allometric Line," *Biology Letters* 5 (2009): 643–46, https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2009.0346. for an overview of the scholarship from Kratochvil and Flegr regarding the digit ratio theory being disproven.

Methodology

"What art exists for prehistoric Europe, and what does it tell us about prehistoric society?" was a question asked by John Robb in 2015 when he decided that more needed to be known about the 500 or so works that had been found in Europe from prehistoric periods.[76] Robb goes on to explain how studies of prehistoric art tend to be broken and fragmented because of a wide array of factors like medium and period and because of this, what we know of prehistoric art usually exists only in relation to single works. Some of these works were things like crafted figures or sections of art on cave walls.[77] Factors like this are what cause less of an overall understanding of how art was made in prehistory. We can review singular works of art at a time and craft our knowledge around what we can find out, but we cannot look and determine if the same is true about one artwork and the next.

It is difficult to understand whether or not there is a trend between art made by women versus art made by men. Taking Robb's view in consideration with what Brown said about the similarities in art might amount to more of an understanding of who created the parietal art. Because of this, there are specific methodological approaches that best handle looking into artwork without carrying said biases. In certain caves, like Cuevas de las Manos (fig. 1), there is an extensive amount of artwork to be seen. In this cave there are several hundred outlines of hands throughout the cave walls. In the Chauvet Cave system, there are animal drawings, hand stencils, and footprints. Regardless of the artwork, the one question that remained was who worked on the art. One thing we can determine is that, even without finite proof of how many handprints or animal drawings were done by men versus women, we cannot assume that everything was done by men or vice versa. The best we can do now is use an appropriate

[76] Robb, "Prehistoric Art in Europe: A Deep-Time Social History," 635-636.

[77] Ibid.

methodology to determine what might have happened, in consideration with the data that we can and have collected over time. Things should be reviewed without biases.

The main process of studying the gender aspects in prehistoric cave art to around 50,000 years ago was by finding scholarship done by those questioning gender in prehistory. National Geographic, for example, used a lot of imagination alongside assumptions and their data of history to make reconstructions of different periods. This often caused a reflection on how we view the people of prehistory.[78] In understanding this, other scholarship needed to be considered as to why these assumptions were made. What caused this idea that women worked less than men? To answer this, the process led to reviewing what gender might have meant in a different period.

Regarding some of the separate roles played in society by men and women, Pamela Geller spoke on the need to intertwine feminism with the archaeology of gender to best understand the diverse interactions and lives that people previously led. This included mentioning that a view without feminism is a view only to the favor of men.[79] Opposition to this idea causes reconstructions, like in National Geographic, to come up short with preconceived and biased notions of what men and women can and cannot do in regard to things like art creation. Geller went on to specify that, "archaeologists can utilize feminist perspectives to diversify the field, explore the difference, and tackle archaeological issues," because feminism is not a concept just to raise up women, rather a method to fight for equity amongst genders, even in prehistoric periods.[80]

---

[78] Solometo and Moss, "Picturing the Past: Gender in National Geographic Reconstructions of Prehistoric Life," 123.

[79] Geller, "Identity and Difference: Complicating Gender in Archaeology," 66.

[80] Geller, "Identity and Difference: Complicating Gender in Archaeology," 66.

This approach was applied in more scholarship that reviewed gender and prehistoric art together, much of it focusing on Cueva de las Manos, because of the multitude of prints that could be gender-compared. The theories they laid out specified that there were possibly dimorphic differences in the hands and fingers of women and men and in the hands of adults in the past because of the differences that exist in the hands of people today. Because of these concepts, educated assumptions could be formulated on exactly who painted some of the more well preserved and photographed handprints and hand stencils from 50,000 years ago to around 2,000 years ago.

Human footprints found in the Chauvet Caves help illustrate the idea that adult men were not the only ones exploring and working in the cave systems. Dated to around 26,000 years ago, archaeologists uncovered about twenty footprints along a path leading to the Skull Chamber in Chauvet Caves. While this may seem innocuous at first glance, the footprints have actually been measured out to the size of a child's.[81] Along the path this prehistoric child took were two handprints against the cave wall, showing that these paintings were not just created by men. If children left their marks on the cave walls, it is more than likely adult women were crafting and creating within the caves, too. Discoveries like these broaden the horizon of consideration in who did what.

[81] Clottes, *Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times,* 34.

Parietal Art Images

There are several caves of parietal art that detail information about who the artists of prehistory might have been and why the art might have been created. Several sections of different caves depict hands of varying sizes and shapes, which can be taken into consideration using the digit ratio theory. Other art, such as walls that are decorated with animals being hunted or herded, could be representative of what people in prehistory did with the animals they needed for survival. Finally, there is art that shows symbolic depictions of males and females, such as triangles that mimic vulvas and ovals that represent breasts, which could be telling of the individuals who made the art or of ceremonies conducted by the artists.

Cuevas de las Manos (fig. 1), situated in the canyon of Rio Pinturas in Argentina is filled with hundreds of handprints and stencils along the cave walls, dating back to at least 10,000 years ago. This cave system is around 200m in depth and is covered with parietal art. This art was likely formed by blowing pigment through a pipe-like tool around a hand pressed to the wall. The walls of this cave show several different sized hand stencils, leading viewers to believe that this was because multiple people created the art, not just a single person. Most of the handprints and stencils are spread throughout the cave walls, but few can be seen almost stacking on top of or layering over one another. Further, many of the prints are placed at different heights along the walls.[82] The varying sizes of handprints and stencils, as well as the different heights in which they have all been placed, is a fair indicator that the art was left behind by different people, likely of differing ages and genders. Thomas Brown originally claimed these works of art

[82] For more on Cuevas de las Manos, see Thomas Brown, "Cave of the Hands," *Archaeology* 43, no. 3 (1990), http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765825. and, "Cueva de las Manos, Rio Pinturas." World Heritage Convention UNESCO, https://www.whc.unesco.org/en/list/936/.

looked to be around 2,000 years old at least. For Cueva de las Manos, further study has shown that they are closer to 10,000 years in age at the youngest sections.

