



The Cave of Lascaux: The Final Photographs

By Mario Ruspoli

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The prehistoric cave in France's Dordogne region, with its 17,000-year-old animal paintings discovered accidentally in 1940, was sealed in 1963 due to deterioration in atmospheric conditions. Two decades later, television producer Ruspoli went underground to take the photographs that form the basis of this handsome, comprehensive book. The murals he recordedelegant renderings of animals in stately friezes, courting rituals and overlapping groupingsare here beautifully reproduced. The text elucidates the theory that the paintings were created as part of a paleolithic mythology, with Lascaux a religious sanctuary. Bolstering this, the author shows stenciled handprints, shamanistic human figures and arcane symbols (perhaps prewriting). He also includes an abundance of background information, including scientific data on both the animals and the artists. This is a fascinating and beautiful addition to the library of amateur anthropologist and art lover alike.

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From Library Journal

The author, who sadly died before this awe-inspiring book was published, headed a team which filmed and photographed the paintings and engravings from the cave at Lascaux (now closed to the public for reasons of conservation) at the request of the French Ministry of Culture, in order to create a cinematic record of the renowned Paleolithic site. Ruspoli describes this photographic project toward the end of his book. The book as a whole, however, is an extraordinary journey into the world of the hunters who painted and engraved the animals and symbols of Lascaux. Ruspoli's knowledge of prehistory and archaeology and his intimate awareness of the images gained by photographing the cave are combined with a magnificent "feel" for the civilization that produced the images. A splendid work of spiritual artistry.Joan W. Gartland, Detroit P.L.

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