

# **MAKING ART IN THE ICE AGE**

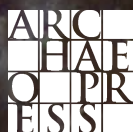
**THE STORY OF HOW OUR  
ANCESTORS MADE IMAGES**

**Paul Bahn  
Elle Clifford**

**Foreword by  
Antony Gormley**







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Front cover: Pech Merle spotted horses. Photo J. Vertut, P. Bahn collection

Back cover: Altamira bison. Photo A. Gavan

Inside front cover: Niaux panel. Photo B. Caland

Inside back cover: Engraved bison from Covaciella. Photo P. Saura

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# CONTENTS

Foreword.....	ii
Deep time line.....	iv
How was cave art discovered?.....	1
What did they draw and paint? .....	14
Drawing humans .....	17
Portable art .....	24
Techniques in cave art.....	38
What did they use to make art? .....	45
Images outside caves .....	56
How old is the art? .....	61
Fakes and forgeries .....	67
Can we know what the art means?.....	69
Conclusion.....	72
Glossary .....	74
Questions.....	78
Appendix: Further reading.....	79
Image credits .....	79
Map of sites mentioned in the text .....	84



## FOREWORD

You enter a cave, its walls glistening with calcite-rich water. You trace your fingers, leaving a mark in the ceiling like tram tracks. You see your breath in the cool air; every footfall is echoed in the resonance of the darkness and the stone. Now, fill the hollow of an animal bone with finely ground ochre taken from the floor, and press the palm of one hand against the cave wall. Blowing the ochre onto the back of your hand, you leave a hand stencil — the earliest mark of human touch that reaches out to us across the millennia, speaking of presence, contact and time.

What is it that makes us human? The ability to reflect on our own experience.

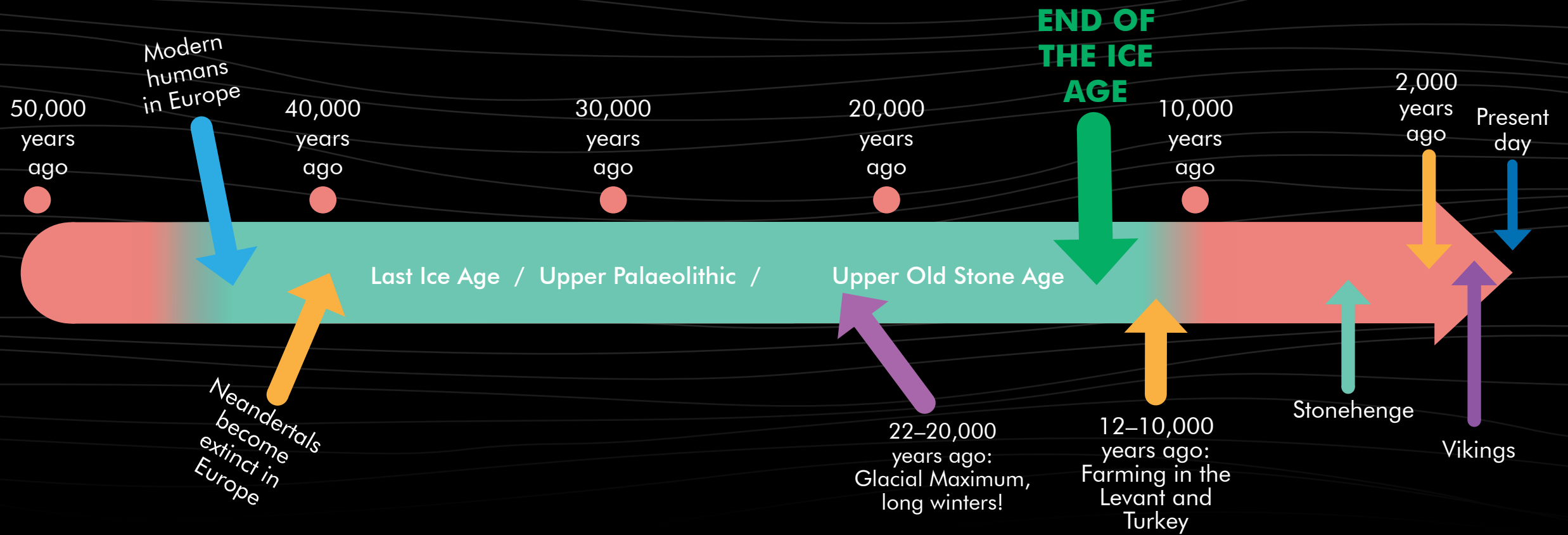
The cave's darkness is the ground in which the first art was made, but it also remains a metaphor for the act of imagining — going deep inside yourself in order to find the things that resonate with the outer world. One of the extraordinary things about the Ice Age in Europe is how the artists drew horses, bison, mammoths and deer both practically and imaginatively. At that time, there were far more animals than humans roaming the land, and the sight and sound of those vast herds thundering down the limestone valleys of southern France would have been awe-inspiring. We hunted them, ate their flesh and dressed ourselves in their skin — all in order to survive — but we also worshipped and respected

them. The art of the caves shows our dependency but also their place in the Ice Age imagination as powerful, mythical creatures.