The cave of Pech Merle (fig. 2) was discovered in the early 1920s, depicting cave art from around 20,000 years ago and spanning around 2000m in tunnels and length. The first section of art upon entry is in the Black Frieze area, so named for the harsh black outlines that surround the horses on the wall. Throughout this section there are bison, horses, and mammoths. Deeper into the cave are several preserved footprints, sized to about that of a child. All of this is seen before coming across the famous section of the Spotted Horses of Pech Merle, decorated with black spots all over and several hand stencils above and below them.[83] There is not a finite understanding of what the horses were painted for, but assumptions can be made on the hands around the horses, placed at various heights. It is likely that the hand stencils, while each slightly different, were done by different individuals.

The Cosquer Cave (fig. 3) was estimated to have been painted around 27,000 years ago and again at 20,000 years ago. Overall, this cave system includes around 500 paintings, most depicting animals like bison and horses, but also of geometric shapes often associated to ritual art. A single painting of a human-animal hybrid is also found within the cave but appears to be the only human art other than more hand stencils.[84] This hybrid art shows a bison with a triangle and line, likely the representation of the female pubic area. Hybrid creations like this were often

[83] For more in depth information over the Spotted Horses of Pech Merle, see Thomas Dowson. "La Grotte Du Pech Merle – Pech Merle Cave," Archaeology Travel, https://www.archaeology-travel.com/france/pech-merle-cave/.

[84] For more on the Cosquer Cave systems, see, *Cosquer Cave Hand Print: Stencils Above the South Edge of the Large Shaft*, photograph, https://jstor.org/stable/community.13555154, and, "Cosquer Cave | Underwater Archaeology," Archeologie Culture, accessed February 1, 2023, https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/archeo-sous-marine/en/cosquer-cave#:~:text=Cosquer%20Cave%20is%20home%20to.

viewed as having been created by or for religious practitioners, showing the connection between people and animals or people and the spiritual world.[85]

Finally, the Chauvet Caves (fig. 4) are a huge system of caves with a wide array of chambers and galleries, depicting things from animals to hand stencils to animal-human hybrids to geometric shapes of gender. This cave spans around 400 meters long. The cave system is found in the Ardeche River in southeastern France, not far off from the Pech Merle cave.[86] One of the entrances to this system leads to a display of mammoth paintings on the cave wall and bones of cave bears on the floor, while more exploration of the cave shows paintings of owls, rhinoceroses, and oxen. One section of the cave includes a bison figure alongside what is assumed to be the lower portion of a woman. This is assumed because the art is shaped like the pubic area and thighs of a person. Animals alongside human characteristics like this were seen in a few different areas throughout the cave, often being interpreted as female imagery. The dates of this cave system go from 37,000 years ago to 21,000 years ago. Certain sections were dated back to specific times - two charcoal samples on the cave floor, for example, helped clarify that a certain section of the cave art was visited around 24,000 years ago.[87] Child-sized footprints were also located in the cave, forming a path in the Skull Chamber. Other chambers had walls with handprints or hand stencils, indicating the areas that were accessible to early humans. It was also believed that the art in some of the systems, such as the spots of red, were indicators of the crossing between the real and spiritual worlds.[88]

---

[85] Religious practitioners might not have been defined to a specific gender and thus the assumption can be made that if art was created by them, it is not necessarily something created by just men or just women.

[86] Brian Fagan, "Paleolithic Masterpieces," review of, "Dawn of Art: The Chauvet Cave," by Jean-Marie Chauvet et al., *Archaeology* 49, 1996, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41771035.

[87] Ibid, 71.

[88] For more information on the Chauvet Caves, see, *Chauvet: Hand Prints: Panel of Hand Prints with Animals*, photograph, https://jstor.org/stable/community.13570609 and Clottes, "Chauvet Cave: The Art of Earliest Times."

"Man the Hunter" Paradigm

Donna Hart claimed that humans were being hunted at a time when society currently believes that humans are at the top of the pyramid in the food chain. The comparison here is from the idea that fossils might have shown that humanoid-like ancestors were preyed upon by larger mammals.[89] The assumption is that if men were not always the hunters of society, then they also might not have always been the creators. The overview of this paradigm works to break unsupported ideas. Societies of the past were not just what the biases of today claim they might have been.

The Chauvet Cave system (fig. 4) has several sections of art that mimic the appearance of a woman's pubic area, alongside animals like bison. The image appears to represent the vulva of a woman attached to a bison. Under the "Man the Hunter" paradigm, the assumption would be that these drawings were done by men, the ones who were assumed to have hunted the bison for food. However, in considering that self-portraiture may have been a reason behind some parietal art, this paradigm must be considered in conjunction with other possibilities. It is a possibility that this specific painting was done by a woman that went through a ceremony or rite of passage and left a mark, possibly acting as a recording of history or simply a part of the ceremony. The bison appearing above the pubic area does not necessarily equate to a man-hunter.

Using a feminist methodological approach to this matter allowed an open-minded social role and gender view over the topic and scholarship. This helps to pursue the idea that women should not be looked at with internalized biases that society has always had. Marginalizing individuals that are still marginalized today only leads to misinformation and uneducated

[89] Hart, *Man the Hunted: Primates, Predators, and Human Evolution* discusses that early humans were likely preyed upon by mammals due to fossil evidence of Australopithecus from nearly five million years ago that often shows signs of talons or bites.

assumptions based around those guesses. Scholarship on prehistoric cultures is often based on modern assumptions and biases when viewed under a Euro-Centric standard. Judith Resnik wrote a piece of advice given to her by a male colleague,

> Be careful. Don't teach in any areas associated with women's issues. Don't teach family law; don't teach sex discrimination. Teach the real stuff, the hard stuff: contracts, torts, procedure, property. And be careful - don't be too visible on women's issues.[90]

This was her way of saying that people often had an inherent bias against the interest and well-being of women in law, that their interests were in things that were "not woman oriented". Under the "Man the Hunter" paradigm, men are given the benefit of the doubt regardless of what they do while women are forced to prove themselves to be given that same benefit. Resnik's writing shows that women must often still fight to be viewed like men are, to work against structural systems such as sexism and the patriarchy. The "Man the Hunter" paradigm aligns to all levels of occupation, regardless of the individuals that are in the position.

