



BEAUTY'S REFLECTIONS AS A HISTORICAL TOOL

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ABSTRACT - This contribution summarises the results of 25 years of personal, worldwide, on-site, field sessions and theoretical research on the most complicated kind of historical sources: paleo-art pictograms, petroglyphs and portable art. This article examines a fundamental phenomenon unique to human culture: the evaluation of fine art, which in this article includes the interpretation of the dual nature of paleo-art as a historical source. The article also discusses how these humans' aesthetics changed history from a strictly modern scientific analysis perspective.

RIASSUNTO - La comunicazione riassume i risultati di 25 anni di ricerca personale, teoretica, condotta in tutto il mondo, in loco e con sessioni di osservazione sul campo riguardo al più complicato tipo di fonte storica: pittogrammi, petroglifi e arte mobile. Si prende in esame un fenomeno fondamentale unico della cultura umana: la valutazione dell'arte, che include l'interpretazione della natura duale dell'arte primaria come fonte storica. L'intervento illustra anche come riflessioni sulla concezione del "bello" riescano a cambiare la storia, nella prospettiva della moderna analisi scientifica.

This article distils and relates 25 years of scientific research on the most complicated kind of historical sources. They are modern graffiti on the one hand and prehistoric rock art on the other, and they are very different. The paleo-art specialists do not care about ugly city graffiti and the graffiti producers know nothing about prehistoric rock art. A position free of dogma shows that all these images look completely different, yet deceptively simple, under the open sky. Somebody's reflection of beauty created them, in order to communicate with observers without the constraints of time and culture. Francesco Bonami wrote that: "All Art Has Been Contemporary" (Bonami 2007).

Talented painters create modern graffiti (Fig.1). Textual graffiti were produced to be transmitted to other people as a visual message (Fig.2)(Lurie 2000, 2003). Graffiti may be as aggressive and sharp as iron (Fig.1),or they can look soft and fluffy. At the same time, the painter's main goal is to create a visual illusion of the third dimension, which is additional to the two-dimensional possibilities of the real urban surfaces. This is the evidence of any real Art (Vipper 2004). Three-dimensional illusions of urban graffiti are marking 'our modern one-use plastic world', as the Russian artist Andrey Biljo would say (Bilzho 2013). These outstanding three-dimensional iron visual illusions are possible on an artificial surface in artificial urban surroundings by the Chinese artist "DAL-east".

Another world-famous graffiti artist, who calls himself Robert Banksy, a pseudonym of an English Bristol artist, is a good philosopher. Everybody knows the three topics which attract people's attention: somebody's money, somebody's private life and somebody's death. Banksy uses all three topics and creates his compositions with the help of stencils. This allows him to save time and to get outstanding quality for the images of his graffiti. He managed to create a story on a blind red brick wall 'in the middle of nowhere' (Fig.3).

There are three interconnected visual items created in graffiti. First of all, the observer is getting a 'unique', so to speak, possibility to see some thing 'hidden' and therefore not visible under the painted piece of white fabric. It looks as if it is possible right now and right here, and that peaks people's curiosity. Second, the observer is looking at the painted female waitress dressed in black and white.

She stands bowing on the surface of the painted white fabric on the real red brick wall. Third, this painted female waitress is communicating with the 'invisible' part of the real fragment of the red brick wall with the dustpan. She is frightened and is doing this discreetly, and confirms that there is some 'space' under the painted white fabric. However, externally this is an artificial graffiti story about a frightened waitress on the artificial, man-made boundary. Such a story is possible in artificial urban surroundings only for urban people perception.

Another graffiti of Banksy is dedicated to another issue of urban private life (Fig.4).

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The key point of this graffiti is the artificial window painted with stencils on the faceless wall. There are three figurines painted in different styles: the man inside the window is dressed in a blue jacket and the female as well as the male body under the window are painted in white and black, which indicates a nude body. Banksy is using contrasts of white and black colours, to show that people are frightened and dark pink blinds to underline romantic background of this story.

