



## Nonverbal Communicability and Artistic Appreciation of Stone Age Art

Ravindrababu Veguri, Research Scholar, Department of Fine Arts, Andhra University, visakhapatnam

### ***Abstract***

*This article supports that nonverbal emotions lies at the foundation of art. The interpretation of prehistoric art should take place other than the semantic level. A review of the literature shows very little research carried out around the world that addresses nonverbal communication in rock paintings and engravings. The task lies on the artist to decode these images into verballity. The art approbation purely depends on understanding by others of the work created by him. This aspect refers to as communicability. The uncertainty of life in pre historic times compelled man to communicate his experience to his fellow beings. To them art is a realm, which they created for themselves through nonverbal art form which need to be transmitted to the posterities. Successful tactics and strategies in nonverbal forms of communications had to be communicated to the future generations to ensure aesthetic appreciation and understanding the creativity and communicability of the ancestral art.*

***Keywords:*** nonverbal, communication, human environment

### **Introduction**

"Art is a unique, evolving dialectical relationship between internal and external aspects of the artist's own subjectivity". Human beings create artworks upon inanimate objects and convert them to embody their experiences and interests. Their motto lies in creation of something functional, transforming nonhuman forms to construct human environment where social life can take place. The pre historic men created works of human scale and reflects back to them who and what they are. The emotions, rhythm, feel, symbolic representations all put together contribute to the integration and blending of creator with his creation. It makes the viewer's spellbound, forgetful of material reality. It is then 'The words lost their relevance'.

### **Method of communication**

The method of communication has a hoary past. Rock art is said to be the earliest manifestations of communication in the prehistoric times. These came into light during 19<sup>th</sup> century but still the process of discovery continues. In India, the Rock art was first discovered by A. Carlleyle in the Vindhya of the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. It is a global phenomenon that had the element of communication of ideas by someone or other. It is not only confined to humans, animals also do communicate for example, dolphins also talk to each other. Starting from birth, dolphins squawk, whistle, click, and squeak. "Sometimes one dolphin will vocalize and then another will seem to answer," says Sara Waller, who studies bottlenose dolphins off the California coast.

From around 20,000-14,000 years ago, humans are seen doing paintings and



making engravings on the walls of the caves. These were the ways or method of communication in pre historic times where it is amply clear that they were meant for self-satisfaction, i.e....art for art's sake or even share their hunting plan, mobilization of human on grounds of ethno- archaeological studies. Scholars have realized that this art of communication is nonverbal and certainly, magico-religious in intent and purpose. The primitive artist shared his ideas, beliefs, rituals and concerning supernatural powers or gatherings in the cultural milieu. A review of the literature shows very little research carried out around the world that addresses nonverbal communication in rock paintings and engravings. A few researchers have interpreted rock images using nonverbal expressions as a reference to their interpretation. Malaiya (1988, 1992) is more inclusive in her comparison of what are interpreted as dance scenes in the rock paintings of Central India with examples of ethnographic analogies from tribal groups in India. The body gestures, postures and spatial positioning support Malaiya's argument that the paintings do depict dance. Since 125 years after ACL Carlleyle 's discoveries of Pre historic art, a number of scholars have worked to enrich the rock paintings data as a result of which 150 sites comprising 19 zones have been discovered. Factual recording and Analysis of Indian rock paintings have been done for decades but the creativity and aesthetic appreciation of these rock paintings received little attention. The amalgamation of the decoding and encoding of images on stone art, for example realistic with the sensible and manoeuvre with natural surroundings is the need for the hour.

A visual artist tries to posit his moods, feelings or emotions through depiction of his immediate surroundings like flora, fauna, behaviour, occupation etc...on these rock paintings. The present article gives an aura of artistic elements engrossed on the Rock paintings, their creativity with regard to aesthetic appreciation of art in their nascent form. It highlights the nonverbal expressions at the foundation of art compared to the verbalized messages. The artist's instinct to create an eternal conceptual artwork and his passion in the form of artifice is the culmination. The basic elements like the involvement of the creator's desire, inspiration, mood, feeling, psyche, visualisation, innovative and creative skills are involved in attached creation or detached creation. In the attached creation these creative elements occur at conscious level while in the detached creation these elements occur at subconscious level. Therefore an artifice is the manifestation of the total involvement of the personality of the artist. According to certain scholars, 'Art is said to be originated from purposive communication of already verbalized messages'. Contradictorily, I would argue that the interpretation of rock art should take place on hermeneutic level than the semantic one. Much research in Rock art is concerned with a possible semantic of art and also with reference to the above scholars that Rock art is a kind of language was originally a verbal meaning then transformed to images. The task lies on the artist to decode these images into verbality.

The philosopher Susanne Langer has a good offer when she says "I think that every artist has over one artistic aim...to present his idea of some mode of feeling (Langer 1970 : 124). From the perspective of a visual artist the feelings



or nonverbal expressions lie at the foundation of art. It is created not only to communicate a semantic message but also interprets the experience of an artist. Imitation plays a role in the production of art. Art is never grounded in verblivity at all rather explores artistic elements at cosmic levels. The social context of rock art production explores different choices that artists have made in producing art as to the response of archaeologists. Artistic styles varies as per the culture and artists produce that signify the activity of the species (Deetz, 1965) Style in nonverbal communication which negotiates identity (Weissner 1984, 89, 90). Rock art represent "horizons of the past" in which image is produced ( Willey , 1991).It determines the ways we can attain genuinely to understand nonverbal forms and expressions always conditioned by the present.