Considering that the "Man the Hunter" paradigm says that society often associates archaeological record and work as a product of men and not women, prehistoric art must be reviewed while considering this theory to allow for a full understanding of who might have created the art.[91] According to Hart, for this paradigm to work in its own way, people would have to consider men to be the dominate, masculine gender. They would be viewed as the ones who hunted and explored and did the dangerous activities to keep society alive and thriving on their own because they were men and they were supposed to be brave.

---

[90] Judith Resnik, "Gender Bias: From Classes to Courts." *Stanford Law Review* 45, no. 6 (1993): 2195-2209, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229145.

[91] April Nowell and Jennifer C. French, "Adolescence and Innovation in the European Upper Paleolithic," *Evolutionary Human Sciences 2* (2020): e36. Doi.10.1017/ehs.2020.37.

According to this paradigm, women and children are not viewed as people who assisted in the harsher, survival necessities of life outside of gathering. In order to say women helped hunt or explore or adventure, we would have to have proof of them doing these things, because the man the hunter theory claims that women have to prove their contribution. This also means that men were just assumed to have done work.[92] As popular of an idea as this likely is or was, it is quite frankly not a usable source of information to base academic research on. When proof does not exist in the favor of either gender, the safer idea is to use collected data to make educated statements or to admit to a lack of proof and request that studies into the matter continue.

Resnik again claimed that another lesson was worth noting, "there are no safe harbors (if that is what one is seeking) from having to think about the implications of gender."[93] This means that we cannot view something from history, the present, or the future, without considering the implications of gender on what we are reviewing. There have always been biases against women working, like in the "Man the Hunter" paradigm, and there will always be people fighting for equity in consideration, like with Pamela Geller's work.

This paradigm takes away from the feminist methodology, which requires that we look at things with an open mind about the experiences of women and those with marginalized history when it comes to academic research. In requiring proof of the work of one gender but not of another, we are actively working against this methodology and against what women have done for history. Because of this, we come to conclusions on the roles of genders in prehistoric society when we look at it on a level playing field. This again tells us why a feminist approach is the best one to take. History is already going against the "Man the Hunter" claim of which gender did

---

[92] Ibid.

[93] Resnik, "Gender Bias: From Classes to Courts," 2196.

which work, without much proof in the matter. It is the responsibility of those that research and create content for consumption by others to raise the voices of the marginalized by studying the work they have done.[94]

John Parkington reviewed the work by Leoir-Gourhan and the claims of association between males and females as depicted in parietal art. From Leoir-Gourhan's work, Parkington noted that there was a high regularity of male figures in the caves of South-West Europe, except near the entrances.[95] Further, the number of times that male figures were seen grouped with animals was frequent, as males are often seen as being associated with horses, snakes on staffs, stags, and mammoths.[96] These male figures were often shown holding spears and were drawn as tall and thin. Often the depictions are of the males hunting or herding the animals in these pictures.[97] Women, depicted by triangles for pubic regions and ovals for breasts, were often seen being drawn with unidentifiable animals, or with animals that were not wounded. However, there are exceptions to this finding.

In some of these parietal works, Leoir-Gourhan noted that there were female elements depicted alongside some of the other animal drawings, like the ones found near the male elements. Some of the evidence of bison being hunted or horses being used for transportation were alongside the image of women figures, often determined to be women through the use of ovals for breasts and triangles for vulvas.[98] Leoir-Gourhan thought that representations of

---

[94] Ibid.

[95] Parkington, "Symbolism in Paleolithic Cave Art," 3.

[96] Leoir Gourhan theorized that males in prehistoric drawings were depicted through the use of dots, short strokes, and barbed signs, while females were shown through the use of ovals, triangles, and brace-shaped signs. Further, his research spanned across cave systems mainly in France, such as Le Gabillou, Rouffignac, Les Trois Freres, and Etchiberriko. For more information regarding the caves and the exact locations of the art mentioned, see the chart on page 5 at John Parkington, "Symbolism in Paleolithic Cave Art," *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 24, no. 93 (1969): 3–13, https://doi.org/10.2307/3888361.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid, 9.

women in art could be seen in caves where the humans were drawn with ovals, triangles, and rectangles. He also thought that men could be seen in the art through short strokes and dots.[99] An example of this is where the pubic area drawn with a bison is represented through a triangular shape in the Chauvet Cave (fig. 4).

So what does this mean to women as parietal artists? That women were alongside men creating the art found in these caves. Some paintings represent the female body and, if created in the same manner of ceremony art, would possibly have been painted by women.

Going back to McDermott's study, it was likely that women were already crafting artwork of themselves. McDermott's study served to act as a challenge to the assumption that human images were made by those looking at someone else, a three-dimensional portrait work of another.[100] He goes on to discuss the idea that these figurines were instead representations of an egocentric viewpoint of oneself, to serve as self-portraits of the person who was creating the artwork. His argument also points to the idea that assuming a figurine was done to represent another person would be the same in assuming what he does. The best way to understand this, according to McDermott, is by studying the process in which a modern-day woman would look at and recreate herself.[101] The figures in which he refers to in his study are often depictions of larger women, heads turned down toward their own bodies (fig. 9). McDermott believes that this is another possible indicator of it being crafted by the woman herself, a representation of the way in which she looks down to her own body, whether to observe or appreciate or acknowledge. These figures had the appearance of larger, rounded breasts and missing feet, backing up

---

[99] Ibid, 3.

[100] McDermott, "Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines," 227.

[101] Ibid, 228.

McDermott's theory. This is why he believed that the figures could often look warped, because they were being viewed in a warped perspective.

McDermott believed that the artwork was once looked at as if symbolic of something, which was why the objects often deviated from realism at the idea of what a human woman would look like. This different anatomy, he argues, became easier to understand when viewing it in the way that the artists themselves may have, by looking down at the rest of their body.[102] This further expresses the idea that women were creating their own "Venus statues," as they were the ones looking down at their own bodies.