The white frame of the window's graffiti is underlined by the black colour space of glass and shade part under the white windowsill. The white female figure is painted on black space inside the room as well as having black underwear on. The best aspect is the white male figure painted under the window in white and black. This image makes the wall look funny and 'alive', because the man is frightened to death.

The observer of this graffiti can see the whole story as one and compare the active, powerful and nevertheless stupid position of the man in a blue jacket with the miserable and vulnerable position of the nude body painted as hanging by one hand under the window. It takes time and attention to understand that this three-dimensional illusion of urban graffiti is just an artificial composition which is located on an also artificial faceless wall of a building with several floors. I would like to draw your attention to one more of Banksy's urban graffiti. It is painted with just one white silhouette of the death image travelling in a small boat. This was painted on a black iron ferry near the water surface (Fig.5).

Banksy was lucky to discover this unusual place for such philosophical urban graffiti. The image is reflecting in the water surface and changes according to the water's condition. Therefore, there are two images at once: one is painted in white on the iron surface and the other one is reflected in the water. The paradox is that the iron surface is manmade; the artificial and water surface is real.

At the same time there is no image on the real water surface. It is visible only and Banksy designed an illusion of the illusion and confirm done more fourth dimension. He found an excellent illustration of death. Death is not visible but people die every day. A similar interchange of visible and invisible has been known since the Neolithic period. Petroglyphs, made more than 5,000 years ago are found in two concentrations, on the east bank of the Onega Lake and on the south bank of the White Sea. Zalavruga is the name of the rock art site near the White Sea.

The gneiss-granite surface is full of different constant invariants, of which polished parts are one. They are visible but not obvious and look like glass. Polished parts were formed in high-pressure and high-temperature conditions during the Pleistocene.

Some gneiss-granite parts at the Zalavruga site were naturally polished, very convenient for Neolithic painters to peck some petroglyphs on. The boat hunting scene is on the right of group 4 (Fig.6). Changes happen when water is added to the polished gneiss-granite surface: the boat hunting scene on the white whale petroglyph and all the surfaces around will start to shine brightly (Fig.7). The same is possible to see on the rear water surface during direct sunshine (Fig.8). Several steps to the left along group 4 will allow us to see elk hunting on skis above the snow crust (Fig.9). It became very famous because of the detailed pecked petroglyph composition (Savvateev 1970).

There are three hunters on skis following each other, which is possible to read because of the three dots on both sides along the ski tracks (Fig.10). The polished gneiss-granite surface in this case was used to create an artificial image of the peace of natural surroundings. Therefore, more than 5,000 years ago the same naturally polished gneiss-granite surface in one case is a snow crust and few metres further on is a water surface available for boat hunting. At the same time there is a strong temptation for modern urban observers. They can be the visual victims of the image's meanings.

Archaeological society in the whole Soviet Union was divided into two groups, because of the semantic meaning of just one type of abstract Karelian (European part of Soviet Union, in the north) Neolithic petroglyph 25 years ago (Fig.11).

One group insisted that Alexander Lynevsky's explanation was correct, that this was the image of a Neolithic hunting trap. The other group was sure that Vladislav Ravdonicas's explanation was correct and that it was the images of solar or lunar Neolithic marks. The members' opinions in those two groups were different, but both of them were under pressure from the beauty and enigma of this one type of abstract Neolithic petroglyph from Karelia. It is interesting to think what Soviet orthodox archaeologists will say about other rock art images.

Rock art sites are the most complicated kind of historical source. There is one rock art pictogram of a human figurine painted 2,000 years ago with brown colour pigment at the Seven Miles Canyon, Utah, in the United States. The eyes and image of the little green snake in the mouth of this pictogram is painted with green pigment (Fig.12).

This is one of 362 Barrier Canyon style (BCS) rock art sites (Sucec and Law 1991, Schaafsma 1971). What is the most important aspect of this pictogram? The meaning of the snake painted in the human's image mouth, the vertical location of the image of the snake, the same color of the snake and eyes or the pieces of the natural three-dimensional surface of the rock which were not covered by the brown pigment and prepared by the pictogram painter in advance from the very beginning?