For thousands of years our culture is verbalized the other ways of communicating the discourse is through dancing, sculpting music that has no relation to verbalization. Moreover these ways cannot be transformed to linguistics. They are perceived by the viewer's visually through expressions, gestures emotions or feelings, from the primitive Mimesis, Allegorical or an Imitation art (Greece) to the present conceptual or abstractism. The appreciation of art is considered to be accessible only through contemplation and inner purification. According to Art historian, Richard's interpretation of nonverbal communication , "without knowing the artistic mind it is difficult to understand his linguistic peculiarity and without appraising the linguistic peculiarity it is difficult to appreciate art ". It is clear that for communication of worthwhile experiences, it is necessary that the artist's mind and his medium

should be understood. Sometimes, art is bad when communication becomes defective. Richard's view of art appreciation was different from Crocian aesthetics where, ' art does not depend on communication, it has its existence in expression'. Nothing is beautiful if it is not expressed through a visible medium. For an instance, the passion expressed by a poet in a particular poem can reveal the reader only on the condition that the reader had such passion to express. He cannot appreciate a character good or bad unless something of that is already there within his inner self. He insists on creative intuition. According to Croce, the poet communicates his ideas to propagate them ie..Self-satisfaction is all that can be expected from an artistic produce. It is contrary to Richard's view that, the artist is endowed with a sensibility and a power of communication and receives events with a peculiar penetrative force. In art and literature, the co-aesthetics process is always at work. It has a relation with life and social purpose to serve. So, Communication -Nonverbal is a "no externalization at eternal level to express the inexpressible", which is contradiction to Richard's critical formulations. Art just springs from common life.

Mimic art, imitation, speaking to trees or animism for a long time it was early traditional ways of communicative art. It implies replication or copying than invention, change and creativity .The innovativeness of primitive art, I manifested in the Rock shelters of Jurreru and Kalaganti valley in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh has enriched art forms that speak volumes about the then residents or the tribes expressing rich cultural heritage of India to the present times. The Palaeolithic art is a play with form or inter materiality. The primitive artist can be seen as the



tool of the nature extracting natural pigments or colours. The original meaning of the Pre historic art is lost in the absence of the artistic expression (Bahn 2001: 78). While Paul Ricoeur worked with text analysis and argued that social action can also be seen as text. In hermeneutical point of view, verbal communication has to do with understanding the intention of the speaker which is different from the acted, sculpted or painted. As to his point of view, the idea of interpretation is to understand an author better than he could understand himself. (Ricoeur 1973:114).

The Nonverbal rock art forms meaning, identification of ethnic groups and artistic appreciation on their modes of understanding nature and its forces is the crucial subject of the artist. It is he who expresses, understands and perceives eternal instincts of man and his surroundings. This receiving the expressed, transmitted or exposed thoughts is reception, which may be casual or attentive. The interaction at the conceptual level between the creator and the viewer is possible through a medium of transmission only when something is worthy or noticeable. Communication is established between the creator and the viewer when the viewer can reach the concept. The intensity of communication differs from person to person based on his perception to art. This is the horizon where expression of thought fuses. The symbolic representation of pre historic art speaks volumes about the pre historic man's beliefs, customs, traditions, culture and so forth. Hence creativity, communicability and Art connoisseurship of animate or inanimate objects painted on the rocks reflects coexisting and continuous phenomenon.

The art approbation purely depends on understanding by others of the work created by him. This aspect refers to as communicability. The uncertainty of life in pre historic times compelled man to communicate his experience to his fellow beings. Gestures, sign language, body postures proxemic behaviour form an important nonverbal communication system in the Stone Age. It was also proved that human language originated from these nonverbal expressions. The anthropomorphic images in rock art portrays aspects of this kind of communication in a structured way. This shows that the primitive artists were having a complicated brain perceiving signs and signals though verbal forms may or may not exist in the ancient groups. The gestures may be innate to all human beings and cannot that simple head nodding communicates yes or can also be no. La Barre (1947) calls this as "sub-linguistic gestures and signs" that is marked by cultural variances. Symbolic meanings of art forms vary from culture to culture. It is believed to be stemmed from cultural conditioning rather than biological 'hand-wiring' of the brain. The reason behind all human evolutionary advances, especially in both tool-making and art, was undoubtedly the gradual increase in brain size, as measured by the cranial capacity. Since Neanderthals had a brain capacity large or even larger than more modern Homo sapiens, the relative complexity of the internal architecture of the brain is also an important factor. In any event, brain functionality is directly associated with linguistic and creative expression.

### **Conclusion**

Successful tactics and strategies in nonverbal forms of communications had to be communicated to the future



generations to ensure aesthetic appreciation and understanding the creativity and communicability of the ancestral art. The pre historic man created symbols to convey meaning that can be easily understood by his fellows. To them art is a realm, which they created for themselves through nonverbal artform which need to be transmitted to the posterities. The Indian rock art thrived on these aesthetic principles and the world visualizes the artistic manifestations in the contemporary times.

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