If these statuettes were in fact made for a different purpose, such as representing the need for weight to survive harsh winters, it is still a possibility that these were made for this purpose by the women who carried the weight. Even with the figures being possible heirlooms or messages of necessity, the manner in which they were made could have been crafted by the angled views that McDermott discussed.

This thesis serves as another collection of information about women creating art in prehistory. If it cannot be assumed that the creators of the stone figures were men and it cannot be assumed that it was women, then the only fair assumption is that it could have been either. McDermott's study, combined with other important scholarship throughout this piece, serves as an idea that women were creating artwork. If it could have been of themselves, then the caves littered with handprints and hand stencils are just one other method in which women were likely leaving their mark throughout history.

To conclude the discussion over the paradigm, gendered assumptions often create more gendered assumptions. Women and men must both be looked at as capable of creating to have a fair slate in which to determine how work was made and by whom.

---

[102] Ibid, 234.

Digit Ratio

Hand stencils created on cave walls (figs. 1 and 2) were likely done by several different people. In Cueva de las Manos, there are hundreds of stencils seen in the various images of the cave. These images are important when considering the Digit Ratio theory, as it gives a visualization to differences in finger lengths from around 10,000 years ago.

John Manning's review of digit ratio in his book *Digit Ratio: A Pointer to Fertility, Behavior, and Health* analyzes different samples and suggested that the male to female finger ratios differ based off their gender and the growth hormones that go into an individual as they develop in the womb, through puberty, and into adulthood.[103] With this idea, men and women are said to have different finger lengths compared to one another and children would also have a difference in finger lengths compared to that of adult men, adult women, and compared to adolescence. A look at Manning's scan of two hands, one from a male adult and one from a female adult, determines that,

> (A) The right hand of a Caucasian male with a 2D:4D ration of 0.92. This is a low ratio for male Caucasians. (B) The right hand of a female with a 2D:4D ratio of 1.00. This ratio is close to the mean in many female Caucasian samples.[104]

---

[103] Wang Wong, Melissa Hines, Lukas Kratochvil, and Jaroslav Flegr discussed that the ratio was not a solid theory for multiple reasons, such as the ratio should have remained with aging but it did not and that the results were difficult, if not impossible, to replicate. See Wang Wong and Melissa Hines, "Interpreting Digit Ratio (2D:4D)–Behavior Correlations: 2D:4D Sex Difference, Stability, and Behavioral Correlates and Their Replicability in Young Children." *Hormones and Behavior* 78 (February): 86–94 and Lukas Kratochvíl and Jaroslav Flegr, "Differences in the 2nd to 4th Digit Length Ratio in Humans Reflect Shifts along the Common Allometric Line," *Biology Letters* 5 (5): 643–46, https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2009.0346.

[104] John Manning, *Digit Ratio: A Pointer to Fertility, Behavior, and Health*, (New Brunswick Rutgers Univ. Press.) and see Figure Six, discusses the ratio of length between fingers in both men and women. 2D is the second digit, or index finger, and 4D is the fourth digit, or ring finger. The ratio was used to show the differences in finger lengths based around a variety of things, but Manning focused on the difference in relation to biological sexual characteristics.

Manning used this example to illustrate the differences in finger length between adult women and men. The digit ratio theory represents the idea that the index finger on men is often longer than the ring finger of men. In using this, he also detailed the possibility that the differences could be made in error, as measurements are not always exact when taken. Using his calculation, and a number of 300 different hand samples, he determined that the accurate differences in finger ratios are often greater than the measurement error would be.[105] In simple terms, this means that gender likely can be determined by the differences if following his equation, but it is also not likely the most accurate manner of concluding information that could exist. This study was based around hand samples from Caucasian individuals. To create a better understanding, a study would need to span across a range of ethnicities.

Dean Snow was one of the people who researched more into Manning's work and decided to use this comparative information to guess the gender of prehistoric artists by completing his own study. The hand stencils, which Snow describes as having been made by placing a hand against the cave wall and blowing paint at it through a tube or tube like tool, have been found in caves all over the world. Some places previously mentioned are the United States, Argentina, Spain, and France, specifically. One of the things Snow was originally concerned about was the differences in bodily structure to the samples today compared to those from 50,000 years ago. In his view, the ancestors of people today would not have the same evolutionary construction as people today. This was one of the parts he mentioned before conducting his study, to make sure the consideration was being made that his work was only representative of the information he currently had. This was not to serve as the only finite possibility of gender consideration in prehistoric art.

[105] Ibid, 3.

Snow collected several samples available to him but also remarked that he was limited with the samples that could be visually measured from the cave art. Because the artwork in and of itself is thousands of years old, there are limitations on which works of arts can most accurately be used for the study.[106] However, in studying more and by taking samples of handprints in 2013, he concluded that,

> There is some risk that evolutionary change over the last three dozen millennia has rendered the modern European population no longer sufficiently representative of the Upper Paleolithic population for our purposes...However, genetic research shows that over 95 percent of all modern European Y-chromosomes belong to a set of ten lineages that have been present there since the Upper Paleolithic...A reference population of modern European hands is appropriate for the study of European Upper Paleolithic hand stencils.[107]

This, in addition to the measurements that Snow was able to make from his selected samples, gave rise to the conclusion that at least some of the art was in fact done by women, as not all of his hand stencils studied appeared to belong to the digit ratio of men.[108] In all of the caves that Snow studied, he came to the conclusion that about 24 out of 32, or about 75%, of the hand stencils reviewed fell into Manning's theory of what a female hand should look like based on his and Manning's digit ratio theories.[109] With Snow's theory in addition to this, he claimed that this could help take down the "Male the Hunter" paradigm, as it shows women might have played bigger roles in these societies than previously thought. It was not just a study that determined women were artists but also added to the conversation that women have played roles in the different societies throughout time.

---

[106] Ibid.

[107] Snow, "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art," 748.