I believe that making things and drawing are intrinsic parts of our species and our evolution — of who we are. If you give any child a way of making a mark, say pencil or brush, they will use it with joy and expressiveness. In making something, whether it resembles something that already exists or is entirely unique, like your handprint, it changes the world and changes the way you feel in it: you have brought something into existence that was not there before. Without these adventures in our imagination, we are lost. Curiosity is at the root of all creative ventures. Pick up a pencil, grab a piece of clay and start making!

Antony Gormley





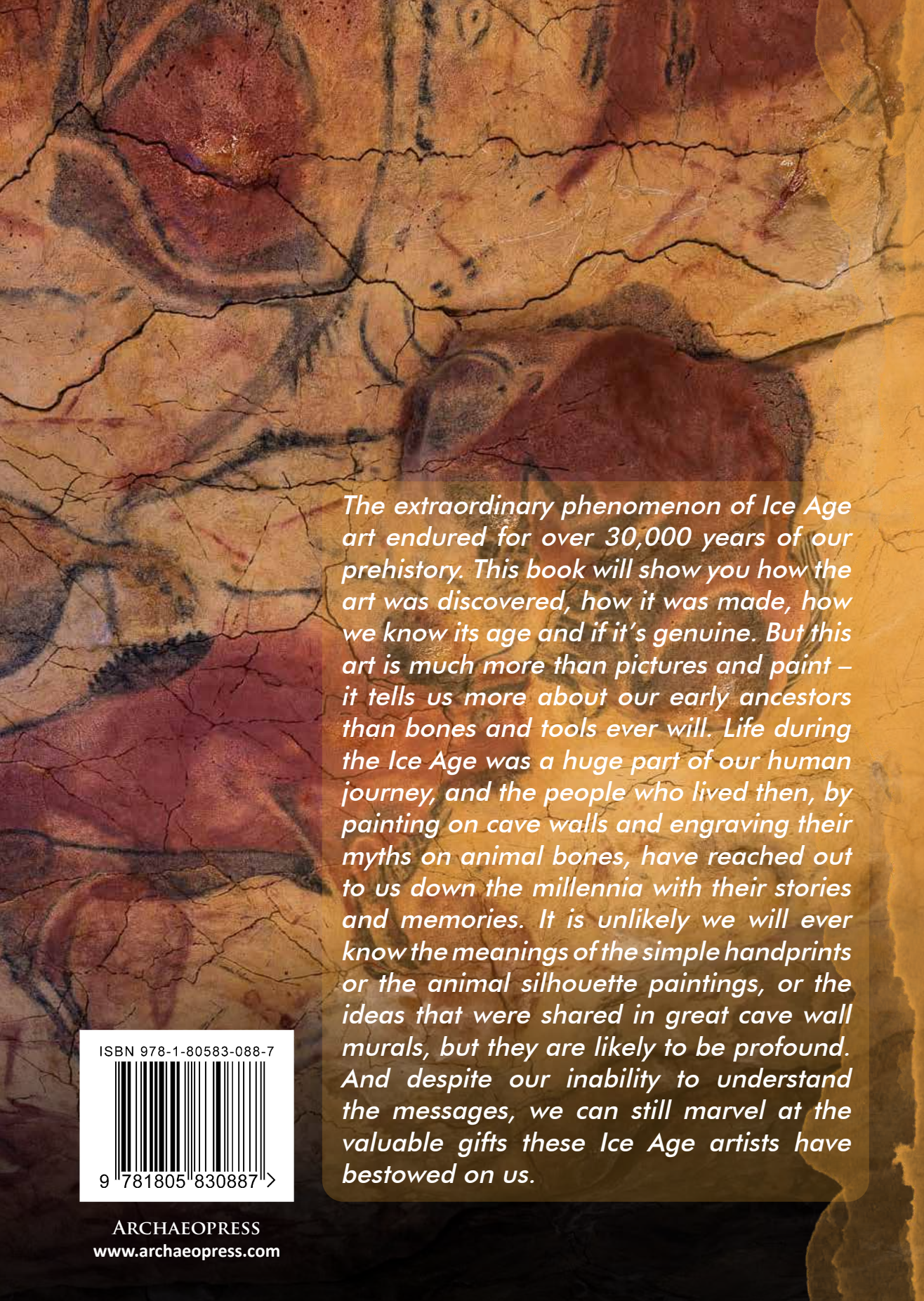
## DEEP TIME LINE

Time line from the approximate arrival of modern humans in Europe to the present



Photomontage of the 'unicorn' panel at Lascaux II





*The extraordinary phenomenon of Ice Age art endured for over 30,000 years of our prehistory. This book will show you how the art was discovered, how it was made, how we know its age and if it's genuine. But this art is much more than pictures and paint – it tells us more about our early ancestors than bones and tools ever will. Life during the Ice Age was a huge part of our human journey, and the people who lived then, by painting on cave walls and engraving their myths on animal bones, have reached out to us down the millennia with their stories and memories. It is unlikely we will ever know the meanings of the simple handprints or the animal silhouette paintings, or the ideas that were shared in great cave wall murals, but they are likely to be profound. And despite our inability to understand the messages, we can still marvel at the valuable gifts these Ice Age artists have bestowed on us.*

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