Another possibility is to investigate the location of this pictogram in the natural surroundings of the Seven Miles Canyon and compare field results with some other BCS sites. I believe that analyses of meanings of the very delicate balance of natural and artificially made parts can open the world of the creator of the human pictogram with the snake in the mouth at Seven Miles Canyon and other BCS sites. The other BCS site can make observers speechless. The Black Dragon Wash pictograms look simple but very powerful. We found this pictogram group covered by white chock and destroyed by bullet tracks (Figs.13, 14).

I am grateful to my friend Jeff Kottmyer who organized and sponsored our scientific expedition in 2012. We were lucky one day to be at the right place and at the right time. One man came to the valley, Black Dragon Wash, in order to record his music on the same day and time as we did. There were no loudspeakers or any other devices to make his music louder. Nevertheless, the clear sound of his portable electro piano was all over the grand space of this valley.

We discovered the 'Kottmyer phenomenon' as one more dimension of the BCS pictograms. It was a we some. The sound travelled 600m or so and was clear, with some echo. Therefore I believe that this valley was selected because of its unique acoustic possibilities from the very beginning and for the location of the powerful pictograms later. The middle pictogram is damaged by the four bullet tracks. This is also the evidence of modern human reflection but a completely different type.

CONCLUSION

Images are unique historical sources. They belong to the history of fine art. At the same time, by the way, what is fine art doing? Art is using something very simple to create something very complicated. What is science doing? Science is doing the opposite. It takes something very complicated and makes it very simple.

Therefore, from the position of scientific analysis it is possible to say that urban graffiti is possible just in artificial urban surroundings. The main goal of the painters is to create an illusion of an additional third dimension: the illusion of illusion on the water reflection, the illusion of human's emotions, the illusion of fantastic three-dimensional animals. It should be an illusion of our modern one-use plastic world urban life.

Neolithic pictograms and petroglyphs painters' main goal was different. They were using parts of three-dimensional natural surfaces to create illusion or small copies of the new natural surroundings and an illusion of the internal world of spirits full of enigmatic sounds additional to the physical world.

Is there anything in common for both types of these historical sources? I am very glad to say yes. All images were created by people for other people's visual perception, with the great hope that these other people will enjoy the images and feel happy, thanks to the great human possibility of the reflection of beauty.

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Fig.1 Iron looking graffiti' of the D. A. Least–artist from China.



Fig.2 Street graffiti created for transmission.



Fig.3 Waitress graffiti of 'Robert Banksy' on the red brick wall.