[108] This conclusion is contingent upon the digit ratio theory being a reliable source of information. As the theory is not proven beyond all reasonable doubt, Snow's conclusion is also still debatable.

[109] Ibid.

The Cueva de las Manos and the Chauvet Cave systems have hundreds of hand stencils left on the cave walls. Using Snow and Manning‘s data on finger size comparison to determine gender, it can be deduced that a section of the hand stencils could have been created by women.

A hand stencil in Cueva de las Manos toward the bottom right portion has shorter fingers than a majority of the other stencils (fig. 1). Because this stencil is found at a lower height, it can be considered, along with the shorter finger lengths, that it was possibly done by a woman. Several of the hand stencils in this image have a difference in finger ratio as well, attributing to the idea that the stencils were not just painted by men. The two hand stencils above the spotted horses in the Pech Merle cave (fig. 2) appear to have different finger ratios as well. If the digit theory is true, then this could be because the stencils were done by men and women, not just men.

Religious and Ceremonial Art

The Cosquer cave system (fig. 3) was mostly accessible through an underwater entryway, the same one that the original discoverer of the cave used to begin exploration. According to Clottes and Courtin, the cave was in an unusual location as it was close to the water, meaning there was not likely places that large prey would live in.[110] This cave probably existed as a place where people did not live, rather, where they went when they needed a place to make art or conduct ceremonies.[111] Guthrie argues that ceremonies often occurred in caves to allow those participating the chance to record their initiations on the walls of the cave. Guthrie went on to explain that there was no ultimate truth to these assumptions, as we could not simply interview a Paleolithic individual. Rather, this creates the responsibility that logical conclusions should be drawn.[112] Further, he believed that the parietal art might sometimes look different than other art because it was in fact made by different individuals and not just men.[113]

This means that gender in prehistoric artists should be understood as well as the age of the creators, as often it is seen that these hand stencils and prints (figs. 1 and 2) were actually done by children rather than adults. Bonnie Hewlett determined that artwork, namely hand stencils and prints, have often been confused when considering whether they were made by women or adolescents, as the finger digit ratio for a teenager would be close in comparison to that of an adult woman.[114] According to Hewlett's studies, initiation ceremonies were often taken

[110] Clottes, *The Cave Beneath the Sea*, 7.

[111] Clottes, *The Cave Beneath the Sea*, 7.

[112] Ibid, 15.

[113] Russell Dale Guthrie, *The Nature of Paleolithic Art (*Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2005), https://www.bibliovault.org/BV.book.epl?ISBN=9780226311265.

[114] Bonnie L. Hewlett, *Adolescent Identity: Evolutionary, Cultural and Developmental Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2013.)

by children when representing the transition from childhood to adulthood.[115] Taking this into account alongside Guthrie's theory that cave art might often be a mark or record of ceremony or initiation for many reasons, it is a clear connection that these ceremonies, if recorded on cave walls by the adolescents that took part in them, would have been recorded by the children that were being initiated for things like transition into adulthood, during the Upper Paleolithic period.[116]

While some of the handprints and hand stencils in Pech Merle, Chauvet Cave, and Cueva de las Manos seem too small to have been painted by adults, going off of the digit ratio theory or a general understanding of human hand size, it now adds to the formula that it could have been children creating the artwork, which is why the stencils and prints were smaller, not necessarily because it was a grown adult creating the art.[117]

Neyir Kolankaya-Bostanci claimed that religious practitioners were often likely to participate in religious rituals in places that mimicked doorways, such as cave openings, where parietal art is often found.[118] Caves like Lascaux and some chambers in the Chauvet cave system were often seen as aggregation sites for these types of rituals, which is why the art is believed to have indicated some type of ceremony.[119] These areas were often viewed as usable places of ceremonies because of the open space for gathering and the sanctuary-like space, enclosed by the

---

[115] Ibid. And see Hewlett, *Adolescent Identity: Evolutionary, Cultural and Developmental Perspectives,* for a more extensive overview of ceremonial initiations.

[116] Guthrie, *The Nature of Paleolithic Art.*

[117] Ibid.

[118] Kolankaya-Bostanci, "The Evidence of Shamanism Rituals in Early Prehistoric Periods of Europe and Anatolia," and see James Pearson, *Shamanism and the Ancient Mind,* (Rowman Altamira, 2002) for a more extensive overview of Shamanism.

[119] Ibid, 187.

cave walls. Oftentimes the human-animal hybrid drawings would be viewed as representative of certain rituals, as if linking the connection between humans and animals together.

Some parietal art that shows hunting could have related to a symbolic kill, as a child might have their first hunt or a larger animal that provides nutrition might have been brought back during a special time, such as a moment of fertility or after a long stretch of hunger.[120] Jean Clottes and David Lewis-Williams also suggested that parietal art could have been created by religious practitioners to contact the spiritual world or to show what contact looked like.[121] Without written records of prehistory, cave art was likely the source used to leave behind information on these rituals or to show others the process.[122] In this case, men would not have been the only ones creating the art that was left behind.

[120] Ibid, 195.

[121] Jean Clottes and David Lewis-Williams, *Shamans of Prehistory,* (Harry N Abrams Incorporated, 1998) and see James Pearson, *Shamanism and the Ancient Mind* (Rowman Altamira, 2002) for a more extensive overview on Shamanism.

[122] Ibid.

Further Considerations on Gender

Overall, the information regarding gender that has been utilized for the sake of this thesis must all be considered together. The "Man the Hunter" paradigm cannot be disregarded or accepted without considering the marginalized women that have been looked over in prehistory. Scholars must work against biases of gender in art and history in order to allow for an open-minded consideration of the artists of the time. Using the idea that women have played roles in history before, the fact that women work today, and the idea that there is proof, or attempted proof, at sizing out handprints and stencils, allows for a broader understanding at exactly the roles played.

It should be said, too, that no data collected about prehistory interpretations of art are entirely accurate. Art itself cannot tell us what the meaning behind these hand stencil symbols are. Because of this, we are left with yet another flag telling us that there is no concrete proof in prehistory, as there is no recorded information to guide us into what it meant and who made it.

