

Scenes from the Stone Age: The cave paintings of LASCAUX

From 2 October 2015 to 17 January 2016
Hall 7, Palexpo Geneva

Truly experience the Lascaux phenomenon; this is the goal that this exhibition, born out of an initiative of the General Council of Dordogne and the French Ministry of Culture, has given itself. The issue is straightforward: help the public to understand the aesthetic revolution provoked by the discovery of the Lascaux cave, right up until its permanent closure in 1963. But this exhibition will also help understand why this cave, one of the most important in the world, had to be preserved at all costs. The arrival of Lascaux in Geneva is also the occasion to begin a dialogue with the Geneva museums, who will be adding to the wealth of information contained in the original exhibition by providing locally sourced exhibits destined to create new bridges.

The LASCAUX exhibition opening this autumn in Geneva – after Chicago, Houston, Montréal, Brussels and Paris, but before South Korea and Japan in 2016 - retraces the incredible story of the cave at Lascaux and of its discovery. The cave is often called « The Sistine Chapel of the Stone Age». Painted and engraved about 20 000 years ago, it is considered to be one of the world's leading sites of prehistoric cave art. Aurochs, deer, bison, horses, and even a woolly rhinoceros: over 900 depictions of animals decorate its walls.



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Visitors are plunged into this universe thanks to a life-size replica of part of the cave, an incredible virtual tour, models, archive images and interactive games. Visitors will embark on a labyrinthine visit, extending over the almost 4'000 m2 of Hall 7 of Palexpo.



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Our first encounter is in 1940's France, when four boys provoked shock waves by their chance discovery of this cave covered in paintings. A virtual 3D tour, mind-bogglingly realistic, plunges visitors into the depths of the cave, whilst a full 1/10-scale model of the cave will allow them to appreciate the global dimensions of the cave.

Using contemporary photographs and video archives, the reasons that led to the closure of Lascaux to the public will be explained to visitors. They will then be able to identify with the first explorers of the cave as they enter a true-to-life reproduction of the cave and discover the paintings in this monumental setting.

A face-to-face meeting with Cro-Magnon man is inevitable! Hyper-realistic models will surprise young and old alike. Having overcome their initial amazement, visitors will be invited to play, to observe and deepen their awareness about Lascaux. The work of scientists and archaeologists is presented on interactive terminals and via video animations that are accessible to all.

An enormous pedagogical potential

History, yes, of course, but also flora and fauna, drawing, geology, geography, biology, natural and social sciences: an exhibition such as Lascaux represents a real goldmine for teachers, with its almost infinite pedagogical resources. The visit provides an opportunity to develop pupils' transversal capacities, whatever the particular subject involved.

LASCAUX and the museums of Geneva

The arrival of the Lascaux exhibition in Geneva represents a unique opportunity to set up a dialogue between the exceptional heritage of Lascaux and the collections housed in the Geneva museums. The Natural History Museum and the *Musées d'art et d'histoire* will be preparing exhibitions and developing complementary items for inclusion in the exhibition at Palexpo, thus contributing to the continuing reflections and dialogue around prehistory, both in Geneva and at the site of Lascaux.