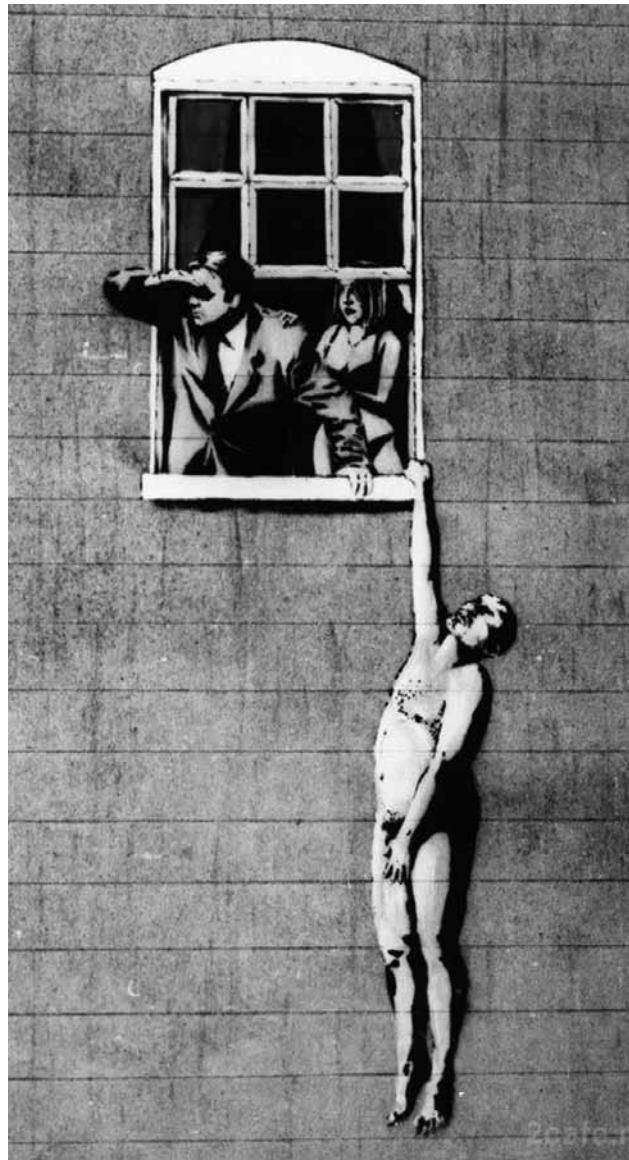


Fig.4 Private story graffiti by Robert Banksy on the grey wall.



Fig.5 Robert Banksy graffiti of death image on the black iron surface.



Fig.6 Copy of the boat hunting on the White Whale after U. Savvateev.