There is, however, conclusive proof with reconstructions of history that women have been forgotten about or intentionally left out of spaces in the past that attribute to the growth of the world today, whether through art production or hunting or something of a similar aspect.[123] Gender of prehistory cannot be fully and completely understood without giving fair recognition to the roles played by all parties, men and women. Pamela Geller agreed with this in studying gender in archaeology and acknowledging the changes in what we study when we fully understand what it is we need to study.

This study only works when understanding the implications of the period that the artwork was created in. Upper Paleolithic art was done without any modern-day innovations of art tools.

[123] Solometo, "Picturing the Past: Gender in National Geographic Reconstructions of Prehistoric Life," 123.

The artwork had to be done by someone without modern tools, without mirrors, without reference images. Artwork of this time was done from what the mind could imagine and from what the eyes could see and the hands could craft.

Without a criterion of basis on who the hunters were, the gatherers, or the artists, studies must continue to be delved into regarding this topic. Michel Schmidt-Chevalier discussed that women are often seen as creators because of their inherent ability to do so in creating the human body through their own.[124] But this assumption runs the same problem as those made around the "Man the Hunter" paradigm - women can make art, but it doesn't mean they have to. We cannot assume that any one gender played a more important or involved role in art history than any other gender, without precise proof of what happened. Schmidt-Chevalier noted that women would often be the ones to seek out the damp and dark places, like caves, because of their relation to damp and dark places, like wombs, but this is another biased opinion that forced women to be viewed as nothing more than creators because of their gender, people who made art because their ovaries pushed them into these places.[125] This is not a view that can be appropriately used in order to give fair consideration to all genders.

Using the digit ratio theory originally developed by Manning, and in association to the further research by Snow, we can apply this to the work seen in different caves. There are sections of art that appear more likely to be that of a woman's hand stencil than that of a man, and vice versa, due to the aforementioned finger lengths. Because of this, there is no one clear creator in the parietal world because it appears that both men and women alike, and even adolescents in some cases like with the footprints, shared a role in creating the art.

---

[124] Schmidt-Chevailer, "Were the Cave Paintings in Southwest France Made by Women," 302.

[125] Ibid.

There is not enough solidified criticism against Manning's or Snow's work to say that the digits from one gender to another or from adult to child are not in fact a proof of difference and because of this, we can continue to follow the samples taken by Snow and consider the continuation of women in art from prehistory.

Considering the footprints found in the Chauvet Cave system are also something to apply to this line of thinking, opening up more considerations about who was creating the art or the prints or the stencils. The digit ratio theory created by Manning and further studied by Snow gave reason to believe that the finger lengths were different between men and women and adults and children, and because of this, we can look at other prints that we know to belong to children and compare them more to the prints of adults. If age is the first notable difference, gender could be the next.

This analysis, while comprehensive in the review of the work mentioned, is not a complete understanding of the prehistoric art or the genders of the individuals who created the works. Unfortunately, the analysis serves as a review of what can be understood when viewing the work together, in comparison and abstraction to other works of arts. Because of this, a conclusion can be guessed at about what parietal was made by who, but nothing finite can be gathered until more data becomes available.

Conclusion

The likely conclusion is that prehistoric women and men created art alongside one another, in the same spaces. At this time, it cannot be said exactly who did which art and how much was done by each gender. We have no record of the possible societal or gender roles that existed in prehistory.

Were women artists? Probably. Can it be proven? Educated guesses about this can be made in the same way that we can make our educated guesses of men having crafted this art. While this is an inhibitor to the understanding of gender in prehistoric times, this thesis was still able to group relevant information together to better understand the place we are at in understanding the gender biases, or possible lack thereof, in prehistoric art.

Additional research should be done by archaeologists and art historians alike. Current gender biases must be considered when reviewing prehistoric artwork and when conducting research, regardless of the location or time period of the art. Prehistoric art and the implications of gender, as a field, must continue to be studied to better understand the extent that artwork has been made by men and women to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the past. This thesis allows for a broadened understanding of what the field has pulled together thus far through various research, but also shows how much is still unknown today about what society and gender and art were all like back in the Upper Paleolithic period. Filling in the holes of this study will likely require comparative understandings of contemporary people and prehistoric ancestors, cave on-site exploration to continue researching parietal art, and more. It is important to continue this research and to consider all gender biases in order to broaden the knowledge of women creating art in prehistory.

Illustrations

Figure 1. Cueva de las Manos. Between 2,000 and 10,000 years ago. Blown pigment on cave wall. Located near Rio Pinturas, Argentina. Photo accessed from UNESCO World Heritage Convention site.

Figure 2. The Spotted Horses. 20,000 years ago created but discovered first in 1922. Pressed pigment on rock wall. Pech Merle, Cabrerets, France. Photo accessed from Archaeology Travel, Adventures in Archaeology and History for Everyone site.

Figure 3. Cosquer Cave Art. 27,000 years ago and 20,000 years ago. Pigment on rock wall. Under the Calanques Massif in France. Photo from Underwater Archaeology.

