

X Of Bears and Men X



For the workshop I propose an extract of the piece: “Rock art Rocks Me”.

“Rock Art Rocks Me” is a performance piece designed for 10 artists. Through the scope of these fragmentary traces of history, we are seeking to reconstruct various performative scenarios, echoing the paintings of the Chauvet cave. We are looking for something primitive: a memory from before our birth. Something obvious, we all carry and that evolves within us: the first gestures of the first men. Between art, science and technology, our research tends towards a virtual scene of rock art in action.

Supposing that the cave paintings are the traces of oral performance or dance rites, we assume they have been used as transmission and communication media for the knowledge of surrounding and environments of the early men (hunting, myth, history, art or religious content, shamanism).

SCENARII FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL SET UP

In order to establish the experimental protocol based on the data found in the literature, we work with various scenarios based on scientific hypotheses :

1. There's a shaman in the cave, he is giving a therapeutic ritual.
2. There is a prehistoric performance group in the cave telling a story to a wider audience.
3. Recent discoveries show that some paintings were drawn by the hands of women. The paintings were perhaps carried by women who were invoking the spirits of the animals to help in the hunt.
4. Studies of légor Reznikoff show that in some caves red dots indicate echolocation points (resonance in the cave). Chauvet's Cave is recognized as a sanctuary where

rituals were practiced. Performers are invited to practice beatboxing, to loop their own body sounds.

5. The cave could have been a school of arts. The paintings could have been made out of tracing shadows.



PERFORMANCE PROPOSAL FOR ISGS WORKSHOP — “OF BEARS AND MEN”

For the performance presented at the ISGS, I propose a modulation of the first hypothesis: “*There’s a shaman in the cave, he is giving a therapeutic ritual*”.

In the Chauvet Cave, the bear is peculiarly present. Bears have certainly occupied the cave. Moreover, bones have been found stuck in the mud, paintings of bears have been found, traces of scars of bears have been found on the walls of the cave.

In the shamanic tradition, the bear is the animal comparable to men. Indeed, it is able to walk on two legs.

On the other hand, the shaman is a medicine man. His mind can travel through the different layers of the worlds, between men animals and spirits, dead and living things.

SYNOPSIS

Two dancers are present on stage.

Their dance tells the encounter of the spirit of the shaman with the animal spirit.

The bear is in the cave sleeping.

The shaman is entering the cave.

The bear wants to defend its territory.

The man wants to take the power over the cave.

The dance expresses the appropriation of the soul of the bear by the shaman; the struggle between the two entities then their merger by the spirit.

THE DIRECTOR’S NOTE

The bear is a wild and strong spirit. The shaman is a wild man. Both of them recognize each other for their self-power. Bear and Man initiate a dance for self-recognition.

Responding to a scientific and historic background, we propose an exploration of the bear-men relationship through dance and performance.

Echoing gestures and movement, the performance questions the status of men in front of animals. What are the boundaries of the human world? Time? Space? Culture? Wilderness?



DISCUSSION

The performance will be shown without any technological effect. It will be a “crude” performance according to Artaud’s definition.

After the show, the public is invited to share impressions and comments.

We will then show some other parts of the Rock Art Rocks Me performance project, engaged with 10 artists and digital technology.

The workshop will then allow us to discuss the inter-disciplinary boundaries, between live performance, gesture analysis, visual arts and technology.

ARTISTS

Sophie Cousinié, performance,

Hortense Kack, dance.

Anne Dubos, art director, staging.