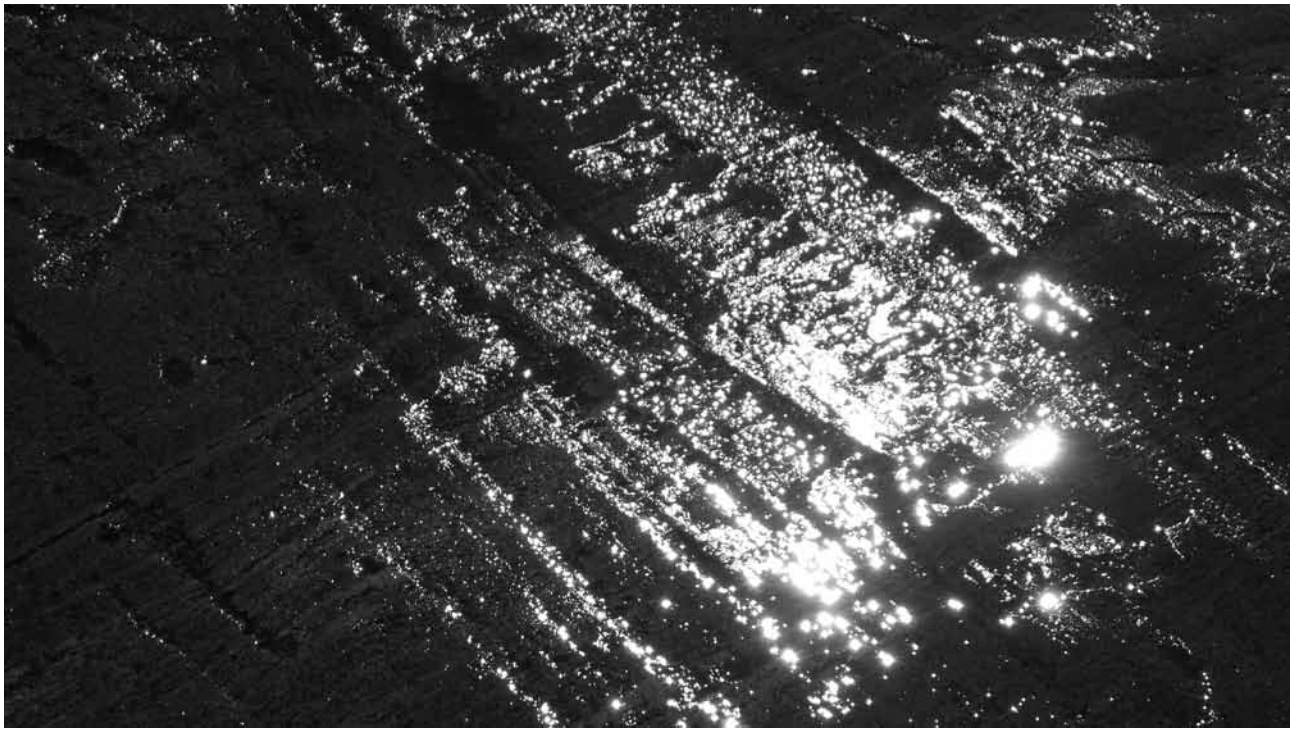


Fig.7 The boat hunting scene on the white whale petroglyph which is shining brightly. Photo by A. Faradzhev.



Fig.8 The river surface shining under the direct sun light.



Fig 9 Petroglyph of the elk hunting on skis over the snow crust.

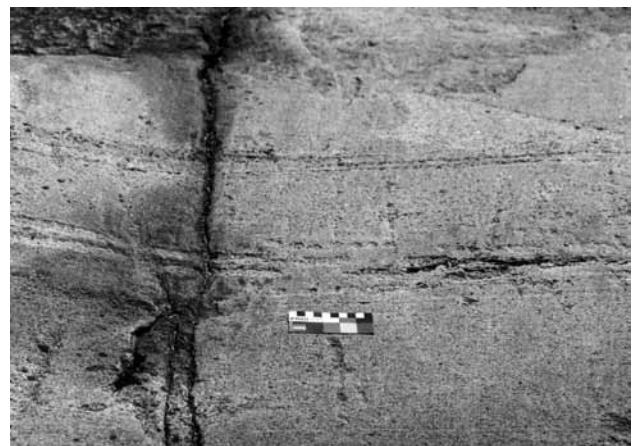


Fig. 10 Petroglyphs of three dots. Photo by A. Faradzhev



Fig. 11. Abstract petroglyph from Pery 6 on Onega Lake Photo by A. Faradzhev



Fig.12 Pictogram of human with a snake in the mouth at the Seven Miles Canyon, Utah, United States. Photo by A. Faradzhev.



Fig.13 The field work at the valley Black Dragon Wash. Photo by J. Kottmyer

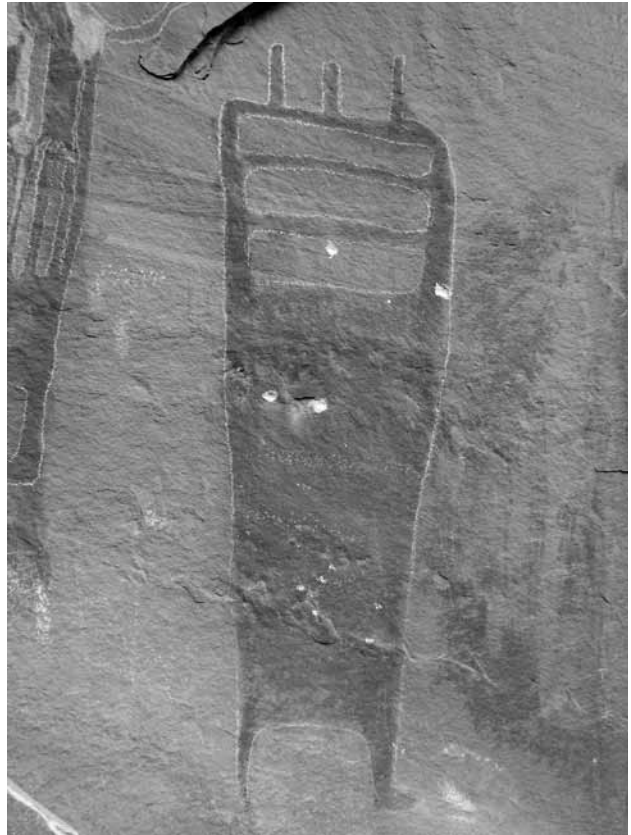


Fig. 14 The middle pictogram at the Black Dragon Wash canyon. Photo by A.Faradzhev.