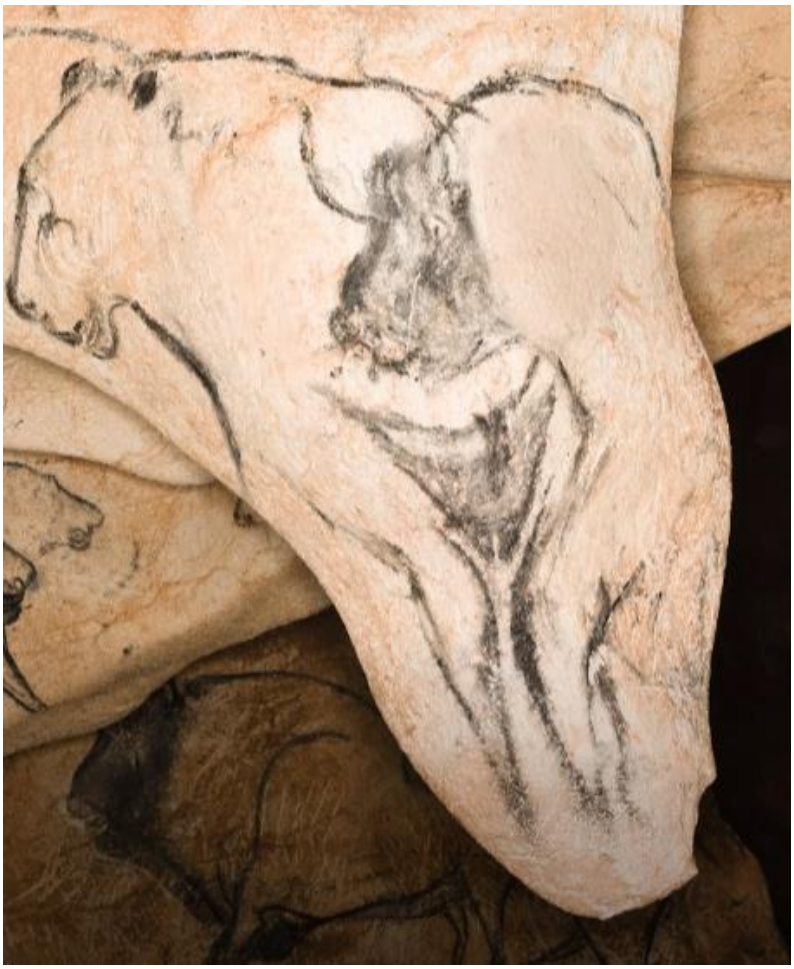


Figure 4. Prehistoric Bison and Pubic Area. Around 20,000 years ago. Pigment on cave wall. Chauvet Cave in France. Photo accessed from Artstor Slide Collection.

Figure 5. Drawings of Animals Engraved on Cave Wall. 1902. Pen and paper. Cave at Les Comarelles in France. Photo accessed from Linda Hall Library, artwork done by Abbe Breuil.

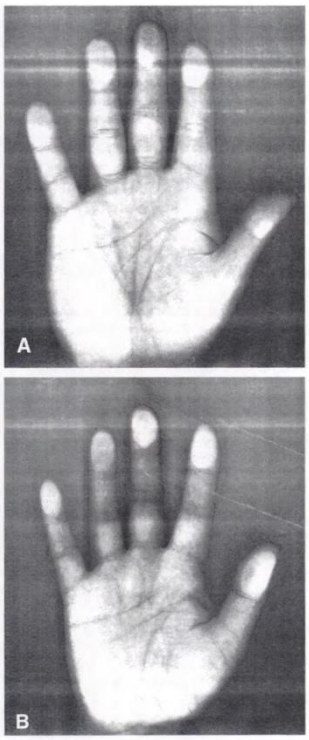


Figure 6. Male and Female Hand Scans. 2002. Hand scanned with copier. Digit Ratio book. Photo by John T. Manning.

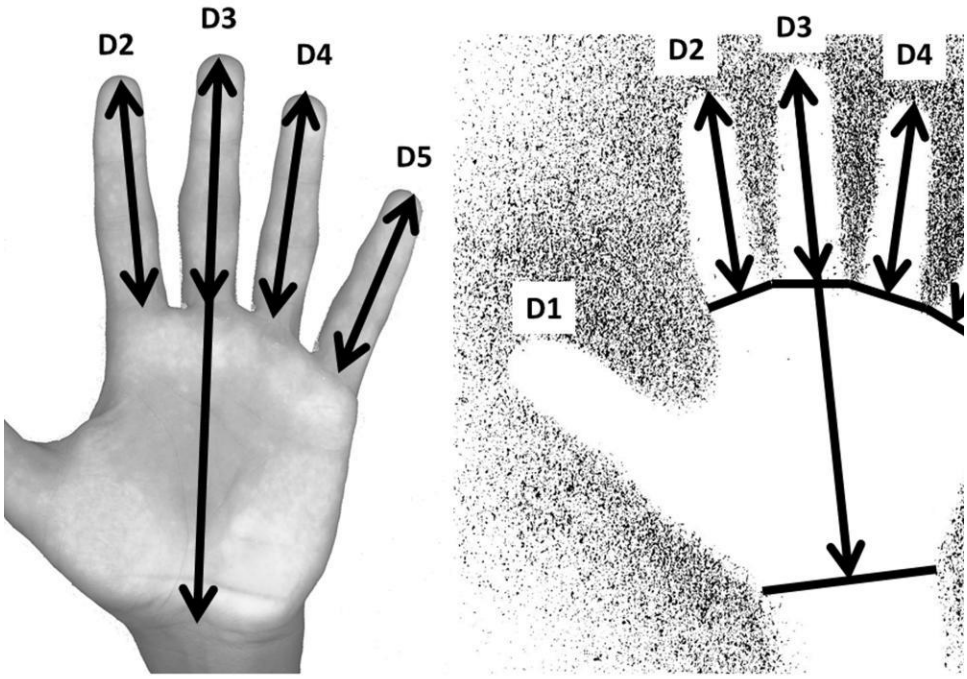


Figure 7. Photocopy of Hand Scan. 2013. Scanned paper copy. Sexual Dimorphism Article. Image by Dean Snow.

Figure 8. Cave Art. Exact date unknown. Pigment on cave wall. El Castillo Cave in Spain. Image from Pedro Saura of Science/AAAS.

Figure 9. Venus of Hohle Fels. Carved mammoth ivory tusk. Schelklingen, Germany. Image by Thilo Parg.

Bibliography

"Cosquer Cave | Underwater Archaeology." Archeologie Culture, https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/archeo-sous-marine/en/cosquer-cave#:~:text=Cosquer%20Cave%20is%20home%20to.

"Definition of Parietal Art in Art History." Bluebox Creighton Education, https://bluebox.creighton.edu/demo/modules/en-boundless-old/www.boundless.com/definition/parietal-art/index.html.

