Cave Paintings

Deep within some ancient caves, the ceilings and walls are covered in primitive art, brought to life by flickering firelight. These paintings are not thought to have only been for decoration, as they have been found in caves with no signs of life.

Made by grinding colourful rocks (such as yellow ochre and red oxide) into powder and binding them into a paste using water or animal fat, early humans drew animals and hunters, or left empty handprints, in caves around the world, as a call for hunting success from their spirit world ancestors.

Some famous cave paintings have been dated to around 18 000 years old but many are now closed to the public, as the carbon dioxide breathed out by visitors caused irreparable damage to the prehistoric relics.