Ashworth, William. "Henri Breuil." The Linda Hall Library, https://www.lindahall.org/about/news/scientist-of-the-day/henri-breuil#:~:text=Scientist%20of%20the%20Day%20%2D%20Henri%20Breuil&text=28%2C%201877.

Brown, Thomas M., "Cave of the Hands," *Archaeology* 43, no. 3 (1990): 10, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765825.

Chauvet: Hand Prints: Panel of Hand Prints with Animals, n.d., https://jstor.org/stable/community.13570609.

Clottes, Jean and Jean Courtin. *Cave Beneath the Sea.* Harry N. Abrams Incorportated, 1996.

Clottes, Jean. *Chauvet Cave : The Art of Earliest Times*. Salt Lake City: University Of Utah Press, 2003.

Clottes, Jean and David Lewis-Williams. *Shamans of Prehistory*. Harry N Abrams Incorporated, 1998.

Clottes, Jean, Jean Courtin, and Paul G. Bahn, "Stone Age Gallery-by-the-Sea," *Archaeology* 46, no. 3 (1993): 37-43, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41766360.

Dowson, Thomas. "La Grotte Du Pech Merle – Pech Merle Cave." Archaeology Travel. https://www.archaeology-travel.com/france/pech-merle-cave/.

Fagan, Brian. Review of *Paleolithic Masterpieces*, by Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel Deschamps, Christian Hillaire, Jean Clottes, Paul Bahn, Jean Clottes, Jean Courtin, and Marilyn Gamer. *Archaeology 4*, 1996, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41771035.

Geller, Pamela L. "Identity and Difference: Complicating Gender in Archaeology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38 (2009): 65-81. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20622641.

Guthrie, Dale. *The Nature of Paleolithic Art.* Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2005. https://www.bibliovault.org/BV.book.epl?ISBN=9780226311265.

Hart, D., & Sussman, R. W. *Man the Hunted: Primates, Predators, and Human Evolution*. Westview Press; Philadelphia, Pa., 2009.

Hewlett, Bonnie. *Adolescent Identity: Evolutionary, Cultural and Developmental Perspectives.* New York: Routledge, 2013.

Google Arts & Culture. "Humans in the Chauvet Cave." https://artsandculture.google.com/story/humans-in-the-chauvet-cave-grotte-chauvet/vwUBgypsuG61IA?hl=en

Johnson, Richard, Miguel A. Lanaspa, John W. Fox. "Upper Paleolithic Figurines Showing Women with Obesity may Represent Survival Symbols of Climatic Change." Obesity, 2020.

Kolankaya-Bostanci, Nevir. "The Evidence of Shamanism Rituals in Early Prehistoric Periods of Europe and Anatolia." *Colloquium Anatolicum XIII* (2014). https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/collan/issue/61597/919791

Kratochvíl, Lukáš, and Jaroslav Flegr. 2009. "Differences in the 2nd to 4th Digit Length Ratio in Humans Reflect Shifts along the Common Allometric Line." *Biology Letters* 5, 643–46. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2009.0346.

Liew, Jessica. "Venus Figurine." *World History Encyclopedia, (*2017). https://www.worldhistory.org/Venus_Figurine/.

Mandell, Laura. "Gender and Cultural Analytics: Finding or Making Stereotypes?" *Debates in the Digital Humanities,* edited by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, (2019): 3-26. https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctvg251hk.4.

Manning, John T. *Digit Ratio: A Pointer to Fertility, Behavior, and Health.* New Brunswick Rutgers Univ. Press, 2002.

McDermott, LeRoy. "Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines." *Current Anthropology* 37, no. 2 (1996): 227-75. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2744349.

Nochlin, Linda. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ArtNews*, (1971): 1–26.

Nowell, April and Jennifer C. French. "Adolescence and Innovation in the European Upper Paleolithic." *Evolutionary Human Sciences 2* (2020): e36. doi.10.1017/ehs.2020.37.

Parg, Thilo. "Venus of Hohle Fels." *World History Encyclopedia,* (2017). https://www.worldhistory.org/image/6346/venus-of-hohle-fels/.

Parkington, John. "Symbolism in Paleolithic Cave Art." *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 24, no. 93 (1969): 3-13. https://doi.org/10.2307/3888361.

Pearson, James L *Shamanism and the Ancient Mind*. Rowman Altamira, 2002.

Resnik, Judith. "Gender Bias: From Classes to Courts." *Stanford Law Review* 45, no. 6 (1993): 2195-2209. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229145.

Robb, John. "Prehistoric Art in Europe: A Deep-Time Social History." *American Antiquity* 80, no. 4 (2015): 635-654. https://www.jstor.org.stable/24712796.

Schmidt-Chevalier, Michel. "Were the Cave Paintings in Southwest France Made by Women?" *Leonardo* 14, no. 4 (1981): 302-303. https://doi.org/10.2307/1574607.

Snow, Dean R. "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art." *American Antiquity* 78, no. 4 (2013): 746-761. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43184971.

Solometo, Julie and Joshua Moss. ”Picturing the Past: Gender in National Geographic Reconstructions of Prehistoric Life.” *American Antiquity* 78, no. 1 (2013): 123-146. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23486388.

Unknown. “Cosquer Cave Hand Print: Stencils, Above the South Edge of the Large Shaft.” https://jstor.org/stable/community.13555154.

UNESCO. “Cueva de las Manos, Rio Pinturas.” World Heritage Convention UNESCO. https://www.whc.unesco.org/en/list/936/.

Virginia Tech. “History Repeating.” *Liberalarts.vt.edu*, 2022, liberalarts.vt.edu/magazine/2017/history-repeating.html.

Vogel, Lise. “Fine Arts and Feminism: The Awakening Consciousness.” *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 1 (1974): 3–37. https://doi.org/10.2307/3177695.

Wong, Wang I., and Melissa Hines. “Interpreting Digit Ratio (2D:4D)–Behavior Correlations: 2D:4D Sex Difference, Stability, and Behavioral Correlates and Their Replicability in Young Children.” *Hormones and Behavior* 78 (February 2016): 86–94.